

ARCO DEN HEIJER

Portraits of Paul's
Performance in the
Book of Acts

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

Mohr Siebeck

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Portraits of Paul's Performance in the Book of Acts

Luke's Apologetic Strategy in the Depiction of
Paul as Messenger of God

Mohr Siebeck

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For Philip and Matthias

Preface

The PhD project that has resulted in this book has benefited from conversations with many friends, colleagues and scholars. I express my thanks to the financial support offered by Stichting Jagtspoel Fonds, Stichting De Honderd Gulden Reis, Vicariefonds Ridderlijke Duitse Orde Balije van Utrecht, and Stichting Greijdanus-Kruithof Fonds, which enabled a stay of four months in Cambridge (UK) to conduct my research in the Library of Tyndale House. The wealth of books available in Cambridge and the interaction with other scholars from around the world have contributed greatly to this thesis. Particularly helpful were conversations about my project with Steve Walton, Loveday Alexander, David Friedman, and Simon Gathercole. Also, I thank George van Kooten for bringing me into contact with them and inviting me to the Cambridge New Testament Research Seminar.

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The academic home of this study is the research group Biblical Exegesis and Systematic Theology (BEST) of the Theological Universities of Apeldoorn and Kampen, closely related institutes for Reformed Theology in the Netherlands. It provided a research environment characterised by friendship, fear of the Lord, and an open mind in the investigation of his Word.

Most of the actual reading and writing for my thesis was done in the attic of the Theological University Kampen, in an office shared first with Chandra Gunawan and later with Surya Harefa. Neighbouring PhD students were Anne, Lisanne, Jasper, Marinus, Byunghoon, Aron, Chul-Kyu, Koos, Jung-Hun, Moses, Chungman, and Eunkyuu. In addition, we enjoyed the company of Myriam Klinker-de Klerck, assistant professor of New Testament and a thoughtful

scholar; Marc Janssens, teacher of Greek and Latin; and Siebold Schipper, researcher in church history. Their names represent cheerful company and warm collegiality. Many thanks to them, and to all those working and studying at the University, for making me feel at home in Kampen.

Rob van Houwelingen, professor of New Testament at the Theological University Kampen, supervised the project carefully, with an eye for detail and an encouraging nonchalance regarding established scholarly views, and with much concern for my personal wellbeing. Bart Koet, professor of New Testament at the Tilburg School of Catholic Theology in Utrecht, acted as external supervisor of the project. His continuous insistence on staying close to the actual wording of the text has shaped my exegetical conscience. I thank Rob and Bart for guiding me along the way of writing my thesis.

At the final stage of the project, the manuscript was read carefully by Niels den Hertog and Roelof van IJken, and by Edward Jacobson from Vuurtoren Editing. I thank them very much for their feedback, suggestions and corrections, which improved the readability of the book at numerous points.

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Arco den Heijer
Nijmegen, 1 January 2021

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This study focuses on the portrayal of Paul's performance in five episodes from the book of Acts: Acts 13:4–12 (before Sergius Paulus in Paphos),¹ Acts 13:14–52 (in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch), Acts 14:6–20 (in Lystra), Acts 17:16–34 (in Athens), and Acts 25:23–26:32 (before Agrippa in Caesarea). In this way it contributes to research into the image of Paul in Acts. The concept of 'performance' will provide a heuristic framework for the inquiry and connect it with contemporary interest in performance.

In this introductory chapter, the research question will be situated in the field of scholarship on 'the image of Paul in Acts' (§1.1). Next, the concept of 'performance' will be elucidated (§1.2) and the selection of case studies justified (§1.3). The chapter closes with preliminary remarks about the text used as basis for my research and assumptions about dating and authorship of the book of Acts (§1.4), as well as a brief sketch of the relationship between Romans, Jews and Christians at the end of the first century CE (§1.5).

