

STANLEY E. PORTER

# The Paul of Acts

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament*

115

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**Mohr Siebeck**

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament

Herausgegeben von  
Martin Hengel und Otfried Hofius

115





Stanley E. Porter

# The Paul of Acts

Essays in Literary Criticism,  
Rhetoric, and Theology

Mohr Siebeck

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## Preface

This volume has been developed and written in much more diverse circumstances than have surrounded any of the other books that I have written. The writing itself has occurred virtually entirely in Europe, though the ideas were first aired publicly mostly in North America. Much of the writing took place in London, England, where I am privileged to be the Professor and Chair of a vibrant and active Centre for Advanced Theological Research and Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. My colleagues, both those younger and those older, are a constant stimulation to do good work, as we share the common purpose of developing and perpetuating a research culture in the finest tradition of British scholarship. One of the most commendable elements of that tradition – and one that Roehampton Institute London safeguards in a highly commendable way – is the openness with which we can discuss various scholarly positions. I have taken advantage of the freedom to re-think many of my stances, some of them reflected in this volume, free from being pulled by stifling critical conformity on the one side, and unreflective confessional orthodoxy on the other. Some of the writing of this volume also occurred in the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. As a Visiting Scholar there, I had the opportunity of using the valuable library, and being able to have time to think for uninterrupted periods about many of the issues raised in this book.

Those who have helped in the formulation, refinement and felicitous phrasing (such as there is) of this volume deserve mention, as well. Included are the many attentive auditors who were present when many of the chapters in this volume were first presented at various places and on various occasions spread over three continents. I took particularly full advantage of many opportunities to deliver papers at conferences, especially in North America, in order to develop my ideas on Acts and Paul more completely. Many times there were stimulating and difficult questions asked, as well as healthy conversation afterwards. I wish also to thank two of my research students, Gustavo Martín-Asensio and Matthew Brook O'Donnell, my colleagues Brook W.R. Pearson (who suggested the title for this volume) and Arthur Gibson, and my wife (and closest colleague), Wendy, for reading various

versions of this manuscript, and making many well-deserved comments that resulted in serious improvements and refinements.

Lastly, I wish to thank Professor Dr Martin Hengel for his acceptance of this volume into the WUNT Series. He not only provided helpful suggestions for its improvement, but was encouraging of what this monograph is trying to accomplish.

This volume is dedicated to those who suffered, and even died, for their faith and Christian scholarship during the damnable Soviet communist occupation of Central Europe, and especially to those “freedom fighters” of the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University, who not only endured but ultimately triumphed.

Stanley E. Porter

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## Chapter One

# Methods and Assumptions in this Study of the Paul of Acts

The title of this volume, *The Paul of Acts*, is a play on the title of the well-known apocryphal work, the *Acts of Paul*.<sup>1</sup> The play on the title is self-conscious, and descriptive of the project contained within these pages. This is not a tightly-organized monograph that tries to argue a single hypothesis, but a series of studies that focus upon the depiction of Paul in the book of Acts from literary-critical, rhetorical, and theological perspectives, among several others. In a limited sense, this volume is an attempt to provide a “disciplined narrative-critical character study of Paul in Acts,” something that Gowler says is “yet to be done.”<sup>2</sup> The essays contained within this volume were explicitly written as a result of contemplation of various issues in recent Pauline studies, focused initially upon the Paul of his letters. After having written a number of essays, as well as a monograph, on various dimensions of Paul and his letters,<sup>3</sup> it seemed natural to extend my study and pursue various topics

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<sup>1</sup> See the recent study of this interesting apocryphal book in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996). Cf. R. Brawley, “Paul in Acts: Lucan Apology and Conciliation,” in C.H. Talbert (ed.), *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar* (New York: Crossroad, 1984) 129–147.

<sup>2</sup> D.B. Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend: Portraits of the Pharisees in Luke and Acts* (ESEC 2; New York: Lang, 1991) 285 n. 209; cf. R.L. Brawley, “Paul in Acts: Aspects of Structure and Characterization,” in D.J. Lull (ed.), *Society of Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 90–105, who commentates on narrative literary devices in pp. 96–103.

