In the Image of Empire: The Acts of the Apostles and Imperial Representations

Drew W. Billings

Faculty of Religious Studies McGill University, Montréal



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English Abstract

The objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate, by way of three case studies, how Acts fashions a public portraiture of Paul in conformity with the representational standards in circulation during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan (98-117 CE). The first case study demonstrates that Acts' discursive mode, characterized by its dramatic continuous narrative format, heavy use of realism, and encomiastic style, correlates with contemporary developments in Roman commemorative art, epitomized on the Column of Trajan. The second case study, employing epigraphic records from Asia Minor (the same location as Paul's travels in Acts), analyzes how Acts characterizes Paul as a community patron and benefactor at a time when there was a striking proliferation of provincials representing themselves as benefactors. The third case study investigates the obverse side of Luke's apologetic and the various ways the author negatively characterizes "Jewish" responses to Paul. I demonstrate how this image is constructed in accordance with a pervasive anti-Jewish misanthropy theme that was adopted from imperial rhetoric, while accommodated to Acts' own contemporary setting to reflect post-70 developments of Roman-Jewish relations. Through each of these three case studies, I show that Acts fashions Paul's image in conformity with broader standards and trends of identity construction. In the end, by situating Acts within a definite field of vision, this project will contribute to scholarship in understanding some of the more salient effects the Roman Empire had in the shaping of early Christian and Jewish representational interests and strategies.

French Abstract

Le but de cette thèse est de démontrer, au moyen de trois études de cas, de quelle manière Actes construit un portrait public de Paul qui est conforme aux normes représentatives qui circulaient pendant le règne de l'empereur romain Trajan (98-117 ap. J.-C.). La première étude de cas démontre que le mode discursif du livre, caractérisé par son format narratif continu dramatique, par l'usage intensif de réalisme, et par le style encomiastique, est en corrélation avec les évolutions contemporaines de l'art Roman, parfaitement illustrés sur la colonne Trajane. La deuxième étude de cas utilise les dossiers épigraphiques de l'Asie Mineure (au même endroit que les voyages de Paul dans les Actes) afin d'analyser la façon dont le livre des Actes caractérise Paul comme patron de la communauté et bienfaiteur, à une époque où il y avait une prolifération remarquable des provinciaux se présentant comme des bienfaiteurs. La troisième étude de cas examine l'avers de l'apologétique de Luc et les différentes façons dont l'auteur caractérise négativement les réponses «juives» à Paul. Je démontre comment cette image est construite en conformité avec un thème envahissant anti-juif de la misanthropie qui a été adapté de la rhétorique impériale ; le thème est bien conforme au cadre contemporain du livre afin de refléter les développements post 70 des relations juives-romaines. Par ces trois études de cas, je montre que Actes construit l'image de Paul en conformité avec les normes et les tendances générales de la construction identitaire. En fin de compte, en situant le livre des Actes dans un champ visuel définitif, ce projet contribuera à l'érudition par la compréhension de certaines des influences les plus saillantes de l'Empire romain sur la formation des intérêts et stratégies représentatifs des premiers juifs et chrétiens.

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Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of my late *Doktormutter*, Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, former professor and dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University, who supervised this research until the final days of copy-editing. Dean Aitken's contribution to my life is simply unquantifiable. I am deeply thankful for the time we spent together in Montreal, Rome, Boston, San Diego, Chicago, and beyond. It is with a great sense of pride that I count myself as one of her students.

INTRODUCTION:

History of Scholarship on Acts and Empire

For the study of Christian discourse in the Roman world is the study of reception, and this is a two-way process—not merely how Christian discourse made its impact on society at large, but how it was itself transformed and shaped in the endeavor. Christian discourse would have been different without the environment of the Roman world; and that environment itself was subject to geographical and diachronic variance. What we study is a dynamic process in which both sides are changing.¹

Since the 1990's the study of Jewish and Christian literature in the Greco-Roman period

has witnessed an increasing interest in the foregrounding of the Roman Empire as a

determinative context in which Jews and Christians lived, wrote, and had their being, rather than

as a coincidental and inconsequential background. As a result, several important studies have

demonstrated the varying degrees and manifold ways particular texts negotiate this

environment.² Such a growth of interest, of course, does not take place in a vacuum; instead, it

corresponds with new research in Classics, as well as broader trends across the humanities,

where empire-critical and postcolonial studies have proven to be widely fruitful modes of

analysis.³ This project grows out of a similar interest in how early Jewish and Christian discourse

¹ Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of a Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 4.

