THE WRITINGS OF LUKE AND THE JEWISH ROOTS OF THE CHRISTIAN WAY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE AIMS OF THE FIRST CHRISTIAN HISTORIAN IN THE LIGHT OF ANCIENT POLITICS, ETHNOGRAPHY, AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

John Andrew Cowan

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
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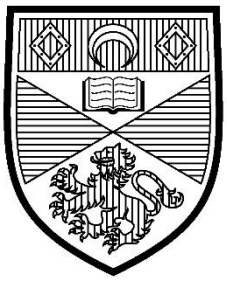

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the motivations behind the theme of Christianity's Jewish roots in the writings of Luke. In particular, this study is a critical examination of a set of increasingly influential proposals that all maintain that Luke's goal in highlighting the Jewish roots of the Christian movement is to gain cultural or political capital in Graeco-Roman society. According to these proposals, the Jewish people had an ancient and therefore respected heritage, and Luke attempts to leverage this situation to the church's advantage.

In order to evaluate these proposals, this thesis compares Luke's writings to historical works written by two of Luke's near-contemporaries: Dionysius of Halicarnassus and T. Flavius Josephus. The works of both Dionysius and Josephus have been set forth as parallels to aspects of the recent proposals about Luke's writings, especially Luke's purported interest in the respect that comes from antiquity, and thus their writings make an excellent control group against which to test these proposals.

The central argument of this thesis is that a careful examination of these authors' writings reveals that Luke's aims are very different from those of Dionysius and Josephus. The latter two clearly and explicitly pursue cultural and political agendas by emphasizing the respectable ancient heritages of the Romans and the Jewish people, but Luke appears to be unembarrassed by the newness of the Christian movement, and he often depicts the history of the Jewish people in remarkably unflattering terms. The particular ways in which Luke highlights the Christian movement's Jewish roots suggest that, like other early Christian literature, his primary aim in emphasizing this theme is to reassure adherents of the faith that the foundational events of the life of Jesus and the early church legitimately constitute the fulfilment of God's salvific plan.

For Susan

CONTENTS

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Thanks are due to many people for their assistance in the production of this thesis. First, throughout my education I have enjoyed the unwavering support and encouragement of my parents, Mack and Betty Sue Cowan. Over the course of this project, they have constantly prayed for me, occasionally discussed the details of my work, and, for the last year, allowed a family of five to share their home. The debt that I owe to them is incalculable; it is only matched by the depth of gratitude that I feel.

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The University of St Andrews provided help with the funding for this project through both a travel grant, which enabled my attendance at a conference in the United States, and also the Richard Bauckham Scholarship, which was donated in celebration

of the University's 600th anniversary. I was honoured to receive this scholarship, particularly because of the esteem with which I regard Professor Richard Bauckham. His work is representative of the high standards to which I aspire.

In addition to the excellent library at the University of St Andrews, I received assistance in obtaining valuable resources from the Pitts Theology Library at Emory University, the John Bulow Campbell Library at Columbia Theological Seminary, the Nantahala Regional Public Library in Murphy, North Carolina, and Dr Nicholas Wiater of the Classics department at the University of St Andrews. I am grateful to Dr Wiater and the staffs of these other institutions for their professionalism and timely assistance.

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Finally, my family deserves a word of thanks. Soon after my entry into the PhD programme at St Andrews, Professor Wright mentioned that, when he wrote his own thesis, he produced four major chapters and one child per chapter. My thesis has three major chapters, and I have followed the same pattern. Julia, Chloe, and Stephanie have all proved to be delightful additions to our family, and their joy and enthusiasm have often provided a welcome break from work.

My wife, Susan, is among the rarest of women. In addition to birthing and raising our three children, she has continued to provide income for our family by teaching French online while also serving as my personal editor and a frequent dialogue partner regarding the content of my work. Few spouses are as engaged as Susan in their husbands' academic pursuits, but the partnership that we share has been a source of great joy to us both. In recognition of her myriad contributions, this study is lovingly dedicated to her.

ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Abbreviations are taken from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th ed.; edited by Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

All translations are original, developed in consultation with the editions listed in the bibliography.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of his *Historiae*, the Roman historian Tacitus gives an account of the origins and customs of the Jewish people. To say that Tacitus is no friend of the Jewish people is a gross understatement: he concludes his discussion by declaring, "the customs of the Jews are absurd and foul."[1] Nevertheless, before rendering this final verdict, Tacitus states regarding some of the customs, "These rites, whatever their origin, are defended by antiquity (*antiquitate defendentur*)."[2] This latter comment reflects a perspective that was widely shared in the ancient world but no longer holds currency in much of Western civilization: the estimation that antiquity is a key criterion in judging legitimacy and value. This criterion was often applied to ideas and practices, and many groups seeking an elevated status within society sought to demonstrate their ancient pedigree.[3]

Over the course of the past forty years, an increasing number of New Testament scholars have suggested that the writings of Luke emphasize the Jewish roots of the Christian movement in order to address precisely this issue. They claim that one of the primary motivations behind Luke's emphasis on the association between Christianity

[1] *Hist.* 5.5; cf. the analysis of Tacitus' depiction of the Jewish people in Feldman 1993: 183-96.

[2] *Hist.* 5.5.

[3] Cf. van Groningen 1953: 7-11; MacMullen 1981: 1-5; Brawley 1984: 139-40; Esler 1987: 19-20; Droge 1989: 9; Feldman 1993: 177-78; Edwards 1996: 28-33; Balch 2003: 140; Backhaus 2007: 403-7; Marguerat 2009: 99-100; Wendel 2011: 126; Keener 2012–2015: 1.454; and esp. Pilhofer 1990. See also the many studies related to this theme in Gardner and Osterloh 2008; Ker and Pieper 2012; Alroth and Scheffer 2014.

and Judaism is his desire to furnish the Christian movement with a respectable ancient heritage.[4] The purpose of this thesis is to examine and evaluate this claim.

1.1 The Origin and Varieties of the Antiquity Proposal

Modern proposals that link Luke's interest in the Jewish roots of the Christian movement with the issue of antiquity typically develop from and react to a well-known older reading of Luke's writings: the view that Luke's writings are intended to function as a political apology.

The reading of Luke's writings as a political apology is usually traced back to a 1720 study by C. A. Heumann. In this study, Heumann argues that Luke's writings are an explanation of the Christian movement addressed to a Roman official named Theophilus.[5] Although opinions on Theophilus varied over the years, the claim that one of Luke's primary intentions is to defend Christianity against charges of sedition or to secure the place of the Christian movement within the Roman Empire eventually came to be a majority opinion within Lukan scholarship.[6]

In 1897, Johannes Weiss proposed what came to be a particularly influential variant of this position, suggesting that the means by which Luke seeks to establish the place of the church within the Empire is by arguing that the government should view

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[4] E.g., Brawley 1984: 139-40; Talbert 1984: 100; Aune 1987: 137; Brawley 1987: 62; Esler 1987: 214-17; Pervo 1987: 137; Sanders 1987: 236, 243; Downing 1988: 153-54, 157; Edwards 1991: 183-85; Sterling 1992: 368-69, 384-85; Peterson 1993: 102-3; Squires 1993: 154, 191-93; Merkel 1994: 385-89; Edwards 1996: 45-46; Witherington 1998: 544; Marguerat 1999: 76-77; Pervo 1999: 137; Tomson 1999: 586-87; Bonz 2000: 87; Wilson 2001: 78; Marguerat 2002: 74; Mason 2003b: 265-67; Bryan 2005: 96-98; Pervo 2006: 327-28; Tyson 2006: 59; Backhaus 2007: 402-4; Kim 2008: 173-74; Nasrallah 2008: 566; Marguerat 2009: 98-100; Butticaz 2011: 340-42, 417-18; Wolter 2012: 68-69; Keener 2012–2015: 1.266-67, 449-59, 487.

[5] Heumann 1720.

[6] See the accounts of the rise of this view in Walaskay 1983: 1-10; Esler 1987: 205-7; Yoder 2014: 6-14; and throughout Gasque 1975; cf. also the useful typology of apologetic readings in Alexander 1999: 16-19.

Christianity as a type of Judaism.[7] A similar proposal was set forth in the second volume of the collection of studies on Acts published under the title *The Beginnings of Christianity*, within which the editors suggest that Luke sought to identify Christianity as the true religion of Israel because Rome only tolerated the religions of recognized races.[8] This proposal then came to quintessential expression in Henry J. Cadbury's seminal work, *The Making of Luke-Acts*.[9] Although Cadbury expresses some qualifying hesitations,[10] his work introduced the phrase *religio licita* into the discussion, and this contribution established his status as a central proponent of this view. He writes:

> It may even be conjectured that [Luke's] political apologetic had as its aim the satisfaction of Rome's demand that foreign religions must be licensed to be permitted. If Judaism was a *religio licita* and Christianity was not, it was important to show that Christianity was only a legitimate form of Judaism and could shelter under the Jewish name.[11]

Cadbury later repudiated both the phrase *religio licita* and the idea that Rome licensed religions,[12] but the influence of his initial proposal was substantial. In the following years, many others endorsed the view that Luke's aim was to position the church within the legal protections that were afforded to the Jewish religion, often describing Luke's goal with the phrase *religio licita*.[13]

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[7] Weiss 1897: 54-59; see Yoder 2014: 6-10, who explains how Weiss's reading developed out of growing doubts about the central proposals of F. C. Baur and the Tübingen school.

[8] Foakes-Jackson and Lake 1922: 179-87; cf. the similar proposal in Loisy 1920: 107.

[9] Cadbury 1926: 308-16.

[10] "Our knowledge of Roman law on these points and of Rome's treatment of the Christians in the first century is too uncertain for any assurance" (Cadbury 1926: 308).

[11] Cadbury 1926: 308.

[12] Cf. Cadbury 1958: 215-16.

[13] E.g., Easton 1954: 41-57; Vielhauer 1966: 41; Trites 1974: 278-84; Menoud 1978: 480-85; Fitzmyer 1981: 10; Haenchen 1987: 100-2, 541, 630-31, 658-59, 693-94 (Haenchen, however, hesitates over *religio licita* as an official category, speaking instead of a *religio quasi licita*); Stoops 1989: 89; Tajra 1989: 56, 126-27; Bruce 1990: 22-25; Hansen 1998: 320-21.

Others continued to argue that Luke's intention was political apologetic without evoking the relationship between Christianity and Judaism,[14] and a few objected to the claim that Luke has a political agenda,[15] but the *religio licita* view remained the majority position until around the 1980s. At this time, however, three main objections to the view that Luke's writings are political apologetic gained prominence, and construals of Luke's intentions in the political sphere began to proliferate.

First, there was a growing consensus that Luke's writings were not addressed to outsiders but to Christians, or, at the very least, to people who were considering converting to Christianity.[16] Barrett's statement of this objection is frequently cited:

> [Acts] was not addressed to the Emperor, with the intention of proving the political harmlessness of Christianity in general and Paul in particular . . . No Roman official would ever have filtered out so much of what to him would be theological and ecclesiastical rubbish in order to reach so tiny a grain of relevant apology.[17]

Second, many began to note that Luke's depiction of the Roman Empire was less decidedly positive than the political apologetic reading assumes. This is the primary objection that Jacob Jervell raises against the political apologetic view,[18] but the point is made most forcibly (although with some overstatement) in two monographs by Richard Cassidy.[19]

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[14] Most notably Conzelmann 1960: 138-44; Sterling 1992: 381, n. 352 wrongly classifies Conzelmann with the advocates of *religio licita*.

[15] E.g., Barrett 1961: 63; Jervell 1972: 153-58; Franklin 1975: 111-12, 134-36.

[16] Cf. Maddox 1982: 14-15; Walaskay 1983: 1; Cassidy 1987: 163; Esler 1987: 24-26, 211; Edwards 1991: 186-88; Sterling 1992: 374-78; Mason [1992] 2003: 266-67; for later reiterations of the damage that this point does to the reading of Luke's writings as political apologetic, see Alexander 1999: 20-23; Marguerat 2002: 30.

[17] Barrett 1961: 63.

[18] Jervell 1972: 156-58.

[19] Cassidy 1978; Cassidy 1987; cf. also Maddox 1982: 95; Swartley 1983: 31-32; Esler 1987: 209-10; Edwards 1991: 186-88; Tyson 1992: 171; and the later reiterations of this point in Walton 2002: 20-25;

Third, the claim that Rome regulated religion and had granted Judaism the status of a *religio licita* was called into question. In a 1982 study, Robert Maddox examines the studies of Rome's dealings with religious groups from the field of Classics, and he finds evidence for Rome's regulation of religious practice wanting. Consequently, Maddox absolutely rejects the *religio licita* reading: "The theory of a 'religio licita' as explaining the purpose of Luke-Acts may therefore be regarded as unfounded and now discredited."[20] Maddox's conclusion was then bolstered by Philip Francis Esler, who similarly rejects the claim that Rome licensed religions. Esler also provides a study of the extant evidence for the particular relationship between Rome and the Jewish people, suggesting that the issues that Rome did address were too focused on the particulars of Jewish customs to have relevance for Christian communities.[21]

Together, these objections brought an end to the dominance of the traditional political apologetic view and the claim that Christianity found shelter within Judaism as a *religio licita*. In the wake of this dissolution, scholars have set forth a wide variety of interpretations of Luke's political agenda. The options proposed range from Paul W. Walaskay's suggestion that Luke's writings commend the behaviour of the Roman Empire to Kazuhiko Yamazaki-Ransom's argument that Luke presents the Roman Empire as a diabolical institution.[22] Within this ongoing discussion, a stream of

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Skinner 2003: 109-10, 195-99; Kim 2008: 88-90; and esp. Yamazaki-Ransom 2010; Muñoz-Larrondo 2012. Cassidy's penchant for overstatement is criticized in Barclay 1989: 577-79.

[20] Maddox 1982: 93; cf. Nock 1952: 215-17.

[21] Esler 1987: 211-14; cf. the denials of *religio licita* as a legal category in Witherington 1998: 539-44; Neagoe 2002: 10; Barclay 2011: 324; as well as the many studies related to this theme in Hasselhoff and Strothmann 2016.

[22] Cf. Walaskay 1983; Yamazaki-Ransom 2010. For useful surveys of the range of proposals that developed, see Neagoe 2002: 4-21; Walton 2002: 2-12; and esp. Yoder 2014: 5-41.

scholarship has emerged that continues to insist that Luke's emphasis on the Jewish roots of the Christian movement is (at least partially) motivated by social or political concerns. This stream consists of those who argue that Luke's interest is in demonstrating that the Christian movement deserves the respect and authority afforded by an ancient heritage.

Proposals along these lines have been set forth by several scholars since the breakup of the older political apologetic reading, but Nils A. Dahl's 1966 study of Luke's treatment of Abraham stands as a forerunner to these more recent proposals. Dahl concludes, "[Luke's] interest in Abraham and his archaizing tendency in general bear the stamp of an age that looked back to classical times and considered antiquity an indication of value."[23] This comment does not appear to have inspired the more recent proposals, but the correspondence is notable.

The recent proposals begin with two studies from the 1984 book *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*. Within this book, the essays by both Robert L. Brawley and Charles H. Talbert promote the claim that Luke appeals to the Christian movement's Jewish roots in order to associate the Christian movement with antiquity. Brawley's essay suggests that Luke appeals to antiquity by presenting Paul as a proclaimer of Jewish tradition. Luke does this, Brawley claims, because antiquity was a familiar criterion of legitimation for his Hellenistic audience.[24] Talbert, on the other hand, argues that Luke attempts to link the Christian movement with the old and respected Jewish tradition through his extensive use of the motif of prophecy and fulfilment. This connection, Talbert claims, is intended to enhance the cultural profile of the Christian movement. Talbert compares Luke's strategy to that of

[23] Dahl 1966: 152; cf. Dahl 1976: 84.

[24] Brawley 1984: 139-40; cf. Brawley 1987: 62.

the Jewish historian T. Flavius Josephus. He points out that Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* emphasizes the antiquity of the Jewish tradition in order to enhance the cultural profile of the Jewish people. Talbert also claims that Josephus borrowed this strategy from the Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose similarly titled history of the Romans, *Antiquitates Romanae*, argues that the Romans are legitimate heirs of the ancient Greek tradition.[25]

Similar claims that Luke's association of the Christian movement with Judaism are a play for cultural respect *via* antiquity appear in brief in a number of subsequent studies.[26] Among these, three are worth mentioning. First, in Jack T. Sanders' well-known book arguing that Luke is anti-Semitic, Sanders suggests that the need to provide the Christian movement with ancient roots explains several of the passages with positive references to the Jewish people in Luke's writings.[27] Second, F. Gerald Downing proposes that Luke's reports of instances of Jewish Christian observance of the Mosaic law serve as a socio-cultural apologetic by linking the church with the antiquity of Jewish tradition. Like Talbert, Downing mentions Josephus and Dionysius as examples of other authors who emphasize the maintenance of ancestral traditions.[28] Third, Richard I. Pervo claims that the presence of an argument from antiquity in Luke's writings supports a second century date for Acts because this sort of argument for respect is absent in Christian writings from the first century.[29]

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[25] Talbert 1984: 100.

[26] E.g., Aune 1987: 137; Pervo 1987: 137; 243; Peterson 1993: 102-3; Merkel 1994: 385-89; Squires 1993: 154, 191-93; Pervo 1999: 137; Bonz 2000: 87; cf. Wolter 2012: 68-69, who suggests that Luke's aim is to demonstrate that Christianity is not a "new religion of conversion," but rather a "religion of tradition."

[27] Sanders 1987: 236, 243.

[28] Downing 1986: 49-52; Downing 1988: 153-57.

[29] Pervo 2006: 262-63, 327-28; cf. Nasrallah 2008: 565-66. Nasrallah, however, follows the variant of the antiquity proposal set forth by Esler. See also Tyson 2006: 59, who considers the claim that Luke's

In four articles written between 1989 and 2003, David L. Balch presents a more substantial version of Downing's brief proposal that draws further parallels between Luke's writings and Dionysius' *Ant. Rom*. According to Balch, Luke's writings and *Ant. Rom.* belong to the genre of political history, and thus they must include an account of the people's ancestors, their immigration, and the central founding events of their community. Luke does this, Balch suggests, by including Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3.23-38 and surveys of Israel's origins and history in Acts 7.1-53; 13.16-41, 46-47.[30]

Balch traces numerous parallels between Luke's writings and Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.*,[31] and he suggests that they share a special concern for demonstrating their protagonists' maintenance of ancestral customs. With respect to Luke, Balch writes, "In Graeco-Roman culture, one had to argue that new practices had their origin in the ancient founder(s), in this case, Moses and Jesus."[32] Like Downing, Balch claims that Luke first addresses this issue by emphasizing the continued observance of traditional piety by Jewish Christians. This emphasis, he suggests, reflects the conception of the Mosaic law as a constitution and parallels Dionysius' emphasis on the Roman constitution.[33] The departures from Jewish custom entailed by the inclusion of Gentiles, however, presented a significant problem for Luke:

> The changes these Lukan characters introduce must somehow be justified by references to antiquity (hence the importance of the references to Moses) so as

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interest in antiquity is similar to the apologists but ultimately argues that Luke's emphasis on Christianity's Jewish roots is a refutation of Marcion.

[30] Balch 1989: 345-46; Balch 1990b: 11-13; cf., however, the softening of Balch's stance on the genre of Luke's writings in Balch 2003: 142-45.

[31] Cf. Balch 1989: 349-55; Balch 1990b: 15-17; and esp. the list of 16 similarities between Luke, Dionysius, and Plutarch in Balch 2003: 154-73.

[32] Balch 2003: 140.

[33] Balch 1989: 358-60; Balch 1990b: 14, 19; Balch 2003: 139-41, 149, 160.

> not to be perceived as new developments. The ancient order was the ideal (i.e., divine, revealed) and therefore could not be changed or improved upon.[34]

Luke solves this problem, Balch suggests, by claiming that the Jewish Scriptures themselves anticipated later changes to the Mosaic constitution: "A major part of the Lukan argument rests on the premise that Mosaic, Davidic, and prophetic Scriptures (Luke 16.31; 24.44-48; Acts 13.47), as well as Jesus, prophesied God's reversal (i.e., the acceptance of all the nations)."[35] In this way, according to Balch, Luke roots the whole of Christian piety in the antiquity of Jewish tradition in order to demonstrate that the Christian movement is a respectable cultural option for people within the Graeco-Roman world.[36]

Philip Francis Esler's 1987 study, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, however, brought new dimensions to the proposal that Luke is interested in the theme of antiquity. As was the case in the readings of Luke's work as political apologetic, Esler suggests that Luke emphasizes Christianity's Jewish roots in order to address the issue of the political legitimacy of Christian communities within the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, Esler distinguishes his work from older political apologetic readings in three primary ways.

First, Esler argues that Luke's audience does not consist of governmental authorities external to the Christian community, but rather the church itself. Luke's goal, he claims, is to reassure Christians who work in the service of the Roman Empire that their faith poses no threat to their allegiance to Rome. Thus, Esler concludes, Luke's writings are best characterized as "legitimation," not "apologetic."[37]

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[34] Balch 2003: 174; cf. Balch 1995: 22-23.

[35] Balch 2003: 182.

[36] Balch's view is endorsed by Penner 2004: 282-84.

[37] Esler 1987: 217-19.

Second, after criticizing the *religio licita* theory, Esler argues that evidence from the writings of Josephus indicates that, although Rome did not license religions, they respected religions that were considered to be "ancestral" (πάτριος). Following this, Esler briefly cites four Roman authors who indicate a preference for traditional religions due to the stability provided by ancient customs, and he then claims that Luke's writings contain an "ancestral" theme that is intended to allay fears that Christian belief is novel and therefore politically dangerous. Esler argues that Luke pursues this theme by his resistance to the description of the Christian movement as "new," his use of the adjective "ancestral" (πατρῷος) in conjunction with both God and the Jewish law, his efforts to root the narrative within the world of Jewish history, his emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures, the continuities with Judaism implied by the self-designations used by Christians within his work, and Luke's references to the continued observance of the Jewish law by Christians like Paul who are ethnically Jewish.[38]

Third, Esler maintains that Luke does not attempt to present Christianity as a group that is internal to Judaism. According to Esler, a complete identification as a part of Judaism would have provided almost no benefit to the Christian community because what Rome allowed was the practice of distinctive Jewish customs. Instead of providing benefits, this identification would have had the deleterious effect of obligating Gentile Christians to the *fiscus Iudaicus* inflicted on the Jewish people after Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.[39] Consequently, Esler depicts Luke as engaged in an effort to legitimize particular beliefs and practices. Esler writes,

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[38] Esler 1987: 67-70, 211-17.

[39] Esler 1987: 211-14.

"[Luke's] energies were devoted to attracting existing Roman respect for Jewish customs to such Christian beliefs and practices as could be shown to possess a lineage deriving from Jewish tradition."[40]

Thus, Esler's work reintroduces the issue of Christianity's Jewish roots into the discussion of Luke's political agenda by arguing that these roots alleviate the politically troublesome problem of Christianity's novelty by legitimating specific Christian beliefs and practices as "ancestral." In the years that have followed, this proposal has been endorsed by a number of scholars.[41]

In a 1992 monograph titled *Historiography and Self-Definition*, Gregory E. Sterling makes a similar but distinctive proposal. Sterling argues that Luke's writings belong to a previously unrecognized ancient genre, which Sterling labels "apologetic historiography." According to Sterling,

> Apologetic historiography is the story of a subgroup of people in an extended prose narrative written by a member of the group who follows the group's own traditions but Hellenizes them in an effort to establish the identity of the group within the setting of the larger world.[42]

Sterling's study traces the development of this purported genre through Greek ethnography, the works of Berossus on Babylonia and Manetho on Egypt, and the Hellenistic Jewish historians, but he then focuses on two primary examples: the writings of Luke and Josephus' *AJ*.

According to Sterling, an appeal to antiquity is one of the most important common elements between the writings of Luke and Josephus' *AJ*. He writes:

> Both authors attempted to tell the story of a given people through the rewritings of texts from within their group. Technically they differed in scope: Josephus

[40] Esler 1987: 216.

[41] E.g., Edwards 1991: 183-85; Edwards 1996: 45-46; Witheringon 1998: 544; Bryan 2005: 96-98; Kim 2008: 173-74; Nasrallah 2008: 566.

[42] Sterling 1992: 17 (italics removed).

> retold the entire story; the author of Luke-Acts was a continuator. Yet in another way they agree: both tell the story of the people from the beginning point of their records. More importantly they both emphasize the antiquity of their movement: Josephos through a chronological reckoning and Luke-Acts by insisting that Christianity is not new, but a continuation.[43]

Sterling argues that, in both cases, a major goal of this appeal is the political capital that being a part of a respected ancient tradition provides. *AJ*, he claims, "presented Judaism to the Roman world with the hope that the favourable status Judaism had enjoyed would continue unabated."[44] Luke, he suggests, has similar aims:

> The claim that Christianity was a continuation of Judaism was a way of claiming the standing Judaism enjoyed. It is hard not to compare Josephos and Luke-Acts in this regard. Each pleads for respectability and uses precedents in the form of *acta* or trials to argue their case.[45]

Thus, like Esler, Sterling proposes that Luke uses the theme of antiquity to address political concerns. Nevertheless, there are two important differences between their proposals.

First, unlike Esler, Sterling does not suggest that the function of this theme is merely to reassure Roman readers of the non-conflictual nature of their dual loyalty to Rome and Christ.[46] As indicated by his embrace of the term "apologetic," Sterling maintains that Luke has in view the defence of the Christian movement in the political realm. According to Sterling, Josephus' *AJ* demonstrates that respect and legal rights went hand-in-hand in the ancient world, and Luke aims for both. Nevertheless, Sterling recognizes the problems that Luke's Christian audience and negative depictions of Roman officials pose to the traditional political apologetic view, and thus he suggests

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[43] Sterling 1992: 368-69. Sterling's idiosyncratic spelling of Josephus' name as "Josephos" is not explicitly explained, but it appears to be an attempt to spell the name in a way that reflects direct transliteration. Sterling uses similar unique spellings for several other ancient figures.

[44] Sterling 1992: 308.

[45] Sterling 1992: 385-86.

[46] Cf. his criticism of Esler in Sterling 1992: 383.

that Luke's strategy is to provide models of defence that his Christian audience could imitate. Sterling writes, "Josephos makes his case *directly* to the Hellenistic world; Luke-Acts makes its case *indirectly* by offering examples and precedents to Christians so that they can make their own *apologia*."[47]

The second major difference between Esler and Sterling is that the latter construes Luke's argument as a case for the definition of the Christian movement as a part of Judaism. He dismisses Esler's claim that this would have led to the imposition of the *fiscus Iudaicus* on Gentile Christians.[48] Instead, he suggests, "The defence is that Christianity is simply the extension of the Old Testament and therefore politically innocent."[49] Nevertheless, the evidence to which Sterling points in order to establish this claim is very similar to the evidence adduced by Esler. Sterling primarily relies upon Luke's use of the adjective "ancestral" (πατρῷος), the inclusion of Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3, and especially the prevalence of the theme of prophecy and fulfilment throughout Luke's writings.[50] Sterling even refers readers to Esler's work for a fuller account of this material.[51] He simply thinks that the relationship towards which these connections point is closer than that which Esler acknowledges: "Unable to claim chronological age for his movement, [Luke] argued that it was a continuation of Israel of old: it is therefore not a new movement but an ancient one."[52]

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[47] Sterling 1992: 386.

[48] Sterling 1992: 383, n. 357.

[49] Sterling 1992: 385.

[50] Sterling 1992: 381-86.

[51] Sterling 1992: 381, n. 349.

[52] Sterling 1992: 393.

Thus, Sterling's proposal is nearly a reworked version of the older political apologetic reading of Luke's writings. He only differs from these predecessors in his identification of the direct audience and his claim that Luke expects the Christian movement to enjoy rights because it is a part of a respected ancient heritage, not a formal *religio licita*. As was the case with Esler's work, this proposal has proven to be influential in the ensuing years,[53] and most of the substantial discussions of this issue that have been written after Sterling's study cite him as a definitive proponent of the view that Luke appeals to Jewish antiquity.

In a book originally published in the same year as Sterling's monograph, the notable Josephus scholar Steve Mason promoted a view that is remarkably close to Sterling's proposal.[54] Like Sterling, Mason suggests that Luke and Josephus have parallel agendas: "the points that they need to make are similar: they must show that their groups are worthy of respect because, contrary to first impressions, they are well established in remotest antiquity, possess enviable moral codes, and pose no threat to Roman order."[55] In order to demonstrate these points, Mason claims, Josephus' *AJ* argues for the antiquity of Jewish tradition and the quality of the Jewish constitution. Luke, on the other hand, "must plant Jesus' life and Christian origins deeply within the soil of Judaism."[56]

Like many others, Mason claims that Luke attempts to demonstrate continuity with the Jewish tradition by setting the story firmly within the Jewish world and

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[53] Cf. Tomson 1999: 586-87; Wilson 2001: 78; Bond 2016: 156.

[54] Mason 2003b; the first edition was published in 1992. Despite coming out in the same year, the first edition includes Sterling's work in the bibliography, and thus it is possible that Mason's proposal was influenced by Sterling.

[55] Mason 2003b: 273.

[56] Mason 2003b: 267.

pointing to the fulfilment of the Jewish Scriptures. Additionally, Mason suggests, Luke has a marked emphasis on Jerusalem relative to the other Gospels, and he emphasizes the traditional piety of Jewish Christians in order to suggest that the true "core" of the Christian movement is Jewish. The Gentile mission, Mason claims, is presented as "an *extension* of this Jewish core, maintained by 'thousands of Jews' (21.20)."[57] Mason furthermore argues that Luke parallels Josephus in presenting the various Jewish groups as philosophical schools. Luke does this, Mason states, so that he can define the Christian movement as a distinct school of Jewish philosophy alongside the Pharisees and Sadducees.[58] Mason maintains that these moves, along with Luke's emphasis on the political innocence of Jesus and the early Christians, address false rumours about the church and equip Luke's readers to explain the Christian movement to the broader world.[59]

As a whole, Mason's work thus bears striking similarities to Sterling's study, but Mason adds a few distinctive arguments that bolster the proposal.

The next significant contributor to this discussion is Daniel Marguerat. In his landmark work, *The First Christian Historian*,[60] Marguerat discusses Sterling's view of the parallels between Luke and Josephus, but his evaluation is somewhat unclear. In one passage, he appears to suggest, *contra* Sterling, that Luke and Josephus are more different than alike, particularly on the issue of antiquity. He writes:

> The apologetic of Josephus is argued and direct. Luke, however, proceeds indirectly by means of the narrative. Furthermore, motives such as universal dimension, cultural patriotism, the incomparable antiquity of the movement, the

[57] Mason 2003b: 268.

[58] Mason 2003b: 283-91; cf. Mason 1996: 49-51.

[59] Mason 2003b: 267.

[60] Marguerat 2002; originally published in French as *La première histoire du Christianisme* in 1999.

> demonstration of antiquity and the total reliability of its archives find only a weak echo in Acts.[61]

On the other hand, Marguerat later appears to endorse much of Sterling's study, including his suggestion that Luke and Josephus have an analogous interest in highlighting the ancient roots of their groups. Marguerat lists five points of contact:

> (a) Both offer a definition of their religious movement by means of a historiographical work. (b) Both establish the great antiquity of their religion, a recognized criterion of prestige in Graeco-Roman culture. (c) Both claim the compatibility of their religious customs with the ethos of Roman society, allowing believers to combine their faith with allegiance to Rome. (d) Both present their God as all-powerful in the world, the supreme Providence, even in relation to the Roman authority. (e) Both wish to overcome the rupture produced between Jerusalem and Rome by the events of 70 (a more serious crisis in the case of Josephus), and to construct a work of conciliation.[62]

The inclusion of antiquity on this list appears to contradict Marguerat's earlier objections to Sterling's view, and this topic is not broached elsewhere in the book.

Nevertheless, despite Marguerat's equivocation in *The First Christian Historian*, two of his articles suggest that Luke does share Josephus' interest in the theme of antiquity. Within these articles, Marguerat echoes the proposals of Downing, Balch, Esler, and Mason by suggesting that Luke's emphasis on the traditional piety of Jewish Christians (and especially Paul) is an effort to appeal to Rome's respect for ancient religions. He writes:

> Couper avec la Loi expose au risque que le christianisme apparaisse comme une religion sans coutume, sans passé – illégitime, suivant le canon romain. Le maintien des coutumes, légitimées par l'antiquité de la Torah et allégées de tout excès, lui assure au contraire une surface culturelle politiquement acceptable. C'est la raison pour laquelle, au risque de se faire mal comprendre, Luc a contrebalancé la suspension sotériologique de la Torah par l'affirmation récurrente du maintien do son *ethos* par la branche judéo-chrétienne.[63]

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[61] Marguerat 2002: 30, n. 18.

[62] Marguerat 2002: 80.

[63] Marguerat 2009: 99-100; cf. Marguerat 1999: 76-77.

Marguerat thus maintains that Luke's case for Christian antiquity hinges on the claim that the traditional piety of Jewish Christians establishes the identity of Christian communities as Jewish communities. His proposal has been closely followed in Simon Butticaz's recent study, *L'identité de l'Église dans les Actes des apôtres*.[64]

Another contribution to this discussion arrived in Knut Backhaus' 2007 article, "Mose und der *Mos Maiorum:* Das Alter des Judentums als Argument für die Attraktivität des Christentums in der Apostelgeschichte." As the title indicates, Backhaus contends that Luke appeals to the antiquity of Judaism in order to bolster the appeal of the Christian movement, and his article essentially presents a focused and concentrated selection of the arguments in favour of this view.

Backhaus begins by highlighting the legitimizing authority attributed to antiquity during this time, noting especially the importance of the *mos maiorum* in Roman culture.[65] He then claims that Christianity was treated as suspect because it was considered to be a new and malicious superstition.[66] In the face of this problem, Backhaus suggests, Luke saw the benefits of emphasizing Christianity's connection to Judaism:

> Die archaische Tradition der biblischen Literatur, ‚Mose', nutzt er dabei apologetisch zur Anschluss an die griechisch-römischen Geltungsstandards, für die der *mos maiorum*, im weiten Sinn verstanden, Identität, Legitimation und Konkurrenzfähigkeit stiftet, für die des πρεσβύτερον sich der Vermutung des κρεῖττον erfreut und Alter Attraktivität steigert.[67]

As is the case in most of the studies within this survey, Backhaus suggests that Luke's focus on antiquity is paralleled in the work of Josephus. Backhaus states,

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[64] Butticaz 2011: 417-18, 430-32.

[65] Backhaus 2007: 403-7.

[66] Backhaus 2007: 407-12.

[67] Backhaus 2007: 402.

however, that Luke and Josephus employ different means in order to pursue this theme: Josephus retells the biblical story, but Luke writes the next act in the same drama.[68] As Backhaus sets forth his arguments for the theme of antiquity in Luke's writings, a familiar litany of evidence appears: Luke's aversion to the description of the Christian movement as new, his emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecy, the richly Jewish setting within which both Luke's Gospel and Acts begin, Paul's references to his "ancestral (πατρῷος) God" in Acts, and Luke's references to the traditional piety of Paul and other Jewish Christians.[69]

One final study deserves mention: Craig Keener's magisterial four-volume commentary on Acts. The introduction to this commentary appeared in 2012, and, in several places within this introduction, Keener suggests that Luke has apologetic aims that justify Sterling's classification of Acts as apologetic historiography.[70] Keener again compares Luke's writings to those of Josephus, suggesting that these authors share two primary apologetic strategies: 1) both attempt to provide legal precedents that demonstrate the legitimacy of their groups; 2) both seek to demonstrate their group's claim to antiquity.[71] In Luke's case, Keener argues, these two points largely depend on the identification of the Christian movement as a part of Judaism.

Regarding Luke's political argument, Keener notes the objections to the older *religio licita* view, but he then suggests that a general tolerance was afforded to respected religions. Legal precedents, he claims, played an important role in securing

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[68] Backhaus 2007: 414-15.

[69] Backhaus 2007: 403, 417-26.

[70] Keener 2012–2015: 1.113-15, 161-64, 441-58.

[71] Keener 2012–2015: 1.224, 266-67, 446; cf. his broader comparison of their writings in Keener 2012–2015: 1.188-93.

this tolerance,[72] and Luke's goal is to secure for the church the tolerance that Judaism already enjoys:

> Luke's apologetic directed toward Rome in Acts often does emphasize that Rome understood Christians as a socially harmless sect or party within Judaism . . . Rome's respect for ancestral religions provided a means for arguing for political legitimation. Christians might not find protection under the umbrella of Judaism as a 'legal religion,' but they could find it within Judaism as an *ancient* religion. In practice, this might amount to virtually the same thing.[73]

The resemblances between this proposal and the older *religio licita* view are striking. Nevertheless, Keener, like Sterling, repeatedly stresses that this apology, although *for* Rome, was not written directly *to* Rome, but rather to Christians who could use the defences and decisions that Luke records as models and precedents.[74]

Having thus completed this survey, we are now in a position to note some of the dominant trends in the development of the proposal that Luke highlights the Jewish roots of the Christian movement in order to provide the church with a respectable ancient heritage. This proposal largely developed out of the dissolution of the earlier political apologetic reading of Luke's writings, and it has increased in prominence over the last forty years. Although some suggest that Luke's aim is merely cultural respect, others maintain that he intends to assure Christians who are engaged in government service that their dual allegiance to Christ and Caesar poses no conflict, and still others argue that his goal is to equip Christians with the means to defend themselves in the face of hostile legal challenges. On occasion, versions of this proposal have been conscripted into the service of other agendas, such as Sanders' attempt to portray Luke

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[72] Keener 2012–2015: 1.450.

[73] Keener 2012–2015: 1.449-50; cf. pp. 266-67, 454-56. See also, however, Keener 2012–2015: 1.388, where he suggests (similar to Esler) that the *fiscus Iudaicus* would have motivated Christians to distinguish themselves from the Jewish people. Unfortunately, Keener never explains how he thinks that Luke's strategy of identification avoids this problem.

[74] Cf. Keener 2012–2015: 1.262, 428, 437, 449.

as anti-Semitic or recent efforts to argue that Luke's writings belong to the second century.

The view that Luke intends to equip Christians for legal defence is impressively similar to the older reading of Luke's writings as political apologetic, but its advocates typically follow the lead of Sterling and make two adjustments in order to address criticisms of the older view. First, they assert that Luke's goal is not to speak directly to the Roman government but rather to provide his Christian readers with arguments and legal precedents that they can utilize in their own defence. Second, they argue that, although Rome did not license religions, general tolerance was afforded to religions with an ancient heritage, and this is what Luke intends to secure.

Advocates of Luke's interest in antiquity are also divided over the degree to which Luke associates the Christian movement with Judaism. Most claim that Luke portrays the church as an inner-Jewish party that therefore deserves a full share in the status that the Jewish people enjoy, while others, following Esler, argue that Luke aims to root particular Christian practices and beliefs in antiquity without identifying Christian communities as Jewish.

Nevertheless, advocates of all of these variations typically appeal to the same range of evidence, although some emphasize different aspects of this evidence and some even base their argument on only one feature of Luke's writings. Additionally, nearly all of the substantial presentations of this view suggest that the work of the Jewish historian Josephus is a key parallel that illustrates an appeal to antiquity for social and/or political purposes, and a few have mentioned the Greek historian Dionysius as another author who illustrates the legitimating power of an ancient heritage.

1.2 Criticisms of the Antiquity Proposal

The proposal that Luke highlights the Jewish roots of the Christian movement in order to provide the church with an ancient heritage has rarely been subjected to criticism. Far more often, objections have been raised to specific aspects of the broader proposals set forth by Esler and Sterling. Esler is usually critiqued for his mirror-reading of Luke's writings in order to construct the "Lucan community," and his concomitant claim that the political theme in Luke's writings is designed to legitimate a specific subset of that community.[75] Sterling, on the other hand, is typically censured for unduly minimizing the fact that all of the other examples of apologetic historiography that he presents are both focused on a particular ethnic group and overtly directed to outsiders.[76] Nevertheless, the specific claim that Luke intends to bolster the Christian movement with an argument from antiquity has not gone entirely unchallenged.

In addition to Marguerat's somewhat confusing criticism of Sterling's claims about the importance of antiquity for Luke, Peter Pilhofer denies that any of the New Testament writers engage in an argument from antiquity because they lack the focus on evidence that is present in all other writings that make such claims.[77] Although he does not interact with the specific proposals about Luke, Pilhofer's denial is significant because his study is the only full-length monograph devoted to the topic of the argument from antiquity in ancient literature. Pilhofer surveys the use of this motif in Greek, Roman, Hellenistic Jewish, and early Christian literature, and he concludes that

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[75] Cf. Sterling 1992: 383; Barton 1998: 463-64, 467-70; Walton 2002: 31-32; for extensive criticism of the idea that the Gospels are aimed at particular communities, see the essays in Bauckham 1998.

[76] Cf. Palmer 1993: 15-18; Alexander 1999: 25-27; Holladay 1999; Marguerat 2002: 30; Adams 2013a: 447-54.

[77] Pilhofer 1990: 4-5.

the first Christian to employ this argument is Justin Martyr. Before Justin, Pilhofer points out, Christian apologists embraced the newness of the Christian movement.[78]

The most direct critique of the claims about Luke, however, have been set forth in Susan Wendel's recent study, *Scriptural Interpretation and Community Self-Definition in Luke-Acts and the Writings of Justin Martyr*.[79] As her title indicates, Wendel's study focuses on the ways in which the writings of Luke and Justin interact with the Jewish Scriptures in order to address the issue of community identity. Within this study, Wendel disputes Sterling's claim that Luke seeks to root the Christian movement in antiquity by emphasizing the fulfilment of prophecy.

The relevant chapter begins by tracing appeals to the Jewish Scriptures in Jewish and Christian apologetic literature, including Josephus. Her summary of this material states:

> both early Jewish and Christian apologists deploy similar strategies when they appeal to the Jewish scriptures. In the majority of cases, these authors argue that the Jewish scriptures are more ancient than non-Jewish traditions or represent a superior source of philosophical inquiry. Furthermore, some authors depict the written Mosaic code as a superior form of legislation or ethical guidance.[80]

Following this survey, Wendel explores the writings of Justin, and she finds that he employs precisely the same strategies: "Like the other early Jewish and Christian apologists, Justin uses the Jewish scriptures to demonstrate the antiquity of the origins of his community as well as the superiority of its knowledge and practices over competing non-Jewish traditions."[81]

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[78] See his survey of the Christian apologists in Pilhofer 1990: 221-84.

[79] Wendel 2011.

[80] Wendel 2011: 136-37.

[81] Wendel 2011: 142.

Turning to the writings of Luke, however, Wendel finds little that accords with these apologetic themes. She writes, "Luke never appeals to the Jewish scriptures to assert the antiquity or cultural priority of the Christ-believing movement over against competing non-Jewish religions or schools of thought."[82] The closest he comes, she suggests, is in the account of Paul's speech before the Areopagus, which brings Christian thought into dialogue with the Greek philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, Wendel points out, this speech does not explicitly refer to the Jewish Scriptures; Paul instead presents his theology through the medium of Stoic concepts. Furthermore, Luke never presents the Mosaic law as a superior form of legislation or a philosophical guide to living a virtuous life.[83] Wendel thus concludes:

> Although Luke writes within a Hellenistic historiographical tradition, his appropriation of the Jewish scriptures does not appear to serve the same aim as that of early Jewish and Christian apologists . . . The complete absence of these strategies provides us with little reason to conclude that Luke uses the Jewish scriptures to define Christ-believers with reference to their wider Greco-Roman environment.[84]

The studies of Pilhofer and Wendel suggest that the proposal that Luke is interested in legitimating the Christian movement by associating it with the antiquity of the Jewish heritage is in need of further examination. Both Pilhofer's point about the New Testament writings' failure to include evidence for antiquity and Wendel's claims about Luke's treatment of the Jewish Scriptures cast doubt on this view, but neither deals comprehensively with the variety of arguments that have been set forth in its favour. In this study, we will give thorough consideration to the variety of arguments that have been offered in support of this proposal.

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[82] Wendel 2011: 144.

[83] Wendel 2011: 146-50.

[84] Wendel 2011: 150-51.

1.3 The Plan and Argument of This Study

In order to evaluate the claim that Luke highlights the Jewish roots of the Christian movement for the sake of the cultural or political capital afforded by an ancient heritage, we will compare Luke's writings to the works of two near-contemporaries who, according to the proponents of this view, share Luke's concern for antiquity: T. Flavius Josephus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

As we have seen, the majority of those who have made the case that Luke appeals to Jewish antiquity in order to gain cultural respect or political tolerance point to Josephus as an important parallel. Consequently, we will examine Josephus' *AJ* in order to see how he, in narrative form, presents his cultural and political arguments about the Jewish people. Although Josephus' emphasis on antiquity has often been cited as a parallel by those who argue that Luke has a similar emphasis, Wendel's study has raised important questions about these claims that suggest that this evidence deserves a fresh look.

Dionysius does not feature as prominently as Josephus in proposals about Luke and antiquity, but he does make occasional cameos. Nevertheless, despite his lesser prominence in these conversations, Dionysius' work is in some ways an even closer parallel than that of Josephus to the proposed view of Luke's writings. Dionysius' goal is to enhance the reputation of a group that is currently ethnically diverse (the Romans) by associating it with an ethnically particular ancient heritage (that of the Greeks). This is remarkably similar to the proposal that Luke intends to enhance the reputation of the ethnically diverse Christian movement by associating it with the ancient heritage of the Jewish people. Consequently, comparing Luke's writings with Dionysius will help us to evaluate a different aspect of the proposals about Luke. At the same time, Dionysius

provides yet another example of what it looks like for a near-contemporary of Luke to make an argument within a narrative for antiquity-based respect.

In terms of the order of our study, we will first survey the argument of Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.* and then examine Josephus' *AJ* before turning to the writings of Luke. There are two reasons for the placement of our survey of Dionysius before the study of Josephus. First, Dionysius is chronologically prior to Josephus, having written around a century earlier. Second, despite Talbert's straightforward claim that Josephus borrowed his strategy of appealing to antiquity from Dionysius, there has been a long debate among Josephus scholars about whether or to what degree Josephus used Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.* as a model.[85] This debate has largely been adjudicated on the basis of varying evaluations of the significance of the similar titles of their works, the identical numbers of books, shared vocabulary, similar scenes, the appearance of particular formulas, and reconstructions of their historiographical methods. Our study will attempt to contribute to this discussion by demonstrating that Josephus' central arguments both rely on Dionysius as a model and implicitly treat Dionysius as a rival by insisting on the superiority of the Jewish tradition.[86]

Nevertheless, the more important point is how the arguments in the writings of Dionysius and Josephus compare to the purported evidence for similar themes in the writings of Luke. The emphasis that Dionysius and Josephus place on antiquity makes them an excellent control group to use in evaluating the claim that Luke intends to enhance the reputation of the Christian movement by associating it with the antiquity of

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[85] For Josephus' use of Dionysius as a model: Thackeray 1929: 56-58; Shutt 1961: 97-101; Collomp 1973: 283-87; Attridge 1976: 43-44, 51-54, 60, 64-65, 159-65, 172-76; Momigliano 1978: 16; Downing 1981: 544-45; Downing 1982: 547; Hemer 1989: 64-65; Gabba 1991: 214-16; Sterling 1992: 285-90; Schröder 1996: 261; Feldman 1998a: 7-8; Mason 2003a: 572-73; Keener 2012–2015: 1.188; against: Rajak 1982: 466, 476; Ladouceur 1983; Bilde 1988: 202-3; Spilsbury 1998b: 31, n. 100.

[86] Cf. the brief suggestions along these lines in Thackeray 1929: 56; Collomp 1973: 287.

the Jewish heritage. As Downing writes, "both seem to be trying to persuade people of Hellenic culture that the nations of whom they tell are no upstarts, but have an ancient, valorous and tested law-abiding culture . . . Dionysius and Josephus provide an illustration of 'the spirit of the age.'"[87] The thesis of this study is that reading these three authors back to back reveals that Luke's emphasis on the Jewish roots of the Christian movement is not an effort to furnish the group at the centre of his narrative with a culturally respectable profile. Luke's writings are animated by a different spirit, or at least they are driven by a different set of aims. We will argue that Luke's primary intention in pointing to Christianity's Jewish roots is to demonstrate to his readers that the events that have taken place in the life of Jesus and the early church are legitimate developments within God's plan of salvation history.[88] This theme within his work is thus best characterized not as an exercise in socio-cultural apologetic, socio-cultural legitimation, or political apologetic, but rather as theological legitimation—an effort to provide reassurance to Christians regarding the place of the church within the divine plan.

1.4 Preliminary Qualifications

Before we delve into the body of our study, our approach to a pair of preliminary issues requires attention: 1) the genre(s) of Luke and Acts; 2) the unity of Luke's writings.

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[87] Downing 1981: 545.

[88] The phrase "God's plan of salvation history" is used both here and throughout this study in a non-technical sense. All that it is meant to connote is God's plan to bring about salvation through events that occur within the course of human history. Hence, our use of this phrase should not be taken as an implicit evocation of any of the particular construals of the phrase "salvation history" in recent scholarly literature.

First, despite the fact that we are comparing Luke's writings to two works that belong to the genre of historiography, we are making no assumptions about the genre(s) of Luke's two volumes aside from the fact that they both intend to report historical events. Debates about the specific genre(s) of Luke's writings have been undertaken for many years,[89] but rigid views on this question can have detrimental effects. As Todd Penner writes, "genre categorization can in fact perform a limiting function in analysis, especially with respect to ancient narrative compositions: genre as a formalistic category seems to control and shape the discussion of function."[90] This notion is confirmed by the notable Classics scholar John Marincola.[91] Marincola points out that genres were fluid and developing throughout antiquity, and individual authors often attempted generic innovation. Consequently, he writes, "often-invoked categories are problematic and may obscure more than they illuminate . . . our approach, like that of the ancients, must remain fluid and adaptable."[92] Marincola's work suggests that the precise identification of genre is less important than many previous scholars have supposed. Thus, we will assume no more and no less than that Luke and Acts both belong to genres that entail the reporting of historical events. Comparing such works to Josephus' *AJ* and Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.* is a valid exercise regardless of whether or not they should be classified in precisely the same generic category.

