

DANIEL MARGUERAT

Paul in Acts and
Paul in His Letters

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

310

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This book is a collection of 13 essays devoted to Paul, however they follow the path of reverse chronology: starting with the reception of Paul and moving back to the apostle's writings. The reason for this is revealed in the first chapter which acts as the program of this book: "Paul after Paul: a (Hi)story of Reception". I defend here the idea of a three-fold reception of Paul in the first century: documentary, biographical and doctoral. But mainly, I advocate that the value of the phenomena of reception be appreciated; in particular, the figure of Paul in Acts testifying the biographical reception should not systematically be compared to the apostle's writings; even though this image evolves from a Lukan reinterpretation, it proceeds from traditions absent from the epistles, giving us an aspect of Paul, especially concerning his rapport with Judaism, thus forging the background of the epistolary literature.

Eight chapters of this book (chapters 2–9) are devoted to the literary and theological construction of the Acts of the Apostles focusing in particular on the figure of Paul: his rapport with the Torah, the reference to the Socratic model, the Lukan character construction, the resurrection as a central theme, the significance of meals.

The last four chapters of the book (chapters 10–13) treat some classical or less classical themes of Pauline theology: Paul the mystic, justification by faith, imitating Paul as father and mother of the community, and the issue of the woman's veil in Corinth.

The collaboration of several people has made the publication of this collection of essays possible. I would like to thank my translators who have worked hard translating my language, while preserving its precision: Julien C. H. Smith, Michael D. Thomas, Gerald and Diana Downing, and especially Paul R. Voumard and Joanne Simon. They have my gratitude beyond compare for the care taken in transferring the message from French to English. I am grateful to the editor in charge of WUNT, Professor Jörg Frey, who has accepted this book in his collection without any hesitation. I want to thank my colleagues and friends with whom I have discussed over time these studies; they have enhanced my thoughts with their remarks, suggestions and objections. I would especially like to mention Loveday Alexander, Carl Holladay, Michael Wolter and Ulrich Luz. My assistants Emmanuelle Steffek and Agnes Nagy provided me with their precious assistance

during the first elaboration of these studies. Yvette Nissen was precious in establishing the biblical index.

In the end a text is never the work of the author alone. It always benefits from the *koinonia* of researchers – a theme dear to the author of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2,42).

March 2013

Daniel Marguerat

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Reading indications

Bibliographical references

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Abbreviations

I have adopted the norms of the *SBL Handbook of Style*, Peabody, Hendrickson, 1999. In addition, consult *Abkürzungen Theologie und Religionswissenschaft nach RGG⁴* (UTB 2868), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2007.

Biblical quotations

The biblical quotations are normally borrowed from the NRSV. If not, they are my own translation.

Translations

Unless indicated otherwise, the translations of ancient texts are my own. The same is true for the translation of quotes originally in any language other than French.

For the chapters the translators' names are listed under the title "First publications" (p. 255–257).

Chapter 1

Paul after Paul: A (Hi)story of Reception

The question of the reception of Paul is as old as historical criticism. I express it as follows: how can we understand and connect the different facets of Paul's extraordinary image, which Paul enjoyed within early Christianity? What paradigm should be applied in order to interconnect the Deutero-Pauline epistles (Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians), the Pastorals (1–2 Timothy, Titus), the Acts of the Apostles, and the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*¹?

Each of these texts creates, in fact, a specific construct of Paul's image. The Deutero-Paulines, as well as the Pastorals, explicitly take the thematic and biographical motifs of the apostle's letters. Acts differs from them in presenting Paul, not as a writer, but rather as a missionary founder of churches. As for the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, dating from the end of the second century, they do equal justice both to the image of the missionary and to that of the writer (third letter to the Corinthians). The way in which I define my subject indicates that on the literary level I adopt the position which consistently seems to me to be the most illuminating, even if it is the object of debate: the Deutero-Paulines and the Pastorals are part of an "after Paul" legacy, whoever the responsible authors of this post-Pauline tradition may be (a secretary? a Pauline school?). I therefore treat these letters as originating not from the hand of the apostle, but rather as appropriating the legacy of Pauline thought.