² Cynthia L. Westfall and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Empire in the New Testament* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2011); Scott McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, eds., *Jesus Is Lord, Caesar Is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013); Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006); Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, eds., *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (Text and Editions for New Testament study 9; Leiden: Brill, 2012); Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies; New York: Routledge, 2008).

³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 2-3; R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14; Musa W. Dube Shomanah, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2000); Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo, *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles* (vol. 147;

relates to its imperial context and seeks to investigate the nature of this relationship with regard to its participation within broader tendencies in cultural production and identity construction at a particular stage in the evolution of the Roman Empire.

The narrative of Acts provides an important reminder that the modern preoccupation with organizing politics and religion into discreet and isolated spheres is just that—*a modern* preoccupation. Such a dichotomy between politics and religion would have been foreign to ancient writers, with Christians and Jews serving as no exception.⁴ Acts typifies this tendency as it narratively maps the early Christian movement onto the spaces of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.⁵ Paul's mission is set on the stage of a number of Rome's most important metropoleis, such as Pisidian Antioch and Philippi famous Roman military colonies, Ephesus, the administrative center of the Roman province of Asia, and, of course, the capital city of Rome.⁶ Less noted, though just as pervasive, is the reciprocal interest of mapping the Roman

Studies in Biblical Literature; New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 6-7; Jeffrey L. Staley, "Changing Woman: Postcolonial Reflections On Acts 16.6–40," *JSNT* 21, no. 73 (1999): 113–35.

⁴ In the words of Malina and Pilch, "the separation of church and state and of bank of state is an eighteenth-century phenomenon. In more abstract terms, that means that the separation of religion from politics and economics from politics dates to the eighteenth-century. Before that time, there were no formal social institutions called religion and economics. Rather religion and economies were substantial social institutions that were embedded in politics, resulting in political religion and political economy," Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Social-science commentary; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 1.

⁵ David W. J. Gill and Conrad H Gempf, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 223-482. Due to several factors, least of all the failure of the *parousia* to materialize as soon as expected, the *ekklesia* was put in a position to establish itself in relation to the civic world of the Greek East, the empire, and Judaism. Acts sits in sharp contrast to other early Christian literature, especially the book of Revelation, in how it envisages and positions itself vis-à-vis Rome. This "original achievement" requires further investigation in the conditions shaping *how* it relates the *ekklesia* to its environment and *why* it does so in the way it does. See Hans Conzelman, *The Theology of St. Luke* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 137.

⁶ Paul R. Trebilco, "Asia," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad H Gempf; The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 2; Grand Rapids:

Empire onto the story of Acts. For instance, Paul is identified exclusively in Acts as a Roman citizen.⁷ Paul is seen as friends with and protected by people of high standing, especially those associated with the administration of the Roman Empire.⁸ A list of Paul's friends and associates include not only Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus (13:7-12), but also the magistrate and jailer in Philippi (16:29-35, 39), the authorities of Thessalonica (17:8-9), Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia (18:12-17), the Asiarchs and town clerk in Ephesus (19:31-41).⁹ In Jerusalem, the list includes Claudius Lysias, the tribune (21:32-36, 40; 22:24-30; 23:10, 18-31), governor Felix (24:22-23), governor Festus (25:1-6,12), King Herod Agrippa II (26:31-32), Julius, the centurion (27:3, 43), and Publius at Malta (28:7-10). Acts makes explicit the links between the political and religious realms in weaving together the story of Christian origins with the story of Rome's

Eerdmans, 1994), 291–362. The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are the only two New Testament writings that refer to Roman emperors by name. In Luke 2:1, the Emperor Augustus (Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου) decrees a worldwide census to which the holy family responds by travelling from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea. According to Luke 3:1-3, it was during the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius (Τιβερίου Καίσαρος) that John the Baptist "went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." In Acts, the Roman Emperor Claudius is mentioned on two separate occasions; first, in reference to the time of the worldwide famine (11:28); second, in reference to the ordering of "all Jews to leave Rome" (18:2). In addition to these references, the Roman emperor is referred to as Kaîoap without any further specificity on over a dozen additional occurrences (Luke 2:1; 3:1; 20:22; 20:25; 23:2; Acts 17:7; 25:8; 25:11; 25:12; 25:21; 26:32; 27:24; 28:19). Thus, both Luke and Acts demonstrate an interest in situating their narratives within an imperial context. As Philip Esler notes, "These synchronisms are not merely an aspect of Luke's historiographical technique; they suggest that among his intended audience were readers interested in the position of Christianity in the context of Roman history," Philip Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Society for New Testament Studies 57; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 201.