Regarding the issue of unity, Colin J. Hemer's 1989 study of Acts states, "the unity of Luke-Acts is today so generally accepted as to seem a datum of the problem, and the onus does not lie upon us to establish a position which not many would care to

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[89] Cf. the recent survey of approaches to the genre of Acts in Adams 2013b: 5-22.

[90] Penner 2003: 15.

[91] Cf. Marincola 1999: 281-324.

[92] Marincola 1999: 321.

deny."[93] The consensus of which Hemer speaks, however, no longer exists. It was first challenged in a book-length critique co-authored by Mikael Parsons and Richard Pervo,[94] and the issue of whether Luke and Acts can legitimately be treated as a single work, Luke-Acts, in accordance with Cadbury's famous proposal continues to provoke lively debate.[95] Despite these ongoing discussions, however, in this study, we will treat Luke and Acts together. This is in large part necessitated by the fact that those who support the antiquity proposal have almost universally made their case on the basis of both volumes. In addition, however, a strong case can still be made for the narrative unity of Luke and Acts,[96] and this point is even granted by some who deny that the two were originally published and read as a single work.[97] Thus, without making any assumptions about the conditions of their publication or reception, we will treat Luke and Acts as a single narrative with literary unity.

With these preliminary issues out of the way, we are ready to commence with the study proper. We will begin by exploring the argument of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Antiquitates Romanae*.

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[93] Hemer 1989: 30.

[94] Parsons and Pervo 1993.

[95] See the important essays from various perspectives in Gregory and Rowe 2010.

[96] E.g., Marguerat 2002: 43-64; Spencer 2007: 341-66; Green 2011: 101-19.

[97] E.g., Rowe 2007: 451-53.

CHAPTER 2

DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS AND THE ANCIENT GREEK ROOTS OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE

Dionysius of Halicarnassus came to the city of Rome soon after Augustus' defeat of Mark Antony in the year 31 BCE. There, he taught rhetoric while studying Latin and Roman history for twenty-two years before he published the first volumes of his account of the city's origins, *Antiquitates Romanae*.[1] This work, he claims, was written in part as a tribute to his adopted city, in part to inspire his contemporary Romans to live up to the example of their virtuous ancestors, and in part to justify Roman rule to his Greek contemporaries.[2] The means by which he pursues this latter goal make Dionysius an excellent candidate for comparison with recent proposals about Luke.

As Dionysius explains in the preface, *Ant. Rom.* attempts to justify Roman rule by refuting alternative and derogatory accounts of Rome's history. According to Dionysius, there were stories that circulated among the Greeks that claimed that the first Romans were a mixture of homeless people, barbarians, and slaves. Rome, detractors asserted, attained power "not by piety, righteousness, or other virtues, but by chance and unrighteous fortune randomly giving the best of good things to the worst

[1] *Ant. Rom.* 1.7.2. For a detailed examination and probing of Dionysius' brief autobiographical comments, see Delcourt 2005: 21-38.

[2] *Ant. Rom.* 1.5-6.

people."[3] In response to these charges, Dionysius seeks to demonstrate that the founders of Rome were not barbarians but important Greeks, and that Rome's customs and institutions produced a superlatively virtuous people who achieved world dominion by "a law of nature common to all, which time cannot destroy: the superior always rule over the inferior."[4]

Thus, Dionysius' intention in *Ant. Rom.* is to justify Roman rule by proving that the Romans are legitimate heirs of the ancient Greek tradition and that they are the most virtuous people among the Greeks. Predictably, modern scholars have divined further intentions behind Dionysius' narrative, at times in striking opposition to one another.[5] As we proceed, we will occasionally gesture towards these discussion, but our primary interest lies not in the motivation behind Dionysius' argument but rather in its internal logic. Unfortunately, this aspect of Dionysius' writings has not been the subject of nearly as much scholarly reflection as the corresponding material in the writings of Josephus and Luke. In fact, as the occasional sparsity of critical footnotes indicates, some facets of Dionysius' argument have rarely been explored, and there are few disputes about the meaning of his words at the micro-level.[6] Nevertheless, this material needs to be presented in order to enable the comparisons that we intend to make, and Dionysius' clarity perhaps enhances his utility as a foil for Luke.

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[3] *Ant. Rom.* 1.4.2; Hunter 2009: 124, n. 250 suggests that this statement is a reworking of Thuc. 1.20. For efforts to identify or reconstruct the Greek views that Dionysius opposes, see Fox 1993: 34; Fox 1996: 53; Wiater 2011a: 100-2; Wiater 2011b: 72-76.

[4] *Ant. Rom.* 1.5.2-3.

[5] E.g., the contrasting pro- and anti-Augustan readings; pro-Augustan: Pinsent 1959; Bowersock 1965; Martin 1971; Crouzet 2000; anti-Augustan: Hill 1961; Hurst 1982; Gabba 1991. For useful, brief surveys of the history of research on Dionysius, see Hartog 1991: 156-60; Delcourt 2005: 71-76.

[6] There are brief surveys of Dionysius' argument in Forte 1972: 195-203; Peirano 2010: 39-43. The most extensive studies of this material are Gabba 1991; Delcourt 2005, and we will note the points of both overlap and contrast between their studies and our own throughout this chapter.

Dionysius' goal of enhancing the reputation of the Romans by demonstrating that they are the true heirs of the ancient Greek tradition provides a close parallel to the proposal that Luke's aim is to enhance the reputation of the church by rooting the Christian movement in the ancient Jewish tradition. As noted in the introduction, a few of the scholars who have set forth versions of this proposal have even mentioned Dionysius as a contemporary author with similar strategies and aims.[7] This proposed parallel suggests that Dionysius is well-positioned to serve as a test case for the proposals about Luke because Dionysius' work stands as a concrete example of the sorts of things that an author says and does in a historical narrative when these concerns are in view. This chapter will thus explore the argument of Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.* in order to observe what it looks like when a near-contemporary of Luke pursues such an agenda.

Dionysius' argument consists of three primary theses: first, he maintains that the earliest Romans were descended from five waves of immigrants from Greece; second, he argues that Rome has sustained its Greek cultural heritage better than any other Greek colony; third, he suggests that the Romans are the most virtuous among the Greek peoples because their constitution, laws, and policies include and improve upon all of the best elements from the Greek tradition.[8] The arguments for these theses are spread throughout the work, and we will examine the support that he provides for each one in turn. We will begin with the case that Dionysius presents regarding the ancestry of the founders of Rome.

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[7] E.g., Talbert 1984: 100; Downing 1986: 49-52; Downing 1988: 153-57; Penner 2004: 282-84; and esp. Balch 1989: 349-55; Balch 1990b: 15-17; Balch 2003: 154-73.

[8] Cf. the summary of Dionysius' argument in Gabba 1991: 195-96.

2.1 The Ancient Greek Ancestry of the First Romans

Immediately after the preface, Dionysius launches into an extensive account depicting the first Romans as a group consisting of five waves of immigrants from Greece.[9] The five waves of immigrants identified by Dionysius are: 1) the Oenotrians, who came from Arcadia and were later renamed the Aborigines; 2) the Pelasgians, who came from Thessaly; 3) a group from the Arcadian city of Pallantium under the command of Evander; 4) certain Epeans and Pheneats who arrived with an army under the command of Hercules; and 5) the Trojans who had escaped with Aeneas at the conclusion of the Trojan War.[10]

The importance of some of these groups for the founding of Rome had been acknowledged by others before Dionysius, but his claim that all of Rome's founders were Greek was unprecedented.[11] Contrary to Dionysius' argument, many believed that the Aborigines were an autochthonous people native to Italy,[12] and many also identified the Pelasgians with the native Tyrrhenians. Additionally, although the version of Rome's origins preferred by the house of Caesar traced the founders' lineage to the Trojans, the accepted version of this story identified the Trojans not as Greek but rather as opponents of the Greeks. In some variations on this trope, Rome's conquest of Greece was even viewed as the enactment of Troy's vengeance against the Greek

[9] Delcourt suggests that Dionysius also intends to associate all five waves of immigrants with the Arcadians (Delcourt 2005; 130, 143-45), but Dionysius' summaries do not consistently highlight this region in the way that one would expect if this were a significant point for his argument; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.60.3; 1.89; 2.1.

[10] Cf. the summary in *Ant. Rom.* 1.60.3.

[11] For a survey of prior works that make strides in this direction, see Gabba 1991: 12-15.

[12] Linderski 1992: 4 notes Varro's promotion of this view.

world.[13] Thus, Dionysius' identification of ancient Rome as a Greek city would have proved highly controversial.

Dionysius' case for Rome's ethnic origins is primarily presented in the first book of *AJ*. The level of documentation in this book indicates that he was well aware of the controversial nature of his claims. Anouk Delcourt writes, "Si l'on observe la répartition des citations à travers les *Antiquités romaines*, on ne peut manquer d'être frappé par une disproportion flagrante : soixante pour cent d'entre elles sont concentrées dans le seul premier livre."[14] Citations, however, are only the tip of the iceberg. Dionysius presents extensive arguments for the Greek origins of each of the five waves of immigrants: he recounts their ancestry, the occasion of their immigration from Greece to Italy, where they lived in the Italian peninsula, and when they joined with the other groups to form a united people. In order to facilitate comparison with Luke's depiction of the relationship between the Christian movement and the Jewish heritage, we will briefly review this material.

2.1.1 The Aborigines

After a brief overview of the material that is to follow,[15] Dionysius begins his discussion in earnest with the Aborigines. He raises the issue of their purported autochthonous origins in Italy, along with other more derogatory accounts of their ancestry.[16] He counters these stories, however, by appealing to Roman historians who

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[13] Cf. Hill 1961: 90-92; Hurst 1982: 860-62; Hartog 1991: 167; Linderski 1992: 9-11; Fox 1993: 34; Fox 1996: 53-55; each of whom points to Virgil as an exemplar of the standard view.

[14] Delcourt 2005: 54; cf. Schultze 1986: 128-29.

[15] *Ant. Rom.* 1.9.

[16] *Ant. Rom.* 1.10; cf. the exposition of this passage in Linderski 1992: 4.

had mentioned the immigration of a Greek tribe long before the Trojan war.[17] Dionysius asserts that these unidentified Greeks were Arcadians under the leadership of Oenotrus, and he then traces Oenotrus' lineage, demonstrating that he was a fifth-generation descendant of the first kings in the Peloponnesus.[18] In support of these claims, he appeals to the writings of the poet Sophocles and the historians Antiochus of Syracuse and Pherecydes of Athens, the latter of whom provides corroboration for Dionysius' genealogy of Oenotrus.[19] Dionysius concludes, "These, then, are the things said by the ancient poets and mythographers concerning the dwelling place and race of the Oenotrians, by which I am persuaded that, if the tribe of the Aborigines is really Greek, as is said by Cato and Sempronius and many others, then they are descended from these same Oenotrians."[20]

When recounting the cities in which the Aborigines lived, Dionysius mentions an oracle of Mars that bore a striking similarity to a legendary oracle located at Dodona in Greece.[21] Although this is meagre evidence for the Aborigines' Greek ancestry, Dionysius takes care to mention it, and it is the first of many religious practices to which he appeals in setting out his case. As Emilio Gabba states, "Roman religion is a cornerstone of [Dionysius'] reconstruction of history as a demonstration of Rome's original Greek character."[22]

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[17] *Ant. Rom.* 1.11.1; he explicitly claims the support of Porcius Cato and Gaius Sempronius, but he asserts that many others held the same view.

[18] *Ant. Rom.* 1.11.2.

[19] *Ant. Rom.* 1.12.1-13.1.

[20] *Ant. Rom.* 1.13.2.

[21] *Ant. Rom.* 1.14.5.

[22] Gabba 1991: 134. Cf. the surveys of Dionysius' argument regarding the Aborigines in Gabba 1991: 113-16; Hartog 1991: 152-54; Delcourt 2005: 132-35; and esp. Briquel 1993: 17-39.

2.1.2 The Pelasgians

Turning to the Pelasgians, Dionysius relates how they too originated from an ancient Greek race on the Peloponnesus, asserting that their ancestor Pelasgus was descended from Niobe and Zeus.[23] Dionysius earlier identifies this same Pelasgus as the grandfather of Oenotrus,[24] and he explains the alliance between the Pelasgians and Aborigines/Oenotrians as a consequence of their common Greek ancestry.[25]

In his description of the lands inhabited by the Pelasgians, Dionysius suggests that their Greek heritage is attested by the name that they gave to the marshes: "*Velia*." He explains that this name is derived from an ancient Greek word that contained the now defunct letter digamma, which was transliterated into Latin as a "v."[26] Dionysius also appeals to certain aspects of the culture of the Pelasgian cities. He claims that the cities of Falerii and Fescennium preserved ancient Greek military customs because their soldiers carried Greek implements and they followed the Greek tradition of sending out holy men before a battle with the terms of peace.[27] There is further proof of Greek ancestry, he suggests, in other religious practices of these cities. He highlights in particular the similarities between the structure and ceremonies of the temple of Juno at Falerii and the temple at Argos.[28] Additionally, he notes a town in Italy that the Pelasgians named Larisa after their mother city in Greece.[29]

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[23] *Ant. Rom.* 1.17.3.

[24] *Ant. Rom.* 1.11.2.

[25] *Ant. Rom.* 1.20.2.

[26] *Ant. Rom.* 1.20.2-3.

[27] *Ant. Rom.* 1.21.1.

[28] *Ant. Rom.* 1.21.1-2.

[29] *Ant. Rom.* 1.21.3-4.

The greatest challenge to Dionysius' account of the Pelasgians is the widespread identification of this people with the native Tyrrhenians, and he consequently devotes a lengthy excursus to proving that the Pelasgians are a distinct group. Dionysius' primary argument is that the Pelasgians and Tyrrhenians were confused because they lived in the same region, and, as is often the case, the label attached to the region came to be applied to all of the people who lived there. Nevertheless, the Pelasgians' distinctness, he claims, is evident from the unique language that they spoke, which is also attested by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Sophocles.[30]

2.1.3 Evander and the Arcadians

Regarding the group of Arcadians that came with Evander, Dionysius recounts that their leader was the son of Hermes and an Arcadian nymph.[31] This small expedition received a warm welcome from the Aborigines, and they settled near the middle of what is now Rome, naming their settlement Pallantium after their mother-city in Arcadia.[32]

Once again, in order to provide proof of the Greek ancestry of this expedition, Dionysius appeals to their religious customs, noting that the Arcadians built a temple to Lycaean Pan, the most ancient and honoured Arcadian god. Upon this altar, they performed traditional sacrifices, which, Dionysius claims, are still observed at Rome.[33]

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[30] *Ant. Rom.* 1.25-30; cf. the survey of Dionysius' argument regarding the Pelasgians in Delcourt 2005: 135-39; and the recent effort to use this aspect of Dionysius' work in the process of historical reconstruction in Tegelaar 1999: 95-101.

[31] *Ant. Rom.* 1.31.1.

[32] *Ant. Rom.* 1.31.2-4; *Ant. Rom.* 1.32.1-2 is devoted to refuting other explanations for the name of this settlement.

[33] *Ant. Rom.* 1.32.3-5.

Dionysius goes on to suggest that the same type of continuity can be seen in the rites and sacrifices associated with a temple to Ceres, a precinct dedicated to Equestrian Neptune, and a festival known in Arcadia as Hippocrateia.[34] He concludes:

> And they also dedicated many other precincts and altars and images of gods, and they established ancestral purifications and sacrifices, which are practised in the same manner up to my time. But I would not marvel even if some had fallen to the side, having escaped the memory of the descendants because of their great antiquity, but those that are still happening now are sufficient proof of the former Arcadian customs.[35]

2.1.4 The Expedition of Hercules

In the section on the expedition that came with Hercules, Dionysius is less focused on the ethnicity of the immigrants than he is on sorting out fact from fiction in the stories about Hercules' time in Italy. He claims that the soldiers who decided to stay were Peloponnesians from Pheneus and Elis intermixed with a few Trojans.[36] Regarding this group as a whole, he recounts a story regarding the Saturnian Hill that links the Greek rites performed there with this expedition, but he then rejects the tale as spurious.[37] After this, the group fades into the background and Dionysius focuses on legends concerning Hercules himself.

Dionysius first recounts how Hercules abolished human sacrifice and taught the people to burn effigies instead. This alternative, Dionysius suggests, was meant to

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[34] *Ant. Rom.* 1.33.1-2.

[35] *Ant. Rom.* 1.33.3; cf. the extensive comparison between Dionysius' depiction of Evander and those of Livy, Virgil, and Ovid in Delcourt 2001: 829-63. Martin 1971: 167-69 claims that Dionysius is implicitly presenting Augustus as the successor to Evander by virtue of the particular religious ceremonies that he attributes to the latter, but the fit between these passages and Dionysius' stated purpose of proving the Romans' ancient Greek ancestry casts doubt on Martin's proposal.

[36] *Ant. Rom.* 1.34.2.

[37] *Ant. Rom.* 1.34.3-5.

assuage the people's traditional scruples, and he promises to return later in the work to the topic of Greek rites and sacrifices practised at Rome.[38]

Dionysius then addresses Hercules' arrival in Italy, but his handling of this topic is bewildering. At the conclusion of a tale recounting Hercules' recovery of cattle, he states that Hercules erected an altar to Jupiter the Discoverer at Rome and established Greek ceremonies that are still celebrated.[39] He also gives an extensive description of Evander's establishment of a cult in Hercules' honour. Evander, Dionysius claims, foresaw that Hercules would become a god, and he wanted to be the first to institute a sacrifice for him. He invited Hercules himself to officiate the first sacrifice, and Hercules taught the proper Greek rites to two families. These families, Dionysius claims, oversaw annual ceremonies in Hercules' honour for many generations, and the same sacrifices are still observed in Rome, but the ceremony is now officiated by slaves who are purchased with public money.[40] Thus far, Dionysius appears to assume that this story is accurate, but he then goes on to give an alternative account of Hercules' arrival in Italy that he describes as "more true."[41]

In this alternative account of Hercules' arrival, there are no cattle and no sacrifices, only a military conquest. Hercules arrives with an army, conquers territory, and leaves a battalion of Greek soldiers to guard the country.[42] Dionysius states that the leaving of a guard was in keeping with Hercules' standard practice of taking under his

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[38] *Ant. Rom.* 1.38.3-4.

[39] *Ant. Rom.* 1.39.4.

[40] *Ant. Rom.* 1.40.2-6; Dionysius promises to give more information about why the oversight of these rites was transferred at a later point, but no such explanation ever appears in the extant text.

[41] *Ant. Rom.* 1.41.1.

[42] Garstad 2014: 233-37 suggests that Dionysius' second account is an example of the "historicization of hero myths," and stands as but one among many instances in which mythical heroes were reinterpreted as military generals.

command for a time captives from conquered peoples and then rewarding them for faithful service by giving them new lands elsewhere.[43] In this case, Dionysius claims, the discharged soldiers were Peloponnesians and Trojans who settled around the Saturnian Hill and later joined with the Aborigines as one people.[44]

This latter account supports Dionysius' claims regarding the ethnicity of the soldiers who stayed in Italy, but it also subverts his statements regarding the origins of the Greek religious rituals that are associated with the other stories about Hercules. Dionysius, however, demonstrates no awareness of this discrepancy, and he later refers back to the sacrifices instituted by Hercules without any embarrassment or further explanation.[45]

2.1.5 Aeneas and the Trojans

Finally, Dionysius discusses Aeneas and the Trojans. There were various accounts of what happened to Aeneas after the fall of Troy, and Dionysius provides evidence for his version of the story by identifying various temples, altars, and other religious items that the Trojans established at various points along their journey to Italy.[46] He explains their positive reception by the Aborigines as a consequence of their Greek ancestry,[47] and he later devotes an excursus to demonstrating that Aeneas was an

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[43] *Ant. Rom.* 1.42.3-4.

[44] *Ant. Rom.* 1.44.2.

[45] *Ant. Rom.* 6.1.4. Martin 1971: 170-74 tries to claim both versions of Dionysius' story of Hercules as examples of Dionysius' support for Augustus. Martin suggests that Hercules serves as a precedent for imperial divinization, and he argues that the particular sites of military victory that Dionysius mentions correspond to locations in which Augustus won important battles. Nevertheless, as was the case with Dionysius' account of Evander's religious rites, Dionysius' presentation of this material corresponds so closely to his stated purpose that Martin's proposal seems superfluous. Cf. Martin's discussion of both his proposal and the standard view in Martin 1972: 252-75.

[46] *Ant. Rom.* 1.49.3-53.5.

[47] *Ant. Rom.* 1.57.3-58.5; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.64.4, where the Trojans are attacked due to fear of Greek power.

eighth generation descendant of Atlas, the first Arcadian king.[48] Dionysius concludes, "It has thus also been shown by me that the Trojan race was Greek from ancient times."[49] In *Ant. Rom.* 1.71, Dionysius traces the succession of kingship among the Trojans in Italy. He begins with Silvius, the son of Aeneas, and concludes with Romulus and Remus, thus completing his account of the line from the Trojans' Greek ancestors in the Peloponnesus to the twin founders of Rome.

Aside from this genealogical account, Dionysius also maintains that the gods worshipped by the Trojans demonstrate their Greek heritage. Throughout his account of the Trojans' journey, Dionysius mentions that Aeneas brought images of the Trojan gods with him.[50] The purpose of this detail becomes clear when Dionysius later reports that the images brought by Aeneas are images of the Great Gods worshipped by the Greeks, particularly the Samothracians, and that they are still preserved in a sanctuary at Lavinium. They were given, Dionysius claims, as a dowry from Zeus to Aeneas' grandfather before he left Greece, and copies of these images may be viewed in a temple at Rome.[51] Thus, the images of the Trojan gods provide corroboration for his account of the Greek origin of the Trojan people.[52]

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[48] *Ant. Rom.* 1.61-2.

[49] *Ant. Rom.* 1.62.2; cf. the expositions of this argument in Hartog, 1991: 167; Delcourt, 2005: 140-43.

[50] *Ant. Rom.* 1.46.1, 3, 4; 1.47.6; 1.55.5; 1.57.1.

[51] *Ant. Rom.* 1.67-9; he cites several other historians in support of this story.

[52] For a thorough treatment of Dionysius' account of Aeneas and the Trojans, including intriguing proposals about the composition of this passage, see Dubourdieu 1993: 71-82; on the Trojan images, see Gabba 1991: 134.

2.1.6 Conclusion

At the conclusion of his first book, Dionysius summarizes his argument and calls for the renunciation of alternative depictions of the earliest Romans. In later books, he includes a few brief genealogical notes intended to demonstrate possible links between Greece and the inhabitants of areas that were colonized by Rome,[53] but the majority of his case regarding the ethnicity of the first Romans is presented in the first book.

In *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.2, Dionysius writes, "One can find no nation more ancient (ἀρχαιότερον) or more Greek (Ἑλληνικώτερον) than these." The value that Dionysius assigns to these qualities is evident in his account of an incident in which the people of Rome held a festival in order to attract the virgin women from the surrounding cities so that Roman men could seize them during the festival and take them for their wives.[54] The women, he claims, were at first upset, but Romulus then comforted them by pointing out that this practice was "both Greek and ancient" (Ἑλληνικόν τε καὶ ἀρχαῖον).[55] These qualities, Romulus states, legitimate this practice as "the most illustrious" (ἐπιφανέστατον) means for contracting a marriage. In Dionysius' eyes, the status of being both ancient and Greek carried a great deal of symbolic cultural capital; it could even legitimate the procurement of a wife by seizure.[56]

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[53] E.g., *Ant. Rom.* 2.48-49, on the possible origins of the Sabines; *Ant. Rom.* 2.50.5, on the Aboriginal origin (via Alba) of Cameria; and *Ant. Rom.* 3.46.4-8, on the personal ancestry of the Roman king Tarquinius, which shows him to be the son of a Corinthian. For suggestions of further ways in which the later books reinforce Dionysius' ethnographic argument, see Martin 2000: 148-57; Fox 2011: 109-10.

[54] *Ant. Rom.* 2.30.

[55] *Ant. Rom.* 2.30.5. For a discussion of Dionysius' source for the purported ancient Greek practice here mentioned, see Greaves 1998: 572-74.

[56] Cf. the discussion of Dionysius' use of the phrase "ancient and Greek" in Hill 1961: 88, who also mentions Dionysius' use of this phrase in his description of the system of patronage in *Ant. Rom.* 2.9.2. See also the discussion in Delcourt 2005: 205-6.

Thus, when Dionysius applies the same labels, "ancient" and "Greek," to the ancestors of the Roman people, he is making a powerful legitimating claim. He is essentially arguing that the roots of the Roman people stretch back to the originators of civilized life. In Dionysius' argument, claims to antiquity join with claims to Greek ancestry in order to suggest that the Romans are a part of a venerable heritage whose value has been proven by the test of time.[57]

As we have seen, Dionysius' arguments for Rome's links with the most ancient Greek peoples are explicit and extensive, and both the shape and the quantity of Dionysius' arguments will be important to keep in mind as we turn to evaluate the claim that Luke's goal is to demonstrate that the Christian movement is both Jewish and ancient. Do Luke's writings really show interest in these themes? We will examine this question in due course. Nevertheless, in Dionysius' view, being Greek involves more than simply having certain ancestors; it is also a way of life. Thus, his second line of argument is to suggest that Rome's culture has been consistently Greek. We will explore this theme in the following section.

2.2 The Greek Culture of Rome

Despite his case regarding the founders of Rome, Dionysius cannot deny that many barbarians have taken up residence in Rome over the course of time. He openly admits, "But the intermixing of the barbarians, through which the city unlearned many of the ancient customs, happened with time."[58] This poses a threat to Dionysius' claims regarding Rome's status as a Greek city because no ancestral pedigree could authenticate a city as Greek if it had been overrun with barbaric customs. Dionysius,

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[57] Cf. the emphasis on longevity as the key factor in Gabba 1991: 202.

[58] *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.3.

however, is prepared to face this challenge. As Nicholas Wiater writes, "His work was to provide Rome with a Greek past so as to demonstrate that the Romans were Greek, both ethnically and ethically."[59] Hence, immediately after admitting the intermixing of races at Rome, Dionysius seeks to ameliorate concern by first laying out what he considers to be the appropriate criteria for evaluating a city's preservation of Greek culture and then arguing that Rome has been more successful in this endeavour than any other Greek colony. He writes:

> And it may seem to be a marvel to those who consider the natural course of events that [Rome] was not barbarized altogether . . . because others, having dwelled for a long time among barbarians, have unlearned everything Greek after a little time passed; thus they do not speak the Greek language, nor practise Greek customs, nor recognize the same gods, nor the equitable laws (by which especially Greek nature differs from barbarian), nor anything pertaining to other marks, none whatsoever.[60]

After laying out these criteria, Dionysius dismisses the issue of the Romans' language, which he explains as a partially barbarized form of Aeolic Greek,[61] and he then asserts, "other things, as many as are indicators of the Greek race, they preserve like no other of those who have gone out from home."[62]

Dionysius also ironically employs the presence of barbarians in Rome as an argument in favour of Rome's Greek heritage. He suggests that what is impressive about this situation is the degree to which Rome has been able to preserve Greek customs despite having an ethnically mixed population.[63] As we shall see, this is not the

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[59] Wiater 2011a: 166.

[60] *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.3-4; cf. the analysis of this passage in Dench 2005: 234-36.

[61] See also his references to the use of Greek characters or words in *Ant. Rom.* 2.54.2; 4.15.2; 4.18.2; 4.26.5; 5.47.1; and his earlier claim that the Arcadians introduced Greek characters into the region in *Ant. Rom.* 1.31.4.

[62] *Ant. Rom.* 1.90.1; he goes on to provide an example of an Achaean colony that quickly barbarized.

[63] Cf. the discussions of Dionysius' emphasis on the preservation of customs in Gabba 1991: 109-10; Hartog 1991: 161-63.

only time that Dionysius makes an ironic argument with regard to Rome's relationship with non-Greek peoples.

Significantly, *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.3-4 also gives a list of the elements that Dionysius considers to be important for evaluating the Greek culture of Rome. Aside from the issue of language, which he concedes as a weak point for Rome, Dionysius lists customs, gods, and laws as the relevant criteria. Consequently, this section will focus on Dionysius' comments on these areas. Our study of this material will help us to evaluate the similar proposal that Luke points to continuity with the Jewish heritage by emphasizing the traditional cultural practices of many Jewish Christians.

2.2.1 The Romans' Greek Customs

As we have seen, Dionysius' first book suggests that the five groups of immigrants who combined to form the city of Rome brought with them the culture of Greece.[64] Throughout *Ant. Rom.*, Dionysius emphasizes the concern of the Romans for the maintenance of their ancestral customs. The importance of this concern is amply illustrated by the frequency with which the Romans appeal to ancestral customs in political discussions and debates.[65] In many of these cases, the issue under consideration is the form of government, and the senators argue that the form of government should not be altered.[66] In one instance, however, the terms are reversed, and Dionysius claims that the Romans considered the purpose of the government to be the preservation of their customs. In *Ant. Rom.* 7.54-56, Manius Valerus discusses

[64] Gabba 1991: 105 points out that Dionysius' work contrasts with that of Thucydides in attributing an advanced level of civilization to Greeks from the era of these purported immigrations.

[65] Cf. *Ant. Rom.* 2.3.4; 4.31.1, 78.1, 80.1-4; 6.9.4, 24.1, 38.3, 60.1, 61.1, 80.1-4; 7.38.3-4, 50.2, 59.2;10.3.2; 11.6.3, 7.2, 8.2, 9.5, 19.5, 55.2, 60.2, 60.4, 62.1; 19.16.5, 17.4.

[66] Dionysius frequently attributes these arguments to the Claudii; this phenomenon is explored in Wiseman 1979: 57-103, who compares Dionysius' treatment of the Claudii with that of Livy.

whether the people should be granted the new right of prosecuting a senator. His concluding argument, which persuades the senate, is that this change is justified because the customs of the people will be better protected if more eyes keep watch over them.[67]

2.2.2 The Romans' Greek Laws

Dionysius assigns Rome's laws a particularly important role in assuring that Rome maintains its Greek cultural heritage; he claims that laws are the element "by which especially a Greek nature (φύσις 'Ελλάς) differs from a barbarian."[68] Later in the work, he offers a definition of the difference between Greeks and barbarians, and again the issue of one's nature is preeminent. He writes:

> For I think it right to distinguish the Greek from the barbarian not by name or on account of dialect but by intelligence and the choosing of kind behaviour, and most of all by not going beyond human nature in treatment of one another. Therefore, as many as have these things in abundance in their nature (ἐν τῇ φύσει), these I think it necessary to call Greeks, and as many as have the opposite, barbarians.[69]

Thus, in Dionysius' view, the thing that distinguishes Greeks from barbarians is their nature, and laws are the primary element that shapes a people's nature. Consequently, there could be no greater guarantee of Rome's status as a Greek city than for Rome to have Greek laws.

As is the case with several important elements of Greek culture, Dionysius associates the introduction of Greek laws to Italy with the arrival of Evander and the

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[67] *Ant. Rom.* 7.56.4.

[68] *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.4.

[69] *Ant. Rom.* 14.6.5.

Arcadians.[70] This notice, however, is only a minor foreshadowing of the extensive development of this theme. Dionysius' argument for the Greek roots of Rome's laws comes to fullest expression in his discussion of the constitution.

Dionysius uniquely associates the establishment of Rome's constitution with Romulus, and he attributes nearly every major element within this constitution to Greek precedent.[71] It is perhaps with this in view that Dionysius mentions Romulus' Greek education earlier in the book.[72] In the opening scene of the establishment of the constitution , Romulus himself mentions that he has learned from old men who were acquainted with history.[73]

The story begins with Romulus calling the people to decide between the three best forms of government: monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy. He suggests that the good character of a city's citizens is the only thing that can produce undisturbed assurance of safety, and he claims that the character of a city's citizens results, above all else, from the city's form of government.[74] The people respond to this request by appealing to ancestral precedent: "We do not need a new form of government. To the contrary, receiving the one that was approved by our fathers to be most excellent, we are not going to change."[75] They then appoint Romulus to be king.

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[70] *Ant. Rom.* 1.33.4; on the broader elements of Greek culture that Dionysius associates with this group, see Delcourt 2005: 147-50.

[71] Delcourt 2005: 272-73.

[72] *Ant. Rom.* 1.84.5.

[73] *Ant. Rom.* 2.3.6; cf. Wiater 2011a: 175-76, who suggests that Romulus' reliance on the advice of old men is itself an imitation of Greek custom.

[74] *Ant. Rom.* 2.3; cf. the discussion of this passage in Wiater 2011a: 184-85.

[75] *Ant. Rom.* 2.4.1.

Dionysius continues by narrating Romulus' organization of the city. He first describes the division of the city into patricians and plebeians and the assigning of responsibilities to these groups.[76] According to Gabba, this section echoes Aristotle's *Politica* in order to suggest that Romulus designed an ideal Greek city.[77] More importantly for our purposes, Dionysius explicitly suggests that Romulus borrowed these societal divisions from the practices of Athens and Thessaly.[78]

Dionysius then tells of the establishment of the senate, which he claims was "a Greek custom."[79] Following this, he describes the appointment of the *celeres*, a body of 300 men who guarded the king and undertook urgent business on his behalf. This institution, he traces to the Lacedaemonians.[80] He also suggests that the balance of power between the king and the senate in Rome was derived from Lacedaemonian practice.[81]

Dionysius goes on to describe Romulus' establishment of religious practices. He asserts that Romulus "established all these things by the best of the customs from the Greeks,"[82] and he then provides examples in support of this assertion. He describes the roles assigned to the families of priests and suggests that the method for selecting others to perform these roles in the case of a priest without a family was derived from

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[76] *Ant. Rom.* 2.8-11.

[77] Gabba 1991: 169-71.

[78] *Ant. Rom.* 2.8.1-3; 2.9.2.

[79] *Ant. Rom.* 2.12.3.

[80] *Ant. Rom.* 2.13.

[81] *Ant. Rom.* 2.14.2. Delcourt suggests that Dionysius alters the details of both these Roman institutions and their Greek predecessors in order to make his argument for borrowing sound more plausible (Delcourt 2005: 180-84).

[82] *Ant. Rom.* 2.18.2.

Greek practice.[83] He then highlights the appointment of a traditional soothsayer for each tribe,[84] and he describes the establishment of a common table for each *curia* to use on holy days. This latter practice, he suggests, was taken over from the Lacedaemonians.[85]

Dionysius' message is clear: Rome's original constitution was thoroughly Greek in character. The point, as Wiater states, is that "throughout history the behaviour of the Romans is based on the Greek values and institutions which Romulus had introduced as the constituents of Roman identity at the origins of Roman history."[86]

Nevertheless, the theme of the Greek roots of Rome's laws does not stop with the initial formation of the constitution. Dionysius also maintains that, as elements of the constitution were adjusted, Greek precedents were kept clearly in view.[87]

The first and most lengthy account of constitutional development is Dionysius' report of the expansion of religious regulations by Numa, Rome's second king. Dionysius writes:

> But as many things as it seemed had been left aside by that one [Romulus], these things, he [Numa] added, appointing many precincts for the gods who had not yet received honours, and founding many altars and temples, and assigning feasts to each of them and appointing the priests who would take care of them, and making laws concerning purifications and rituals and cleansings and many other services and honours.[88]

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[83] *Ant. Rom.* 2.22.1-2.

[84] *Ant. Rom.* 2.22.3.

[85] *Ant. Rom.* 2.23.1-3.

[86] Wiater 2011a: 178; cf. Delcourt 2005: 291-97, who highlights connections between the constitution and the virtues described in the preface.

[87] Although Wiater suggests that Dionysius contrasts with his contemporaries who held that the constitution of Rome developed through "struggles and controversies" over a number of years (Wiater 2011a: 180-85), this contrast is more apparent than real because Dionysius himself narrates a number of developments. Additionally, *Ant. Rom.* 1.9.4 speaks explicitly of how the Romans established their form of government "on the basis of many experiences, taking something beneficial from each occasion;" cf. Schultze 1986: 130-31; Delcourt 2005: 178-79.

[88] *Ant. Rom.* 2.63.2.

According to Dionysius, Numa committed this whole system to writing, dividing the religious ceremonies into eight different classes and assigning each class of ceremonies to a particular group.[89] Throughout his account of these ceremonies, Dionysius points out connections with Greek religious practices as often as possible.

Dionysius explains that two orders of ceremonies were assigned to groups whose association with Greek tradition has already been demonstrated: the *curiones*[90] and the *celeres*.[91] He maintains that four other orders of ceremonies were assigned to groups that corresponded to existing Greek orders: the *flamines*,[92] traditional soothsayers,[93] the *Salii*,[94] and the *pontifices*.[95] In only one case does Dionysius suggest that Numa assigned ceremonies to a group that was not in use among the Greeks: the *fetiales*, whose function was to make certain that Rome's wars were just by establishing the violation of treaties.[96] He devotes the most space, however, to the Vestals, to whom the fifth class of ceremonies was assigned.[97]

The Vestals receive extra attention because there is disagreement about whether Romulus or Numa constructed the temple of Vesta at Rome, and Dionysius' preferred solution calls into question Romulus' faithfulness to the Greek religious tradition.

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[89] *Ant. Rom.* 2.63.4; cf. the reflections on Rome's religious regulations in Gabba 1991: 120.

[90] *Ant. Rom.* 2.64.1; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.23.1-3.

[91] *Ant. Rom.* 2.62.3; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 2.13.

[92] *Ant. Rom.* 2.64.2.

[93] *Ant. Rom.* 2.63.4.

[94] *Ant. Rom.* 2.70-71.

[95] *Ant. Rom.* 2.73.

[96] *Ant. Rom.* 2.72. Crouzet 2000: 160-62 suggests that Dionysius' reference to the *fetiales* is a reflection of his pro-Augustan bias because Augustus had recently revived this institution.

[97] *Ant. Rom.* 2.64.5.

Dionysius admits that the case for construction by Romulus is strong. A man like Romulus, skilled in divination, would surely know that a city needs a public hearth, and it is unlikely that he would neglect the goddess whom his mother had served as a priestess. Nevertheless, Dionysius argues, the placement of the temple suggests that it was not constructed during Romulus' reign, and he postulates that Romulus may have avoided establishing a temple to Vesta due to doubts about his moral authority to punish unchaste priestesses; his own mother had become pregnant while serving this goddess. Dionysius concludes that, instead of a central hearth in a temple to Vesta, Romulus erected a hearth in each *curia* and appointed the head of the *curia* to serve as a priest. In so doing, Dionysius asserts, he was following other Greek customs from the most ancient cities. Numa, he claims, allowed the practice instituted by Romulus to continue, but he also added the central temple to Vesta and entrusted it to the care of the traditional virgin priestesses.[98]

Throughout his account of Numa's religious regulations, Dionysius draws attention to commonalities with Greek customs. According to his report, Numa rectifies all that was lacking in Romulus' establishment of Rome's religious practices, and his legislation ensures that Rome is the most pious Greek city on earth.

A similar emphasis occurs in most of the instances where Dionysius recounts further adjustments to Rome's constitution and laws. According to Dionysius, when the Roman king Tullius decided to unite the Latin race, he drew inspiration from the formation of the Greek Amphictyonic council.[99] After the era of the kings, when Rome

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[98] *Ant. Rom.* 2.65-69.

[99] *Ant. Rom.* 4.25.

first decided to appoint a dictator in a time of crisis, Dionysius asserts that this also was an institution taken from the Greeks.[100]

Furthermore, Dionysius emphasizes that Greek precedent was followed when Rome sought to choose a new form of government after the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus, the last Roman king.[101] He recounts that, during the city's deliberations, some suggested that rule should be assigned to the senate, as it is in many Greek cities, while others advocated for the adoption of a democracy like the one at Athens. The proposal that carried the day, however, was Lucius Junius Brutus' recommendation of the consul system, which, he claimed, had produced good government and prosperity among the Lacedaemonians for many generations. Dionysius' point is to emphasize that this change was not a departure from Rome's Greek heritage. Rome adopted both the monarchy and the consul system with Greek precedents clearly in view.[102]

A similar emphasis occurs in Dionysius' narration of another significant transition, the establishment of Rome's law code by the decemvirate. According to Dionysius, the people demanded the establishment of a law code that would apply equally to all Romans regardless of social status. Titus Romilius approved of this proposal and suggested that ambassadors be sent to the Greek cities of Italy and to Athens in order to inquire regarding their best laws.[103] Over the course of Dionysius'

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[100] *Ant. Rom.* 5.73-74.

[101] For a comparison between the accounts of Tarquinius' expulsion in the works of Dionysius and Livy, see Delcourt 2005: 345-52.

[102] *Ant. Rom.* 4.72-73. Wiater suggests that Dionysius depicts the expulsion of the kings as not an alteration but rather a return to the constitution because, according to Dionysius, Tarquinius Superbus had departed from the constitution through his innovative policies (Wiater 2011a: 179, citing *Ant. Rom.* 5.2.2). This suggestion is in keeping with Wiater's claim that Dionysius did not present Rome's constitution as developing over time, but it is difficult to see the establishment of the consulate as anything less than a substantial adjustment to Rome's form of government. Cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.8.2, where Dionysius promises to describe the different forms of government that the Romans used during and after the regal period.

[103] *Ant. Rom.* 10.50-51.

narration of the proposal and enactment of this plan, he mentions the acquisition of laws from the Greeks six times.[104] The point is clear: Rome's law code is thoroughly Greek; because their laws were drawn from the best of the Greek legal tradition, the Romans have the kind of "equitable laws" that distinguish Greeks from barbarians.[105]

All throughout *Ant. Rom.*, Dionysius maintains that Rome's constitution and laws were Greek in their origins and remained Greek as they were adjusted to account for new circumstances.[106] Given the importance that he assigns to these factors in shaping the nature of a people, the importance of this theme for Dionysius' case regarding Rome's Greek culture can hardly be overestimated.[107] As Gabba writes:

> Dionysius maintains that the Roman people as a social and political framework elaborated by Romulus had functioned in line with the best ethical and civic principles of the Greeks themselves. These principles, which were to be found in outstanding personalities and mirrored in the whole population, had guaranteed the persistent continuity of those structures and in so doing had enabled Rome to expand its territories, maintain its capacity for assimilation, and eventually rationalize the political system itself.[108]

2.2.3 The Romans' Greek Religious Practices

Although Dionysius considers Rome's constitution and laws to be the greatest guarantee of Rome's Greek culture, he does not think that they provide the greatest

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[104] *Ant. Rom.* 10.51.5; 10.52.4; 10.54.3; 10.55.5; 10.56.2; 10.57.5.

[105] Cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.4, quoted above.

[106] Cf. the survey of Greek elements in Rome's constitution in Wiater 2011a: 173-80.

[107] As we shall see in section 2.3.1, Dionysius does not assert that every aspect of Rome's constitution was derived from Greek precedent, but he usually argues that, where there are differences, Rome is superior; cf. Gabba 1991: 194.

[108] Gabba 1991: 203; cf. Wiater 2011a: 196-98, who contrasts Dionysius' emphasis on Rome's constitution as the driving force behind Roman power with Polybius' claim that Rome achieved power through the Second Punic War.

proof of that heritage. When Dionysius explicitly reflects on the various evidences for Rome's Greek culture, he writes:

> Among these things, I am persuaded that the first and most powerful of all are the things that happen in each city concerning the ancestral worship of gods and divinities. For both Greeks and barbarians have made a place for these things by preservation over the longest period of time, and they do not think anything a worthy reason to make changes in these things because of a fear that is made strong by divine wrath. And the barbarians have especially experienced this for many reasons concerning which it is not the time to speak in the present, and no amount of time up to the present has persuaded the Egyptians or the Libyans or the Gauls or the Scythians or the Indians or any another barbarian nation to unlearn or transgress anything concerning the rites of the gods, except that some, when they came under the power of others, were compelled to exchange their customs. But with respect to the city of the Romans, it never fell to their lot for such misfortune to be experienced; instead, it [Rome] drew up the order of what was right for others at all times.[109]

Thus, because people maintain their own religious practices if they have not been subjected to a foreign power, Dionysius considers Rome's religious practices to be the greatest proof of Rome's Greek culture.[110]

In fact, Dionysius presses this line of reasoning so far as to suggest that the maintenance of Greek religious practices among the *Greeks* is proof of Rome's cultural heritage. He writes:

> But if their [the Romans'] race were indeed barbarian, they would have been so far from unlearning the ancestral rites and the customs of their country, through which they came to such great fortune, that they would also have required all the others whom they ruled to honour the gods by their customs. And nothing would have prevented the entire Greek world from being barbarized by the Romans, having already been ruled by them for seven generations, if they were barbarians.[111]

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[109] *Ant. Rom.* 7.70.3-4.

[110] Cf. the studies of this aspect of Dionysius' argument in Gabba 1991: 134-37; Martin 2000: 149-50.

[111] *Ant. Rom.* 7.70.5.

Thus, Dionysius appeals to the worship of Greek gods in Greece as evidence for Rome's adherence to Greek religious customs. More direct evidence, however, is presented throughout the work.

As we have already seen, during his account of the five waves of immigrants, Dionysius highlights several Greek religious ceremonies that, he claims, are still observed at Rome.[112] On two of these occasions, he states that more information about Rome's Greek sacrifices and rites will be provided later.[113]

The point is picked up in Dionysius' discussion of Romulus' constitution. As noted above, Dionysius views the constitution as the primary guarantee of Rome's Greek culture, and thus the inclusion of religious regulations in the constitution is significant of its own accord. Nevertheless, in the midst of this discussion Dionysius also explicitly states regarding the practices instituted by Romulus, "The majority of these, if not all, remain until our time, being performed according to the ancient manner."[114]

As the narrative of Rome's subsequent history proceeds, the religious customs of Rome are mentioned on occasion,[115] but there is one extended reflection on this topic: Dionysius' description of the *Ludi Maximi* in *Ant. Rom.* 7.70-73. Dionysius begins his discussion of this festival by recalling his first book's promises of more information about Rome's adherence to Greek religious practices.[116] As we have seen

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[112] Cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.32.3-33.2; 1.38.2-3; 1.39.4; 1.69.

[113] *Ant. Rom.* 1.33.3; 1.38.4.

[114] *Ant. Rom.* 2.23.4.

[115] Cf. *Ant. Rom.* 3.35.2; 8.56; 8.89.4; 10.53; 11.62.1.

[116] Halbfas 1910: 60 rather amusingly suggests that Dionysius may have delayed his presentation of this material in order to keep the first book from being too boring.

above, he emphasizes that religious practices are the strongest proof of Rome's adherence to its Greek cultural heritage.[117]

Dionysius also mentions the possibility that Rome's adoption of Greek religious practices occurred subsequent to Rome's conquest of the Greek world. In order to rule this out, he states that the antiquity of the festival that he is about to describe is attested by Quintus Fabius. Quintus Fabius, he claims, was the most ancient and accurate Roman historian, and his writings precede Rome's conquest of Greece.[118]

Following this extensive introduction, one expects Dionysius to present a thorough case for the Greek origins of the *Ludi Maximi*, and he does not disappoint. He begins by noting that this festival was instituted soon after the expulsion of the kings. The first celebration resulted from a vow made by the dictator Aulus Postumius before a battle against those who sought to restore Tarquinius Superbus to power. The festival, Dionysius claims, contains far too many Greek observances to recount in full, and thus he focuses on the procession, the sacrifice, and the games.[119]

Dionysius suggests that four features demonstrate the ancient Greek roots of the procession. First, the contestants who process are clothed in only a loincloth. This practice, Dionysius claims, was observed by Greeks in ancient times but later abolished by the Lacedaemonians. He proves the point by quoting three passages from Homer, and then he asserts that the Romans preserve this ancient Greek custom better than their Greek contemporaries.[120] Second, he similarly suggests that the flute and lyre players who accompany the dancers are in accordance with ancient but not contemporary

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[117] *Ant. Rom.* 7.70.

[118] *Ant. Rom.* 7.71.1.

[119] *Ant. Rom.* 7.71.2-3; on the institution of this festival, see also *Ant. Rom.* 6.10.1; 6.17.2-4.

[120] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.2-4, citing Hom., *Il*. 23.685; *Od*. 18.66-69; 18.74-75. The passages that Dionysius cites from Homer are noted in the Loeb translation.

Greek practice.[121] Third, Dionysius claims that the dances performed during the procession are ancient and Greek. The first dance is a serious and war-like dance called the Pyrrhic, and Dionysius quotes four passages from Homer to illustrate its antiquity. It originated, he suggests, either as a victory dance after the defeat of the Titans or during the infancy of Zeus when the Curetes who served as his nurses tried to amuse him.[122] After these dancers, there follows a group that impersonates satyrs and performs a Greek dance called *sicinnis*. According to Dionysius, this is a mocking dance that is also performed at Roman triumphs, and a similar custom used to exist at Athens. He adds that he has personally seen this dance performed at funerals, and he thereby concludes that its origin is certainly Greek.[123] Finally, Dionysius asserts that the gods carried at the end of the procession are the same gods worshiped by the Greeks. After listing the many Greek gods and demigods included in the ceremony, he concludes by throwing down the gauntlet:

> And indeed, if those who inhabited Rome and established this feast were barbarians, why has it come about that they worship all the Greek gods and divinities, but despise those of their ancestors? Or let someone show us another tribe outside of the Greeks for whom these rites are ancestral, and then let him throw out this demonstration as unsound.[124]

Turning to the sacrifice associated with these games, Dionysius provides a step-by-step description of the process, and then quotes four passages from Homer in order to demonstrate the continuity between this process and ancient Greek custom.[125] He claims that witnessing these sacrifices in person has persuaded him that the Romans are

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[121] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.5.

[122] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.6-9, citing Hom., *Il.* 18.494-96, 590-94, 597-98, 603-5.

[123] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.10-12.

[124] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.14.

[125] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.15-17, citing Hom., *Il.* 1.449; *Od.* 14.422; 14.425-26; 14.427-29.