I will begin by posing the problem of the reception of Paul with respect to the relationship between Acts and the Pauline correspondence (1), then propose a model of the reception of Paul (2), and apply this model to three common themes shared by Paul and by the writings belonging to his heritage (3): first, the status of the apostle (3.1); second, the suffering of the apostle (3.2) and third, Paul's teachings (3.3). Finally, I will close with a brief conclusion (4).

¹ This article is the *Presidential Address* I delivered at the 62nd General meeting of the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* in Sibiu, August 1, 2007. An earlier version of the thesis I am proposing here was presented at the University of Manchester as *Manson Memorial Lecture*, October 26, 2006. I thank the colleagues who, on these two occasions, gave me a number of interesting suggestions.

1. The Paul of the epistles and the Paul of Acts: between incompatibility and harmonization

The question of the connection between the image of Paul drawn from his writings and the image which emerges from Acts has been scrutinized since the Tübingen school. The question of connectedness continues to give rise to the clash of two theses: from one point of view, the two images of Paul are declared irreconcilable (the thesis of incompatibility), whereas from the other perspective, they are harmonized.

The divergences between the given facts of the letters and those of Acts are well known; I will but recall them briefly. They appear on the level of the *informative*: Paul acknowledges himself as a mediocre orator (1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 10:10) while Luke credits him with brilliant discourses like those of ancient orators (Acts 13; 14; 17; 20; 22; 26)². The Jerusalem assembly, which must settle the discord between Paul's mission to non-Jews and the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem, concludes in Acts with the imposition of four practices from which non-Jews must abstain (Acts 15:20.29), whereas Paul boasts in Gal 2:5–10 that nothing was imposed upon him except collecting the offering for Jerusalem. Paul protests that some Christians have returned to the practice of circumcision (Gal 5:1–12), but in Acts 16:3 he circumcises Timothy. One notices, moreover, troubling *silences*: why does the author of Acts mention neither the theological conflicts which Paul had to face in his communities, nor his epistolary activity? Why does Luke refuse the man of Tarsus the title of “apostle”, which plays however such a fundamental role in Paul's self-understanding (Gal 1:1; 1 Cor 9:1: 15:9)? On the *theological* level, the disagreements become obvious. It is well known that Paul's essential theological struggle revolves around the issue of the Torah: for the apostle, salvation in Jesus Christ is salvation “apart from the works of the law” (Rom 3:20); and one reads in Galatians that Paul does not admit the slightest compromise on this score; this polemic is absent from Acts, which shows Paul displaying an unflinching attachment to the customs of the fathers (Acts 28:17b). Moreover, the crystallization of Pauline theology of the cross is met with, in the discourses in Acts, a focus on the *kerygma* of the resurrection of Christ: the discord between Jews and Christians in Acts is not centred on the cross, as it is for Paul, but rather with the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:22–36; 3:15–21; 13:26–39; 23:6–9; 26:6–8).

The thesis of incompatibility found its classic expression in a famous article by Philipp Vielhauer in 1950³. The author vehemently argues the idea that Luke, in

² John C. LENTZ, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (SNTSMS 77), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

³ Philipp VIELHAUER, “On the ‘Paulinism’ of Acts”, in: *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander KECK and J. Louis MARTYN, Nashville, Abingdon, 1966, p. 33–50 (reprinted in: *Paul and the Heritage of Israel*, ed. David P. MOESSNER, Daniel MARGUERAT, Mikeal C. PARSONS and Michael WOLTER, [LNTS 452] London-New York, Clark, 2012, p. 3–17).