<sup>3</sup> The following are what I consider to be the most important works that I have written on Paul and his letters, not including some others mentioned below in this chapter: S.E. Porter, *Καταλλάσσω in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings* (Estudios de Filología Neotestamentaria 5; Córdoba, Spain: Ediciones El Almendro, 1994); with J.A.D. Weima, *An Annotated Bibliography of 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NTTS 26; Leiden: Brill, 1998); “The Pauline Concept of Original Sin, in Light of Rabbinic Background,” *TynBul* 41.1 (1990) 3–30; “ἵσπε γινώσκοντες in Ephesians 5:5: Does Chiasm Solve a Problem?” *ZNW* 81 (1990) 270–276; “Romans 13:1–7 as Pauline Political Rhetoric,” *FN* 3 (1990) 115–139; “The Argument of Romans 5: Can a Rhetorical Question Make a Difference?” *JBL* 110 (1991) 655–677; “What Does it Mean to be ‘Saved by Childbirth’ (1 Timothy 2:15)?” *JSNT* 49 (1993) 87–102; “A Newer Perspective on Paul: Romans 1–8 through the Eyes of Literary

related to Paul in Acts that had suggested themselves. Issues such as the character of Paul as seen in Acts and the letters, the relation of Paul the letterwriter to Paul the speaker, and various dimensions of Paul's theology as seen in Acts and the letters, emerged as suitable for investigation. For that reason, this is not an attempt at a thorough and complete study of all of the various dimensions of how Paul is described and depicted in the book of Acts, to say nothing of it being a study of the book of Acts as a whole. The topics presented are selective ones, but ones that I think address many of the most important issues raised in current scholarship on how Paul appears in the book of Acts, since I believe "that the author of Acts is concerned that his readers should form an adequate estimation of the character of Paul"<sup>4</sup> (my conclusions, however, do not always answer the questions in the way many might have come to expect, according to the critical consensus). To my surprise, once I began writing and putting this volume together, I came to realize that there are not many other books in English that have devoted themselves to studying the Paul of Acts in the way that I do here. Many of these treatments are devoted to various dimensions of the juridical elements of Paul's presence in Acts,<sup>5</sup> usually giving more attention to how these

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Analysis," in M.D. Carroll R., D.J.A. Clines, and P.R. Davies (eds.), *The Bible in Human Society: Essays in Honour of John Rogerson* (JSOTSup 200; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 366–392; "Reconciliation and 2 Cor 5,18–21," in R. Bieringer (ed.), *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1996) 693–705; "Understanding Pauline Studies: An Assessment of Recent Research," *Themelios* [Part One] 22 (1; 1996) 14–25; [Part Two] 22 (2; 1997) 13–24; "Images of Christ in Paul's Letters," in S.E. Porter, M.A. Hayes, and D. Tombs (eds.), *Images of Christ: Ancient and Modern* (RILP 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 95–112; with K.D. Clarke, "Canonical-Critical Perspective and the Relationship of Colossians and Ephesians," *Bib* 78 (1997) 57–86; "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," in C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders (eds.), *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (SSEJC 5; JSNTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 79–96; "Exegesis of the Pauline Letters, including the Deutero-Pauline Letters," in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (NTTS 25; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 503–553; with J.T. Reed, "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm and its Exegetical Significance," *NTS* 44 (1998) 213–231; and "The Rhetorical Scribe: Textual Variants in Romans and their Possible Rhetorical Purpose," in S.E. Porter and D.L. Stamps (eds.), *Rhetoric, Method and the Bible: Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming). I have also edited, with C.A. Evans, *The Pauline Writings: A Sheffield Reader* (BibSem 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> C.J.A. Hickling, "The Portrait of Paul in Acts 26," in J. Kremer (ed.), *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie* (BETL 48; Gembloux: Duculot; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979) 503.