Greeks. He concludes, "It is possible that some barbarians prescribe a few customs about sacrifices and feasts like the Greeks, but to practise all these things is incredibly unlikely."[126]

Finally, Dionysius describes the games themselves. The order of the opening races, he suggests, matches the practice of ancient Olympia and contemporary Greece.[127] Regarding the two-horse chariot race, Dionysius claims that the Romans follow an ancient but now abandoned tradition attested by Homer in which a third horse was attached to the chariot but not yoked to the others. Additionally, the Romans also preserve the ancient Greek custom of having the chariot drivers engage in a foot race, which, Dionysius claims, is still observed in connection with ancient sacrifices in a few Greek states.[128] Following the chariot races, in accordance with Homer's description of Patroclus' funeral, the runners, boxers, and wrestlers enter, and, in between the contests, crowns are awarded in accordance with Greek custom and the spoils of war are displayed just as they are at the festival of Dionysus in Athens.[129]

Thus, Dionysius provides a point-by-point demonstration of the Greek origins of the *Ludi Maximi*. The ancient elements of this festival prove both that Rome's ancestors were Greek and that the Romans have maintained their cultural heritage with great fidelity. This festival is the greatest proof that the instantiation of Greek culture in the city's constitution and laws has been successful throughout the years.[130]

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[126] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.18.

[127] *Ant. Rom.* 7.73.1.

[128] *Ant. Rom.* 7.73.2.

[129] *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.3-4.

[130] Cf. the brief discussion of this passage in Gabba 1991: 134-35.

2.2.4 Conclusion

Throughout *Ant. Rom.*, Dionysius maintains that Rome's culture has always been Greek. He claims that the Romans' ancestors brought Greek culture with them to Italy, and the city's founders inscribed Greek institutions in the city's constitution. When adjustments were made to the constitution, Greek precedent was followed, and the religious practices of the city demonstrate that these efforts to preserve Rome's Greek culture were successful. By means of all these arguments, Dionysius seeks to leave no doubt in his readers' minds that Rome is a Greek city. As Gabba writes:

> for [Dionysius] . . . the Greek character of the Romans takes the form of a lengthy process, a structure underlying the city's history and culture, which survived not only in the external aspects of the civilization (writing, language, and artistic production), but also in the nature and customs of the people, its religious and political institutions, and the high ideals that presided over the life of the city. He had a special view of the development of Roman history: hellenization, or rather the original Hellenic character, predating the phase of post-Alexandrian corruption, is seen not as surviving in fossil form but as continuing to be a vital and operative force throughout the course of Roman history.[131]

Dionysius presents a fascinating and sophisticated cultural argument, and it will be interesting to compare Dionysius' argument with the evidence for the view that Luke emphasizes Jewish Christian observance of ancestral customs in order to prove that the Christian movement is a part of Judaism. Nevertheless, we have one final aspect of Dionysius' argument to consider: his claim that Rome is the most virtuous Greek city that the world has ever seen.

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[131] Gabba 1991: 16; cf. Delcourt 2005: 107-8, 202-4. Several scholars have emphasized that Dionysius' view of what being a Greek city entails reflects strong influence from Isocrates, the Athenian rhetorician whom Dionysius presents as the ideal public speaker in his essays on the ancient orators; cf. Gabba 1991: 39; Swain 1996: 21-27; Wiater 2011a: 65-68, 137.

2.3 The Superior Virtue of Rome

Dionysius emphasizes Rome's superiority to other Greek cities throughout *Ant. Rom*. He asserts in the introduction that the empire of Rome surpasses the achievements of all other cities and countries because the Romans have obtained the widest dominion for the longest period of time, and there is no end in sight.[132] This, however, was precisely the problem for many of his Greek contemporaries; they felt that Rome was unworthy of such extraordinary power because the Romans lacked virtue.[133] Consequently, Dionysius also sets out to prove that the virtue of the Roman people was superior to that of the people in any other Greek city.

2.3.1 The Superiority of Rome's Constitution and Laws

Because of the importance that Dionysius assigns to the constitution and laws in shaping the character of a city's citizens, these are the primary areas through which he seeks to demonstrate Rome's superior virtue. As we have seen, he occasionally mentions ancient Greek religious customs that Rome preserves better than any other Greek city, but this point is never developed at length.[134] With respect to the constitution and laws, however, there are seven different issues that Dionysius mentions as areas of contrast between Rome and other Greek cities, and in six out of seven the clear point of the contrast is the superiority of Rome.[135] The only report of a contrast in which Rome's superiority is not obviously the point occurs in *Ant. Rom.* 8.80.3. Here, Dionysius discusses the proscription of the sons of tyrants, and he leaves

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[132] *Ant. Rom.* 1.2-3; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1.31.3.

[133] *Ant. Rom.* 1.4.2.

[134] Cf. the discussion of the *Ludi Maximi* above.

[135] Gabba 1991: 194 thus makes only a slight overstatement when he claims that all of the comparisons with Athens, Sparta, or other Greek cities turn to Rome's advantage.

it up to the reader to decide whose policy on this issue is the best. With respect to the other six issues, Dionysius' position is consistent.

First, although Dionysius admits that Romulus drew the division between patricians and plebeians from Athenian practice, he claims that Romulus improved this institution by allowing plebeians to choose any patrician whom they wanted for their patron. This resulted, he suggests, in an absence among the Romans of the haughty treatment of clients that one may observe among the Thessalians and Athenians. The latter called their clients "hirelings" or "toilers," but Romulus called the institution "patronage," thus designating the relationship as one that is fitting for fellow citizens. As Delcourt writes,

> Le système de patronage institué, selon Denys, par Romulus, fournit une illustration particulièrement éclatante de la φιλανθρωπία romaine. Les relations qui se créent à Rome entre les patrons et leurs clients se reconnaissent à leur caractère plein d'humanité et favorable aux intérêts de l'État. C'est que, par le patronage, Romulus entend confier le peuple romain au soin des patriciens, non à leur bon vouloir, et attend de ces derniers qu'ils se comportent tels des pères envers leurs enfants. [136]

Second, Dionysius discusses three policies that increased the population of Rome and thereby made it fit to survive prolonged warfare. First, Romulus forbade the exposure of children under three years of age, aside from those who were severely disfigured. Second, he welcomed the free men who sought to escape bad governments in other Italian cities and offered them citizenship and land. Third, when Rome captured a city in war, they did not kill the men and enslave the rest but instead sent settlers and made the conquered city into a Roman colony. Dionysius declares this latter policy to be "the best of all political measures,"[137] and he goes on to contrast the devastation that many Greek cities suffered through a single military defeat with the

[136] Delcourt 2005: 170; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 2.9.2-3.

[137] *Ant. Rom.* 2.16.1.

ability of the Romans to carry on wars on several fronts at the same time due to the sheer quantity of Roman soldiers.[138]

Later in the work, he narrates an instance when this latter policy was applied by the Romans to the Tusculans, and he contrasts this with the barbaric treatment of disobedient colonies by the Athenians and Lacedaemonians. It is in this context that he suggests that a kind and humane nature is the true mark that distinguishes Greeks from barbarians.[139] The clear implication is that Rome is more Greek than Athens and Sparta.[140] As was the case with the general presence of barbarians in Rome, Dionysius ironically highlights a Roman policy that results in associations with barbarians in order to argue that Rome embodies Greek virtue more faithfully than other Greek cities.[141]

Third, Dionysius highlights Rome's religious regulations as a mark of the Romans' superiority. Dionysius suggests that the religious customs established by Romulus are superior because he took the best of Greek religious practice but rejected the traditional myths that impugn the character of the gods.[142] Furthermore, although Romulus allowed those from other countries to observe their own religious customs at

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[138] *Ant. Rom.* 2.15-17; cf. the discussion of Dionysius' arguments about these three policies in Delcourt 2005: 287-91. The latter two policies are also highlighted in Dionysius' preface (*Ant. Rom*. 1.9.4); cf. the discussion in Fox 1993: 34.

[139] *Ant. Rom.* 14.6.

[140] Cf. the extensive exploration of Dionysius' comparisons between Rome and these cities in Delcourt 2005: 156-95.

[141] For a discussion of Dionysius' account of the incident with the Tusculans, see Crouzet 2000: 166-68. For a comparison between the perspectives of Dionysius and Livy on Romulus' policies towards outsiders, see Dench 2005: 18-20.

[142] *Ant. Rom*. 2.18.3. Dionysius provides examples of bad mythology in *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.1-2. Halbfas 1910: 63-65 claims that Dionysius never affirms any mythological material. On the other hand, Gabba 1991: 118-25 claims that Dionysius includes myths that were broadly accepted (i.e., he endorses the idea of divine favour for Rome) but avoids all theoretical discussion of the gods. Cf. also Wardman 1960: 409-10.

Rome, the Romans themselves were forbidden from participating in foreign ceremonies and they detested all pompous displays that were lacking in decorum.[143]

When Dionysius comes to the topic of Numa's religious regulations, Rome's superiority again comes into focus. Dionysius emphasizes the quantity of observances established by Numa. There are so many, he suggests, "that no city, Greek or barbarian had more, not even those who were most piously minded at that time."[144] In the case of the one order of ceremonies that is without Greek precedent, the *fetiales*, Dionysius claims that it was a most pious institution that substantially contributed to Rome's extraordinary success in war.[145]

Fourth, Dionysius draws a contrast with other Greek cities when discussing the regulation of marriage at Rome. He notes the many problems with the ways that other cities have sought to regulate this institution, drawing particular attention to the lax attitude of the Lacedaemonians. These problems, he suggests, were solved by Romulus with a single law that assigned to women a full share in their husbands' possessions and sacred rites. This law, he claims, encouraged women to be virtuous and to obey their husbands because the husbands could adjust the wives' share in the inheritance in accordance with their behaviour. Furthermore, if a man's wife were convicted of either adultery or drunkenness, she could be punished with death. Dionysius looks upon this law as a substantial improvement over Greek practice, and he claims that it was so effective that there were no divorces during the first 520 years of the city's existence.[146]

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[143] *Ant. Rom.* 2.18-20; 2.23.5; cf. the discussion of the first of these passages in Balsdon 1971: 26.

[144] *Ant. Rom.* 2.63.2.

[145] *Ant. Rom.* 2.72.3.

[146] *Ant. Rom.* 2.24-25; Dionysius justifies the inclusion of drunkenness as a capital offense because drunkenness leads directly to adultery.

Fifth, Dionysius also asserts that Rome's laws regarding the duties of children towards parents were vastly superior to other Greek laws. The other Greeks placed children under the rule of their fathers for a limited time and set the limit for punishment of children at expulsion from the home and disinheritance. These mild punishments, Dionysius claims, are not enough to restrain the folly of youth. Romulus, however, gave fathers full power over their sons for as long as they lived and set no limitations on punishment. Roman fathers, he continues, could even sell individual sons into slavery up to three times. Thus, Roman fathers have even more power over their sons than masters have over slaves.[147]

Finally, Rome's superiority is again asserted in Dionysius' discussion of Romulus' arrangement of the economy at Rome. This is of supreme importance, he asserts, because citizens are induced to lead lives of virtue if they engage in the kinds of occupations that lead to moderation, a just inclination, and endurance of difficulty. Consequently, Romulus assigned the kinds of jobs that promote shameful passions, sedentary and mechanical jobs, to foreigners and slaves. This left open two possible means of employment to the free men of Rome: agriculture and the military. Contrary to the Lacedaemonians, however, Romulus did not assign different groups among the Romans to these two tasks. Instead, the Romans worked in the country during peacetime and served as soldiers whenever the need arose. Thus, all worked in trades that promote virtue and all shared equally in the spoils of war. This arrangement, Dionysius claims, prevented the division, jealousy, and fault-finding that result from the Lacedaemonian system.[148]

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[147] *Ant. Rom.* 2.26-27; cf. Dionysius' general praise of the Roman regulation of private life in comparison to the Athenians and Lacedaemonians in *Ant. Rom.* 20.13.2-3, and the discussion of this latter passage in Delcourt 2005: 169-70.

[148] *Ant. Rom.* 2.28; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 3.42.3, where Dionysius claims that the virtues here listed as the product of this arrangement resulted in military victory.

In addition to these specific issues, Dionysius also makes a general statement at the conclusion of his discussion of the establishment of the Roman law code by the decemvirate. Most of what precedes is lost, but this final word indicates the tenor of Dionysius' comments. He writes: "But concerning the Roman laws, which we found written on the twelve tables, it was not fitting to make any further word nor to advance beyond what is necessary, prolonging the history about them, while they are thus so revered and have such superiority over Greek law codes."[149]

Thus, in nearly every instance in which Rome's constitution or laws are compared with those of other Greek cities, Dionysius declares the Roman version to be far superior. Given the importance that Dionysius assigns to the constitution and laws in shaping the nature of a people, the implication is clear: the Romans are a superior people. Their constitution and laws have taken the best elements from the Greek legal tradition and perfected them so that the shape of Rome's society directs the city to the wisest courses of action and the people to the most virtuous lives.

2.3.2 The Superior Virtue of Rome in Action

Dionysius is not content merely to make the bald claim that Rome's constitution and laws result in superior virtue; he also attempts to demonstrate this point within his narrative. He describes numerous individual Roman characters in terms of the classic cardinal virtues, and, on a few occasions, he places his own arguments about Rome and virtue on the lips of his characters. This affords Dionysius the opportunity to present his case regarding Greek submission to Rome in a slightly different register. A few episodes from two major passages are worth mentioning.

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[149] *Ant. Rom.* 11.44.6.

2.3.2.1 Rome's Conflict with Alba

Dionysius reports a conflict between Rome and Alba in the third book of *Ant. Rom*. According to Matthew Fox, "The fall of Alba Longa is the centre-piece of Dionysius' early books, the archetype for Rome's human expansion, providing ample opportunity for adumbrating her ideological superiority."[150]

Dionysius writes that, during the reign of Tullius Hostilius, Rome's third king, a war nearly broke out between Alba and Rome, but a conspiracy against both caused the Alban general Mettius Fufetius to propose an alliance. Tullius agreed, but he then asserted that they must find a solution to the envy that was producing the tensions between them. He suggested two possibilities: either the Albans could leave their city and join in the prosperity of Rome directly or both cities could appoint a single council and officially grant supremacy to the more powerful of the two. After conferring with his counsellors, Fufetius declared his preference for the latter option, but this resulted in a debate about which city should rule over the other.[151]

In order to settle this issue, Fufetius presented three arguments in support of the claim that Alba should rule over Rome. First, he states that it is "a common law of men, which nature gave to all, for progenitors to rule over their posterity."[152] Second, he mentions that Alba limits citizenship to Greeks and Latins, while Rome has been corrupted by the inclusion of vagabonds and barbarians. Rome, he claims, even allows barbarians into positions of power with control of public affairs. Consequently, "if we should turn aside the rule to you, the bastard will rule over the legitimate, and the

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[150] Fox 1993: 36. Elsewhere, Fox provides a stimulating comparison between this episode and the conflict between Corinth and Corcyra in Thuc. 3.70-85 (Fox 1996: 82-88).

[151] *Ant. Rom.* 3.2-10.

[152] *Ant. Rom.* 3.10.3; cf. *Ant. Rom.* 3.23.19-20.

barbarian over the Greek, and the one brought in from outside over the native."[153] Third, he suggests that Alba has stable customs and traditions because it is in its eighteenth generation under the same constitution, but Rome lacks order and discipline because it is far newer and contains such a broad mixture of races.[154]

The answer that Dionysius then supplies for Tullius addresses these objections point by point. In response to the claim that nature requires mother cities to rule over their colonies, Tullius first admits that there is a right conferred by nature on those with the most virtuous ancestors, but he asserts that neither Alba nor Rome can claim advantage on this basis because they share the same ancestors. He then refutes the claim that nature dictates the rule of mother cities over their colonies, noting that in Greece Sparta rules over its mother, the Doric nation. He also points out that Alba itself was a colony of the Lavinians, and thus the straightforward application of this principle would require the subjection of Alba to Lavinium.[155]

Second, in response to the claim that Rome has been corrupted by granting citizenship to foreigners, Tullius claims that this policy was borrowed from Athens, a city of no mean reputation, and he maintains that the results demonstrate its wisdom. In contrast to other cities where important positions are given to those with impressive ancestry, Rome assigns responsibility to those who display the nobility of virtue. Additionally, the inclusion of foreigners is the very policy by which Rome has grown

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[153] *Ant. Rom.* 3.10.5.

[154] *Ant. Rom.* 3.10.6; cf. the reflections on Fufetius' argument and his speech's assumption of the view that Greek identity is exclusively a matter of genealogy in Richard 1993: 126, 128-29.

[155] *Ant. Rom.* 3.11.1-3.

from a small city to the most significant power in Italy. On the other hand, Alba, although once a great and powerful city, has experienced decline.[156]

Third, Tullius claims that the divisions at Rome do not produce disorder but actually enhance the welfare of the city because each group tries to do more good for the city than the others.[157] He concludes that rule over others requires "strength in war" and "good judgment in counsel," and he then asserts that these characteristics are abundantly evident through the undeniable and extraordinary success of Rome.[158]

The relevance of this exchange for Dionysius' Greek contemporaries is transparent. Tullius provides pre-emptive answers for Greeks who dispute Rome's ancestry or think that the Romans should submit to their progenitors, and he reinforces Dionysius' claims regarding the virtue of Rome's policies of accepting barbarians and granting citizenship to defeated foes. The number of times that these latter points are addressed in *Ant. Rom.* suggests that they were particularly sensitive points of criticism. Nevertheless, as in the passages where Dionysius addresses these issues in his own voice, Tullius claims that the wisdom of these policies is demonstrated by the success that they produce.[159] Tullius thus becomes Dionysius' mouthpiece in defending the legitimacy of Roman rule. His words to the Albans apply equally to Dionysius'

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[156] *Ant. Rom.* 3.11.3-7. Richard 1993: 130-31 points out that, in *Ant. Rom.* 2.17.1-4, Dionysius has already highlighted the wisdom of this policy by contrasting Rome's resilience with the limitations that resulted from heavy losses suffered by the Spartans, Thebans, and Athenians.

[157] *Ant. Rom.* 3.11.8.

[158] *Ant. Rom.* 3.11.9; cf. the reflections on Tullius' reply and his speech's view that Greek identity is indissolubly tied to virtue in Richard 1993: 126-27, 129-30.

[159] Cf. Gabba 1991: 208-10, who stresses the emphasis in this speech on the value of assimilation. Peirano 2010: 41, n. 40, wrongly suggests that this passage presents the view that this policy makes Rome superior to Athens. All that is said here is that Rome adopted the policy in imitation of Athens. The dissonance between this claim and Dionysius' argument in *Ant. Rom.* 14.6 that this policy is a mark of superiority to Athens remains unresolved; cf. the discussion of this tension in Richard 1993: 132-33.

contemporaries, and the conclusion towards which they point is clear: Rome's rule is justified by her virtue.

2.3.2.2 Roman Virtue in the Pyrrhic War

The second major event in which the issue of Rome's superior is directly addressed is Dionysius' account of the Pyrrhic War. Dionysius recounts this story in the final two books of *Ant. Rom*. The text is fragmentary, but important portions have been preserved.[160]

In his own critical writings on the works of other historians, Dionysius emphasizes the importance that he assigns to the ending of a work. As Irene Peirano points out, Dionysius' criticism of Thucydides suggests that historical works should end at a point that both serves as a natural conclusion to the story and provides emotional resolution by recapitulating the major themes of the work.[161] Although his account of the Pyrrhic War is not the final story, it is the last major event, and the recapitulation of Dionysius' themes is evident. As Peirano writes:

> the Pyrrhic War afforded Dionysius the opportunity to revisit the question that dominates the beginning of the work, namely the issue of the ethnic identity of the Romans. The encounter between Pyrrhus and the Romans is presented as the final test of the true identity of the latter.[162]

According to Dionysius, this war came about because the people of Tarentum insulted the Roman ambassador Postumius. Dionysius notes that, as Postumius spoke, the Tarentines waited for him to make minor mistakes in the pronunciation of Greek so that they could mock him as a barbarian. Then, as the Roman delegation was leaving, a

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[160] On the sources used to reconstruct this portion of the work, see Peirano 2010: 34.

[161] Peirano 2010: 37, citing *Pomp.* 3.10.

[162] Peirano 2010: 39.

man defiled Postumius' sacred robe in a most shameful way, which provoked even more laughter from the Tarentines.[163]

This scene evokes Dionysius' claim that the distinction between Greeks and barbarians is not a matter of the name or dialect of a people but a matter of their character.[164] The Tarentines mock Postumius as a barbarian for his pronunciation of Greek, but, in so doing, they prove themselves to be barbarians through their outrageous conduct.[165]

A second scene from Dionysius' account of this war evokes similar themes. After the first battle, Roman ambassadors were sent to Pyrrhus to negotiate for the release of prisoners. Pyrrhus offered a bribe to one of the ambassadors, Gaius Fabricius, but Fabricius responded with a long speech explaining why he could not accept this offer. His reasons for refusing make him a living embodiment of virtue: he does not desire riches; he already possesses supremely honoured status in Rome; if he wanted to be rich, he could already be rich by honest means; if he accepted the bribe, he would surely be punished by the censors for departing from ancestral customs; he would not really be of use to Pyrrhus; and he would ultimately lose his home and status.[166] Pyrrhus was so impressed by Fabricius that he responded, "No longer does marvelling come upon me concerning why your city is famous and has been invested with such magnitude of dominion, being the nurse of men such as this."[167] He then returned the prisoners without ransom and proclaimed his intention to end the war.

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[163] *Ant. Rom.* 19.5.

[164] *Ant. Rom.* 14.6.5.

[165] Cf. the insightful analyses of Delcourt 2005: 110-13; Peirano 2010: 43-44.

[166] *Ant. Rom.* 19.13.1-18.8; cf. Crouzet 2000: 164-66, who emphasizes the supererogatory nature of Fabricius' posture in comparison to the standards of the Peripatetic school of philosophy.

[167] *Ant. Rom.* 19.18.8.

Fabricius' virtue stands in stark contrast to the character of Pyrrhus. Fabricius is a model of self-control and wisdom, while Pyrrhus is shown to be corrupt and foolish. Again, the Roman displays Greek virtue, while the Greek acts barbarously. Nevertheless, despite his personal shortcomings, Pyrrhus' response to Fabricius gives voice to one of Dionysius' central themes: the virtue of the Romans and the legitimacy of their rule. The placement of this admission on the lips of a Greek king during a moment in which he recognizes the folly of opposition to Rome epitomizes Dionysius' message.[168]

Dionysius attributes a similar sentiment to Pyrrhus in the following book. He writes:

> And Pyrrhus himself, having uttered the Homeric lines that Hector was portrayed as saying to Ajax as if they were spoken by the Romans to himself—'And I do not wish to strike you, being such a person, having lied in watch for you in secret, but openly, if I may'—and afterwards saying that he ran the risk of evil in having made a plan for war against the most pious and most righteous men among the Greeks, said that he saw only one good and profitable way of ending the war: if they might make them friends instead of enemies, beginning with some great benevolent act.[169]

Again, Pyrrhus recognizes the superior virtue of the Romans. Here, however, he flatters them with Homeric verse and explicitly declares them to be the most virtuous among all the Greeks, thus confirming both Dionysius' claims regarding their moral superiority and his assertions regarding their ethnic heritage.[170] Receiving this testimony from a Greek king is the ultimate acknowledgement of Roman superiority.[171]

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[168] Cf. the comments on this scene in Peirano 2010: 44-45.

[169] *Ant. Rom.* 20.6.1.

[170] The Loeb translation unfortunately translates the phrase ὁσιωτάτους Ἑλλήνων καὶ δικαιοτάτους as "more pious than the Greeks and more just," thereby reducing the two superlative adjectives to comparatives and missing the implicit point about the ethnicity of the Romans entirely.

[171] Cf. Peirano 2010: 49-51, who compares this scene to Dionysius' depiction of the Greek recognition of Aeneas in *Ant. Rom.* 1.57-58.

In the remainder of Dionysius' account of this war, he portrays the superior virtue and piety of the Romans as the key to their success. Pyrrhus, he claims, began to behave tyrannically, and even went so far as to rob a temple of Persephone in order to acquire funds for the war. It was for this reason, Dionysius suggests, that Pyrrhus was defeated. Pyrrhus had offended the gods, and thus he suffered defeat despite the fact that his army was far larger, more experienced, advantageously positioned, and serving under the greatest general of that era.[172]

Thus, in the final major episode of *Ant. Rom.*, Dionysius returns to the themes with which his work began. He addresses the issue of the relationship between the Romans and the Greeks by narrating a conflict in which the superior virtue of the Romans is incontestably demonstrated. The Romans win the war as a result of their superior piety, and, in the Greek king's encounters with Roman ambassadors, even he recognizes the Romans' ethnic heritage, their superior virtue, the legitimacy of their dominion, and the futility of opposition.

2.3.3 Conclusion

The superior virtue of the Roman people is a major theme throughout *Ant. Rom*. As Clemence Schultze states, Dionysius emphasizes that the Romans "are not only Greeks but are better than actual Hellenes, more truly Greek in their customs and behaviour generally, and above all in their *politeia*."[173] Dionysius' work asserts that the Romans surpassed the Greeks because their constitution and laws were unparalleled in quality, drawing on and improving the best of the Greek tradition. Within the narrative,

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[172] *Ant. Rom.* 20.8-10; cf. the discussion of Pyrrhus in Peirano 2010: 47-48.

[173] Schultze 1986: 133; cf. Halbfas 1910: 50-51; Wiater 2011b: 80. See also the very brief survey of Dionysius' emphasis on Rome's superiority in Spawforth 2012: 32-33.

this theme often surfaces when Dionysius describes conflicts between the Romans and other peoples. In Dionysius' account of the conflict with Alba, the Roman king Tullius argues that they should be given pre-eminence because Rome's policies are better suited to military success and the promotion of virtue. Near the conclusion of the work, Dionysius also narrates several encounters during the Pyrrhic War in which the virtues of the Roman characters outshine their Greek opponents, and he even describes two instances in which the Greek king Pyrrhus recognizes the superiority of Rome. All of this serves the goal outlined in Dionysius' preface: demonstrating that Roman rule is a consequence of Roman virtue.[174]

The primary importance of this material for our purposes is the illustration that it provides of how Dionysius writes the issues with which he is concerned into his narrative. As we turn to Luke's writings, we will need to pay close attention to how the issues with which he is purportedly concerned are handled. Does Luke write questions about the respectability of the Christian movement into his narrative and allow his characters to present the arguments that he wants his readers to overhear?

2.4 Conclusion

Having surveyed this material, we are now in a position to make a few summative observations that are relevant to the broader themes of our study. First, it is notable that, in order to garner respect from the Greek world, Dionysius feels the need to argue that the Romans are actually Greek. He is not content to suggest that some Romans have Greek ancestry or practise Greek customs; his aim is to define the

[174] Cf., however, Hill 1961: 89-90, who suggests that Dionysius' intention is to combat anti-Greek prejudice among the Romans by stressing their Greek roots, as well as the sophisticated reading of Wiater 2011a: 216-23, who claims that, although Dionysius' argument is at one level a justification for Roman rule over Greece, it also plays to the advantage of the Greek people because Dionysius implies that Rome's supremacy is justified only to the degree that the Romans adhere to Greek culture.

Romans as a whole as a Greek people. This will be important to keep in mind as we examine the types of connections that Luke draws between the Christians and the Jewish people. Does Luke emphasize the kinds of continuity that suggest that the Christian movement should share in the respect afforded to the Jewish heritage?

Second, for Dionysius, antiquity functions as a small part of a broader argument. His argument is not that the Romans have an ancient heritage and are therefore *de facto* respectable. Instead, Dionysius' argument is that the Romans are respectable because they are a people whose traditions of virtue reach back to the origins of civilized life and have stood the test of time. They are not merely old, but "old and Greek," and their "Greek nature," i.e., their virtuous nature, has been proven throughout their history. This suggests that simply having a long past counted for very little in the eyes of Dionysius' contemporaries. What mattered was what a people's past revealed about their nature. A long history of virtue carried a great deal of symbolic cultural capital, but a long history of barbarism would hardly have impressed. Consequently, when we turn to evaluating the proposed readings of Luke's writings, it will be important to look at both what he says about the issue of antiquity itself and how he depicts the history of the Jewish people. His perspective on Jewish history should help us to evaluate whether or not his intentions in highlighting Christianity's Jewish roots are similar to those of Dionysius.

Third, Dionysius' arguments for the Romans' claim to being an ancient Greek people are explicit, extensive, and pervasive throughout his work. We will return to several particular details that we have covered as we examine specific aspects of Luke's writings, but a part of the reason that we have reviewed these arguments so thoroughly is that both the volume and the variety of the material that Dionysius explicitly devotes to this issue are impressive. His arguments range from the Greek

origins of Roman orthographic practices to the correspondence between the details of a particular religious festival and the depiction of religious rites in the writings of Homer. On many occasions, he explicitly argues his case as the narrator, but at times he also inserts the issue of Rome's heritage into the narrative action and places his arguments on the lips of central characters. As we study Luke's writings, we will observe how his work does and does not address the issue of Christianity's Jewish roots.

Nevertheless, before we turn directly to the writings of Luke, we will consider the work of another figure whose arguments both resemble Dionysius and parallel other important aspects of the recent proposals about Luke's writings: the Jewish historian Josephus.

CHAPTER 3

JOSEPHUS AND THE ANTIQUITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, T. Flavius Josephus moved to Rome at the end of a tumultuous period during which a new *Princeps* was established. Many believe that Dionysius relocated because he viewed the new peaceful situation in Rome as a good opportunity to offer his services as a teacher of rhetoric; Josephus' move was a little more complicated. According to his writings, Josephus was appointed as a general of the Jewish forces in Galilee at the start of the war between Rome and the Jewish people. Upon being captured by the Roman general Vespasian, he prophesied that his captor would become the next emperor. When Vespasian later ascended to the throne, Josephus was released from his bonds and utilized as an assistant in the Roman war effort. At the end of the war, Josephus returned to Rome on a boat with Titus, the son and immediate successor of Vespasian, and in Rome he was granted Vespasian's old house for lodging, an annual pension, and Roman citizenship.[1] Over the course of the next 25 to 30 years, Josephus composed the four works for which he is now famous. One of these works, completed around 93 CE, [2] has a title that bears striking similarity to Dionysius' history of Rome: Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae*.[3]

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[1] See *BJ* 2.568; 3.400-2; 4.622-29; *Vit.* 4.11-29. For a detailed exploration of Josephus' relationships with the emperors and his life at Rome, see Hollander 2014.

[2] In *AJ* 20.267, Josephus claims that he completed this work in the thirteenth year of Domitian's reign.

[3] As many have noted, both of these works are also 20 books in length. Beyond this, however, the influence of Dionysius on Josephus has been debated, and this issue will receive consideration below.

As we have seen in the first chapter, the majority of those who have made the case that Luke intends to present Christianity as ancient and respectable point to Josephus' *AJ* as a historiographical parallel. Charles H. Talbert and F. Gerald Downing suggest that both Josephus and Luke seek to enhance the cultural profile of the groups with which they are concerned by associating them with antiquity.[4] Philip Esler, Daniel Marguerat, and Knut Backhaus all claim that Josephus and Luke appeal to Graeco-Roman respect for ancestral traditions in order to present their people as politically stable.[5] Gregory E. Sterling argues that the writings of Josephus and Luke are parallel illustrations of the genre "apologetic historiography": both provide a Hellenized account of the history of their people that emphasizes antiquity in order to gain cultural respect and avert political accusations.[6] Finally, Steve Mason suggests that Josephus and Luke both present their groups under the rubric of philosophy as a part of larger efforts to present those groups as ancient, virtuous, and cooperative with the Roman peace.[7] The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine the argument of Josephus' *AJ* so that we may evaluate these proposed parallels.

In order to do so, we will explore the ways in which Josephus addresses the social and political profile of the Jewish people in *AJ*. As we proceed, we will pay attention to the particular points that Josephus intends to communicate, the evidence that he presents in support of these points, and the historiographical strategies that he employs in his presentation of the evidence. Little of this material will be ground-breaking in and of itself, but a rehearsal of these details is necessary in order to enable a

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[4] Talbert 1984: 100; Downing 1986: 49-52; Downing 1988: 153-57.

[5] Esler 1987: 67-70, 211-17; Marguerat 1999: 76-77; Backhaus 2007: 422-26; Marguerat 2009: 98-100.

[6] Sterling 1992: 3, 368-69; cf. Keener 2012–2015: 1.224, 266-67, 446.

[7] Mason 2003b: 265-73.

comparison with Luke's work. One of the leading contentions of this study is that a close examination of this material will reveal that the arguments and intentions of Josephus and Luke bear less similarity than recent proposals suggest, or at least that the places in which Josephus and Luke are similar are not those that have been proposed.

To speak of analysing Josephus' argument about the Jewish people may at first glance appear to be the imposition of a foreign framework on *AJ* because, unlike Dionysius' *Antiquitates Romanae*, *AJ* does not begin with an extensive description of the points that Josephus intends to demonstrate regarding the people who stand at the centre of his narrative. *AJ*'s preface is much shorter than the preface to *Ant. Rom.*, and Josephus describes the work as intended to communicate only one main point: the importance of the Jewish laws.[8] There are good reasons, however, to think that, in addition to an appreciation of the Jewish laws, Josephus also intends the audience of *AJ* to come away with a particular view of the Jewish people. Earlier in the preface, Josephus locates *AJ* among those historical works that bring to light events that are both little known in the Greek world and beneficial for the common good.[9] This declaration of a need to dispel Greek ignorance implies that some may have held to less complimentary views of Jewish history. Josephus' later work, *Contra Apionem*, confirms this suspicion. In fact, in *Ap.*, Josephus both explicitly describes some of the points about the Jewish people that *AJ* was intended to communicate, and he explains

[8] *AJ* 1.14.

[9] *AJ* 1.3-5.

the alternative contemporary views that these points were intended to preclude.[10] Josephus himself thereby endorses reading *AJ* with this purpose in mind.[11]

Josephus' argument about the Jewish people consists of five broad claims: 1) the Jewish people are ancient; 2) the Jewish people have noble origins; 3) the Jewish people have the best constitution; 4) the history of the Jewish people illustrates their virtuous character; 5) the Jewish people enjoy the support of Rome. Excluding the final point, the similarity between these claims and the argument in Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.* is striking. Contrary to those who have argued that Dionysius' influence on Josephus went no deeper than the title and number of books,[12] these remarkable correspondences suggest that *Ant. Rom.* may have served as a direct model for much of the argument of *AJ*. As F. Gerald Downing states, "both seem to be trying to persuade people of hellenic culture that the nations of whom they tell are no upstarts, but have an ancient, valorous, and tested law-abiding culture."[13] As we examine Josephus' argument, we will highlight these parallels. We will begin by examining Josephus' argument for the antiquity of the Jewish people.

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[10] Cf. the study of commonalities between *Ant. Rom.* and *Ap.* in Spilsbury 1996: 348-68. Some have even gone so far as to assert that the existence of *Ap.* demonstrates that Josephus believed *AJ* to be a failure; e.g., Rajak 1982: 477; Sterling 1992: 298.

[11] Cf. the similar sentiments in Hata 1987: 180-82; Bilde 1988: 99-101; Sterling 1992: 297; Feldman 1996: 78-79; Spilsbury 1996: 350-62; Feldman 1998a: 46-49, 132, 570; Spilsbury 1998b: 16. For a survey of older treatments of Josephus as an apologetic author, see Attridge 1976: 17-26.

[12] E.g., Rajak 1982: 466-77; Bilde 1988: 202-3; Spilsbury 1998b: 31, n. 314. The case for direct dependence is made on linguistic grounds by Shutt 1961: 97-101. Those who deny dependence regularly cite the criticisms of Shutt's arguments in Ladouceur 1983: 20-35. Ladouceur does decisively refute Shutt's arguments about shared vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical structures, but the case for a direct relationship can be made on other grounds; cf. the arguments for Dionysius' direct influence in Feldman 1998a: 8.

[13] Downing 1981: 544-45; cf. Attridge 1976: 60; Momigliano 1978: 16; Gabba 1991: 214-16; Sterling 1992: 289-90; Feldman 1998a: 3-13; Mason 2000: xxii-xxiv; Mason 2003a: 572-81; Feldman 2005: 232-34; Keener 2012–2015: 1.188, n. 189.

3.1 The Antiquity of the Jewish People

The first thing that Josephus states in his summary of *AJ* in *Ap.* 1.1 is that *AJ* demonstrates that the Jewish people are "most ancient" (παλαιότατον), echoing the claim from the preface to *AJ* that their history covers a period of 5,000 years.[14] He goes on to assert that the primary reason behind the production of *Ap.* was the persistence of the claim that the Jewish people were not an ancient people and the consequent lack of trust in the reliability of *AJ*.[15] On the basis of these statements, one would expect the antiquity of the Jewish people to be a major theme in *AJ*. This, however, has been disputed. Thus, the first topic that we must address in this section is the question of whether or not antiquity really is a concern for Josephus in *AJ*.

3.1.1 Josephus' Concern for the Issue of Antiquity

Due to the paucity of explicit references to the issue of antiquity in the body of *AJ*, some have suggested that Josephus artificially concocted concerns about Jewish antiquity in *Ap.* because this either provides an argument that is easy for him to win or it affords him the opportunity to discuss certain other topics in which he is interested. Along these lines, Erich S. Gruen points out that Josephus does not attribute objections to Jewish antiquity to any named accuser in *Ap.*, and he notes that the Greeks freely admitted the greater antiquity of other nations (e.g., Herodotus on the Egyptians). He concludes, "It seems quite unlikely that Greek writers would see the lack of a long chronological pedigree as a reason for reproach. And it is even less likely that they

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[14] *AJ* 1.13; one is reminded of Dionysius' claim regarding the ancestors of Rome: "One can find no nation more ancient (ἀρχαιότερον) or more Greek than these" (*Ant. Rom.*, 1.89.2); this connection is also noted by Bilde 1988: 93-94.

[15] *Ap.* 1.2-5; the whole of *Ap.* 1.1-218 is devoted to re-substantiating this point.

would fasten this label upon the Jews for whom it is manifestly specious . . . One cannot avoid the strong suspicion that he has concocted a confrontation on this issue."[16]

Contrary to this position, however, Gunnar Haaland suggests that Josephus does attribute objections to Jewish antiquity to particular accusers in *Ap.*, citing Josephus' critiques of the claims made by Apion and Lysimachus regarding the date of the exodus.[17] The former example is clearer than the latter, but an explicit dispute on this issue with the primary antagonist of the work is good evidence that objections to Jewish antiquity are not a Josephan illusion.

In addition, despite the fact that *AJ* does not explicitly foreground the issue of antiquity in the same way that *Ap.* does, this work also contains evidence for the reality of disputes about Jewish antiquity. *AJ* 16.44 reports that Nicolas of Damascus, in the midst of his defence of Jewish rights in Ionia, explicitly mentioned that some people deny the antiquity of Jewish customs. This unprovoked aside does not lead to a long discussion proving Jewish antiquity or provide Josephus with the opportunity to discuss other topics in which he is interested, and thus it cannot be explained by the motives proposed for the appearance of this theme in *Ap*. To the contrary, this statement suggests that Josephus thought that some people really did question the antiquity of the Jewish people.[18]

In addition, both Gregory Sterling and Peter Pilhofer highlight predecessors to Josephus in arguing for Jewish antiquity.[19] Although not every example is as clear as one may wish, Sterling and Pilhofer firmly establish that Josephus was not the first to

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[16] Gruen 2005: 40-41; cf. Droge 1996: 140; Goodman 1999: 52-53; Barclay 2007a: xliii.

[17] Haaland 2011: 170-71, pointing to *Ap*. 1.305, 2.17.

[18] Cf. the discussion of this passage in Haaland 2011: 171.

[19] Sterling 2007: 234-36; Pilhofer 1990: 142-92.

present an apologetic argument on this issue. The fact that the assertion of Jewish antiquity was already an important theme in Jewish apologetic literature more broadly poses a serious challenge to the claim that Josephus invented objections in *Ap.* in order to score rhetorical points.

Finally, the preface to *AJ* testifies to the importance of the issue of antiquity for this work. As noted above, *AJ* 1.13 boasts that the history of the Jewish people encompasses 5,000 years. Following this, in *AJ* 1.16, Josephus emphasizes that Moses lived and wrote 2,000 years ago, and he points out that this places Moses not only before Greek records of human laws and deeds but even before the chronological age that the Greek poets attribute to their gods.[20] Because of the important role that prefaces played in setting the expectations of one's audience in the ancient world, Josephus' inclusion of these claims at this point suggests that he wanted to emphasize the antiquity of the events that he narrates. Thus, Josephus' claim that the demonstration of Jewish antiquity was a part of his agenda in *AJ* is best taken at face value.[21]

3.1.2 Josephus' Arguments and Aims in Emphasizing Jewish Antiquity

In the body of *AJ*, Josephus demonstrates the antiquity of the Jewish people primarily by providing dates for various people and events. Much of this data is repeated in *Ap*., and it is there set in explicit opposition to the charge that the Jewish people lack antiquity.[22] In *AJ*, however, the point is largely left at the level of an

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[20] Cf. the discussion of this passage in Pilhofer 1990: 194.

[21] So Feldman 1984: 83-84; Sterling 1992: 263; Mason 2000: xxii-xxiv; Haaland 2011: 170-71; Keener 2012–2015: 1.454-55.

[22] Cf. the examples of references shared between *AJ* and *Ap.* in Spilsbury 2005: 351; Barclay 2007a: xxiii; see also the further suggested examples of Josephus' attempt to demonstrate the antiquity of the Jewish people in Feldman 1987: 137-38; Sterling 1992: 247, 297-98; Feldman 1998b: 133-35, 226-27; Mason 2000: xxiii.

implication. It seems that Josephus expected his audience to draw the proper inference from the dating of events without repeated prompting. Nevertheless, as Mason states, "[Josephus'] systematic refutation of slanders about Jewish antiquity . . . was already woven into the fabric of the *Antiquities*."[23]

There are two main suggestions regarding the aim of Josephus' emphasis on antiquity. Some suggest that Josephus is drawing on the general sense that "the old is good," and presenting the Jewish people as an ancient people in light of the respect commanded by an ancient heritage.[24] Others claim that Josephus has a more specific and ambitious goal. In Josephus' day, many people believed that civilized life must have originated in one people and then spread to the others. Josephus' intention, they suggest, is to demonstrate that the Jewish people were the first to develop such a culture and that they thereby constitute the foundation of the civilized world.[25] These proposals are not mutually exclusive, and, as we shall see, there are hints of both in *AJ*.

Josephus' interest in the general respect afforded to an ancient people is primarily indicated by the argument that he makes in *Ap*. 1.6-218. In this section, Josephus describes his opponents as "those providing evidence that our nation is young,"[26] and "those attempting to demonstrate the recentness of our establishment."[27] It is evident that his argument here is not merely about Jewish culture because he

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[23] Mason 1996b: 208; cf. Sterling 1992: 298.

[24] E.g., Bilde 1988: 93-94; Keener 2012–2015: 1.454-55.

[25] E.g., Droge 1996: 125; Feldman 1998a: 83; Mason 2000: xxiii-xxiv; Barclay 2007b: 131-32; Hansen 2007: 529. G. R. Boys-Stones similarly proposes a background to Josephus' argument for Jewish antiquity in the Stoic belief that there was a pure original philosophy; he argues that Josephus is attempting to avert the implication that Jewish thought is a corrupted version of Egyptian philosophy (Boys-Stones 2001: 67-73; 85-90).

[26] *Ap.* 1.2.

[27] *Ap*. 1.58.

locates the origin of the Jewish people well before the establishment of many features of that culture, identifying Noah as "the founder of our race" (ὁ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν ἀρχηγός).[28] Thus, his interest in highlighting the 5,000 year history of the Jewish people in both *Ap.* and *AJ* appears to be similar to Dionysius' emphasis on the antiquity of the people from whom the Romans were descended. A long heritage of noble ancestors is an essential characteristic of a respectable people. In *AJ*, Josephus' claim to this kind of heritage is never explicitly set forth in an appeal for respect from the audience, but the implication that the heritage that Josephus describes is worthy of respect is present throughout the work.

Josephus relates antiquity to the origin of civilized culture primarily when making claims about the Jewish laws. The issue is explicitly discussed in *Ap.* 2.151-56. Josephus begins by stating that the first people to live ordered, lawful lives, "may, as one would expect, be acknowledged to excel in civilization and virtue of nature."[29] He notes that each people argues for the antiquity of their lawgiver in order to prove that they are the origin of civilized life, and he then points out that Moses precedes all of the celebrated Greek lawgivers.[30] Hints of this argument can be detected in a few passages in *AJ*.

First, as noted above, the preface to *AJ* emphasizes that Moses lived and wrote in an era that is earlier than any that the Greek poets dared to imagine. This claim comes in the context of frequent references to Moses as the "lawgiver" (νομοθέτης) of

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[28] *Ap*. 1.130.

[29] *Ap.* 2.151.

[30] Cf. the study of this theme in *Ap.* in Pilhofer 1990: 193-98.

the Jewish people.[31] The correspondence between this passage and *Ap.* 2.151-56 is evident.[32]

At two other points in *AJ*, Josephus mocks other nations' claims to antiquity. First, in *AJ* 1.121, Josephus chides the Greeks for attempting to claim the glory of antiquity by renaming and imposing their own forms of government on other nations in an effort to make it appear that those nations had descended from the Greeks. Second, in *AJ* 9.93-94, he criticizes the Syrians for worshipping Hazael and Ben-Hadad as gods, claiming that they ignorantly glory in the antiquity of these rulers, oblivious as to how recently they lived. Neither of these passages makes a claim regarding the age of Jewish culture, but they both support Josephus' case for Jewish superiority by cutting down the claims of others.

Although not directly linked to Moses or the Jewish laws, Josephus makes a similar argument in his portrait of Abraham. According to Josephus, Abraham taught the Egyptians astronomy and arithmetic, and the Egyptians, in turn, passed on these disciplines to the Greeks.[33] Josephus does not attribute their invention to Abraham,[34] but the insinuation that these aspects of Greek culture are derivative from and dependent upon Abraham is clear.[35]

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[31] *AJ* 1.15; Josephus refers to Moses as the νομοθέτης of the Jewish people six times in the preface to *AJ*.

[32] Cf. the examination of the preface to *AJ* in Mason 1996b: 197-200.

[33] *AJ* 1.167-68.

[34] In *AJ* 1.69, Josephus attributes the origin of astronomy to the virtuous descendants of Seth, and, in *AJ* 1.106, he appears to attribute discoveries in both astronomy and geometry to the same group.

[35] Cf. the discussions of this passage in Feldman 1998a: 234-37; Mason 1998: 89; Sterling 2007: 236-37. Sterling notes that other Jewish authors claimed that the whole of Greek philosophy was rooted in the Jewish world, and he thus concludes that Josephus is relatively restrained in his arguments.

3.1.3 Conclusion

Thus, we have seen that Josephus appeals to the antiquity of the Jewish people in order to make arguments on two fronts. He seeks to demonstrate the primacy of Jewish culture as the oldest and therefore the original civilized way of life, and he also seeks to present the Jewish people as a nation with respectably ancient roots. In *AJ*, Josephus asserts Jewish antiquity in the preface and he then imbeds this point within the narrative by highlighting the relative chronology of particular events.

In relation to the recent proposals about Luke's writings, it is significant that Josephus feels the need to argue for Jewish antiquity. This suggests that the antiquity of the Jewish people is not a point that one could take for granted in the first century. Thus, it will be important to ask whether Luke's writings attempt to demonstrate the antiquity of the Jewish tradition and also to compare the purported evidence for Luke's interest in this theme with the relevant material in *AJ*.

As we have seen in our examination of Dionysius, however, ancient roots by themselves counted for very little in the ancient world unless one could also demonstrate the high quality of one's ancestors.[36] It should consequently come as no surprise that another of Josephus' major points is that the origins of the Jewish people were noble. We will examine this theme in the following section.

3.2 The Noble Origins of the Jewish People

Josephus highlights the importance of the origins of the Jewish people in the prefaces to both *AJ* and *Ap*. In *AJ* 1.6, Josephus describes a part of his intention as "to make clear who the Jewish people were from the beginning." In *Ap.* 1.1, Josephus

[36] Cf. the comments in Barclay 2007b: 131-23 regarding the relationship between antiquity and respect in *Ap.*

claims that *AJ* demonstrates that the Jewish race "originally had its own unique essence." As in Dionysius' *Ant. Rom*., ancestors are a significant point of focus in the early portions of *AJ*.

3.2.1 Josephus' Arguments for the Nobility of Jewish Origins

Josephus undertakes the task of tracing Jewish origins throughout *AJ* 1–4. It appears that his primary purpose is to assert the veracity of central features of the biblical account and thereby implicitly invalidate alternative construals. As John Barclay notes, one of the major views that Josephus deals with in *Ap.* is the claim that the Jewish people were a colony of leprous or polluted Egyptian rebels.[37] The same concern is evident at a few points in the narrative of *AJ*.

When Josephus reproduces the list of the names of the seventy people who went with Jacob when he moved down to Egypt at Joseph's invitation, Josephus states that he had considered leaving out these names because they are difficult for Greeks to pronounce. He decided to include them, however, because they so clearly demonstrate that this family originated in Mesopotamia rather than Egypt.[38]

In response to the charge that Moses was a leper leading a colony of lepers, Josephus maintains in *AJ* 3.265 that "one can only laugh" at such charges because the laws that Moses wrote on the topic of leprosy restrict those suffering from this malady to a much greater degree than was common in his day. Josephus also adjusts the report of the miracle in which Moses' hand was transformed so that his hand only became white, not leprous, when he put it inside his cloak.[39] In a similar vein, Josephus adds

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[37] Barclay 2007a: 4.

[38] *AJ* 2.177-83; cf. Thackeray 1929: 59.