Acts, contravenes the teaching of Paul, in part by defending a natural theology in Paul's discourse in Athens (Acts 17:22–31), and in part by abandoning the Pauline position on the Torah in the name of a Christian-Jewish continuity, leaving out the Christology of the cross, and attesting a collapsed eschatology. In brief, he concludes, “the author of Acts is pre-Pauline in his Christology, and post-Pauline in his natural theology, concept of the law, and eschatology. One finds in him not a single specifically Pauline idea”⁴. Here we see Luke expelled from the Pauline school for reporting so poorly! However in its massiveness, Vielhauer's position proves to be untenable. It is inexact to say that Acts 17 defends a natural theology; the failure of pagan knowledge of God is also affirmed in it as much as in Rom. 1:18–32: God brings to an end, says the Lukan Paul in Athens, to the “times of ignorance” (χρόνοι τῆς ἀγνοίας, Acts 17:30a) by announcing the necessity of conversion to the One whom he has designated as Judge of the world (17:30b); the necessary *metanoia* injects the idea of a moment of change, which breaks from natural theology. Moreover, opposing the circumcision of Timothy (Acts 16:3) with the non-circumcision of Titus does not take into account the fact that Titus is a gentile, whereas Timothy has a Jewish mother; this corresponds to the position that the apostle assumes in 1 Cor 9:20–21. “I became as a Jew for the Jews ... for those without the law as one without the law”: Paul puts forward an explicitly differentiated position with respect to religious status. Moreover, viewing the Pauline version of the Jerusalem assembly (Gal 2:5–10) as contradictory to that of Luke (Acts 15:5–21) does not take into account the different literary genres: Paul is arguing a case, whereas Luke is describing a practice⁵.

One must add that, methodologically, the specific aim of each writer must be kept in view. Luke describes Paul as debating with outsiders, in the synagogue or with a gentile audience; in his correspondence, the apostle takes a position within an internal debate, thus arguing as an insider. Luke's Paul proclaims the gospel; the Paul of the epistles exposit it. One might equally expect that a biographical writing would mention traits of the apostle which he himself might omit or mention only briefly; such is the case with his acts of healing, to which I will return later. The methodological deficiency of Vielhauer's position is that it overlays two literary genres and considers Paul's letters to be the norm to which Acts should conform: in brief, his thesis of Lukan infidelity, to the Pauline tradition is no longer defensible. One could demonstrate, moreover, that the stark contrast between Luke and Paul constructed by Vielhauer is deeply permeated with the theological controversy between Barth and Brunner during the 1930s,

⁴ Philipp VIELHAUER, “On the ‘Paulinism’ of Acts”, p. 49.

⁵ This argument is explored in the Graeco-Roman literature by Tom W. HILLARD, Alanna NOBBS and Bruce W. WINTER, “Acts and the Pauline Corpus 1: Ancient Literary Parallels”, in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, I Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993, p. 183–213.

and that Vielhauer thinks he must reiterate the “no” signified by Barth to Brunner concerning the relationship between nature and grace⁶.

At the other extreme, harmonizing the contents of the epistles and Acts is equally unsatisfying⁷. Even though it argues correctly for the complementarity of the contents of the apostle’s writings and those of Luke, the positions set forth by one or the other regarding the Torah cannot be superimposed. Vielhauer is correct: the acuity of the debate regarding the validity of the law is no longer Luke’s concern. The Christology of Acts is not at all that of Paul, which is focused on the cross. The thesis of harmonization, in my opinion, is no more defensible than the thesis of incompatibility in the final analysis.

What can we do, other than leave behind the alternatives of incompatibility or a harmonization? A differentiated approach to the reception of Paul make it possible.

2. A typology of the reception of Paul

What information did the author of Acts have at his disposal in order to write his work? In my opinion, it hardly appears possible to defend the idea that the author was a companion of Paul, given that the Christianity reflected in Acts is closer to that of the Pastorals, dating from the 80s. It has been demonstrated numerous times that the farewell discourse to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:18–35) bears witness to a situation analogous to the issue addressed by the Pastorals: the announcement of internal tensions, the questioning of Paul’s integrity, and the polemic against false preaching⁸. Maintaining the notion of an eyewitness only aggravates the problem: how could a witness who listened to Paul daily omit his epistolary activity, or deny him the title of apostle, for which he fought?