<sup>5</sup> Books that treat certain dimensions of this include H.W. Tajra, *The Trial of St Paul: A Juridical Exegesis of the Second Half of the Acts of the Apostles* (WUNT 2.35; Tübingen:

features relate to the historical context than how they relate to Paul himself. One of these that has proved insightful, with more attention to the narrative and character development than others, is M.-E. Rosenblatt's short *Paul the Accused*.<sup>6</sup> In a narrative-exegetical fashion, she analyzes the book of Acts, especially those passages that are concerned with accusations brought against Paul. Perhaps inevitably, because of the sweep of her topic, her treatment of a given passage is often brief. I have, instead, chosen to treat a smaller number of passages, and discuss them in more detail, without the constraint of focusing on only one theme.

The essays included in this volume have all been researched and written in the last five years, as various new dimensions of the study of the Paul of Acts presented themselves to me as worthy of further exploration. Whereas one of the essays, the earliest, has been previously published, and another is in press at this time,<sup>7</sup> these two chapters have been thoroughly scrutinized and completely re-written in light of the other essays, my continued thinking about the topic, and the most important secondary literature that has appeared since. All of the other essays are published here for the first time.

This series of studies has both fortuitously progressive and decidedly traditional elements to it. The subject matter itself is, it seems to me, one of the more progressive elements. This is not a volume on the theology of Acts, a treatment specifically focused upon the historical Paul as seen in Acts, or a study of ancient rhetoric or epistolography, even though these topics – and others – are introduced in different places and contexts throughout the volume.<sup>8</sup> What this volume intends to be is a depiction of one character, Paul,

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Mohr–Siebeck, 1989); B. Rapske, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. III. *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); J.C. Lentz, Jr, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (SNTSMS 77; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). This is not a complete list, and does not include sections on Paul within larger monographs. A commendable approach to another character in Acts is by F.S. Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations* (JSNTSup 67; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> M.-E. Rosenblatt, *Paul the Accused: His Portrait in the Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1995). One of the important topics discussed in my volume is the "we" passages, a topic of which Rosenblatt takes only short notice (e.g. p. 44).

<sup>7</sup> S.E. Porter, "The 'We' Passages," in D.W.J. Gill and C. Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. II. *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 545–574, incorporated, with major changes, in this volume as Chapter Two; *idem*, "Paul as Rhetorician and Epistolographer?" in S.E. Porter and D.L. Stamps (eds.), *Rhetoric and the Bible: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming 1999), incorporated, with radical expansion, in this volume as Chapter Four.

<sup>8</sup> My major extended treatment of Acts will be published in my commentary on Acts for the New International Greek Testament Commentary Series, edited by I.H. Marshall and

as he is presented and appears in various ways in the book of Acts, sometimes in narrative, sometimes delivering speeches, sometimes traveling. The major material in Acts that provides the basis for discussion of these topics is the “we” passages and Paul’s many speeches, and the events that surround these sections.

Without entering into the expansive debate on the topic of literary interpretation of the New Testament,<sup>9</sup> in a sense this is a literary study of the figure of Paul as seen in various ways in the book of Acts.<sup>10</sup> Literary-critical questions – such as those about possible sources used by the author and about the relation of the Paul of Acts to the Paul of the letters – are raised intermittently and at (what I consider to be) crucial junctures. For the most part, however, this series of studies concentrates first and foremost upon how Paul is depicted as a literary character, that is, as a character in Acts. The literary dimensions of this study, therefore, encompass both traditional literary or form criticism, concerned with the study of literary types such as the travel narrative, and modern literary criticism, that is, a phenomenological exposition of a character involved in action (plot). No sustained defense of the methods is offered here. Traditional literary criticism has too long a history to need further discussion of its strengths and weaknesses, as many as those may be.<sup>11</sup> Instead, Chapter Two offers a test of whether a traditional literary-critical method (in conjunction with redaction criticism) can provide a

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D.A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster), tentatively scheduled to appear in 2004.