⁷ Acts 22:25-29; 23:27. Peter van Minnen, "Paul the Roman Citizen," *JSNT* 17, no. 56 (1995): 43–52.

⁸ On the representation of governors in Acts, see Joshua P. Yoder, "Representatives of Roman Rule: Roman Governors in Luke-Acts" (PhD diss., Notre Dame, 2012), 322-425.

⁹ R. A. Kearsley, "The Asiarchs," in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting*, 363–76.

empire.¹⁰ While almost all publications dealing with the political perspectives of Acts recognize, to varying degrees, this Lukan tendency, analyses are often restricted to these observations alone.¹¹ Are there other ways, whether explicit or implicit, that Luke maps the Roman Empire onto his story? If so, how might one go about elucidating and explicating such instances? This dissertation will demonstrate how the investigation of political themes in Acts might be both broadened and deepened in its scope.

A number of important studies have focused on the political interests of Acts, generating a range of proposals which have since raised the question of Acts' political dimensions as a consequential, albeit contested, line of critical inquiry.¹² While the majority of these studies are motivated by enthusiasm for and hope of making broader claims about Christianity's relationship to Rome, the discussion has been confined between two opposing poles. Scholars have sought to read Acts as constructing either a friendly or antagonistic relationship between Christians and the Roman Empire. On the one side of this debate, scholars have approached Acts as a document that presents a politically harmonious relationship between Christians and the empire.¹³ The way

¹⁰ Ho Sung Kim, "Collusion and Subversion: Luke's Representation of the Roman Empire" (PhD diss., Madison, N. J.: Drew University, 2009). The book of Acts was written for Christian readers, who at the time of composition were not using the term "Christian" as a self-designation. Therefore, the readers of Acts were those for whom its commemorative interests shaped the lives and visions of their community.

¹¹ I agree with Yamazaki-Ransom's assessment that the references in Luke and Acts to the imperial context are not solely for added historical information, but carry ideological and theological implications. See Kazuhiko Yamazaki-Ransom, *The Roman Empire in Luke's Narrative* (Library of New Testament studies 404; London: T & T Clark, 2010), 69. In spite of this agreement, this study contends with what Yamazaki-Ransom argues these implications are, namely, that Luke was presenting an alternative to imperial ideology.

¹² See Todd Penner, "Madness in the Method? The Acts of the Apostles in Current Study," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2, no. 2 (2004), 257, which situates this debate within the larger context of contested issues in Acts scholarship.

¹³ From this perspective, Luke is seen as a precursor of Eusebius and Prudentius in his attempt to forge a harmonious relationship between the church and the state. For those who argue Acts is "for" empire see Henry J. Cadbury and Paul N. Anderson, *The Making of Luke-Acts*

Acts seeks to forge this relationship, however, has been hotly debated.¹⁴ Paul Walaskay, for example, argues that Acts was written to encourage Christians to view the empire positively and to strive to be good citizens.¹⁵ Another representative example of this perspective is Philip Esler, who reads Acts as providing "political legitimation" for the Christian movement. According to Esler, Rome's neglect to sanction the "new religion" led some Roman Christians to question the legitimacy of the faith to which they had subscribed.¹⁶ Luke responded to the situation by

¹⁴ One common form of this position has been advanced in terms of the so-called "*religio licita*" theory, which claims that all foreign religions required special licensing by Rome in order to be permitted to carry on; and since Judaism had been so licensed, Luke attempted to show that Christianity was a form of Judaism in order to garner the same special privileges as Jews. Several objections, however, have been levied against this view. Esler, perhaps more than anyone else, has argued convincingly that there is no historical support that Romans had a process for licensing foreign religions. Esler questions what benefit Christians would have under Roman law by depicting Christianity as a form of Judaism when many from Luke's community did not uphold the Jewish ancestral laws, such as Sabbath observance and dietary laws, the celebration of Jewish festivals, circumcision, or synagogue attendance. Esler questions, "Why would such an author wish to attract Roman protection for a set of practices in which a large part of his community did not engage?" For a full discussion, see Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 206. Esler further argues that living in a post-70 world would have then made Christians susceptible to paying the Temple tax instituted by Vespasian. Thus, Esler rejects the "*religio licita*" theory, because it would not have brought any advantages to the majority of Luke's community.