1.1. Research Field and Question

Since the rise of biblical scholarship over the course of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, a broad field of research has emerged under the title "the image of Paul in Acts", "the Lukan Paul", or "the reception of Paul in Acts". Overviews of the development of this field of research have been given elsewhere.² Here, only a concise survey will be given of the various questions that have been posed in this research field as well as the diversity of answers given to them, in order to situate my own research within this field. In view of the topic of my thesis, a short literature survey on the speeches in Acts is also included.

¹ In the text of Acts, Sergius Paulus's name is spelled with single λ. The correct Latin spelling is with double ll. In this study, I follow the convention in English Bible translations to write the name with single l.

² For extensive bibliographical overviews, cf. Mattill, *Bibliography*; Gasque, *History*; Schröter, "Actaforschung", 27–59; Flichy, "Paul"; Baker, "Peter and Paul".

1.1.1. Historical Issues

A key issue has been one with a historical orientation: How does the course of Paul's life as described in Acts relate to what can be deduced from Paul's letters about his life? This question was first investigated by William Paley, who concluded that comparison of both sources shows their historical reliability.³ Subsequently, some scholars have pointed out contradictions between the account of Acts and the information from Paul's letters and have taken a radically skeptical approach to the historicity of the narrative provided by Acts.⁴ Others have sought to demonstrate that Acts provides reliable data that can be harmonised with the information from the letters.⁵ Many scholars navigate a course between these extremes.⁶ In addition, it is debated what it implies for the authorship of Acts if there are chronological and biographical differences between Acts and Paul's letters. Does it imply that the author of Acts cannot have known Paul personally,⁷ or can the differences be explained as part of his freedom in narrating the life of Paul with an eye to his own purposes?⁸

A second historical question concerns the relationship between the content of Paul's proclamation as described in Acts and the theology in Paul's letters. Here, the article of Philipp Vielhauer, written in 1950, is the classic representative of the view that Luke's⁹ and Paul's theologies are incompatible.¹⁰ However, both his assessment of Luke's theology and his Lutheran interpretation

³ Paley, *Horae Paulinae*. Cf. Gasque, *History*, 17–19. For a recent, cautious comparison of the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the letters, cf. Phillips, *Paul*. Phillips concludes that “in particular, Paul's wealth, citizenships, tutelage under Gamaliel, and commissioning by the high priest – as well as the retainer class social status that Paul probably derived from these advantages – have probably (but not necessarily) been embellished to varying degrees by the author of Acts.” Phillips, 124. Cf. also Walton, *Leadership*, who compares the portrait of Paul in Acts and in the letters by focusing on one speech of Acts and one letter of Paul.

⁴ Cf. especially Baur, *Paulus*; Knox, *Chapters*; Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*; Lüdemann, *Paulus*; Pervo, *Profit*; Mount, *Pauline Christianity*; Harrill, *Paul*, 46–50; Campbell, *Framing Paul*.

⁵ Cf., e.g., Bruce, “Paul”; van Bruggen, *Paulus*; Carson and Moo, *Introduction*, 354–70.

⁶ Cf., e.g., Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life*; Schnelle, *Paulus*, 29–30; Johnson, *Constructing Paul*, 32.

⁷ Thus first de Wette, *Lehrbuch*, 2:203–4.

⁸ Dibelius, following Von Harnack, already argued that the disagreements can be accounted for by the freedom of the ancient historian. Dibelius, *Aufsätze*, 118–19. Recently, Jens Schröter, Simon Buttica and Andreas Dettwiler suggest likewise that the we-passages “point to the author's partial companionship of Paul on his journeys”, without denying the differences between Acts and the letters. Schröter, Buttica, and Dettwiler, “Introduction”, 6. Cf. further below, §1.4.2.

⁹ On the use of “Luke” in this study, see below, §1.4.3.