We must therefore ask ourselves again what information Luke had at his disposal. The model of harmonization and that of incompatibility share a common presupposition: Luke knew of the letters of Paul, yet for unexplained reasons did not mention them. Can we be so sure? Can we be certain that Luke knew of

⁶ Emil BRUNNER, *Natur und Gnade*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1934; Karl BARTH, *Nein! Antwort an Emil Brunner* (Theologische Existenz heute 14), München, Kaiser, 1934; Emil BRUNNER and Karl BARTH, *Natural Theology: Comprising ‘Nature and Grace’*, trans. P. Fränckel, London, The Centenary Press, 1946: I am indebted to Michael Wolter for these references.

⁷ Frederick F. BRUCE, “Is the Paul of Acts the Real Paul?,” *BJRL* 58, 1976, p. 282–305; Colin J. HEMER, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT 49), Tübingen, Mohr, 1989; Stanley E. PORTER, *The Paul of Acts. Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, and Theology* (WUNT 115), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1999; Alexander MITTELSTAEDT, *Lukas als Historiker. Zur Datierung des lukianischen Doppelwerkes* (TANZ 43), Tübingen, Francke, 2006.

⁸ Jacques DUPONT, *Le discours de Milet. Testament pastoral de saint Paul (Actes 10,18–36)* (Lectio divina 32), Paris, Cerf, 1962; Beverly ROBERTS GAVENTA, “Theology and Ecclesiology in the Miletus Speech: Reflections on Content and Context”, *NTS* 50, 2004, p. 36–52.

the Pauline correspondence? The intense work currently focusing on Christian apocryphal literature leads us, in fact, to reexamine the means by which the tradition was transmitted. The existence of numerous apocryphal Gospels or apocryphal Acts of the apostles leads us to the realization that outside and alongside the tradition fixed in the canonical texts, a number of both oral and partially written traditions, later gathered up into the Apocrypha, were circulating in the communities. Today, we know with greater clarity that the redaction of canonical texts did not by any means exhaust the tradition of Jesus and the apostles. Many other traditions, and the communities giving life to these traditions – passed on orally or promulgated by prophets and teachers – composed the network of Christianity during the first two centuries.

What transpired after the death of Paul, around the year 60? The circulation of his letters was already attested during his life (2 Cor 10:10). His writings were progressively collected and assembled, the first indications of a canon of Pauline letters dates to the end of the first century. *First Clement*, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna, clearly manifest their awareness of his writings, but without taking interest in the person of the apostle.⁹ Between 60 and 100, what else took place? Paul's heritage was preserved by other means, along other paths than the collection of his writings. In my opinion it is an anachronism to imagine Luke writing a history of Paul with the letters of the apostle in front of him. Between Acts and the canon of Pauline letters a historical phase is being overlooked: the complex and multiform phenomenon of the reception of Paul.

2.1 *The three poles of Paul's reception*

To speak of "reception" signals a change of paradigm for the proponents of the theories of incompatibility and harmonization. The phenomenon of reception implies that a dialectic of identity and shift characterizes the relationship between an original thought and its subsequent resumption. The diversity of forms which the Pauline tradition took corresponds to this observation. On one hand, some letters imitate the apostle's style and present a teaching in his name: these are the Deutero-Pauline letters and the Pastorals. On the other hand, the memory of the apostle is magnified by the recollection of his actions: this is the case with Acts and the *Acts of Paul*. François Bovon defended the thesis that the reception of the apostle, in the first century, took two forms: on one hand, Paul survived in the letters as a "document"; on the other, in biographical writings as a "monument"¹⁰. The proposition is interesting, but it calls for a correction: Colossians and Ephesians, as well as 2 Timothy, continue the epistolary activity of Paul, but at the

⁹ Andreas LINDEMANN, *Paulus. Apostel und Lehrer der Kirche. Studien zu Paulus und zum frühen Paulusverständnis*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1999, p. 294–322.

¹⁰ François BOVON, "Paul as Document and Paul as Monument", in: *New Testament and Christian Apocrypha*, ed. Glenn E. SNYDER, Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2011, p. 307–317.

same time do so without neglecting the biographical dimension of his persona, noting his life of suffering (Col 1:1–11; 1:24–2:4; Eph 3; 2 Tim 1:12–2:7; 4:6–8).