¹⁵ Walaskay sees the politically sensitive material directed inwards to the Christian community as an attempt to counter anti-Roman sentiment among Christians in order to enable the church to survive in the current political order. See Walaskay, *And so We Came to Rome*, 1-14.

¹⁶ The fact that Rome has not sanctioned the new religion may have led some Roman Christians to question the legitimacy of the faith to which they have subscribed, which, for Esler, created the *Sitz im Leben* from which Luke composed Acts and sought to legitimize Christians as a valid group in the empire. Esler claims that there must have been Romans in the Christian community. Luke diverges from his sources and the historical situation to emphasize the prominence of Romans among the early converts to the faith, such as the centurion of Capernaum (Luke 7:1-10), the centurion at the foot of the cross (23:47), the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:1ff), Sergius Paulus (13:6-12), and others. In addition to this, Paul's own claim to

⁽London: S.P.C.K., 1968); Conzelman, *The Theology of St. Luke*; Paul W. Walaskay, *And so We Came to Rome: The Political Perspective of St. Luke* (Society for New Testament Studies monograph series 49; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1988). This perspective has been around since the eighteenth century, see W. Ward Gasque, *A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975).

presenting Christians as good Roman citizens because he wants to show Roman converts that their faith in Jesus is compatible with allegiance to Rome.¹⁷ Advocates of this "pro-empire" perspective have often noted Luke's purportedly positive depiction of Roman officials, as well as the tendency for Acts to exonerate Paul from all criminal offences during the trial scenes.¹⁸ While there have been a few noteworthy attempts to nuance this premise, a number of studies stand on

Roman citizenship is evidence of the existence of Roman citizens among the author's audience. Esler's conclusion nicely summarizes his entire position: "How could the Romans in Luke's community have remained Christians when Jesus himself had apparently been executed by the Roman governor of Judaea and many of the early Christians, especially Paul, had been brought before Roman courts? Legitimating Christianity to them inevitably involved providing a reassurance that faith in Jesus Christ was not incompatible with allegiance to Rome. This context offers the best explanation for both the explicit and implicit political motifs in Luke-Acts: that is, for the various levels of interaction between Rome and Christianity in the text, and for the presentation of Christianity as an ancestral religion," *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 217.

¹⁷ In spite of the popularity Esler's theory attracted over the last twenty-or-so years, there remains a question of how to move from literary representation to historical situation. If Esler were to be completely consistent, he would also have to include Samaritans among Acts' readership since they too are given special attention in the Lukan narrative. It is not, however, necessary to discard Esler's contributions, even if one disagrees with his reconstruction of Luke's audience. Seeing the political theme as serving a legitimizing role is quite helpful for understanding Lukan discourse as politically charged yet internally directed.

¹⁸ Paul is presented on friendly terms with Roman representatives. For example, in Acts 19:31, Paul is said to be friends with and protected by Asiarchs, an office associated with provincial administration and often identified by their dedication to the promotion of the imperial cult. Jerome H. Neyrey, "Luke's Social Location of Paul: Cultural Anthropology and the Status of Paul in Acts," Pages 251-82 in History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts (ed. Ben Witherington; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 265. For a critical survey of scholarly opinion on these key passages, see Yamazaki-Ransom, The Roman Empire in Luke's Narrative, 107-162. Acts evidences an interest in showing its chief protagonist Paul to be politically innocuous. For instance, after Paul's defense before king Agrippa, Festus, and Bernice, they uniformly conclude, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment" (26:31). In an earlier instance, the Roman proconsul Gallio in Corinth dismisses the prosecution of Paul on the grounds that the charges do not pertain to Roman law (18:15). Paul is repeatedly publicly judged for being no offence to Rome. See Loveday Alexander, Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles (Library of New Testament studies; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 197-198. The controversies that do arise around Paul in Acts are attributed to the instigation of other rabble-rousers, which ends up usually involving Jews (e.g. 18:14-15). Luke emphasizes the political innocence of Christians and seems intent on demonstrating that they are not politically subversive (Acts 18:14; 25:18; 26:32).