¹⁰ Vielhauer, “Paulinismus”.

of Paul's letters have been questioned.¹¹ In a bibliographical overview of literature on the reception of Paul in Acts between 1982 and 2003, Jens Schröter concludes that the thesis of a profound diastasis between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the Letters has given way to a detailed analysis of Pauline traditions in Acts and to the way these have been crafted into a specific portrait of Paul by Luke.¹² Since then, the view that the author of Acts has used Paul's letters for his composition has gained more adherents.¹³ This portrait is now appreciated as a creative and original reception of Paul, rather than as a downfall from the heights of Paul into the depths of early Catholicism.¹⁴ Further, coming from a completely different angle than Vielhauer, the *Paul within Judaism* school tends to blame the book of Acts for appropriating Paul as a model Christian convert, whereas Paul appears in his letters as someone who identifies himself as a Jew.¹⁵

A third topic within the debate on the "Paul of Acts" focuses on how Luke describes Paul's social status, level of education, rhetorical ability, and moral excellence (and how this relates to the image that emerges from his letters).

¹¹ For a response to Vielhauer's assessment of Acts, cf. Jervell, "Paul"; Porter, *Paul*, 187–206; Hvalvik, "Paul"; Oliver, "Paul"; Gleich, "Lukanischen Paulusreden". The Lutheran interpretation of Paul's letters that is presupposed by Vielhauer has been questioned in the context of the *New Perspective on Paul* and its more recent successors, the *Radical New Perspective* and the *Paul within Judaism* school. Cf. also De Zwaan, who already argued that the Paul that was seen as being in conflict with the Lukan Paul, was a Paul formed by Western-Protestant or Western-Catholic tradition. De Zwaan, *Inleiding*, 1:163–64. In support of Vielhauer, cf. still Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 313.

¹² Schröter, "Actaforschung", 58. Other scholars approaching the portrait of Paul in Acts as a form of reception history of Paul include de Boer, "Images"; Schenk, "Luke"; Walton, *Leadership*; Schröter, "Kirche"; Marguerat, *Reception*; Koet, "Light"; Buttica, "Paul".

¹³ Cf. the position of Pervo, one of the most influential advocates of a second-century date of Acts. Cf. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 51–147.

¹⁴ On the use of the label "early Catholicism" by Ernst Käsemann, and its prehistory, cf. recently Alkier, "Forschungsgeschichtliche Bemerkungen".

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., Eisenbaum, *Paul*. Eisenbaum does not engage the book of Acts in depth, but refers to it in passing as among the writings that made Paul into a Christian and have a negative perspective on Jews; ignoring the tendency in current scholarship on Acts to read Luke and Acts as Jewish literature (for this, cf., e.g., Böttrich, "Doppelwerk"; Oliver, *Torah*; Carras, "Sensibilities"). An interesting forerunner of this debate was the Dutch scholar W.C. van Manen (1842–1905), who argued that the Jewish Paul of Acts was closer to the historical Paul than the Paul of the letters, which he considered to be an entirely pseudepigraphical letter collection from the early second century CE. "Acts has erred not in making Paul appear too Jewish, but rather in making him out to be too Gentile, or, perhaps better, too Christian. He was and remained a faithful Jew." Gasque, *History*, 90. Cf. van Manen, *Paulus*; Verhoef, *van Manen*; Gasque, *History*, 86–90.

This question has been addressed most extensively by John Lentz, who concludes that Luke portrays Paul as a model of virtue and a person of high social status – a portrait that Lentz considers historically implausible.¹⁶

Finally, Paul's view of Torah and his Jewish identity according to the book of Acts have attracted particular attention. Many scholars have pointed out that Paul is fully law-observant in Acts, and that the book emphasises Paul's Jewishness, especially where Paul has to defend himself against the accusation of teaching against the Jewish nation, law and temple.¹⁷ Others have nuanced this view somewhat, by pointing out, for example, that Paul circumcised Timothy not so much because he thought that the law required this, but "because of the Jews", in order to take away potential stumbling blocks for Timothy's proclamation of the Gospel.¹⁸ Bart Koet has argued that the Paul of Acts and of the letters should be compared based on how they interpret the Scriptures rather than on their respective theologies, since that is the most pertinent point of comparison from Paul's Jewish perspective.¹⁹

