

Luke's Story of Paul in Corinth: Fictional History in Acts 18

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Introduction

Most investigations of Luke's story of Paul in Corinth in Acts 18 take for granted that what is presented there derives, at least in part, from historically reliable source material — and then strive to demonstrate that this is the case. If it is assumed, for example, that the writer's dramatic portrayal of Paul's missionary journeys must be based on a historically reliable "itinerary source," the challenge is to identify items in this passage that derive from such a source. Otherwise, the task is to show that certain crucial information derives from historically reliable sources of some kind. Sometimes the presence of "names" and "details" and "local color" suffices to identify the presence of trustworthy information. Most often, however, the question is whether what Luke relates is confirmed by what we know from the Pauline writings, or at least is not contrary to what we find in these writings.¹ Such interpretations, however, represent something different from the historian's normal concern

In the ensuing discussion the following works will be cited in notes simply with the name of the author: Conzelmann = Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Haenchen = Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971); Jewett = Robert Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); Lüdemann = Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989); Murphy-O'Connor = Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); Ollrog = Wolf-Henning Ollrog, *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter* (WMANT 50. Neukirchen: Neukirchen Verlag, 1979); Pereira = Francis Pereira, *Ephesus: Climax of Universalism in Luke-Acts. A Redaction-Critical Study of Paul's Ephesian Ministry* (Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1983); Schmithals = Walter Schmithals, *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas* (Zurich, ZBK NT 3.2, 1982); Weiser = Alfons Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, vol. 2 (OTBNT 5/2 Gütersloh:, 1985). Other works by these authors will be identified by title.

¹ It is argued that the appearance of Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth (v. 1ff.), and then in Ephesus (v. 18f.; 26), Paul's journey from Athens to Corinth (v. 2), Paul's working as a tentmaker (v. 3), the arrival of Timothy and Silas in Corinth (v. 5), Paul's supposed turn to full-time preaching (v. 5), the conversion of Crispus (v. 8), and Apollos' preaching in Achaia (v. 27f.) are all confirmed by what we find in the Pauline writings: e.g., Weiser, 483-485, 497, 508; Lüdemann, 198-204.

about the reliability of his or her source material, where credibility is not an assumption to be validated, but a question to be critically investigated.

More is at stake for such interpretations, however, than the reliability of what Luke tells us. For Corinth is thought to have been the center of Paul's missionary enterprise in Achaia, a community which he founded, where he worked for a number of years, to which he wrote two magnificent epistles, and where the wondrous epistle to the Romans flowed from his pen. For such interpretations, therefore, the crucial issue finally has to do not merely with the historicity of what we read in Acts, but whether our traditional assumptions about Paul and Christian origins in Corinth are confirmed by what Acts presents.

I doubt very much that there is any basis in Acts 18 for an affirmative answer to this question. A critical analysis of this material shows that the depiction of Paul in Acts 18 as the founder of the Christian community in Corinth is not only Luke's own construction, but is also an imaginative apologetic rewriting of earlier traditions having quite different views of Christian beginnings in Corinth — and the same is true for Luke's portrayal of Paul's work in Ephesus. To see this, however, we need to read Acts in a different way than is usually done.

Clarification of Terms

This project will be an exercise in redaction-criticism, composition-criticism, and tradition history. By a critical investigation of Lukan composition in Acts 18, we will attempt to identify the writer's presupposed sources and traditions and disclose the ways he modified these sources and for what purposes. To begin with, however, I must clarify what I mean by such terms as "sources," "traditions," "redaction," and "composition," which are employed by interpreters in various ways.

By "sources" I refer to actual written documents. And the term "redaction" refers to the writer's appropriation and literary modification of written sources. Such modifications can involve insertions, elaborations, rearrangements, or more radical transformation of the presupposed source. But one can meaningfully speak of "redaction" only where written sources have been employed. And only where redactional modifications can be identified can it be concluded that a written source is in fact presupposed. On the other hand, by "tradition" I refer in general to all the other information that Luke had at his disposal, not

only “oral traditions” concerning earliest Christian times, but all kinds of things that he may have learned from others, or perhaps discovered for himself, or that he simply took for granted, including “traditions” that Luke did not agree with and endeavors to repudiate. In this same way, I also use “tradition” to refer to what might have been presupposed by Luke’s sources. In no case, however, do I mean to imply that what was mediated by “tradition” is necessarily historical.

When I describe specific material — whether a redactional insertion or an entire passage — as “Lukan composition,” I refer to material that, at least in its present form, is entirely Luke’s own creation. Lukan composition does not exclude the use of traditional elements and motifs. Nor does it exclude the use of written sources that have been transformed into what are now entirely new stories — in which case composition-criticism becomes an extension of redaction-criticism.² In a wider sense, however, the way Luke creatively modifies, arranges, and orders all his diverse materials is also “composition.” From this perspective, the entire book of Acts is a Lukan composition, the final product Luke’s own literary creativity. There is, therefore, not a single item in Acts that is not an element of Lukan composition. So what we will be doing in this study is perhaps best understood as composition criticism.³

Historical Criticism or Apologetic Historicizing?

As we observed, most interpretations of Acts assume that what Luke presents is basically reliable, or even if he was fudging a bit on the historical margins, that Luke at least made use of historically reliable sources of some kind,⁴ even if the precise nature of these sources can no longer be determined.⁵

² In such cases the use of an earlier source may or may not have historical or hermeneutical implications. An example would be Luke’s use of Homer in creating the story of Paul and Eutychus in Acts 20:7-12: see Dennis MacDonald, “Luke’s Eutychus and Homer’s Elpenor: Acts 20:7-12 and *Odyssey* 10-12,” *JHC* 1 (Fall, 1994), 5-24. Apart from its entertainment value, it is difficult to perceive any Lukan agenda here. But we will see that this is not always the case.

³ Composition criticism is also closely related to literary criticism (see below). But I use the term “composition criticism” to include our concern with Luke’s reworking of presupposed sources and traditions.

⁴ Many scholars hypothesize that in chs. 16-20 Luke made use of some kind of “itinerary source” (*inter alia*, Weiser, 388-390). According to Philipp Vielhauer, the hypothesis of an itinerary source “has become widely accepted” (*Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* [Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975], 389-392:

Then a peculiar development takes place. The primary task for such interpretations becomes the demonstration that such assumptions are valid. And the agenda now pursued is not historical criticism, but apologetic historicizing.

With regard to the historical reliability of what Luke relates, of course, it makes no difference at all that such information may have been derived from written sources—even if such sources were in the form of first-person accounts and made explicit claims to be eye-witness reports. Whatever information might be deemed to derive from such sources would still have to be critically evaluated on its own merits.⁶ But this problem does not really arise for such studies. For the only material these interpretations attribute to a presupposed source (or tradition) is that which they already believe to be historical because it coheres with what they take for granted about the history of earliest Christianity, usually on the basis of what we supposedly find in the Pauline writings. Such studies are not really concerned with historical source material that might differ from what Luke relates or from what we find in the Pauline writings, and might therefore reflect a different view of early Christianity, or the Pauline writings, than is commonly assumed. This is something very different from historical criticism.⁷ But it has important

389). Lüdemann (13f.) posits the existence of a “list of stages” or “stations”; but most often he simply refers to presupposed “traditions.” Regarding the whole issue of sources presupposed by Acts, see Jacques Dupont, *The Sources of the Acts* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964).

⁵ E.g., Haenchen and Conzelmann. Luke Johnson (*The Acts of the Apostles*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992) declares that, since Luke rewrites his sources so thoroughly, the detection of specific sources is “hopeless” (3). “We cannot, because of Luke’s artistry, determine the extent or even the existence of written sources” (7). One wonders, however, whether such praise of Luke’s artistry does not conceal uneasiness about what might be discovered if such sources could be detected.

⁶ Hypothesizing that what Luke relates must derive from historically reliable sources of some kind increases the probability that at least some information in a given account must derive from such a source, and this provides grounds for willy-nilly assigning to such a source whatever items of information excite the interpreter’s fancy. The hypothesis of an itinerary source certainly functions in this way.

⁷ I am obviously generalizing. Günter Klein’s book, *Die zwölf Apostel* (Göttingen, 1961) was paradigmatic for a historical-critical investigation of Luke’s agenda in Acts. Gottfried Schille’s worthy attempts to read behind Luke’s text in his *Anfänge der Kirche* (1966) and *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas* (1983) are also exceptions. And the many works by Walter Schmithals often recognize and address real historical issues, even if his solutions tend to be historically conservative. On the other hand, however, investigations that focus only on Luke’s

consequences for how we understand, or fail to understand, what Luke presents, and for what we might learn from Luke about early Christian history.

What such interpretations offer is apologetic historicizing. Beginning with the assumption that much of what Luke relates is basically reliable, and being primarily concerned with demonstrating the validity of this assumption, they interpret what Luke presents to mean what it must mean to make this assumption valid. The first question asked is whether what we find in Acts can be confirmed by what we read in the Pauline writings; and then they search the Pauline writings to discover what Luke must mean if he is to agree with Paul.⁸ Such interpretations, however, do not allow Luke to speak for himself, in his own words. Especially when Luke appears to be relating historical information, they do not imagine that what he presents might be entirely determined by his own agenda, or that Luke's sources might reflect a history different from that which we might take for granted. In this regard, modern advocates of literary criticism rightly criticize practitioners of historical criticism for searching for history behind the written text but not paying attention to what the text itself says and means. It is not really historical criticism that they have in view, however, but merely a pretender.⁹

"theological" tendencies — e.g., his eschatology, his conception of salvation history, his attitude towards Jews and Judaism — are essentially works of literary criticism.

⁸ It is often unclear which is being confirmed: what Luke relates, or what we find in the Pauline writings. Lüdemann in fact seems to say that there is mutual confirmation. He concludes that "alongside the letters of Paul Acts remains an important source for the history of early Christianity," since "many of the traditions which it uses are historically reliable and enrich our knowledge of earliest Christianity in addition to the letters of Paul" (17). But arguments supporting this contention can be circular. In one place, for example, Lüdemann tells us that "Paul's close connection with Aquila and Priscilla during the visit on which he founded the community in Corinth and which is also recognizable from his letters (cf. 1 Cor. 16.19b) is also confirmed by the report in Acts..." (12). But later, supporting the historical reliability what Luke relates in Acts 18:2ff., Lüdemann argues, in reverse, that "the couple Priscilla and Aquila appear in 1 Cor. 16.19... They send greetings to the Corinthians and this presupposes that they know them" (201).

⁹ Even supposedly literary interpretations, however, read information into Acts from other sources. Robert Tannehill, for example, tells us that "Priscilla and Aquila are examples of Christians," and that Apollos "comes to Ephesus and then goes to Corinth" (*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts. A Literary Interpretation* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 221). In fact, the writer of Acts neither identifies Priscilla and Aquila as Christians nor relates that Apollos went to Corinth. Later on, Tannehill tells us (p. 222) that Titius Justus "presumably has become a

Such interpreters do not perceive what they are doing as apologetic in character, nor is it usually perceived in such a way by others. They are only doing what almost all biblical scholars have been doing for the past century, and is now generally regarded as “historical criticism,” no matter how uncritical it may be in practice.¹⁰ Ever since the paradigmatic work of scholars such as Lightfoot and Zahn, Pauline studies has been essentially an apologetic enterprise whose primary task is to demonstrate that the Pauline writings cohere with one another, thus confirming their presumed authenticity and providing a secure biblical basis for Christian theology.¹¹ As an essential part of this task, what is related in Acts must also be shown to cohere with what we find in the Pauline writings. But even more, it must also be demonstrated that, apart from his own “theological” tendencies, Luke’s depiction of early Christian history as such is basically reliable — i.e., his conception of early Christianity as a movement beginning with the original apostles in Jerusalem, established throughout the world by the missionary work of Paul, and characterized, at least in the beginning, by the absence of diversity and conflict.¹² All this is at stake in Acts 18. But it can

believer because he offers his house for Paul’s use.” But the literary critic should ask why Luke explicitly identifies Titius Justus as merely a “God-worshiper.”

¹⁰ See, for example, E. Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), for whom historical criticism should include a “theological or transcendental explanation of cause” (58). Krentz’s claim that the historical-critical method is now “generally accepted” (2) would be true only for what passes today as historical criticism. Simply because a work is concerned with historical questions does not mean it pursues historical criticism. It would be more accurate to say that, over against the historical-criticism practiced in the nineteenth century, interpreters became generally preoccupied with apologetic historicizing. For a more accurate discussion of historical criticism, see Van Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), and Christian Hartlich, “Historical-Critical Method in its Application to Statements Concerning Events in the Holy Scriptures,” *JHC* 2/2 (Fall, 1995), 122-139.

¹¹ I have discussed this subject at length in D. Doughty, “Pauline Paradigms and Pauline Authenticity,” *JHC* 1 (Fall, 1994), 95-128; esp. 114-119, and, with regard to Acts, 122-124.

¹² It might be objected that diversity and conflict are already reflected in the Pauline writings themselves, where the great apostle almost always faces “opponents” of some kind. Even these writings, however, reflect the “orthodox” conception of church history, according to which the communities founded by Paul originally “received” what he delivered to them (1 Cor 15:1-2; Gal 4:12-14; Phil 1:3-5; etc.), and that “opponents” with different teachings only appeared later on the scene. Whether these adversaries be portrayed as “Judaizers” or “Gnostics,” their actual identity remains quite vague. Whatever their teaching might be, however, it is assumed to be contrary to the original apostolic testimony represented by Paul (1 Cor 15:1-11; Gal 2:1-10; Phil 3:2-21; Rom 16:17-20).

be perceived only by an investigation that doesn't simply buy what Luke wants to sell.¹³

The writer of Acts certainly made use of written sources. But attempts to disclose Lukan source material are skewed by the search for historically reliable information in these sources. Redaction-critical analysis is fully able to discern the presence of written source material behind specific passages, and perhaps even disclose what the original content of such material might have been.¹⁴ But the primary purpose of redaction-criticism is to clarify the historical significance of what Luke himself relates. It endeavors to discern the nature of Luke's presupposed sources, not to demonstrate their historical credibility, or the historical reliability of what Luke tells us, but to understand the meaning of what Luke presents with reference to his own historical situation. In this sense, redaction-criticism resembles literary criticism. It asks many of the same questions and employs many of the same methods. Like literary criticism, redaction-criticism asks how Luke's original readers would have understood what he presents.¹⁵ But redaction-criticism then asks how such an understanding was motivated by Luke through manipulation of his presupposed sources. And this then enables the critical historian to ask why Luke would have done such a thing, and what was really at stake from a historical perspective.¹⁶

¹³ Even otherwise critical scholars like Hans Conzelmann and Helmut Koester seem to buy Luke's view that the Christian movement began with the original apostles and then spread to "Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8); see Conzelmann, *History of Primitive Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 32-90; Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 86-94.

¹⁴ With regard to Acts, Haenchen chastises practitioners of redaction criticism who think of Luke "as making insertions between sentences taken over unaltered from his source, and on occasion omitting or transposing something." According to Haenchen, "they have thus overlooked the fact that Luke by no means worked so mechanically. In reality he has constructed our passage with a carefully calculated graduation of events." (537) But this is a very simplistic characterization of redaction criticism, which is interested in far more than a few insertions or omissions, which is very much concerned with how Luke constructed a passage, and does not assume that in doing so Luke took anything over "unaltered from his source."

¹⁵ In our study, for example, we will frequently ask how Luke's own readers would have understood what he relates, in contrast to "informed readers" like ourselves.

¹⁶ Literary criticism and redaction-criticism are not necessarily competitive agendas, and both are important components of historical criticism. For hermeneutical purposes one may choose to focus only on literary questions — and move

If all we are concerned about when we read Acts is the historical reliability of what Luke tells us, or the historical reliability of items excavated from his presupposed sources, and if an attribution of reliability is based only on what we ourselves already take for granted, we will never discover, or even look for, anything that differs from what we think we know. This is why interpreters so readily historicize what they read in Acts — because it protects us from things that we might rather not know. But the consequence is an unacceptable apologetic demarcation of what we might discover about early Christian history by a critical reading of what Luke relates, without assuming in advance that Luke can only say things, or that his sources can only reveal things, that cohere with our own assumptions about early Christian history.