<sup>9</sup> For a recent discussion of this topic, see B.W.R. Pearson, “New Testament Literary Criticism,” in Porter (ed.), *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*, 241–266; cf. S.E. Porter, “Literary Approaches to the New Testament: From Formalism to Deconstruction and Back,” in S.E. Porter and D. Tombs (eds.), *Approaches to New Testament Study* (JSNTSup 120; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 77–128. On Acts, see M.A. Powell, *What are They Saying about Acts?* (New York: Paulist, 1991) 96–107. A fairly recent bibliography on the subject is found in M. Minor, *Literary-Critical Approaches to the Bible: An Annotated Bibliography* (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill, 1992) 413–420, 450–454. Note that his definition of literary criticism is quite broad and encompassing.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion and evaluation of literary interpretation of Acts, a helpful, though not entirely convincing, study is F.S. Spencer, “Acts and Modern Literary Approaches,” in B.W. Winter and A.D. Clarke (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. I. The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 381–414.

<sup>11</sup> For discussion of traditional literary criticism, see D.R. Catchpole, “Source, Form and Redaction Criticism of the New Testament,” in Porter (ed.), *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*, 168, 170–175; cf. J. Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Berlin: Evangelische Verlags-Anstalt, 1981) 6–10, for a history of discussion of the literary character of Acts. That traditional and modern literary criticism can easily be confused, with what purports to be the latter ending up the former, is seen in J.M. Robinson, “Acts,” in R. Alter and F. Kermodé (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (London: Fontana, 1989) 467–478.

more convincing explanation than other recent methods of analysis in assessing certain phenomena in Acts, in particular the “we” passages, and how they are intertwined in a third-person narrative. (It is in this context that I offer a discussion of the genre of Acts.) This effort is important because of the role that the “we” passages play in revealing the character of Paul in Acts. The attempt to combine theology with form-critical study is also an element not readily found in other treatments of Acts.<sup>12</sup> Once the character of the “we” passages has been described, the theology of the passages, in particular their relationship to the presentation of the character of Paul as he is depicted in these passages, is explored in Chapter Three. The conclusions reached here should provide material for further consideration, since there is found to be some significant differences between the Paul of the “we” passages and the Paul of the rest of Acts. Chapter Four continues this style of exposition, by examining Paul and the Holy Spirit in Acts. This exposition is in terms of how the Holy Spirit and Paul relate to each other in Acts, not treating either independently or as general topics as they occur throughout Acts. This more narrowly circumscribes the subject in terms of the focus of this volume, and, by doing so, introduces a dimension of study that is not usually discussed.

A topic of much recent discussion is the relationship of ancient rhetoric to the study of the Pauline letters.<sup>13</sup> In Chapter Five, I explore this subject from a slightly different angle than is usually employed. Beginning with the basic recognition that the Paul of the letters is an epistolographer and the Paul of Acts is an orator, I address questions raised by this analysis. Included here is brief discussion of the role of speeches in ancient literature, offering my own perspective on the programmatic statement in Thucydides 1.22.1.<sup>14</sup> In this chapter, questions of the relationship between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the letters are inevitably raised, suggested by the material in Acts as the point of initial comparison. Then, in Chapters Six and Seven, I pursue analysis of the oratorical dimension of Paul’s speeches in Acts, dividing the treatment

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, H.C. Kee, *Good News to the Ends of the Earth: The Theology of Acts* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> On this topic, see S.E. Porter, “The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature,” in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 100–122; *idem*, “Paul of Tarsus and his Letters,” in S.E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.–A.D. 400* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 533–585.

<sup>14</sup> My fuller treatment of this topic is found in S.E. Porter, “Thucydides 1.22.1 and Speeches in Acts: Is There a Thucydidean View?” *NovT* 32 (1990) 121–142; repr. with modifications in *idem*, *The Greek of the New Testament: Theory and Practice* (SBG 5; New York: Lang, 1996) 173–193.



into expositions of the so-called missionary speeches and of the so-called apologetic speeches. Soards has done much valuable work on the rhetorical dimension of the speeches in Acts.<sup>15</sup> Whereas these two chapters appreciate his work, my approach is different, in that it explores the nature of the speeches in terms of the character of Paul the speechgiver as revealed in Acts, not simply as part of a larger scheme of analysis of all of the speeches in Acts, or simply of all of Paul's speeches. After discussing the character of his missionary and apologetic speeches, I draw some inevitable points of comparison between Paul's approach in the speeches and his approach to similar topics in his letters.