Pursuing this insight, I would say that the reception of Paul is organized around three poles: *documentary biographical*, and *doctoral*. The “documentary” pole remembers Paul as a writer: his writings are collected, copied, reconfigured in certain cases, and assembled in a collection which is integrated into the New Testament canon. From the “biographical” pole, Paul is celebrated as the herald of the gospel, the missionary to the nations, whose salient facts are narrated (as Luke does in Acts); a hagiography is in the works here, of which the *Acts of Paul* is the first installment a century later. From the “doctoral” pole, Paul is invoked as doctor of the church: his sentences in pseudepigraphical letters are imitated; his teaching in the areas of ecclesiology and ethics are spread; texts in his name are written; these are the Deutero-Paulines and Pastorals.

It is essential to recognize that these three types of reception are parallel and simultaneous, unfolding between 60 and 100. They represent three ways to respond to the absence of the apostle: establish the memory of his life (“biographical” heritage), preserve his writings (“documentary” heritage), institute him as the theological icon who ensures an orthodox interpretation (“doctoral” heritage: cf. Col. 2:5). Each of these strategies of managing the Pauline heritage selects the traits of the apostle’s persona most amenable to its view and confers upon this persona a specific status. The persona of the apostle is thus constructed along three parallel paths. Here I must stress that the canon of Pauline epistles does not constitute the common documentary basis, the backdrop against which the entire reception of the apostle would be constructed. The documentary reception constitutes in itself a branch of the reception of Paul’s persona, a specific branch which preserves his status as a polemical writer. Once again, it is anachronistic to think that, since we have his correspondence before our eyes today, his letters constituted the sole means by which he was known in the first century. All that we know of the rarity of writing in Antiquity should lead us to think the contrary: the memory of the apostle was preserved primarily through oral tradition circulating in the communities which he had founded. Only literate persons had access to texts. In no way was the social memory of the apostle transmitted through purely literary channels.

The consequences of the paradigm that I am proposing are important for the construction of Paul’s image. The “doctoral” pole traces the literary activity of the apostle and is based on his writings; this activity of reading and rereading can be found from the effects of an intertextual conversation between pseudepigraphical and proto-pauline letters¹¹. The same does not apply to the “biographical”

¹¹ Annette MERZ, *Die fiktive Selbstausslegung des Paulus. Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (NTOA 52), Göttingen / Fribourg, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht / Academic Press, 2004.

pole, demonstrated by Luke's silence with regard to Paul's writings: the author's knowledge of Paul is not a literary one. Luke works with the memory of Paul's life and teaching, such as it was preserved by his circle, when twenty years later, Paul's debate concerning the Torah has lost its urgency. The memory of it was preserved (Acts 15:1–35; 16:1–6; 21:17–26), but the discussion as such is absent from Acts – not because Luke would have misread Paul, but because he depends on another source of information. On the other hand, the memory of the communities founded by the apostle to the Gentiles furnishes Luke with abundant narrative material absent from the letters. It is therefore inadequate to measure the Lukan historiographical reliability by a norm constituted by the corpus of Pauline writings, precisely because these writings in and of themselves did not constitute the norm of Pauline tradition.

2.2 Paul the healer

An example: the image of Paul the healer. The book of Acts recounts five miraculous acts (13:9–11; 14:8–10; 16:16–18; 28:7–8), as well as the resurrection of a dead person (20:7–12) and a summary of healings (19:11–12). The Tübingen school highlighted the technique of *syncretism* between Peter and Paul systematically constructed in Acts, concluding that Luke would have distributed between Peter and Paul the same qualities in order to model the portrait of one on the other. Jacob Jervell had good reason to protest, invoking the therapeutic activity of Paul attested by his letters¹². He drew attention to the “signs of the apostle” (τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου) claimed by the apostle in 2 Cor 12:12. The modality of the signs of the apostle is explained by the triad “deeds of power, wonders and signs” that one recognizes in Acts¹³. In Rom 15:18b–19, the apostle synthesizes his ministry, using the same terms: Christ worked through him “to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders (ἐν δυνάμει σημεῖων καὶ τεράτων)”. To the Thessalonians, he speaks of the gospel which “came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit” (1 Thess 1:5).