The historical value of what Luke relates, and the historical value of his sources, are certainly necessary questions for historical criticism to pursue. But this can only be done after we critically evaluate what Luke relates. The entire presentation of Acts is Lukan literary composition. Luke was perfectly capable of transforming stories or even creating stories of his own to serve his purposes — perhaps merely the entertainment of his intended readers, or perhaps, more seriously, to promote his own historical apologetic agenda, or both at the same time. In any case, we cannot assume that anything Luke relates is merely incidental.¹⁷ There is not a single bit of material in Acts, regardless of what may have been its original source, whose meaning is not now subservient to Luke's own hermeneutical program. In every individual case, only after Luke's own agenda has been explored can we consider the historical value of what he tells us. But the historical *value* of what Luke tells us does not necessarily have anything to do with its intrinsic historical *reliability*. What we will learn, first of all, is what was important for Luke and for the brand of Christianity he represents. Then we can ask about what

from there to narrative criticism, and reader-response criticism. The historian, on the other hand, employs both literary criticism and redaction-criticism, and then moves to historical criticism. The discipline of literary criticism is necessary for the historian to avoid premature historicizing from his own perspective as a (supposed) historically "informed reader" or as a theologically "committed reader."

¹⁷Jewett contends that "travel and historical details incidently mentioned in the text have a higher claim to accuracy than the overall framework in which they appear," since these are less likely to have been shaped by Luke's "theological" perspective (*Chronology of Paul's Life*, 9f.). But historical criticism cannot make such assumptions; everything must be critically investigated.

might have been going on in early Christian history that Luke may not have wanted us to know about.

In what follows, I will employ redaction-criticism and composition-criticism to provide such a reading. I will pursue this as far as I can. In some instances I might go a bit too far. But the real point here is methodological: i.e., how to read a Lukan text in a way that is both historical and critical. I hope the trip will be as exciting for the reader as it has been for me.

The Arrival of Paul in Corinth

The story of Paul's arrival in Corinth in 18:1-3 — its present form and most of its content — is entirely Lukan composition. Lüdemann is correct, of course, when he observes that “a redactional tone” does not necessarily mean that the information related is not reliable.¹⁸ Contrary to Conzelmann, however, details such as those found here can certainly be invented.¹⁹ So the historical significance of such details must be established. And this can be done only after we determine what their significance might have been for Luke himself.

To begin with, let us consider Luke's depiction of Paul's arrival in Corinth. To be sure, if the writings to the Corinthians attributed to Paul, which assume that he was the founder of the Christian community in that city, are authentic, one would have to assume that Paul arrived in Corinth from somewhere. But the report of Paul's arrival in Corinth from Athens in Acts 18:1 is a typical Lukan redactional transition.²⁰ There is no need to

¹⁸ Lüdemann, 196.

¹⁹ Conzelmann, 151: “Luke possessed some good individual pieces of information on Paul's activity in Corinth. There are factual details not previously encountered in such abundance in Acts — details about working conditions, lengths of time, names, places, and dates... Details such as those given in vs 2 are not invented”; cf. Haenchen (Acts, 537): “Luke must have drawn on some source or other. It would be senseless to pass off all details as a creation of the author's fantasy.” If details were a mark of historical reliability, however, we would have to regard Chariton's story of *Chaereas and Callirhoe* as a historically reliable narrative. Regarding the significance of local color and details for Luke, see Richard Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 71f. Pervo observes that “verisimilitude does not guarantee accuracy of reporting. With regard to ancient literature, the opposite is likely to be the case” (38; see also 117).

²⁰ “With a transitional sentence Luke brings Paul from Athens to Corinth” (Haenchen, 538). The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα is a characteristic Lukan transition (Lk 5:27; 10:1; 12:4; 17:8; Acts 7:7; 13:20; 15:16; 18:1; elsewhere in the NT only Mk 16:12!); see Lüdemann, *Acts*, 195; *Paul*, 157.

assume that Luke derived this from a presupposed "itinerary source."²¹ To portray a missionary journey of the great apostle, passing through all the famous cities in Macedonia and Achaia later associated with his name, and, after a stopover to preach to pagans in Athens, culminating at Corinth, all the writer would have had to do is look at a map.²²

The claim is often made, however, that Paul's journey from Thessalonica to Corinth via Athens is confirmed by what we read in 1 Thess 3:1-6.²³ But Corinth is not even mentioned in 1 Thess 3, and everything else related in Acts regarding the journey of Paul from Thessalonica to Corinth conflicts with what is related there. According to Acts, Paul and his cohorts fled from Thessalonica to Beroea (17:10), where, for some reason, Timothy and Silas stayed behind while Paul himself went on to Athens (17:14f). But in 1 Thess 3:1 Timothy is said to have been with Paul in Athens, that he was sent back from there to Thessalonica, and that he has now rejoined the apostle — although it is not said where.²⁴ Moreover, Silas is not mentioned in 1 Thess 3. So

²¹ The postulate of a presupposed itinerary source at this point generally derives from the view that what is related here is confirmed by what we read in 1 Thess 3 (see below). On this basis, it is reasoned that since this information is reliable it must derive from a reliable source. At the same time, however, the postulate of a presupposed itinerary source for this section of Acts tends to give credibility to information found here. In any case, the real question is whether what Luke relates here can in fact be confirmed from *any* other source.

²² With regard to Luke's account of Paul's journey from Philippi to Thessalonica via Amphipolis and Apollonia (Acts 17:1), Conzelmann rightly observes (134) that "Luke required no access to an itinerary source for this data... A personal knowledge of the road, inquiry or examination of a description of the road, or a map would suffice." This is true, however, for all of Luke's accounts of Paul's missionary journeys.

²³ Weiser; 348; Lüdemann, 201; Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thesslonicher* (EKKNT 8. Neukirchen, 1990), 17; According to H. Koester, "The information in Acts 18:1ff can be confirmed in part by the Pauline letters" (*History and Literature of Early Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982], 109); but he refers only to Paul's stay with Priscilla and Aquila and the conversion of Crispus. A more complicated argument is that Paul's itinerary in Acts 16-18 coheres with what can be reconstructed in a more general way from the Pauline writings: e.g., Murphy-O'Connor, 25f., who on this basis concludes that "it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Luke had independent information about Paul's first independent missionary journey through Asia Minor and Greece" (26).

²⁴ There was a time when the usual assumption was that Timothy must have rejoined Paul in Athens (see K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity, Part I, The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Macmillan, 1933), 208; cf. 224: "There is no hint that this is not a return to Athens." Lake and Cadbury consider alternative proposals, not unlike those still set forth today, but conclude "it is perhaps easier to accept the plain statement of 1 Thessalonians and assume that

we would have assume that he remained with Paul in Athens (hence the plural in 3:1) and then moved with Paul to wherever he is now thought to reside (3:6).²⁵ One can certainly harmonize this diverse information in various ways.²⁶ But one cannot claim that such conjectures “confirm” what we read in Acts 18:1.²⁷ The only concrete evidence we have for a journey by Paul from Athens to Corinth is what Luke tells us in his own words.

Excursus: Acts and 1 Thessalonians

With regard to presupposed sources, there must, of course, be some relationship between the account of Paul’s journey from Thessalonica to Athens, and then to Corinth, in Acts and what we read in 1 Thess. The most probable explanation, it seems to me, is that the writer of 1 Thess made creative use of material from Acts.²⁸ Silas was dropped from the picture and the role of Timothy was magnified because by the time 1 Thess was written Timothy had become a much more significant figure in the Pauline traditions. Paul’s stay in Beroea (Acts 17:10-15) was dropped because in Luke’s narrative it only elaborates and complicates the story of Paul in Thessalonica (17:1-9), and had little interest for the writer of 1 Thess.²⁹ And for this reason in

the writer of Acts made a mistake in thinking that Silas and Timothy did not join Paul before he had reached Corinth” (Ibid.). Rather than assume that the writer of Acts made a mistake, however, we should assume he tells us exactly what he wants to and ask why he tells the story in this way.

²⁵ The problem becomes even more complicated when it is assumed, as most interpreters do, that Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth (Acts 18:5) with financial support from Philippi (see the discussion of this text below).

²⁶ Cf. Lüdemann, 203; Marxsen, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 14; Suhl, 102-110; H.-M. Schenke and K. M. Fisher, *Einleitung in die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, Vol. 1 (Berlin: Evangelischen Verlag, 1978), 71-75.

²⁷ John Hurd rightly observes that “the customary procedure by which these accounts are ‘reconciled’ is simple conflation. The two stories are dovetailed, neither giving way to the other.” (25) But Hurd’s own proposal that 1 Thess 3 and Acts 17 relate two different visits of Paul in Athens (also Schmithals, 169) is only another kind of harmonizing explanation.

²⁸ Christoph Demke also concludes that “the tradition-historical location of the post-apostolic author [of 1 Thess] must be investigated anew, especially in relation to the work of Luke, and the connection between 1 and 2 Thess” (“Theology and Literary Criticism in 1 Thessalonians,” *JHC* 3/2 (Fall, 1996), 194-214: 214.

²⁹ Assuming that 1 Thess was written by Paul, Haenchen suggests (517, n. 5) that Luke either had no exact information or was simplifying the story (cf. p. 513). Conzelmann merely observes (136) that “the Lukan picture is simplified,” leaving open the possibility that Luke nevertheless possessed more detailed information (cf. 151). According to Schille (352), “The Lukan presentation does not simplify, but has its entirely independent character and meaning.” In any case, Luke’s version is more complicated. Luke probably had Timothy and Silas stay behind in

1 Thess Timothy had to accompany Paul to Athens and then return to Thessalonica. The pseudonymous writer of 1 Thess remains vague about where “Paul” was when this letter was written because he had not yet read the harmonizing works on Pauline chronology by modern scholars supposedly demonstrating that his letter must have been written in Corinth.

Evidence for the dependence of 1 Thess on Acts would be the language in 1 Thess 3:2: καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον... εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι. The word στηρίζειν (“establish”) is used in Acts 14:22; 15:32, 41; 16:5; 18:23 (also 1 Pet 5:10; 2 Pet 1:12). The verbs στηρίζειν and παρακαλέσειν appear together in Acts 14:22 and 15:32. On the other hand, στηρίζειν (or ἐπιστηρίζειν) appears elsewhere in the Pauline writings only in Rom 1:11f (cf 16:25). Assuming that the writer of 1 Thess used Acts as a source would also explain the reference to persecution by “the Jews” suffered by the “churches of God in Judea” (1 Thess 2:14-15), which reflects very much what we learn from Acts (8:1; 11:49; 13:50!). The vague reference to the persecution suffered by the Thessalonians from their “own countrymen” could be derived from Luke’s story of Paul in Thessalonica (Acts 17).³⁰ The reference to Paul having been “driven out” by the Jews simply summarizes Paul’s usual experience according to Acts. And the idea that Paul “worked night and day” to support himself (1 Thess 2:9) would also derive from Acts.

Beroea because he wanted to attribute the first preaching in the great pagan metropolis of Athens to Paul himself (cf. Schille, 352; also Lüdemann, 188), and, as we will see, also because he wanted to establish that Paul founded the Christian community in Corinth all by himself. By the time of 1 Thess, however, the increased stature of Timothy as a “child” of Paul (1 Tim 2:2) made it entirely plausible that he had been with Paul in Athens. It is amazing how few commentators say anything at all about the statement in 17:16 that Paul was “waiting for them [Timothy and Silas] in Athens.” This note may have been the basis for the version in 1 Thess. But it also has special significance in Luke’s account (see below).

³⁰ Schille observes (353) that “whoever wants to historically locate the episode related in this tradition will think above all of the persecution mentioned in 1 Thess 2:14: the Thessalonians must suffer the same thing as Paul and the Jewish Christians καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων συμφολετών.” Lüdemann suggests (188) that the account of Jason and other Christians being brought before the court “as the result of state intervention” may be a “more specific version of the information in 1 Thessalonians.” But the reverse may also be true: the reference in 1 Thess may be a vague allusion to what is related in Acts.

Prisca and Aquila

Now let us examine Luke's account of the arrival of Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth in v. 2. This is also Lukan composition.³¹ Aquila was certainly a Jew. And the information that Aquila's family home was in Pontus may derive from tradition.³² But the explicit identification of Aquila as "a Jew" is Luke's own work.³³ The phrase Ἰουδαῖον ὀνοματι Ἀκύλαν is a typical Lukan construction (cf. 5:1, 34; 8:9; 9:10, 11,12, 33, 36; 10:1; 11:28; 12:13; 16:1, 14; 17:34; 18:7, 24; 19:24; 20:9, 10; 27:1; 28:7), particularly at the beginning of a new story (5:1, 34; 8:9; 9:10, 33; 10:1; etc.). In Acts 5:1 there is a very similar introduction of "a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira." And the description of Apollos in Acts 18:24 as "a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria," who "came to Ephesus" is almost identical to the description of Aquila in this story. References to "Italy" (Ἰταλία) appear elsewhere in the NT only in Acts 27:1, 6 and Heb 13:24. The word προσφάτως ("recently") appears only here in the NT. But Lüdemann observes that with this word "Luke is making clear the chronological relationship between the arrival of Aquila and Priscilla and that of Paul."³⁴ So the reference to Aquila's "recent arrival from Italy" is probably also Lukan composition.³⁵

³¹ See, in general, Lüdemann, 195; also Weiser, 484. Murphy-O'Connor regards vv. 2-3 as a redactional insertion.

³² Weiser, 484; also Lüdemann, 198.

³³ It is often observed that the term Ἰουδαῖος does not necessarily imply that someone is not a Christian. This is true, of course, in the sense that the original followers of Jesus were certainly Jews and that in Acts many Jews become Christians. But when the writer introduces a Jew who is already a Christian, he usually indicates this, directly or indirectly (cf. 16:1; also 9:10, 36; 11:27).

³⁴ Lüdemann, 196.

³⁵ Lüdemann tells us: "The tradition about the arrival of Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth is confirmed by the evidence in Paul... The couple Priscilla and Aquila appear in 1 Cor. 16.19 and Rom 16.3; in 1 Cor. 16.19 they send greetings to the Corinthians and this presupposes that they know them" (Acts 20:1; also Weiser, 484; Murphy-O'Connor, 261). But it may simply be that this couple was as well known to the Corinthians as they were to "all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom 16:4). According to Lüdemann, that Paul first met the couple in Corinth is "the most probable explanation of the presence of Aquila and Priscilla among Paul's followers in Ephesus." This is certainly what Luke wants his readers to assume. But it is not "confirmed" from the Pauline writings. The most that might be said is that what Luke relates concerning Aquila and Priscilla can be harmonized with references to the famous couple found in the Pauline writings. But the historical probability of such information must still be determined.

The association of the arrival of Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth with the edict of Claudius having expelled “all the Jews” from Rome is Lukan composition. It reflects Luke’s tendency to associate Christian history and world history.³⁶ The phrase διὰ τὸ διατεταχέναι Κλαύδιον... (διὰ + acc. + inf.) is again a typical Lukan construction.³⁷ Luke’s previous association of Claudius with Christian history in 11:28, which would at best have had meaning only for an “informed reader,”³⁸ probably prepares for this more significant connection. It is also prepared for in v. 1 by Luke’s explicit identification of Aquila as a Jew, and provides another opportunity for Luke to identify Aquila and Priscilla as Jews. Schmithals observes that the statement that Claudius drove all the Jews out of Rome “corresponds with Luke’s apologetic tendency to portray Jews as riotous, but not Christians.”³⁹ All things considered, therefore, there is no reason at all to think that the connection of the edict of Claudius with the arrival of Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, and thus with Paul’s own arrival in that city, derived from any presupposed source or “tradition.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Weiser, 484; also Lüdemann, 195; Murphy-O’Connor, 14f. Even though Weiser assumes this information to be historical, he observes that it could not have been included in Luke’s itinerary source, but must have come from “somewhere else.” But where else? Lüdemann also qualifies the significance of this observation by arguing that vv. 2-3 nevertheless come “from tradition” (198). According to Lüdemann, this is “suggested” by the “compactness of the clauses in vv. 2 and 3,” which is “best explained on the hypothesis that various traditions have been forced together in them.” But this is too vague. What is required is a redaction-critical analysis that distinguishes between Lukan composition and presupposed “tradition.” Lüdemann further observes that Paul finding a welcome with Aquila and Priscilla because they practice the same craft “is a quite untendentious report.” But Lüdemann is not seriously searching here for Lukan tendencies. See below.

³⁷ Weiser, 484; Lüdemann, 195.

³⁸ That is, a reader who knew that a series of famines took place in various places during the reign of Claudius (see Haenchen, 374).

³⁹ Schmithals, 168. Conzelmann observes that when Luke has a Roman audience in view he describes the Jews as “notorious disturbers of the peace” (*The Theology St. Luke* [New York: Harper, 1960], 145).

