ANDREW GREGORY

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Mohr Siebeck

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The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus

Looking for Luke in the Second Century

Mohr Siebeck

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for Katherine
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Andrew Gregory
Oxford
Pentecost 2003

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Chapter One

Introduction and Methodology

1.1 The Scope of This Monograph

The research project which was the basis of this monograph was originally conceived as a comparison of the pneumatology of *Luke-Acts* with the pneumatologies presented in Christian literature of the second century. Recent scholarship on Lukan pneumatology is agreed that Luke has a particular interest in the Spirit, but it is divided as to whether his pneumatology is part of a homogeneous early Christian understanding or a distinctive presentation that is to be sharply differentiated from that of Matthew and Mark, of John, and of Paul. Noting a lacuna identified by Turner,[1] I set out initially to ask two questions. First, whether it might be possible to identify in second century pneumatologies any characteristics that New Testament scholars might label as distinctively Lukan. Second, whether such characteristics might be sufficient to indicate not only the influence of Lukan pneumatology but also a conscious appropriation of distinctively Lukan theology by other early Christians.

Any attempt to identify Lukan influence on later writers, or any attempt to demonstrate their appropriation of Lukan thought depends on an ability to demonstrate the knowledge and use of *Luke* and/or *Acts* in those texts. Therefore I approached the question of the reception of *Luke* and *Acts* as no more than a preliminary investigation that was methodologically necessary as a foundation on which my discussion of pneumatology might stand. Yet ongoing research demonstrated that the fluidity of Christian traditions in the second century and the tendency to harmonise gospel tradition render anachronistic any attempt to speak of the distinctive theological influence of Luke. Not only did it prove very difficult to find evidence for a particularly Lukan stream of pneumatology, but so too it proved very difficult to find evidence for the particular influence of Luke. This realisation pointed to the importance of the prior issue of the reception of *Luke-Acts* in itself. I discovered that relatively little attention had been paid to the question of whether or how *Luke* and *Acts* were known and used in the period before

[1] "Most attempts at describing Luke's pneumatology have made little if any attempt to locate his views within a more general history of the development of understanding(s) of the Spirit from Jewish views through to the second century." Turner 1996: 13.

Ireneaus, so a question which I had assumed would be no more than a preliminary one became the focus of my research.

As it now stands, this monograph sets out primarily to ask an open question rather than to demonstrate or to overturn a previously held assumption, although in doing so it will challenge a number of commonly held assumptions in the study of the emerging New Testament. The open question, any answer to which will help to fill a lacuna in contemporary scholarship and its knowledge of Christian origins, is this: what use was made of *Luke-Acts* in the second century, and what conclusions – if any – may be drawn from the level and kind of use that is discovered? Various assumptions and prior decisions lie behind this question, so it seems helpful to justify or at least to clarify each of them as an introduction to the discussion which follows.

1.2 The Assumptions of the Monograph

First, there is the question of why it is the investigation of the reception of *Luke-Acts* and not any other early Christian text that is taken as the basis for this study. The short and straightforward answer is that no such detailed investigation of this question has yet been attempted, nor indeed has there been a satisfactory comprehensive treatment of the early reception of either *Luke* or *Acts*.[2] Behind this question lies the modern assumption that *Luke* and *Acts* are two volumes of one longer work,[3] each of which was written by the same author. Therefore it is important to realise that *Luke-Acts* as an object of study, two separate texts linked by a hyphen, is in fact a modern construct.[4] Of course this is not to deny that Luke wrote two successive volumes – and perhaps even set out to write two successive volumes – each of which largely coheres with and informs the other. Rather, it is simply to note that for much of their subsequent history Luke's two volumes have not been read in this way and, consequently, that it is not possible to assume that the knowledge and use of one of these texts by a subsequent reader or text need in itself require or indeed make probable the knowledge and use of the other. Nor do we know if ever they circulated together in this period, for once Luke released each volume he would have had no control over its circulation and copying.