1.1.2. Literary Issues

Taking a more literary approach,²⁰ Luke Macnamara has asked how the reader would construct an image of Paul as a character in the story of Acts (limiting his investigation to Acts 7–15), when he or she would read the book of Acts without prior knowledge about Paul.²¹ Likewise, Manfred Lang poses the more specific question about how a Roman reader would read the account of Paul in Acts.²² Matthew Skinner has drawn attention to the contribution of the location to the narrative characterization of Paul, in his examination of the locations of custody in Acts 21–28.²³

A key question within the literary approach is how to evaluate the parallels between what Paul does and says in the book of Acts and what Jesus, Peter and Stephen do and say according to the Gospel of Luke and Acts.²⁴ Moreover,

¹⁶ Lentz, *Portrait*. Cf. also Hickling, "Portrait"; Neyrey, "Social Location"; Hock, "Problem"; Hess, *Rhetor*.

¹⁷ Jervell, "Paul"; Hvalvik, "Paul"; Marguerat, "Torah"; Carras, "Sensibilities".

¹⁸ Thus Du Toit, "Torah". Cf. also Sandnes, *Paul Perceived*.

¹⁹ Koet, *Studies*; Koet, "Light", 251. Cf. also Hays, "Paulinism".

²⁰ The tendency to read Acts as a literary narrative (without discussing its historical value), rather than as a composition of edited traditions, was pioneered by Tannehill, *Unity*. Cf. more recently Aletti, *Quand Luc raconte*.

²¹ Macnamara, *Instrument*.

²² Lang, *Kunst*.

²³ Skinner, *Locating Paul*.

²⁴ Mattill considers H.H. Evans (1884) to have been the first to treat the parallels extensively. Cf. Evans, *Paul*; Radl, *Paulus*; Mattill, "Parallels"; Muhlack, *Parallelen*; Praeder, "Parallelisms"; Moessner, "Christ"; Clark, *Parallel Lives*; Zwiep, "Paul".

some scholars have argued that Paul is depicted in Acts as a prophetic figure.²⁵ Others have focused on Greco-Roman models for the depiction of Paul in Acts, often pointing especially to Socrates, the prototypical Greek philosopher.²⁶ Clare Rothschild has recently made a case for a depiction of Paul as Epimenides.²⁷

1.1.3. Purpose of Luke's Portrait of Paul

Finally, much debate has focused on why the author of Acts pays so much attention to Paul and describes him the way he describes him. Does Luke intend to defend Paul?²⁸ If so, against whose accusations? Accusations by Jews, such as those voiced by the high priest and his Sadducee companions in Acts 22–26?²⁹ Or by Jewish³⁰ or Judaizing Christians who insisted on the necessity of circumcision for Gentile converts?³¹ Critics of the latter two proposals point out that there is little evidence for anti-Paulinism after Paul's death (with the possible exception of the Ebionites),³² but of course, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Or has the author of Acts portrayed Paul like Peter and

²⁵ Johnson, *Function*; Denova, *Accomplished*, 178–99; Moessner et al., *Paul*; Toney, “Paul”; Bormann, “Prophecy”.

²⁶ Sandnes, “Paul and Socrates”; Hummel, “Factum”; Labahn, “Paulus”; Marguerat, “Socratic Figure”; MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil*; Jantsch, “Areopagrede”; Bilby, Kochenash, and Froelich, *Models*.

²⁷ Rothschild, *Paul*.

²⁸ For scholars reading the book of Acts as an apology of Paul, cf. Wasserberg, “Paulusapologie”; Zwiep, “Paul”. Zwiep acknowledges that “attempts to reduce the author's purpose to a single motive are misplaced.” Zwiep, 164.