⁴⁰ The idea that Claudius expelled “all the Jews” from Rome (which cannot be true) is also found in Suetonius. But Luke’s own knowledge may be based only on tradition. In any case, we cannot assume that Luke had any further knowledge of events surrounding the edict. We must assume rather that he simply relates what he does “know,” namely that (for some reason) Claudius “commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.” We cannot employ what we know (or think we know) about this event to elaborate what Luke tells us, or speculate about what Luke “must have known” but didn’t tell us. We cannot assume, for example, that Luke knew that Jews were exiled from Rome because of disturbances involving the Christian Messiah (which is not at all certain), and that this would have made it difficult for

This is entirely Luke's creation.⁴¹ There is no historical basis here for Pauline biography.⁴² The question we need to ask is what significance this connection had for Luke.

Preoccupied with a search for reliable history concerning the early days in Corinth and Ephesus presupposed by Luke's account, it is easy to ignore or misread the meaning of Luke's own story. Haenchen observes that "the interest which the author obviously takes in Aquila and Priscilla shows that they were so important for the history of the Christian mission that Luke could not overlook them. Such things Luke does not say outright but simply indicates by the manner of his presentation."⁴³ Let's consider the "manner of Luke's presentation" more carefully.

Even though the story in vv. 1-3 is entirely Lukan composition, there are nevertheless indications that he created this story on the basis of an earlier written source. The complicated character of v. 2, for example, is not a sign that "various traditions have been forced together,"⁴⁴ but is the result of Lukan redactional insertions — the reference to Aquila "having recently arrived from Italy" (προσφάτως ἐληλυθότα ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας) and its association with the edict of Claudius. Careful analysis, however, discloses a good deal more redactional activity. Already in v. 2 we are told that Paul "found" (εὗρών) Aquila and Priscilla, and then

Luke to have Paul find lodging with Aquila and Priscilla unless Luke knew also that they were Jewish Christians (cf. Haenchen, 533, n. 4; Weiser, 490). This is pure speculation.

⁴¹ Fortunately for Ollrog, his assertion that the connection with the edict of Claudius "shows no Lukan language, style or thought," that it is confirmed "by Suetonius as well as by Paul's reference to his own work," that "no Lukan tendency can be perceived here," and that therefore "everything speaks for its historical reliability" (24, n. 88) was placed in a footnote where few readers would notice it. To be fair, Ollrog cites Haenchen and Conzelmann, but would not have yet known Weiser (1985) or Lüdemann (German edition, 1987). But why did he not apply the same critical analysis to this story that he applied to the story of Lydia in Acts 16:11-15? (see p. 29, n. 122).

⁴² This conclusion can not be set aside no matter what exhausting historical labor might disclose about the reliability and meaning of what ancient historians relate concerning the edict of Claudius (e.g., R. Riesner, *Die Frühzeit des Apostels Paulus* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1994], 139-180). Such apologetic endeavors, in the spirit of Lightfoot and Zahn, while certainly learned, cannot substitute for critical analysis of the biblical texts themselves. The only evidence we have connecting Aquila and Priscilla with this edict is found in Acts, and this connection is entirely Luke's own creation, reflecting his own literary technique and serving his own purposes.

⁴³ Haenchen, 539.

⁴⁴ Lüdemann, 198.

“went to them” (προσῆλθεν αὐτοῖς), for which no real motivation is given.⁴⁵ The word εὐρίσχω is often used by Luke, particularly in such contexts (cf. 9:33; 11:25f; 13:6; 19:1; 28:14). But it normally refers to “finding” something (or someone) after a search (cf. 11:26; 12:19; 17:6,27; 19:1; 27:6), or to “come upon” something by chance (cf. 9:33; 10:27; 13:6; 17:23; 28:14). In either case, however, one does not first “find” someone and then “go to visit” them. Such redundancy is an indication of redactional activity. And since εὐρίσχω is a favorite Lukan word, the phrase προσῆλθεν αὐτοῖς probably derived from Luke’s source material.

The phrase καὶ διὰ τὸ ὁμότεχνον εἶναι (“because he had the same trade”) in v. 3aa is a typical Lukan formulation (διὰ + acc. + inf.). If Paul’s meeting with Aquila and Priscilla derived from Lukan source material, the information that Paul “went to them” (προσῆλθεν αὐτοῖς) at the end of v. 2, was probably directly followed by “and he stayed with them” (καὶ ἔμενεν παρ’ αὐτοῖς) in v. 3ab.⁴⁶ The intervening reference to their common trade thus provides Luke’s own reason for Paul’s having stayed with Aquila and Priscilla. The source material has been entirely reworked by Luke in v. 3 to make this point. The entire focus here on manual labor is the product of Lukan redaction.⁴⁷ The phrase καὶ ἠργάζετο (“and he worked”) reflects Luke’s view that Paul always supported himself by manual labor (cf. 20:34). The phrase ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ τῆ τέχνη seems tacked on at the end of v. 3, and is probably Lukan elaboration. The implication is that, at least in this instance, Paul worked as a “tentmaker.” But Priscilla and

⁴⁵ According to Haenchen (538), “the statements about the meeting with Aquila and Priscilla sound as if they come from travel memoirs. The interest in Paul’s host suggests this.” This is entirely subjective. How can something “sound” like it comes from a written source?

⁴⁶ Luke shows special interest in where and with whom people stay, which is often expressed with the word μέναι (1:13; 9:43; 16:15; 18:3; 21:7,8), and also with ξενίζεῖν (10:6,18,23,32; 21:16; 28:7). But Luke’s source could have used the same language if it also had to do with a visit of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla.

⁴⁷ Murphy-O’Connor rightly observes (261) that Luke certainly intended to portray Paul as performing manual labor. But his conception of redaction as a kind of “scissors and paste” operation does not allow that the depiction of Paul working “side by side with Prisca and her husband as a tent-maker” might be Luke’s own construction. And his argument that since “the occupation of Paul, Aquila and Prisca must have been well known in Greece, Asia and Italy... falsification would have brought ridicule” would hardly apply to Luke’s construction, since all anyone would know about their common occupation would be what Luke relates.

Aquila seem to be primarily in view.⁴⁸ And they are intentionally depicted by Luke as wandering tradespeople — not Christian missionaries.

The historical question that preoccupies interpreters of this passage is whether Aquila and Priscilla were already Christians when they arrived in Corinth.⁴⁹ In fact, Luke did everything he could to prevent any such assumption. In v. 2 he explicitly identifies Aquila as “a Jew,” and tells us that the only reason for Aquila’s recent appearance in Corinth with his wife Priscilla is that they had been expelled from Rome along with “all the Jews.” One would assume that they came to Corinth to pursue their work as tentmakers (v. 3b). In Luke’s version of the story their common vocation now provides the reason why Paul found lodging with Aquila and Priscilla, and it is without doubt intended to deter the idea — which so many interpreters read into the text anyway — that Aquila and Priscilla were Christians when Paul first met them.⁵⁰ In the original story of Paul’s lodging with Aquila and Priscilla, however, it probably was assumed that Paul sought them out and stayed with them because they were Christians.

Lüdemann tells us that “Luke imagines Aquila and Priscilla as Christian teachers...”⁵¹ No one can know, of course, what Luke imagined; but what would his intended readers have assumed? Nowhere does Luke clearly identify Aquila and Priscilla as Chris-

⁴⁸ Cf. Murphy-O’Connor, 261.

⁴⁹ According to Murphy-O’Connor, “it must be assumed that Prisca and Aquila were Christians” (263). He later speculates that Prisca and Aquila took Paul in hoping to convert a fellow-Jew, and imagines “the stunned amazement when they realized that they were all followers of Christ” (265). This is how legends develop.

⁵⁰ Cf. Haenchen, 533, n. 4: “That a Jewish couple... gave a Christian missionary work and shelter is far more improbable than that Paul found lodgings with Christians”; also Weiser, 490.

⁵¹ Lüdemann, 198. Lüdemann actually comes close to perceiving what Luke is really up to here. He rightly observes, for example, that “Paul finds a welcome with Aquila and Priscilla because they practice the same craft;” but he then adds the parenthetical qualification “and not primarily because of the same faith.” Later on (p. 201) he simply gets things reversed. He tells us that “the *tradition* (vv. 2f.) does not presuppose that the couple belong to the Christian church, but explains Paul’s association with them by referring to their shared craft” (my italics) — when in fact it is Luke’s own redaction that offers this explanation — and that in 18:26 *Luke* seems to “tacitly presuppose” that they were already Christians when they came to Corinth (cf. 18:26) — when in fact 18:26 suggests the opposite. Even if it were true, however, that Luke implied that “the couple only became Christians as a result of their meeting with Paul” (Lüdemann, 201), such information would still have to be approached with suspicion, since it could simply reflect Luke’s subordination of the missionary couple to Paul.

tians, let alone as Christian teachers. They are certainly not pictured here as missionary co-workers of Paul.⁵² Schmithals's suggestion that they followed Paul to Ephesus for business reasons is what any reader would assume from Luke's own story.⁵³ Luke's portrayal of Aquila taking a vow and shaving his head (v. 18) indicates that he observes the "customs of the Jews" in a serious way.⁵⁴ When they all arrive in Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla go to work, while Paul goes to the synagogue to preach (v. 19). And since Luke has related nothing to the contrary, the reader would also assume that in v. 26 Apollos must go the synagogue in order to meet Priscilla and Aquila because, from Luke's perspective, they are still Jews.⁵⁵ In vv. 27ff., Luke then portrays a Christian community — evidently separated from the synagogue⁵⁶ — in which Aquila and Priscilla seem to have no part.⁵⁷

⁵² Pereira observes (57) that Priscilla and Aquila seem to have traveled to Ephesus simply to have an encounter with Apollos. "After they have privately expounded to him more accurately the way of God, they disappear altogether from the narrative of Acts. Apparently the couple does not do any 'preaching' work aimed at conversion." In addition, however, since Christian tradition associated Priscilla and Aquila with Ephesus, Luke had to account for this association in some way, even if very minimal.

⁵³ Schmithals, 169. But Schmithals then decides that the "primary reason" for their trip may have been to preach the Pauline gospel in Ephesus.

⁵⁴ Most interpreters assume that it must have been Paul who shaved his head (Conzelmann, 107; Schille, 367; Weiser, 497; Schmithals, 169; Lüdemann, *Paul*, 144f). Lüdemann quotes Wellhausen: "What do Aquila's hair and the fact that he had it cut have to do with anything...?" But its meaning is also obscure as a reference to Paul (Schmithals, 169f). In 21:23f Luke employs this same motif to show that, although he himself did not take a vow or shave his head, Paul nevertheless supported the "customs" of Judaism (v 22) and thus lived "in observance of the law" (v. 24). In 18:18ff, however, as a vow taken by Aquila, the motif is employed by Luke to suggest that Aquila (like the four men in 21:23) actually observed the customs of the Jews (or at least what Luke regarded as such) in a serious way.

⁵⁵ Schille, 374; cf. 363.

⁵⁶ According to Schille (374), "the Christian community in Ephesus was separated from the synagogue by Paul afterward (19:9)," in which case it might be assumed that in v. 26 they were Jewish-Christians. But this is not quite accurate. In 19:8 it seems to be assumed that Paul took up his preaching in the synagogue where he had left off in 18:19, but this time experienced an unpleasant reception. And in 19:9 it is only Paul and his twelve new disciples who separate from the synagogue. If Paul's previous preaching in the synagogue (18:19) had been at all successful (18:20, 27), we would have to assume, from Luke's account, that any followers he won on his first visit in Ephesus had already left the synagogue. And this might be why this time his preaching in the synagogue was not well received. From this perspective, Schille's contention that Priscilla and Aquila are still conceived in v. 26 as "pure Jews" makes more sense, for in contrast to the Christian "brethren," they remained in the synagogue.

Aquila and Priscilla are portrayed by Luke as Jews, not Christians.⁵⁸ We should not attempt to correct Luke's account on the basis of what we think was really the case. We should rather ask why Luke portrays Priscilla and Aquila in this way.

Many scholars perceive that Luke may be fudging the truth in this passage to promote his own interests. But they do not pursue very far the historical implications of this. Haenchen remarks, as an aside, that "it would fit poorly into the Lucan historical picture if he had to admit that there were Christians in Corinth before Paul."⁵⁹ But what "historical picture" is at issue here? Weiser explains that Luke does not mention that Aquila and Priscilla were Christians because he wants to establish Paul as the founder of the Christian community in Corinth.⁶⁰ But why was it important to establish this? Conzelmann observes in a similar way that "Luke, of course, eliminates any such trace of an earlier Christian presence in Corinth because Paul must appear as the founder of the congregation," but he then hastens to assure us that "in fact Paul *was* the founder of the congregation."⁶¹ Whether Paul was in fact the founder of the Christian community in Corinth, however, is precisely what is at stake for Luke. And that he manipulates his material to make Paul appear as the founder suggests that the answer to this question was probably not as clear in Luke's own time as it seems to most interpreters today. The real problem for Luke, however, did not have to do merely with what may have taken place in ancient

⁵⁷ It is not indicated that Apollos was introduced by Priscilla and Aquila to the Christian brethren in Ephesus, or even that Apollos was accepted by the brethren because of the remedial instruction he received from them. Nor can it be said that this is an inconsistency deriving from Luke's handling of his source material, for there is no indication that source material is presupposed here: the entire account of Apollos' meeting with Priscilla and Aquila in the synagogue in vv. 25f and his commission by the brethren in vv. 27ff is Lukan composition (see below).

⁵⁸ Pereira perceives exactly what is going on here (58, and n. 213): "Priscilla and Aquila... are explicitly mentioned as being Jews.... Nowhere in Acts does the author expressly say that the couple... were already Christians, nor does he make any mention of their conversion. And this is particularly striking when we observe that the custom of the writer of Acts is to refer to Christians as 'believers' or 'brethren' when they are *first* mentioned (e.g., Ananias, 9:10; Dorcas, 9:36; Timothy, 16:1; Timothy's mother, 16:1)."

⁵⁹ Haenchen, 533, n. 4. Haenchen believes it probable that Aquila and Priscilla did have a house church in Corinth, but explains that "they had not yet begun a mission." It is difficult to imagine, however, that such a house church would have had no evangelical significance.

⁶⁰ Weiser, 490.

⁶¹ Conzelmann, 159.

times, but with his own time. And with regard to Priscilla and Aquila, the problem had to do not with Corinth, but with the situation in Ephesus!

Significantly the issue concerning Paul as founder of Christian communities is also present in Luke's account of Paul's mission in Ephesus. Luke's depiction in v. 19 of Paul's brief trip to Ephesus and his preaching in the synagogue identifies Paul as "the first Christian preacher in that city."⁶² In v. 20 Luke implies that Paul's preaching found a positive response. Consequently, he later portrays a flourishing Christian community, separated from the synagogue,⁶³ able to provide Apollos with credentials for his work in Achaia (v. 27). All this establishes Paul as the founder of Christianity in Ephesus. Perceiving Acts primarily as a potential source for reconstructing earliest Christian history, a question scholars raise is whether Luke's story of Apollos in 18:24-28, and in particular the reference to Christian "brethren" in v. 27, presupposes a source depicting the presence of a Christian community in Ephesus prior to Paul's arrival.⁶⁴ This is improbable. For the scene in vv. 27f. is entirely Lukan composition.⁶⁵ Such historicizing, however, obscures the fact that the problem for Luke had to do not merely with what took place in the early days, but with the contested situation in Ephesus in Luke's own time.

⁶² Conzelmann, 155; also Weiser (499): Luke "allows Paul to appear as the founder of the community in the metropolis of Ephesus"; and Lüdemann (228): Luke "at least implicitly claims that Paul was the first to preach in Ephesus."

⁶³ See above, n. 56.

⁶⁴ Cf. Haenchen, 551; Conzelmann, 158; Weiser, 510. According to Lüdemann (208), the reference to the Christian community (the "brethren"), which commended Apollos to Achaia was part of the original Apollos tradition. Schille rightly observes, however, "Whoever senses pre-Pauline traces here once again encumbers redactional associations with historical significance" (375). The real historical question is whether Luke's story provides any evidence for Paul ever having been in Ephesus.

⁶⁵ Weiser, 508; Schille, 374f. As a Lukan precedent for the "brethren" sending someone off to a new place cf. 9:30; 15:32f; 17:10, 14. The demonstration that "Jesus was the Messiah" by appeals to scripture appears again and again in Lukan redaction (Lk 24:26f; Acts 3:19-23; 9:22; 17:2; 18:5). In Acts 9:22 Luke relates that Paul himself "confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ." The word *παραγενόμενος* ("to arrive") is Lukan language (Lüdemann, 208). *Χάρις* is used by Luke as a reference to the power of God in 4:33; 11:23; 13:43; 14:3,26; 15:11; 20:24, 33 (cf. also 6:8; 7:10; 46). *διακατελέγχομαι* ("to refute entirely") is known nowhere else; but *διαλεγομαι* (to "argue" or "dispute") is a favorite word of Luke's (17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 9; 20:7, 9; 24:12, 25). *δημοσίᾳ* ("public" or "in public") appears elsewhere in the NT only in Acts 5:18; 16:37; 20:20.