Thus although Irenaeus made use of *Luke* and *Acts* together it would appear that this was not typical, either in those who preceded or succeeded him. This means that in order to try to do justice to the historical circumstances of Christian life in this period, it is necessary to investigate the

[2] For a survey of previous scholarship, see below, Chapter Two.

[3] On the unity of *Luke-Acts*, see Verheyden 1999.

[4] The term was coined by Cadbury. For discussion and references, see Maddox 1982: 3–6.

reception of *Luke* and of *Acts* as two separate entities. Parallels and links may emerge in the course of our investigation, but it is important to reach separate conclusions before these conclusions may be brought together. Further, not only is it important to do this in order to avoid importing anachronistic assumptions unnecessarily into second-century texts, but it may also provide us with a number of methodological checks and balances when we come to compare the results of the two parts of this investigation.

Second, there is the question of why it is the *period before Irenaeus* that has been chosen as the period to be investigated. Primarily, it is because of the probable importance of this early and still largely unknown period[5] for the development of the Christian Church, its practice and its Scriptures, as we know them today. As Gerd Lüdemann has put it: "*In the period from the first Christian generations to the end of the second century, more important decisions were made for the whole of Christianity than were made from the end of the second century to the present day.*"[6] Also, the fact that the work of Ireneaus provides a natural upper limit for a study such as this may be seen from its adoption in comparable treatments of the reception of *Matthew*[7] and of *John*.[8]

It is also important that this period is identified as the "period before Irenaeus" rather than strictly as the "second century". Too much should not be made of the second century as a tightly defined historical period with clear opening and closing dates. Much of our chronological information for this period is limited, and it is difficult to reach firm conclusions in dating many of the texts and authors whom I shall discuss. The *Against Heresies* of Irenaeus, probably dated *c*185, provides a more practical *terminus ad quem* than does the year 199 or 200, not least because it appears that it is Irenaeus who provides the first explicit external witness to both *Luke* and *Acts*. Yet there are a number of texts which although possibly later than Irenaeus may nevertheless shed light on the period prior to Irenaeus.[9] Similarly, a "fuzzy" boundary seems to be required also at our starting period. It is possible that some canonical texts might be a witness to the reception of *Luke* or of *Acts*, and I shall include a discussion of *John* and *2 Timothy* as potential witnesses to *Luke* and to *Acts* respectively, but otherwise I shall use "second century texts" as a form of short-hand equivalent for non-canonical writings.

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[5] On the difficulties in approaching "the creativity of the second century", see Lieu 1996: 3–5.

[6] 1996: 12 (his italics). *Cf* Osborn 2001: xiv, who refers to the second century as "that fertile period which formed Christian thought".

[7] Massaux 1990, Köhler 1986.

[8] J Sanders 1943, Nagel 2000.

[9] For example, early witnesses pertaining to the New Prophecy, the early Apocryphal Acts and the source underlying *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* 1.27–71. See below Chapter Twelve.

Similarly, some of the texts that I shall discuss might contain material that is earlier than the second century, for example the *Didache*.

The third prior decision to be justified is that it is either appropriate or helpful to study *Luke-Acts in the context of second-century Christian writings*. Some may object to this approach on theological grounds, for it might be thought to undermine the authority of the canon and to lead towards an evaluation of early Christian literature that does not make a sufficient distinction between those texts that came to be recognised as canonical and those that did not. Yet even if it is accepted that there is theological force to this objection, such a theological consideration should be treated with caution in a historical study. On the contrary, it seems likely that for the historian there can only be positive consequences of any attempt to break down the artificial and relatively unexplored boundaries that modern scholarship tends to maintain between the study of canonical ("New Testament") and non-canonical ("Patristic") texts.