[39] *AJ* 2.273.

embellishing details about the beauty of Moses, claiming that people would stop whatever they were doing in order to admire his striking appearance when he was carried by as a child.[40] Josephus also emphasizes the physical quality of the patriarchs. According to Josephus, when Joseph accused his brothers of being spies, one of Joseph's arguments was that they must be the children of kings because no private man could produce sons of such great physical beauty.[41]

In addition to responding to these particular slanders, Josephus also edits the early parts of his story in order to downplay or erase many other embarrassing events. For example, he justifies the seduction of Lot by his daughters by claiming that Lot's daughters believed that no other humans had survived the destruction of Sodom and thus incest was necessary to perpetuate the human race;[42] Josephus has Rachel explain that she stole her father's gods not for the purpose of worship but rather because she thought that they would make a good bargaining chip if they were caught as they fled from Laban;[43] Josephus deletes the scene in which the sons of Jacob deceive the people of Shechem by requesting that they circumcise themselves;[44] and, in Josephus' version of the confrontation between Joseph and his brothers, Joseph claims that their virtuous response to his tests proves that when they had sold him into slavery this was not due to an evil nature but rather because God had willed it.[45]

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[40] *AJ* 2.231; on Josephus' editing of the story of Moses in light of this concern, see also Thackeray 1929: 59; Hata 1987: 183-84, 186-87.

[41] *AJ* 2.98.

[42] *AJ* 1.205-6.

[43] *AJ* 1.310-11.

[44] *AJ* 1.339-40.

[45] *AJ* 2.161; cp. the balance between divine intention and human responsibility in Gen 50:20. For further examples of this type of editing in *AJ*, see Spilsbury 1996: 352-62; and throughout Feldman 1998a.

When Josephus turns to the wilderness generation, he is not completely averse to reporting their failures, but he does erase every episode that has potential links to animal worship. He makes no mention of the golden calf or the bronze serpent.[46] Although the Jewish people were more often ridiculed for their aniconic worship, in *Ap*., Josephus is particularly sensitive to Apion's claim that the Jewish people secretly worship a golden donkey head,[47] and the absence of these episodes in *AJ* may be due to Josephus' desire to avoid arousing any suspicions in this direction.[48]

Nevertheless, Josephus' concern for the reputation of the wilderness generation pales in comparison with his concern for the reputation of their leader, Moses. Moses was the most famous ancestor of the Jewish people, and, as their lawgiver, he was considered to be the founder of their nation; thus, a great deal was at stake in the character of Moses.[49] In Josephus' account, Moses does not murder an Egyptian and then flee the country because he fears the consequences. Instead, Moses conducts a successful military campaign in Ethiopia and then flees Egypt because the king is seeking to kill him out of envy and fear.[50] When God calls Moses through the burning bush, not only does Josephus adjust what happens to Moses' hand, Moses also expresses far more confidence in God's plan than he does in the biblical account, and

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[46] Cf. *AJ* 3.95-98; 4.85-86.

[47] Cf. *Ap*. 2.79-88, 112-20.

[48] Cf. the reflections on these omissions in Hata 1987: 188-89; Spilsbury 1998b: 130, n. 128.

[49] Cf. Tiede 1972: 230-37; Feldman 1998b: 72; Rajak 1998: 134-35; Spilsbury 1998b: 114; Spilsbury 2005: 221-22; *contra* Frulla 2011: 122, who suggests that Josephus is reacting against the interpretation of Moses as a lawgiver and intends to highlight his many other roles and accomplishments. It seems, rather, that Josephus' aim is to point to Moses' other roles and accomplishments in order to highlight his qualifications for producing the most excellent laws. This is precisely the framework that Josephus implies by the way in which he introduces Moses in the preface to the work (*AJ* 1.15-26).

[50] *AJ* 2.238-63; cf. the analyses of this passage in Hata 1987: 184-86; Bloch 2011: 111-13; Frulla 2011: 115-17.

there is no mention of a speech impediment.[51] In fact, Josephus claims in his encomium upon Moses' death that Moses was an excellent public speaker, thus aligning Moses more closely with Graeco-Roman concepts of an ideal leader.[52] Josephus also deletes Moses' greatest failure in the wilderness: there is no record in *AJ* of Moses' disobedient striking of the rock at Meribah. Although Josephus reports that Moses was not allowed to cross the Jordan, he gives no explanation for this prohibition.[53] Thus, Josephus did a great deal of editing in order to delete potentially embarrassing details of Moses' life.

3.2.2 Josephus' Employment of Graeco-Roman Categories in Depicting Jewish Origins

In addition to removing embarrassing incidents from the biblical material, Josephus also appeals to his Graeco-Roman audience by presenting the story of Jewish origins in terms of categories drawn from the Graeco-Roman cultural world.[54] Two of these are thematic for *AJ* as a whole and thus merit some attention.

3.2.2.1 The Jewish Forefathers as Philosophers

First, Josephus presents the ancestors of the Jewish people as philosophers. Josephus was hardly the first to portray the Jewish people in this way,[55] and this label corresponds to several important aspects of what being a Jew entailed in the ancient world. As Mason points out, the realms of theology and moral instruction were typically associated with philosophy; ancient religions were usually more focused on

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[51] *AJ* 2.264-76.

[52] *AJ* 4.328.

[53] *AJ* 4.177; on these adjustments to the story of Moses, see Feldman 1998b: 63-65.

[54] Bartlett 1985: 80-81 likens Josephus' portraits to the depictions of the heroes in Greek literature.

[55] Cf. the survey of Jewish authors who utilized this image prior to Josephus in Mason 1996a: 42-44.

cultic rituals.[56] For this reason, the Greeks often found philosophy to be a helpful rubric for classifying the Jewish people. There are examples of Greek authors categorizing the Jewish people as philosophers as far back as the fourth century BC.[57] Nevertheless, it is still significant that Josephus consciously chose to adopt this classification in his narrative.[58]

Josephus first employs the category of philosophy when he discusses Moses in the preface. He portrays Moses as unique among lawgivers in that Moses included so much "physiology" (φυσιολογία) in his writings. Moses did this, Josephus claims, because he wanted to communicate the nature of God, which is the only true foundation for proper thoughts about virtue and the attainment of a "happy life" (εὐδαίμονα βίον).[59] The overt presence of philosophical *topoi* in this initial description of Moses invites Josephus' audience to view Moses as a philosopher and the Jewish laws as philosophical instruction.[60] He goes so far as to ask readers to evaluate Moses' understanding of the nature of God, which, he claims, is the basis for the way of life commended by Moses.[61] As Mason argues, much of the preface to *AJ* reads as an invitation for interested outsiders to consider adopting this philosophy.[62]

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[56] Cf. Mason 1996a: 38-39; Mason 2007: 486; on the differences between ancient and modern conceptions of the realm of "religion," see also Hurtado 2016: 38-44.

[57] See the examples mentioned in Hengel 1974: 255-61; Pilhofer 1990: 73-75; Sterling 1992: 140; Mason 1996a: 41-42; Mason 2000: xxx.

[58] Cf. Mason 1991: 184-86 on the centrality of the theme of philosophy in *AJ* and Mason 1996a: 44-46 for a brief survey of Josephus' employment of this theme in both *AJ* and *Ap.*

[59] *AJ* 1.18-25; cf. his description of what Moses is doing in Genesis 2 in *AJ* 1.34.

[60] Cf. the discussion of these features in Thackeray 1929: 94.

[61] *AJ* 1.15, 18-24.

[62] Mason 1996b: 197-200; cf. the comparison between Josephus' preface and Philo's presentation of the law in Berthelot 2003: 350-55.

Within the subsequent narrative of Jewish origins, the most extensive development of the philosophical theme comes in Josephus' discussion of Abraham. According to Josephus, Abraham thought deeply about the irregularity of the heavenly bodies and then developed a unique and more virtuous conception of God based on his observations.[63] He then relocated to Canaan because the Chaldeans rejected these views.[64] When Abraham later moved to Egypt, Josephus claims, he went in order to compare his philosophy of God with theirs and to persuade them of his view if it proved to be superior.[65] This story enhances the ancient roots of Moses' philosophy of the divine.

The presentation of Jewish people as adherents of a compelling ancient philosophy places them in a category that was familiar, easily comprehensible, and respectable. Mason claims that it also implies that the Jewish way of life is not meant for Jewish-born people only, but for all.[66] This latter point, however, has been disputed.

Louis H. Feldman maintains that Josephus was sensitive to Roman concerns about proselytism.[67] This position forces Feldman into making the awkward claim that Josephus' statements about the happiness that results from obeying the laws were intended exclusively for the Jewish portion of his audience,[68] despite the fact that no such limitation is indicated in the text.

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[63] Feldman 1998a: 229 claims that the proof for God's existence that Josephus attributes to Abraham is an unparalleled inversion of Platonic and Stoic thought, and is therefore probably original to Josephus.

[64] *AJ* 1.154-57.

[65] *AJ* 1.161; cf. the discussions of this passage in Bartlett 1985: 149-50; Feldman 1987: 139; Feldman 1998a: 228-34; Bird 2010: 94; Begg 2012: 326.

[66] Mason 1996b: 201-7; Mason 1998: 93-97.

[67] Feldman 1998b: 559-60; Feldman 1998a: 157-60.

[68] Feldman 2013: 1137-38. Mason 1996b: 187 notes the irony in Feldman's denial of Josephus' interest in conversion in light of the fact that for many years Feldman was nearly a lone voice in arguing that the Jewish people more broadly were interested in gaining proselytes.

Katell Berthelot, however, follows Feldman's proposal, and she claims that Josephus' sensitivity to Rome's concerns is reflected in his omission of references to Abraham's hospitality:

> Il me semble qui si Josèphe se refuse à développer le thème de l'hospitalité d'Abraham vis-à-vis des étrangers (autrement dit sa *philanthrôpia* ou sa *philoxenia*), ce n'est pas que le patriarche ne représente pas « une figure cruciale », comme le pense S. Sandmel, mais plutôt que cette réputation d'hospitalité était beaucoup trop associée, dans l'esprit de Josèphe, avec l'activité missionnaire d'Abraham.[69]

This proposal falters, however, as soon as one realizes that Josephus portrays Abraham as engaging in behaviour that is far more directly missionary in character than mere hospitality. According to Josephus, Abraham moved to Egypt with the intention of persuading the Egyptians to adopt his conception of God.[70] Even Feldman admits that Abraham here appears to be engaged in missionary activity.[71]

Nevertheless, the strongest objections to viewing Josephus as interested in portraying the Jewish way of life as a philosophy that is open to outsiders have been articulated by Shaye J. D. Cohen. Cohen claims that, aside from the story of the royal house of Adiabene, the conversions reported in *AJ* are all presented negatively by Josephus. He suggests that, out of the six other conversion stories in *AJ*, three are mass conversions that result from fear or compulsion,[72] motives that Josephus condemns in *Vit.* 112-13, and three are individual conversions that end poorly.[73] Regarding the royal

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[69] Berthelot 2003: 243. Berthelot suggests that Josephus viewed Abraham's hospitality in this way because it was frequently depicted as missionary activity in the Jewish tradition.

[70] *AJ* 1.161.

[71] Feldman 1998a: 48-49.

[72] The conversions of those in the Persian kingdom during the time of Esther (*AJ* 11.285), the Idumeans (*AJ* 13.257-58), and the Itureans (*AJ* 13.318-19).

[73] Fulvia is swindled (*AJ* 18.81-84), and Azizus and Polemo are abandoned by the Jewish wives for whom they converted (*AJ* 20.139-46).

house of Adiabene, Cohen claims that, if the inclusion of this story is not the result of Josephus' stupidity or sloppiness, it is only acceptable because it "concerns the propagation of Judaism outside the Roman empire in a kingdom which resisted the Parthian kings, the enemies of Rome."[74]

In response to Cohen, Mason points out that, despite Josephus' statement in *Vit.* 112-13, the forced conversions in *AJ* are not condemned but praised,[75] and he suggests that individual negative stories involving conversions are not meant to be condemnations of conversion itself.[76] Furthermore, Mason argues that Cohen's dismissal of the story of the royal house of Adiabene is inadequate. He writes:

> This is the longest single episode in volume 20, occupying about one quarter of the book (20.17-96). Its position in the narrative constitutes a massive contextual rebuttal of Cohen's attempt to tease an anti-conversion stance out of the incidental references to conversion in volume 20.[77]

Mason points out that this story recapitulates themes from the preface by depicting God's providential rewarding of virtuous behaviour. The behaviour in question in *AJ* 20, however, is the full adoption of Jewish customs by a Gentile family. As Mason suggests, the clear implication is that this family serves as a model for Gentile readers that demonstrates the universal efficacy of Jewish philosophy.[78]

Terrence C. Donaldson has undertaken an extensive review of this conversation, and he essentially agrees with Mason's reading of the evidence.[79] He suggests,

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[74] Cohen 1987: 422-25; cf. Sterling 1992: 304-6; Goodman 1995: 85-89; Bird 2010: 98.

[75] *AJ* 13.299-300; 13.319.

[76] Mason 1996b: 201-5.

[77] Mason 1996b: 205.

[78] Mason 1996b: 206-7; cf. Donaldson 2007: 333-38; Tuval 2013: 243-46. Mason also points out that Josephus is explicitly enthusiastic about conversion in several passages in *Ap.*, and Cohen is forced by his position to claim that these passages have been taken over from a source and are not really authentically Josephan (Mason 1996b: 208; cf. Cohen 1987: 425-27).

[79] Donaldson 2007: 283-361.

however, that Mason overstates the degree to which conversion is a central goal in *AJ*. He points out that Josephus avoids direct appeals and presents ethical monotheism outside the Jewish world in a positive light.[80] Michael F. Bird similarly claims, "[Josephus] regards virtuous Gentiles and noble rulers as having their own path to 'a true and befitting conception of God.'"[81] Along the same lines, Seth Schwartz suggests that foreign rulers are only expected to permit Jewish observance, to be just, and to avoid sacrilege.[82]

These moderating proposals, however, underestimate what is achieved by Josephus' adoption of the category of philosophy. Regarding Josephus' apparent approval of piety outside the Jewish world, Josephus claims that the best aspects of Greek philosophy are actually derivative from and dependent upon the philosophy of Moses.[83] This implies that the ethical monotheism of which Josephus approves is actually not something separate from Jewish philosophy but rather a vestige of its broad influence on past generations.

Presenting the Jewish way of life as a philosophy also suggests that it is not an all-or-nothing enterprise in the same way that an in-or-out soteriology is. Philosophies claim that one will experience happiness (εὐδαιμονία) or misfortune in relation to the degree that one's life conforms to the commended pattern. Thus, Josephus creates space in which his readers can try out and embrace aspects of Jewish life short of conversion, while at the same time implying that the fullness of εὐδαιμονία is reserved for full converts.

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[80] Donaldson 2007: 358-61; cf. Sterling 1992: 304-6.

[81] Bird 2010: 103.

[82] Schwartz 1990: 192-95.

[83] *Ap.* 1.162-65; 2.167-69, 255-57, 280-81; cf. Boys-Stones 2001: 85-90, who examines the perspective on Greek philosophy presented in these passages.

Within this perspective, it is also clear that Josephus' presentation of foreign rulers as avoiding or incurring divine judgment in relation to their handling of a few basic issues does not mean that these rulers have attained εὐδαιμονία. These stories only imply that certain levels of intolerance, injustice, and sacrilege are so unacceptable to God that he will repay them with grave consequences. Proper behaviour in these areas constitutes adherence to a few tenants of Jewish philosophy but hardly everything that a Gentile ruler should embrace. The thrust of the work as a whole, and the story of the royal house of Adiabene in particular, suggest that everyone—Jews, Gentiles, rulers, and subjects, must embrace the totality of the way of life commended in Jewish philosophy if they want to attain full εὐδαιμονία. Mason's conclusion is justified:

> Josephus effectively provides a primer in Judean culture for interested gentiles; he even shows how God rewards sincere converts. Of course, he does not punctuate each volume with forthright exhortations to conversion; the appeal is more subtle and operates at various levels. Nevertheless, his appeal is unmistakable.[84]

One of the central features that enables this multi-levelled appeal is the presentation of Jewish life as the embodiment of an ancient philosophy.

3.2.2.2 The Jewish Forefathers and the Classic Cardinal Virtues

The second thematic category that Josephus employs in his portrait of Jewish origins is virtue. Because the goal of philosophical instruction was to induce people to lead virtuous lives, this feature of Josephus' narrative may be considered to be a subset of the previous point. Nevertheless, it is so prevalent and important that it deserves to be highlighted independently.

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[84] Mason 1996b: 207.

According to Feldman, Josephus attempts to demonstrate that each important ancestor of the Jewish people embodied the cardinal virtues that were prized in Graeco-Roman culture: wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, and piety.[85] Although Feldman at times overreaches in discussing particular passages, it is widely recognized that his central claim about the importance of virtue for Josephus is amply borne out by the evidence.[86] Because of Feldman's extensive work, we do not need to provide an extensive chronicle of examples.[87] The point, however, is easily illustrated by bare lexical data: in *AJ* 1–4, Josephus' retelling of the narrative of the Pentateuch, the word ἀρετή occurs 81 times; ἀρετή is entirely absent from the versions of these books in the Septuagint.

The prevalence of virtue terminology throughout the work suggests that Josephus assumed that this was the criterion by which his audience would evaluate the Jewish people. Contrary to Tessa Rajak's assertion that Josephus "expects his Greek readers to accept the early history of the Jews on his terms, not on theirs,"[88] the "terms" are precisely the most substantial area in which Josephus accommodates to the prevailing culture.[89] He takes up the terminology of cardinal virtues in order to present

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[85] Feldman 1998a: 96-139 on the general tendency; 228-49 on Abraham; 294-99 on Isaac; 306-10 on Jacob; 344-61 on Joseph; 397-425 on Moses. On p. 96, Feldman claims that, despite the fact that piety was not originally considered to be one of the cardinal virtues, there is precedent for its inclusion as a fifth virtue in the writings of Plato (Feldman cites *Prt.* 329c, 349b; cf. Hansen 2007: 530-32). Feldman 2006: 549 also notes that Josephus' addition of piety to the cardinal virtues corresponds to the similar move made in Dionysius' *Ant. Rom*.; cf. Attridge 1976: 115, n.3.

[86] Cf. the astute assessment of Feldman's work in Spilsbury 1998b: 33-34.

[87] Cf. also the examples set forth in Begg 2012: 313-14, 325-26; Tuval 2013: 154-67.

[88] Rajak 1982: 477.

[89] Rajak's claim is based on Josephus' use of native records as the primary source material. Her conclusions on that particular issue are well-founded, but she appears to overestimate the importance of that point for the question of the degree to which *AJ* is presented as a work in the mould of the Greek historiographical tradition.

the Jewish people as a group in which the cultural ideals of the Graeco-Roman world find their greatest fulfilment.

3.2.3 Conclusion

Thus, Josephus employs numerous strategies in order to argue for the noble origins of the Jewish people's earliest ancestors. This parallels the argument made about the earliest Romans in Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.*, and the correspondence between these two works suggests that the quality of a people's ancestral pedigree was an essential component of a respectable heritage. Consequently, it will be important to pay attention to Luke's depiction of the Jewish people's earliest ancestors. If his purpose is to garner respect for the Christian movement by associating it with the Jewish heritage, we would expect to find in his writings a similar emphasis on the nobility of Jewish origins and the quality of the Jewish forefathers.

In the previous chapter, we observed that Dionysius tethers the virtue and character of the Roman people to their constitution, declaring that the Romans are the most virtuous people because their constitution is the best. In *AJ*, the high point in Josephus' presentation of Jewish origins is the gift of the laws, which Josephus often refers to as the "constitution" (πολιτεία) of the Jewish people. In the next section, we will examine Josephus' depiction of the Jewish constitution.

3.3 The Superiority of the Jewish Constitution

Josephus presents the Jewish laws as one of the major topics covered in *AJ*. His initial description of the contents states that this work addresses "our ancient history and the arrangement of our political life (διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος)."[90] Although this

[90] *AJ* 1.5.

description emphasizes the political dimension of the laws, echoing Dionysius' description of the contents of *Ant. Rom.*, it soon becomes evident that the Jewish laws as a whole are in view.[91] The Jewish laws constitute a central focus for much of *AJ*.

3.3.1 The Centrality of the Jewish Laws in *Antiquitates Judaicae*

As we have seen in the section on antiquity, a few passages in *AJ* hint at the claim that the Jewish laws are the most ancient legal code and therefore the foundation of all civilized life. Josephus also weaves the laws into what he describes as the central point of the work. He writes:

> And overall, any desiring to go through it may especially learn from this history that for those who follow the will of God, not daring to transgress the well-framed laws, all things go well beyond belief, and the reward that is happiness is set before them by God. And to the degree that they depart from precise care in these things, the practical becomes impractical and what they once were eager to pursue as good turns into irreparable misfortunes.[92]

Moralizing was a standard feature of historiography in the ancient world,[93] and Josephus' nod toward this theme in the preface to *AJ* is thus entirely unsurprising. What is surprising is the manner in which Josephus links this theme to the Jewish laws. Josephus does not claim that his history illustrates general moral principles; he instead claims that it demonstrates the importance of obeying the particular laws that God gave to the Jewish people.

Once the laws are introduced, fidelity to the laws becomes the intra-narrative criteria by which all characters are judged. Josephus includes plenty of moral evaluation before the introduction of the laws, but the presence of the laws transforms

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[91] Cf. *Ap.* 2.287.

[92] *AJ* 1.14.

[93] Cf. the comments on moralizing in Hemer 1989: 79-85.

and dominates Josephus' moralizing reflections. Both Jewish people and Gentiles are evaluated on the basis of their relationship to the Jewish laws.[94]

Josephus spells out the reason for the universal applicability of the Jewish laws in the preface. These laws are based, he claims, on a uniquely accurate conception of God. He writes:

> Therefore, I now exhort those who will encounter this book to pay attention to the conception of God and to consider our lawgiver, if he apprehended his nature worthily and always attributed to him deeds that are fitting to his power, keeping the word about him pure of all the unseemly mythology that is found among others . . . one must see that that one [Moses] considered it most necessary for the one who intends to manage his life well and to give laws to others first to understand the nature of God and, having become an observer of the works of that one with his mind, in this way to imitate the pattern of the best of all as much as possible, and to try to follow after it . . . our lawgiver, having shown that God has undiluted virtue, thought that it was necessary for men to try to share in that, and he relentlessly punished those neither thinking nor believing these things. Therefore, I exhort those who read to make a close examination in relation to this proposal. For nothing out of place in them or unfitting to the majesty and benevolence of God will appear to those who contemplate in this way. For all things have a harmonious place in the nature of the universe.[95]

Thus, according to Josephus, the laws of the Jewish people prescribe how to be virtuous in a way that is congruent with both the virtuous nature of God and the place of humanity within the universe, and they are thus philosophically superior to all other law codes. For this reason, they are universally applicable and they constitute the true measure of virtue to which all who aspire to a happy life must conform.[96]

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[94] Mason 1998: 80-81, 85-86; cf. Tuval 2013: 154. Mason highlights Gaius Caligula, Claudius, and Petronius as examples of Gentiles who are judged on the basis of their relationship to the Jewish laws in *AJ*; Tuval adds the judgment of Pharaoh in *AJ* 2.291-92 (Tuval 2013: 160-61).

[95] *AJ* 1.15, 19, 23-24; cf. the similar insistence on the avoidance of unseemly mythology in Dionysius' description of the Roman constitution (*Ant. Rom.* 2.18-20).

[96] Cf. Attridge 1976: 67-69; Sterling 1992: 295-97; Mason 1998: 84-88; Mason 2000: xxxii-xxxiv; Mason 2008: 79-80; Tuval 2013: 146-47, 154; *contra* Jervell 1974: 200; Feldman 2013: 1137-38.

The importance for *AJ* of the theme of God's rewards and punishments can hardly be overstated; it is explicitly reiterated throughout the work.[97] Its importance is also evident from the way that Josephus alters his source material. The emphasis on this theme is so great that Michael Tuval states, "The law is absolutely central in *AJ*; it would not be an exaggeration to say that it is more central in *AJ* than in the Bible itself."[98] As Seth Schwartz amply illustrates, Josephus enhances the theme of God's providential responses to human behaviour in his rewritings of both the biblical material and the later eras covered in his previous work, *Bellum Judaicum*.[99] For example, in *BJ*, Herod is presented as a national hero whose public successes were envied by Fate, which thus visited him with personal miseries.[100] In *AJ*, however, Herod's personal problems are described as divine retribution for his disobedience to God's laws.[101] The employment of the laws as an overarching evaluative framework is pervasive in *AJ*.

3.3.2 Josephus' Arguments for the Quality of the Jewish Laws

As noted in the previous section, Josephus is particularly concerned about the reputation of Moses because of Moses' role as lawgiver. The character of Moses is a significant part of Josephus' argument for the quality of the Jewish laws. This comes

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[97] The point is often made by Josephus' characters; e.g., *AJ* 4.177-93; 6.20-21, 165, 307; 7.338-42, 374; 8.120-29; cf. Tuval 2013: 165-66.

[98] Tuval 2013: 154.

[99] Schwartz 1990: 176-92; cf. Attridge 1976; Squires 1993, both of whom also highlight the centrality of the theme of providence (πρόνοια) in *AJ*.

[100] E.g., *BJ* 1.431.

[101] E.g., *AJ* 15.241-43, 267-76; 16.179-90; 17.1, 168-70; 18.127-29; on Josephus' divergent treatments of Herod, see Schwartz 1990: 151-60; Mason 1998: 85; Jensen 2007: 292-96; van Henten 2011: 193-216; Tuval 2013: 211-20; and esp. Landau 2006, a nuanced, full-length study of this issue.

across particularly in Josephus' portrait of Moses' virtue. Josephus ascribes ἀρετή to Moses 21 times in *AJ*.[102] As David Lenz Tiede states, "Josephus' whole treatment of Moses could be described as a recitation of his virtues, or even an aretalogy."[103] The preface makes Josephus' motive in this clear: he asks his audience to consider "under what sort of lawgiver [the Jewish people] were trained in the things pertaining to piety and other exercises of virtue."[104] Josephus' narrative suggests that the proper answer to this enquiry is that Moses was the most virtuous man ever to live.[105] This is evident from the bookends that Josephus places around his account of Moses' life. He begins with a prophecy made before Moses' birth in which it is stated that he "will surpass all men in virtue,"[106] and he concludes with an encomium upon Moses' death proclaiming that those who encounter his laws can discern "the superiority of his virtue."[107]

Josephus' emphasis on this point suggests that Moses composed the laws on the basis of his superlative personal virtue and his accurate conception of God.[108] As Paul Spilsbury notes, however, despite this strong emphasis on Moses' personal qualifications, Josephus also presents the laws as a direct revelation from God.[109]

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[102] Feldman 1998a: 377, citing *AJ* 2.205, 238, 243, 257, 262; 3.12, 65, 67, 69, 74, 97, 187, 188, 192, 317, 322; 4.196, 320, 321, 326, 331. Cf. also the study of *AJ*'s presentation of Moses' virtue in Feldman 1993: 243-85, and the comments on Moses and virtue in Spilsbury 1998b: 94; Tuval 2013: 159-67.

[103] Tiede 1972: 230.

[104] *AJ* 1.6; cf. Tiede 1972: 230-37, who highlights the frequency with which the portrait of Moses as virtuous is associated with his role as lawgiver.

[105] Cf. Attridge 1976: 13-14; Spilsbury 1998b: 99-102.

[106] *AJ* 2.205; cf. the treatment of this passage in Bloch 2011:106-9. The prophecy also proclaimed the victory of the Israelites over the Egyptians through this child, and Josephus depicts Pharaoh's decree to kill the male Israelite babies as an attempt to prevent Moses' birth.

[107] *AJ* 4.331.

[108] Cf. *AJ* 4.180, in which Moses exhorts the Israelites to obey the laws that he has set forth in accordance with his understanding of the mind of God.

[109] Spilsbury 1998b: 99-105; cf. Schwartz 2010: 98-99.

According to Josephus, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he reported to the people, "O Hebrews, God received me graciously just as before, and he has suggested to me a happy way of life for you and an order for a constitution."[110] Elsewhere, Josephus speaks of Moses ordaining the laws "in accordance with God's direction,"[111] and his version of the seduction of the Israelites by Midianite women turns this episode into a test regarding whether or not the laws truly have a divine origin.[112] The relationship between Moses' personal qualifications for writing the laws and the laws' divine origin is never explained at length,[113] but Josephus' emphasis on a divine origin adds another dimension to his emphasis on their importance. In *AJ* 4.319, Moses exhorts the people with an *a fortiori* argument by pointing to the grave consequences of disobeying a human lawgiver and then reminding them that their laws have been given by God.

Josephus also emphasizes the quality of the Jewish laws by claiming that these laws never change. At the end of Moses' life, Josephus claims, he urged the people to swear that they would execute any person who sought to alter their constitution.[114] Josephus demonstrates the importance of this command by narrating the disastrous consequences that followed every time a person attempted to introduce innovations to the laws.[115] The point is made explicit in the final book, where Josephus describes

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[110] *AJ* 3.84.

[111] *AJ* 3.213.

[112] *AJ* 4.131-55. On the divine origin of the laws, see also *AJ* 3.78, 87, 223; 4.13, 213, 316, 318; 12.37, 90.

[113] In *AJ* 3.322, Josephus mentions both the concept of a divine origin and the importance Moses' character, but he says little to indicate precisely how these factors interact and contribute to the quality of the laws: "Even those who hate us confess that God is the one who established our constitution through Moses and his virtue." Spilsbury similarly suggests that this tension remains unresolved (Spilsbury 1998b: 110-11).

[114] *AJ* 4.309-10.

[115] Cf. the studies of this theme in Mason 1998: 84-85; Spilsbury 1998b: 222-23.

adjustments in the clothing of Levites and the hymnody of the singers and then declares, "All these things were against the ancestral laws, concerning which, when they have been transgressed, it is never possible to avoid punishment."[116] The permanence of the laws is also attested in *Ap.*, where Josephus claims that the Jewish people did not produce many new inventions because there could be no improvement on the way of life that God had given through Moses,[117] and he contrasts the permanence of the Jewish laws with the alterations to the laws of other nations.[118]

3.3.3 Josephus' Employment of Graeco-Roman Categories in Depicting the Jewish Laws

As was the case with the earliest ancestors of the Jewish people, Josephus employs categories that appeal to his Graeco-Roman audience in presenting the laws. There are again two examples that merit discussion.

3.3.3.1 The Jewish Laws as "Ancestral Customs"

Josephus and the characters within his narrative frequently refer to the laws as the "ancestral customs" (πάτρια ἔθη)[119] or the "ancestral laws" (πατρίοι νόμοι)[120] of the Jewish people. According to Hans G. Kippenberg, the latter is a constitutional term

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[116] *AJ* 20.218.

[117] *Ap.* 2.182-84.

[118] *Ap.* 2.220-33.

[119] E.g., *AJ* 5.90, 101; 8.192; 9.95, 137; 11.339; 12.10, 255, 271, 280; 13.397; 14.194, 213, 216, 223, 258, 263; 15.267; 16.1, 35, 171; 19.290.

[120] E.g., *AJ* 4.71, 130; 5.108; 7.130, 131, 134; 8.129, 361; 9.99, 243; 10.11, 214; 11.109, 140, 231, 338; 12.142, 145, 240, 267, 300, 381, 382; 14.116, 235, 242; 16.163, 365; 17.41, 150, 200; 18.84, 263, 280; 19.301, 349; 20.143, 218.

borrowed from the Greek world.[121] Both terms are frequently used in the work of Dionysius to describe the Roman laws, in all likelihood due to the contemporary emphasis on the *mos maiorum* at Rome.[122] Bernd Schröder claims that the frequent appearances of this phrase in the works of Dionysius and Thucydides make them probable influences on Josephus' terminology, along with the Greek and Roman documents quoted in *AJ* (if these are deemed to be authentic).[123] Schröder also points out that, aside from instances in the Greek and Roman documents that are quoted by Josephus, these terms usually do not occur in Josephus' sources and he has thus added them himself.[124] Although Josephus was by no means the first to do so, presenting the Jewish laws under these labels places them in a familiar and attractive category that would have appealed to the taste and sympathies of many in his audience. As Schröder writes, "Anerkennt der römisch-griechische Leser diese als ‚väterlichen Gesetze', also als etwas, dem er selbst auch Anerkennung zollen würde, wird er dem jüdischen ‚Eigensinn' weniger zornig als vielmehr achtungsvoll gegenüberstehen."[125]

Schröder further suggests that, in addition to facilitating sympathetic understanding, these terms also echo Josephus' emphasis on the antiquity of the Jewish people:

> Mit dem Rekurs auf die ‚väterlichen Gesetze' baut Josephus in diesem Bemühen die im Judentum gängige „traditionale Legitimation" aus. Er erweitert die Legitimation durch die Schrift um den Verweis auf die ‚väterlichen Gesetze' bzw. das väterliche Erbe uberhaupt. Zu diesem Zweck adoptiert Josephus eine

[121] Kippenberg 1986: 46.

[122] Schröder 1996: 107 notes that, in *AJ* 18.236, Josephus himself uses the term πατρίοι νόμοι for the Roman *mos maiorum*.

[123] Schröder 1996: 261, 267; see pp. 158-262 for a thorough survey of the use of this terminology in ancient Greek, Roman, and Jewish literature.

[124] Schröder1996: 128; Schröder claims that this is true in relation to both the biblical material and also, in many cases, the passages that have parallels in *BJ*.

[125] Schröder1996: 130; cf. Schröder's survey of Josephus' use of these terms in *AJ* on pp. 70-130.

> sprachliche Form aus dem hellenistischen Raum, die der Achtung vor jüdischen väterlichen Erbe aufgrund seines Alter, seiner Bewährtheit und seiner Qualität einen Ausdruck verleiht, der gleichermaßen Juden wie Nicht-juden verständlich ist.[126]

Esler essentially assumes this significance for the adjective πάτριος, and he makes phrases that include this word a cornerstone in his argument for a parallel concern for antiquity in Josephus and Luke.[127] Nevertheless, there are reasons to doubt that this word carries this kind of temporal nuance.

First, a character within Josephus' narrative uses the adjective πάτριος in relation to the Jewish laws while Moses is still alive,[128] and on two occasions similar uses are attributed to characters within the story of the generation immediately following Moses' death.[129] This seems to imply that the connotations of the adjective πάτριος are far more ethnic than temporal. This impression is strengthened by Josephus' report of Nicolas of Damascus' speech in support of Jewish rights at Ionia. Nicolas gives no indication that he has said something controversial when he refers to the Jewish people's "ancestral worship" (πάτριον εὐσέβειαν) or when he draws an implicit correspondence between Jewish customs and the "ancestral customs" (πάτρια ἔθη) of the Ionians. [130] Nevertheless, he then goes on to state, "Therefore, if anyone examines them, our customs are good, and they are ancient (παλαιά), even if it does not seem so to some."[131] Nicolas assumes that his audience will agree that Jewish customs are "ancestral" (πάτριος) but he does not assume that everyone will affirm that Jewish

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[126] Schröder 1996: 269.

[127] Esler 1987: 214-17.

[128] *AJ* 4.130.

[129] E.g., *AJ* 5.90, 108

[130] *AJ* 16.35, 41.

[131] *AJ* 16.44.

customs are "old" (παλαιός). These occurrences of the adjective πάτριος raise doubts about the claim that Josephus intends for the phrases "ancestral customs" and "ancestral laws" to echo his claims about the Jewish people's antiquity. It seems, rather, that πάτριος identifies the laws or customs as those that belong to a particular people without implying anything about the timing of their origins.

3.3.3.2 The Jewish Laws as a Constitution

The other important category that Josephus frequently uses to present the laws is that of a national "constitution" (πολιτεία). This also is not original to Josephus, but it is in keeping with his first reference to the Jewish laws in *AJ*, which, we have noted, speaks of the laws as an "order of political life."[132]

Although Josephus frequently uses the term πολιτεία to refer to the Jewish constitution, the particular referent of the term varies from passage to passage. On several occasions, he uses this term to refer to the Jewish people's form of government, addressing the question of whether they lived under a monarchy, an aristocracy, or some alternative arrangement.[133] In other places, the term appears to comprehend the whole order of life that God gave to Moses.[134] Still elsewhere, the word πολιτεία appears alongside νόμοι as if God gave a constitution and laws as two separate but complementary entities.[135] When Josephus sets out to describe the Jewish πολιτεία in detail, however, he claims that it consists of the subset of laws that relate to communal

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[132] *AJ* 1.5.

[133] *AJ* 4.223; 6.35, 44, 83, 268; 10.275; 11.111; 18.53; 20.229, 251, 261.

[134] *AJ* 3.84, 322; 4.191, 195, 196, 310; 5.98, 132, 179; 12.280; 13.2, 245; 15.281.

[135] *AJ* 1.10; 3.213; 4.45, 184, 193, 194, 312; 11.140; 12.240; 15.281.

affairs and relations between people.[136] As is the case in many lengthy works, Josephus uses his terminology with varying degrees of precision, but the frequency of the term πολιτεία suggests that he wanted this description of the Jewish laws to linger in the minds of his audience.

This move is particularly interesting in light of the central biblical category that Josephus avoids using in his description of the laws: divine covenant. The absence of explicit covenant terminology in *AJ* is well-known but subject to various explanations. Harold W. Attridge suggests that covenant was perhaps too exclusive for Josephus, who wanted to emphasize a more universal version of divine "retributive intervention."[137] In an influential article, Betsy Halpern Amaru argues that Josephus avoids the category of covenant because the covenantal land promises were linked to messianic expectations that included political liberation.[138] On the other hand, Spilsbury suggests that Josephus does not delete covenant at all. Instead, he claims, Josephus transposes the biblical covenants into the Roman key of a patron-client relationship. All the essential elements, including God's exclusive commitment to Israel, are still there.[139]

Within this discussion, Halpern Amaru highlights Josephus' avoidance of messianism and she ably points out Josephus' adjustments to land theology in many passages. Nevertheless, Spilsbury is right to insist that Josephus retains essential elements of Israel's covenant with God. In fact, Josephus does not hesitate to include

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[136] *AJ* 4.198; cf. *AJ* 4.230, 292, 302. In *AJ* 4.198, Josephus distinguishes these laws from those that will be the topic of his projected work, "On Customs and Causes."

[137] Attridge: 1976: 79-83.

[138] Halpern Amaru 1981: 210-11, 227-29; cf. Feldman 1998b: 37, n. 17.

[139] Spilsbury 1998a: 181-91.

the claim that God has a commitment to Israel that entails giving them eventual victory over all who attack them. He includes the following in Balaam's prophecy:

> For providence is theirs so that God saves them from every evil and allows no such suffering to come upon them by which all would be destroyed. But a little suffering might fall upon them for a little while by which they may appear to be humbled. Then, they will put fear in those who brought injuries upon them.[140]

Although, as Halpern Amaru notes, there is no allusion to a messiah in this passage,[141] Balaam's statement still conflicts with the claim that Josephus intended to delete everything that pointed in the direction of hopes for political liberation. It is difficult to imagine a Roman general who had participated in the recent war reading this passage without some level of discomfort. If such material is included, however, then it seems unlikely that the whole category of covenant is excluded due to the potential link between political liberation and land promises.

Spilsbury is probably correct, then, in claiming that Josephus has translated God's covenantal relationship with Israel into the Graeco-Roman idiom of a patron-client relationship. Within this scheme, the constitution describes how to repay God's former benefactions by exercising virtue and thereby also securing future benefactions.[142] This proposal, however, is in need of two amendments. First, there is merit to Attridge's point that the idiom into which Josephus translates God's covenant with Israel is more general and therefore appears to be more widely applicable. Second, as noted above, Josephus indicates that he views the Jewish people as an open set that could be joined by any who adopted the Jewish laws for themselves.[143] Thus, Josephus'

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[140] *AJ* 4.128; cf. *AJ* 3.313; 7.380; 11.169.

[141] Halpern Amaru 1981: 225-29.

[142] Spilsbury 1998a: 182-86.

[143] Cf. Mason 1996b: 205-7; Mason 1998: 93-95; *contra* Cohen 1987: 424-25; Goodman 1995: 86-87.

presentation of the laws as a part of a patron-client relationship interprets God's relationship with Israel as one that is open to any who are willing to take on the necessary obligations.[144] This parallels the openness implied by the presentation of the Jewish people as philosophers.

Even this formulation, however, does not explain why Josephus chose to speak of the Jewish laws as a constitution; constitutions were not the ordinary instrument for regulating a patron-client relationship. On Josephus' selection of this term, John R. Bartlett suggests that Josephus' intention is simply to use an easily understandable term,[145] but Mason suggests that Josephus' aims are rather more ambitious. Mason claims that Josephus is attempting to submit the Jewish laws for consideration in the ancient competition over which nation has the best constitution. In support of this proposal, Mason points to the debates on constitutional superiority in various ancient writers and the problems with the Roman constitution highlighted in Josephus' narration of Claudius' accession.[146]

In addition to the evidence cited by Mason, we may add that there is a striking similarity between the place of the constitution theme in Josephus and Dionysius, the latter of whom is clearly interested in the competition highlighted by Mason.[147] As we have seen, one of Dionysius' main points in *Ant. Rom.* is that Rome has the best

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[144] Spilsbury's own perspective on Josephus and conversion is unclear. At one point, he states that Josephus does not think of the Jewish people as a missionary people but was not opposed to proselytism (Spilsbury 1998b: 63-64); elsewhere, he claims that Josephus presents Abrahamic descent as essential to Jewish identity, stating that law observance by itself is insufficient (Spilsbury 1998b: 188, 217-18).

[145] Bartlett 1985: 161-62.

[146] Mason 1998: 80-87; Mason 2000: xxiv-xxix; cf. Schröder 1996: 153, who similarly notes that this move places the laws in the same realm as the Roman constitution.

[147] Mason 2003a: 572-81 notes similarities in the treatment of particular aspects of the constitution theme in *AJ* and *Ant. Rom*., along with other important parallels between the two works, but he does not highlight how the centrality of this theme in *AJ* corresponds to its predecessor.

constitution, and he suggests that his narrative of Rome's history serves as ample proof of the point. Josephus claims that his narrative demonstrates that the Jewish constitution is based on superior philosophy, divinely given, and universally applicable. There are differences in nuance, but the central place given to the constitution in both works suggests that Josephus was both inspired by and competing with Dionysius.[148] As Schröder writes, "Formelhaft verkürzt gesagt, offenbart das Gesetzes verständnis des Josephus seine Neigung, die jüdische Sache (Inhalt) als ‚Antwort' auf hellenistiche ‚Fragen' in weltoffener Verpackung (Form) darzustellen."[149]

3.3.4 Conclusion

Two main aspects of this material bear significance for our study of Luke. First, Josephus' use of the phrases "ancestral customs" (πάτρια ἔθη) and "ancestral laws" (πατρίοι νόμοι) suggests that these terms do not necessarily imply great antiquity. For Josephus, such terms connote a national heritage, not an ancient heritage. This raises questions about the claim that Luke's use of the adjective "ancestral" (πατρῷος) in relation to God or the Jewish law is meant to evoke the aura of antiquity.[150] Second, this material provides an excellent point of comparison for David L. Balch's claims that Luke's writings reflect the conception of the Mosaic law as a constitution and parallel Dionysius' emphasis on the Roman constitution.[151] Josephus' writings actually do both

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[148] Cf. Thackeray 1929: 56-57; Collomp 1973: 287, the latter of whom suggests that there is implicit criticism of Dionysius in *AJ* 1.2 when Josephus rebukes those who write historical works to show gratitude.

[149] Schröder 1996: 269.

[150] *Contra* Esler 1987: 211-17; Backhaus 2007: 422-26.

[151] Cf. Balch 1989: 358-60; Balch 1990b: 14, 19; Balch 2003: 139-41, 149, 160.

of these things, and, if Balch is correct, one would expect to find similarities between Josephus' presentation of the Jewish law and that in Luke's writings.

In the previous chapter, we examined Dionysius' argument that the quality of Rome's constitution is demonstrated by the virtue of the people whom it governed. Josephus similarly narrates the subsequent history of the Jewish people in order to highlight their virtuous conduct. In the next section, we will consider this aspect of Josephus' work.

3.4 The Virtue of the Jewish People

Throughout his narrative of life under the Jewish constitution, Josephus continues the emphasis on virtue that we have observed in his presentation of the earliest Jewish ancestors. In fact, the preface to *AJ* emphasizes that Moses' goal in producing the constitution was to teach the Jewish people the proper exercise of virtue.[152] Josephus' narrative of the post-constitution era implies that Moses succeeded.

3.4.1 Josephus' Presentation of the Virtue of the Jewish People

According to Josephus, the superior virtue of the Jewish people was prophesied by Balaam shortly after Moses received the laws on Sinai. In one of his speeches before Balak, Josephus' Balaam proclaims:

> This people is happy, to whom God gives possession of countless good things and promises his own providence as an eternal ally and leader, as there is no human race to which you will not be judged superior in virtue (ἀρετήν) and zeal for the pursuits that are best and purest from evil. And you will leave these things to children who are better than yourselves since God watches over only you among humanity and provides that by which you might become the happiest (εὐδαιμονέστεροι) of all under the sun.[153]

[152] Cf. *AJ* 1.6, 14-26.

[153] *AJ* 4.114.

This prophecy draws on the philosophical *topoi* of ἀρετή and εὐδαιμονία, and it asserts that they can be found in greater measure among the Jewish people than any other.

Josephus also makes extravagant claims about the devotion of the Jewish people to their laws. He writes, "Indeed, there is no one among the Hebrews who would offend the laws framed by [Moses], even if he were able to escape notice, as if [Moses] were present and going to punish him."[154] Although his narrative as a whole provides ample evidence that this claim is overstated, Josephus immediately produces two examples of devotion to the law under extraordinary circumstances in order to substantiate the point.[155]

Josephus' editorial activity pushes in the same direction. Although he does not completely delete the mistakes of the Jewish people and their rulers, Josephus emphasizes the virtues and minimizes the failures of nearly every important Jewish character in the biblical narrative.[156] As was the case with the ancestors of the Jewish people, Feldman's studies illustrate the determination with which Josephus pursues this agenda.[157] The lexical data also remains impressive: Josephus uses the word ἀρετή 156 times in *AJ* 5–20.

Josephus' tendencies in *AJ* are well illustrated through his version of the story of Saul and the medium at Endor. In the biblical narrative, Saul's visit to the medium at

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[154] *AJ* 3.317.

[155] *AJ* 3.318-21; Schwartz 1990: 195-97 notes the contradiction between this claim and the main theme of the work, and he also points to similar claims about Jewish devotion in *AJ* 3.222-23; 12.255-56, 267, 279ff.; 14.64-67; 18.55-62, 263-309; 20.113-17.

[156] *Contra* van Unnik 1978: 60, who claims that Josephus' inclusion of the people's failures demonstrates that he was not writing to demonstrate the greatness of the Jewish people. What van Unnik fails to observe is the degree to which Josephus minimizes these failures and enhances positive characteristics relative to the biblical accounts.

[157] See the relevant studies collected in Feldman 1998a and Feldman 1998b. Feldman suggests that the only major Jewish character whom Josephus leaves as an unmitigated villain is Jeroboam. He attributes Josephus' lack of sympathy for Jeroboam to the fact that Jeroboam was the cause of στάσις, a grievous offense in Graeco-Roman culture.

Endor is presented as Saul's final abandonment of God's commands. In *AJ*, however, both Saul and the medium are portrayed as examples of virtuous behaviour. Josephus urges his audience to imitate the medium because she does what is right for the sake of divine reward rather than human favours. She provided food for Saul even though Saul had hurt her in the past by forbidding her profession and could not help her in the future because, as Samuel had prophesied, he was going to die the next day.[158] Saul is then presented as the consummate example of bravery because he went forth to battle on behalf of his nation not merely in the face of danger but in the face of certain death.[159] As Attridge posits, Josephus includes these moralizing reflections because he is "concerned to offset the very negative picture of the first Jewish king which would have resulted from the bare retelling of the biblical narrative of 1 Sam 28:16-20."[160] The episode is given the best possible spin through Josephus' editing.

3.4.2 Josephus' Efforts to Combat Negative Images of the Jewish People

In addition to continuing his emphasis on the virtues of the Jewish people, Josephus also continues to fend off negative stereotypes. One of the major emphases in the second half of *AJ* is the Jewish people's loyalty to reasonable foreign rulers. In the wake of the recent war, it would hardly be surprising to find people questioning the loyalty of the Jewish people, and Josephus' narrative displays sensitivity towards these concerns.

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[158] *AJ* 6.340-42; cf. the comments on this aspect of the story in Castelli 2013: 1263-65.

[159] *AJ* 6.343-50.

[160] Attridge 1976: 114; cf. also the studies of Josephus' treatment of Saul in Spilsbury 1998b: 170-75; Feldman 1998a: 512-33; Dormeyer 2005: 148-53.

In his retelling of the period from the exile to the Maccabean revolt, Josephus presents the Jewish people as well-behaved subjects who desire nothing more than permission to live in accordance with their own ancestral customs.[161] He eagerly highlights the cooperation between the Jewish people and their rulers in his versions of stories from Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, and Esther.[162] Spilsbury states that *AJ* 11.1-183 in particular "is dominated by a concern to establish the loyalty of the former exiles to the sovereign power so that they might be treated with the consideration due to all peoples,"[163] and Berthelot highlights the importance of this theme in Josephus' account of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid eras.[164]

Josephus' retelling of Esther addresses this issue directly by means of Haman's accusations against the Jewish people. The decree that Haman circulates describes them as "a nation that is hostile, strange in laws, disobedient to kings, different in customs, hating monarchy, and ill-disposed to our affairs."[165] As in the biblical account, Josephus attributes Haman's views to racial prejudice and Haman's unmeasured anger at Mordecai. Haman's declarations of Jewish disloyalty, however, are first refuted by Mordecai's faithful service to the king and then reversed by Esther's counter-letter in the king's name, which states, "the Jewish people are not evil but carry out public life

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[161] On Josephus' emphasis on the loyalty of the Jewish people to foreign rulers in his earlier rewritings of biblical accounts, see Feldman 2006: 490-95.

[162] Cf. the studies of these passages in Feldman 1998a: 148-57, 645-54; Feldman 1998b: 556-58; Spilsbury 1998b: 224-25. According to Feldman, Josephus also presents the rulers under whom the Jewish people lived during this time in a positive way (Feldman 1998b: 74-75, 452-55, 503-8).

[163] Spilsbury 1998b: 209.

[164] Berthelot 2003: 328-29.