²⁹ J.D. Michaelis argued that the purpose of Acts was to confirm the truth of the Christian religion through a persuasive account of the first miracles and to defend the right of Gentiles to be part of the church of Christ, a right which was contested especially by Jews. Michaelis, *Einleitung*, 2:1304–5. S.G. Frisch argued for a twofold purpose: (1) defending the cause of Paul against opponents and vindicating his authority and (2) persuading Jews and Jewish Christians that Jesus' dignity was greater than that of Moses and that all men should participate in Christian salvation. Frisch, *Commentarium*. Cf. McGiffert, “Criticism”, 365–66.

³⁰ Thus especially H.E.G. Paulus (cf. McGiffert, “Criticism”, 366) and later Schneckenburger, *Zweck*; Mattill, “Purpose”; Mattill, “Parallels”. More recently, Jacob Jervell argued that Luke defends Paul against Jewish-Christian charges of apostasy from Judaism. Jervell, *Luke*, 17; Jervell, “Paulus – der Lehrer Israels”; Jervell, “Paul”; Jervell, “Paulus in der Apostelgeschichte”. In a similar vein, Rebecca Denova has argued that Luke, a Jew, portrays Paul as law-abiding Jew and prophet of Israel in order to convince Jews and Jewish Christians of the legitimacy of the Gentile mission, in view of Isaianic prophecies. Denova, *Accomplished*.

³¹ H.H. Evans argued that Luke and Acts were written by Paul to defend his life and actions against Judaizers, Jews, and Roman authorities. Evans, *Paul*, 56–57. Cf. further the positions of J.J. Griesbach and H.E.G. Paulus as described in McGiffert, “Criticism”, 364–65.

³² Cf. Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum*; Lindemann, “Paulus”; Konradt, “Antipauliner”.

Peter like Paul in order to reconcile a Petrine (Jewish Christian) and a Pauline movement in early Christianity, as F.C. Baur claimed?³³ A different approach to the parallels is taken by Eve-Marie Becker, who has recently suggested that Acts can be read as a *prosopography*, for which she refers to a definition of Lawrence Stone: “the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives”.³⁴ Thus, Luke highlights the common elements of Peter, Paul and other disciples in order to describe the group to which they belong.³⁵

Another line of scholarship focuses on the political apologetic in Acts.³⁶ Again, Luke may have had Jewish Christians in view, as Luke uses his narrative about Paul to argue that the conversion of the Gentiles does not threaten their safety as Jewish inhabitants of the Roman empire.³⁷ Or he may have had a Gentile audience in view: scholars arguing this consider Theophilus to be a Roman aristocrat, who functions as the addressee of Luke and Acts just as the early Christian *Apologies* are addressed to elite Romans.³⁸ Alternatively, the emphasis on Paul’s defence before Roman governors may have been intended to equip a Christian audience for their life under Roman rule and for their defence strategy in trials.³⁹ Indeed, the emphasis on Paul’s Jewishness and obedience to the law (the “Jewish apologetic”) may be part of the political apologetic strategy of arguing that Christianity deserves to be acknowledged as *religio licita* because it is a form of Judaism.⁴⁰ Those exegetes who read Acts as written primarily for Christians (and perhaps only in a secondary sense also for outsiders)⁴¹ interpret the apologetic strands in the narrative as intended to

³³ Cf. Baur, “Ursprung”, 142; Zeller, *Apostelgeschichte*, 363. For their contemporary critics, cf. Gasque, *History*, 54–72.

³⁴ Stone, “Prosopography”, 46.

³⁵ Becker, *Birth*, 79–82.

³⁶ For a helpful overview, cf. Alexander, “Apologetic Text”.

³⁷ A suggestion of Schneckenburger, taken over by Eduard Zeller. Schneckenburger, *Zweck*, 244–45; Zeller, *Apostelgeschichte*, 368.

³⁸ Cf. Neumann, “Dissertatio”; Overbeck, “Verhältniss”. For Overbeck, this is only a secondary purpose: the primary purpose is to explain why Gentile Christianity had come to be predominant at the beginning of the second century (110–130 CE). On the development of the position of Overbeck through time, cf. Emmelius, *Tendenzkritik*, 112–38. The position of Neumann was substantiated by Cadbury in his detailed commentary on the preface of Luke. Cadbury, “Preface”.