Chapter Eight may well prove to be the most provocative chapter in the volume, not necessarily because of a methodological progressiveness, but because of the nature of the thesis that it advances. In a brief examination of Acts 21, I conclude that there is a distinct possibility that, by the way they behaved, the leaders of the church in Jerusalem in some ways established a context of distrust of Paul, which manipulation indirectly contributed to his arrest. Chapter Nine is placed last so as not to distract from what I have been trying to do in the bulk of the volume – that is, to examine Paul through Acts, and not through his letters. Nevertheless, it seemed almost inevitable that I would finally need to address the major critical questions concerning the relationship between the Paul of Acts and of the letters, which I do through subjecting the major arguments against their close relation to rigorous scrutiny. I was frankly disappointed with the level of precision with which this case has been made, in which assumption often seems to have replaced evidence. Thus, my hope is that, from a methodological standpoint, a contribution of this volume is in its unique drawing together of several areas of recent New Testament studies – including forms of literary criticism, rhetorical criticism and epistolography, as well as theology – in the service of analysis of one dimension of the book of Acts, the depiction of the actions, behavior and beliefs of the Paul of Acts.

There are also a number of elements of this study that will strike the reader as rather traditional. To be straightforward, now that my study is complete (at least for the time being), I am not convinced that there is as great a separation between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the letters as many have posited. At the least, the arguments that have often been marshalled to establish the differences between the two, when critically scrutinized, do not seem compelling. What differences there are seem to be fully explicable in terms of

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<sup>15</sup> M.L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994).

Acts and the letters being written by two different authors, with their commonalities pointing to close contact between the two, including the use by the author of Acts (whom I call Luke) of a first-hand source – the “we” passages. In other words, to use the taxonomy of Mattill, my position would probably fall within what he calls the “one-Paul view of historical research.”<sup>16</sup> Further, in the rest of the volume, I will often use “Luke” to refer to the author of Luke–Acts, even though the two works are formally anonymous. The conclusion that I have drawn from other study (and do not argue directly in detail, apart from in Chapter Nine) is that the author of Acts was someone much like the traditional figure of Luke (if not Luke himself). It seems to me that, on the basis of historical, literary and theological reasons, that is as reasonable an estimation as any other, and better than most.<sup>17</sup> The difference this makes for analysis in most of the chapters is minimal, however, so even those who categorically reject this analysis should still be able to benefit from much of this volume without this feature obstructing their reading.

Of more personal concern, however, is the methodology of my approach. I believe that there is only limited productive capacity in most literary methods as they are being practiced in New Testament studies today, and my simply invoking and slipping into a phenomenological (or, perhaps, New Critical or formalist) stance without presenting full justification for this approach, some would say, is naive at best, and highly suspect at worst. I am aware of the major critical issues regarding this position, having raised them elsewhere myself,<sup>18</sup> but believe that, nevertheless, the essays stand here on their own without need for justification in this context. Of greater significance, however, is the fact that I have not utilized what I consider to be the next step forward in further New Testament exegetical study, namely, various forms of

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<sup>16</sup> A.J. Mattill, Jr, “The Value of Acts as a Source for the Study of Paul,” in C.H. Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke–Acts* (Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978) 76–98, esp. 77–83. Mattill defines the following categories: the One-Paul View of the School of Historical Research, the Two-Paul View of the School of Creative Edification, the Lopsided-Paul View of the School of Restrained Criticism, and the Three-Paul View of the School of Advanced Criticism. According to him, the Two-Paul View is the most dominant.