[165] *AJ* 11.217; cf. Feldman 1998b: 529-30, who points out the correspondence between Haman's accusations and popular complaints about the Jewish people. On Haman's accusations, see also Berthelot 2003: 323-24; Doering 2012: 85; Spilsbury 2013: 1315. Doering notes that Josephus distances the king from this decree by writing that the decree was sent "as if" from the king (*AJ* 11.215), whereas in the source-text, it is clear that the king's decree confirms an earlier letter from Haman. Doering also suggests that Josephus has intentionally shortened the accusations of lawlessness and insubordination.

in the best manner and devote themselves to God, who protected the kingdom both for me and for our ancestors."[166]

Regarding the relationship between the Jewish people and Rome, the loyalty of the Jewish people is often mentioned in Josephus' three collections of Rome's *Acta pro Iudaeis*.[167] In the introduction to the first and most lengthy collection, he claims that these documents demonstrate Rome's approval of the Jewish people's "courage and fidelity,"[168] he presents the second collection as "a testimony to the disposition which the rulers had towards us from the beginning,"[169] and specific documents in the first and third ground Rome's favour in the fidelity and friendship that the Jewish people have shown.[170] Several of the episodes demonstrating Jewish fidelity that are mentioned in these documents are also narrated at length elsewhere in the work, such as the assistance that the Jewish people provided to Julius Caesar in his war against Egypt and the close relations between the Herodian family and the Caesars over the course of several generations. The impression given by all of this is that the Jewish people are a faithful people who bring numerous benefits to their rulers.

As a complement to this positive emphasis on Jewish loyalty, Josephus also attempts to explain or minimize incidents in which there has been tension between the Jewish people and their rulers. In each case, he lays the blame either on a small group of Jewish people who do not align with the values of the majority, unreasonable

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[166] *AJ* 11.209-11, 279.

[167] *AJ* 14.185-267; 16.160-78; 19. 278-92, 300-12.

[168] *AJ* 14.186.

[169] *AJ* 16.161.

[170] *AJ* 14.192-93, 214, 242, 257; 19.287-88.

demands or conditions imposed by the ruling party, or some combination of these two factors.

Josephus' narrative of the Maccabean revolt suggests that this conflict was forced on the Jewish people by Antiochus' unreasonable prohibition of Jewish customs. Josephus heightens the importance of this aspect of the conflict relative to 1 Maccabees, his primary source for this section. At several points where 1 Maccabees gives significant attention to the issue of the temple and its cult, Josephus replaces references to the temple with more general comments about Jewish customs.[171] In light of the temple's recent destruction by Roman forces, Josephus perhaps did not want to highlight or encourage Jewish anger over the mistreatment of the temple, but this editorial move also coheres with Josephus' emphasis on the importance of the tolerance of Jewish customs. In any case, Josephus claims that the injustice of Antiochus' actions was ultimately confirmed by Antiochus himself. In *AJ*, Antiochus' last words are a confession that his death is a punishment for the trouble that he had brought upon the Jewish nation, his plundering of the temple, and his disregard for the Jewish God.[172]

Within *AJ*, problems between the Jewish people and the Romans first arise soon after Pompey settled the dispute between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. Josephus attributes all of the initial difficulties to the family of Aristobulus, the contender for power against whom Pompey had decided.[173] Josephus opens up space between the intentions of this family and the people by claiming that the son of Aristobulus took power "by

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[171] For detailed analyses of these features, see Gafni 1988: 116-31; Schröder 1996: 83-90; Tuval 2013: 194-201. Cf. also the treatment of these passages in Feldman 1996: 140-46 and the synoptic presentation of Josephus and his sources in Sievers 2001.

[172] *AJ* 12.354-59. Josephus contrasts this account with Polybius' claim that Antiochus died because he intended to plunder the temple of Diana in Persia; cf. Polyb. 31.9.

[173] *AJ* 14.92-102, 330-491.

force" (κατὰ βίαν).[174] He also points out that Antipater, at the urging of the Roman general Gabinius, was able to dissuade many from participating in these seditious activities.[175]

According to Josephus, tensions flared again in conjunction with the death of Herod the Great. Josephus claims that many people felt that Herod had not properly honoured the Jewish laws, and trouble began when Herod became ill.[176] Upon his death, three groups travelled to Rome in order to appeal to the emperor, but several factions also attempted to seize power in Judea.[177] Some of these attempts, Josephus claims, were due to the unbearable oppression and corruption of Sabinus, the Roman procurator who was left in charge of the region.[178] Nevertheless, Josephus does not depict any of the rebellious factions as enjoying the united support of the people.[179]

Problems again erupted when Judea was reduced to a Roman province upon the removal of Herod's son and successor, Archelaus. Here, Josephus employs his presentation of the Jewish people as philosophers in order to concentrate the blame on a particular group. Josephus claims that, at this time, two men, Judas the Galilean and a Pharisee named Sadduk, founded a fourth Jewish philosophy that altered the ancestral customs of the Jewish people.[180] After describing the three traditional philosophies,

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[174] *AJ* 14.100

[175] *AJ* 14.101-2.

[176] *AJ* 17.146-67.

[177] *AJ* 17.206-323.

[178] *AJ* 17.221-23, 250-68.

[179] *AJ* 17.269-98.

[180] *AJ* 18.4-10.

those of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes,[181] Josephus states that the distinguishing feature of the "fourth philosophy" is that "they have an unconquerable love of freedom; they support God as the only ruler and lord."[182] After introducing this novel philosophy, Josephus blames its adherents for everything from the initial resistance to taxation to the disastrous revolt against Rome. Josephus has much more to say about the revolt, but his claims about the "fourth philosophy" enable him to present resistance to Roman rule as an aberration from the ordinary character of the Jewish people.[183] In relation to the taxation, Josephus also claims that most of the people were persuaded by the high priest's admonition to comply.[184]

The revolt itself is not described in *AJ*, but Josephus still goes to great lengths in order to provide an explanation that exculpates the majority of the Jewish people. In the preface, Josephus claims that the conflict with Rome was "involuntary" (ἄκων),[185] and he attempts to substantiate this claim by blaming numerous parties. In addition to the blame that he places on the "fourth philosophy," Josephus also explicitly attributes the revolt to insensitive auxiliary troops who were present in the region,[186] the bribery-induced denial of Jewish rights in Caesarea,[187] and the mismanagement and extreme corruption of the Roman procurator, Gessius Florus, who partnered with the bandits in

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[181] *AJ* 18.11-22. This is not Josephus' first description of these three philosophies; they are also described in *AJ* 13.171-73. For discussion of the purpose of this earlier appearance, see Haaland 2007: 271-72; for a comparison between the accounts in *BJ* and *AJ*, see Weissenberger 2007: 521-25.

[182] *AJ* 18.23.

[183] Cf. the discussions of Josephus' strategy in Kippenberg 1986: 59; Mason 1991: 282-85, 307-8.

[184] *AJ* 18.3.

[185] *AJ* 1.6.

[186] *AJ* 19.363-65.

[187] *AJ* 20.173-78, 182.

Judea.[188] Overall, Josephus depicts the revolt as a result of mounting pressure from several intolerable conditions coupled with the influence of a new, alien philosophy masquerading as fidelity to Jewish tradition.[189]

3.4.3 Conclusion

Thus, throughout *AJ*, Josephus presents the Jewish people as virtuous and defends them against charges of rebelliousness that would besmirch their character. His emphasis on the virtue of the Jewish people again corresponds to Dionysius' emphasis on the virtue of the Romans, and their works confirm that the character of a people over time is an important aspect of a respectable ancient heritage.[190] Consequently, it will be important to examine Luke's depiction of the character of the Jewish people over the course of their history. If Luke's aim is to garner respect for the Christian movement by highlighting its Jewish roots, one would expect him to be similar to Josephus in highlighting the virtues and minimizing the vices of the Jewish people. If Luke is not similarly positive about Jewish history, this will cast serious doubt on the claim that his motivation in highlighting the Jewish roots of the Christian movement is to associate the church with a respected ancient tradition.

As we have seen, a part of Josephus' case for the respectability of the Jewish people entails defending their loyalty to Rome. On the other side of this coin, Josephus also claims that Rome has been supportive of the Jewish people. We will examine this theme in the following section.

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[188] *AJ* 20.252-58.

[189] Cf. the study of this material in Hadas-Lebel 2006: 59-74; for comparisons between the depictions of the causes of the revolt in *AJ* and *BJ*, see Bilde 1979: 194-97; McLaren 1998: 107-26.

[190] Cf. Momigliano 1969: 33-35, who argues that it is not antiquity per se, but rather long duration that was admired by historians in this era. In the works of both Dionysius and Josephus, the heart of the argument is that their people have endured and excelled in the test of time; cf. *Ap*. 2.279, 290.

3.5 Rome's Support for the Jewish People

In *AJ*, Josephus carefully traces the origins and development of the relationship between the Jewish people and Rome. His purpose is to emphasize that Rome has respected and supported the Jewish people throughout the period of their mutual acquaintance.

3.5.1 The Nature of Jewish-Roman Relations in *Antiquitates Judaicae*

In pursuing this goal, Josephus charts a middle course between his depictions of Jewish-Roman relations in *BJ* and *Ap.* In *BJ*, one of the central speeches is Herod Agrippa II's attempt to avert the rebellion. Within this speech, Agrippa describes the subjection that followed the admission of Pompey into Jerusalem as "slavery" (δουλεία) and a lack of "freedom" (ἐλευθερία), comparing their subjection to that of all of the other nations that have been forced to submit to Rome.[191] In the broader scheme of the book, this perspective plays into Josephus' intention to provide a sympathetic psychological portrait of the ordinary people who were caught up in the revolt. In *Ap.* 2.134, however, Josephus presents a very different evaluation of the relationship between the Jewish people and Rome. He writes, "when all the kings everywhere were hostile to Rome, only ours were kept as allies and friends on account of their fidelity." This more positive perspective coheres with Josephus' attempt in *Ap.* to present the Jewish people as a well-respected nation. In *AJ*, one finds aspects of both perspectives: Josephus admits that the Jewish people lost their freedom when they were made subject

[191] *BJ* 2.355-56.

to Rome, but he also insists that their official status as friends of the Roman people was maintained.

The perspective of *BJ* appears when Josephus describes Pompey's reorganization of Judea. He writes, "The causes of this suffering for Jerusalem were Hyrcanus and Aristobulus raising sedition (στασιάσαντες) against one another. For we lost our freedom (ἐλευθερίαν) and we became subject to the Romans."[192] He then later describes several of the Jewish attempts at rebellion as efforts to throw off "slavery" (δουλεία) or regain "freedom" (ἐλευθερία).[193] In these passages, the subjection of Judea is presented in the same terms that appear in Agrippa II's speech.

Nevertheless, the dominant note in *AJ* is the continual friendship between the Jewish people and Rome. Josephus first reports the establishment of a league of friendship during the high priesthood of Judas Maccabeus. According to Josephus, when Judas heard about the power of the Romans, he proposed an alliance with them in order to intimidate the Seleucid king Demetrius, and the Roman Senate responded with a decree of mutual assistance.[194] Josephus records five separate renewals of this treaty, and some of these renewals occur after Rome's subjection of Judea.[195] Thus, in keeping with the later depiction in *Ap.*, *AJ* claims that the Jewish people retained their status as friends of the Roman people despite their subjection to Rome.

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[192] *AJ* 14.77.

[193] E.g., *AJ* 14.429; 17.267; 18.4; 20.120.

[194] *AJ* 12.414-19.

[195] *AJ* 13.163-65, 227, 259-66; 14.127-48, 217-22. According to Smallwood 1976: 7, the frequency of the renewals is due to the fact that treaties were considered to be lapsed upon the death of a ruler on either side.

3.5.2 Josephus' Minimization of Roman Opposition

As we have seen above, the Jewish people had on several occasions proved to be problematic to the Romans, but Josephus employs various strategies to minimize these incidents. He also reports two important incidents in which the Romans acted against the Jewish people, but he again suggests that these problems were due to exceptional circumstances and do not represent ordinary relations between these groups.

First, Josephus describes an incident in which Gaius Caligula attempted to place his own image in the temple at Jerusalem. According to Josephus, the first few years of Gaius' reign went smoothly, "but as time went on, he ceased from thinking humanly, making himself a god because of the greatness of his rule, and he took it upon himself to behave in all things in dishonour to God."[196] According to Josephus, Gaius' exalted self-assessment created problems for the Jewish people. He reports that Apion came from Alexandria and charged the Jewish people with failing to honour the emperor with temples, statues, and oaths. Gaius, enraged at this slight, then ordered the Syrian governor Petronius to set up an image in the temple at Jerusalem. According to Josephus, Petronius disobeyed these orders and supported the Jewish people, and he was eventually rescued from an order to commit suicide by the providentially orchestrated prior arrival of a ship carrying news of Gaius' death.[197]

This whole incident, Josephus claims, resulted from Gaius' bad character, and it is out of keeping with Rome's ordinary treatment of the Jewish people. Josephus narrates Gaius' death at length, and he concludes this account by providing a summary of Gaius' life that admits Gaius' skill in oratory but otherwise paints him as a man

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[196] *AJ* 18.256.

[197] *AJ* 18.257-309.

bereft of all virtue.[198] Although Josephus states that Gaius was killed by Romans who were unhappy with the severity of his rule, he later claims that his assassination was a punishment for his assumption of divine honours.[199] Josephus also reproduces an edict that Gaius' successor, Claudius, sent to Alexandria in which Claudius discusses Gaius' commands regarding the temple. In this document, Claudius describes Gaius as "the one who, on account of his great madness and insanity, humiliated [the Jewish people] because the nation of the Jewish people did not wish to transgress their ancestral worship and call him god."[200] Claudius then contrasts Gaius' actions with the long history of Roman support for Jewish rights.[201] Thus, throughout *AJ*, Gaius is presented as a mad usurper of divine honours whose treatment of the Jewish people was out of keeping with Rome's traditional and reasonable policies.[202]

Perhaps the most embarrassing incident for Josephus' claims about Roman support is the expulsion of the Jewish people from Rome. In order to minimize this event, Josephus employs the historiographical strategy of σύγκρισις, narrating two incidents together for the purpose of comparison.[203] Immediately before recounting the expulsion of the Jewish people, Josephus provides an extensive description of Rome's expulsion of the cult of Isis. The latter was due, he explains, to the involvement of the priests of Isis in an elaborate plot to seduce a virtuous Roman woman by persuading

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[198] *AJ* 19.1-211.

[199] *AJ* 18.305-9.

[200] *AJ* 19.284.

[201] *AJ* 19.280-85.

[202] Cf. the comments on Josephus' treatment of Gaius in Moehring 1984: 901-2; Tuval 2013: 228-30; see also the comparison between this account and the one in *BJ* in Olson 2010: 147-55.

[203] Cf. Plutarch's utilization of this device as the organizing principle in *Vitae Parallelae*.

her that she was having relations with a god.[204] Following this salacious tale, Josephus briefly reports that the Jewish people were expelled from Rome because four unauthorized Jewish men defrauded a Roman woman by pretending to collect money for the temple at Jerusalem.[205] Josephus' purpose in placing this event beside the lurid story of the expulsion of the Isis cult is transparent. The scandal of the first story mitigates the offence of the second, and the parallel highlights the fact that the Jewish offenders were not authorized representatives of the people. Additionally, Josephus' dubious explanation of this expulsion suggests that the problem was not with Jewish customs per se but rather with the conduct of a few particular miscreants.[206]

3.5.3 Josephus' Use of the *Acta pro Iudaeis*

Among the means that Josephus employs to emphasize Rome's support of the Jewish people, pride of place belongs to his reproductions of the *Acta pro Iudaeis*.[207] These *Acta* include a wide range of honours and privileges granted by the Roman authorities, and much of this material corresponds to Josephus' two accounts of the trial about Jewish rights in Ionia.[208] Examination of these passages reveals both the issues that Josephus thought were important and the motivations that he attributes to the Romans in granting the Jewish people these rights.[209]

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[204] *AJ* 18.65-80.

[205] *AJ* 18.81-84.

[206] Cf. the comments in Schröder 1996: 106; Tuval 2013: 231. On the historical improbability of Josephus' explanation, see Gruen 2002: 29-36.

[207] *AJ* 14.185-267; 16.160-78; 19. 278-92, 300-12.

[208] *AJ* 12.125-28; 16.27-65.

[209] The actual authenticity of these documents is debated, but this is immaterial to our purposes. If they are inauthentic, they still give us Josephus' representation of Rome's dealings with the Jewish people, and this is all that matters in assessing proposals of a literary parallel between *AJ* and the writings of Luke. For the authenticity debate, see Moehring 1975; Pucci Ben Zeev 1994; Pucci Ben Zeev 1996a; Pucci Ben Zeev 1996b; Gruen 2002: 84-104; Eilers 2008.

Josephus reports occasional *carte blanche* declarations of the Jewish people's freedom to observe their own customs or laws,[210] but these are usually supplemented by a description of the particular issues that were causing problems. With respect to Jewish people living among Gentiles, four issues frequently recur in the documents and incidents that Josephus reports: 1) the Jewish people's desire for permission and/or space to hold their assemblies and festivals;[211] 2) the question of whether or not the Jewish people should be required to appear in public courts on the Sabbath day;[212] 3) the exemption of the Jewish people from military service due to their commitment to Sabbath observance and the food laws;[213] 4) the permission granted to the Jewish people to collect and send money to Jerusalem for sacrifices and the temple.[214] As noted in the introduction, Esler argues that this material indicates that Rome did not give official recognition to Judaism as a religion. Instead, disputes about Jewish rights in the Roman Empire revolved around a specific cluster of practices that had public consequences.[215] Regardless of the validity of that historical conclusion, the important point for our purposes is that Josephus details the specific permissions that were granted.

With respect to the basis for Rome's support of Jewish rights, Josephus' work points to four primary factors.

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[210] *AJ* 12.125-82; 14.213-16, 223-27, 245-46, 263-64; 16.27-28, 163-64, 174; 19.285, 287, 290, 304, 306, 311.

[211] *AJ* 14.213-16, 235, 257-58, 259-61; 16.171.

[212] *AJ* 14.241-42, 245-46, 257-58, 263-64; 16.27-28, 163-64, 167-68.

[213] *AJ* 14.223, 226-27, 228-30, 231-33, 234, 236-37, 240; 16.27-28.

[214] *AJ* 14.227, 245-46; 16.27-28, 160, 163-64, 166, 167-68, 169-70, 171, 172-73. For a thorough survey of these documents, see the extensive study of Pucci Ben Zeev 1998, who presents a helpful table detailing all of the permissions and benefits granted by Rome on pp. 374-77.

[215] Esler 1987: 211-13; cf. also the examination of Josephus' documents in Trebilco 1991: 12-19.

First, Josephus claims that the Romans' policy of tolerance for Jewish customs was to some degree a matter of following precedent.[216] Josephus carefully notes the establishment of a policy of tolerance by both the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties,[217] and he describes Rome's continuation of this policy as a refusal "to alter any of the ancient favours given to the Jewish people."[218] Furthermore, in the edict that Claudius sent to Alexandria in support of Jewish rights, Claudius points back to this pre-Roman precedent as a reason for the maintenance of Jewish rights.[219]

Second, Josephus presents support for Jewish rights as an extension of a more general Roman policy of tolerance. Claudius' edict also states that Augustus' desire was for people to be subject to Rome "while continuing in their own customs and not being forced to transgress their ancestral religion."[220] Similarly, Petronius concludes a letter to the city of Doris rebuking their infringement of Jewish rights by declaring that everyone should worship in accordance with their own customs.[221]

Third, the most frequent reason given for Rome's support of Jewish rights is the friendship and alliance between Rome and the Jewish people. When this is explained in detail, the Romans point to either personal friendships between important Jewish and Roman figures or the assistance that the Jewish people provided for Julius Caesar in his war against Egypt.[222]

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[216] Cf. the discussion in Trebilco 1991: 8-9.

[217] *AJ* 11.338-39; 12.8, 119-24, 131-35, 137-53.

[218] *AJ* 12.124.

[219] *AJ* 19.281.

[220] *AJ* 19.283.

[221] *AJ* 19.311.

[222] *AJ* 14.192-93, 214, 242, 257; 16.48, 50-57, 60, 162; 19.287-88.

Fourth, on occasion, it is suggested that Rome upholds Jewish rights because they do not want the Jewish people to revolt. Petronius' letter to Doris explicitly mentions this,[223] and the same idea also seems to stand behind one of the arguments made in the trial at Ionia. In the latter, Nicolas of Damascus asserts that the Ionians themselves would rather go to war than suffer the abrogation of their customs.[224] The clear implication is that depriving the Jewish people of their rights may produce similar results.

Notably absent from this list of Rome's motivations in supporting Jewish customs is the antiquity of the Jewish tradition. Jewish antiquity only appears one time in discussions of Jewish rights, and it does not play the role that many have suggested. During the trial at Ionia, Nicolas of Damascus states, "Therefore, if anyone examines them, our customs are good, and they are ancient (even if it does not seem so to some), so that concerning them the honour conferred by time is hard to unlearn for those who have piously received and observe them."[225] Thus, Nicolas does not present the antiquity of Jewish customs as something that appeals to the Romans' cultural taste or something that in and of itself makes them worthy of legal protection. Instead, he claims that the length of time that the Jewish people have followed this way of life has resulted in a level of devotion that will boil over into revolt if the right to observe these customs is revoked. Nicolas' comment suggests that whether or not others affirm the antiquity of Jewish traditions is beside the point; the real issue is the intensity of the Jewish people's commitment to these ways. Contrary to those who claim that Josephus illustrates the political importance of Rome's respect for the antiquity of the Jewish

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[223] *AJ* 19.309.

[224] *AJ* 16.35-37.

[225] *AJ* 16.44.

tradition,[226] Josephus' writings never link Rome's tolerance of Judaism to the respect conferred by antiquity. Josephus instead presents Rome's support for Jewish rights as motivated by a combination of precedent and pragmatism.

Nevertheless, Josephus claims that his primary purpose in including the *Acta* is to present the Romans as a model for the Greek world in respecting the Jewish people. Josephus states that he has produced the first collection, "in order that it might not escape the notice of all the others that the kings of both Asia and Europe held us in high regard, loving both our courage and our fidelity."[227] Similarly, the conclusion to the second collection reads:

> I have set forth these things from necessity because the records of our deeds are about to release all the more to the Greeks, showing to them that, having obtained every honour, we were not hindered from practising any of our ancestral ways by the rulers but we were supported in keeping the things pertaining to worship and the honours due to God. And I make mention of them many times, reconciling the races and destroying the causes of hatred that had sprung up in unreasonable people among both us and them.[228]

Thus, Josephus claims that these documents are primarily intended to demonstrate the high regard in which the Romans held the Jewish people for the benefit of Jewish-Greek relations. The logic seems to be that if the Romans regarded the Jewish people with such esteem, the Greeks ought also to afford them respect.[229]

Several scholars, however, claim that Josephus' real intentions in including this material lie elsewhere. Per Bilde states, "[Josephus'] aim is to re-establish, maintain, and secure the rights and position of the Jewish people within the Roman Empire in the

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[226] E.g., Esler 1987: 211-13; Sterling 1992: 368-69; Witheringon 1998: 539-44; Marguerat 1999: 76-77; Backhaus 2007: 414-15; Marguerat 2009: 98-100; Keener 2012–2015: 1.455; Bond 2016: 156.

[227] *AJ* 14.186.

[228] *AJ* 16.174-75.

[229] Cf. the similar conclusions in Sterling 1992: 303; Olson 2010: 201.

precarious situation following the war in 66-70 (74)."[230] Tessa Rajak similarly claims that Josephus included the collections of documents in order to preserve them for Jewish people who might find them useful in court.[231] Like Rajak, Horst R. Moehring also proposes that the documents are aimed at the Jewish people, but he argues that Josephus' intention is to communicate that the Romans provide the freedoms that the Jewish people enjoy, and thus "it would be criminal madness ever again to endanger the peaceful relations between Rome and the Jews."[232]

There are problems, however, with each of these proposals. Contrary to Bilde's suggestion, at no point does *AJ* give the impression that Jewish rights needed to be "re-established" in the post-war era. Instead, Josephus praises Vespasian and Titus for their benevolence in continuing to support Jewish rights despite their experiences as leading generals in the campaign against Judea.[233] On the other hand, the proposals of Rajak and Moehring both depend on the assumption that these sections are addressed to a Jewish audience, but this is doubtful. The best evidence in favour of this view is Josephus' claim that the documents in *AJ* 16 are meant to have the function of "reconciling the races and destroying the causes of hatred that had sprung up in the unreasonable people among both us and them."[234] This statement, however, should not be taken at face value. The other party in view in this passage is not the Romans but the Greek peoples, and it is difficult to see precisely how a collection of documents

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[230] Bilde 1988: 121-22; cf. Sterling 1992: 302-4.

[231] Rajak 2007: 183-88. In support of this proposal, Rajak argues that the citation of documents in such an unconnected manner is similar to the use of documents in court speeches.

[232] Moehring 1984: 896-97.

[233] *AJ* 12.121-24, 128; cf. the discussion of this passage in Berthelot 2003: 339.

[234] *AJ* 16.175.

demonstrating Rome's correction of the mistreatment of Jewish people in Greek cities is supposed to make the Jewish people feel better about Jewish-Greek relations.

Additionally, locating the primary purpose of such large sections of *AJ* in relation to a Jewish audience is awkward because the work as a whole appears to be aimed at a Graeco-Roman audience. The stated purpose of the work is to provide the Greek world with an account of the constitution and history of the Jewish people.[235] Although Josephus makes a cursory reference to the possibility of a Jewish reader when defending his arrangement of the laws,[236] he consistently assumes the posture of an insider explaining the Jewish people to outsiders.[237]

Nevertheless, it may be correct to assert that some of this material has a political purpose. The foregoing proposals have only misidentified the audience to whom such a message is likely to have been directed. Attempts to curtail Jewish rights in the wake of the Jewish revolt had not come from the Romans but from Hellenistic cities.[238] Because *AJ* primarily addresses a Greek audience, it stands to reason that Josephus may have wanted to preclude further such incidents by reminding the Greeks of Rome's unwavering support for the Jewish people. In any case, the primary purpose appears to be precisely what Josephus says: these documents demonstrate the respect afforded to the Jewish people by Rome.

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[235] *AJ* 1.5; 20.262.

[236] *AJ* 4.197.

[237] Mason 2000: xix-xx; Etienne Nodet argues that the primary audience is Jewish (Nodet 2007: 103-22), but he provides no account for the explanatory posture of the work.

[238] E.g., *AJ* 12.122-24; cf. Smallwood 1976: 138-43, which studies this issue from a historical perspective but makes liberal use of Josephus' work as a historical source.

3.5.4 Conclusion

Josephus' emphasis on Rome's support for Jewish rights has significant implications for our study of Luke. As we have seen, this material raises questions about the claim that Josephus provides evidence that being a part of an ancient tradition is a pathway to legal protection. In *AJ*, Roman respect for Jewish antiquity is never presented as the motive for toleration of Jewish customs. Instead, Rome's tolerance of Judaism is presented both as the application of a more general policy and as a consequence of the particular relationship between Rome and the Jewish people. This casts doubt on proposals such as Esler's, who claims that Luke did not identify the Christian movement as a part of Judaism but sought to legitimate the Christian movement by associating it with antiquity.[239] As we examine Luke's writings, we will thus need to pay close attention to both his depiction of the nature of the relationship between the Christian movement and the Jewish tradition and also the ways in which this relationship is or is not portrayed as politically relevant.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have studied various aspects of Josephus' argument for the respectability of the Jewish people. Our study has confirmed and strengthened the proposal that Josephus used Dionysius' *Antiquitates Romanae* as a model for *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Aside from Josephus' points about the relationship between the Jewish people and Rome, the arguments of these two works are remarkably similar.[240]

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[239] Cf. Esler 1987: 211-17.

[240] Cf. the arguments for Dionysius' direct influence on Josephus in Collomp 1973: 283-88; Attridge 1976: 43-44, 51-54, 60, 172-76; Momigliano 1978: 16; Downing 1981: 544-45; Gabba 1991: 214-16; Sterling 1992: 289-90; Feldman 1998a: 3-13; Mason 2000: xxii-xxiv; Mason 2003a: 572-81; Feldman 2005: 232-44.

In order to enhance the cultural profile of their people, both authors insist that they are an ancient people with noble origins and a superior constitution, all of which has issued in a long history of virtuous behaviour. In making these arguments, Dionysius and Josephus employ the same vocabulary and the same evaluative criteria. Although none of these features is absolutely unique to these two authors, the combination of such a similar argument with parallel terminology suggests that a direct relationship is highly probable.[241] As we have seen, Josephus may even consider himself to be in competition with Dionysius, attempting to demonstrate that the Jewish people have a better constitution and fulfil the Greek world's ideals of virtue to an even greater degree than Rome. In any case, the works of both authors illustrate how one would go about arguing for a people's respectability in the Graeco-Roman environment, and the details of how this works have important implications for the proposed parallels between Josephus and Luke.

First, like Dionysius, Josephus indicates his interest in proving the antiquity of the Jewish people by speaking directly about this issue and providing evidence for Jewish antiquity in the body of his text. The presence of these arguments in both *AJ* and *Contra Apionem* demonstrate that Josephus did not assume that the antiquity of the Jewish people could be taken for granted. As we turn to Luke's writings, it will be important to observe whether or not there are similar statements that indicate his interest in this issue or actual arguments in support the notion of Jewish antiquity. As we have seen, the occurrence of the phrase "ancestral customs" (πάτρια ἔθη) in Luke's writings is not enough to establish this point.[242]

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[241] *Contra* Rajak 1982: 466-77; Ladouceur 1983: 20-35; Bilde 1988: 202-3; Spilsbury 1998b: 31, n. 314.

[242] *Contra* Esler 1987: 214-17; Backhaus 2007: 422-26.

Second, as was again the case with Dionysius, Josephus does not present antiquity by itself as a sufficient argument for cultural respect. In addition to the bare historical existence of the Jewish people in ancient times, Josephus also seeks to demonstrate the quality of their earliest ancestors and the virtue of the people throughout their history. Josephus pursues this agenda by editing his sources in the light of contemporary criticisms of the Jewish people and utilizing categories for presenting the people and their institutions that resonated with the cultural values of the Graeco-Roman world. If Luke's aim is to garner respect for the Christian movement by rooting it in the Jewish heritage, we should expect him to engage in a similar effort. If Luke does not present the Jewish people as a virtuous group, it is unlikely that he thinks that association with the Jewish heritage will lead to respect for the Christian movement. As we examine Luke's writings, we will in many cases be able to make a direct comparison between the ways in which Luke and Josephus treat particular episodes from Jewish history.

Third, Josephus' work provides an illustration of the use of particular cultural apologetic themes that some have proposed are important for Luke. Josephus' *AJ* both presents Jewish thought as a form of philosophy and the Jewish law as a constitution. His work thus makes an excellent point of reference for both Mason's claim that Luke portrays Christianity as a form of Jewish philosophy and Balch's proposal that Luke depicts the Jewish law as a constitution.

Finally, Josephus' depiction of the relationship between Rome and the Jewish people has significant implications for proposed parallels between the political intentions of Luke and Josephus. We have seen that Josephus' writings do not support the claim that association with an ancient heritage was a means to attaining political tolerance. Josephus explains Rome's tolerance of Jewish customs on other grounds.

This conflicts with proposals that claim that Luke intends to secure political protection for the church by associating it with an ancient heritage, but it does leave open the possibility that Luke sought tolerance for the church as a branch of Judaism. We will need to pay close attention to the political material in Luke's writings to evaluate these claims.

Our examinations of the writings of Josephus and Dionysius have thus raised a number of important questions regarding recent proposals about Luke's writings. All that remains is for us to turn directly to Luke's writings and explore how our findings shed light on his work. We will embark on this task in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE OLD IS GOOD? ANTIQUITY AND THE JEWISH ROOTS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN THE WRITINGS OF LUKE

In the previous chapters, we have examined the writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and T. Flavius Josephus in order to explore the ways in which they present the Roman and Jewish people in terms that appeal to the social taste and political concerns of the Graeco-Roman world. Our aim has been to consider the shape of their arguments so that we may have better footing to address the question of whether or not Luke intends to make a similar appeal by emphasizing the Jewish roots of the early Christian movement. This study has unveiled four broad areas that need to be explored in order to investigate this issue.

The first of these areas is Luke's treatment of legal material. Many have claimed that Luke's accounts of Christian interactions with Roman officials are parallel in purpose to Josephus' reports of trials about Jewish rights and his collections of the *Acta pro Iudaeis* in *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Luke, they suggest, intends to provide his readers with precedents or arguments that demonstrate the legal classification of the Christian movement as a Jewish party. We will assess this proposal by examining Luke's treatment of various legal scenes in Acts.

Second, we will explore Luke's explicit treatment of the issue of antiquity. As we have seen, both Dionysius and Josephus address this issue by making direct claims and providing various kinds of evidence to back up those claims. In the case of

Josephus, this is particularly interesting because his writings demonstrate that one could not presume that people in the late first century automatically assumed that the Jewish people had a respectable ancient heritage. We will examine Luke's writings in order to see if there are signs that he had similar concerns in view.

Third, we will look at Luke's depiction of Jewish history. Our surveys of both Dionysius and Josephus have revealed that, for both of these authors, demonstrating the antiquity of a people was only a small part of a broader, interconnected case for respectability that included demonstrating the people's noble origins and the virtue of that people over the course of time. Consequently, Luke's treatment of the history of the Jewish people is a crucial issue for the view that he wrote with the goal of cultural respect in mind.

Finally, we will consider the nature of the continuities that Luke highlights. In the writings of Dionysius, we have a near-contemporary example of what it looks like to make an argument about the affiliation of an ethnically mixed group with a particular ancient heritage. Having studied this material, we are now in a better position to evaluate Luke's aims in highlighting the relationship between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots.

4.1 The Christian Movement, the Jewish People, and Rome

As noted in the introduction, many recent interpreters who argue that Luke intends to associate Christianity with Judaism for political purposes claim that Luke's writings parallel Josephus' treatment of legal issues in *AJ* in some way. Philip Esler, Daniel Marguerat, and Knut Backhaus argue that Luke and Josephus both play on Roman respect for "ancestral" religions,[1] Gregory Sterling and Craig Keener suggests

[1] Esler 1987: 213-19; Marguerat 1999: 76-77; Backhaus 2007: 422; Marguerat 2009: 98-100.

that Luke uses trial scenes like Josephus uses the *Acta pro Iudaeis*,[2] and Steve Mason proposes broad resemblances in argument: "the points that they need to make are similar: they must show that their groups are worthy of respect because, contrary to first impressions, they are well established in remotest antiquity, possess enviable moral codes, and pose no threat to Roman order."[3]

Our study of Josephus, however, has both clarified the shape of his political argument and called into question some of these proposals. As we have seen, Josephus does not directly link Roman protection of Jewish rights to Rome's respect for the Jewish people, the antiquity of Jewish customs, or the fact that their religion is "ancestral." The trials and documents that Josephus highlights mention four specific reasons for Rome's protection of Jewish rights: 1) Rome was following the precedent set by the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties; 2) Rome's general policy was to allow subject peoples to observe their own customs; 3) the Jewish people had an official status as friends and allies of Rome, particularly because of the assistance that they had provided in Rome's war against Egypt; 4) the Jewish people would revolt if these rights were taken away.

The grounding of Rome's protection of Jewish rights in the particular relationship between Rome and the Jewish people suggests that any Christian claim on these rights would depend on the identification of the Christian movement as a Jewish party. This, however, is precisely what many have argued that Luke's political material is intended to demonstrate.[4] In order to argue for the view that Luke presents the

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[2] Sterling 1992: 385-86; Keener 2012–2015: 1.224.

[3] Mason 2003b: 273.

[4] E.g., Easton 1954: 45-48; Haenchen 1987: 100-2, 630-31, 693-94; Stoops 1989: 89; Sterling 1992: 384-85; Hansen 1998: 318-21; Pervo 2008: 454-55; Keener 2012–2015: 1.387-88, 437.

Christian movement as Jewish for political purposes, scholars typically point to Luke's accounts of Paul's trials in the book of Acts. These scenes, they suggest, are meant either to provide model arguments that Christians should use in court or to record important legal precedents to which Christians could appeal.[5] We will examine these claims in this section.

4.1.1 Josephus' Political Argument and the Writings of Luke

The first thing to note about Luke's account of Paul's trials in Acts is how different this material is from the legal material in Josephus. Josephus provides lists of Roman decrees and decisions that detail the particular rights granted to the Jewish people,[6] and he highlights occasions on which these rulings were later confirmed or treated as important precedents.[7] He also includes two accounts of a trial in which these rights were explicitly at stake, and he reports the details of the decision in order to demonstrate the specific rights that were confirmed.[8] With Paul's trials, Luke records one dismissed case (the trial before Gallio) and one extended case that is never actually resolved within the narrative (the case related to Paul's arrest at the temple). Luke does not report any decisions that explicitly describe the rights that Christians possess or that state that Christians share in the rights that belong to the Jewish people. Furthermore, no legal decisions are treated as important precedents within the narrative of Acts, despite the numerous opportunities provided by the drawn-out proceedings in the final

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[5] Cf. Cadbury 1926: 308-16; Easton 1954: 42-43, 48; Trites 1974: 278-84; Schmithals 1982: 212-24; Sterling 1992: 385-56; Balch 1995: 19-20; Horn 1999: 215-24; Keener 2012–2015: 1.266, 437, 452-53, 466.

[6] E.g., *AJ* 12.414-19; 14.190-267; 16.160-78.

[7] E.g., *AJ* 12.124; 13.163-70, 227, 259-66; 14.145-48, 217-22; 19.278-84, 300-11; 20.6-14.

[8] *AJ* 12.125-28; 16.27-65.

quarter of the book.[9] If, as is often argued, Gallio's dismissal of the case against Paul in Corinth represents an important legal precedent,[10] it is curious that Paul himself fails to mention it in his later trials.[11] Thus, both the content and the treatment of legal material in Acts share little in common with *AJ*.

4.1.2 The Significance of Paul's Trials in Light of the Charges Levelled against Him

Beyond these general dissimilarities with Josephus, the particulars of the trial scenes in question raise doubts about the claim that Luke's agenda is to establish the political identity of the Christian movement as a Jewish party. A significant problem with this reading is that the specific charges in each case deal with Paul's activities among the Jewish people, not the legal status of ethnically mixed Christian communities.[12] C. Kavin Rowe has recently emphasized that each trial scene must be interpreted in relation to the particular charges in view, noting that a failure to do so can lead to a gross overestimation of the significance of an individual verdict.[13] This has a substantial impact on how one understands the rulings and arguments in Paul's trials.

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[9] *Contra* Cadbury 1926: 310-11, who suggests that the references to Christ's innocence in Acts 3.13; 13.28 and to Paul's innocence in Acts 28.18 may indicate Luke's interest in legal precedents. These references are all within sermons. No character in Acts ever brings up a previous legal decision as a precedent in a trial.

[10] E.g., Easton 1954: 42-43; Sterling 1992: 385-86; Winter 1999: 213, 222; Padilla 2008: 158-59; Dunn 2012: 85-88; Keener 2012–2015: 1.442.

[11] Winter's claim that this ruling would not have been legally binding outside of Achaia does not evade this criticism. Winter himself suggests that authorities outside of this region would have given careful consideration to Gallio's decision: "This judgement was valid for the Province of Achaea by reason of his *imperium*, but although it was not legally binding beyond it, an opinion of a leading jurist could not be lightly disregarded" (Winter 1999: 223).

[12] This view is close to but slightly distinct from the proposal that Paul's appeals to the Jewish heritage are too autobiographical to be transferable to others (for this latter view, see Jervell 1972: 154, 161; Brawley 1987: 70-71; Jervell 1996b: 86; Neagoe 2002: 176-77). Paul's comments occasionally extend beyond the category of autobiography, but, as we shall see, they remain focused on the nature of his activities.

[13] Rowe 2009: 56-57.

First, Luke reports in Acts 18.12-13 that certain Jewish people came to Gallio and complained, "This man persuades people to worship God contrary to the law." This scene is often interpreted to mean that Paul is charged with either fomenting rebellion or forming an illegal association, and Gallio's decision is concomitantly interpreted as a determination that the Christian movement is a legitimate branch of the Jewish religion.[14] As Gallio's reply assumes, however, Paul is charged not with rebellion but with promoting a deviant view of the Jewish law.[15] The implication of the accusers' charge is that Paul is causing dissension within the Jewish community, and they are hoping that Gallio will take action to quell this disturbing teacher in fulfilment of his mandate to maintain public order.[16]

Consequently, Luke's report in Acts 18.14-15 that Gallio dismissed Paul's case as dealing with a Jewish matter of which he does not wish to be a judge should not be over-interpreted. The charges before Gallio deal with Paul and his teachings, not the nature of the ethnically mixed Christian communities that often resulted from Paul's ministry. The legal status of those communities remains out of the frame.[17] Instead, by

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[14] Cf. Walaskay 1983: 54-55; Cassidy 1987: 104; Tajra: 1989: 121-23; Winter 1994: 100-3; Winter 1999: 213-24; Winter 2001: 134-35; Mason 2003b: 289; Bock 2007: 581-82; Padilla 2008: 154-56; Schnabel 2012: 763-64; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2773-74; Yoder 2014: 261-65; Marguerat 2015: 175; Sterling 2015: 25-26.

[15] Cf. Tannehill 1986–1990: 2.226-27; Johnson 1992: 328; Jervell 1998: 461; Witherington 1998: 552; *contra* Conzelmann 1960; 142-43; Schneider 1980–1982: 2.252; Tajra 1989: 57; Zmijewski 1994: 660; Fitzmyer 1998: 629; Eckey 2000: 2.418; Schnabel 2012: 762; Marguerat 2015: 174-75, each of whom suggests either that the "law" in view is the Roman law or that the accusers chose ambiguous words in the hopes that Gallio would hear a reference to the Roman law.

[16] Cf. Rowe 2009: 58-60. Despite his overly clever proposal that the accusers' use of the term νόμος is a double entendre, Rowe lucidly describes the socio-political dynamics of this scene. Omerzu 2002: 252-58 alternatively suggests that, as in Philippi, Paul is here charged with the illegal promotion of Jewish customs among Gentiles, but, if this view of the situation were correct, Gallio's reply would make little sense.

[17] Winter's attempt to depict the charges as dealing with wider issues of the identity of the Christian movement depends on far too much speculation and tendentious interpretations of the terms used in Gallio's reply (e.g., he attempts to stretch the term λόγος to mean "'legal immunity' in relation to the observation of the imperial cult"; see Winter 1999: 218-23).

his decision not to try the case, Gallio simply rejects the claim that disputes over the Jewish law constitute a threat to the public order with which he ought to be concerned.[18]

The second time that Luke describes charges against Paul occurs in Paul's trial before Felix. According to Luke, on this occasion, Paul's accusers brought with them an eloquent lawyer named Tertullus, and this lawyer describes the charges against Paul in a brief rhetorical speech. Following a *captatio benevolentiae* that emphasizes the tranquillity accomplished through Felix's administration,[19] Tertullus declares, "We have found this man to be a plague, one who stirs up dissension (στάσεις) among all the Jews in the world, a leader of the party of the Nazarenes, who even tried to profane the temple."[20] In this case again, many suggest that Paul is being charged with anti-Roman activity.[21] Some argue that this is the implication of the claim that Paul stirs up στάσις, a term frequently associated with political unrest.[22] The term στάσις, however, can refer to different kinds of disturbances to community life,[23] and the shape of Tertullus' speech suggests that what is in view is internal Jewish dissension, not anti-Roman rebellion. As Bruce Winter argues, the words quoted above contain two portions of

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[18] Cf. Rowe 2009: 57-62, who similarly argues that Gallio's ruling is limited in nature. Rowe suggests that Gallio does not take into account the cultural destabilization that results from the collision between Christian proclamation and pagan culture. Nevertheless, Rowe still overstates the significance of the scene. He claims that Gallio's dismissal of the case establishes that Christianity is not seditious. Luke, however, does not depict the charges against Paul as rising to that level.

[19] Cf. Winter 1991: 515-18; Heusler 2000: 68; Padilla 2008: 219, who note the cleverness of this introduction in light of the charges that are brought against Paul. This sharp observation, however, fits with several different possible construals of the charges themselves.

[20] Acts 24.5-6.

[21] E.g., Schmithals 1982: 212-14; Cassidy 1987: 104; Bruce 1988: 439-40; Weiser 1989: 346-47; Fitzmyer 1998: 733; Witherington 1998: 707-8; Heusler 2000: 70-71; Bock 2007: 691; Pervo 2008: 597; Gebauer 2014–2015: 2.184-85.

[22] E.g., Winter 1991: 518-19; Zmijewski 1994: 815; Omerzu 2002: 427-34; Padilla 2008: 219-20; Rowe 2009: 73.

[23] Cf. Acts 15.2; 19.40; 23.7, 10.

Tertullus' speech: the *narratio* and the *confirmatio*. In the *narratio*, Tertullus charges Paul with being an agitator of the Jews, and in the *confirmatio*, he points to Paul's purported attempt to defile the temple as evidence for this accusation.[24] Defiling the Jewish temple can hardly be understood as evidence for anti-Roman activities, but it serves very well as evidence for causing internal Jewish dissension.[25] Thus, Tertullus' claim that Paul "stirs up dissension among all the Jews in the world" is actually very similar to the charges presented by Paul's accusers in Corinth. Paul is again being charged with causing dissension within Jewish communities, and his accusers are suggesting that the disruptions that Paul causes are significant enough to warrant an imperial response.[26] On this occasion, however, the framing of the complaint is much shrewder.

Once these charges are clearly in view, the significance of Paul's two major defence speeches comes into sharper focus.[27] Paul's references to the Jewish heritage in these speeches are not efforts to combat the interpretation of Christianity as rebellion by portraying ethnically mixed churches as legitimate Jewish communities; they are

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[24] Winter 1993: 320; *contra* Tajra 1989: 121-23; Tannehill 1986–1990: 2.277; Zmijewski 1994: 815; Rowe 2009: 73-75; Marguerat 2015: 309-10, who suggest that the incident at the temple stands as a separate charge, and Yoder 2014: 287, who states that the relevance of the incident at the temple is unclear. As Winter points out, his view is supported by the grammar. The phrase alleging that Paul attempted to profane the temple is a relative clause that is subordinated to the description of Paul as a "plague" and a "leader of the party of the Nazarenes." This suggests that Paul's alleged attempt to profane the temple is meant to be an example of his activity as a leader in this disruptive party. Nevertheless, despite Winter's observation about the relation of the purported temple disturbance to the previous charges, Winter also depicts the charges as involving political opposition to Rome (cf. Winter 1991: 518-19).

[25] *Contra* Rowe 2009: 74-76, who attempts to stretch Tertullus' claim about "profaning" the temple into the charge that Paul attempted to be "an occupier of the temple."

[26] Cf. Sherwin-White 1963: 49-52; Schneider 1980–1982: 2.345-46; Jervell 1998: 568; Tannehill 2005: 247-48; Barclay 2011: 324-25. Heusler 2000: 70-71 initially recognizes the inner-Jewish nature of the disturbances that Tertullus describes, but she then suggests that his use of the phrase "in all the world" indicates that Paul's disruptive activities extended beyond the Jewish people. The phrase "in all the world," however, does not suggest that Paul's activities concerned a broader audience; it only signifies that Paul has disturbed Jewish communities throughout a large geographical region.

[27] *Contra* Marguerat 2002: 147-48, who claims that the relevance of Paul's defence speeches is unclear.

efforts to claim that his personal activity among the Jewish people is not improper agitation.

In Paul's defence before Felix, following a brief *captatio benevolentiae*, he states:

> You can verify that it has not been more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem. And they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city, nor are they able to prove to you any of the things concerning which they now accuse me.[28]

Paul's focus is clearly on refuting the evidence that Tertullus offered in favour of the charge that he is an agitator. He begins by claiming that his recent visit to Jerusalem was well intentioned and entirely peaceful on his part.

The middle of this speech then corrects Tertullus' depiction of the general character of Paul's activities. Paul states:

> But this I confess to you, that according to the way, which they call a party, thus I serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the law and that is written in the prophets, having a hope in God which also these themselves await—that there is about to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. In view of this, I myself take great care to maintain a blameless conscience towards God and people at all times.[29]

This section of the speech is often interpreted as Paul's effort to define the Christian church as a Jewish institution.[30] This interpretation, however, misses the way in which Paul's words are focused on answering the particular questions that have been posed about his behaviour. Although Paul certainly does highlight continuities with Jewish beliefs about God, his aim is not to comment on the legal status of Christian communities but rather to claim that the "way" that he follows does not entail offences

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[28] Acts 24.11-13.

[29] Acts 24.14-16.

[30] E.g., Easton 1954: 45-46; Haenchen 1987: 630-31; Tajra 1989: 126-27; Weiser 1989: 346-47; Zmijewski 1994: 816-17; Mason 2003b: 289; Rowe 2009: 77; Marguerat 2015: 311-12.

against the Jewish people. In order to establish this point, he makes two assertions: first, he claims that this "way" is fully in accordance with the Jewish Scriptures; second, he states that it leads him to a life in which he pursues a "blameless conscience" towards all.[31]

Following these general comments, Paul returns to the topic of his recent visit to Jerusalem:

> And after many years, I came, bringing offerings and alms for my nation. During this time, they found me in the temple, having been purified, with no crowd or uproar. But some Jews from Asia—who ought to be here before you to accuse me if they have anything against me, or else let these themselves say what wrongdoing they found while I stood before the council, other than concerning this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: "Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you today."[32]

Thus, Paul concludes by again emphasizing that he did nothing wrong in Jerusalem, pointing out that there are no witnesses who can prove otherwise.

The focus of the speech thus consistently remains on Paul's activities, and his point is to argue against the claim that he goes around "stirring up dissension." Despite claims to the contrary, Paul does not address questions about the nature and legal status of Christian communities. His appeal to continuity with the Jewish heritage is meant to demonstrate that the message that he promotes is inoffensive to the Jewish people; it is not meant to define the Christian movement as a Jewish party.[33]

Paul's other major defence speech is similar, although the purpose of the hearing in which it occurs is slightly different. Within the narrative, Festus claims that the purpose of this event is for the Jewish king Agrippa to determine the nature of the

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[31] Cf. Keener 2012–2015: 4.3398-99, who describes this section as an argument for Paul's innocence on the basis of the incongruity of the charges against Paul and his general *ēthos*.