³⁹ Cassidy, *Society*.

⁴⁰ Thus Cadbury, *Making*, 308. For critical discussion of the term and concept of a *religio licita*, cf. Hasselhoff and Strothmann, *Religio licita*. More recent versions of Cadbury’s argument, which do not employ the concept of *religio licita*, are provided in Backhaus, “Mos Maiorum”; Tomson, “Counsel”.

⁴¹ On the possibility of a two-tiered audience, cf. Becker, *Birth*, 46.

provide the audience with assurance amidst rumours about Christians circulating in the Roman world,⁴² as a legitimation of their identity.⁴³

In the second half of the twentieth century, much scholarship was devoted to reconstructing the theology of Luke, or the *kerygma* of the book of Acts. In that approach, preaching was considered to be the purpose of the book, and Paul, alongside Peter and other protagonists, were viewed as mouthpieces or embodiments of Lukan theology.⁴⁴ Even the miracles that Paul performed do not foreground Paul as a person, but demonstrate the power of the Gospel and encourage the readers to have faith in Christ.⁴⁵ More recently, Van Eck has read the book of Acts as a testimony to Christ in his lawsuit against the world, highlighting the political aspects of the book within this theological interpretation of the book's programme.⁴⁶

Alternatively, or in addition to political-apologetic and kerygmatic purposes, Luke may have intended to explain why the Christian church of his day consisted predominantly of converted Gentiles in communities all over the Roman empire, whereas Jesus was a Jew from Nazareth in Galilee. In this reading, the figure of Paul functions to explain the transition: a very Jewish Jew called by Jesus to bring the Gospel to Gentiles in the Roman empire.⁴⁷ The mainstream view around the middle of the twentieth century was that the book of Acts addresses a church that consists overwhelmingly of Gentiles and has become separated from the synagogue.

⁴² Thus Esler, *Community*; Sterling, *Historiography*; Hess, *Rhetor*. Cf. also Alexander: "Already in the first century, we can see that the Christian presentation of the Gospel has a strongly apologetic shape: that is, the story is told in such a way as to provide an apologetic response to objections raised by earlier hearers." Alexander, "Apologetic Agenda".

⁴³ Buttica, "Paul", 412.

⁴⁴ This approach was anticipated by Dibelius, although his main focus was on the *Formgeschichte*, the identification of individual units of tradition, and their *Sitz im Leben*, based on genre distinctions. Cf. Dibelius, *Aufsätze*, 116–17. See also the conclusion of Greijdanus, a Dutch reformed theologian (1871–1948): "De Handelingen, hoewel geschiedenis verhalende, d.w.z. feiten, en deze in onderling verband en in zekere ontwikkeling, zijn toch eigenlijk geen geschiedenisboek, en geven zich daar ook niet voor uit, maar zij zijn een boek van Christus–prediking door de apostelen. [The Acts, although narrating history, i.e. facts, and these in their relationship to each other and in a certain development, are nevertheless not properly a history book, and do not claim to be that, but they are a book of Christ-preaching through the apostles.]" Greijdanus, "Doel", 360. The classic essay of Vielhauer on the Paulinism of Acts reflects the tendency of his day to focus on theological content, but Vielhauer (unlike Dibelius and Greijdanus) thought that the purpose of the author of Acts himself had been to inform about history (even if very inaccurately, according to modern standards). Vielhauer, "Paulinismus", 14.

⁴⁵ Schreiber, *Paulus*, 152.

⁴⁶ van Eck, *Handelingen*, 23–25.

⁴⁷ Cf. Overbeck, "Verhältniss"; Dupont, *Salvation*, 7–8; Dupont, "Salut"; Roloff, "Paulus-Darstellung".