In brief, what Paul touches upon so discreetly, the “biographical” memory has preserved it for us. Acts inscribes it within a correlative schematic Jesus-Peter-Paul, whereas the *Acts of Paul*, in their rereading of the canonical Acts, gives way to an amplification in a legendary mode; fundamentally, by describing Paul as a healer, these writings have invented nothing. Furthermore, they help us to better comprehend the “Paul effect” in the communities he founded, and which

¹² Jacob JERVELL, *The Unknown Paul. Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History*, Minneapolis, Augsburg, 1984, p. 76–95.

¹³ Acts 2:22; 8:13. See also 2:19.43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12.

welcomed him, following the example of the Galatians, as “an angel of God” (Gal 4:14).

2.3 Points of contact

The terminological points of contact between Acts and Pauline language are not numerous¹⁴. The same verb πορθεῖν designates Paul’s opposition to the Christian movement (Gal 1:13; Acts 9:21) as well as the formula ζηλωτῆς ὑπάρχων (Gal 1:14; Acts 22:3). In the episode of the flight from Damascus, there are the same expressions, “through an opening in the wall” (διὰ τοῦ τεύχους) and “lowering” (χαλαῖν) in 2 Cor 11:33 and Acts 9:25. These points of contact may be explained easily by the diffusion of the Pauline legend: as one perceives it in the reading of Phil. 3:6, Paul himself contributed to the diffusion of his portrait as a repentant persecutor. These terminological contacts relating to his teaching, present in the discourse between Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:43) and in Paul’s speech in Pisidian Antioch (13:38–39), will be treated below under 3.3; it is not a matter of citation, but rather of the use of the logia of the apostle in circulation among Pauline communities.

Let me illustrate my thesis on these two points of narrative contact between Acts and the Pauline letters: the result of the Jerusalem assembly and the flight from Damascus.

Whereas Paul assesses the Jerusalem assembly for the benefit of the Galatians – “we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you” (Gal 2:5) – the account in Acts sets up the four required abstinences of the apostolic decree (Acts 15:20.29): idolatry, immorality (πορνεία), eating strangled meat, and drinking blood are forbidden to Gentile Christians. Once again the basic contradiction between Paul’s text and the Lukan text has led most often to the suspicion that Luke has inserted here a late and local decree adopted by Jewish-Christian communities; possibly Luke himself actually recorded such a pronouncement. Most importantly, in my opinion, he thereby gives an account of the actual practice of Paul. When Paul demands, in Corinth (1 Corinthians 8) or in Rome (Romans 14), that the strong have regard for the weak, he pleads, in effect, soteriologically for the freedom of the strong, but pragmatically recommends their abstinence: “If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love, Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died” (Rom 14:15). Does not one discover in the apostolic decree this echo of the apostle, at the same time theologically firm

¹⁴ Cf. William O. WALKER, “Acts and the Pauline Corpus Reconsidered”, *JSNT* 24, 1985, p. 323 or *The Pauline Writings*, ed. Stanley E. PORTER and Craig C. EVANS (The Biblical Seminar 34), Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995, p. 55–74. For a maximizing evaluation of parallels with the Pauline literature: Richard I. PERVO, *Dating Acts. Between the Evangelists and the Apologists*, Santa Rosa, Polebridge, 2006, p. 51–147.

and ethically supple, in the name of *agape*¹⁵? One conceives that in the rhetorical strategy of Galatians 2, Paul is defending the soteriological principle and not its ethical modulations; these have been retained in the memory of the apostle as recorded by Luke.

The second point of narrative contact is the famous incident of the flight in the basket down the wall of Damascus. The hostility which forced the apostle to flee is attributed by Paul to the ethnarch under King Aretas (2 Cor 11:32–33), by Luke to the Jews (Acts 9:25). The two versions therefore do not agree. The proposals in the history of exegesis which attribute to Luke a distorted re-reading of the episode of 2 Corinthians 11 are by no means absent. But it is more plausible that such a spectacular anecdote gave rise, in the oral tradition, to multiple variants; the author of Acts has thus drawn his version, without a doubt choosing the one most amenable to his purpose, in order to be able to present the Jews in the role of persecutors of Paul, himself only recently converted from his activity of persecuting Christians (9:26–30)¹⁶. Here again, the tradition on which the author of Acts draws is inspired primarily not by the writings of the apostle, but by the history of his life.