the opposite side of the debate and attempt to read Acts as anti-imperial.¹⁹ This has been the primary approach in more recent scholarship, especially since the rise of empire-critical approaches in New Testament studies, which has historically generated more anti-imperial readings of NT texts. Gary Gilbert's work serves as a prime example of such anti-imperial approaches to Acts.²⁰ Gilbert analyzes the list of nations in Acts 2:9-11 with reference to Roman imperial propaganda, which represented Rome's universal control through the public display of lists of conquered nations.²¹ Gilbert reads the discourse in Acts as politically subversive in its competitive posturing toward Roman claims to rule the world. Although a number of interesting proposals have emerged from anti-imperial approaches, such readings further polarize the discussion of the text's political dimensions, indelibly restricting the horizons for exploring Acts'

¹⁹ See Richard J. Cassidy, Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987); C. Kavin Rowe, World upside down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman age (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); David Rhoads, David Esterline, and Jae Won Lee, eds., Luke-Acts and Empire: Essays in Honor of Robert L. Brawley (Princeton Theological Monograph Series 151; Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2011); Loveday Alexander, "Luke's Political Vision," Int 66, no. 3 (2012): 283–93. However, as Penner warns, "We should be careful not to be lulled into a false sense of security that the language of Christian texts is somehow more humane and gentle; radical discourses that revalue power relationships are themselves not politically and socially innocent, since the strategies used to undermine a dominant structure in any respects use the same coercive and manipulative power to do so," Todd C. Penner, "Civilizing Discourse: Acts, Declamation, and the Rhetoric of the Polis," Pages 65-104 in Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse (eds. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele; Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series no. 20; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 70. As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza similarly argues concerning such approaches, "Attempts by scholars to rescue early Christian scriptures as anti- or counter-imperial literature tend to overlook that the language of empire and its violence, which are encoded in them, have shaped Christian religious and cultural self-understanding and ethos throughout the centuries and still do so today," Schüssler Fiorenza, The Power of the Word, 5.

²⁰ Gary Gilbert, "Roman Propaganda and Christian Identity," Pages 233-256 in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (eds. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele; Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series no. 20; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

²¹ Augustus' *Res Gestae* serves as a prime example.

political interests. Once scholars decide where Luke sits within the pro-empire/anti-empire poles, the decision then controls their overall reading of the text.

C. Kavin Rowe has recently attempted to establish a new perspective from which questions of Acts' critical posturing toward the empire is understood.²² His research seeks to explicate how Luke's theological vision and accompanying praxis forge new subjectivities that refuse to conform to the values of the wider society espoused by the Roman Empire. From Rowe's perspective, Luke's contribution to early Christian discourse is a rather sophisticated theo-political vision of how life could be lived as a subject of empire. As Rowe argues,

No longer can Acts be seen as a simple *apologia* that articulates Christianity's harmlessness vis-à-vis Rome. Yet neither is it a direct call for liberation, a kind of theological vision that takes for granted the solidity of preexistent political arrangements. Rather, in its attempt to form communities that witness to God's apocalypse, Luke's second volume is a highly charged and theologically sophisticated political document that aims at nothing less than the construction of an alternative total way of life—a comprehensive pattern of being—one that runs counter to the life-patterns of the Graeco-Roman world. His literary work is thus... a culture-forming narrative.²³

One of the many strengths of Rowe's study is his insistence that the narrative power of Acts is the medium by which Luke's religious challenges to society simultaneously contests political and economic practices. From this perspective, Acts is read as "lively political theology."²⁴ As such, Rowe argues that Acts provides a cultural vision that sits in profound tension with its cultural milieu, "Embracing the theological vision of the Christian gospel simultaneously creates a new cultural reality... this process of revelation and formation inherently destabilizes essential assumptions and practices of Mediterranean culture."²⁵ Rowe's interpretation of Acts, however,

²² See Rowe, *World upside down*, 3, which argues, "the dominant view of Acts' political vision has failed to deal with more basic theological ingredients of the text that determine what politics means in Acts, and that attending to the practical theology of Acts requires a radical reassessment of the political contour of this ancient text."