This view was strongly criticised by Jacob Jervell, who claimed that Jewish Christians still constituted a “mighty minority” in the eighties CE, and that the book of Acts addresses a crisis within the church caused by Jewish-Christian allegations about Paul.⁴⁸ However, Jervell maintained that those Jews who had not come to faith in Christ at the end of the book of Acts, were considered by Luke as excluded from the renewed people of Israel: the mission to the Jews ended with the final word of Paul to the Jewish leaders in Rome.⁴⁹ After Jervell, Bart Koet argued that Luke-Acts does not teach a rejection of the Jews in favour of the Gentiles, but the salvation through Christ of the Gentiles and of Israel, based on Isaianic prophecies and stated programmatically in the words of Simeon in Luke 2:29–35.⁵⁰

Today, a more nuanced version of the earlier mainstream view finds many adherents. These exegetes allow for the presence of Jewish Christians in the church envisaged by the author of Acts but still read Luke and Acts as a *Trennungsgeschichte*, an account of the first era (*Erstepoche*) of Christian history, which explains how Christian communities and Jewish synagogues came to be separate entities, even though the Gospel was also, and even primarily, a message of salvation for Jews.⁵¹ The Paul of Acts is widely considered an identity figure who embodies the connection between Judaism and the church.⁵² This interpretation of Acts can already be found in a fourth/fifth-century prologue to a lost commentary on Acts, addressed to a certain Eusebius and preserved in a twelfth-century manuscript of Acts along with the Euthalian prologue.⁵³

Finally, a number of scholars interpret the portrait of Paul in Acts within the context of the polemics against Marcion and/or Gnostic teachers at the beginning or the middle of the second century. In this approach, Luke does not so much defend Paul’s authority, but appropriates it for his views, against Marcion, who also claims Pauline authority for his teaching.⁵⁴ The book of Acts

⁴⁸ Jervell, *Luke*. For a recent version of this interpretation, cf. Oliver, *Torah*. For the opposite position, that the church consists or even should consist exclusively of converted Gentiles according to Luke, cf. Sanders, *Jews*. For various positions in this debate, cf. Tyson, *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People*.

⁴⁹ Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 629.

⁵⁰ Koet, “Isaiah”; Koet, “Worte”.

⁵¹ E.g. Maddox, *Purpose*; Wasserberg, *Mitte*; Wolter, “Doppelwerk”; Buttica, *Identité*; Buttica, “Paul”; Backhaus, “Paulus”.

⁵² Cf. Obermeier, “Gestalt”; Roloff, “Paulus-Darstellung”; Marguerat, “Image”; Flichy, *Figure*; Schröter, “Kirche”; Hoppe and Köhler, *Paulusbild*; Baker, “Peter and Paul”. According to Schnelle, “Paulus fungiert als Repräsentant der zweiten Christengeneration, der die Ikk. Gemeinde ihren Glauben verdankt.” Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 349.

⁵³ Von Dobschütz, “Prologue”. On this document, cf. Hemmerdinger, “Auteur”, 229; Willard, *Study*, 126–27.

⁵⁴ Cf. Klein, *Apostel*; Tyson, *Marcion*. Recently, Nathanael Lüke has argued that Acts, dated to the mid-second century, is intended as introduction to a corpus of Pauline letters

argues against Marcion that Christians should not kiss their Jewish heritage goodbye and emphasises Paul's Jewishness to that purpose.⁵⁵ Indeed, Irenaeus (130/140 CE – late second century CE), the first early Christian author who made extensive use of the book of Acts, read it as an affirmation of the harmony between Paul and the Twelve and used this to combat Marcionites and Valentinians.⁵⁶ Whether this was also the intention of the author of Acts remains contested.⁵⁷