<sup>17</sup> This subject is discussed in more detail in L.M. McDonald and S.E. Porter, *Early Christianity and its Sacred Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, forthcoming 1999) chap. 8; cf. W.G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. H.C. Kee; Nashville: Abingdon: 17th edn, 1975) 147–150 for a brief survey; and the detailed discussion of the historical evidence in C.-J. Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen* (WUNT 56; Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 1991) 8–81.

<sup>18</sup> See Porter, “Literary Approaches to the New Testament,” esp. 97–106.

functional grammatical and sociolinguistically-based discourse analysis.<sup>19</sup> On the basis of my having explored such methods elsewhere, as well as having seen the productive results when such methods are creatively employed by others, I believe that a more rigorous and explicit methodology of text-based “linguistic criticism” must continue to be developed alongside historically-based criticism, as is being done in a number of circles.<sup>20</sup> (Elsewhere, I have

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<sup>19</sup> For some of my explorations in these areas, see S.E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (SBG 1; New York: Lang, 1989); *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (BLG 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2nd edn, 1994) esp. 298–307; *Studies in the Greek New Testament, passim*; “Studying Ancient Languages from a Modern Linguistic Perspective: Essential Terms and Terminology,” *FN* 2 (1989) 147–172; with J.T. Reed, “Greek Grammar since BDF: A Retrospective and Prospective Analysis,” *FN* 4 (1991) 143–164; “Word Order and Clause Structure in New Testament Greek: An Unexplored Area of Greek Linguistics Using Philippians as a Test Case,” *FN* 6 (1993) 177–205; “The Date of the Composition of Hebrews and Use of the Present Tense-Form,” in S.E. Porter, P. Joyce, and D.E. Orton (eds.), *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays on Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (BIS 8; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 313–332; “Discourse Analysis and New Testament Studies: An Introductory Survey,” in S.E. Porter and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (JSNTSup 113; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 14–35; “Rhetorical Analysis and Discourse Analysis of the Pauline Corpus,” in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht (eds.), *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference* (JSNTSup 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 249–274; and “Dialect and Register in the Greek New Testament: Theory,” and “Register in the Greek New Testament: Application with Reference to Mark’s Gospel,” in M.D. Carroll R. (ed.), *Rethinking Context, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming 1999).

<sup>20</sup> Among others, see, for example, J.T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity* (JSNTSup 136; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); *idem*, “Discourse Analysis,” in Porter (ed.), *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*, 189–217; *idem*, “Cohesive Ties in 1 Timothy: In Defense of the Epistle’s Unity,” *Neot* 26 (1992) 131–147; *idem*, “To Timothy or Not: A Discourse Analysis of 1 Timothy,” in S.E. Porter and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research* (JSNTSup 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 90–118; *idem*, “Discourse Features in New Testament Letters with Special Reference to the Structure of 1 Timothy,” *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 6 (1993) 228–252; *idem*, “Modern Linguistics and the New Testament: A Basic Guide to Theory, Terminology, and Literature,” in Porter and Tombs (eds.), *Approaches to New Testament Study*, 222–265; G. Martín-Asensio, “Hallidayan Functional Grammar as Heir to New Testament Rhetorical Criticism,” in Porter and Stamps (ed.), *Rhetoric and the Bible*; *idem*, “Foregrounding and its Relevance for Interpretation and Translation, with Acts 27 as a Case Study,” in S.E. Porter and R.S. Hess (eds.), *Translating the Bible: Problems and Prospects* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming 1999); and *idem*, “Participant Reference and Foregrounded Syntax in the Stephen Episode,” S.L. Black, “The Historic Present in Matthew: Beyond Speech Margins,” J.T. Reed, “The Cohesiveness of Discourse: Towards a Model of Linguistic Criteria for Analyzing New Testament Discourse,” M.B. O’Donnell, “The Use of Annotated Corpora for New Testament Discourse Analysis: A Survey of Current Practice and