Further, with specific reference to the particular texts which constitute the twin foci of this study, there are in fact a number of links which can be made between issues and concerns that appear to be reflected in *Luke-Acts* and those that are found also in second-century texts and authors. Such links justify the discussion of *Luke-Acts* in particular against the background of second-century Christianity.[10] Indeed, even if it is not possible to demonstrate that *Luke* and *Acts* were known and used in the second century, other important similarities or contrasts between *Luke*, *Acts* and second-century texts might emerge, and these in themselves may be useful in learning more about some aspects of second-century Christianity as well as in shedding further light on *Luke-Acts*.

This leads me therefore to justify my fourth prior decision, which is why the approach of this thesis is to investigate the *reception* of *Luke* and *Acts* in second-century Christianity rather than to ask the more open question of what relationship, if any, might be detected between *Luke-Acts* and Christian texts of the second century. To speak of the second-century reception of *Luke-Acts* is to assume that those texts were written and available in time to be "received" in the second century, rather than that they were written in the second century. I have assumed throughout this investigation that the composition of *Luke* and of *Acts* should be dated no later than the early 90s.[11]

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[10] For a list of the concerns which Luke shares with the second century church, see Shellard 1994: 80–81. *Cf* also Knox 1942; Talbert 1966; Drury 1976: 22–25; Wilshire 1974; Zehnle 1971: 44–60; Townsend 1984. On the particular affinities between Luke and Justin see O'Neill 1970; Skarsaune 1987; and Chapters Seven and Eleven below.

[11] This is the latest date at which it seems reasonable to believe that a companion of Paul, whose presence seems to be indicated in the we-passages, might have written *Acts*. This date assumes of course that in these passages the author of *Acts* did not draw on a source written

This means that it is reasonable to suppose that Christians living after this date may have been in a position to have known and used *Luke* and *Acts* in the form in which Luke released them.

1.3 Methodological Issues for the Current Study

1.3.1 Introduction

The question of whether other Christians *knew* the writings of *Luke* is not one that can be addressed directly however, for it is impossible to demonstrate knowledge unless it is used. Further, an inability to demonstrate use does not mean that non-use (let alone ignorance) has been proven. Therefore this investigation is limited to the question of whether it is possible to show that other Christian texts have *used Luke* and/or *Acts*, and this in turn can be answered only on the basis of whether it is possible to prove either direct literary dependence or the indirect appropriation and use of either *Luke* or *Acts* in another writing. Establishing that one text has drawn indirectly on or that it presupposes another is very difficult indeed, and the problem of identifying quotations and allusions is often scarcely less so. A writer may employ expressions in the precise form in which they were first written or spoken by others and yet be unaware that he is "quoting." She may also consciously reproduce an earlier written authority and yet do so in such a loose or tendentious manner that it is difficult for a reader or hearer to ascertain whether or not the "quotation" is intentional. This raises the question of whether a "quotation" is to be defined by a writer-centred or reader-centred approach. By "writer-centred", I mean one in which consideration is given as to whether an author is referring to an earlier text. By "reader-centred" I mean an approach which addresses the question of whether the reader or the hearer of a text is aware that the author of that text is drawing on an earlier text. I shall adopt the former alternative, for the interest of this study lies in the question of whether writers in the period before Ireneaus drew on *Luke* and/or *Acts* rather than on whether their readers were likely to be aware of such

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by someone else in the first person, and that he consciously claims to have been a companion of Paul.

Other internal arguments used for the dating of *Luke-Acts* seem less secure than the use of the we-passages. If those arguments that are advanced to date *Luke* post 70 are accepted, it is not altogether clear why they must keep *Luke-Acts* to pre-100 unless an argument from the we-passages is introduced.

As I shall argue, there is no firm evidence from external sources for the reception of *Luke* until mid second century at the earliest, and none for *Acts* until slightly later. This does not require a second-century date for *Luke-Acts*, but it does make it difficult to rule it out.

For discussion of the date of *Luke-Acts*, see Wilshire 1974, Maddox 1982: 6–9.

dependence. The possibility of an author seeking not to quote but to allude to or to paraphrase an earlier text further complicates the question of what constitutes a quotation or allusion, as does the possibility that many quotations were made from memory.