In Luke's own time Ephesus was a hotbed of heterodoxy.⁶⁶ This situation is clearly reflected by Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-35, where he warns that after his departure "fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise people speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (vv. 29f.).⁶⁷ Presupposed here is the "orthodox" conception of Christian history, according to which in the beginning all Christian communities were subservient to apostolic teaching — represented by Paul — and that false teachers and schismatics only appeared later. Elaine Pagels observes: "Christians in the second century used Luke's account to set the groundwork for establishing specific, restricted chains of command for all future generations of Christians. Any potential leader of the community would have to derive, or claim to derive, authority from the same apostles."⁶⁸ Luke's concern was to establish this "groundwork" by portraying Paul's work in Ephesus, the most important city in Asia, as the crowning achievement of the great apostle's missionary enterprise. But this was a formidable task. For Luke seems to have possessed no actual traditions to support his claim regarding Paul's foundational work in Ephesus.⁶⁹ And the only story he

⁶⁶ See Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 82-87. Helmut Koester observes that by the end of the first century in Ephesus "several rival Christian groups... must have existed simultaneously" (*Trajectories through Early Christianity*, J. M. Robinson and H. Koester, eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 155). Schille observes (376) that in the post-Pauline period "the region in and around Ephesus was the most contested region in the history of the earliest church."

⁶⁷ This situation is also reflected in 1 Tim 1:3, where "Paul" exhorts Timothy to remain in Ephesus and "charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine," by the reference in Rev 2:2 to "false apostles" at work in Ephesus, and by Irenaeus' fascinating story about an encounter between the John, the disciple of the Lord, and the gnostic teacher Cerinthus in an Ephesian bath house (*AH* 3.3.4). Bauer observes that "in Ephesus, Paul had turned out to be too weak to drive the enemies of the church from the battlefield." (*Orthodoxy*, 84). The only "evidence" that Paul ever worked in Ephesus, however, derives from Acts (and 1 Cor 16:8f., 12, 19, which could well be derived from Acts).

⁶⁸ Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 10.

⁶⁹ Schille rightly observes that Luke's account of Paul's founding a Christian community in Ephesus is very meager: "If one examines his tradition, one discovers not a single piece of authentic Pauline material" (383). In Acts 19, while there are a number of entertaining stories, the only followers Paul actually recruits are the twelve disciples portrayed in vv. 1-7, 9; and as Luke's reference to them as "disciples" implies, even they were not real converts. It is difficult to understand how Pereira can say that "Ephesus appears to be the center of Paul's most successful apostolate" (33).

did know about the early days in Ephesus contested this claim. But Luke did the best he could with what he had.

Apart from Acts, we have no traditions at all associating Priscilla and Aquila with missionary work in Corinth. As we have seen, their arrival in Corinth portrayed in 18:2 is entirely Lukan composition. And all the other evidence we have associates Priscilla and Aquila with Ephesus. In 1 Cor 16:19 it is assumed that Paul is with them in Ephesus (cf. 16:8); and since the reference here to their having a house church in Ephesus goes beyond the information in Acts, this could derive from an independent tradition.⁷⁰ Regardless of whether Rom 16 is regarded as a letter to Christians in Rome or in Ephesus, the reference in Rom 16:3f to Priscilla and Aquila having “risked their necks” for Paul probably also associates the couple with traditions concerning the apostle’s “affliction” in Ephesus (cf. 2 Cor 1:8f; 1 Cor 15:32). If Rom 16 was directed to Christians in Rome, we would have to conclude that Priscilla and Aquila eventually left Ephesus and returned to Rome.⁷¹ But there is no reason to regard this information as more reliable than the view in 2 Tim 4:19 that when Paul was brought to Rome in chains (1:16f), Aquila and Priscilla were still with Timothy in Ephesus.⁷²

I would suggest, therefore, that Luke’s presupposed source material in Acts 18:1-3 originally related a visit by Paul with Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus. From our analysis of Lukan composition in vv. 1-3, it is very probable that Luke’s source material originally referred to Paul’s arrival in Ephesus, where Aquila and Priscilla had already established a house church (1 Cor 16:19), and where Paul sought them out and stayed with them because they were Christians. But Luke marvelously relocates this story to Corinth, identifies Aquila and Priscilla as still Jews at the time

⁷⁰ I assume that 1 Cor in its present form is later than Acts.

⁷¹ Lüdemann, *Acts*, 202. Schille argues (381ff) that after the collapse of Paul’s promising first attempts to establish a Christian community in Ephesus (2 Cor 1:8ff.), he had to flee from Ephesus, that Rom 16:3 indicates that “the events made it necessary not only for Paul but also for some other persons to leave the city” (383). But 2 Cor 1:8ff. does not say that Paul was forced to flee from Ephesus, or even that the “affliction” referred to here took place in Ephesus, or what was the nature of this affliction. If Paul is informing the Corinthians about all this for the first time (v. 8), it is strange that everything remains so vague.

⁷² It is very doubtful that Rom 16 — with its greeting from “all the churches of Christ” (v 16) and warnings against false teachers “who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught” (vv. 17f) — is very early.

of Paul's own arrival in Corinth, and has Paul stay with them because they practiced the same trade. Since Christian tradition associated Priscilla and Aquila with Ephesus, Luke had to deal with their presence there in some way (vv. 18f.). But from Luke's narrative one would assume that the only reason they followed Paul to Ephesus was to practice their trade in that city.⁷³ They are not portrayed by Luke as missionary co-workers with Paul.⁷⁴ And their appearance in the synagogue, even though the Christian community seems to have separated from the synagogue (vv. 27), assumes that they were still Jews. In contrast to Luke's source material, there is no indication that Priscilla and Aquila ever had a house church in Ephesus. And since they are not mentioned when Paul returns to Ephesus (19:ff), one would simply assume that by then they had left the city to ply their trade elsewhere. There would be no reason at all to think that Aquila and Priscilla ever became Christians, let alone founders of a Christian community in Ephesus. Very ingenious!

Paul and Apollos

Apart from Acts, the only reference we have associating Apollos with Ephesus (1 Cor 16:12) strangely emphasizes only his reluctance to visit the Corinthians, with no implication that he had ever been in Corinth before, let alone that he might have powerfully worked in their midst.⁷⁵ In Luke's time, however, the situation in Corinth was just as contested by Christian heterodoxy as it was in Ephesus.⁷⁶ And Luke would

⁷³ The only reason Luke fabricates Paul's quick trip to Ephesus in vv. 19-21, the story of Apollos in 18:24-28, and a "third missionary journey" (vv. 23) to return Paul to Ephesus in 19:1 is because he needed to deal with Priscilla and Aquila, and Apollos. Otherwise he could have had Paul go directly to Ephesus and stay there for a while.

⁷⁴ Pereira observes (57f.), "It is Paul *alone* who goes into the synagogue (18:19) and argues with the Jews. Why are Priscilla and Aquila left out?... One gets the impression that in the mind of Luke Paul is to be the *sole* missionary and founder of the Ephesian church." Of course!

⁷⁵ 1 Cor 16:12 may have Acts in view. But Paul himself now encourages Apollos to visit the Corinthians, and the accompanying "other brethren" have replaced the letter of recommendation, which the Corinthian writings do not view with favor (cf. 2 Cor 3:1). The Western text of Acts (18:27) awkwardly integrates this information.

⁷⁶ See Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 100-102. The situation in Corinth is also reflected in 1 Clement, which is probably more or less contemporary with Luke (c. 140-150). This is directly reflected as well, however, in the Corinthian writings attributed to

certainly have been familiar with traditions raising up Apollos as a competitor with Paul for followers in Corinth. As Pereira observes, "1 Corinthians makes it sufficiently clear that Apollos enjoyed a great deal of prominence in the Corinthian church... In 1:12 Apollos appears as the focus of partisan loyalty... At least by one group Apollos was considered on a par with Peter and Paul, the two 'heroes' of Acts."⁷⁷ Moreover, reading 1 Cor 3-4 against the grain, one would suspect that there were conflicting views about who "planted" and who "watered" in Corinth.⁷⁸ Beneath the surface, Luke's description of Apollos as "an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures... informed concerning the way of the Lord" may reflect even his own awareness of traditions magnifying Apollos' reputation as an early Christian missionary. But Luke could permit no competitors with Paul and the apostolic tradition he represented. So he treats Apollos much like he treated Priscilla and Aquila, only in reverse, and a bit more severely, since Apollos was a more difficult figure to dispense with.

The only problem with Pereira's otherwise impressive analysis is his assumption that reflected here is the actual *Sitz im Leben des Paulus* rather than problems in Luke's time. From a historical-critical perspective, this is a fundamental methodological error. For whatever else may be reflected by the presentation of an ancient writing, directly and primarily present are concerns in its own time. Pereira perceives, for example, that the strange way Luke treats Priscilla and Aquila may have something do with whether Paul was "the sole missionary and founder of the Ephesian church." (58). But he does not pursue this question; and above all he does not pursue what signi-

Paul, which is the real significance of Bauer's comparison (100f.) of what we find in 1 Cor and the situation in "post-apostolic times." The Pauline writings, which are generally later than Acts, deal with the problem of Christian diversity and heterodoxy in a different way. The writer of Acts denies the existence of Christian diversity. The Pauline writings portray the great apostle as personally combating false teachers of every kind.

⁷⁷ Pereira, 31; cf. also 79.

⁷⁸ This section of 1 Cor is probably more or less contemporary with Acts (c. 140-150 C.E.). W. C. van Manen observed long ago that everything in 1 Cor 3-4 is retrospective in tone: "It is always possible to look back upon them (the apostles) and upon the work they achieved. Paul has planted, another has watered (1 Cor 3:6). He as a wise master-builder has laid the foundation; another has built there-upon (3:10). He himself is not to come again (4:18). He and his fellow-apostles have already been made a spectacle unto the world... Their fight has been fought, their sufferings endured. It is already possible to judge as to the share of each in the great work." ("Paul," in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* [New York: Macmillan, 1899-1903], 3629).

ficance this might have had for Luke's own time. In a similar way we are told that Luke's interest in "putting Apollos in his proper place," reflects the fact that "in Paul's own time there must have been a... tendency in the churches of Asia and Achaia to extol the figure of Apollos too much to the detriment of Paul" (78). But Pereira does not consider that this might have been a problem in Luke's time. Pereira asks, "Why is Luke silent about the factions in the Corinthian church?" (79). But he does not consider the possibility that Luke's entire account of Paul in Corinth (and Ephesus) may address this issue. Pereira's own answer, that "these (factions) arose only after Apollos had worked there for a period of time with success," and thus had no real place in Luke's account of the earliest of Paul's missionary work, only accepts what Luke wants us to believe, namely the orthodox view that Paul's apostolic hegemony in Christian congregations was only challenged by false teaching and schisms appearing after him. It does not consider the possibility that the entire purpose of Luke's presentation may be to promote this view.

The introduction of "a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria" in v. 24 is a typical Lukan formulation, in the same way as his introduction of "a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus" in v. 2,⁷⁹ and, as we will see, has the same purpose. The phrase κατήντησεν εἰς Ἔφεσον ("came to Ephesus") is also a Lukan formulation (cf. 16:1; 18:19; 21:7; 25:13; 27:12; 28:13).⁸⁰ There is no reason to assume that this information derives from a tradition concerning Apollos that was "rooted in Ephesus."⁸¹ The connection of Apollos with Ephesus is Luke's own fabrication. Luke has Apollos appear in Ephesus instead of Corinth, where he really made his reputation. He appears out of nowhere. We are not told where he directly came from or why he came to Ephesus. It is often assumed that Apollos was depicted in Luke's source material as an independent, itinerant missionary, wandering from place to place, and even that this depiction may be historically

⁷⁹ See the discussion of 18:2 above.

⁸⁰ Ollrog refers to καταντᾶν as "a favorite Lukan word" (39). Where Luke refers to a series of arrivals in the same sentence he uses καταντᾶν first, then alternative verbs (cf. 20:15; 28:13). According to Ollrog, the phrase κατήντησεν εἰς Ἔφεσον is a Lukan insertion, which disrupted the original continuity between ἀνὴρ λόγιος and δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς, making it necessary to alter the original sentence structure and begin a new sentence with οὗτος ἦν in v 25. If Luke could make such an awkward insertion, however, he could also compose in such a way: cf. the descriptions of Barnabas (4:36f.) and Lydia (16:14).

⁸¹ Cf. Weiser (505): in 18:24-28 Luke inserted "a tradition deriving from Ephesus." Also Lüdemann, 208.

accurate.⁸² But it is only Apollos' lonely and mysterious appearance on the scene in Luke's own story that gives us this impression. The idea that the "original apostles" constituted a churchly community from the beginning, with many co-workers and supporters, while those outside the official church worked alone, is a later Christian conceptualization.

Some interpreters believe that the description of Apollos in vv. 24-25b as "an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures, informed concerning the way of the Lord, and fervent in spirit, who spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus" must derive from pre-Lukan source material, which was qualified by Luke's redactional elaboration in 25c, that Apollos "knew only the baptism of John," and the insertion of v. 26, where Apollos receives "more accurate" instruction from Priscilla and Aquila, all of which portrays Apollos as a kind of "quasi-Christian."⁸³ In fact, however, while traditions portraying Apollos as an eminent Christian missionary may be in the background, the entire description of Apollos in vv. 24ff. is Lukan composition.

The basic argument for Luke's use of a presupposed source was set forth by Ernst Käsemann:⁸⁴ "This narrative is in itself contradictory and incredible. Apollos is portrayed here first as inspired by the Spirit, secondly as being accurately instructed in the history of Jesus, thirdly as a teacher of the Church... But none of these things is compatible with the statement that he was only acquainted with the baptism of John..." (143). "It is utterly inconceivable that anybody could be well informed about Christian origins without being aware of the line of demarcation between Jesus and his community and the Baptist and his baptism; that anybody could be 'inspired by the Spirit' without seeing that the advantage of the Christian over the disciple of the Baptist lay precisely in his being endowed with

⁸² Ollrog (40): "So far as one can determine from the tradition employed by Luke, Apollos was an ecstatic spiritualist and one of those early Christian missionaries who moved alone from place to place preaching about Jesus by spirit-filled interpretation of the Old Testament." Also Weiser (510): "A spiritually endowed, but independent and marginal Christian missionary." And Lüdemann (209): "An early Christian pneumatic," like "the itinerant missionaries of the tradition about the sending out of the disciples."

⁸³ Conzelmann, 158; Ollrog, 39f.; Weiser, 506f.; Lüdemann, 208; Johnson, *Acts*, 335). E. Schweizer oddly argues that Apollos was portrayed in Luke's source material as a non-Christian, Jewish missionary, and then christianized by Luke: "Die Bekehrung des Apollos, *Ag.* 18,24-26," *EvTh* 6 (1955), 247-254. But his article includes some perceptive insights.

⁸⁴ Ernst Käsemann, "The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus," in idem, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964), 136-148: 143f.

the Spirit... From these facts we can draw only one conclusion: 18.25c must be regarded as a Lucan fabrication.” (144)

From a literary (or narrative) perspective, however, it makes little difference whether such things are “compatible” or “conceivable” in the minds of informed and expert readers like ourselves, but only whether such things are compatible with the perspective of Acts and would have been conceivable for the readers of Acts. Most such interpretations assume, at least implicitly, that Luke’s supposed source material must have reflected some reliable information concerning Apollos, and then read meanings into the text, based on what we know (or think we know) about Christian origins,⁸⁵ without first reading Luke’s own narrative to find out what the meaning might be on his own terms. All too often, particularly in the investigation of Acts, so-called “redaction criticism” is far more concerned with uncovering the history assumed to be contained in Luke’s source materials than with the picture of Luke’s own time reflected in what he himself relates. This concern even leads interpreters to imagine presupposed sources where none exist.

In this particular case, the material commonly regarded as pre-Lukan tradition in fact has many characteristics of Lukan composition. The description of Apollos as “an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures” could simply follow from Luke’s depiction of him as a “native of Alexandria.”⁸⁶ Pereira observes that the phrase δυνατός ἐν... appears elsewhere in the NT only in the Lukan description of Jesus as “powerful in deed and word” (Lk 24:19) and of Moses as “powerful in his words and deeds” (Acts 7:22).⁸⁷ The reference to Apollos “speaking and teaching” (ἐλάλει καὶ ἐδίδασκεν) is a typical Lukan formulation (Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8f; 20:7, 9; 24:12, 25).⁸⁸ The expression “the things concerning Jesus” (τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ)

⁸⁵ E.g., Käsemann’s dogmatic statement that “it is utterly inconceivable that anybody could be well informed about Christian origins without being aware of the line of demarcation between Jesus and his community and the Baptist and his baptism.” In fact, it probably took some time to work out this demarcation: see now, James Robinson, “Building Blocks in the Social History of Q,” in *Reimagining Christian Origins: A Colloquium Honoring Burton L. Mack* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996), 87-112.