[32] Acts 24.17-21.

[33] Cf. the similar comments in Haacker 1985: 439-43.

charges against Paul because they involve disputes about the Jewish religion.[34] Attentive readers will remember, however, that Acts 25.7 states that Paul's accusers brought "many and serious charges," and Acts 25.9 states that Festus proposed to relocate the trial to Jerusalem because he wished to do the Jews a favour. The contradiction between Festus' explanation and Luke's narrative suggests that Festus is attempting to conceal his attempt to show favouritism; his hope is that Agrippa will discern some complaint that he may report to Caesar and thereby avoid the embarrassment of sending a prisoner to Rome whom he clearly should have released.[35]

Nevertheless, once Paul is called upon to speak, he states that his defence will address "all the things of which I am accused by the Jews."[36] The speech that then follows recycles pieces of Paul's comments and speeches from the previous few chapters, and Paul again focuses on his own activities. After a *captatio benevolentiae* addressed to Agrippa, he begins by describing his Jewish upbringing and life as a Pharisee.[37] He then claims that he is on trial for something that the Jewish people should find unobjectionable:

> And now I stand, being judged, for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, worshipping in earnest day and night. Regarding this hope, I am accused by the Jews, O king. Why is it judged incredible by you that God raises the dead?[38]

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[34] Acts 25.18-21.

[35] Cf. Tannehill 1986–1990: 2.309-10; Witherington 1998: 728-31; Padilla 2008: 226-27; Yamazaki-Ransom 2010: 148-56; Marguerat 2015: 323-24; *contra* Yoder 2014: 318-19, who claims that Festus' report merely represents an outsider's perspective on the charges; and Rowe 2009: 80; Schnabel 2012: 996-97, who suggest that Festus interprets the issue in the trial as a Jewish matter because the accusations that were brought before him were less politically charged than those that were brought before Felix. Luke's narrative suggests that the "many and serious charges" in this trial may actually have been *more* politically charged because Paul responds by explicitly denying that he has done anything against Caesar (Acts 25.8).

[36] Acts 26.2.

[37] Acts 26.4-5.

[38] Acts 26.6-8.

This comment recalls Paul's questionable claim before the Sanhedrin that he is on trial for his Pharisaic belief in resurrection,[39] but on this occasion Paul fills out the claim by going on to describe how his encounter with the risen Jesus led him to the activities that have upset his accusers.

Paul prefaces the account of this encounter with a description of his early efforts to combat the Christian movement.[40] This history serves both to explain what he was doing on the road to Damascus and to bolster the credibility of his claims about what he experienced there.[41] Following this, Paul describes his encounter with Jesus, the third account of this event in the book of Acts, claiming that on this occasion Jesus ordered him to go to the Gentiles.[42]

Paul then relates his fulfilment of this commission to his arrest:

> Whence, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but I declared first to those in Damascus and then in Jerusalem and then all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles to repent and to turn toward God, performing deeds worthy of repentance. On account of these things, the Jews, having seized me in the temple, were trying to kill me.[43]

Thus, Paul suggests that the real reason for his arrest was his proclamation of repentance among both Jews and Gentiles, not improper behaviour at the temple.[44]

The conclusion of his speech, however, again argues that Paul's message and activities are all in keeping with the Jewish Scriptures. He states:

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[39] Acts 23.6; cf. the discussions of this connection in Bruce 1988: 463; Schnabel 2012: 1003; Keener 2012–2015: 4.3499-502.

[40] Acts 26.9-11.

[41] Cf. the similar comments in Keener 2012–2015: 4.3504-5.

[42] Acts 26.9-18; contrast Acts 22.17-21, in which Paul describes his commission to go to the Gentiles as occurring during a subsequent vision in the temple.

[43] Acts 26.19-21.

[44] Cf. Bock 2007: 720-21.

> So, obtaining the help that comes from God, I stand to this day bearing witness to both small and great, saying nothing other than what both the prophets and Moses said would happen: that the Christ must suffer, and that by being the first in the resurrection of the dead, he would proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.[45]

Thus, Paul's point in this speech corresponds to the point of his speech before Felix; his emphasis is on the fact that the Jewish people should find his activities inoffensive.[46] Again, however, he does not address the issue of the nature or legal status of Christian communities. Paul's appeals to the Jewish heritage in this speech deal with matters of his own biography and the fact that his endeavours are fully in keeping with Jewish tradition. As in the trial before Gallio, the legal classification of ethnically mixed Christian communities remains out of the frame.

Paying attention to the charges that Luke reports, then, raises doubts about the claim that his accounts of Paul's trials are meant to illustrate the legal strategy of appealing to Christianity's Jewish roots in order to argue that the Christian movement should be classified as Jewish. Gallio's dismissal of the charges against Paul deals with the limited question of whether or not Paul's views on the Jewish law are a matter of public concern, and Paul's appeals to the Jewish heritage in his later trials are intended to defend his own actions, not to define the nature of Christian communities. The question of the status and legality of Christian gatherings is never raised in Paul's trials, and those who read these scenes in light of this issue are forcing the text to address a question in which it has no real interest.

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[45] Acts 26.22-23.

[46] Cf. Bruce 1988: 469; Pervo 2008: 634-35; Schnabel 2012: 1013.

4.1.3 The Authorities and Christian Activity among Gentiles in Acts

Elsewhere in Acts, Luke does report two incidents in which Christian activity among Gentiles is brought to the attention of the authorities. Because these scenes deal with controversies that reach beyond the disturbance of Jewish communities, they make much better test cases for the view that Luke believed that the church as a whole could find political protection as a part of Judaism. Neither of these scenes, however, suggests that appealing to the Christian movement's Jewish roots is an effective legal strategy.

First, in Acts 17.1-4, Luke recounts Paul's time in Thessalonica. He notes that Paul, as was his custom, began by reasoning with the Jews at the synagogue, but his mission reached "a great number of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women."[47] In response, a Jewish contingent stirred up a mob and brought Jason, with whom Paul was staying, and a few others before the authorities, proclaiming, "Those who are stirring up the whole world have come here also, and Jason has received them. And they all act against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus."[48] In this case, the charges brought against the Christians are not limited to agitation of the Jewish community; they are charged with "stirring up the whole world."

Nevertheless, there is debate about the specific nature of the charges in this scene. Many suggest that Jason is charged with treasonous activities.[49] Others, however, note that treason was a matter of public law, not a particular decree from Caesar, and they propose alternative views. E. A. Judge suggests that the law in view is

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[47] Acts 17.4.

[48] Acts 17.6-7.

[49] E.g., Cassidy 1987: 89-91; Bruce 1988: 324-25; Tajra 1989: 34-36; Schwartz 2003: 124.

a ban on predictions regarding a change of ruler,[50] Justin Hardin has recently argued that this scene deals with the violation of laws restricting voluntary associations,[51] Rowe claims that the violation of loyalty oaths is probably in view,[52] and Heike Omerzu maintains that attempts to identify a specific historical law are futile because the particular wording in this passage is designed not to provide readers with minute historical details but rather to association this event with other passages in the Lukan corpus.[53] At the very least, this scene goes beyond the complaint that a Christian disturbs Jewish communities. It presents the book of Acts' clearest example of an accusation that Christians are anti-Roman.[54] If Luke's answer to such charges is that the Christian movement is a legitimate Jewish party, this is a prime opportunity to demonstrate the efficacy of that legal strategy.

Instead, however, Jason and the others give money either in payment of a fine or as a guarantee of their guests' good behaviour, and then they immediately send Paul and Silas away by night.[55] No arguments are made before the court about the relationship between the Christian movement and Jewish religion or the Jewish people, and, in fact, the narrative leaves these serious political charges entirely unanswered.[56]

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[50] Judge 1971: 1-7 [2008: 456-62]; followed by Witherington 1998: 508.

[51] Hardin 2006: 40-48.

[52] Rowe 2009: 97. Combinations of various aspects of the previous three proposals can be found in Bock 2007: 552-53; Schnabel 2012: 707-9; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2551-57.

[53] Omerzu 2002: 188-218.

[54] Although Hardin's proposal might sound like an exception to this, he suggests that the prohibition of voluntary associations was due to the fear that such groups might become centres for political activity (cf. Hardin 2006: 39-42).

[55] Acts 17.9-10; on the purpose of the money that Jason and the others give to the politarchs, see the varying proposals in Sherwin-White 1963: 95-96; Tajra 1989: 43; Omerzu 2002: 218; Hardin 2006: 45-46.

[56] On the problem that this poses for all readings of Luke's writings in terms of political apologetic, see Cassidy 1987: 89-91; Alexander 1999: 34-35; Hardin 2006: 48-49.

The second incident in which Christian activity among Gentiles is brought to the attention of the authorities occurs during Paul's visit to Philippi. Luke's account of these events suggests that being identified as Jewish may be detrimental in some situations. According to Acts 16.20-21, Paul was handed over to the magistrates of this city by the owners of a girl from whom he had cast out a spirit of divination. The owners claimed, "These men, who are Jews, are disturbing our city, and they proclaim customs which are not lawful for us to accept or practise, being Romans." There is uncertainty about the precise law being invoked here,[57] but what is clear is that Paul and Silas are perceived to be promoting Jewish customs among the Roman people, and this is the basis for their arrest. Instead of providing political protection, the equation of Paul and Silas' mission work with the promotion of Jewish customs is the very thing that provides an opening for charges against them. As Jack T. Sanders points out, Paul and Silas are not delivered at Philippi because of their Jewishness but rather because of their Roman citizenship.[58]

Thus, although Luke depicts Paul as appealing to the continuities between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots when he is on trial for disturbing Jewish communities, Luke does not present such claims as an effective defence in legal situations where Christian activity among Gentiles is in view. This raises further doubts about the claim that Luke intends to imply that the Jewish roots of the Christian movement can be exploited as a means for political protection.

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[57] Cf. the discussions in Sherwin-White 1963: 79-81; van Unnik 1973: 375-84; Tajra 1989: 12-14; Rapske 1994: 117-19; Eckey 2000: 2.367-71; Omerzu 2002: 124-41; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2470-72.

[58] Sanders 1987: 271.

4.1.4 The Purpose of Trials in Acts and the Words of Jesus in Luke

In addition to the particulars of the legal scenes in Acts, Jesus' words in the Gospel of Luke also present problems for the view that the speeches in Acts are meant to inform Christian legal strategies. On two occasions in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus speaks about his disciples appearing before the authorities, and in both instances he discourages the planning of one's defence.

In Luke 12.11-12, Jesus states, "And when they bring you before synagogues and rulers and authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself (ἀπολογήσησθε) or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." Similarly, in Luke 21.12-19, he says:

> But before all these things, they will lay their hands upon you and persecute you, giving you over to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for the sake of my name. This will be your opportunity to bear witness (εἰς μαρτύριον). Therefore, place it in your hearts not to prepare to make a defence (ἀπολογηθῆναι) beforehand, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom that all those who oppose you will not be able to resist or speak against (ἀντειπεῖν). You will also be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will kill some of you, and you will be hated by all on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance, you will gain your lives.

Thus, Jesus suggests that a disciple's aim in court should not be the pursuit of vindication but rather bearing witness to the faith, and, in the light of the promise of divine assistance, he discourages the planning of one's defence.[59]

These instructions suggest that it is hermeneutically inappropriate to read the defence speeches in Acts as models to be imitated for their legal sagacity. Instead, Jesus' words intimate that the trial scenes in Acts should be understood as instances in which the disciples expected and experienced divine empowerment to bear witness before the authorities. Luke's construction of many of the trial scenes in Acts suggest

[59] Cf. the analyses of these passages in Marshall 1978: 768-69; Bock 1996: 1143; Green 1997: 484-85, 736-37; Garland 2011: 506, 830-31.

that this is precisely how he intended these scenes to be read. This can be illustrated through the thematic connections between Jesus' words and the first and final trial scenes that Luke reports.

When Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4, Luke states that Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit."[60] The content of his speech consists of testimony regarding Jesus as both the only way to salvation and the source of the healing that he and John had performed.[61] Then, following the speech, Luke notes the shock of the members of the council at the boldness of Peter and John, adding, "they had nothing to say against (ἀντειπεῖν) them."[62] The correspondence between this scene and Jesus' words is striking; everything happens according to script.

Similar observations can be made about the final trial scene in Acts—Paul's speech before Festus, Agrippa, and Berenice in Acts 26. Many have noted that this scene recalls Jesus' prediction that his disciples would stand trial before "kings and governors."[63] Beyond this, the central focus of the speech is clearly on bearing witness, and Paul states that God assists him in this task: "So, obtaining the help that comes from God, I stand to this day bearing witness (μαρτυρόμενος) to both small and great, saying nothing other than what both the prophets and Moses said would happen."[64]

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[60] Acts 4.8. The connections between this passage and Jesus' assurances of divine assistance in Luke 12.11-12; 21.14-15 have often been noted; cf. Fitzmyer 1985: 965; Zmijewski 1994: 215; Barrett 1994–1998: 1.226; Jervell 1998: 178; Marguerat 2007: 144; Gebauer 2014–2015: 1.85-86.

[61] Acts 4.8-12.

[62] Acts 4.13-14, echoing Jesus' promise regarding his disciples' opponents in Luke 21.15; cf. Johnson 1992: 78; Zmijewski 1994: 219; Barrett 1994–1998: 1.234-35; Jervell 1998: 180; Bock 2007: 196; Marguerat 2007: 147; Schnabel 2012: 244; Gebauer 2014–2015: 1.88. Bock, however, incorrectly states that these two passages include the only occurrences of ἀντιλέγω in the New Testament; cf. Luke 2.34; 20.27; John 19.12; Acts 28.19, 22; Rom 10.21; Titus 1.9; 2.9.

[63] E.g., Fitzmyer 1985: 1340; Tannehill 1986–1990: 2.329; Eckey 2004: 2.859; Bock 2007: 707; Pervo 2008: 593, n. 7; Keener 2012–2015: 4.3491.

[64] Acts 26.22; cf. Keener 2012–2015: 4.3532, who notes the connection to Jesus' words.

Thus, the final defence speech in Acts again echoes the themes of Jesus' words from the Gospel of Luke.

It appears, then, that Luke had Jesus' words in mind as he composed the trial scenes in Acts.[65] This makes any claim that the defence speeches in these scenes are meant to be models for imitation highly suspect; Jesus' prohibition of the planning of one's defence conflicts with such a reading.

4.1.5 Conclusion

Several angles suggest the inaccuracy of the claim that Luke intends to encourage Christians to seek legal advantage by highlighting the Jewish roots of their movement. First, despite claims to the contrary, the legal material in Luke's writings is not similar to that in Josephus. Luke does not include the same kind of legal decrees and decisions that Josephus does, and nothing in his work suggests that the cases that he does report constitute precedents for future trials. Second, the passages on which arguments in favour of this view are usually based, the trials of Paul, are focused on the nature of Paul's activity among the Jewish people. The status of the ethnically mixed communities that often resulted from his ministry is never addressed in these trials. Third, in the scenes in which Paul's activity among Gentiles causes legal trouble, the Jewish roots of the Christian movement are not set forth as a claim to legitimacy. In fact, in one of these scenes, the claim that Paul is promoting Jewish customs is the very thing that leads to his arrest. Finally, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus states that Christians should not attempt to plan their legal defences because they will be granted wisdom in

[65] Connections with other trial scenes are noted in Wiefel 1988: 350; Johnson 1991: 195, 322-23; Rapske 1994: 398-401; Eckey 2004: 1.573; 2.860-61.

the moment to bear witness before the authorities. These words suggest that reading the defence speeches in Acts as models is inappropriate.

Contrary to the view that Luke's aim is to inform Christian legal strategies, our research coheres with the proposal that the purpose of the legal material in Acts is to encourage Christians to endurance and faithfulness in witness regardless of the political consequences.[66] Advocates of this view differ over the degree to which Luke is positive or negative about the Roman Empire as a whole, but their proposals all cohere with the claim that Jesus' words in the Gospel of Luke have important hermeneutical implications for reading the trial scenes in Acts. These cues, the details of the trial scenes themselves, and the varying outcomes of the trials suggest that Luke's interest lies much more in encouraging Christian endurance in the midst of opposition than in commending the efficacy of particular lines of defence.

Thus, the claim that Luke highlights the Jewish roots of the Christian movement for political benefits is unlikely. Does he, then, emphasize this connection in order to enhance the Christians' cultural profile? As we have seen, both Dionysius and Josephus make arguments about cultural respect, and the issue of antiquity looms large in their works. This subject will thus be addressed head on in the following section.

4.2 The Antiquity of Israel and the Newness of the Christian Movement

One of the central arguments for those who claim that Luke highlights the Jewish roots of the Christian movement in order to gain cultural respect or political

[66] See the various expressions of this proposal in Maddox 1982: 96-97; Cassidy 1987: 160; House 1990: 329-30; Tannehill 1986–1990: 2.301-2; Alexander 1999: 39; Walton 2002: 33-35. Maddox, unfortunately, rarely gets credit for promoting this view. His work is typically classified with the alternative view that Luke's intention is to provide an argument on behalf of the Roman Empire, similar to Walaskay 1983 (cf. the discussions of Maddox in Cassidy 1987: 216-17, n. 24; Esler 1987: 208-10; Walton 2002: 5). Although Maddox does suggest that a part of Luke's intention is to dissuade Christians from courting martyrdom, the centre of his proposal lies much closer to the view discussed here.

tolerance is that Luke wants to associate Christianity with the antiquity of the Jewish people. They suggest that, like Josephus, Luke is eager to demonstrate that Christians deserve the kind of respect and tolerance afforded to peoples with an ancient heritage. As Keener writes:

> The earliest Diaspora followers of Jesus endured most of the challenges faced by Judaism, but in addition, they could be scorned for their lack of antiquity if they were regarded as a new sect that had broken from Judaism. Thus Luke, like Josephus regarding Judaism, must demonstrate the antiquity of his movement's message.[67]

This view, however, is not without its detractors. In fact, years before this proposal gained prominence, Arnaldo Momigliano contrasted Luke's work with that of Josephus by claiming that Luke did not write with Roman concerns in view. Momigliano concludes, "The Christian accounts offended all the classical notions about Antiquity, memory, evidence."[68] More recently, Peter Pilhofer, in the most extensive examination of the use of arguments based on antiquity in ancient literature, claims that no New Testament authors engage in this type of apologetic.[69] In fact, Pilhofer claims that the earliest Christian to make such an argument was Justin Martyr; the earlier apologists embraced Christianity's newness.[70] Additionally, Susan Wendel has objected to the claim that Luke is interested in demonstrating antiquity by comparing the treatment of Scripture in the works of Luke and Justin Martyr. She concludes that Luke and Justin both claim to have a superior understanding of Scripture in relation to the

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[67] Keener 2012–2015: 1.455; cf. Talbert 1984: 100; Brawley 1984: 139; Aune 1987: 137; Esler 1987: 19-20, 67-68; Pervo 1987: 137; Sanders 1987: 236; Downing 1988: 152-53; Edwards 1991: 13-15; Sterling 1992: 368-69; Pervo 1999: 137; Tomson 1999: 586-87; Bonz 2000: 87; Wilson 2001: 78; Mason 2003b: 267; Tyson 2006: 59; Pervo 2006: 327-28; Backhaus 2007: 403-10; Nasrallah 2008: 566; Wolter 2012: 68-69.

[68] Momigliano 1969: 38-39.

[69] Pilhofer 1990: 4-5.

[70] Pilhofer 1990: 221-84.

Jewish people, but only Justin recapitulates the Jewish apologists' arguments about the antiquity and superiority of the Jewish tradition.[71]

In this section, we will examine this discussion and give direct attention to Luke's treatment of the issue of antiquity. As we shall see, there are numerous reasons to doubt that Luke has any interest in associating the Christian movement with the antiquity of Judaism.

4.2.1 The Writings of Luke and the Arguments for Antiquity in Dionysius and Josephus

Wendel's argument against Luke having a strong interest in the theme of antiquity highlights the disparity between how Luke presents Scripture and how Jewish apologists, such as Josephus, present Scripture. The Jewish apologists, she notes, combine claims about the antiquity and superiority of their Scriptures with the denigration of non-Jewish traditions, but no such contrast appears in Luke's work.[72] As we have seen, however, Josephus imitates Dionysius' treatment of the Romans by arguing not merely for the antiquity of the Jewish Scriptures but also for the antiquity of the Jewish people. Thus, despite Wendel's able critique on Luke's treatment of Scripture, there are more angles to consider with regard to Luke's engagement with the theme of antiquity; we need to look at how his work compares to the arguments about the antiquity of a people in Dionysius and Josephus.

Dionysius argues for the antiquity of the Roman people by demonstrating that they were descended from five groups of Greek immigrants to Italy whose claim to an ancient heritage was unquestioned. He essentially devotes an entire book to this topic, and, at the conclusion of this discussion, he makes the claim to antiquity explicit: "One

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[71] Wendel 2011: 125-51.

[72] Wendel 2011: 144-45.

can find no nation more ancient or more Greek than these."[73] Luke records the genealogy of Jesus and mentions the Jewish ethnicity of several characters, but he never explicitly claims to have demonstrated the Christians' antiquity, nor does he even mention the antiquity of the Jewish people.

This latter point increases in importance when one compares Luke's work to that of Josephus. As we have seen, Josephus makes the Jewish people's claim to antiquity explicit in the preface to *AJ*: he states that the history of the Jewish people encompasses 5,000 years, and he claims that Moses' life took place before the era in which the Greeks date the origin of their gods.[74] In the body of his work, Josephus then attempts to demonstrate this antiquity by pointing to interactions between the central characters of his narrative and non-Jewish figures whose antiquity was widely recognized. He then repeats this material in concentrated form in the first book of *Contra Apionem*, which he claims to have produced because of widespread objections to the assertion of Jewish antiquity in *AJ*.[75] Although Luke records the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam and includes two speeches that recount Jewish history,[76] he shows no interest in the kind of relative chronology that interests Josephus. Despite occasional appeals to Jesus' genealogy as proof of Luke's interest in demonstrating antiquity,[77] Luke's record of Jesus' family tree consists of a bare list of names that gives no indication of the length of time that it entails. The two speeches in Acts also give few

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[73] *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.2.

[74] *AJ* 1.13, 16.

[75] *Ap.* 1.1-3.

[76] The genealogy in Luke 3.22-38 and the speeches in Acts 7.2-52; 13.16-41.

[77] E.g., Sterling 1992: 383-84; Edwards 1996: 45; Green 1997: 250; Marguerat 2002: 74; Eckey 2004: 1.265-66; cf. Balch 1990b: 11-12.

chronological details,[78] and they do not make any references to known historical figures outside of the people of Israel by whom one could date the events that are being described.[79] Luke simply assumes that his readers accept the record of history in the Jewish Scriptures, and he makes no effort to equip readers for the task of persuading those who have doubts.[80] Thus, one does not find in Luke's writings the same kinds of arguments for antiquity that one finds in the works of Dionysius and Josephus.

4.2.2 The Writings of Luke and the Newness of the Christian Movement

Despite the fact that Luke does not make the same kinds of explicit arguments for antiquity that one finds in the works of Dionysius or Josephus, modern scholars have proposed that a great deal of material in his two volumes relates to this theme. In addition to Jesus' genealogy and passages that mention the Jewish heritage of other significant characters, some have argued that antiquity is a significant factor behind Luke's interest in Abraham and "the fathers,"[81] his emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecy,[82] references to Jewish Christian observance of the law,[83] and the passages that highlight similarities between the views of Christians and Pharisees.[84] Nevertheless, the relation between this material and the theme of antiquity is more

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[78] The only indication of a significant block of time within this material comes in Acts 13.20 when Paul declares that the time between God's initial choice of the patriarchs and the completion of the conquest of Canaan took about 450 years.

[79] On Luke's lack of interest in the dates and chronology of Israel's history, cf. Holladay 1999: 176-77.

[80] Cf. the similar comments in Marguerat 2002: 30, n. 18; Backhaus 2007: 414-15.

[81] E.g., Dahl 1966: 152; Dahl 1976: 84; Esler 1987: 216.

[82] E.g., Talbert 1984: 100; Brawley 1984: 139; Brawley 1987: 62; Esler 1987: 67-68; Aune 1987: 140; Squires 1993: 154, 191-93; Peterson 1993: 102-3; Balch 2003: 140; Keener 2012–2015: 1.164, 487.

[83] E.g., Marguerat 1999: 76-77; Backhaus 2007: 422-23; Marguerat 2009: 95-100; Butticaz 2011: 340-42.

[84] E.g., Esler 1987: 216-17; Sanders 1987: 243.

asserted than argued. There is no particular feature of the relevant texts to which proponents of this view point as the proof that this material is meant to address the issue of antiquity; they simply suggest that this is an implicit purpose. The real case for Luke's interest in this theme rests on a much smaller selection of data: Luke's redaction of Mark 1.27 in Luke 4.36, the final line that Luke adds to the Parable of the New Wine in Luke 5.39, and a few aspects of the account of Paul's visit to Athens in Acts 17.[85] This material is extremely important for the question of Luke's view regarding the Christian movement and antiquity because the latter two passages are the only places in Luke's work in which the issue of the Christian movement's newness is explicitly addressed. Therefore, we will examine each of these passages with care.

First, in Mark 1.27, observers of Jesus' ministry declare, "What is this? A new teaching (διδαχὴ καινή) with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." The version of this incident in Luke 4.36, however, omits any reference to a "new teaching." Luke writes, "What is this word (λόγος)? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out." This omission, some claim, reflects Luke's concern to combat the impression that the Christian movement is new.[86]

At first glance, this argument appears to have some force, but it is not ultimately compelling. The replacement of the phrase "new teaching" does stand out when one compares Luke's version to that of Mark. Nevertheless, this alteration does not curtail the impression that what the audience is witnessing is surprising and unfamiliar, and the

[85] Cf. Brawley 1984: 139; Brawley 1987: 62; Esler 1987: 67-68, 216; Malherbe 1989: 151-52; Balch 1990a: 72, 79; Merkel 1994: 385-89; Green 1997: 250; Tyson 2006: 118; Witulski 2006: 346-47; Backhaus 2007: 403; Rowe 2009: 33-39; Rowe 2011: 40-42; Schnabel 2012: 730; Rothschild 2014: 138-39; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2625.

[86] Esler 1987: 67-68, 216; Merkel 1994: 386; cf. Richardson 1969: 165.

change is easily explainable on other grounds. As I. Howard Marshall suggests, the inclusion of the term "word" in place of the phrase "new teaching" likely reflects Luke's sensitivity to the fact that the audience was responding to the expulsion of a demon and not a pedagogical experience.[87]

Additionally, the phrase that Luke purportedly here avoids occurs later in his work. In Acts 17.19, the Athenians say to Paul, "May we know what this new teaching (καινὴ αὕτη . . . διδαχή) is that is being proclaimed by you?" As we shall soon see, Paul's response to the Athenians confirms rather than challenges the notion that the Christian message is a "new teaching." He concludes the speech by declaring that there is now a universal call to repentance as a consequence of Jesus' resurrection. This passage's affirmation of the characterization of the Christian message as a "new teaching," however, suggests that the omission of the phrase "new teaching" in Luke 4.36 does not carry the weight that has sometimes been assigned to it.

Luke's lack of embarrassment about the newness of the Christian movement is also confirmed through a careful examination of the Parable of the New Wine. In Luke's version of this parable, the final line states, "No one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'The old is good.'"[88] This line is unique to Luke, and several interpreters suggest that it is meant to serve as a counter-balance to the representation of Jesus' movement with two objects described as "new" in the preceding context. Luke's point, they claim, is to downplay the newness of Jesus' movement by having him affirm the superior value of the old, implicitly evoking the antiquity of the Jewish tradition.[89] As we shall see, however, this reading reverses the point of the saying.

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[87] Marshall 1978: 193; cf. Radl 2003: 278-79; Eckey 2004: 1.235.

[88] Luke 5.39.

[89] Cf. Esler 1987: 216; Merkel 1994: 385-86; Green 1997: 250; Eckey 2004: 1.265-66; Tyson 2006: 118; Backhaus 2007: 403; Bovon 2002–2012: 1.193-94; for similar readings of the saying without any

According to Luke, the setting for this pericope is that some guests at a dinner challenged Jesus regarding the fact that his disciples do not fast like the disciples of the Pharisees or those of John the Baptist.[90] In response, Jesus first compares his presence to that of a bridegroom at a wedding feast, and he then tells two parables. In both of the parables, the activities of Jesus and his disciples are represented by something described as "new."

The first parable is the Parable of the New Garment: "No one tears a piece from a new garment (ἱμάτιου καινοῦ) and puts it on an old garment (ἱμάτιον παλαιόν), but if one does, one will tear the new garment and the piece from the new will not match the old."[91] As Marshall highlights, Luke's version of this parable is unique in speaking of a "new garment" that is ruined. The versions of this parable in Mark and Matthew merely speak of an unshrunk patch that causes a worse tear in an "old garment."[92] Luke's redaction points to a stronger emphasis on the representation of Jesus' movement by that which is new.[93]

The second parable that Jesus tells is the Parable of the New Wine: "And no one puts new wine (οἶνον νέον) into old wineskins (ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς), but if one does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled and the skins destroyed. But new

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emphasis on the antiquity of the Jewish tradition, see Flusser 1979: 26-31; Good 1983: 23-25; Cook 1988: 116-17.

[90] There is debate about whether or not those who raise this objection are the Pharisees with whom Jesus was speaking in the previous verses. Luke's introduction of the discourse without identifying new speakers appears to imply this, but the absence of first person pronouns when referring to the practices of the Pharisees' disciples has given some interpreters pause; cf. the discussions in Good 1983: 19-23; Green 1997: 248; Bock 2007: 514.

[91] Luke 5.36.

[92] Marshall 1978: 226-27; cf. Mark 2.21; Matt 9.16.

[93] Cf. Bock 1994: 519-20; *contra* Green 1997: 249-50, who ignores Luke's redaction and insists, "it would be difficult to imagine Luke insisting that what Jesus is doing in his ministry is 'new.'"

wine must be put into new wineskins (ἀσκοὺς καινούς)."[94] Again, Jesus represents his movement with something described as "new" and portrays it as incompatible with that which is "old." His point is that the new movement centred on him must develop in an appropriate manner and not be confined by the old ways of Jewish tradition.[95]

The consistent identification of Jesus' movement with what is "new" in these parables implies that one should interpret "new wine" in the final saying similarly unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. This interpretation, however, maps much more easily onto Luke's narrative than the view that Jesus here affirms the value of the "old." Continuing to identify Jesus' movement with the new wine suggests that Jesus concludes his response to the critics of his disciples' behaviour by criticizing their unwavering devotion to Jewish tradition; they are depicted as those who miss the "new wine" of God's activity through Jesus because of their dedication to that which is old.[96] On the other hand, identifying Jesus' movement with the old wine works well with the theory that Luke values antiquity, but it makes little sense within this narrative context. It would, in fact, support the contention of the critics that the shirking of Jewish tradition by Jesus' disciples is blameworthy.[97] Thus, contrary to those who see support in this passage for the view that Luke is interested in associating the Christian

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[94] Luke 5.37-38.

[95] Cf. Marshall 1978: 227-28; Nolland 1989: 249; Stein 1992: 184-87; Bock 1994: 509, 520-21; Schnabel 2012: 254; *contra* Flusser 1979: 26-31; Good 1983: 26-34; who both argue that the "new" in these parables represents the Pharisaic practices that Jesus' disciples eschewed. The problem, they claim, is that the Pharisaic practices were innovative, while Jesus supports precise Mosaic praxis. This proposal misses how Luke's redaction places the emphasis in both parables on the damage that is done to the new when it is combined with the old.

[96] Cf. Marshall 1978: 228; Fitzmyer 1981: 601-2; Nolland 1989: 249-50; Johnson 1991: 100; Stein 1982: 186; Bock 1994: 521-22; Radl 2003: 334-35; Meynet 2005: 277-78; Schnabel 2012: 255.

[97] Cf. the similar criticism of this view in Drewermann 2009: 1.313-14.

movement with antiquity, Jesus instead consistently identifies his movement with that which is new, and the final line that Luke adds criticizes undue attachment to the old.

Finally, we turn to Paul's visit to Athens recounted in Acts 17.16-34. There are two main features of this passage that have been used to argue for the view that Luke is concerned about the issue of antiquity.

First, some point to Acts 17.21: "Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new (τι καινότερον)." This statement, they claim, reflects the value that Luke places on antiquity by expressing scorn for the Athenians' affection for all things new.[98] The suggestion that this statement has a critical tone is probably correct,[99] but the claim that this demonstrates Luke's respect for antiquity goes too far. Criticism for excessive interest in *every* new trend is not the same thing as asserting that antiquity is the measure of validity.

The second feature is the way in which Paul's speech relates to the Athenians' original question: "May we know what this new teaching (καινὴ αὕτη . . . διδαχή) is that is being proclaimed by you?"[100] Some have argued that Paul's speech in response to this query, in fact, denies that his teaching is anything new. Those taking this view differ, however, over what aspect of Paul's speech establishes the antiquity of his message. Robert L. Brawley suggests that this point is established by virtue of the fact that he traces God's activity back to creation,[101] Clare K. Rothschild argues that Luke

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[98] Brawley 1984: 139; Brawley 1987: 62; Esler 1987: 216; cf. Rowe 2009: 32-33.

[99] Cf. Bruce 1988: 332; Bock 2007: 563; Pervo 2008: 429; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2612-16; each of whom points to criticisms of Athenian interest in novelties in other ancient writings; *contra* Schnabel 2012: 728-29, who interprets it as a neutral explanatory observation.

[100] Acts 17.19.

[101] Brawley 1984: 139; Brawley 1987: 62.

appeals to antiquity by depicting Paul as a new Epimenides,[102] others propose that the key claim is Paul's purported identification of God with the "unknown god" who is worshipped at Athens,[103] and still others state that the philosophical content of Paul's speech implies antiquity by virtue of the continuity between his message and the philosophical tradition.[104] These proposals, however, are all problematic.

First, in response to Brawley, there is a large difference between teaching about creation and demonstrating that the content of one's teaching has been around for a long time. The fact that Paul's teaching concerns the full sweep of human history implies nothing about its novelty or antiquity. Paul's point in referring to God's creation of the world is to support his claim that God does not live in human-made temples or have need of service from humankind.[105]

Second, Rothschild's claim that the depiction of Paul as a new Epimenides associates his message with antiquity is problematic at several levels. Rothschild claims that this identification legitimates Paul's message of resurrection as old because of the tale of Epimenides' legendary 57-year nap. She writes, "resurrection is precisely the proof they would have anticipated, since it was the hallmark trait of the prophet (i.e., Epimenides) issuing the warning."[106] Nevertheless, the best evidence that she can produce for the interpretation of Epimenides' awakening as a resurrection are jokes

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[102] Rothschild 2014: 76-80, 138-39.

[103] Witulski 2006: 346-47; Rowe 2009: 34, 39; Rowe 2011: 40; Schnabel 2012: 730; Marguerat 2015: 157.

[104] Malherbe 1989: 151-52; Balch 1990a: 72, 79; Rowe 2009: 33-39; Rowe 2011: 41-42; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2625.

[105] Cf. Witherington 1998: 525.

[106] Rothschild 2014: 76.

about the impossibility of the dead reawakening,[107] and, even if one assumes the accuracy of this interpretation, it is unclear how Epimenides' resurrection would imply the antiquity of Paul's claim that a man has recently been raised from the dead.[108]

Rothschild also suggests that the identification of Paul as Epimenides associates the former with antiquity because Epimenides was from Crete. She explains:

> Rome yielded to Greece on the basis of greater antiquity in much the same way that Greece had yielded to Crete during its rise to power, and Crete, to the cultures of the East. The expected path of a cult beginning in Judea but ending in Rome was, thus, through Crete. Although the Lukan Paul does not literally stop over on Crete before visiting Athens, his appearance as Epimenides in Athens has that function. Ultimately, this portrayal is a proof from antiquity. In order to avoid association with more recent hostile cult transfers such as the Bacchanalian affair, Luke emphasizes distinguished transfers of the past.[109]

Rothschild presents no evidence, however, for the claim that Luke has these specific "transfers of the past" in mind, and her assumption that Luke is working with the wide-ranging paradigms implicit in this extremely complicated train of thought remains unsubstantiated. Thus, even if one accepts Rothschild's broader argument for the identification of Paul as a new Epimenides in Acts 17, her claim that this point addresses the issue of the antiquity of the Christian message fails to persuade.

Third, there are good reasons to question the common view that Paul identifies the God that he proclaims with the "unknown god" that is worshipped at Athens. To begin with, it is worth asking if such an obvious exercise in rhetorical sleight of hand would have fooled the Athenian philosophers. Did Luke really expect his readers to

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[107] Rothschild 2014: 76-80; cf. the criticism of Rothschild's interpretation of Epimenides' awakening as a resurrection in Jipp 2015: 525.

[108] Rothschild's proposal that resurrection is a link to antiquity leads her to the conclusion that the Athenians' lukewarm response to Paul results from his lack of novelty (Rothschild 2014: 56-57). Merkel 1994: 386 takes a similar position, suggesting that the combination of the notice of Athenian interest in novelty in Acts 17.21 with the broad rejection of Paul's message in Acts 17.32 implies the antiquity of Christian teaching. It is clear in the text, however, that the Athenians' disinterest springs from incredulity regarding the possibility of resurrection.

[109] Rothschild 2014: 138-39.

believe that no one in Paul's audience would have realized that any charlatan could trot into town, proclaim a foreign deity, and then suggest that their deity was the unknown god whom they worshipped at this altar? This seems unlikely.[110]

Furthermore, the grammar of the passage also casts doubt on this interpretation. Paul states:

> Men, Athenians, I see that you are in every way very religious (δεισιδαιμονεστέρους). For while I was passing through and observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar on which it had been written, "To an unknown god" (Ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ). What, therefore, you worship without knowing (ὃ οὖν εὐσεβεῖτε ἀγνοοῦντες), this I proclaim to you.[111]

The first point to note is that the word θεός is masculine, but Paul uses a neuter relative pronoun at the start of the second sentence. In the rest of Luke's writings, there are no examples of a neuter relative pronoun used with a masculine antecedent. This suggests that, when Paul states, "What, therefore, you worship without knowing," he is not referring to the specific god worshipped at the altar in Athens. If that had been his intention, he would have used a masculine relative pronoun.

The significance of this point has been better appreciated in German scholarship than in English-language scholarship. English-language scholars who note the switch in genders typically suggest that this move is meant to draw a subtle distinction between Paul's view of God as personal and the Athenians' view of divinities as impersonal.[112] A few German scholars, however, see a more fundamental distinction at work. Gerhard Schneider writes, "Damit ist angezeigt, daß es sich nicht nur um Unkenntnis der Person oder des Namens des Einen Gottes handelte, sondern um eine (freilich ahungsvolle)

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[110] *Contra* Witulski 2006: 346-47, who suggests that Luke intends the identification of God with the unknown Athenian god to be a "*Musterapologie*" that readers could employ in the face of numerous difficulties.

[111] Acts 17.22-23.

[112] E.g., Bruce 1988: 336; Polhill 1992: 372; Barrett 1994–1998: 2.838; Witherington 1998: 524.

Unkenntnis bezüglich des „Göttlichen“ (vgl. V29 τὸ θεῖον) im allgemein.”[113] Thus, Schneider sees the referent of the relative pronoun not as the particular god worshipped at this altar but rather as the Athenian conception of divinity in general. This proposal is supported by the fact that neuter relative pronouns without a specific antecedent that matches in gender and number often refer back to the concepts in the preceding context in a more general way.[114] In this case, the first lines of Paul's speech briefly mention the diverse religious practices of the Athenian people. He observes that they are "very religious" (δεισιδαιμονεστέροι) and have objects of worship throughout the city.[115] Consequently, the declaration, "What, therefore you worship without knowing, this I proclaim to you," probably refers not to the Athenians' practice of worshipping one specific god but rather to the entirety of their religious system.

The appearance of the cognate noun for the verb ἀγνοέω later in the speech confirms this proposal. In Acts 17.29-30, Paul describes the era of pagan worship with the phrase "times of ignorance" (χρόνοι τῆς ἀγνοίας). According to Paul, the problem with the Athenians is that the whole of their religious practice is rooted in an "ignorant" tradition. As Ned B. Stonehouse writes, "Paul makes the most of the public profession of lack of knowledge concerning the objects of worship by virtually reading it back to them as a characterization of their religion."[116]

This, in fact, is the point of Paul's appeal to the specific altar that he mentions. Paul does not appeal to this altar in order to suggest that the God whom he proclaims is identical to a god whom the Athenians already worship, but rather to highlight the

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[113] Schneider 1980–1982: 2.238; cf. Roloff 1981: 260.

[114] Cf. Acts 11.30; 26.10.

[115] Acts 17.22-23.

[116] Stonehouse 1957: 19; cf. Roloff 1981: 260, who similarly notes the significance of Acts 17.29-30 for the interpretation of Acts 17.23.

ignorance about the divine realm that this altar implies. Altars to unknown deities were constructed in order to ensure that any gods who had been omitted by a city would not be offended or to placate gods during times of crisis when sacrifices to the ordinary gods proved ineffective.[117] The very existence of this altar is thus a self-admission of ignorance at one level, and this is precisely the point that Paul draws from it: the Athenians "worship without knowing (ἀγνοοῦντες)." As Jürgen Roloff states:

> Er wertet die Inschrift zunächst als ein Zeichen für das Ungenügen und Versagen des Polytheismus. Indem die Athener diesen Altar aufstellten, haben sie ihre Unfähigkeit bekundet, die Wirklichkeit des Göttlichen mit ihrem Bilderkult angemessen zu erfassen.[118]

Paul's reference to this altar, therefore, is not an attempt to refute the claim that he brings a "new teaching" by identifying the object of his proclamation with a deity already worshipped at Athens. Instead, Paul interprets the altar as a public admission of Athenian ignorance about the divine.

Fourth, the suggestion that Paul's speech establishes the antiquity of his message through continuity with the philosophical tradition over-interprets the significance of the philosophical echoes that it contains. As many have noted, the speech obviously uses concepts and terms drawn from pagan philosophy.[119] Nevertheless, the content does not correspond to any particular pagan philosophy but rather to Jewish theology.[120] The speech concludes by mentioning the philosophically

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[117] Cf. the discussions of these altars in van der Horst 1988: 19-42; Witherington 1998: 521-23; Taylor 2007: 49-59; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2630-2; and esp. van der Horst 1989: 1426-56.

[118] Roloff 1981: 260.

[119] Cf. Barrett 1974: 69-77; Schnabel 2005: 172-90; Lang 2011: 151-73; Rowe 2011: 41-43.

[120] Cf. Litwak 2004: 199-216; Winter 2005: 48-57; *contra* Malherbe 1989: 152; Balch 1990a: 72, the latter of whom claims that Paul's speech is intended to demonstrate his adherence to Posidonian Stoicism.

derided notion of resurrection, and the result is that most of the audience mocks Paul;[121] they do not leave saying, "This teaching is a part of our philosophical tradition."

The biggest problem with all four of these proposals, however, is that Paul's speech appears to affirm the newness of his message when he addresses the specific matters that had attracted the Athenians' attention. According to Luke, the Athenians' request to hear about Paul's "new teaching" resulted from curiosity about particular aspects of his message. Their interest arose, Luke claims, "because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection."[122]

Paul finally brings up these topics at the very end of his speech. He states:

> Therefore, God, having overlooked the times of ignorance, now commands all people everywhere to repent because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he appointed, having given proof to all by raising him from the dead.[123]

Paul does not mention Jesus by name, but his referent is obvious to readers of Acts, and the earliest readers may have assumed that the absence of the name itself is merely a by-product of the fact that the account in Acts is probably a brief summary of a much longer speech. The important point for our purposes is that, when Paul finally does address the topics in which the Athenians expressed interest, he states that the resurrection of Jesus has brought an end to the "times of ignorance" and inaugurated a new era in which there is a world-wide call to repentance in light of the coming judgment. Thus, Paul implicitly makes the point that the message that he proclaims is of recent vintage. The command to repentance that God "now" issues is the result of a

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[121] Acts 17.32.

[122] Acts 17.18. Some have suggested that the Athenians understood Paul to be proclaiming two new divinities, mistaking the word ἀναστάσις for a name, but this is immaterial for our purposes; on this possibility, see the discussion in Schnabel 2012: 726; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2598-99.

[123] Acts 17.29-31.

change in eras effected through contemporary events. Contrary to the claim that Paul opposes the construal of his message as a "new teaching," he describes the Christian call to repentance as a *novum* inspired by Jesus' resurrection.[124]

The importance of this scene for the view that Luke's intention is to present the Christian movement as ancient by associating it with Judaism can hardly be overestimated. Luke could not have crafted a better scene within which to demonstrate the effectiveness of this tactic; the question of the newness of Christian teaching is explicitly raised by a philosophically inclined audience in a central hub of the Greek cultural world.[125] Luke, however, does not have Paul answer this question by claiming that the Christian movement is ancient because it is a variant of the Jewish religion. Although the content of the speech is essentially Jewish theology, Paul cloaks this theology in philosophical terminology and he makes no explicit attempt to identify his message as Jewish. Instead, Paul's speech describes the "new teaching" that he brings: he states that there is now a call to universal repentance that has resulted from the change in epochs brought about through the resurrection of Jesus. Luke's account of Paul's visit to Athens thus not only fails to support the proposal that Luke's intention is to establish the antiquity of the Christian movement through association with Judaism, it also conflicts with the claim that Luke was uncomfortable with the identification of the Christian movement as new.

When examined carefully, then, most of the evidence typically marshalled in order to argue for Luke's interest in presenting the Christian movement as possessing

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[124] Cf. the expositions of Calvin 1966 [1554]: 123-25; Lestang 2006: 406; Peterson 2009: 491; Butticaz 2011: 381. Calvin was particularly attuned to this dynamic within the text due to his own theological opponents' employment of the argument that antiquity validates.

[125] One is reminded of the scenes in which Dionysius has his characters raise the issues that he wants to address; e.g., *Ant. Rom.* 3.10-11; 19.18.8; 20.6.

an ancient heritage points in the opposite direction. In the first scene in which the issue of newness is explicitly mentioned, Jesus unashamedly portrays his movement as a new reality while criticizing blind devotion to tradition. In the second, Paul states that the Christian message is the product of recent events in which God's orientation to the Gentile world has shifted from overlooking folly to demanding repentance.

4.2.3 Conclusion

Unlike Dionysius and Josephus, Luke appears to have no concern about the issue of antiquity. Nothing in Luke's writings comes close to the explicit claims about and evidences for antiquity that Dionysius and Josephus present. To the contrary, when the issue of the newness of the Christian movement or Christian teaching arises, Luke does not hesitate to disparage ancient traditions and affirm the newness of God's action through Jesus. As we have seen, Luke's version of the Parable of the New Wine concludes by criticizing the kind of over-zealous devotion to Jewish tradition that can keep one from recognizing the new thing that God is doing, and Paul's speech at the Areopagus suggests that the Greek philosophical tradition is a vestige of the "times of ignorance" that have now come to an end with God's universal call to repentance. Contrary to the claim that Luke's writings appeal to those who value antiquity, they obliquely critique this cultural assumption, and they give no evidence of embarrassment about the Christian movement's newness.

This raises doubts about the claim that Luke highlights the Jewish roots of the Christian movement for the purpose of cultural respect. As we have seen, however, for Dionysius and Josephus, arguments for antiquity itself are only one aspect of a broader argument for cultural respect. The central crux of this argument is not antiquity per se, but rather the demonstration of the virtuous character of a people over the course of a

long period of time. Thus, in the following section, we will examine the depiction of the history of the Jewish people in Luke's writings.

4.3 The History of the Jewish People

The image of the Jewish people in Luke's writings has garnered a great deal of scholarly attention in the post-holocaust era.[126] Most of these studies, however, have emphasized Luke's portrayal of the Jewish characters within his narrative rather than his depiction of the Jewish people's history. This emphasis matches Luke's own primary focus, but our interest lies in Luke's characterization of the past.

As we have seen, both Dionysius and Josephus argue for cultural respect by claiming that the history of the people whom they are describing demonstrates their virtuous character. This, in fact, is a central burden within their writings, and they both claim that virtue results from having a superior constitution. Despite the importance of these themes for Dionysius and Josephus, advocates of the view that Luke associates the Christian movement with Judaism for the purpose of cultural respect have rarely devoted attention to the question of whether or not Luke's writings contain similar motifs. David L. Balch, however, has suggested that Luke's writings contain themes that parallel Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.* He writes:

> Both Dionysius's and Luke's histories concern the character of the founders of nations/peoples, the modes of life they initiate, as well as the lives and history of their successors and of the people who live according to the founders' constitutions. The founder is an ideal/mythical figure whose original constitution generates virtue and the people's growth.[127]

In this section, we will first examine Balch's proposal about Luke's constitutional interest and then consider Luke's perspective on Jewish history more broadly. As we

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[126] Cf. the book-length survey of this literature in Tyson 1999.

[127] Balch 2003: 153.

shall see, Luke's view of Jewish history is largely negative, and this has significant consequences for the claim that he highlights Christianity's Jewish roots with a view towards cultural respect.

4.3.1 The Jewish Law in the Writings of Luke

Balch's comparison between Luke and Dionysius suggests that Luke makes the same move as Josephus: interpreting the Jewish law as a "constitution." As noted in the previous chapter, one of the primary ways in which Josephus suggests the similarity of the Jewish law and the constitutions of other peoples is through his diction; he frequently refers to the Jewish law with the term πολιτεία.[128] Luke, however, never describes the Jewish law with constitutional vocabulary.[129] In fact, in Stephen's speech re-narrating the history of Israel, Stephen depicts Moses' reception of the law on Mount Sinai with distinctive terminology that places the law in a different realm. He states, "[Moses] received living oracles (λόγια ζῶντα) to give to us."[130] Contrary to Josephus' strategy of presenting the law as a constitution, Stephen's historical survey suggests that the law should be viewed primarily as prophecy. This move, of course, fits with Stephen's invocation of the theme of a future "prophet like Moses" two verses earlier.[131] Otherwise, Luke and the characters within his narrative typically refer to the law with the basic term νόμος, occasionally adding qualifiers such as "of Moses," "of

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[128] Cf. the survey of Josephus' varied uses of the term πολιτεία in relation to the Jewish law on pp. 106-7 above.