Studies of quotations from and allusions to earlier authorities abound in the study of the New Testament, whether discussions of the use of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament, or of Jesus tradition in the letters of Paul and elsewhere. Yet there has been perhaps surprisingly little rigorous attention paid to the methodological issues that are raised in the attempt to determine what constitutes either a quotation or an allusion.[12] Similar issues must be addressed in setting out the methodological considerations that will guide this discussion of the reception of *Luke* and *Acts*, although the precise distinction between a quotation and an allusion is of secondary importance for our purposes. This is because either quotations or allusions, if established, may each be sufficient to indicate the use of *Luke* or *Acts*, directly or indirectly. A direct quotation, containing verbatim parallels to material in *Luke* or *Acts* and referring explicitly to either of those texts as its source would of course constitute the strongest possible evidence. Almost as strong would be an explicit reference to either *Luke* or *Acts* as the source of particular information known to be found in either text, even if the material were not quoted verbatim. Yet such evidence is not generally available in surviving texts from the period before Irenaeus, so it would be foolish to draw any conclusions from its absence. Rather, other criteria must be determined for assessing such evidence as is available.

Such criteria must assess not only whether a writer is referring to an unidentified earlier text, but also whether and how that text may be identified. A writer may refer to something that is known today otherwise only through *Luke* or *Acts*, or through other texts thought to be dependent upon either of them, but this does not of itself constitute proof that a particular writer depended on either *Luke* or *Acts* for such information. For example, the only reference in the synoptic tradition to Jesus' age at the beginning of his ministry is found in *Luke*. Yet it is possible that such information was well known quite independently of *Luke*. Again, only Luke tells us of the Apostolic Decree. Yet if there were such a decree, then it is possible that the

[12] For discussion and bibliography, see Stanley 1992: 31–61, Porter 1997. Note also Thompson 1991: 30–36 (but *cf* Porter 1992: 85–87) for a set of criteria intended to provide sound method in identifying allusions in biblical literature. Thompson also discusses the citation of Jesus-tradition in other early Christian writers whose works are preserved in the New Testament (1991: 37–44) and in the Apostolic Fathers (1991: 44–60). He finds a general lack of appeal to Jesus tradition in early Christian writers, and argues that this should make it unrealistic to expect anything significantly different in the letters of Paul (1991: 60–63). For another catalogue of criteria for literary dependence, intended to demonstrate the dependence of the *Acts of Andrew* on Homer, see MacDonald 1994: 302–316.

text, or at least the content, of the decree was widely known through copies of the letter quite independently of any knowledge of the text of *Acts*. The same issue may present itself even if a later writer includes material that is verbally, formally or conceptually parallel to material now otherwise extant only in either *Luke* or *Acts*. This difficulty arises because although there is a great deal of material in *Luke* and (especially) in *Acts* that is without parallel in other extant sources, the possibility that it may draw either on an earlier written or oral source means that it may not always be possible to assume that a later writer draws on *Luke* or *Acts* rather than on one of the sources that may have been used in the composition of those texts.

If it were possible to be certain that all Luke's single-tradition was his own composition then there would be no need to consider the possibility of such sources, but the question of the origin of such single tradition remains unresolved. Hence I shall discuss, first, the way in which others have approached the question of the use of the Synoptic Gospels in this period and, second, the arguments that persuade me to remain open to the possibility that there may be occasions when later writers may have drawn not only on *Luke* or on *Acts* but on sources or traditions that may be older than those texts and used independently of their use by Luke.