⁸⁶ Cf. Conzelmann, 157.

⁸⁷ Pereira, 78.

⁸⁸ Conzelmann, *Theology*, 224; Pereira, 54-56. Since Luke most often uses such language to refer to the preaching of Christian missionaries, Pereira concludes that Apollos is portrayed here as “resembling a Christian preacher” (56). But such language has no such meaning in itself. Where the reference is to Christian preaching, this is usually clear from the context. With regard to Apollos, however, no such meaning is indicated. Schweizer rightly observes that “whoever reads v. 24, 25a can naturally only imagine a non-Christian Jew versed in the scriptures” (“Bekehrung des Apollos,” 251).

has a precedent in Luke 24:19, where the disciples relate “the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth” (τὰ περὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζαρηνοῦ). The phrase ἡ ὁδός (“the way”) referring to the content of Christian preaching is typical for Luke (9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; also 16:17), even if it has a different connotation here with reference to Apollos.⁸⁹

Pereira has shown that Luke closely associates Apollos with John the Baptizer, and that in this light the information concerning Apollos related in vv 24-26 constitutes a coherent picture in Luke’s own terms.⁹⁰ In Lk 3:4, for example, the reference to John proclaiming “the way of the Lord” (citing Isa 40:3) probably refers to Jesus.⁹¹ That Apollos is said to be “informed concerning the way of the Lord,” therefore, need mean no more than that he was well informed about what Jesus “did and said” (Acts 1:1).⁹² Pereira observes that when Luke tells us that Apollos knew “only the baptism of John,” he does not portray Apollos as an actual disciple of John, i.e., as one who had actually been baptized with John’s baptism, but only as a person who “was *acquainted* with John’s baptism, what it meant...”⁹³ In Acts 13:24 we are told that John “preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.” But in Acts 10:37 a distinction is made between “the baptism that John preached” and “the proclamation of the word throughout all Judea,” which began “after” that (μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐκήρυξεν Ἰωάννης).⁹⁴ Like John, Apollos is associated by Luke with a stage in salvation history before “the good news of the kingdom of God is preached” (Lk 16:16; cf. Acts 10:37). He preaches a “way of the Lord” (Lk 3:4; Acts 18:25) that is not yet “the way.”⁹⁵ This depiction of Apollos is Luke’s own fabrication.

⁸⁹ See Pereira, 51-54.

⁹⁰ Pereira, 61-65.

⁹¹ W. Michaelis, “ὁδός κτλ.,” *TWNT* V, 70; also Pereira, 53f.

⁹² Weiser (509) regards *κατηχήω* as technical language referring to instruction received in the Christian faith. But this technical meaning is relatively late (see Jackson and Lake, *Beginnings*, 233; also Pereira, 50; BGD, s.v.). In Acts 21:21 the term simply refers to what the Jews have been told about Paul. Even if the reference is to more formal “instruction,” however, there is no reason to conclude that its content was the Christian faith.

⁹³ Pereira, 56f.

⁹⁴ Contrary to Pereira (62), Acts 10:36f. does not imply that “John’s story is the beginning of the Gospel.”

⁹⁵ Pereira rightly perceives that Apollos is not portrayed by Luke as a Christian preacher. Like John, Apollos does not proclaim the Christian message of the kingdom of God, but merely prepares the way for this message. This is even true for Apollos’ preaching in Achaia (v. 28; see below). Contrary to Pereira (61),

Just as in the case of Priscilla and Aquila, preoccupied with historical tidbits that might be scavenged from Luke's story, commentators speculate about whether Apollos was a Christian when he arrived in Ephesus. In v. 25 Apollos is referred to as "fervent in the Spirit" (ζέων τῷ πνεύματι), and appealing to the parallel in Rom 12:11, where this phrase refers to Christian life in the Spirit, most take for granted that Apollos is represented by Luke, or Luke's source material, as some kind of Christian.⁹⁶ But there is no reason to transpose a meaning from Romans into Acts. Lukan tradition did not limit the work of the Holy Spirit to Christian personalities.⁹⁷ Similarly, Apollos is also portrayed by Luke as "speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus." But this does not necessarily identify him as a Christian teacher. In Lk 24:19f the "things concerning Jesus of Nazareth" (τὰ περὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζαρηνοῦ), related by the brethren on the Emmaus road, include the knowledge of Jesus as "a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people" and how he had been condemned to death and crucified, but not that he was in fact the Christ — until this was explained to them by the resurrected Jesus (vv. 25ff.). The intended readers of Acts would have assumed that the content of Apollos' preaching was more or less the same.⁹⁸

The identification of Apollos as "a native of Alexandria" makes the reader immediately aware that the brethren in Jerusalem had never laid their hands on him. And that Apollos knew only the baptism of John tells us that Apollos did not know the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (cf. Lk 3:16; Acts 11:16). Luke

however, Apollos does not really "prepare the stage for Paul" (64). When Apollos arrives in Ephesus, Paul has already been there (18:19), and has already preached in the synagogue with some success, as the existence of a Pauline community indicates (v. 27). Luke's descriptions of Paul's own preaching include both the demonstration that Jesus was the Christ and the Christian witness to the resurrection.

⁹⁶ Käsemann, 143; Ollrog, 40; Weiser, 509; even Pereira, 63.

⁹⁷ In Lk 1:80 John is referred to as "becoming strong in the Spirit" (ἐκκραταιοῦτο πνεύματι) already as a child. John (Lk 1:15) and Elizabeth (Lk 1:41) and Zechariah (Lk 1:67) are all Jews referred to as being "filled with the Holy Spirit." And in Lk 2:25f. it is said of Simeon that the Holy Spirit was "upon him," that he had received a revelation "by the Holy Spirit," and that he entered the Temple "inspired by the Spirit" (ἐν τῷ πνεύματι). Pereira rightly observes, "So also here the Jew Apollos" (63, n. 240).

⁹⁸ The writer of Acts presupposes that the reader is familiar with his "first book" (Acts 1:1). In a similar way, Luke implies that the disciples of John in Ephesus did not know that the one to come proclaimed by John was Jesus until they are told this by Paul (Acts 19:4f.).

thus separates Apollos from the apostolic tradition deriving from the events in Jerusalem.⁹⁹ The reader might surmise that Apollos had been informed in Alexandria about the “things concerning Jesus.” But the reader would also understand not only that Apollos had missed the special instruction Jesus gave his disciples following his resurrection (Acts 1:3; 10:41f.), but also that Apollos did not even know about the resurrection, since only the apostolic “witnesses” make this known (Acts 1:21f), and there is no reason to assume from Luke’s narrative that Apollos had ever encountered such people.¹⁰⁰ In contrast to “the things concerning the kingdom of God,” which Paul preaches in Ephesus (19:8; 20:25), “the things concerning Jesus” preached by Apollos belong to the past (Acts 1:1).¹⁰¹ In the same way as John, Apollos belongs to a time that is not yet the “kingdom of God” (cf. Lk 7:28; 16:16; Acts 10:37).¹⁰²

Luke’s portrayal of Apollos’ meeting with Priscilla and Aquila in v. 26, where they provide “more accurate” instruction concerning the “way of God,” does not increase his stature.¹⁰³ Given the

⁹⁹ Schweizer wrongly claims that “Jerusalem plays no role here” (“Bekehrung des Apollos,” 250).

¹⁰⁰ Pereira rightly perceives (59f) that “the narrative is not about Apollos’ work as a Christian missionary,” since “Luke expressly tells us that the Christian missionary activity began after the Exaltation of Jesus and the Pentecost event” (Acts 1:8).

¹⁰¹ Pereira, 64. Conzelmann suggests that Luke’s meaning is that “Apollos knew the material of the ‘gospel’ (as far as Luke 24), but not the events from Acts 2 on” (158). It might more accurate, however, to say that Apollos is assumed to have known “all that Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts 1:1), but not his resurrection or the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2). But it is not very meaningful to speculate about such details when all we have before us are literary allusions.

¹⁰² There is no reason to assume any of this has to do with Apollos’ actual teaching, and to speculate further about what more Apollos might have known or should have known. We have to do here not with a historical report, but with apologetic characterization.

¹⁰³ Verse 26 is generally regarded as Lukan composition. Luke uses the verb *παρρησιάζεσθαι* (“to speak boldly”) elsewhere in 9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 26:26. According to Weiser, however, that Priscilla and Aquila meet Apollos in the synagogue derived from Luke’s source material. For given the “explicit testimony” in 1 Cor 16:19 that the couple had a house church in Ephesus, this is “fully believable” (508). To be “believable,” however, does not necessarily mean something derived from source material, let alone that it might be historical. Even if Priscilla and Aquila had a house church in Ephesus, that they ever met Apollos, and that they met him in such a way, must be demonstrated. And contrary to Weiser (509), nothing is said in v. 26b about Apollos staying at the house of Priscilla and Aquila. One cannot simply extract pieces of Lukan composition and arbitrarily assign them to imagined Lukan source material.

previous statement that Apollos “spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus” (v 25b), the usual assumption is that reference here is to remedial instruction in the Christian faith.¹⁰⁴ But this is doubtful. How could his already “accurate” teaching be improved? As we have seen, Priscilla and Aquila are conceived here simply as Jews. Luke is careful, therefore, not to say that Priscilla and Aquila provided remedial instruction concerning the “way of the Lord” or about the “things concerning Jesus.” Instead he describes the content of their instruction as “the way of God,” which characterizes it as Jewish teaching.¹⁰⁵ In the same way as Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos himself has been explicitly identified by Luke as “a Jew” (v 24),¹⁰⁶ which explains why he first steps up in the synagogue teaching, albeit imperfectly, “the way of God” (v. 26). From Luke’s story, the reader would simply assume that all we have here are Jews talking with one another about Jewish

¹⁰⁴ According to Lüdemann (207f.), Priscilla and Aquila introduce Apollos to “full Christianity.” Ollrog explains (40) that this teaching brings Apollos “into the sphere of official church preaching.” According to Weiser (510), the remedial teaching signifies the integration of a spiritually endowed, but independent and marginal Christian missionary into “the tradition community of the apostolic church that began in Jerusalem.” And Schille similarly observes (375) that it has to do with “the acceptance of the chain of tradition recognized by the church.” According to Murphy-O’Connor (274), “Apollos has been transformed from an unattached Christian of uncertain antecedents into a bearer of the Pauline gospel.” Even Pereira concludes (54) that the teaching consisted of a “fuller exposition of the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation (the way of God) in Christ... the events of the Passion, death and Resurrection-Exaltation of Jesus and the subsequent Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the believers.” None of this is obvious from Luke’s own story.

¹⁰⁵ In Lk 20:21 the question posed to Jesus by the scribes and chief priests concerning the “way of God” clearly refers to Jewish teaching (Peraia, 53; also Michaelis, ὁδός). There is no reason to assume that the meaning here is any different. The distinction Pereira makes between the “way of God” as “the kind of life God wills of man” and as “the way which God took, his plan and work of salvation,” which is “clearly” present in Acts 18:25, is too subtle. His explanation that “Apollos, a learned Jew, well versed in the Scriptures did not need to be told (about God’s will) by Priscilla and Aquila” historicizes too easily, and misses what Luke wants to imply. But even if the reference were to “God’s plan of salvation,” it would not necessarily follow that the content of this teaching was “the Resurrection-Exaltation of Jesus and the subsequent Outpouring of the Holy Spirit” (54). This makes Apollos a Christian teacher, which is precisely what Luke avoids.

¹⁰⁶ There are in Acts, to be sure, Jews who become Christian. But Schweizer observes that in Acts the term Ἰουδαῖος almost always refers to non-Christian Jews, that in 14:4, for example, “the Jews” stand over against the apostles, who of course are also Jews, and that the only real exceptions would be 10:28, 21:39, and 22:3, where Jewish descent is the issue (“Bekehrung des Apollos,” 251). In a similar way, when Gallio addresses “the Jews” in vv. 14f. it does not seem to include Paul.

things.¹⁰⁷ Luke's historical fiction has a serious apologetic purpose, but it also intended to entertain. That Apollos, although already "well versed in the scriptures," must receive remedial teaching from Jews in the synagogue not only deflates his reputation as a learned teacher, but is also a fine example of Lukan satirical humor.¹⁰⁸

Apollos next appears interrelating with the Pauline Christians in Ephesus and Corinth (vv. 27f.).¹⁰⁹ The usual assumption is that Luke thereby integrates Apollos into Pauline Christianity.¹¹⁰ But even though Luke enjoyed telling conversion stories (Acts 9:17-19; 10:44-48; 16:13-15; 16:25-34), having depicted Apollos up to now as a Jew, he refrains from saying that he actually became a Christian.¹¹¹ That the Christian brethren encourage Apollos when he wants to move on the Achaia, and supply him with a letter of reference, does not necessarily mean that he had become a Christian. Luke's primary concern is to get Apollos out of town before Paul returns, so that their paths never cross, and also to remedy the traditions associating Apollos with Corinth. When Apollos finally arrives in Achaia — significantly,

¹⁰⁷ Schweizer observes that this activity is "fully understandable for a Jewish teacher of scripture seeking to edify the community... Whoever reads this without previous assumptions can only imagine a Jewish teacher of scripture" ("Bekehrung des Apollos," 251, 252).

¹⁰⁸ Regarding Lukan humor and irony, see R. Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 58-66, though Pervo does not cite this story as an example.

¹⁰⁹ According to Lüdemann (208), the reference to the Christian community (the "brethren") which commended Apollos to Achaia was part of the original Apollos tradition. But what is the basis for this claim? There are no signs of redactional activity in vv. 27f. indicating a presupposed source. But there are many marks of Lukan composition. As Lüdemann himself observes (208), in 18:19f Luke "at least implicitly claims that Paul was the first to preach in Ephesus." Having decided to provide Apollos with a cameo appearance in Ephesus, it was necessary for Luke to establish the presence of a Christian community there before Apollos arrived. The appearance of such a community in vv. 27f. is simply Luke's own development of what was said in 18:19f. We observed above (n. 65) that the scene in vv. 27f. is Lukan composition.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Weiser: That Apollos receives encouragement from the brethren and a letter of recommendation so that he can be received by the disciples in Corinth "shows the interest of Luke to let Apollos now appear as fully integrated into the fellowship of the church" (510); also Murphy-O'Connor: "He has become an emissary of a Pauline church. Thoroughly domesticated, and integrated into a recognized channel of church development, he is now free to go his own way" (274). Luke's treatment of Apollos, however, is not so gracious.

¹¹¹ See Pereira, 64. Apollos' reputation in Christian tradition probably made it difficult for Luke to explicitly claim he was not a Christian. But Luke lets his readers reach their own conclusion on the basis of the information he provides.

Luke does not say Corinth¹¹² — we are told that he only “assisted” (συνεβόλετο) the disciples there by confuting the Jews, “showing by the scripture that the Christ was Jesus” (18:28).¹¹³ But this is not actually Christian proclamation. Elsewhere, appeals to scripture by Christian missionaries show that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and die, and then rise from the dead (Acts 17:2f.; cf. 2:22-36; 3:18-25; 13:26-37; 26:22f.; also Lk 24:45f; 1 Cor 15:3f.).¹¹⁴ Luke’s portrayal of Apollos is vague.¹¹⁵ Given what Luke has related thus far, however, there is no reason to assume that Apollos’ appeal to scripture here concerned anything more than the messianic significance of what Jesus did and said (cf. Lk 4:16-22; 7:18-23; Acts 2:22). Even here Apollos seems to be portrayed as similar to John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Christian message of salvation.¹¹⁶ Then Apollos disappears from Christian history in the same way as he arrived. So far as anyone would know from Acts, Apollos was never heard from again in Christian circles.

Luke did the same thing to Apollos, therefore, that he did to Priscilla and Aquila.¹¹⁷ First of all, he has Apollos appear in Ephesus, instead of Corinth, where tradition remembered him as a competitor with Paul. Secondly, in the same way as Priscilla and Aquila, Luke depicts Apollos as a Jew — as a learned interpreter of scripture, to be sure, and even as well-informed

¹¹² Contrary to Pereira, Luke does not say that in Achaia Apollos “first stops at Corinth” (65), or even that Apollos ever pays a “visit to Corinth” (78). According to Weiser (510), on the basis of 1 Cor 1-4 and Acts 19:1, “it should be assumed that when Luke speaks of the journey to Achaia he means Corinth.” But this is simply harmonization. We should rather assume that Luke means what he says.