defined “linguistic criticism”<sup>21</sup> as the utilization of a fully explicated linguistic interpretative framework, rather than simply the adaptation of a highly selective number of insights from modern linguistics that can help the exegete make a particular point.) In that sense, this set of essays may well stand at a turning point in New Testament methodological eras, as New Testament scholars re-assess the methods at their disposal, turning (I hope) to those that offer a more substantial exegetical framework. In other words, I hope that New Testament criticism is moving beyond impressionistic exegesis that makes grammatical and theological statements on the basis of feelings, hunches, the tradition of interpretation alone (especially if it only reflects recent fads), and other undemonstrated (and undemonstrable) assertions. Examination of the most recent New Testament commentaries, including those on Acts, illustrates that we are far from seeing this goal fully realized, however. I have tried to avoid these faults insofar as the confines and boundaries of a traditional methodology allow this, by presenting what seem to me to be substantial arguments, backed wherever possible by quantifiable grammatical analysis and other exegetical considerations. Those looking for comprehensive citation of all the secondary literature in most modern languages will have to look elsewhere, however.<sup>22</sup> I have cited only selective and representative secondary literature, where I think it germane and important, drawing upon a number of commentaries that have captured some of the sense of the narrative of Acts, but never, I hope, as a substitute for an argument.

In writing this volume, I think that I will have succeeded if I have raised a significant number of important interpretative and methodological issues, and prompted revived and expanded discussion of one of the seminal figures in early Christianity, as he is depicted in the book of Acts.

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Future Prospects,” and S.E. Porter, “Is Critical Discourse Analysis Critical? An Evaluation Using Philemon as a Test Case,” all in S.E. Porter and J.T. Reed (eds.), *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming 1999); as well as some of the essays in Porter and Carson (eds.), *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*, esp. Part I; and S.E. Porter and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming 1999).

<sup>21</sup> McDonald and Porter, *Early Christianity and its Sacred Literature*, chap. 2. See also R. Fowler, *Linguistic Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>22</sup> Abundant bibliography is referred to in J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (MeyerK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) *passim* (which arrived too late for my use in this volume).

## Chapter Two

# The “We” Passages in Acts as a Source regarding Paul

### 1. Introduction

The “we” passages in Acts continue to be discussed for their bearing on questions of source and authorship of the book, as well as its historical reliability.<sup>1</sup> The proposals have been several and their variations legion. To summarize, the four major proposals are: (1) they indicate the author’s personal presence as an eyewitness (this is the traditional solution), (2) they reflect a diary or literary source, perhaps from the author but more likely from another writer (this is the source-critical solution), (3) they are some form of redacted document, reflecting the author’s imaginative editorial manipulation (this is the redaction-critical solution), or (4) they are a literary creation, reflecting the author’s creation of a larger fictive narrative work patterned after contemporary literature, or his use of a literary convention for telling of sea voyages in the first-person plural (this is the so-called literary solution).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For summaries of past discussion, see J. Dupont, *The Sources of Acts: The Present Position* (trans. K. Pond; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964) esp. 76–112 on “we” and “they” sources, and 113–65 on forms of “itinerary” theories (cf. *idem*, *Études sur les Actes des Apôtres* [LD 45; Paris: Cerf, 1967] 33–40); D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 3rd edn, 1970) 363–377. Dupont (*Sources of Acts*, 166) contends that the quest for sources is probably futile. I am not as pessimistic as he is, as the following argument attempts to show. The recent neglect of the topic in a major Bible dictionary does not bode well for the subject, however. See L.T. Johnson, “Luke–Acts, Book of,” *ABD* 4 (1992) 403–420. For general discussion of the history of Acts scholarship, see W.W. Gasque, *A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (BGBE 17; Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); M.C. Parsons and J.B. Tyson (eds.), *Cadbury, Knox, and Talbert: American Contributions to the Study of Acts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); and I.H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (NTG; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 84–91.

<sup>2</sup> For summaries of the issues, see especially S.M. Praeder, “The Problem of First Person Narration in Acts,” *NovT* 29 (1987) 193–218; C.J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (ed. C. Gempf; WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr–Siebeck, 1989; repr. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 308–334; *idem*, “First Person Narrative in Acts 27–28,” *TynBul* 36 (1985) esp. 79–86; C.-J. Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der*

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