1.3.2 Earlier Approaches to the Reception of Synoptic Tradition

That different approaches to such prior questions will lead to very different conclusions may be seen in the examinations of the use of *Matthew* and of synoptic tradition in the Apostolic Fathers by Massaux and Koester respectively. The results of their investigations are quite distinct, as Neirynck observes.[13] Whereas Massaux argued for the widespread influence of canonical Gospels, and the preponderance of *Matthew*, Koester found in favour of the preponderance of oral tradition independent of and often earlier than the written Gospels. Not surprisingly, such different results were obtained from the adoption of different methodological approaches. Neirynck describes Massaux as having been guided by a 'principle of simplicity', for 'a source which is "unknown" does not attract him.'[14] Massaux's own initial account of his methodology is quite brief. He notes that he shall speak often of 'literary contact', and states that he shall use the term

> in a rather strict sense of the word, requiring, when speaking of contact, sufficiently striking verbal concurrence that puts the discussion in a context that already points towards the Gospel of Mt. These literary contacts do not exhaust the literary influence of

[13] Neirynck 1990: xiv.
[14] Neirynck 1990: xix.

> the gospel; one can expect, without a properly so-called literary contact, the use of typically Matthean vocabulary, themes and ideas.'[15]

Thus Massaux seeks passages that are similar to *Matthew*, and he evaluates whether they depend on *Matthew* by asking of they are closer to *Matthew* than to other New Testament writings. This, in effect, is what Neirynck has described as Massaux's principle of simplicity: material that looks like *Matthew* is likely to depend on Matthew, and little or no consideration is given to the possibility that it depends on the postulated sources *M* or *Q*, or on the shared vocabulary of a common community. Massaux assumes the knowledge and use of *Matthew* in at least some of the Apostolic Fathers, and sets out to determine its extent. Koester, by contrast, sets out to determine whether the knowledge and use of the Synoptic Gospels may be determined at all.

Koester's approach is more complicated, but this is a strength rather than a weakness. He is open to the possibility that Jesus tradition may stem not from the Synoptics but from their sources, written or oral, so he formulates a criterion to assess whether or not parallels to synoptic tradition can be shown rather than assumed to depend on the Synoptic Gospels. This criterion is that literary dependence on the finished form of a text is to be identified only where the later text makes use of an element from the earlier text that can be identified as the redactional work of the earlier author/editor.[16] Koester makes no mention of Massaux in his monograph,[17] but his methodology differs from Massaux's in his cognisance of the difficulty that the presence of similar or even verbally identical material in two texts is not itself sufficient proof of literary dependence, for two texts might each draw independently on a common source. Yet if Massaux may be accused of finding dependence on Matthew too readily, Koester's weakness may be that his criterion makes it virtually impossible to demonstrate any dependence on a Synoptic Gospel except in passages where the redactional activity of an evangelist may be readily identified. This is a point to which I shall return. The importance of Koester's criterion must be noted, but it is important to emphasise that he has not spoken the last word on the question of how literary dependence is best established.

Köhler provides a further important contribution to the debate on how the reception of a Synoptic Gospel may be assessed, and his monograph on the

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[15] Massaux 1990: xxi–xxii.

[16] In discussion of the question whether written gospels or older traditions lie behind passages quoted under the authority of 'the Lord" rather than that of an explicit appeal to a written source, Koester states: " hängt die Frage der Benutzung davon ab, ob sich in den angeführten Stücken Redaktionsarbeit eines Evangelisten findet.", 1957: 3. For a convenient presentation of his argument, see Koester 1994.

[17] But see Koester 1994 for a direct critique of Massaux.

reception of *Matthew* is in many ways similar to this monograph on the reception of *Luke*. Köhler's account of earlier research on the reception of *Matthew* takes its cue from the stand-off between the approaches of Koester and of Massaux,[18] and acknowledges that the methodology of the former is more satisfactory than that of the latter.[19] Köhler notes the importance of Koester's concern for introductory citation formulas, although he concludes that such formulas can neither prove nor disprove the appropriation of *Matthew*.[20] He also agrees with his emphasis on redactional elements as proof for the use of a particular Synoptic Gospel,[21] but notes also the limitations of his approach. Thus Köhler observes that it is not appropriate to argue that written Gospels have not been used just because it may not be possible to demonstrate their use,[22] and he sets out to address the problem of how possible literary dependence is to be addressed when neither citation formulas nor redactional material is present. Köhler offers a number of criteria to assist in this process, noting that no satisfactory catalogue of criteria is to be found in other discussions besides those of Koester and Massaux.[23] Köhler offers three main criteria, each sub-divided further, to be used in determining the extent to which *Matthew* may have been used in Christian texts written in the period before Irenaeus.