[129] His only use of the word πολιτεία comes in Acts 22.28 and refers to the Roman citizenship of Lysias the tribune.

[130] Acts 7.38.

[131] Acts 7.36; cf. the similar comment in Wendel 2011: 144.

the Lord," "ancestral," or "of the Jews,"[132] and, in a few instances, the term "customs" (ἔθη) appears.[133] Nothing in Luke's diction suggests that he is pressing for the interpretation of the Jewish law as a constitution or seeking to enter the Jewish law in the ancient competition over which nation had the best constitution.

Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, Luke's narrative does not suggest that the Jewish law is a virtue-producing instrument. As we have seen, Dionysius suggests in the preface to *Ant. Rom.* that his work will demonstrate the virtue of the Roman people, and he links this virtue to their constitution in the body of his work. He then seeks to establish the superiority of Roman virtue by frequently highlighting the cardinal virtues in the lives of his characters, contrasting Roman practices with those of other nations, and including scenes in which significant Greek characters proclaim the superior virtue of the Romans. In *AJ*, Josephus makes similar moves in order to depict the Jewish law as a virtue-producing constitution: he emphasizes in the preface that the purpose of Moses' constitution is to instruct the people in the proper exercise of virtue, he embellishes Balaam's prophecies with extravagant claims about Israel's future virtue and the consequent εὐδαιμονία, he exaggerates Jewish devotion to the law, claiming that no Hebrew would dare to offend Moses' commands, and he edits his narrative in order to highlight the cardinal virtues within the life of nearly every important biblical character. We will explore Luke's editing of Israel's history more thoroughly in the following section, but for the moment we only need to note that the distance between his representation of the Jewish law and the constitutional theme in the works of Dionysius and Josephus is abundantly evident.

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[132] Luke 2.22-24, 27, 39; 10.26; 16.16-17; 24.44; Acts 6.13; 7.53; 13.15, 38; 15.5; 18.13, 15; 21.20, 24, 28; 22.3, 12; 23.3, 29; 24.14; 25.8; 28.23.

[133] Acts 6.14; 21.21; 26.3; 28.17; cf. Luke 1.9; 2.42; Acts 15.1; 16.21.

Luke never suggests that the purpose of the law is to promote virtue or to lead the people to a life of εὐδαιμονία; his work remains more firmly within the conceptual world of the Jewish Scriptures in which the law constitutes the terms for the covenant between God and Israel.[134] In contrast to Josephus' emphasis on the law and virtue, Luke focuses on the question of whether or not obedience to the law is necessary for salvation. On the basis of his characters' comments about the law, however, it is easy to demonstrate that Luke did not consider it to be an effective instrument for promoting virtue.

Consider Paul's comments about the law near the conclusion of his sermon in Pisidian Antioch. After arguing that Jesus' death and resurrection fulfil several passages from the Jewish Scriptures, Paul states, "Therefore, let it be known to you, brothers, that through this one forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and in him everyone who believes is justified of all the things from which you were not able to be justified in the law of Moses."[135] As many have noted, these words are Luke's closest imitation of Paul's theology of justification.[136] Paul is evaluating the law in terms of whether or not it provides the forgiveness that one needs in order to have right standing in the divine courtroom, and his words imply that it does not: there are things from which one cannot be justified in the law of Moses. The implicit premise is that the people actually disobey the law to such a degree that they stand in need of forgiveness beyond what is provided through the law's own sacrificial system.[137] The assumption

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[134] Cf. the similar comments in Wendel 2011: 149-50.

[135] Acts 13.38-39.

[136] Cf. Bruce 1988: 262-63; Pervo 2008: 339-40; and esp. Keener 2012–2015: 2.2074-78.

[137] Cf. Roloff 1988: 208; Witherington 1998: 413-14. These accounts are superior to that of Bock 2007: 458-60, who misses the implication that the law provides forgiveness for some but not all sins. Bock is probably overreacting to the proposal of Klinghardt 1988: 108, who argues that, in this passage, Paul is suggesting that the Jewish people need the forgiveness that Christ provides to supplement the forgiveness that they already have through the law.

of this degree of disobedience implies that the law is not an effective instrument for constraining the people's behaviour or producing virtuous character.

Later in Acts, Peter makes the same point, only more directly. His comment occurs during the central scene addressing the issue of the law in Acts: the Jerusalem Council. This event occurred, Luke writes, because some people came from Judea to Antioch and said to the Gentile believers, "You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised according to the custom of Moses."[138] In Jerusalem, a group from the party of the Pharisees expanded this claim: "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses."[139] In the midst of the discussion at this meeting, Peter states, "Why, therefore, are you testing God by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way as they [Gentiles] are."[140] Peter's description of the law as "a yoke . . . which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear" implies that the Jewish people have consistently proved themselves unable to live in the manner that the law prescribes.[141] If, however, the Jewish people have proved unable to live by this law, then it clearly has not produced virtue within them.

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[138] Acts 15.1.

[139] Acts 15.4.

[140] Acts 15.10-11.

[141] Cf. Zmijewski 1994: 566; Barrett 1994–1998 2.718; Fitzmyer 1998: 548; Bock 2007: 500-1; Pervo 2008: 373-74; Gebauer 2014–2015: 2.54-55; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2235-39. Klinghardt 1988: 111-13 attempts to dilute the critique of the law in this passage by claiming that it is a mere confession of the actual failure of the Jewish people that implies the need for the Jewish people to repent and do better (cf. Jervell 1998: 392; Eckey 2000: 1.330). This proposal, however, leads him to a virtual denial of Peter's actual words: "Die Forderung der Verpflichtung der Heiden auf Gesetz (und Beschneidung) wird nicht deswegen kritisiert, weil es als 'Joch' zu schwer zu 'tragen' wäre, sondern weil das Gesetz als ganzes den Juden auferlegt ist." In any case, even on this law-friendly reading, Peter's pessimism regarding Israel's history remains intact.

Although Jacob Jervell claims that the remarks in these passages are "reminiscences and echoes from tradition and never developed into a theological concept,"[142] they are among the most direct comments about the law in the whole of Acts, and their placement within important speeches suggests that they should be taken with full seriousness. Additionally, as we shall soon see, the implication that the people by and large have not obeyed the law corresponds to the depiction of Jewish history in Luke's work. Thus, contrary to Balch's proposal that Luke understands the law along the lines of a virtue-generating constitution, Luke's perspective is ably described by Joseph B. Tyson: "Within the narrative world of Acts, Torah is . . . a theologically ineffective burden that includes commands that have not and cannot be obeyed, and thus it is inappropriate to expect Gentile Christians to attempt to carry it."[143]

4.3.2 Luke's View of the History of the Jewish People

Unlike Dionysius on the Romans and contrary to Josephus, Luke's writings suggest that the history of the Jewish people reveals far more vice than virtue. He does, of course, mention a few exemplary individuals,[144] but they appear to be exceptions to the general rule. The majority of the people are consistently depicted as disobedient to God and resistant to his messengers. The major place in which this perspective is presented is Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin, but Stephen's survey of Israel's history corresponds to comments throughout Luke's writings.

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[142] Jervell 1972: 146.

[143] Tyson 1992: 147.

[144] Most often Abraham (e.g., Luke 16.22-31; 7.2-8), Moses (e.g., Luke 9.28-36; Acts 7.20-44), or David (e.g., Luke 1.27, 32, 69-70; 2.4, 11; Acts 7.45-46; 13.22-23, 35-37).

On several occasions in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus describes the people's constant rejection of God's overtures through the prophets. This motif first comes to expression in the Sermon on the Plain. In the final blessing at the start of the sermon, Jesus urges his followers to rejoice when hated and mistreated, "for their fathers treated the prophets in the same way."[145] Later, Jesus criticizes the legal experts in a lengthy diatribe by describing the current generation as the culmination of a long history of persecution and even murder of God's prophets.[146] Before his entrance into the city of Jerusalem, Jesus laments, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I wanted to gather your children as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing."[147] Then, after his arrival in the city, he tells the Parable of the Tenants, which allegorically depicts the rejection of the prophets through the image of the tenants' rejection of servants who were sent by the owner of the vineyard to collect his share of the fruit.[148] This collection of sayings gives the impression that the prophets were the only faithful Israelites, and that they were consistently rejected by the rest of the nation.[149]

Outside of Stephen's speech, the only substantial comments on Israel's history in the book of Acts come in Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch. Nevertheless, this sermon focuses far more on God's actions on behalf of the people than it does on the

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[145] Luke 6.23; cf. the corresponding woe in Luke 6.26, which describes the people's acceptance of the false prophets.

[146] Luke 11.45-52.

[147] Luke 13.34.

[148] Luke 20.9-18.

[149] Cf. Luke 13.28, in which Jesus describes those who are excluded from the kingdom as weeping "when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast out;" and Acts 3.25, in which Peter gives a positive description of his audience by saying, "You are the sons of the prophets and the covenant which God granted to our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.'" In both passages, the patriarchs and the prophets are assumed to be the faithful within Israel.

actions of the people themselves.[150] Aside from a few comments about David,[151] the only activity attributed to the people in this speech is their request for a king.[152] That incident, of course, is portrayed negatively in the Jewish Scriptures, and there are perhaps negative overtones in Paul's description of Saul's reign and removal.[153] Additionally, there may be an echo of Israel's disobedience in the wilderness in Paul's statement God "put up with (ἐτροποφόρησεν) them" during this time,[154] but there are textual variants that complicate this issue.[155] In any case, Paul's purpose is not to highlight Israel's resistance to God but rather God's choice of this people and his gifts to them, culminating in the provision of the promised saviour. Stephen's historical survey focuses far more directly on the people themselves.

Stephen begins with God's election of the patriarchs, highlighting in particular God's promise of land to Abraham and the covenant of circumcision.[156] As is also the case in both Luke's Gospel and Paul's speech, Stephen presents God's dealings with Abraham as the beginning of Israel's history, a period of promise whose fulfilment

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[150] Cf. the insightful analysis in Jeska 2001: 221-24.

[151] Acts 13.22, 36.

[152] Acts 13.21.

[153] Cf. Schnabel 2012: 576; Keener 2012–2015: 2.2060-61. Schnabel summarizes Paul's point as "Human behavior (whether Saul's or Israel's) thwarts God's initiative." Keener points out that Saul is clearly used here as a foil for David, and he further suggests that the description of Saul's reign as lasting forty years may be an effort to associate his reign with the forty years in the wilderness.

[154] Acts 13.18; cf. the comments in Bock 2007: 452; Schnabel 2012: 575.

[155] Cf. Johnson 1992: 231; Witherington 1998: 409-10; Pervo 2008: 336, each of whom prefers the reading ἐτροφοφόρησεν ("cared for"). If this reading is adopted, the verse simply emphasizes God's care for the people and says nothing either positive or negative about their behaviour. On the difficulties involved in this textual decision, see Metzger 1994: 357.

[156] Acts 7.2-8.

unfolds over the course of time.[157] In comparison to Josephus, Stephen's account of Abraham is far less embellished,[158] but it is clearly positive.

After briefly mentioning Isaac and Jacob, Stephen turns to the story of Joseph. As we have seen, Josephus attempts to protect the character of Joseph's brothers by absolving them from guilt in selling their brother into slavery, suggesting that divine providence overrode their natural character.[159] Stephen, however, does nothing to lessen their guilt. Instead, he attributes this ignominious deed to the brothers' jealousy.[160] As many have noted, within Stephen's speech, the brothers' rejection of Joseph serves as a foreshadowing of the people's subsequent history because this event represents the seed of the people's consistent rejection of God's chosen agents of salvation.[161] The theme of rejecting God's salvific agents is developed extensively in the following section centred on the life of Moses.

Stephen begins by emphasizing Moses' beauty at birth and his upbringing in the house of Pharaoh.[162] As Darrell Bock notes, the intent of this part of Stephen's account is to present Moses as a well-trained leader.[163] Stephen concludes, "Moses was trained

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[157] Cf. Penner 2004: 306-7, who highlights how this section sets up the speech's framework of promise and fulfilment.

[158] E.g., Abraham is not, according to Stephen, an important purveyor of cultural disciplines; cf. *AJ* 1.167-68.

[159] See p. 87 above. Keener 2012–2015: 2.1365 provides a list of other Jewish sources that minimize the culpability of Joseph's brothers; cf. also the brief survey of ancient interpretations of Joseph's brothers in Johnson 1992: 116-17.

[160] Acts 7.9.

[161] Cf. Scharlemann 1968: 39-40, 63-69; Kilgallen 1976: 46-63; Bruce 1988: 142; Witherington 1998: 267-68; Pervo 2008: 179; Braun 2010: 204-11; Butticaz 2011: 178-82; Schnabel 2012: 362-63; Lee 2013: 271-72.

[162] Acts 7.20-22.

[163] Bock 2007: 291.

in all the wisdom of Egypt, and he was mighty in his words and deeds."[164] This emphasis on Moses' preparation for leadership serves as the lead-in for Stephen's unique account of Moses' slaying of the Egyptian. According to Stephen, this latter incident was yet another instance in which the people rejected God's chosen agent of salvation. He says, "[Moses] supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving salvation to them through his hand, but they did not understand."[165] Stephen's emphasis on Moses' qualifications as a leader in the preceding context amplifies the culpability of this rejection. Furthermore, according to Stephen, Moses' flight to Midian was entirely due to the reluctance of the Israelites to follow his leadership; Stephen makes no mention of Moses' fear that Pharaoh might learn of his deed.[166]

Stephen's account of this incident is thus both similar and dissimilar to that of Josephus. They both vindicate Moses, but the means by which they do so point to very different agendas. Josephus omits the killing altogether and instead links Moses' flight to Pharaoh's fear of Moses due to the latter's success as a military leader.[167] He thereby both deletes an embarrassing event that could be taken as an indication that Moses was subversive and he enhances Moses' stature by suggesting that he was an enviable military commander. Stephen, however, chooses not to omit the killing but rather to vindicate Moses' deed. According to Stephen, the slaying of the Egyptian was justified because it was Moses' first attempt to enact God's plan to deliver Israel from Egypt. The problem is that the people did not recognize the deliverance that God was

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[164] Acts 7.22. Penner suggests that this depiction of Moses corresponds to Josephus' comments in *AJ* 2.230-31 (Penner 2004: 320); Jeska points out that parallels to Stephen's idealizing can be found in several other post-biblical accounts (Jeska 2001: 168-69).

[165] Acts 7.25.

[166] Acts 7.29.

[167] *AJ* 4.254-56.

providing. As Eckhard Schnabel writes, "While Moses is characterized positively as a savior sent by God, the people of Israel are described negatively as those who fail to understand the divine salvation."[168]

Stephen returns to this theme again after describing Moses' call at Mount Sinai. He brackets a description of Moses' *resumé* with references to the people's resistance to Moses' leadership. He states:

> This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, "Who made you a ruler and judge?"—this man God sent as ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, "God will raise up a prophet like me for you from among your brothers." This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received living oracles to give to us, to whom our fathers were unwilling to be obedient; rather, they rejected him and turned in their hearts to Egypt, saying to Aaron, "Make gods for us who will go before us. For this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." And they made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and they were rejoicing in the works of their hands.[169]

This passage emphatically focuses on Moses, referring to him with a striking sequence of five consecutive demonstrative pronouns.[170] The middle of the passage is practically an encomium describing Moses' most significant deeds.[171] The bookends, however, demonstrate that Stephen's emphasis falls on the culpability of the people's rejection of

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[168] Schnabel 2012: 375. On the contrast with Josephus, see also Bock 2007: 293; Pervo 2008: 185-86; Keener 2012–2015: 2.1391-92. Marguerat 2007: 249 points out that Stephen's description of God's intention to "give salvation (σωτηρίαν)" through Moses is close to the description of God's intentions in Pseudo-Philo, *LAB* 9.10. Pseudo-Philo, however, includes similar language in a prophecy before Moses' birth. He does not present a similar interpretation of Moses' slaying of the Egyptian.

[169] Acts 7.35-41.

[170] This sequence has often been noted in studies of the passage; cf. Kilgallen 1976: 77-78; Schiffner 2008: 369; Keener 2012–2015: 2.1400-1. Witherington suggests that the passage may echo Acts 3.14-16, which uses a series of relative pronouns to describe the rejection and subsequent vindication of Jesus (Witherington 1998: 270).

[171] Cf. the comments in Penner 2004: 321-22.

Moses. His point is that, despite Moses' impressive *resumé*, the people failed to obey him and instead turned to idolatry.[172]

As we have seen, Josephus omits the story of the golden calf in order to protect the people's reputation.[173] Stephen, however, highlights this event as a defining incident.[174] In fact, Stephen suggests that God responded to the people's "turn" away from Moses with a deeply consequential "turn" of his own. Immediately after describing the production of the idol, he writes:

> And God turned and gave them over to serve the host of heaven, just as it is written in the book of the prophets, "You did not offer me offerings and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness, did you, house of Israel? And you took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rephan, the figures which you made in order to worship them, and I will remove you beyond Babylon."[175]

According to Stephen, then, God's response to the golden calf incident was to give the people over to false worship.

Stephen describes God's relinquishment of the people to idolatry through a citation of Amos 5.25-27. This passage is quoted with one significant alteration from both the Hebrew and Greek versions: Babylon has replaced Damascus as the location of the exile. Although some have suggested that Babylon is mentioned because it is more relevant than Damascus as a place of exile for a Judean or Jerusalem audience,[176] it is more likely that this substitution is meant to extend the significance of Amos'

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[172] Cf. the comparison between Stephen's treatment of Moses and the treatment of Moses in Jewish literature in Scharlemann 1968: 69-76.

[173] See p. 88 above.

[174] Acts 7.39-41; cf. the discussion of the contrast with Josephus in Balch 1990b: 13; Penner 2004: 112-13; Bock 2007: 298; and esp. Keener 2012–2015: 2.1406-7, who understands Josephus' motives better than the others.

[175] Acts 7.42-43.

[176] E.g., Schneider 1980–1982: 1.465; Richard 1982: 41-42; Bruce 1988: 146; Witherington 1998: 272; cf. Pervo 2008: 189; Schiffner 2008: 376-77, who claim that "Babylon" is here used because it is a code word for Rome.

words. As Bock writes, "the change might well suggest that the pattern and consequences continued even beyond what Amos predicted."[177] Bock is on the right track. By this alteration, Stephen depicts the whole of Jewish history from the wilderness to the Babylonian exile as a time in which the people were given over to idolatry.

Stephen then moves on to discuss the tabernacle and the temple, but the details of this frequently controverted portion of the speech need not detain us. He returns to the topic of the character of the people in his conclusion. Stephen states:

> You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers, so also you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one, whom now you betrayed and became murderers, you who received the law as ordinances of angels and did not keep it.[178]

Thus, Stephen concludes with an invective that indicts both his hearers and their ancestors.

Joachim Jeska suggests, however, that the ancestors in view at this point are only those of the post-temple era. He writes:

> Von der auf den Tempelbau folgenden Phase distanziert sich der Redner, wobei diese Phase derartig gerafft wird, daß die gegenwärtigen Hörer als die direkten Nachfolger der Väter *in dieser Phase* bezeichnet werden können. Es liegt demgemäß in Apg 7,51-53 sehr wohl eine Zusammenfassung vor, aber diese ist nicht das Fazit aus der gesamten Rede, sondern die Zusammenfassung der Geschichtsphase, die auf den Tempelbau folgt.[179]

In support of this view, Jeska primarily highlights the distinction between Stephen's references to "our ancestors" in the earlier parts of the speech and his reference to "your ancestors" in the conclusion. This, however, is the wrong inference to draw from

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[177] Bock 2007: 300; cf. Keener 2012–2015: 2.1412.

[178] Acts 7.51-53.

[179] Jeska 2001: 150-51.

this phenomenon. Stephen's point is that his hearers are proving themselves to be descendants of those who resisted God's will throughout Israel's history. Jeska underestimates the correspondence between Stephen's final criticism and his perspective on the people as a whole. From Joseph's brothers to Moses' contemporaries, Stephen depicts the people as consistently rejecting God's messengers and agents of salvation. Like Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, Stephen's point is that the current generation's recalcitrance is the culmination of a long history of resistance to God.[180]

Stephen's overall depiction of the Jewish people has been assessed in various ways by modern scholars. Jeska, in keeping with his interpretation of the conclusion, suggests that Stephen is largely positive about the people as a whole until he comes to the era of the temple.[181] Todd Penner similarly suggests that Stephen presents a positive image of the ancestors but then asserts that his contemporaries are unworthy of this heritage.[182] Penner claims that Stephen's portrait follows the pattern of retellings of the exodus that "idealize the Mosaic foundation and organization of the Jewish *politeia* but also . . . see a decline under subsequent Jewish leadership."[183] As we have seen, however, Stephen does not portray the Mosaic era as any better than later eras; he emphasizes the rejection of Moses, despite Moses' impressive qualifications and divine calling, and Moses' rejection simply follows the pattern set by the patriarchs in their rejection of Joseph.

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[180] Cf. Lee 2013: 271-72. See also the broader analyses of the conclusion to Stephen's speech in Kilgallen 1976: 95-104; Schiffner 2008: 384-87; Braun 2010: 362-89.

[181] Jeska 2001: 217-18.

[182] Penner 2004: 305.

[183] Penner 2004: 310.

Tyson, on the other hand, stresses Stephen's critical tone. He writes, "Stephen's speech conveys almost totally negative images of the Jewish people."[184] This claim is true of Stephen's portrait of the majority, but it is perhaps overstated. Stephen also depicts a righteous line within the people consisting of Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, and Jesus.[185]

Yet another alternative is suggested by Ben Witherington III, who describes Stephen's perspective as "Deuteronomistic." Witherington claims that Stephen's account appears to reflect a pattern in which disobedient Israelites are admonished by prophets but then reject these messages and bring judgment upon themselves.[186] Witherington rightly captures the contrast between the people and the prophets from the conclusion of the speech, but there is little in Stephen's speech that reflects the pattern that Witherington identifies. The closest that Stephen comes to presenting a pattern is in his depiction of the people's consistent rejection of God's salvific agents.

The overall impression of Stephen's historical survey is that, from the beginning, the people have failed to recognize God's chosen agents of salvation, and they were decisively given over to idolatry in the time of Moses. There has always been a righteous line of prophets within the people, but they have been rejected by the majority. This perspective corresponds to the brief references to Israel's history elsewhere in Luke's writings, and it presents a largely negative view of that history. This has significant implications for the view that Luke's intention is to highlight the Jewish roots of the Christian movement in order to gain cultural or political capital.

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[184] Tyson 1992: 116.

[185] Cf. Schnabel 2012: 362.

[186] Witherington 1998: 262; cf. Bock 2007: 277.

4.3.3 Conclusion

The approach to the history of Israel displayed in the writings of Luke contrasts sharply with Josephus' presentation of Jewish history and bears little resemblance to Dionysius' treatment of the history of Rome. Both Josephus and Dionysius highlight the quality of the people whom they describe and emphasize the demonstration of the cardinal virtues within the corporate character of those people throughout their history. Additionally, they both attribute the preservation of virtue among those people to the superior quality of their national constitutions. The emphases within Luke's presentation of the history of the Jewish people press in the opposite direction.

With the exception of the original three patriarchs, Joseph, Moses, the prophets, and a few notable individuals, Luke consistently presents the majority of the Jewish people as disobedient to God, idolatrous, and violently opposed to God's messengers. He highlights the very episodes that Josephus omits, and his editing often amplifies the people's culpability. No effort is made to present or evaluate the people's history in terms of the classical cardinal virtues,[187] and the Jewish law is not highlighted within Luke's historical surveys as a constitution or an effective means for producing virtuous behaviour. To the contrary, according to Luke, the bad character of the majority of the Jewish people was too great of a problem for the law to overcome, and their consistent resistance to God's overtures has recently culminated in the rejection and murder of the "righteous one" whom God sent for their salvation.

Few of these claims are controversial. Nevertheless, their significance for the question of Luke's aims in highlighting the Jewish roots of the Christian movement has not previously been appreciated. Nothing in Luke's account suggests that the Jewish

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[187] *Contra* Downing 1981: 554-57.

people have the kind of noble heritage with which one would want to associate in order to gain cultural or political capital in the Graeco-Roman world. To the contrary, the Jewish people appear to have precisely the kind of vice-filled history that would have evoked mockery and disdain from Luke's Graeco-Roman peers. In combination with his disinterest in the antiquity of the Jewish people, this strongly suggests that Luke's interests are unlike those of Dionysius and Josephus. If, however, Luke's aims in highlighting the Jewish roots of the Christian movement are not cultural or political, what are they? We will now turn to address this question directly as we examine the specific lines of continuity that Luke draws between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots.

4.4 The Christian Movement and Its Jewish Roots

As noted in the introductory chapter, those who claim that Luke highlights the Jewish roots of the Christian movement in order to gain cultural respect or political tolerance are divided in their assessment of the nature of the connection that Luke draws between the church and the Jewish heritage. The stream of scholarship following Sterling argues that Luke encourages the identification of the church as an inner-Jewish group that shares the reputation, rights, and privileges of the broader community,[188] while the stream of scholarship following Esler maintains that Luke understands the Christian movement to have a distinct public identity but also a legitimating claim to be a "divinely sanctioned outgrowth of Judaism."[189] The common element between these streams is that they both argue that Luke's intention is to provide the early Christians

[188] Sterling 1992: 384-85.

[189] Esler 1987: 69.

with an ancient heritage that will command the respect of any potential cultured despisers.

Proposals such as those of Sterling and Esler suggest that Luke is interested in providing socio-cultural legitimation by demonstrating the sort of continuity that would counter negative perceptions of the Christian movement as judged by the values of the Graeco-Roman world. Others, however, claim that Luke's emphasis on continuity serves a more directly theological purpose. Eric Franklin writes:

> What was at stake was the credibility of the Christian proclamation which saw Jesus as God's eschatological act for Israel. It was this that the Jewish refusal to believe threatened to show up as completely false. How could the Jews have failed to acknowledge God's eschatological act? That was Luke's problem.[190]

Several others have made similar proposals defining Luke's interest in continuity in terms of theological reassurance rather than socio-cultural legitimation.[191] These authors claim that Luke's intention was not to position the church relative to the outside world but rather to bolster Christian confidence that the events of the life of Jesus and the early church are legitimate developments within the divine plan.

In this section, we will examine this debate, exploring both the kinds of continuities to which Luke points and the question of his aims in highlighting these continuities. As we shall see, the weight of evidence supports the view that Luke is primarily concerned about the Christian movement's theological legitimacy.

4.4.1 The Writings of Luke and Dionysius' Legitimation of the Romans as Greek

Dionysius' *Ant. Rom*. provides a near-contemporary example of what it looks like to make an argument about the affiliation of an ethnically mixed group with a

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[190] Franklin 1975: 111.

[191] E.g., Tiede 1980: 131; Cook 1988: 117-22; Jervell 1996b: 4; Wasserberg 1999: 727; Rothschild 2004: 142-82; Wendel 2011: 142-43.

respected, ethnically particular ancient heritage. We have already highlighted several important contrasts between the arguments in Dionysius' work and the writings of Luke, but we have not yet compared the means by which they highlight continuity and the direct types of continuity towards which they point. As we shall see, there are important differences in these areas that suggest that Luke's interests do not lie in establishing the kind of socio-cultural continuity upon which Dionysius focuses.

4.4.1.1 Continuity in the Prefaces of Dionysius and Luke

It is widely recognized that authors in the ancient world typically used prefaces in order to describe the content and purpose of their writings. Joel B. Green states, "The first column of writing, even the first sentence, performed much the same purpose as the modern book jacket precis, table of contents, and title page."[192] Hence, the prefaces to Dionysius' *Ant. Rom.* and Luke's Gospel provide a natural starting point for comparison.[193]

As we have seen, Dionysius makes his intention to demonstrate that the Romans are legitimate heirs of the Greek heritage explicit in the preface to *Ant. Rom*. He draws attention to derogatory accounts of Rome's origins and then states that he will prove that their ancestors were famous Greeks whose traditions of virtue have made the city worthy of the unprecedented dominion that it enjoys.[194] Is there evidence of interest in a similar kind of continuity in the preface to the Gospel of Luke?

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[192] Green 1997: 33; cf. the discussion of the development of preface-writing in Alexander 1993: 18-22.

[193] The preface to Acts adds nothing of interest. It is even shorter than the remarkably brief preface to the Gospel and it says nothing about Luke's aims or purpose. Luke simply gives a brief retrospective summary of the events recorded in the Gospel and then launches into the narrative of Acts. In contemporary ancient literature, the only known retrospective prefaces with no accompanying prospective notice occur in secondary prefaces within multi-volume works, but the significance of the preface to Acts is debated; cf. the divergent perspectives in Cadbury 1926: 9; van Unnik 1973: 7-8; Parsons and Pervo 1993: 61-64; Alexander 1996: 73-103; Bonz 2000: 151-55.

[194] *Ant. Rom.* 1.4-5; see pp. 29-30 above.

The preface to Luke's Gospel is notoriously short—far shorter than the preface to any other extant historical work.[195] Nevertheless, it does still fulfil the ordinary function of a historical preface by discussing a typical selection of *topoi*. Luke writes:

> In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative concerning the events that have been accomplished (πεπληροφορημένων) among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good also to me, having followed all things carefully for some time, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the security (ἀσφάλειαν) of the things you have been taught.[196]

Thus, Luke briefly describes the subject matter, relates his work to previous treatments of the same topic, highlights his own qualifications to write on this subject, and states the purpose of his composition.[197] Despite the routine nature of the *topoi*, however, there are vigorous debates about nearly every line of this opening sentence. Our interest lies in two points: Luke's declaration of the purpose and his description of the content.

Unfortunately, the actual statement of Luke's purpose in the final line is sufficiently ambiguous to support a multitude of interpretations. Luke declares that his aim is for Theophilus to "know the security (ἀσφάλειαν) of the things you have been taught."[198] Discussion of this phrase typically centres on the significance of the term ἀσφάλεια,[199] but the real difficulty is that one's interpretation of the line depends on what one assumes about Theophilus and his prior knowledge. Because we have

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[195] Cf. Alexander 1993: 102. Alexander ultimately concludes that this is because Luke's writings belong to the genre of scientific treatises rather than historiography; see, however, the counterpoints in Schmidt 1999: 35-37; and esp. Aune 2002: 142-48.

[196] Luke 1.1-4.

[197] Cf. the analyses in Mason 2003b: 253-56; Rothschild 2004: 67-69; Penner 2004: 219-21.

[198] Luke 1.4.

[199] Cf. the various construals in Marshall 1978: 44; Esler 1987: 222; Nolland 1989: 11; Sterling 1992: 383-84; Alexander 1993: 140; Bock 1994: 64-65; Green 1997: 45; Rothschild 2004: 95-96.

virtually no secure historical knowledge about Theophilus,[200] this means that scholars attempt to determine what Theophilus already knew on the basis of their construal of what Luke is attempting to reinforce within his work. Consequently, interpretations of the purpose expressed in Luke 1.4 are in reality reflections of interpretations of Luke's work as a whole.

Nevertheless, Luke's preface does also briefly mention the content, and some suggest that this reference signals his interest in the continuity between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots. Luke writes that his work constitutes an orderly narrative on a topic that many others have addressed: "the events that have been accomplished (πεπληροφορημένων) among us."[201] A number of scholars claim that the verb πληροφορέω is a synonym of πληρόω and that therefore the participle πεπληροφορημένων conveys the notion that these events are the "fulfilment" of prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures.[202] Others, however, argue that it simply describes the events in view as having been completed or taken place.[203] Still others propose a middle ground, arguing that the participle gives a sense of the realization of God's purpose but without evoking the particular notion of the fulfilment of prophecy.[204] On the other hand, very early interpreters, such as Origen, took the phrase to mean "the events that have been confirmed to us."[205]

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[200] Cf. the helpful discussion of various proposals about Theophilus in Alexander 1993: 188-93, who suggests that the only firm conclusion that can be drawn is that Theophilus was not an outsider to the Christian movement.

[201] Luke 1.1.

[202] E.g., Fitzmyer 1981: 293; Sterling 1992: 334; Bock 1994: 57; Birkholz 2013: 26-29; Hays 2016: 191-92; cf. Alexander 1993: 111-14, who claims that well-informed readers may have read it as "fulfilled," but those less in the know would not.

[203] E.g., Cadbury 1922: 495-96; Nolland 1989: 6-7.

[204] E.g., Marshall 1978: 41; Green 1997: 39-40.

[205] *Hom. 1 in Lc.* 5-6; cf. Athanasius' use of πληροφορέω to mean "persuaded" or "convinced" in his semi-playful intertextual interaction with Luke's preface in *Ep. fest.* 39.3.

Unfortunately, there is very little lexical evidence to help adjudicate this question.[206] Under any of these interpretations, however, Luke does not emphasize the same kind of continuity that one finds in Dionysius' preface. The two interpretations of Luke's preface that entail continuity with the Jewish heritage suggest that Luke depicts the events that he narrates as either the realization of God's purpose or the fulfilment of prophecy. In either case, this is a very different kind of claim from Dionysius' assertion that the Roman people are ethnically Greek. Dionysius' concern is the actual identity of the people, but Luke focuses on the nature of the events that he is going to describe. This suggests that the type of continuity in which Luke is interested differs significantly from Dionysius. As we shall see, this impression is confirmed by the differences in their content.

4.4.1.2 Dionysius' Genealogical Argument and the Writings of Luke

In order to argue that the Romans are Greek, Dionysius first focuses on the issue of genealogy. He spends nearly the whole of the first book of *Ant. Rom.* attempting to demonstrate that the five waves of immigrants that founded Rome were all Greek.[207] The Jewish ethnicity of the earliest Christians, however, was undisputed, and Luke spends little time addressing such matters. The only extensive genealogy that Luke includes is that of Jesus,[208] and the primary purpose of his tracing of Jesus' genealogy back to "Adam, the son of God"[209] is probably to define what it means for

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[206] A *TLG* search for all forms of the verb πληροφορέω yields three results prior to the New Testament (Ctesias, *Hist. et Med.* F14, §42; Eccl 8.11; *Test. Gad* 2.4), and none of these occurrences matches any of the proposed meanings for Luke 1.1; searches for πληροφορέω in conjunction with πρᾶγμα yield only Luke 1.1 and then jump to later Christian attempts to interpret Luke, beginning with Origen.

[207] See the survey of this material on pp. 32-42 above.

[208] Luke 3.23-38.

[209] Luke 3.38.

Jesus to be the "son of God."[210] This genealogy is situated between Luke's accounts of Jesus' baptism and his temptation in the wilderness,[211] and Jesus' status as "son of God" figures prominently in both of those scenes. At the conclusion of Jesus' baptism, the voice from heaven declares, "You are my beloved son,"[212] and, in the wilderness, the devil begins both the first and the last temptation with the protasis, "If you are the son of God . . ."[213] The placement of a genealogy describing Adam as "the son of God" in the middle of these two scenes likely indicates that for Jesus to be "the son of God" means that he is, theologically speaking, a new Adam.[214] As Rowe explains, the sequence of Luke's scenes draws out the significance of Jesus' divine sonship: "Humanity, it is implied, is given a new beginning in the second son of God."[215] Luke's record of Jesus' genealogy thus serves an entirely different purpose from the genealogical material in Dionysius' work.[216] Although Luke's work makes clear that all of the first Christians were Jewish, this is not a point on which Luke expends

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[210] Cf. Nolland 1989: 172-73; Kremer 1992: 50-51; Bock 1994: 348-49; Green 1997: 189-90; Garland 2011: 173-74. Johnson 1969: 240-52 suggests that Luke also intends to imply Jesus' status as a prophet, but he argues for this on the basis of the unlikely claim that the Nathan in the genealogy is the same person as the prophet who confronted David. Strauss 1995: 209-15 and Drewermann 2009: 1.204-8 claim that the primary point is Jesus' Davidic descent. This may be a part of what Luke is hoping that his readers will notice, but there is more emphasis on the phrase "son of God," which is placed in the climactic final position.

[211] Luke 3.21-22 and 4.1-13, respectively.

[212] Luke 3.22.

[213] Luke 4.3, 9.

[214] Cf. Jeremias 1964: 141; Fuller 2006: 231; *contra* Johnson 1969: 234-35, who objects that Luke does not elsewhere evoke an Adam typology. Johnson misses how Adam typology informs the temptation scene that follows where Jesus becomes the obedient son of God that Adam failed to be.

[215] Rowe 2016: 131-32; *contra* Bovon 2002–2012: 1.137, who suggests that the genealogy loosens the connection between Jesus' baptism and the temptation by focusing on Jesus' human identity. The genealogy instead further defines the meaning of the divine declaration at the baptism in preparation for the temptation scene.

[216] *Contra* Balch 1989: 345; Balch 1990b: 11-12, who suggests that Luke includes Jesus' genealogy because he, like Dionysius, is writing on the origins of a people and therefore must include such material.

argumentative energy. Luke does not present arguments related to ethnicity until he addresses the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community, and then his main point is that Gentile Christians do not need to become Jews or adopt Jewish cultural practices.

4.4.1.3 Dionysius' Cultural Argument and the Writings of Luke

Dionysius' other main argument for Rome's claim to the Greek heritage is that Rome has preserved Greek culture better than any other city. Dionysius defines culture in terms of four elements: language, customs, religious rites, and laws, and, aside from language, he argues that Rome has preserved each area better than any other Greek colony.[217] The greatest proof of this, he claims, is Rome's practice of Greek religious rites, because no people is so foolish as to alter what the gods have commanded. Dionysius thus highlights Rome's religious rites at various points and he provides an extensive account of the *Ludi Maximi* in order to demonstrate the Greek origins of Roman religion.[218] Nevertheless, although religious rites provide the greatest proof of Rome's Greek culture, Dionysius states that the preservation of Greek culture is due to Rome's laws. Laws, he argues, shape the "nature" (φύσις) of a people,[219] and he highlights the Greek origins of nearly every feature of the Roman law code.[220] As his work progresses, he focuses on this area more and more, claiming that the essence of what it means to be Greek is having a "nature" (φύσις) that expresses itself in virtuous conduct.[221] Through various means, he then attempts to demonstrate that the Romans

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[217] *Ant. Rom*. 1.89.3-4.

[218] *Ant. Rom.* 7.70-73; see pp. 52-57 above.

[219] *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.4.

[220] See pp. 45-52 above.

[221] *Ant. Rom.* 14.6.5.

have been shaped by their laws to be more virtuous than any other people.[222] Dionysius' case for the Romans' claim on the Greek heritage is thus clear, explicit, and prevalent throughout *Ant. Rom*. His increasing emphasis on culture as the defining issue facilitates the classification of the whole Roman community as Greek.

Some scholars maintain that Luke also focuses on culture as an important area of continuity between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots. They claim that Luke highlights the observance of the Mosaic law by Jewish Christians because their practice of these customs provides the church with a cultural core that establishes the Christian movement's claim to the ancient Jewish heritage. As Marguerat writes, "L'attachement à la Loi reçoit donc une fonction identitaire, non pas au sens de Jacob Jervell, mais comme *l'attestation d'une religion respectable*, héritant du meilleur de ce qu'a produit la vénérable tradition d'Israël."[223] Several of these scholars assert that Luke particularly emphasizes Paul's continued adherence to the law as emblematic of this continuity.[224]

There are, however, several problems with these claims. First, although many have argued that Luke's position is that Jewish Christians remain fully obligated to the law,[225] others have demonstrated that his writings contradict this claim by portraying

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[222] See pp. 59-72 above.

[223] Marguerat 2009: 99; cf. Downing 1986: 49-52; Esler 1987: 68-69; Sanders 1987: 131; Downing 1988: 153-57; Merkel 1994: 386-89; Balch 1995: 22-23; Marguerat 1999: 76-77; Mason 2003b: 268-70; Moreland 2003: 308; Backhaus 2007: 422-26.

[224] E.g., Esler 1987: 69; Backhaus 2007: 422-23; Marguerat 2009: 95-100; Butticaz 2011: 415-18.

[225] E.g., Jervell 1972: 136-44; Tiede 1980: 52; Ravens 1995: 197; Penner 2004: 283-84; Backhaus 2007: 423-24; Thiessen 2011: 113-20; and esp. Klinghardt 1988.

fellowship with Gentiles as inherently contrary to the law.[226] The latter group points to Luke's account of the events surrounding Cornelius' conversion as proof.

According to these dissenters, Luke's account of Cornelius' conversion suggests that table fellowship with Gentiles requires the adjustment of the food laws. Contrary to Ernst Haenchen, who argues that Peter's vision in Joppa did not really have to do with food but rather with people,[227] this group claims that Luke inextricably links these two issues. Both Mark Seifrid and Joseph Tyson point out that, when Peter returns to Jerusalem after visiting Cornelius, his critics raise the objection, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them."[228] The assumption seems to be that, under the terms of the Jewish law, one cannot eat with impure company without contracting their impurity. Luke's narrative thus draws a close connection between Peter's company and the purity of his diet.[229]

Furthermore, Seifrid and Tyson note that, aside from the issue of food, Peter himself describes his visit to Cornelius as a departure from the Jewish law. He states in Acts 10.28, "You know how unlawful (ἀθέμιτον) it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with or visit a person of another nation."[230] Although historical evidence suggests that Jews of this era held a wide spectrum of views on the issue of how closely one could associate with a Gentile without violating the law,[231] Luke's narrative

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[226] Blomberg 1984: 64-65; Sanders 1987: 118-19; Seifrid 1987: 41-44; Tyson 1992: 119-25; Thompson 2011: 175-91.

[227] Cf. Haenchen 1987: 343-63.

[228] Acts 11.3.

[229] Seifrid 1987: 42-44; Tyson 1992: 121-23.

[230] Seifrid 1987: 42; Tyson 1992: 122; cf. the discussion of the term "unlawful" (ἀθέμιτόν) in Barrett 1994–1998: 1.515.

[231] Cf. the careful documentation of differing levels of cultural assimilation among Diaspora Jews in Barclay 1996: 103-24, 320-35.

assumes a very conservative view and implies that Jewish Christians contravened this norm through their outreach to and association with Gentiles.[232] Thus, Luke's depiction of the nature of fellowship between Jews and Gentiles suggests that Jewish Christian observance of the law in Acts is less thoroughgoing than some have claimed.

Regarding Paul, it is, of course, undeniable that Luke records several instances of Paul's observance of aspects of the Jewish law subsequent to his conversion. Scholars typically point to Paul's circumcision of Timothy in Acts 16.1-3, his vow in Acts 18.18, his desire to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost in Acts 20.16, and his participation in purification rites at the temple in Acts 21.18-28.[233] Nevertheless, neither the details of these scenes nor Luke's narrative framing suggest that Luke's concern in mentioning these instances is to insinuate that the broader Graeco-Roman world should understand the Christian movement to be a form of Judaism. Luke's accounts of both Paul's vow and his desire to be in Pentecost occur in asides that are too brief to bear much significance. In the other two scenes, Luke's framing suggests that his aim was to encourage sensitivity to Jewish concerns for the sake of effective mission work among Jews and unity within the church, not to present Paul as a symbol of some sort of cultural continuity that should colour the outside world's perception of Christians.[234] The latter view assumes a set of questions that are not raised within these passages.

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[232] *Contra* Jervell 1998: 308-9, who suggests that the second half of Acts 10.28 implies that Peter's visit with Cornelius is not contrary to the law because the Gentiles have been cleansed by God. The problem with this explanation is that, for God to have cleansed the Gentiles without their adoption of the law, God himself must have set aside the law's criteria for purity, and the new allowance of fellowship between Jews and Gentiles is thus still predicated upon a substantial adjustment to the law's standards.

[233] Cf. Vielhauer 1966: 37-43; Jervell 1972: 142-47; Wilson 1983: 63-68; Esler 1987: 69; Backhaus 2007: 422-23; Marguerat 2009: 95-100; Butticaz 2011: 415-18, each of whom claims that Luke presents Paul as fully observant.

[234] Cf. the discussions of these passages in Johnson 1992: 283-84; Barrett 1994–1998: 2.760-63; Witherington 1998: 473-77; Eckey 2000: 2.346-47; Thompson 2011: 188-89; Keener 2012–2015: 3.2320-22; and esp. Blomberg 1998: 410-13.

Furthermore, comparison with Dionysius' cultural argument reveals the weakness of the analogous proposal about Luke. As we have seen, in order to argue that the Romans have the kind of cultural continuity that establishes their status as Greek, Dionysius is not content to suggest that the Romans with Greek ancestry have preserved their way of life while those from a different background practise their own customs. Instead, Dionysius defines the elements that make up Greek culture and then attempts to argue that the Roman people as a whole fulfil this ideal. Nothing of the sort occurs in Luke's writings. In fact, whereas Dionysius emphasizes the Greek origin of Rome's laws and the observance of Greek religious rites in Rome, one of Luke's most obvious major points is that Gentile Christians do not need to adopt the Jewish law or Jewish customs in order to be full members of the Christian community.

Thus, the claim that Luke's scattered comments on Jewish law-observance are meant to be an identity-constituting argument for cultural continuity is very unlikely. His work suggests that Jewish Christians who associate with Gentiles are not fully law-observant, he highlights other concerns when describing the motivations for Paul's acts of Torah piety, and his occasional references to the practice of Jewish customs by Christians from a Jewish background pale in comparison to the kind of robust and explicit cultural argument that one finds in Dionysius.

4.4.1.4 Conclusion

As has been the case throughout our study, comparison between Luke and Dionysius suggests that they are far more different than alike. From the prefaces to the particulars of their content, there is nothing in Luke's writings that resembles Dionysius' explicit and pervasive argument for the Romans' claim to continuity with

the Greek heritage. If Luke's intention is to make a similar point, he does not employ any of the same means in order to establish it.

4.4.2 Luke's Writings and Josephus' Jewish Schools of Philosophy

Another possibility that has been proposed is that Luke attempts to provide socio-cultural legitimation by presenting the early Christians as a school of Jewish philosophy. As we have seen, Josephus attempts to encourage the interest of outsiders by presenting Jewish beliefs as a form of philosophy and the different Jewish parties as philosophical schools.[235] Mason argues that Luke similarly presents the Christian movement as a Jewish philosophical school that is comparable to the Pharisees and the Sadducees.[236]

According to Mason, although Luke never explicitly describes the Christian movement as a Jewish philosophical school, the point is implicit throughout Luke's work. In support of this claim, Mason primarily points to five specific features: 1) philosophical vocabulary in the preface to Luke's Gospel; 2) Luke's inclusion of critiques of wealth, hypocrisy, and the abuse of power; 3) Paul's dialogue with the philosophers at Athens; 4) Luke's emphasis on the "boldness" (παρρησία) of Christian preachers; 5) Luke's appropriation of the term αἵρεσις as a label for the Christian movement.[237] We will examine Mason's arguments in each of these areas.

Within the preface, Mason points to three words as examples of philosophical vocabulary. First, he states that the verb "hand down" (παραδίδωμι) in Luke 1.2 is a

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[235] See pp. 89-95 above.

[236] Mason 1996a: 49; Mason 2003b: 288-91.

[237] Mason 1996a: 49-51; Mason 2003b: 283-91.

standard term for the transmission of philosophical teachings.[238] Luke, however, is clearly not using the term in this sense because the thing that he describes as being "handed down" is not a philosophical tradition but rather a historical tradition about "the events that have been accomplished among us."[239] Second, Mason claims that the term "security" (ἀσφάλεια) in Luke 1.4 has philosophical overtones because the goal of philosophy was "to provide a sure basis for ethical action."[240] Again, he appears to be pressing the term into a meaning that is awkward in the context of Luke's preface. As Mason admits, the term ἀσφάλεια is a term that is "characteristic of historical prefaces" for emphasizing the accuracy of the content.[241] The proposal that readers would also have heard philosophical overtones asks too much of a standard historiographic term. Third, Mason points out that the final verb in the preface is "teach" (κατηχέω), which places the implied reader in the position of a student.[242] This observation is accurate in so far as it goes, but it does not justify the conclusion that the reader is implicitly a student of philosophy.

Mason's comparison between Luke's emphasis on the poor and the philosophical commendation of the simple life also fails to persuade. As Mason notes, the philosophers' aim was to describe the means to attaining εὐδαιμονία, and they presented riches as a hindrance to this quest because of the complications that wealth brings.[243] Luke, however, does not present Christian instruction on the use of wealth or

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[238] Mason 1996a: 49; Mason 2003b: 284-85.

[239] Luke 1.1.

[240] Mason 2003b: 285; cf. Mason 1996a: 49. Mason points to the use of the term ἀσφάλεια in conjunction with this concept in Plutarch, *De superst.* 171E; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 8.1.

[241] Mason 1996a: 49; Mason 2003b: 285.

[242] Mason 1996a: 49.

[243] Mason 2003b: 285-86; cf. Mason 1996a: 49-50, where he also emphasizes the simple life lived by John the Baptist and the communal ownership of goods in Acts 2.44-45.

any other ethical matter as a means to attaining εὐδαιμονία. Unlike Josephus, who declares in his preface that those who follow God's laws attain εὐδαιμονία,[244] Luke's focus remains on σωτηρία, and his work suggests that riches are a possible impediment to entrance into the kingdom of God.[245] Because they are set within this framework, the critiques of riches in Luke's work have far more in common with similar critiques in the Jewish Scriptures than they do with the teachings of philosophers, and it is unlikely that readers would have interpreted them to be the latter.

Mason also claims that Paul's speech before the Areopagus presents Christian teaching as "a competitor in the philosophical marketplace."[246] This proposal has some merit. As we have seen, Luke's account of this speech does relate Christian teaching through the medium of philosophical terminology. Nevertheless, as we have also seen, this speech does not depict Paul's teaching as particularly Jewish, and this scene thus does little to support Mason's claim that Luke portrays the Christian movement as a school of *Jewish* philosophy.

Mason further argues that Luke's use of the term "boldness" (παρρησία) portrays the early Christians as philosophers,[247] but this is yet another case of over-interpretation. Although the term παρρησία was used with reference to the bold speech of philosophers, its origins were in the sphere of politics rather than philosophy, and the areas to which it expanded over time included not only philosophy but also rhetoric,

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[244] *AJ* 1.14.