It is correct, of course, to question the historical plausibility of such a paradigm. Could such a great admirer of Paul, as the author of Acts, not have known of the existence of letters attributed to his hero? The existence, within the Pauline communities, of copies of certain letters could hardly have passed unnoticed. Therefore, we cannot affirm with certainty that Luke was unaware of them but with regard to Luke's work, one may observe that he ignored them. Their absence in Acts does not prove the literary ignorance of the author, but rather signals that within the traditional milieu to which he belonged, the letters did not control the memory of the apostle. To insist that an "authentic" knowledge of Paul is mediated exclusively through his letters, while at the same time blatantly ignoring the traces of his actions left in history, is a prejudice which dates back to the Enlightenment.

E. J. Goodspeed, in his time, launched the idea that the canon of Pauline letters was assembled by an anonymous admirer of Paul, the interest in such a collection having been sparked by the reading of the recently published Acts, and that this person collected his letters from within the communities founded by the apostle¹⁷. Taking into account the long and complex process which presided over the establishment of the Pauline canon and the reconfiguration of certain

¹⁵ Karl LÖHNING, "Das Evangelium und die Kulturen. Heilsgeschichtliche und kulturelle Aspekte kirchlicher Realität in der Apostelgeschichte", in ANRW 11/25.3, ed. Wolfgang HAASE, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1985, p. 2604–2646, especially 2623–2625.

¹⁶ See Daniel MARGUERAT, *Les Actes des apôtres (1–12)* (CNT 5a), Geneva, Labor et Fides, 2007, p. 340–341.

¹⁷ Edgar J. GOODSPEED, *New Solutions of the New Testament Problems*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1927.

of his letters, this romantic idea should be abandoned; but the intuition which guided it may be retained: at the time when Luke wrote, the canon of Pauline letters was neither truly assembled nor completed – since the redaction of the Pastorals was still in progress nor, above all, consolidated into a referential corpus of the apostle’s memory¹⁸.

I will now illustrate this differentiated management of the Pauline heritage by demonstrating how the presence of motifs from the “biographical” pole and the “doctoral” pole develop the possibilities present in the apostle’s letters. In other words, I want to show how the choice of different motifs from one or the other of the poles of Pauline reception corresponds to the possibilities present in Paul’s letters, yet these motifs developed in diverse ways in service of the needs of the tradition.

3. A differentiated reception of Paul

How was Paul’s persona constructed in the writings which I associate with the “biographical” and “doctoral” poles? And can one identify in Paul’s letters the traditional source of the motifs retained in this construction, differentiated according to his writings? I repeat: in my opinion, what distinguishes the biographical branch from the doctoral one is that the “doctoral” writings yield themselves to a re-reading of the proto-Pauline letters, while the “biographical” writings derive from a memory of the apostle which had not been normalized by the writings from Paul’s own hand.

3.1 Paul’s status

What status is accorded to Paul from the point of view of the history of salvation? In Acts, the situation is clear. Luke’s account testifies to the distinct interest in the person of Paul, which dominates the narration of ch. 13. Paul is the σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς (9:15), the instrument chosen by God to proclaim the gospel outside its originating space, Judaism. Luke sees in him the providential man by whom the testimony of the resurrection will reach the ἔσχατον τῆς γῆς (1:8). The progressive concentration of the narrative on the person of Paul is the result of a narrative strategy: introduced surreptitiously into the account on the occasion of the martyrdom of Stephen (7:58–8:3), converted (9:1–31), active in Antioch (11:25–26), Saul/Paul is the companion of Barnabas in Acts 13–14, then he plays the primary role in the second missionary voyage of Acts 15–21; from ch. 22 onwards he figures solely as an accused witness, proclaiming the gospel in the

¹⁸ Charles K. BARRETT, “Acts and the Pauline Corpus”, *ET* 78, 1976, p. 2–5.

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