¹¹³ Cf. Pereira (48): “What he did publicly was, apparently, not to preach about Christianity either to Jews or Gentiles with a view to their conversion, but to refute the opposing Jews — who presumably caused trouble and confusion in the minds of many — with arguments from the OT, thus helping (*synebaletō*) the believers there against attacks of the Jews.”

¹¹⁴ Paul’s own confounding of the Jews in Damascus “by proving that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts 9:22) includes the proclamation of Jesus as “Son of God” (Acts 9:20), i.e., that God raised Jesus from the dead as the fulfillment of scripture (cf. Acts 30-34), and also presupposes, of course, his own encounter with the risen Jesus (cf. Acts 26:12-23).

¹¹⁵ Pereira observes (64) that Apollos’ work in Achaia is “still somewhat ‘outside’ the full Christian message.”

¹¹⁶ Pereira, 59f.

¹¹⁷ Murphy-O’Connor’s defensive assertion that “no reason has been, *or can be*, given why a redactor should have created his (Apollos’s) racial origins, his place of birth and conversion, or his qualifications” (275; my emphasis) abrogates critical analysis.

concerning the things that Jesus did and said, but nevertheless as a Jewish teacher of things that other Jews might understand and debate.¹¹⁸ The problem presented by Apollos with regard to Paul as the founder of apostolic Christianity in Corinth, however, was more challenging than that presented by Priscilla and Aquila with regard to Ephesus. And Luke's solution involved sterner measures. Luke entirely severed Apollos not only from Paul but from the Christian movement as such. As Luke tells the story, by the time Apollos appeared in Ephesus, as a Jewish teacher of scripture, Paul had already established thriving Christian communities in both Corinth and Ephesus; when Apollos finally ventured to Achaia, where he merely assisted the Christian cause by controverting Jews, he did so with a letter of introduction from the Pauline brethren in Ephesus; but Apollos never really preached in Corinth at all, and Apollos and Paul never crossed paths.¹¹⁹ All this is entirely Luke's remarkable invention.¹²⁰

Paul and Timothy and Silas

Luke's account of Paul's preaching in Corinth in vv. 4-8 is difficult to decipher; and the task is made more difficult by attempts to explain what Luke relates with information scavenged from the Pauline writings. For example, almost all interpreters today tell us that v. 5 implies that when Timothy and Silas returned to Corinth from Macedonia they brought with them financial support from Philippi (cf. Phil 4:15; 2 Cor 11:9), so that Paul no longer needed to sustain himself by manual labor.¹²¹ No reader would ever make such an assumption from Luke's text alone.¹²² Presupposed here, at least implicitly, is that what Luke

¹¹⁸ The conception of "Jews" and "Jewish teachers," of course is Luke's own.

¹¹⁹ Pereira, 64. Murphy-O'Connor speculates that "there must have been two phases in Apollos' activity at Corinth. In the first, as Acts 18:28 says, he functioned as a missionary in controversy with Jews. When that proved unsuccessful, he turned his attention inward, and became as it were, a theologian-in-residence of the Corinthian community" (276). This is apologetic harmonization.

¹²⁰ Since what Luke presents seems to conflict with what we read in 1 Cor 1-3; 16:12, Ollrog concludes (38, n. 167) that "Luke's historical knowledge of Apollos and his relationship to Paul and the Pauline communities was limited..." Here again, preoccupation with what Luke knew or didn't know takes precedence over the significance of what Luke actually tells us.

¹²¹ Haenchen, 534; Weiser, 485; Lüdemann, 202f; Schmithals, 168; Johnson, 323; Murphy-O'Connor, 276; Conzelmann (152) does not seem to be so sure.

¹²² Cf. Haenchen, 539: "It has long been recognized that what is involved in v. 5a, although it is only implied rather than expressly stated, is that Silas and

presents is historically reliable and therefore must reflect what we find in the supposedly authentic Pauline writings. We have to do here, however, with an exercise in apologetic historicizing carried out under the guise of historical criticism.

In brief, the problem is that in the Pauline writings and Acts we find three different views concerning how Paul's missionary work was financially supported. In Phil 4:16f. we are told that Paul's work in Thessalonica and Corinth was underwritten by the Christian community in Philippi; and 2 Cor 11:9 similarly relates that Paul's work in Corinth was supported by "brethren who came from Macedonia."¹²³ In Acts, however, there is no reference at all to Paul's mission anywhere being supported by distant churches. Acts 20:34 implies, on the contrary, that throughout his ministry Paul worked to support not only himself but also his coworkers.¹²⁴ This same view is implied by the affirmation "We labor working with our own hands" in 1 Cor 4:12,¹²⁵ and by 1 Thess 2:9, where it is said that Paul "worked day and night" so as not to burden anyone. Finally, in 1 Cor 9 we are told that Paul makes no use of his "apostolic right" (v 15), but preaches the

Timothy brought a substantial financial contribution." On the other hand, W. S. Kurz tells us not only that in 18:4 Luke "narrates how Paul preached full-time after Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia," but also that "most readers would surmise that Silas and Timothy either helped support Paul or brought money from Macedonia for his upkeep" (*Reading Luke-Acts. Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1993], 96). This only exhibits how an interpreter purportedly providing a narrative- and literary-critical reading of Acts can read supposedly historical conclusions into the text.

¹²³ David Matson tells his readers that according to 2 Cor 11:8 and Phil 4:15, "Silas and Timothy bring a gift (to Corinth) from Macedonia" (*Household Conversion Narratives in Acts* [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 173, n. 163). But 2 Cor 11:8 and Phil 4:15 say no such thing. Unfortunately, many commentators make such claims, but not so blatantly.

¹²⁴ Cf. Haenchen, 511: In Acts 20:34 "the reader is thereby taught to envisage Paul as earning his daily bread himself throughout his missionary career." Haenchen is attempting to explain here why Luke fails to mention Paul's manual labor in Thessalonica: "Did Luke not know about the paid employment which Paul combined with his missionary activity?" But he seems undisturbed by the fact that Luke nowhere mentions Paul receiving funds from Philippi.

¹²⁵ Like the other affirmations in 4:9-13, this statement seems to characterize the apostle's ministry as such. Lists of miseries like that in 1 Cor 4:11-13 are known throughout the Graeco-Roman world (see Fee, 177). In such a list, however, the reference to "working with our hands" is out of place. "It does not fit the same category of 'hardship' as the others" (*idem*). Fee speculates that the hunger Paul refers to here might be "partly the result of his refusal to accept patronage and thus directly related to his 'working with his own hands.'" More probable, however, is that we simply have to do here with a later insertion — perhaps derived from Acts.

gospel “free of charge” (v 18), which probably refers to the apostles’ right to be supported by the local community in which they are preaching, instead of “working for a living” (v. 6).¹²⁶

To harmonize these views, therefore, it is explained that in Corinth Paul supported himself by manual labor for a while, until Timothy and Silas arrived with financial support from Philippi. At the same time, however, in order to account for what we read in Acts 20:34 and 1 Cor 4:12 (and 1 Thess 2:9), we are told that the support from Macedonia was only supplemental, and that Paul continued work as a tentmaker during his ministry in Corinth.¹²⁷ And finally, to explain how Timothy and Titus arrived in Corinth with support from Philippi, it is necessary to convolute even more the already confusing information found in Acts and the Pauline writings regarding the travels of Timothy and Silas and Paul from Thessalonica to Corinth (which we explored above) by imagining that Timothy and Silas made a detour from Thessalonica to Philippi before rejoining Paul in Corinth — a journey that is reported nowhere in either Acts or the Pauline writings.¹²⁸ Such speculative exercises serve only the interests of Christian apologetics. Not only are they unnecessary for understanding the story Luke presents, they are contrary to what Luke actually tells us.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ See V. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 506f.

¹²⁷ Haenchen observes (510) that while Paul was in Thessalonica, “in spite of working ‘day and night’ for his livelihood, (he) became so needy that the community in Philippi καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δύς sent him money for his support.” Victor Furnish seems to conclude that wherever Paul worked he received financial support from Philippi to “supplement what he was able to earn from his own craft” (*II Corinthians* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984], 507). Weiser explains that what is said in 2 Cor 1:19; 11:9 “certainly does not imply a rejection of (Paul) earning his own livelihood through manual labor” (485), and that from Acts 18:5 “one cannot conclude that Paul now entirely dispensed with supporting himself by manual labor” (490).

¹²⁸ According to 1 Thess 3, Timothy was sent back to the Thessalonians to support them in their “afflictions,” and what he brings with him upon returning to Paul is the “good news of their faith and love” (v 6). There is no indication at all in 1 Thess that Silas was present, or that Timothy (and Silas) had another, perhaps more important, task of obtaining financial support from the Philippians for Paul’s missionary work in Corinth. So we would have to assume that both Acts and the writer of 1 Thess neglected to mention this important detour to Philippi.

¹²⁹ To his credit, Murphy-O’Connor rejects such explanations. He observes that according to 1 Thess 3:1-10, “Timothy’s mission to Macedonia had only one objective, namely, to reinforce the faith of the Thessalonians and report back to Paul as soon as possible... (and) it is highly improbable that Timothy exceeded his mandate by making a visit to Philippi from Thessalonica” (262). According to Murphy-O’Connor, Paul and Timothy and Silas arrived in Corinth together. The depiction of their late arrival in Corinth in v. 5 is a redactional insertion.

Instead of attempting to find room in Acts 18:5 for Paul's reception of financial support from Macedonia, the first question the historian should pursue is why the writer of Acts portrays Paul doing manual labor in Corinth (18:3) and later emphasizes that this was his general practice (18:3; 20:34). But this would call into question some things found in the Pauline writings. The attempt to harmonize these diverse views, therefore, is finally an endeavor to preserve the assumed authenticity of the Pauline writings. Once this assumption is given up, and these writings are recognized to be second-century redactional compositions, the historian processes this information in a different way.¹³⁰

With regard to tradition history, the question whether traveling missionaries should support themselves by their own labor, or receive support from communities in which they worked (cf. 1 Cor 9:15, 18, and v. 6), probably arose very early, with different answers given in different places. On the other hand, the view that Paul's mission in Achaia was supported by the church in Philippi (Phil 4:16; 2 Cor 11:9), or the suggestion that his mission in Spain might be supported by the church in Rome (Rom 15:24), would reflect a later time when it was common practice for wealthy urban churches to underwrite extended missionary enterprises in distant lands. References in the Pauline writings to Paul's manual labor (1 Thess 2:9; 1 Cor 4:12) verisimilarly backdate these writings to the time in which they were supposedly written, and may derive from Acts. References in these writings to Paul's mission being supported by the Philippians would reflect the views of other writers who were either unfamiliar with Acts, and simply took for granted that the practice in their own time had always existed, or who, in contrast to Acts, wanted to promote their own practice by Pauline precedent.

Most interpreters explain that the word *συνείχετο* in v. 5 implies that from this point onward Paul ceased working as a tent-maker and became "fully occupied" with preaching¹³¹ — i.e., that Paul now began to preach every day, not just on the

Evidently, Murphy-O'Connor's "critical" study of Paul's life does not require him to ask why Luke paints a different picture of these events.

¹³⁰ See D. Doughty, "Pauline Paradigms and Pauline Authenticity," *JHC* 1 (Fall, 1994), 95-128.

¹³¹ Haenchen translates: "But when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul went over entirely to preaching," and explains, "Probably Timothy had brought him a gift of money... which allowed Paul to give up earning his living by hand labor" (534). According to Lüdemann, "Verses 5-8 report Paul's intensified missionary activity after the arrival of Silas and Timothy" (*Paul*, 157); Johnson translates: "(Paul) began to devote himself to the word," and explains that this "marks a transition from a split occupation to a single one" (323).

Sabbath. But the imperfect tense basically refers to a continuing action in the past. And an “uninformed” reader, knowing nothing about stories of Paul’s mission being supported by the brethren in Philippi, but having just been told that Paul had been preaching in the synagogue every Sabbath (v. 4), would simply assume from v. 5 that when Timothy and Silas arrived in Corinth, they found Paul still intensely occupied with preaching in the synagogue.¹³² And this is exactly what Luke intends. The depiction of Paul’s preaching in vv. 4-6 is entirely Lukan composition,¹³³ pervaded with Lukan language and concepts.¹³⁴ If Luke had wanted to say that Paul now began preaching on weekdays in the marketplace, he was certainly capable of saying so (see 17:17; 19:9). On the contrary, however, Luke tells us in v. 5 that when Timothy and Silas arrived in Corinth they found Paul fully occupied with “testifying to the Jews” (5b), which must be his same preaching in the synagogue referred to in v. 4. Only after his

¹³² The word *συνέχω* itself is Lukan language (Lk 4:38; 8:37, 45; 12:50; 19:43; 22:63; Acts 7:57; 28:8). An examination of these passages shows that this word is used by Luke in various contexts with a variety of meanings and nuances. A very nice parallel, however, would be Lk 8:37 (Lukan redaction), where all the people asked Jesus to depart from them, “because they were seized with great fear” (ὅτι φόβῳ μεγάλῳ συνείχοντο) when they had been told about what Jesus had done by those who saw it (v. 36). In this context, it is clear that *συνείχοντο* refers to an experience in the past, being seized with great fear, that continues in the present.

Some interpreters (Jackson and Lake, *Beginnings*, vol. 5, 224; Haenchen, 534; Johnson, 323) argue that the imperfect tense has here an inchoative (inceptive) meaning, indicating the beginning of an activity in a past time. One would in fact have to make such an assumption if the meaning here is that Paul now began to preach full time. But no one would ever have invented this peculiar interpretation on the basis of Luke’s own text.

¹³³ See Weiser, 484f, and Lüdemann, 196.

¹³⁴ The word *διαλέγομαι* (“to lecture,” or “argue”) in v. 4 is Lukan language (cf. 17:2, 17; 18:19; 19:8; etc.), as is *πείθω* (“persuade”) with reference to the results of Paul’s preaching (13:43; 17:4; 18:4; 19:8, 26; 26:28; 28:23, 24). In 19:8 *διαλέγομαι* and *πείθω* appear together. Luke used the phrase *κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον* previously in 13:27 and 15:21. The word *συνείχετο* in v. 5 is Lukan language (*supra* n. 133); and so also is *λόγος* used absolutely as a reference to the Christian proclamation: Acts 4:4; 6:4; 10:44; etc. (Lüdemann, *Paul*, 157, n. 49; cf. Conzelmann, 152). Weiser observes (485) that the word *διαμαρτυρούμενος* (“testify”) in v. 5 appears ten times in Luke-Acts, all redactional, and that the characterization of the content of Paul’s preaching to Jews as “Jesus was the Messiah” is also Lukan (cf. 9:22; 17:3; 18:28; 28:31). With regard to Lukan concepts, Paul’s preaching to Jews and Greeks in the synagogue, with various consequences, has precedents in 14:1ff; 17:1-4; 17:10-12; 17:17. The entire scene, including Paul’s rejection by the Jews and his turning to Gentiles, has a precedent in 13:16-47. The return of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia in v. 5 picks up 17:14-15 where, according to Luke, they had been left behind in Beroea.

dramatic announcement — "From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (v 6b) — does Paul leave the synagogue and begin to preach to Gentiles somewhere else (vv. 7-11).

Since the account of Paul's preaching in the synagogue in vv. 4-6 is entirely Lukan composition, we should focus our attention on the meaning of what Luke himself tells us. Luke's account in v. 4 of Paul teaching every Sabbath in the synagogue to Jews and Greeks has the appearance of incidental information. At first glance, there is nothing remarkable here.¹³⁵ Luke often portrays Paul arguing with Jews in the synagogue. A closer look, however, indicates that the matter may be more interesting. Only here does Luke depict Paul as teaching the synagogue on "every Sabbath" (κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον) — i.e., not only one or two times (13:1-46), or even three times (17:2), and not only now and then, but continually, presumably many times,¹³⁶ to both Jews and Gentiles. This kind of information may not be merely incidental.