1.1.4. Scholarship on the Speeches in Acts

This study builds on a body of research into the speeches in Acts. As in the case of the investigation of the image of Paul in Acts, much scholarship has focused on the historical value of the many speeches that Luke has inserted in his narrative. Though few scholars would argue that they present *verbatim* reports of what was said on the occasion, some posit that they do provide adequate summaries and in some cases may even have been based on shorthand transcripts.⁵⁸ Other scholars have been more skeptical, regarding the speeches as the product of “historic imagination”, composed according to ancient conventions to dramatise a narrative that, as a whole, is not without historical value.⁵⁹ Form critics have tended to regard the speeches as traditional material derived from various early Christian practices, which was inserted into the narrative of Acts only secondarily, in scenes composed to provide a setting for these speeches. This form-critical hypothesis inspired a tendency to study the speeches isolated from their context.⁶⁰ In contrast, most scholars today agree that context and speech should be studied together as integral parts of one narrative.⁶¹ Much scholarship has been devoted to comparing the Lukan practice

that guides the readers to an anti-Marcionite interpretation of these letters. Cf. Lüke, *Kohärenz*.

⁵⁵ Pervo, *Making*, 151–52.

⁵⁶ Especially Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.13.3–3.14.1.

⁵⁷ For a recent evaluation of the anti-Marcionite interpretation of the book of Acts, cf. Oliver, “Luke”.

⁵⁸ Bruce, *Speeches*; Winter, “Proceedings”; Baum, “Paulinismen”.

⁵⁹ The phrase “historic imagination” is derived from the seminal essay of Cadbury, “Speeches”, 426.

⁶⁰ Especially Dibelius, “Areopag”. Kucicki also isolates the speeches from the surrounding narrative. However, his motivation for doing so is completely different: recognizing that Luke uses three narrative devices, (narratives, speeches, and dialogues), he reads the account first without the speeches, showing that this provides a coherent historical narrative, and then analyses the function of the speeches, which is, in his view, a hermeneutical function: they interpret for the reader what is told in the narrative. Kucicki, *Function*.

⁶¹ Cf. especially Soards, *Speeches*. See also Smith, *The Rhetoric of Interruption*.

with the practices of other ancient authors.⁶² Recently, a dissertation by Brandon Wason has argued in detail that the speeches in Acts have been written according to the rhetorical technique of *προσωποποιΐα* (cf. also below, §1.2.4.3).⁶³ Finally, Conrad Gempf has argued that the speeches should not be evaluated as transcripts or summaries of what people said, but as records of historical *events*, created with the intention to be appropriate both to the book as a whole and to the alleged speaker and situation.⁶⁴ This view aligns well with my interpretation of the speeches as ‘performances’, as will become clear in §1.2. The focus of my study will be on how to understand Luke’s portrayal of Paul in the speeches that Luke assigns to him on various occasions.

1.1.5. Research Question

The survey above shows that the debate on “the Paul of Acts” has many different focal points and ramifications. Not all of the questions discussed in this field are addressed in my investigation. For example, no comparison is made with Paul’s letters, and no research is done into whether the picture painted in Acts of Paul’s actions is historically plausible. Instead, my research addresses the following main question:

How is Paul’s performance portrayed in five episodes of the book of Acts, and what is the function of this depiction?

A number of elements in this question need further clarification. In §1.2, I will first outline what I mean by “performance” and why I use this concept in a study of the portrait of Paul in Acts. In §1.3, I will account for the selection of five episodes as case studies on Luke’s depiction of Paul’s performance and explain how I intend to investigate the second part of my research question concerning the function or purpose of the depiction of Paul’s performance in these episodes.

1.2. Concept of Performance

The notion of performance as a central element in my research question has been chosen on the one hand because it aligns with a contemporary interest in performance, in relation to themes such as authenticity, persuasiveness, and power and in the context of a performative turn in the humanities. On the other hand, the notion has been chosen because it encompasses a number of aspects that can be identified in the description of Paul’s deeds and speeches in Acts. I

⁶² E.g. Dibelius, “Reden”; Plümacher, *Schriftsteller*; van Unnik, “Rules”; Plümacher, “Missionsreden”; Pervo, “Direct Speech”; Schell, *Areopagrede*.

⁶³ Wason, “All Things”.

⁶⁴ Gempf, “Public Speaking”.

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