Köhler's first criterion concerns the appropriation of *Matthew*, whether or not it is characterised as such. Such appropriation may consist of either quotations or allusions.[24] The second criterion applies more specifically to the possibility of the appropriation of precise wording or phraseology ("Formulierungen") from *Matthew*, or appropriations of his contents and thought. It is sub-divided into two parts. The first part deals with appropriations of Matthean phraseology, and suggests that such appropriation may indicate either clear reference to a particular pericope or verse or, more generally, the reception and appropriation of Matthean language.[25] Examples of such language include expressions that are more frequent in *Matthew* than elsewhere in the New Testament, *eg* ἀνομία,[26] or in the synoptic tradition in particular, *eg* ὑποκρίτης,[27] or words that occur only in *Matthew* and nowhere else in the New Testament, *eg* βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.[28] Köhler also

[18] Köhler 1987: 2–4.
[19] Köhler 1987: 5.
[20] Köhler 1987: 4, 520.
[21] Köhler 1987: 4.
[22] Köhler 1987: 5.
[23] Köhler 1987: 6–7.
[24] Köhler 1987: 8.
[25] Köhler 1987: 8.
[26] Köhler 1987: 9.
[27] Köhler 1987: 9.
[28] Köhler 1987: 9.

includes Matthean special vocabulary, words that Matthew uses in a singular way, *eg* εὐαγγέλιον and μαθητής.[29] The second part deals with either narrative details or content-related statements which arise in relation to particular themes from *Matthew*.[30] Köhler recognises that second-century writers may not have been as alert to the distinctive thematic theological interests of particular evangelists as are modern critics, but argues that it is necessary nevertheless to address the possible appropriation of distinctively Matthean theological themes. These include Matthew's christology, the status of Peter, the role of the law and ecclesiology.[31]

Both these sets of criteria, we might note, start from the text of *Matthew*. Certainly Köhler is open to the possibility that oral tradition rather than direct literary dependence on *Matthew* may explain some Jesus-tradition that is similar to Jesus-tradition in *Matthew*. Yet his initial statement of these criteria suggests a tendency to assume the use of *Matthew* rather than special tradition which may have been available independently to Matthew and to later Christian writers. Köhler's observation that it is not appropriate to argue that written Gospels have not been used just because it may not be possible to demonstrate their use[32] is an important methodological point and a useful qualification of the potentially minimalist results that may be obtained by too strict and exclusive an application of Koester's methodology.

But the opposite is also true. Therefore it is also important to balance Köhler's observation with a reminder that it is not possible simply to assume that the canonical Gospels were the only sources on which writers may have drawn for Jesus tradition. Of course this is a problem of which Köhler is not unaware, at least in theory. Thus he notes that the continuing transmission of Matthean Sondergut alongside *Matthew* precludes a straightforward application of his criteria to possible instances of dependence on *Matthew*,[33] and he allows that expressions which appear to modern readers to be distinctive to *Matthew* may originate in Matthew's sources rather than in his own redactional activity.[34] Yet Köhler might be accused of adding these concessions almost as an afterthought to the main exposition of his methodology. He also appears to limit the theoretical possibility of the use of Matthean Sondergut independently of its inclusion in *Matthew* when he suggests that the reception of Matthean Sondergut in a document to be dated at some distance in space and time from the place and time in which *Matthew* was composed makes very likely ("sehr wahrscheinlich") the reception of

[29] Köhler 1987: 9–10.
[30] Köhler 1987: 9.
[31] Köhler 1987: 10–11.
[32] Köhler 1987: 5.
[33] Köhler 1987: 14.
[34] Köhler 1987: 14–15.

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