Verse 4 requires careful inspection. Luke's story would make sense even without this scene, and it has the appearance of a Lukan insertion.¹³⁷ Contrary to Conzelmann, however, what Luke relates in v. 4 is not really "schematic" for Paul's preaching first to Jews (vv. 5-6) and then to Gentiles (vv. 7-8).¹³⁸ This scheme is indeed present in vv. 5-8. But v. 4 presents a different picture, in which Paul is preaching already to both Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue. Luke refers elsewhere, of course, to the presence of "God-fearers" (φοβούμενοι) in the synagogue when Paul preaches. But Nowhere else does Luke explicitly refer to Paul preaching to

¹³⁵ The common assumption that in v. 4 Paul is portrayed as teaching only on the Sabbath because his manual labor as a tentmaker would have made it impossible to teach on other days is again historicizing speculation that obscures Luke's real agenda. Having made his point that Paul only stayed with Aquila and Priscilla because they shared the same trade (v. 3), Luke leaves that behind and moves on to his next concern. That Paul begins his mission in a new city by preaching to Jews in the synagogue is a typical Lukan theme.

¹³⁶ Elsewhere Luke uses the phrase κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον to refer to the regular practice of reading the prophets (13:27) and the books of Moses (15:21) in the synagogue.

¹³⁷ Weiser suggests (484) that in v. 4 Luke inserted a fragment from some presupposed "tradition." Schmithals (166) actually identifies v. 4 as a redactional insertion. Lüdemann suggests (203), on the other hand, that v. 5 "may be the redaction of a tradition firmly bound up with the coming of Timothy and Silas, which reported a gift of money (from the Philippians)." But Lüdemann recognizes that v. 4 is Lukan composition; and that some kind of "tradition" is presupposed here is only speculation based on the Pauline writings.

¹³⁸ Conzelmann (151f.); also Lüdemann (196).

Gentiles (ἔθνη) in the synagogue.¹³⁹ Luke seems to emphasize here that in Corinth Paul preached to both Jews and Gentiles from the very beginning.¹⁴⁰ When Luke relates, therefore, that when Timothy and Silas finally arrived in Corinth they found Paul intensely occupied with teaching in the synagogue, the reader is very aware that Paul had been already preaching for some time to both Jews and Greeks. And the critical reader suspects that Luke is making another slippery move.

Timothy and Silvanus (Silas) were remembered in Christian tradition as having preached alongside Paul in Corinth (2 Cor 1:19), and could have been regarded therefore as competitors with Paul as founders of the Christian community in Corinth. But Luke's portrayal of Timothy and Silas arriving late in Corinth, after Paul had been intensely engaged in preaching for some time, establishes the fact that when the great apostle planted the seeds of Christian faith in that city Timothy and Titus were not yet on the scene. And it was really their own fault. For it was not Paul's idea that they should remain behind in Beroea (17:14). When they did, Paul ordered them to come to him as soon as possible (17:15), and then waited for them in Athens (17:16). It seems very probable, therefore, that the account of Silas and Timothy staying behind in Beroea (Acts 17:14), for which no reason is given, but which allows Paul to put on a one-man show in Athens and to initiate the Christian mission in Corinth by himself, is Luke's way of neatly disposing of Silas and Timothy as possible competitors with Paul.

¹³⁹ In Acts 13 Paul preaches in the synagogue to "men of Israel and God-fearers" (v. 16), where the "God-fearers" (φοβούμενοι) seem to be conceived as converts to Judaism (σεβομένοι προσηλύτοι) (v. 43). In 17:1-4 it seems to be assumed (v. 1) that Paul preached only to Jews (εἰσῆθεν πρὸς αὐτούς . . . διελέξατο αὐτοῖς), although we are then told that "both a great number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few leading women" were persuaded (4b). In 17:10b-11 it also seems to be assumed that Paul preaches only to Jews, although we are again told that, in addition to many Jews, "not a few leading Greek women... and men" also believed (v. 12b). In neither passage in ch. 17, however, is the theme "first to Jews, and then to Gentiles" present.

¹⁴⁰ It is unclear whether v. 4 is a Lukan insertion in a presupposed source. Vv. 4-6 appear to be entirely Lukan composition. The scene in vv 5f. has a precedent in Acts 13:44-45. And we observed (n. 139) that Luke is not consistent about who is present in the synagogue when Paul preaches. Having established the presence of Greeks in Paul's audience when Paul began to preach in Corinth (v. 4), they can then become bystanders when Luke unfolds his story of Paul's rejection by Jews and his turning to Gentiles (vv. 5ff.). But I would not exclude the possibility that the scene in vv. 5-6 (apart from the reference to the arrival of Timothy and Silas) was originally part of the Titius Justus story (see below).

Titius Justus and Crispus

Now let's look at Luke's stories of Titius Justus and Crispus. While vv. 4-6 are entirely Lukan composition, the material in vv. 7-8 has signs of redactional activity, which indicate the existence of a presupposed source. The note at the end of v. 7 that the house of Titius Justus was next to the synagogue seems to be artificially tacked on to connect this scene with Paul's preaching in the synagogue related in vv. 4-6. Since we are told in v. 6 that Paul ceased preaching to Jews and turned to the Gentiles, the reference in v. 8a to the conversion of Crispus, "the ruler of the synagogue," does not fit well at this point. And in Luke's own narrative the reference to the conversion of many Corinthians in v. 8b would be more appropriate after v. 11. It is possible, therefore, that Luke presupposes an account of an arrival by Paul in Corinth that included his lodging at the house of Titius Justus, perhaps his preaching in the market place, or even in the synagogue, and concluded with the summary reference to Paul's conversion of "many Corinthians" (8b). Beginning his account of Paul's ministry in Corinth with the Aquila and Priscilla scene,¹⁴¹ however, Luke constructed a new story in accordance with his scheme of "Jews first (v 5b)... and then Gentiles" (v. 6), so as to include the information concerning Paul and Titius Justus from his source material.

Again, since we cannot assume that what Luke relates is merely incidental, we must investigate what Luke did with this source material. The phrase καὶ μεταβὰς ἐκεῖθεν ("and he left there") at the beginning of v. 7 is a redactional transition that refers to Paul's departure from the synagogue, where his preaching had just been rejected by the Jews (v 6). David Matson observes that the juxtaposition of the Jewish synagogue and the Christian house church as "two competing institutions" is a Lukan construction.¹⁴² In Luke's version, the continuation, "and he entered the house of a certain man named Titius Justus," implies that Paul co-opted the house of Titius Justus as a new base of operations.¹⁴³ The idea that when Paul left the synagogue there just happened to be a house available right next door where

¹⁴¹ In this sense, Murphy-O'Connor (261) rightly regards vv. 2-3 as a redactional insertion.

¹⁴² David Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts. Pattern and Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 168-170.

¹⁴³ Conzelmann, 152; Weiser, 485; Lüdemann, 203; Matson, 173.

he could continue his preaching is Luke's own explanation of how Paul came to meet Titius Justus. Whether Paul actually stayed with Titius Justus, however, is left significantly vague.¹⁴⁴ And we again begin to read what Luke relates with caution.

Luke's source material portrayed Paul preaching in Corinth, converting and baptizing "many Corinthians." But Paul may not have been portrayed there as founding a Christian community in Corinth. Christian tradition seems to have remembered Titius Justus as an important figure associated with the Corinthian community in its early days. In Luke's source material he would have been portrayed as leader of a house church in Corinth when Paul arrived on the scene. And it was probably related that Paul resided with Titius Justus because he was a Christian (just as many interpreters assume must have been the case with Priscilla and Aquila). But Luke avoids saying that Paul actually moved in with Titius Justus; and the identification of Titius Justus as merely a "God-fearer" would be a Lukan revision. If Titius Justus was already a Christian at the time Paul arrived in Corinth, and perhaps even a leader of a house church, this would again have been disturbing for Luke's conception of Paul as the founder of Christianity in Corinth. So Luke transformed Titius Justus into a simple God-fearer, and, as in the case of Apollos, neglected to mention that he ever became a Christian.¹⁴⁵ But the reader now knows that if there was ever a church in his house, it was established by Paul.

It is not clear that the item concerning the conversion of Crispus in v. 8 was a piece of the story of Paul and Titius Justus. It looks more like an insertion by Luke derived from an independent tradition, which had been preserved because it concerned a leader in the synagogue, and may have been the only tradition

¹⁴⁴ The Western text (= μεταβάς δε ἀπὸ Ἀκύλα) makes explicit that Paul left Priscilla and Aquila and moved in with Titius Justus. But this is only an attempt to clarify what Luke intentionally leaves vague. Haenchen rightly observes (535, n. 2) that the difficulty is grounded "in the composition of the section." But he does not say in what way.

¹⁴⁵ Murphy-O'Connor speculates that the fact that Titius Justus is not mentioned among Paul's first converts in Corinth, either here or in 1 Cor 1:14ff., "might suggest that he came upon the scene at a later stage" (264). If "coming on the scene" refers to Titus Justus's conversion, however, Luke makes no suggestion that he ever became a Christian; and the list of Paul's converts in 1 Cor 1:14ff may simply reflect Luke's view.

Luke knew relating an early conversion in Corinth.¹⁴⁶ The baptism of Crispus by Paul is referred to in 1 Cor 1:14; but he is not identified there as having been a “ruler of the synagogue,” nor is it said that “all his household” were baptized. The inclusion of “all the household” in Acts 18:8 may be a Lukan enhancement.¹⁴⁷ But, as we noted, the identification of Crispus as a “ruler of the synagogue,” does not fit well in Luke’s own story, and probably derives therefore from the presupposed tradition. Crispus would thus appear as an early Christian convert in Corinth in two seemingly independent sources: 1 Cor 1:14, where he is mentioned first among those whom Paul baptized in Corinth, and Luke’s own source, where he was described as a “ruler of the synagogue.” Crispus was also remembered in Christian tradition, therefore, as an important figure associated with the Christian movement in Corinth in the early days. Given what we have discovered about how Luke works, however, one may at least wonder whether the portrayal of Crispus in Acts 8:8 as a convert of Paul’s might also be a bit of Lukan revisionism — that was then taken over by the writer of 1 Cor 1:14ff.

One might ask why Acts does not mention the conversion of Stephanas and his household (1 Cor 1:16), who are referred to in 1 Cor 16:15 as Paul’s “first converts in Achaia.”¹⁴⁸ But the information in 1 Cor is suspicious. For if Stephanas and his household were really Paul’s first converts in Achaia, it is odd that in 1 Cor 1:16 the writer remembers to mention this significant fact only as an afterthought. Furthermore, nowhere else in the Pauline writings is the word *οἶκος* used as a reference to someone’s household; and the word *οἰκία*, with a similar meaning, appears only in 1 Cor 16:15, again with reference to Stephanas. It is very possible, therefore, that the parenthetical reference to the baptism of Stephanas and his household in 1 Cor 1:16 is a later insertion, added at the beginning of the writing to make clear that Stephanas was also baptised by Paul, since the reference in 16:15 is vague on this matter. In

¹⁴⁶ Schille postulates (364) that this is the only element of tradition presupposed in vv. 4-8, and that the entire story of Paul and Titius Justus was constructed around it (also *Anfänge*, 76f.). Schille regards this as an original note relating to the founding of the Christian community in Corinth, which Luke “no longer fully understood and wrongly locates” (*Anfänge*, 77). But there is no way to validate such an assumption. And in contrast to vv. 5-6 and 9-11, there is too much discontinuity in the story of Paul and Titius Justus (vv. 7-8) for this to be entirely Lukan composition.

¹⁴⁷ Weiser, 485; cf. Acts 10:2; 11:14; 16:15, 31, 33.

¹⁴⁸ Because of this, Conzelmann observes (152) that if a presupposed source is present here it “would have to be judged unreliable and highly abbreviated.”

any case, there seem to have been competing traditions regarding Paul's first converts in Achaia: Crispus, represented in Luke's source material and 1 Cor 1:14, on the one hand, and Stephanas and his household, on the other (1 Cor 1:16; 16:16). The traditions concerning the conversion of Crispus may be earlier than the references to Stephanas in 1 Cor 1:16; 16:15. But it is uncertain whether either of these persons was really converted by Paul.

Paul and Gallio

Here again we have a passage that is regarded as fundamental for dating the missionary activity of Paul. In Conzelmann's view, "this verse (v. 12) contains the single most important piece of information for sketching the chronology of Paul's career, and of early Christianity."¹⁴⁹ But it has more significance than this. For like the reference in v. 2 to the arrival of Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth during the reign of Claudius, in a subtle way the story of Paul and Gallio can also be perceived as evidence that Paul really did work in Corinth, and therefore as evidence for the authenticity of the Corinthian writings ascribed to Paul. We saw however that Luke's creative depiction of Aquila and Priscilla's arrival in Corinth has no such historical importance. Now we will see that this is also true for his story of Paul and Gallio. Then we will look at how Luke treated Sosthenes.

Remarkably, almost all critical scholars today regard the story of Paul's appearance before Gallio in Acts 18:12-17 as largely Lukan composition¹⁵⁰ — even those who believe that the story is derived from historically reliable tradition.¹⁵¹ From a Lukan literary perspective, the story fulfills the promise given to Paul in vv. 9-10 that "no person will attack you or harm you in this city." The depiction of "the Jews" as the primary opponents of the Christian mission in v. 12 is a Lukan theme, and the related

¹⁴⁹ Conzelmann, 152. Cf. Jewett (*Chronology of Paul's Life*, 40): Gallio's term of office provides "a pivotal date in the construction of Pauline chronology"; H. Koester (*History and Literature of Early Christianity*, 102f.): "The dating of his [Paul's] stay in Corinth is decisive for Pauline chronology"; also Murphy-O'Connor (15): "This assertion that Paul's ministry in Corinth overlapped, at least in part, with the term of office of the Roman governor Gallio is the linchpin of Pauline chronology." Murphy-O'Connor wrongly informs his readers, however, that this link is "accepted by all scholars."

¹⁵⁰ Haenchen, 541; Conzelmann, 153f.; Lüdemann, 197; Weiser, 187f.; 486; Schmithals, 167f.

¹⁵¹ Haenchen, Conzelmann, Weiser, Lüdemann.

concepts and language are typically Lukan.¹⁵² The formulation of the charges brought by the Jews against Paul in v. 13 is Lukan creation (cf. 16:21; 17:6f; 21:28).¹⁵³ Luke does not allow Paul to speak (v. 14).¹⁵⁴ Weiser explains that Luke reserves Paul's own apology until the beginning of his actual trial in chs. 22-26. But Lüdemann is also correct: "Paul must not say a word so that the accusation by the Jews can be repudiated." This scene, however, can hardly be characterized as a "nontrial."¹⁵⁵ It is the Jews who are on trial here. The entire confrontation is between Gallio and "the Jews" (εἶπεν ὁ Γαλλίων πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ...ὡς Ἰουδαῖοι).

The connection between Paul and Gallio reflects a characteristic Lukan literary device, associating events in Christian history with events and famous figures in the Roman world. From a literary perspective, it prepares for Paul's appearances before Roman authorities later on.¹⁵⁶ But it also exemplifies Luke's view of how Roman secular authorities should deal with religious controversies. Gallio perceives the quarrel as a trivial dispute about "a word and names" (λόγου καὶ ὀνομάτων), i.e., about the identity ("name") of the Messiah ("a word"). There is a parallel and a precedent for this in Acts 17, where Paul proclaims that "Jesus is the Christ" (v 3), and Christians are then accused by the Jews of "acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another King, Jesus" (v 7). Gallio's exemplary conclusion ("See to it yourselves...") presupposes a distinction between religious and

¹⁵² J. T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 75-80; also Schille, 365; Weiser, 487f. The pejorative reference to "the Jews" is Lukan language: e.g., 9:23; 12:3; 13:45,50; 14:4; etc. (Sanders, 71f.). The view that the Jews took "united action" against Paul is Lukan exaggeration (Weiser): the word ὁμοθυπόδον ("united") is a favorite Lukan term (1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 7:57; 12:20; 8:8; 15:25; 19:29; elsewhere in the NT only Rom 15:6). The word κατεφίσταμαι ("to rise up against") appears only here in the NT; but Luke uses ἐφίστημι ("to attack") in Acts 6:12; 17:5.: see Conzelmann, 159f; Lüdemann, 197; also Weiser, 488. Lüdemann observes (199) that it is difficult to understand, therefore, how Weiser can also identify the accusation against Paul by the Jews as deriving from presupposed tradition (See Weiser, 187). But it is equally difficult to understand why Lüdemann himself holds fast to the idea that there is some kind of source presupposed here concerning Paul and Gallio.

¹⁵³ Conzelmann, 159f; Lüdemann, 197; also Weiser, 488. Conzelmann observes: "Luke has the Jews formulate the charge in a deliberately ambiguous way (cf. 17:7); they seek, however clumsily, to deceive Gallio. But a capable Roman official is not so easily taken in."

¹⁵⁴ Lüdemann, 197; Weiser, 488.

¹⁵⁵ Lüdemann, *Paul*, 160; also *Acts*, 199.