[245] E.g., Luke 6.20-26.

[246] Mason 2003b: 287; cf. Malherbe 1986: 197-98; Mason 1996a: 50.

[247] Mason 2003b: 288; cf. Malherbe 1986: 207-8; Dupertuis 2013: 160-67. Mason 1996a: 50-51 both makes this same point and also highlights the impressive composure in the face of danger exhibited by Jesus, Stephen, and Paul as further evidence of Luke's intention to present Christianity as a philosophy.

comedy, and even personal friendship.[248] Παρρησία was thus a term of broad parlance. The suggestion that its use implies that those exercising παρρησία are being depicted as philosophers is too specific for a term with so many possible applications. Its use with reference to the early Christians depicts their behaviour as fulfilling an ideal that the philosophers commended; it does not imply that the content of their teaching actually is philosophy.

Finally, according to Mason, Luke's use of the term αἵρεσις designates the Christian movement as a "Jewish philosophical school" comparable to the Pharisees and Sadducees. In fact, Mason goes so far as to suggest that Luke may be drawing on the work of Josephus for this construal. He postulates that Luke copies Josephus but then substitutes the Christians for the group that Josephus portrays most favourably—the Essenes.[249] In Acts, Luke does occasionally refer to the Pharisees and Sadducees with the term αἵρεσις,[250] and this word is used to describe Christians on two occasions—first in Tertullus' accusation that Paul is a "leader of the party (αἱρέσεως) of the Nazarenes,"[251] and then in the Roman Jews' explanation of their request to hear Paul's views: "for concerning this party (αἱρέσεως), it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere."[252] Nevertheless, the problem with Mason's claim is that, like παρρησία, αἵρεσις is not a term that is exclusively associated with philosophy. It is a

[248] See the extensive study of the origins and use of παρρησία in Fields 2009; cf. the many particular studies of this term in Sluiter and Rosen 2004.

[249] Mason 2003b: 288-91; cf. Taylor 2011: 96-97. The same argument is again present in Mason 1996a: 50-51, along with the claim that the label "the way" (ἡ ὁδός) used by Paul in Acts 24.14 depicts the Christian movement as a philosophy. As we shall see, although some philosophies used the latter term as a label, this is not the reason behind its appearance in Luke's writings. Like the Qumran community, Luke derives the label "the way" (ἡ ὁδός) from the prophecies of Isaiah; cf. pp. 211-12 below.

[250] Acts 5.17; 15.5; 26.5.

[251] Acts 24.5.

[252] Acts 28.22.

general term for subgroups of various kinds, and it is unlikely that the occurrences of this term in Luke's writings bear philosophical connotations.

In Josephus' writings, αἵρεσις is used to describe the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes as philosophical schools,[253] but it is also used to denote political subsets of the Jewish people: Josephus uses this term to describe the political factions behind both Solomon and Antigonus, the final Hasmonean king.[254] Furthermore, Michel Desjardins reports that, during this era, the term αἵρεσις was used to refer to a broad spectrum of voluntary associations. Its roots as a group label were in the distinguishing of medical schools, and it developed into a general term for subgroups with distinctive views.[255] Desjardins' conclusion reflects the term's breadth: "The term αἱρέσεις, at least before it has been transformed simply into 'heresies' by Christian and Jewish heresiology, referred to variant perspectives (beliefs, dispositions, scholarly and medical points of view) within a recognized unity."[256] The key issue for Luke's use of αἵρεσις, then, is how he construes the larger unity of which the group in view is a part.

The two uses of αἵρεσις with reference to Christians in Luke's writings do appear to classify the Christians in view as a subgroup of the Jewish people, but the suggestion that Luke construes the broader whole of the Jewish people to be a philosophical group is not well-grounded. When Josephus uses the term αἵρεσις to depict Jewish groups as philosophical schools, he indicates that this is his intent by explicitly claiming that Jewish thought is a form of philosophy and/or describing the

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[253] *BJ* 2.118, 122, 137, 142, 162; *AJ* 13.171, 288, 293; 20.199; *Vit.* 10, 12, 191, 197; cf. the discussions of these passages in Haaland 2007; Weissenberger 2007.

[254] *AJ* 7.347; 15.6.

[255] Desjardins 1991: 73-74.

[256] Desjardins 1991: 80.

views of the different schools with terms drawn from the realm of philosophy.[257] Neither of these features occurs in the context of Luke's uses of the term αἵρεσις, and it is unlikely that readers would have understood this term by itself to imply that the groups in question are philosophical schools. Although the Jewish people were occasionally described by outsiders under the rubric of philosophy,[258] this categorization was by no means universal, and the lack of any explicit hints in this direction by Luke raises serious doubts about Mason's proposal.[259]

Thus, none of Mason's arguments for the view that Luke portrays the Christian movement as a school of Jewish philosophy is ultimately persuasive. Most of the evidence to which Mason points is too ambiguous to uphold his claims, and key signals like those that one finds in the work of Josephus are lacking.

4.4.3 The Purpose of Continuity in Luke's Writings

Despite the disputed proposals addressed above, scholars are largely agreed about the primary means by which Luke emphasizes continuity between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots. Three central points are widely recognized.

First, Luke depicts the events of his narrative as "the continuation of biblical history."[260] In Luke's Gospel, this theme becomes evident immediately after the preface. The remainder of the first two chapters introduce the narrative by immersing the reader into the world of Jewish culture and piety and foregrounding the Jewish

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[257] See *AJ* 13.171-73 ; 18.11-22.

[258] Cf. the examples compiled in Hengel 1974: 255-61; Pilhofer 1990: 73-75; Sterling 1992: 140; Mason 1996a: 41-42; Mason 2000: xxx.

[259] Cf. the similar conclusion in Wendel 2011: 149, n. 68.

[260] This commonly used phrase is typically attributed to Dahl 1966: 152. In this essay, however, Dahl included an extra definite article: "the continuation of the biblical history."

people's hope for the fulfilment of God's promises of salvation.[261] As many have noted, Luke even appears to imitate the style of the LXX in much of his work.[262] Furthermore, as we have already seen, Luke includes two speeches that briefly recount the history of Israel, and they both present the events recorded in his Gospel as the culmination of that history.[263] All of this, in combination with the similarity in content between Luke's work and the historical writings in the Jewish Scriptures, makes clear that Luke intends his readers to think of his writings as a climactic sequel to the scriptural story.[264]

Second, Luke asserts that the central events that he describes fulfil prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures. Luke's presentations of claims to fulfilment differ markedly from the Gospel of Matthew. As Richard B. Hays notes, the narrator in Matthew frequently employs fulfilment formulas while Luke prefers to place citations of Scripture on the lips of his characters.[265] Nevertheless, the theme of fulfilment is prevalent throughout Luke's work, and many see it as central to his purpose.[266]

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[261] Cf. the surveys of this material in Farris 1985; Tyson 1992: 43-53; Ravens 1995: 24-49; Rusam 2003: 40-88; Litwak 2005: 66-110; Backhaus 2007: 417-19; Wolter 2012: 68-69; Hays 2016: 195-200; Rowe 2016: 113-15.

[262] Cf. Cadbury 1926: 221-25; Dahl 1966: 152; Sterling 1992: 363; Schmidt 1999: 52-54; Schröter 2005: 241-42; and esp. Plümacher 1972: 50-69, who compares Luke's imitation of the LXX to the imitation of Attic Greek in Dionysius and Josephus.

[263] Acts 7.1-53; 13.16-41; cf. the comments on these passages in Easton 1954: 46-47; Wolter 1999: 322-23; Bonz 2000: 87; Jeska 2001: 229-30; Fuller 2006: 199-201; Wolter 2012: 68-69.

[264] For the most thorough presentations of this theme in Luke's writings, see Rosner 1993: 65-82; Buckwalter 1996: 86-99.

[265] Hays 2014: 58; for further comparisons between the use of Scripture in Matthew and Luke, see Rothschild 2004: 160-63.

[266] Cf. the surveys of this material in Peterson 1993: 87-100; Bock 1998: 49-61; Kurz 1999: 148-52; and the detailed studies of Denova 1997; Rusam 2003; Birkholz 2013. For very helpful treatments of both Luke's use of the theme of fulfilment and the subtler echoes of Scripture in his work, see Hays 2016: 191-280 and the chapters dedicated to Luke and Acts in the *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*: Pao and Schnabel 2007 and Marshall 2007.

Third, Luke emphasizes that the Christian message is fully in keeping with traditional Jewish beliefs and hopes, especially the Pharisaic doctrine of resurrection.[267] This theme is particularly prominent in the final quarter of Acts after Paul's arrest.[268]

Both those who claim that Luke's purpose is theological reassurance and those who argue that his aim is socio-cultural legitimation appeal to these three points, but, as we shall see, the claim that Luke employs them for the latter goal is suspect. These points play into Luke's agenda of establishing the legitimacy of the Christian movement as a development within God's plan of salvation history; they do little to establish or bolster the place of the church within the broader Graeco-Roman world.

4.4.3.1 Luke's Ambivalence about External Construals of the Jew-Christian Relation

Luke's lack of interest in utilizing the Jewish roots of the Christian movement for the purpose of socio-cultural legitimation can be illustrated by observing his ambivalence regarding outsiders' construals of the relationship between the early Christians and the Jewish people. Contrary to the proposal that Luke identifies the church as a branch of Judaism, some scholars actually argue that Luke's intention is to establish a clear separation between the Christians and the Jewish people.[269] The fact that these mutually exclusive positions can both be argued from the text of Acts suggests that Luke does not really promote either. Instead, Acts simply reports different external construals of the Christian movement's relation to the Jewish people at

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[267] E.g., Brawley 1984: 140-43; Esler 1987: 69, 216-17; Sanders 1987: 289-90; and esp. Haenchen 1987: 102, 693-94, who suggests that this is the central point in Acts that demonstrates the continuity between the Christian movement and the Jewish tradition.

[268] Cf. Acts 23.6-9; 24.10-21; 26.5-8, 22-24; 28.20.

[269] E.g., O'Neill 1961: 180-81; Wills 1991: 645; Cancik 1997: 675-77; Pervo 2006: 324-27; cf. Tyson 1992: 100; Harvey 1996: 83.

different times and in different locales without suggesting that any one view is or should be normative.

Thus, early in the book, the Jewish leaders understand the Christian movement to be a Jewish group fully within their jurisdiction and comparable to various revolutionary parties that had arisen in the past.[270] At this point in the narrative, all of the Christians are, in fact, Jewish, and so this construal is entirely understandable.

On the other hand, Acts 11.19-26 appears to describe the emergence of a distinct identity for the Christian community at Antioch as a result of the conversion of a substantial number of Gentiles. As many have noted, Luke's report that the title "Christian" (Χριστιανός) first appeared at Antioch follows immediately upon the heels of his claim that this was the first community of believers to include Gentiles. The implication is that the constituency and conduct of this community were sufficiently distinct from those of the Jewish community in Antioch as to require new public labels that recognized their independent status. As David Horrell writes, "Luke was no doubt aware that the Gentile mission achieved notable success in Antioch and that the church there achieved a distinct and visible identity vis-à-vis Judaism ."[271]

Distinction, however, was not the only construal of the Jew/Christian relation after the inclusion of the Gentiles. At the conclusion of the book, the Jewish contingency at Rome refers to the Christian movement as a αἵρεσις.[272] Although, as we have seen, it is a mistake to assert that this term implies that Christianity is a form of

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[270] Cf. Acts 5.35-39.

[271] Horrell 2007: 364; cf. Schneider 1980–1982: 2.92; Weiser 1989: 163; Zmijewski 1994: 444-45; Cancik 1997: 675-77; Barrett 1994–1998: 1.556-57; Gaventa 2003: 180; Gilbert 2003: 233-34; Bovon 2005: 364; Marguerat 2007: 414; Rowe 2009: 134-35; Butticaz 2011: 239-42; Gebauer 2014–2015: 1.217; *contra* Jervell 1998: 324-25; Trebilco 2012: 279, who suggest that the title "Christian" designated the church as a subgroup within the Jewish community. This proposal does not sufficiently account for the link between the origin of this label and the Gentile constituency of the church in Antioch.

[272] Acts 28.22.

Jewish philosophy, the word αἵρεσις does imply that Christians are a subgroup of a broader entity. In this case, the most logical identification of the broader entity of which they are assumed to be a part is the Jewish people.

Nevertheless, the closest that any reliable character comes to expressing an opinion on this issue is Paul's response to Tertullus' description of the Christian movement as "the party (αἵρεσεως) of the Nazarenes."[273] We have argued above that Paul's central point in this speech is to demonstrate that his activity is inoffensive to the Jewish people. In the midst of arguing this point, he states:

> But this I confess to you, that according to the way, which they call a party (αἵρεσιν), thus I serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the law and that is written in the prophets, having a hope in God which also these themselves await—that there is about to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.[274]

This aspect of Paul's exchange with Tertullus has been subjected to a wide variety of interpretations. Both the nature of Tertullus' initial claim and Paul's response to that claim are disputed.

Some understand Tertullus' description of the Christian movement as a αἵρεσις to have inherently negative connotations. Harry W. Tajra suggests that Tertullus' point is that "the high priests and elders considered 'the sect of the Nazarenes' as a group completely outside the framework of official Judaism."[275] Others similarly suggest that the term αἵρεσις implies that the Christian movement is a "heretical" or "unorthodox" form of Jewish religion.[276] According to these interpreters, Paul's response rejects Tertullus' assertion and argues that Christianity is a legitimate variant of Judaism.

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[273] Acts 24.5.

[274] Acts 24.14-15.

[275] Tajra 1989: 122; cf. Omerzu 2002: 434.

[276] Johnson 1992: 412-13; Witherington 1998: 708; Bock 2007: 692; Drewermann 2011: 987-88; cf. the slightly more modest suggestions of Conzelmann 1987: 199; Haenchen 1987: 655; Fitzmyer 1998: 734-35, who view the term as pejorative or contemptuous.

Others take Tertullus' use of the term αἵρεσις to be neutral, implying that the Nazarenes are an inner-Jewish group. Richard I. Pervo, following this line of interpretation, suggests that Paul then rejects the term αἵρεσις because Luke "opposes the theory that the Jesus movement is a Jewish sect."[277] Luke's view, Pervo asserts, is that Acts "posits a clear distinction between two religions."[278] The majority who read Tertullus' statement neutrally, however, suggest that Paul's rejection of the term αἵρεσις is not a repudiation of inclusion within Judaism but rather a rejection of the limitation that this term implies. As C. K. Barrett writes, "The implicit disavowal of *sect* means that Christianity regards itself not as a group or party within the people of God; it *is* the people of God, and its way is the way (the halakha) for all Israel."[279]

Yet another interpretation has recently been proposed by Joan E. Taylor, who argues that Tertullus' description of the Christian movement as a αἵρεσις is actually positive.[280] Taylor notes that Luke associates the term αἵρεσις with the Pharisees and Sadducees, parties that exercise religious authority among the Jewish people, but not other groups. On this basis, Taylor concludes that religious authority is essential to the meaning of the term for Luke, and she consequently regards Tertullus' description of the Christian movement with this term as a complimentary slip of the tongue. She writes, "when suddenly the Nazoreans are defined as a *hairesis* in the narrative of Acts this comes across not actually as insulting but as *elevating*."[281] Taylor then interprets

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[277] Pervo 2006: 168. Pervo argues that Luke's rejection of this label is demonstrated by the fact that it occurs only on the lips of outsiders in Acts (cf. Acts 28.22).

[278] Pervo 2006: 168-69.

[279] Barrett 2002: 368; cf. Jervell 1998: 570; Pao 2000: 65; Mason 2003b: 289; Schnabel 2012: 954; Trebilco 2012: 270; Keener 2012–2015: 4.3401.

[280] Taylor 2011: 91-99.

[281] Taylor 2011: 97.

Paul's statement, "they call it a αἵρεσις," not as a rejection of this label but rather as an ironic argument that Tertullus' diction attributes to the Christian movement a level of dignity on a par with the leading parties of the nation.[282]

Taylor's claim that the term αἵρεσις entails religious authority in Luke's writings is suspect. This proposal adds an unprecedented layer of meaning onto a term that is fully comprehensible without it, and Taylor's argument is undercut by her admission that, in Acts 28.22, the Jewish contingency in Rome uses this term in a neutral sense when referring to the Christian movement.[283] In the latter case, the Jewish contingency in Rome simply reports that they are interested in hearing Paul's views because they know that the αἵρεσις to which he belongs is "spoken against everywhere." Their use of αἵρεσις clearly does not imply that they view the Christian movement as a group with religious authority on a par with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and thus the claim that Luke's writings consistently use this term for groups of such a nature fails to persuade.

Nevertheless, Taylor's opposition to negative readings of αἵρεσις is a step in the right direction. As our study has already indicated, the claim that the term αἵρεσις bears negative connotations is anachronistic in this period, and thus interpretations that depend on a negative meaning for this term are unlikely. If anything, it is not the term αἵρεσις but rather the qualifier "of the Nazarenes" that Tertullus speaks with derisive intent. It may be the case that Tertullus is using a known title for the Christians and assuming their bad reputation, or he may be disparaging them by highlighting the fact

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[282] Taylor also argues that Josephus associates this term with religious authority. Josephus' application of αἵρεσις to the Essenes, however, poses a problem for her proposal because they had no formal religious authority. Taylor attempts to address this problem by claiming that the Essenes' courts represent an independent structure of authority that makes the application of this term to their group appropriate in Josephus' eyes (Taylor 2011: 99-105).

[283] See the comments on Acts 28.22 in Taylor 2011: 98-99.

that they are followers of a man from an unimportant town.[284] In any case, the term αἵρεσις by itself is neutral, and this makes it all the more interesting that this is a point to which Paul responds. What does he accomplish by attributing this label to his accusers while describing the Christian movement with the label "the way" (ἡ ὁδός)?

Contrary to prior proposals, it seems that this alteration of diction affords Paul the opportunity for both greater ambiguity and greater specificity. What becomes more ambiguous is the question that many interpreters suggest that Paul answers: the institutional status of the Christian movement in relation to the Jewish people. If Paul had simply let Tertullus' initial characterization stand, his position on this issue would have been crystal clear: a Jewish αἵρεσις is a subgroup within the larger whole. Substituting the term ἡ ὁδός in place of αἵρεσις, however, puts an ambiguous term in place of a definite one. Although, the term ἡ ὁδός does point to the Christian movement's Jewish roots, it does not speak clearly to the issue of whether or not the movement should be viewed as internal to the Jewish people.

As David Pao argues, Luke's presentation of ἡ ὁδός as a Christian self-designation evokes the motif of a new exodus from Isaiah 40–55. Within Isaiah 40–55, ἡ ὁδός is a key term that evokes exodus traditions, and, as Pao's study demonstrates at length, Luke draws on Isaiah's presentation of this theme throughout his work.[285] Luke 3.4-6 quotes Isa 40.3-5, which speaks of the preparation of "the way (τὴν ὁδόν) of the Lord,"[286] and this latter passage in particular probably influenced the use of ἡ ὁδός as a

[284] Cf. Heusler 2000: 69; Keener 2012–2015: 4.3379-80. Elsewhere in Luke's writings, the term Ναζωραῖος is always used as an adjective describing Jesus, whether on the lips of outsiders, Jesus' disciples, or Jesus himself (cf. Luke 18.37; Acts 2.22; 3.6; 4.10; 6.14; 22.8; 26.9). Nazareth's lowly reputation is well illustrated by Nathanael's incredulous response to Philip's claim that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah in John 1.46: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

[285] See Pao 2000.

[286] Cf. also the allusions to this passage in Luke 1.76; 7.27.

Christian self-designation, just as it did the prominent use of "the way" in self-designations at Qumran.[287] Both early Christians and the Qumran community understood their movements to be the locus of the fulfilment of these prophecies, and both consequently conceived of themselves as those who were proceeding along "the way of the Lord" and adopted the shortened form of this phrase, "the way," as a self-designation.[288] Thus, the title ἡ ὁδός does clearly associate the Christian movement with the Jewish tradition, but it does not address the question of whether or not multi-ethnic Christian communities should be viewed as internal to the Jewish people, as the term αἵρεσις suggests, or as independent communities, as the Antiochene neologism Χριστιανός implies. Paul's hesitation regarding the term αἵρεσις is curious, but his replacement of it with ἡ ὁδός does little to clarify matters.

Nevertheless, this move does afford Paul the opportunity to mention a specific set of continuities that are relevant to his situation before the court. In the face of the charge that he is an agitator who causes dissension within Jewish communities, Paul describes the beliefs of the Christian movement:

> But this I confess to you, that according to the way, which they call a party, thus I serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the law and that is written in the prophets, having a hope in God which also these themselves await—that there is about to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.[289]

However one might construe the relationship between the Christian movement and the Jewish people, Paul claims that this "way," which is a means of worshipping the ancestral God of the Jews, entails full belief in the Jewish Scriptures and the Jewish

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[287] E.g., "those who choose the way" in 1QS 9.17-18; 1QH^a 12.17; "the perfect ones of the way" in 1QS 4.22; 1QM 14.7; 4Q404 2.3; cf. the discussion of the use of this motif at Qumran in Trebilco 2012: 251-53; Bauckham 2003: 76-78.

[288] Pao 2000: 66-68; on "the way" in Isaiah 40–55, see pp. 52-54; cf. also the extensive discussion in Trebilco 2012: 247-71.

[289] Acts 24.14-15.

hope of a coming resurrection. As we have argued above, he emphasizes the traditional nature of Christian beliefs in order to imply that his work among the Jewish people is not improper agitation. That is as far, however, as his words go in defining the relationship between the Christian movement and the Jewish people.[290] Paul places out of bounds the construal of Christian mission work among the Jewish people as an effort to promote inner-Jewish dissension, but he leaves the particular contours of the relationship ambiguous.

Throughout the book of Acts, then, Luke fails to endorse any specific external construal of the relationship between the Christian movement and the Jewish people. His narrative gives the impression that the Christians were sometimes assumed to be an inner-Jewish group and sometimes categorized as an independent movement, but he never suggests that the promotion of one of these views is important. The one point that Luke does seek to establish is that Christian beliefs cohere with the Jewish tradition, and he uses this point in order to argue that Christian mission work among the Jewish people is not an attempt to stir up inner-Jewish dissension. Nevertheless, Luke never commits to a position on the question of whether Christian communities are internal or external to the Jewish people. Those who argue that Luke's agenda is to promote a specific view on this broader issue fail to account for the diversity of evidence within his work.

4.4.3.2 Continuity with the Jewish Heritage as Theological Reassurance

As noted above, in addition to the traditional nature of Christian beliefs, Luke also points to continuity with the Jewish heritage by 1) depicting the events of his

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[290] *Contra* Brawley 1987: 97-100; Haenchen 1987: 693-94; Sanders 1987: 289-90, each of whom suggests that Paul's words demonstrate that Christianity is a form of Judaism.

narrative as the continuation of biblical history and 2) employing the motif of the fulfilment of prophecy. It is somewhat artificial to separate these as two distinct points because they are deeply intertwined within his work. In the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel, one of the primary ways in which he evokes a biblical atmosphere is by depicting the hopes of the people through intertextual engagement with numerous prophetic texts from the Jewish Scriptures.[291] Additionally, both of the surveys of Israel's history in Acts connect that history to the present by highlighting prophecies that, according to the speakers, have now been fulfilled. Thus, for Luke, the events of his narrative are the continuation, in fact, the culmination of biblical history *because* they fulfil God's promises of salvation through the prophets. The central question, then, is what rhetorical function this type of continuity performs: does it, as some have suggested, enable the Christians to enhance their public profile through association with the Jewish tradition,[292] or does it provide reassurance that the events that have taken place through the life of Jesus and the early church truly are a part of God's plan?[293]

In a recent study, Rothschild suggests that the motif of prophecy and fulfilment was primarily employed in ancient historiographic literature as a means for authenticating unlikely or implausible events. Although not all of the evidence within her survey fits neatly within this proposal, Rothschild does establish that this was a common rhetorical function for this theme.[294] Luke's use of prophecy and fulfilment appears to be a particular type of authentication; his appeals to the Jewish Scriptures

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[291] Cf. the study of this material in Hays 2016: 195-201.

[292] Cf. Talbert 1984: 100; Esler 1987: 68; Sterling 1992: 384-85; Mason 2003b: 268-70; Backhaus 2007: 417-26; Keener 2012–2015: 1.487.

[293] Cf. Franklin 1975: 111; Tiede 1980: 131; Cook 1988: 117-22; Jervell 1996a: 104-8; Wasserberg 1999: 727; Rothschild 2004: 142-82; Wendel 2011: 142-43.

[294] Cf. Rothschild 2004: 150-58.

confirm that these events are legitimate developments within God's plan of salvation history.

The appeals to Scripture in Luke's writings cluster around a few central issues and events: the role of John the Baptist,[295] the nature of Jesus' ministry,[296] the question of Jesus' identity,[297] the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus,[298] Judas' betrayal of Jesus and subsequent replacement,[299] the sending of the Spirit,[300] and the inclusion of Gentiles in God's salvific plan.[301] As Luke's writings abundantly illustrate, many of these developments were surprising when they happened and many of them provoked strong reactions from the Jewish community. Thus, they are precisely the kinds of events that need further authentication. By pointing to the correspondence between these events and the Jewish Scriptures, Luke demonstrates that those who doubt the legitimacy of these developments are wrong because they have always been a part of the divine plan.

Notably, the final scriptural citation in Acts implies that even the Jewish people's resistance to the Christian message was a part of this plan. In Acts 28.25-28, Paul responds to the rejection of his message among the Jewish inhabitants of Rome by citing Isa 6.9-10, which describes the people of Israel as perpetually obdurate in the face of God's overtures.[302] The placement of this citation in the final scene of Acts

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[295] Luke 1.14-17; 3.4-6; 7.27.

[296] Luke 4.17-19; 7.22; 20.17-18; Acts 3.24-26; 10.43.

[297] Luke 20.41-44; 22.67-70; Acts 3.22-23; 4.11; 18.28.

[298] Luke 18.31-33; 22.37; 24.25-27, 44-49; Acts 2.25-31; 3.18; 4.24-28; 8.27-35; 17.2-3; 26.22-23; 28.23; cf. Acts 24.14-15; 26.6-8, which relate Scripture to resurrection more generally.

[299] Acts 1.16-20.

[300] Acts 2.15-21.

[301] Acts 13.46-47; 15.15-17; 26:22-23.

[302] Cf. also Luke 8.10; on both of these uses of Isa 6.9-10, see Evans 1989: 115-27.

suggests that Franklin is right in claiming that Luke saw Jewish rejection of the Christian message as a serious problem.[303] This was a problem that needed both to be explained, as Luke attempts to do by including this final citation, and to be countered, as Luke does throughout his work by emphasizing how the events that he describes fulfil God's promises in the Jewish Scriptures.

Further evidence that Luke's purpose is theological reassurance rather than socio-cultural legitimation is provided by the fact that the strategies of emphasizing the continuation of biblical history and the fulfilment of Scripture are hardly unique to Luke's writings. As Hays notes, despite the fascinating differences in their approaches to Scripture, all four of the canonical Gospels emphasize these two basic points. Luke is perhaps the most pronounced in emphasizing continuity with the scriptural story, but all four display cognizance of this narrative framework.[304] No one has proposed, however, that the other Gospels are engaged in an effort to provide socio-cultural legitimation in the broader Graeco-Roman world. To the contrary, the presence of these points in all four Gospels suggests that such points were simply aspects of widespread Christian teaching, and Luke's writings are thus best interpreted as an effort to bolster the confidence of believers in these aspects of the Christian message.

Luke's focus on the Jewish heritage of the Christian movement is thus not socio-cultural apologetic—an effort to persuade (or equip other Christians to persuade) outsiders that the church is an institution with an acceptable cultural profile. Instead, it is apologetic in a more basic sense—an argument for the truth of the Christian message.[305] His aim is to demonstrate that, despite widespread rejection from the

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[303] Cf. Franklin 1975: 111, quoted above.

[304] Hays 2016: 360-63.

[305] Cf. the central proposal of Neagoe 2002.

Jewish community, the events of the life of Jesus and the early church genuinely constitute the realization of God's plan for salvation history.

4.4.4 Conclusion

Thus, the kinds of continuity that Luke emphasizes suggest that his aims in highlighting the Jewish roots of the Christian movement are more theological than socio-cultural.

Luke's emphasis on continuity contrasts sharply with the socio-cultural approach found in Dionysius' *Ant. Rom*. Dionysius' preface makes explicit claims about his intention to demonstrate that the Romans are worthy of honour because of their Greek heritage, but Luke's brief preface suggests that his focus is on leading readers to a proper interpretation of the events that he will describe; he says nothing about the identity of the people. Additionally, the themes in Luke's writings are not comparable to either of the central arguments that Dionysius presents in order to demonstrate the Romans' claim on the Greek heritage. Dionysius provides extensive genealogical evidence that the earliest Romans were Greek. Luke, however, includes far less genealogical material, and he uses this material in the service of very different aims. Dionysius also attempts to demonstrate that Roman culture is Greek by highlighting Rome's Greek laws and religious practices and suggesting that the virtue of the Romans demonstrates their Greek "nature." Luke, on the other hand, emphatically insists that Gentiles within the Christian movement need not adopt the Jewish law, and his writings imply that at least some elements of the law were loosened for Jewish Christians. Dionysius' argument for a culturally legitimating continuity between the Romans and the Greeks thus finds little echo in Luke's presentation of the

Christian claim on the Jewish heritage. Luke's emphasis on continuity runs along different axes, and this suggests that he has distinctive aims.

Contrary to Mason's proposal, Luke's work also contrasts with that of Josephus. Mason claims that Luke adopts Josephus' strategy of presenting Jewish groups as philosophical schools by depicting the Christian movement as a Jewish philosophical school alongside the Pharisees and Sadducees. The evidence on which Mason relies is primarily the appearance of terminology that can bear philosophical connotations, but the contexts in which Luke uses these terms suggest that he does not have these connotations in view. In the scene that comes the closest to presenting Christian thought as philosophy, Paul's speech before the Areopagus, there is little effort made to suggest that it is Jewish.

Luke emphasizes continuity between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots through three primary means: 1) he depicts the events of his narrative as the continuation of biblical history; 2) he claims that the central events that he describes fulfil prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures; 3) he emphasizes that the Christian message is fully in keeping with traditional Jewish beliefs. Luke's focus on continuity in these areas suggests that his primary aim is theological reassurance and not socio-cultural legitimation.

Aside from using the traditional nature of Christian beliefs to rule out the claim that Christian mission work among the Jewish people is improper agitation, Luke is largely uninterested in negotiating external construals of the relationship between the Christian movement and the Jewish people. He reports various responses to the emergence of Christian communities without suggesting that any one response is or should be normative. The one time that a reliable character comments on this issue (Paul's speech in response to Tertullus), he rejects a label that clearly places the

Christian movement within Judaism (αἵρεσις) and expresses his preference for the far more ambiguous title "the way" (ἡ ὁδός). This ambiguity is emblematic of Luke's ambivalence about external construals of the Jew-Christian relation.

Luke's emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecy and his depiction of the events of his narrative as the culmination of biblical history are best explained as a part of Luke's effort to demonstrate that the events of his narrative are legitimate developments within the divine plan. This proposal fits with the prevalent use of prophecy and fulfilment as a means of authentication in historiographic literature, and it makes better sense than the alternative of the presence of similar motifs in the other canonical Gospels. In terms of a historical situation, Luke's emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecy is probably an apologetic response to the broad rejection of the Christian message by the Jewish people.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have investigated the claim that Luke appeals to the Jewish roots of the Christian movement for the purpose of gaining cultural or political capital. We have done so by comparing his work to two near-contemporaries who wrote with cultural and political aims in view: Dionysius of Halicarnassus and T. Flavius Josephus. For each topic that we have explored, we have seen that Luke's treatment of the relevant material differs substantially from these authors and contains little to recommend the view that he intended to associate the Christian movement with the Jewish people for cultural or political ends.

In the legal sphere, Josephus presents numerous decisions detailing the rights of the Jewish people, and he includes instances in which the value of these decisions as precedents is illustrated. Luke, however, records dominical commands forbidding the

planning of one's legal defence, and the few decisions that he records are never treated as precedents within his work. In addition, when Luke's characters appeal to the Jewish heritage in legal situations, the appeals are usually non-transferable because they are tightly linked to the particular charges that these characters are facing.

In terms of cultural argument, both Dionysius and Josephus make explicit claims about and offer proof for the antiquity of the people whom they describe, and they use antiquity as a part of a broader argument that the group in view has a time-tested tradition of virtue. Luke, however, makes no reference to the antiquity of the Jewish people and, when the question of the newness of the Christian movement arises, his work unembarrassedly portrays it as decidedly new. Even more importantly, the references to Israel's past in Luke's work suggest that, aside from a few exceptional figures, the Jewish people do not have an impressive tradition of virtue but rather a long history of disobedience to God and opposition to his prophets.

Finally, in order to legitimate the Romans as Greek, Dionysius points to continuity in the realms of genealogy and culture. Luke, however, primarily emphasizes the correspondence between the events of his narrative and the Jewish Scriptures. Luke is largely ambivalent about external construals of the relationship between the Christian movement and the Jewish people. His work instead focuses on instilling confidence within his readers that the events that have taken place through the life of Jesus and the early church legitimately belong to the divine plan because they fulfil God's promises of salvation.

When Luke's writings are set beside those of Dionysius and Josephus, substantial weaknesses appear in the argument that Luke's intention in highlighting the Jewish roots of the Christian movement is to make a case for cultural respect or political tolerance. On nearly every important issue, Luke does not treat the relevant

material in a way that corresponds to his contemporaries who clearly wrote with these concerns in view, and the kinds of continuities that he emphasizes point to other aims and goals. In the concluding chapter to this study, we will consider the significance of these findings.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have investigated the motivation behind Luke's emphasis on the Jewish roots of the Christian movement. We have particularly focused on evaluating recent proposals that suggest that Luke's intention is to gain cultural or political capital by associating the church with a respectable ancient heritage. In order to assess these proposals, we have compared Luke's writings to the works of two of his near-contemporaries who explicitly pursue such agendas: Dionysius of Halicarnassus and T. Flavius Josephus. In this final chapter, we will first review the findings of our study and then discuss their significance.

5.1 Summary of the Argument

Dionysius' *Antiquitates Romanae* is an effort to justify Roman rule by illustrating the respectable Greek heritage and the virtuous character of the Roman people. He traces the lineage of the Romans back to five waves of immigrants from Greece, and he claims that Rome's constitution combines all the best elements of the Greek constitutional tradition and hence produced a superlatively virtuous people. Dionysius' overarching argument is that Rome is a true Greek city with a tradition of virtue that reaches back to ancient times, and it is this tradition that has led to the city's domination of the world.

Our study of *Ant. Rom.* revealed several interesting points. First, in order to argue that the Romans have a legitimate claim to the ancient Greek heritage, Dionysius defines what it means to be Greek in a manner that encompasses the whole of the Roman people. He evidently did not consider it sufficient to show that Rome has adopted Greek traditions or that some Romans have Greek ancestry. Second, Dionysius' work suggests that having roots in antiquity accomplishes very little by itself; what matters is the quality of a people's ancient roots and the ways in which a people's traditions have or have not proved themselves over the course of time. Third, Dionysius' arguments for Rome's Greek heritage and culture are explicit, extensive and pervasive throughout his work. He does not leave the reader to infer the respectability of the Roman people from sporadic subtle details; he devotes a great deal of space and argumentative energy in order to present his case.

Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* seeks to enhance the reputation of the Jewish people by demonstrating the nobility of Jewish origins and the virtue of the Jewish tradition. As we have seen, much of Josephus' argument parallels and was likely influenced by Dionysius. Josephus similarly claims that the Jewish people's origins can be traced to ancient times, and he argues that they have a constitution that leads the people to lives of virtue. In addition to these parallels to Dionysius' argument, Josephus adds that the honour of the Jewish people is demonstrated by the respect that they have been shown by Rome.

Several points from our study of this material proved to be important. First, Josephus' emphasis on Jewish antiquity suggests that the antiquity of the Jewish tradition was not a point that could be taken for granted. Second, Josephus provides further evidence that, in the first century, the defining characteristic of a respected heritage was not antiquity by itself but rather a long history of proven virtue. Third,

Josephus illustrates the use of particular themes as cultural apologetic (Jewish thought as philosophy and the Jewish law as a constitution) that correspond to recent proposals about Luke's writings. Finally, Josephus' depiction of the legal status of the Jewish people suggests that Rome's tolerance of Jewish customs was not a result of Roman respect for Jewish antiquity. Instead, Josephus portrays Rome's tolerance as both the application of a standard policy and a result of the particular relationship between the Jewish people and Rome, especially the help that the Jewish people provided in Rome's war against Egypt.

With these observations in mind, we examined Luke's writings in order to evaluate the various proposals that maintain that his aims in emphasizing the Christian movement's Jewish roots are cultural or political. We found that there is little support for the purported parallels between Luke's intentions and the intentions of Dionysius and Josephus.

Josephus provides *Acta* and legal decisions that detail the granting of rights to the Jewish people, and he includes episodes that demonstrate the value of these decisions as precedents. Luke records few legal decisions in favour of the early Christians, and nothing in his work suggests that Christians should view these decisions as precedents to which they could appeal in later trials. The decisions that Luke reports are usually tightly linked to particular situations within his narrative, and Jesus' prohibition of the planning of one's defence in Luke's Gospel suggests that reading these scenes as model defences is hermeneutically misguided.

In contrast to the emphasis that Dionysius and Josephus place on antiquity, Luke appears to assume the Jewish people's ancient origins, but he never makes antiquity an important measure of value. Instead, Luke includes Jesus' criticism of blind devotion to that which is old (Luke 5.39), and, when Paul is questioned about his

"new teaching" before the Areopagus, the response that Luke attributes to Paul embraces this characterization, suggesting that the Christian message is a *novum* inspired by Jesus' resurrection (Acts 17.30-31).

Furthermore, Luke does not present the history of the Jewish people in ways that suggest that they have a time-tested tradition of virtue. Unlike Josephus, Luke does not translate the history of Israel into Graeco-Roman categories, presenting the Mosaic law as a constitution and evaluating characters in terms of how they measure up to the classic cardinal virtues. His work stays closer to the conceptual framework and evaluative criteria of the Jewish Scriptures. More importantly, both the occasional comments of reliable characters in Luke's writings and the speeches recounting Israel's history in Acts 7 and 13 suggest that, throughout their existence, the majority of the Jewish people have been disobedient to God and resistant to his overtures through the prophets. The editorial tendencies in Luke's writings press in the opposite direction from those of Josephus, and anyone evaluating Luke's portrait of the Jewish people from the perspective implicit in the works of Dionysius and Josephus would not conclude that they have a respectable heritage that deserves cultural esteem.

Finally, the ways in which Luke points to continuity between the Christian movement and the Jewish tradition contrast with Dionysius' emphasis on the continuity between Rome and the Greek tradition. Dionysius produces an extensive and sophisticated ethnographic argument, but Luke appears to be largely unconcerned about external construals of the Christian movement. Luke points to continuity by emphasizing three themes: 1) the events of his narrative are the continuation of biblical history; 2) these events fulfil the prophecies of salvation from the Jewish Scriptures; 3) the Christian message is fully in keeping with traditional Jewish beliefs. The only one of these themes that Luke uses to address the public identity of the Christian movement

is the third, and, in this case, he only uses this theme to make the negative point that Christian missionary activity among the Jewish people is not improper agitation with which the Roman authorities ought to be concerned. Beyond that, Luke's emphases suggest that his intentions are far less similar to Dionysius than they are to the authors of the other canonical Gospels, all of whom depict Jesus' life as the fulfilment of prophecy and the climax of the biblical story. Luke's focus on continuity in these areas suggests that his purpose is to reassure Christians that the events that have taken place in the life of Jesus and the early church are legitimate develops within God's salvific plan.

5.2 Significance and Implications

The purpose of this study has been to challenge an increasingly influential proposal about Luke's intentions in highlighting the Jewish roots of the Christian movement. Our central contention is that Luke highlights this connection not in order to provide the church with a means to bolster its position in Graeco-Roman society but rather in order to reassure Christians about the legitimacy of the claim that God's promises of salvation have come to fulfilment through the events of the life of Jesus and the early church. In addition to supporting this central thesis, the findings of our study make contributions to a handful of other questions and debates.

First, our study largely confirms the view that Luke has a mixed view of the Roman Empire and primarily intends to encourage Christians to faithfulness in witness, regardless of the political consequences.[1] As noted in the introduction, several versions of the antiquity proposal are essentially nuanced reworkings of the traditional reading

[1] Cf. Maddox 1982: 96-97; Cassidy 1987: 160; House 1990: 329-30; Tannehill 1986–1990: 2.301-2; Alexander 1999: 39; Walton 2002: 33-35.

of Luke's writings as political apologetic.[2] We have seen, however, that these latest iterations of the political apologetic reading of Luke's writings are deeply flawed. The closest that Luke comes to political apologetic is his repeated emphasis on the claim that Christian missionary activity among the Jewish people is not improper agitation.[3] At most, this would lead one to the view expressed by John Barclay:

> I do not think Luke was trying to deflect the suspicion that Christianity was 'a government takeover'—could he imagine that?—but to wedge open a gap between the beliefs and practices of the early Christians and the criminal law, a gap that could be forced open or shut because the relationship between law and religion was an uncertain business.[4]

Nevertheless, even this mild reading of Luke's political material as apologetic goes beyond the hermeneutical stance that Luke's writings imply. Jesus' prohibition of the planning of one's defence and his promise of divine assistance in the midst of trials suggest that readers are to understand the trial scenes in Acts as a demonstration of the fulfilment of that promise.[5] The intended effect of these scenes is not to supply readers with particular arguments or legal precedents but rather to encourage them that God will also equip them in the moment if they are placed in similar circumstances. The aim of Luke's political material is not apologetic or legitimation, but rather edification—encouragement to fidelity in Christian witness, come what may.

Second, Todd Penner wrote in 2003, "while the content and style of a book such as Acts may still be distinct on certain levels when compared to Tacitus, Livy, or

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[2] E.g., Sterling 1992: 381-86; Marguerat 1999: 76-77; Mason 2003b: 270-73, 283-91; Backhaus 2007: 407-12; Marguerat 2009: 98-100; Keener 2012–2015: 1.266-67, 449-50, 454-56; cf. Esler 1987: 201-19, although Esler suggests that the argument is focused on assuaging the concerns of Christians who are involved in government service rather than equipping those within Luke's community to address the authorities, and hence he rejects the label "apologetic" in favour of "legitimation."

[3] See pp. 207-15 above.

[4] Barclay 2011: 324.

[5] Cf. Luke 12.11-12; 21.12-19.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, on many fronts it is now perceived as fully consonant with the so-called high culture of antiquity."[6] Our study, however, raises doubts about this claim. As with all works produced from the perspective of a minority group within a dominant culture, Luke's writings exhibit what post-colonial theorists refer to as "hybridity." They bear an ambivalent relationship to the dominant culture, at times adopting, at times mimicking, and at times rejecting or mocking the values and perspectives of the dominant group.[7] Nevertheless, Luke's writings display far less assimilation to and utilization of the values of Graeco-Roman culture than the writings of Josephus. Barclay, who introduced post-colonial analysis into the study of Josephus, writes:

> in the case of Josephus' rhetoric we may watch an accomplished writer handle the complexities of unequal power-relations, in which an elite foreigner in Rome carefully shapes his discourse in order to win maximal advantage for himself and for his people, within the constraints of his social and political environment.[8]

The same, however, is not true of Luke. As we have seen, Luke's portrait of the early Christian movement is primarily aimed at giving theological reassurance to those who already belong to the faith, and he consequently works with a different set of assumed values and criteria for legitimacy.

Nevertheless, Luke does at times describe the early church in ways that appeal to Graeco-Roman cultural values. For example, scholars have often noted that Luke's depictions of the church in Jerusalem sound very much like either a fulfilment of the Graeco-Roman ideal of friendship or descriptions of utopian societies in ancient

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[6] Penner 2003: 67.

[7] On the concept of "hybridity," see Bhabha 1994: 102-22; Loomba 1998: 178-83. The latter provides a critical discussion of the use of this concept in post-colonial analysis.

[8] Barclay 2005: 315.

philosophical literature.[9] The fact that such passages depart from the dominant trends within the book makes them all the more interesting, and the questions of where, to what to degree, and why Luke shapes passages in accordance with Graeco-Roman values are perhaps issues that deserve further attention. Our study has only explored one small corner of Luke's interaction with the dominant values of Graeco-Roman culture, and further elucidation of Luke's distinct cultural and epistemic vision could be a fruitful avenue for further research.[10]

Third, our examinations of the arguments of Dionysius and Josephus suggest that there is also room for further work on the question of Dionysius' influence on Josephus. Although the influence of Dionysius on Josephus was once an unquestioned majority opinion, this view has recently been criticized for its appeals to ambiguous linguistic data and its minimization of important differences in their historiographic methods.[11] Nevertheless, our study suggests that, at the level of argument, the similarities between Dionysius and Josephus are too great to be coincidental. It appears, in fact, that Josephus' argument is modelled on that of Dionysius, and also that Josephus intends to one-up Dionysius by suggesting that the Jewish tradition is superior to that of Rome when judged by the criteria that Dionysius employs. This fascinating intersection suggests that the relationship between the works of Dionysius and Josephus may benefit from further study and reflection.

Fourth, our study weakens the case of those who suggest that Luke directly used the writings of Josephus when composing his works. As noted above, Steve Mason

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[9] E.g., Plümacher 1972: 16-18; Mealand 1977: 96-99; Conzelmann 1987: 24; Mitchell 1992: 255-72; Moreland 2003: 306-7; Hume 2011; cf. Sterling 1994: 679-96.

[10] Cf. the recent reflections on Luke's perspective on the justification of truth-claims in Padilla 2016: 199-243, Liggins 2016.

[11] Cf. the criticisms in Rajak 1982: 466-77; Ladouceur 1983: 20-35; Bilde 1988: 202-3; Spilsbury 1998b: 31, n. 314.

argues that Luke uses the term αἵρεσις to refer to the Christian movement as a Jewish philosophical school, and he suggests that this move betrays Luke's direct dependence on Josephus, the only other author known to have used this term to depict the major Jewish parties as schools of philosophy.[12] Our study, however, demonstrates that Luke's use of αἵρεσις does not actually depict the Christian movement as a philosophical school, thereby undercutting the basis for Mason's argument.[13] Thus, our study weakens the case for Luke's use of the works of Josephus, although there are many other factors to consider in coming to a final decision on this issue.[14]

Finally, our study also weakens the case of those who have co-opted the antiquity proposal in the service of other agendas. We noted two examples of this in the introduction.

First, Jack T. Sanders explains away Luke's positive references to the Jewish people as a result of his desire to furnish the Christian movement with an ancient heritage. This suggestion enables Sanders to claim that Luke's positive comments are calculated exceptions to his typical anti-Semitic posture.[15] Our study, however, has shown that this explanation is inadequate. Luke is not interested in the respect that an ancient heritage provides, and thus his positive references to the Jewish people cannot be so easily dismissed.

Second, others have pointed to Luke's purported interest in antiquity as evidence for the view that his writings (and especially Acts) were composed in the

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[12] Cf. Mason 2003b: 288-91; see also Pervo 2006: 168-69, 198, although Pervo claims that a similar use of αἵρεσις may be found in Philo, *Contempl.* 29.

[13] See pp. 203-4 above.

[14] Cf. the extensive case presented in favour of Luke's use of the writings of Josephus in Pervo 2006: 149-99.

[15] Cf. Sanders 1987: 236, 243.

second century. Christians, they claim, did not engage in arguments from antiquity before the time of the apologists, and thus Acts must have been produced during this later era.[16] Although the dating of Luke's writings is a complicated issue, our study suggests that this particular line of argument is misguided. Luke's emphasis on the Christian movement's Jewish roots is not, as in the apologists, an effort to argue for antiquity; it is instead, as in the other canonical Gospels, an effort to insist that the events of Jesus' life and the early church truly constitute the fulfilment of God's salvific promises.

At the beginning of our study, we set out to evaluate a particular construal of Luke's intentions by comparing his writings to the works of two of Luke's near-contemporaries: Dionysius of Halicarnassus and T. Flavius Josephus. Although these comparisons have involved exploration of numerous complicated issues, our conclusion is in many ways very simple: two of these are alike (*Antiquitates Romanae* and *Antiquitates Judaicae*) and one is different (the writings of Luke). In contrast to Dionysius' treatment of the Romans and Josephus' treatment of the Jewish people, Luke does not seek to ground the Christian movement in antiquity and suggest that Christians belong to a virtuous, time-tested tradition. Luke's focus on the Christian movement's Jewish roots are instead aimed at bolstering his readers' confidence in the central Christian claims regarding the fulfilment of God's promises of salvation. Like the other canonical Gospels, Luke's aim is to defend the claim that the biblical story has reached its culmination through both the events of the life of Jesus and the subsequent development of the church by means of the proclamation of these events. This construal of Luke's intentions has proved to be illuminating for a number of issues

[16] Cf. Pervo 2006: 262-63, 327-28; Nasrallah 2008: 565-66; see also Tyson 2006: 59, who claims that Luke's emphasis on antiquity is a response to Marcion.

in the study of Luke's writings, implying that some lines of argument should be abandoned and others further developed.

In the end, our study also perhaps helps to fill out the meaning of Luke's stated goal for Theophilus: "so that you may know the security of the things you have been taught."[17] Our findings suggest that the things of which Luke hopes to assure Theophilus include not only the historical reality of the events in question, but also the theological interpretation of these events as the fulfilment of God's salvific plan. Such claims are, of course, impossible to judge apart from one's essential beliefs regarding God, history, and Scripture. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Luke's writings have been used to shape and strengthen Christian faith for nearly two millennia. If the cultural assumptions of the first century still prevailed today, one might even argue that Luke's message is vindicated by this time-tested tradition. Luke, however, would probably want to reply that the vindication of his message rests not on its antiquity, but rather on his careful research, the correspondence between the events that he narrates and the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures, and ultimately on the resurrection of a young Jewish prophet.

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[17] Luke 1.4.

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