¹⁵⁶ Luke alludes to such controversies in his account of Paul's appearance before Agrippa (26:2-3).

secular affairs, and Rome's reluctance to intervene in religious affairs.¹⁵⁷ Verse 16 is also Lukan composition. "Luke makes it clear even for a slow-witted reader how the anti-Semitic high official made the Jews depart."¹⁵⁸ Still presupposed here is Luke's conception of the trial as a conflict between Gallio and the Jews (αὐτούς).

From a historical perspective, there is no basis here at all for thinking that Paul ever made such an appearance before Gallio in Corinth. This story thus has no value at all for dating Paul's supposed presence in Corinth, or even his presence in Corinth as such. In fact, most scholars who make such a claim do not even attempt to ground it with historical arguments.¹⁵⁹ Assuming rather, for obscure reasons, that Luke's account must be historical, or at least based on historically reliable sources, they find this assumption to be "confirmed" by the so-called "Gallio inscription." But this inscription only documents that Gallio served as proconsul in Achaia during the years 51/52 CE — nothing more. How one moves from this item of data to the conclusion that Luke's dramatic portrayal of Paul's appearance before Gallio in Acts 18 is an historical account of an actual happening is wholly mysterious.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Schille, 366. According to Schille, that the matter is conceived in v. 15 as an intra-Jewish controversy does not cohere with Luke's narrative, according to which Christians separated from the Jewish synagogue some one and one-half years before (v 11), and thus reflects a hiatus between the presupposed tradition and the Lukan framework. It may well be that the matter was portrayed as an intra-Jewish controversy in Luke's source (see below). But here Luke seems to imply that secular authorities should not intervene in religious affairs at all — i.e., conflicts *between* Jews and Christians. In this passage Paul is not really portrayed as a Jew. What Gallio says to "the Jews" does not seem to include Paul.

¹⁵⁸ Haenchen, 536.

¹⁵⁹ E.g., Conzelmann, 152ff.; Jewett, 38-40; Suhl, 324f.; Ph. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 72f.; H.-M. Schenke and K. M. Fischer, *Einleitung in die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (Gütersloh, 1978), 49-54; also Murphy-O'Connor, 15-22, who simply observes (15, n. 59) that "Acts 18:12 belongs to one of the most primitive levels of Acts," as if that alone (even if true) establishes the historical reliability of Luke's story.

¹⁶⁰ Some commentators add the note that archeological excavations have discovered a tribunal (βήμα) on the Agora in Corinth, on which judicial proceedings may have been held (Weiser, 494; Johnson, 328). Of course, the βήμα is pictured in Luke's story as an indoor tribunal. But even if it were pictured as outdoors, this discovery would have no significance at all for the historical reliability of what Luke relates.

Weiser argues, for example, that the story in vv. 12-17 “certainly goes back to an isolated event and was mediated through Corinthian local tradition,” and that the references to Gallio and Sosthenes by name indicate that the story is not only pre-Lukan but also has “historical roots,” since that Gallio was proconsul in Corinth is confirmed by the Gallio inscription and the presence of Sosthenes cannot be explained in terms of redactional tendencies in Acts or the presupposed source material.¹⁶¹ Even if Luke obtained such a story from Corinthian “local tradition,” however, it would still have to be demonstrated that such a tradition is historical.¹⁶² This would be the case even if it could be shown that Luke was dependent here on a written source.¹⁶³ References to persons by name do not necessarily indicate historicity. The presence of Sosthenes might be explained in various ways. And Gallio’s presence in Corinth once upon a time can mean that the story has “historical roots” only in the sense that Luke made use of such information to create a story of his own.¹⁶⁴ For this purpose all Luke needed to know was the fact that Gallio was proconsul in Corinth in the legendary days of Paul. And he may also have known that Gallio, like his brother Seneca, was a famous anti-Semite, who would have had no time for disputes among Jews about “words and names.”

¹⁶¹ Weiser, 486. Weiser denies that the presence of so much Lukan composition can be cause to reject an underlying complaint against Paul before the proconsul, “no more than in the Philippi scene in 16:19-24” (487). Before one can make such a claim, however, one must carry out a truly redaction- and tradition-historical analysis of the material in 16:19-24, which Weiser does not do there any more than here.

¹⁶² Lüdemann suggests that “Luke had a tradition in which one of Paul’s visits to Corinth was connected with the person of Gallio,” which Luke then “developed... into the episode of a nontrial of Paul before Gallio” (*Paul*, 160; cf. *Acts*, 199). But it is unclear how he knows this. All he “knows,” from his investigation of the Pauline writings, is that Paul and Gallio must have been in Corinth at the same time (*Paul*, 171f.). And Lüdemann does not claim, at least not explicitly, the reverse, i.e., that Luke’s story of Paul and Gallio confirms this.

¹⁶³ J. Schniewind polemicized against “the extreme recklessness with which many theologians deal with such questions [in Acts]... taking for granted that, once the existence of a source has been made out, the trustworthiness of its contents has also been forthwith established” (“Simon Peter,” in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* [New York: Macmillan, 4 Vols., 1899-1903], Vol. 4, 4560-4627: 4564.

¹⁶⁴ One might just as well argue that the journey of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem related in Lk 2:1-5 has “historical roots” because of its association with Quirinius.

Paul and Sosthenes

After Gallio cuts him off when he was just about to speak (v. 14), Paul disappears from the scene; the contest that follows is entirely between Gallio and “the Jews.” After Gallio drives the Jews from the synagogue (v. 16), however, Luke appends a puzzling story about the beating of a certain Sosthenes, “the ruler of the synagogue,” by a Corinthian mob. The appearance of Sosthenes is entirely unprepared for in Luke’s narrative. And it is unclear who the persons are who “all” (πάντες) seize Sosthenes and beat him, or why they do such a thing.¹⁶⁵ According to Conzelmann, πάντες here “means the people (surely not the Jews).”¹⁶⁶ Lüdemann refers to an “anti-Jewish mob.”¹⁶⁷ But the only mob appearing earlier in the story is Jewish (v. 12). Sanders asks, “Why would either the Jews or the Gentiles beat him because of the brief hearing before Gallio?”¹⁶⁸ But this question implies that what Luke relates here is historical, or at least that Luke is attempting to present a historically believable scene. It is not even obvious what significance this scene had for Luke. Johnson observes, “The scene remains obscure except in one respect: Paul, in accordance with his vision (18:10) comes to no harm.”¹⁶⁹ But the beating of Sosthenes was not required to make this point. Some scholars suggest that these discrepancies reflect Luke’s source material.¹⁷⁰ This is probable, but in a different sense than they imagine.

The Sosthenes episode is Lukan composition.¹⁷¹ The story probably assumes that Crispus ceased to be ruler of the synagogue when he became a Christian (v 8), and it now portrays Sosthenes, his successor in that office, as the leader of the

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Sanders, *Jews in Luke-Acts*, 227.

¹⁶⁶ Conzelmann, 154.

¹⁶⁷ Lüdemann, 200; also Haenchen, 541; Weiser, 487.

¹⁶⁸ Sanders, *Jews in Luke-Acts*, 277.

¹⁶⁹ L. Johnson, *Acts*, 329.

¹⁷⁰ Lüdemann, *Acts*, 199; also *Paul*, 160; Schille, 365f; Weiser, 486.

¹⁷¹ Ollrog (31, n. 132) calls attention to the parallels with this incident in Acts 17:5f and 19:29. In Acts 17:5, being jealous of the evangelical success of Paul and Silas, the Jews drag Jason — who is likewise not previously mentioned — from his house, along with “some of the brethren,” and accuse them of “acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” In 19:28ff, concerned that many people in Asia have been turned away by Paul from serving the goddess Artemis, the crowd drags Caius and Aristarchus, “Paul’s companions in travel” — who suddenly appear here and are mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament — before the clerk of the city.

Jewish opposition to Paul, who receives just punishment because he did not follow the example of Crispus. “The blow comes back upon the one who struck it.”¹⁷² Sosthenes appears here as the representative of “the Jews.” As Lüdemann observes, Luke “exemplified the punishment of the Jews by having the ruler of the synagogue, Sosthenes, beaten.”¹⁷³ Sanders explains: Luke’s message is that “the Jews reject the gospel and persecute the messengers of God; they get what they deserve.”¹⁷⁴ This is all true. Knowing Luke, however, one wonders if there is not something more complicated involved.

We have seen that the story of Paul’s appearance before Gallio in its present form is entirely Lukan composition. But there are also indications that Luke made use here of written source material. On the one hand, as Weiser observes, the break between vv. 11 and 12 is abrupt, and the story itself is a “self-sufficient unity,” with no “material or literary connection” with what precedes or follows.¹⁷⁵ In addition, there seems to be a certain ambiguity here as to whether this is an intra-Jewish conflict,¹⁷⁶ or whether Christianity is conceived as having separated from Judaism.¹⁷⁷ On the other hand, as we observed, Paul himself entirely disappears from the stage, and the appearance of Sosthenes in v. 17 is totally unprepared for. As Schille observes, vv. 16 and 17 now present a doublet: the story seems to have two conclusions,¹⁷⁸ which is most always a sign of redactional activity. There are also several words in this passage that appear nowhere else in the NT — *κατεφίσταμαι* (“to rise up against”; v. 12); *ἀναπείθω* (“to persuade” or “incite”; v. 13); *ἀπελάυνω* (“to drive out”; v. 16), which often indicates the presence of a presupposed source.

At this point, therefore, we might consider Schille’s suggestion that, since Paul disappears entirely after v. 16, the presence of Paul in Luke’s version of the Gallio story may be redactional,

¹⁷² Conzelmann, 154.

¹⁷³ Lüdemann, *Paul*, 161; *Acts*, 200.

¹⁷⁴ Sanders, *Jews in Luke-Acts*, 277.

¹⁷⁵ Weiser, 486.

¹⁷⁶ So Haenchen, 541; Schille, 366; Schmithals, 167.

¹⁷⁷ See above, n. 157. Conzelmann denies that Luke seeks here to “reclaim for Christianity the recognized privileges of Judaism (as a *religio licita*, “legal religion”). This concept which is used without hesitation in modern literature was unknown to him, because there was no such conception” (*Acts*, 153).

¹⁷⁸ Schille, 366.

and that the original story concerned accusations made by Jews against Sosthenes himself, a Jewish leader who, like Crispus, had become a Christian. This would at least explain the presence and identity of the crowd in v 17, who would clearly be the same Jews who (in the original story) brought charges against Sosthenes to begin with. But then we would have to conjecture that the original story included some account of how Sosthenes became a Christian, and why, even though being a ruler of the synagogue, he came to be propagating the Christian message. Schille's proposal, however, is nevertheless provocative; and we may be able to develop his insight a bit farther.

Schille observes that in the development of legends one later ascribes to the greater figure what formerly related to someone else. And he rightly observes that the question concerns the relationship between Paul and Sosthenes. Since we are dealing here with Christian legend, however, Schille's interpretation would make more sense if in the original story Sosthenes was actually a Christian missionary. As we saw above, the point here that the Jews who oppose the Christian mission get what they deserve is probably Lukan construction.¹⁷⁹ And in this case, the identification of Sosthenes as a "ruler of the synagogue" may be Luke's own work. Furthermore, contrary to Schille, it is possible that in the original story (which probably did not involve Gallio) Sosthenes was not treated well in court, that he did in fact suffer a beating, and that the Roman authorities "paid no attention." This idea, however, is precisely what Luke wanted to counter. So through the "nontrial" of Paul, employing the figure of Gallio, Luke portrayed an ideal example of how Roman authorities should deal with disputes between Christians and Jews, and by turning Sosthenes into a Jewish "ruler of the synagogue" he portrays how Roman authorities should deal with those who oppose the Christian mission, or at least what happens to such people.

But why would Luke substitute Paul for Sosthenes, and then treat Sosthenes in such a cruel way? Well, the only other reference in the New Testament to a person named Sosthenes is in 1 Cor 1:1, where he is identified as an associate of Paul, which at least indicates that Christian tradition connected someone named

¹⁷⁹ Schille himself refers to this as "perhaps Luke's opinion" (366).

Sosthenes with Corinth.¹⁸⁰ We have seen, however, that in this section of his narrative Luke is particularly concerned with persons whom Christian tradition associated with the founding of what Luke regards as Pauline communities.¹⁸¹ And we now know what Luke does with such persons. It is very possible, therefore, that in Luke's source Sosthenes appeared in Corinth preaching Jesus as the Messiah, and thus in Luke's mind competing with Paul as the founder of Christianity in Corinth, in the same way as so many others. Compared with missionaries like Apollos, however, and Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus, Sosthenes was a minor figure. So Luke simply transformed the Sosthenes story, which conflicted also with his own views about how Roman authorities should conduct themselves, into a story about Paul and Gallio with a completely different message, and transformed Sosthenes into a Jewish leader of the synagogue who behaved contrary to the example of Crispus and got what he deserved, thereby establishing for his readers the "truth" about Sosthenes' role in Corinth.

Conclusion

How could Luke get away with something like this? First of all, Luke was writing about things that took place in "ancient" times (15:7; 21:16).¹⁸² Secondly, he was writing for people who took for granted that the great Christian churches of their own time had been founded by apostles. Simple readers would have been reassured that what they took for granted was the way everything really happened. More informed readers, who suspected that some things related by Luke were more complicated than his stories imply, might have recognized Luke's work for what it is, a historical novel, a work of religious propa-

¹⁸⁰ The name Sosthenes was quite common (Haenchen, 536, n5). As Ollrog observes, however, it is improbable that Christian tradition associated two different persons with the same name with Corinth (31). It is also improbable that the reference in 1 Cor derives from Acts, for on the basis of Acts (without redaction-critical analysis) no one would infer that Sosthenes was a Christian and an associate of Paul. Lüdemann observes that "the person of Sosthenes is hardly identical with the co-author of 1 Corinthians ... It is not even indicated that Sosthenes became a Christian" (Acts, 204). Well, at least not by Luke.

¹⁸¹ The mysterious story of the "disciples of John" in Ephesus (Acts 19.1-7) might also fall in this category. And it is not impossible that Luke's readers would have recognized the "Jewish exorcists" who appeal to the "name of Jesus" (Acts 19:11-19; cf Lk 9:49-50) as *Doppelgänger* for Christian missionaries (cf. also Lk 9:49-50).

¹⁸² See Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 72.

ganda and apologetic idealizing.¹⁸³ But they would nevertheless have appreciated Luke's attempt, sometimes with a wink of the eye, to present his own "true" account of Christian beginnings, which even if not always accurate, was certainly entertaining — and also what everybody wanted to believe.¹⁸⁴ There was really no demand for a "more accurate" account.

The situation is somewhat similar with regard to interpretations of Acts in our own time. Where the primary assumption, explicit or implicit, is that what Luke relates, at least at some level, is reliable history, which means that it must cohere with what we already take for granted about earliest Christian history and, above all, with what we find in the Pauline writings, there is little demand for a historical-critical evaluation of Acts that might that might controvert such assumptions. What we have is rather a kind of apologetic historicizing that has little to do with historical criticism, but in a remarkable way merely perpetuates Luke's own apologetic program. In this article, I have attempted to provide a different kind of interpretation, that seriously pursues historical criticism — that is concerned, first of all, not with the historical credibility of what Luke relates, but with the significance of what he tells us as an indirect, and perhaps unwilling, reflection of his own historical situation; that assumes we can only perceive the historical significance of what Luke tells us when we understand what Luke is doing, and why.

Luke's own conception of early Christian history is not mysterious. The earliest Christian communities were founded by the apostles and their approved messengers, among whom, for Luke, Paul was the greatest. And having made known "the whole counsel of God," these men appointed bishops "to care for the church of God" (Acts 20:27f). But then, after the original apostles had departed, "fierce wolves" appeared who devastated the flock; and false teachers, "speaking perverse things" arose from within (20:29f.). We have discovered that Luke's purpose in Acts 18 was to establish Paul as the sole founder of Christianity in Corinth and Ephesus, thereby establishing also the priority and authority of Luke's brand of apostolic and Pauline Christianity over against "fierce wolves" and "perverse teachers" in his own time. To achieve this purpose, Luke cleverly rewrote stories and traditions

¹⁸³ *Idem*, 79.

¹⁸⁴ According to Pervo (129), Acts stands at the dividing point between the "apologies for the learned and unselfconscious writings for the more average" that characterized Christian literature by the middle of the second century C.E.

to dispense with figures from the old days who might have represented some other brand of Christianity. He transformed these into a wondrous story about Paul as the founder of Christian communities in Corinth and Ephesus. And as far as we can determine, this story was entirely Luke's own creation.