²³ Ibid., 4, referring to Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²⁴ Rowe, World upside down, 6-7.

²⁵ Ibid., 17.

presupposes a perception of Christian-pagan relations that was predominately characterized by a clash of worldviews. While he recognizes that there was "confusion, diversity, difference, and complete interaction between paganism and Christianity," he immediately reasserts the conflict hypothesis: "But the conflict as a whole and the instantiation of a new culture—for that is what it was—are utterly inconceivable apart from the clash between the exclusivity of the Christian God and the wider mode of pagan religiousness."²⁶ Rowe's main shortcoming is that he reifies the same attributes Acts seeks to stereotype about its non-Christian neighbors.²⁷ Thus, instead of reading Acts' description of the Lycaonian failure to properly distinguish humans and divinities (14:11-13) as polemical stereotyping, Rowe sees it as actually reflecting normative behavior in antiquity.²⁸ Rowe falls into a pattern of merely regurgitating Luke's disparaging tendencies, claiming they were actually a part of broader religious sensibilities constitutive of the very culture Acts is trying to "radically oppose."²⁹ In the end, Rowe's reading of Acts is only

²⁶ Ibid., 18. Rowe argues that by proposing the type of religious reforms as those narrated in Paul's visits to the provinces, Luke was pushing for a broader cultural reform. The heart of his overall argument in this book is that religion and culture are inseparable, and, thus, the difference in Acts' characterization of the divine ultimately generates a different way of living in the world.

²⁷ Lynn Allan Kauppi, *Foreign but Familiar Gods: Greco-Romans Read Religion in Acts* (LNTS 277; London: T&T Clark, 2006). For a discussion of the relationship between Artemis worship and Luke's depiction of Artemis worship in Acts 19, see C. L. Brinks, "Great Is Artemis of the Ephesians': Acts 19:23–41 in Light of Goddess Worship in Ephesus," *CBQ* 71, no. 4 (2009): 776–94; Lynn R. LiDonnici, "The Images of Artemis Ephesia and Greco-Roman Worship: A Reconsideration," *HTR* 85, no. 4 (1992): 389–415.

²⁸ Jerome H. Neyrey, "Acts 17, Epicureans, and Theodicy: A Study in Stereotypes," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (eds. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 118–34.

²⁹ See Harold W. Attridge, "The Philosophical Critique of Religion under the Early Empire," in *ANRW* II.16.1: 45-78. Thus, Rowe can say, "Nor is it any surprise that in Lystra the local priest of Zeus and the crowds instantly prepare to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, (θύειν, 14:13, 18), inasmuch as to worship the gods in antiquity was to sacrifice," Rowe, *World upside down*, 20. Such critiques can be found from a Jewish perspective in the writings of Josephus, and from a pagan perspective, in the writings of Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and beyond. Rowe focuses on Paul and Silas' visit to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-10a). Rowe argues, "More than any other, this scene encapsulates in one compressed piece of text the theological thought that

revolutionary when read in light of the narrative world it creates for itself, not the world of the author and his readers/hearers. As a result, Rowe's study does not offer much in undoing the stagnation that has arisen within scholarship because it further reifies the rather problematic for/against binary that has defined the debate around Acts' political dimensions.³⁰

The problems with scholarly approaches that reduce Acts' political dimensions to the question of whether the author has a positive, negative, or even neutral assessment of the Roman Empire are manifold. First, the narrative is too complex in its references to imperial subjects for pat answers to withstand scrutiny. Acts contains passages that can support both readings and is often ambivalent in its depiction of things Roman, which should be expected considering the length of the text and the experience of colonial subjects.³¹ What ends up happening, as a result, is that certain passages are foregrounded to the neglect of those that do not fit neatly into the chosen scheme. As Tim Whitmarsh argues concerning Greek texts written during the Roman period, "Literature can be sophisticated, ludic, self-ironizing, and/or irresponsible: it can provoke and tease its readership with ambivalence, contradictions, and gaps."³² Texts are not necessarily univocal. Second, the question of the author's attitude toward Rome is not a question the text

expresses the tension inherent to Acts: the Christian mission is, in Luke's way of reading reality, a witness to a world that is upside down (17:6). Thus does cultural destabilization appear to Roman eyes as sedition and treason but emerge in Luke's counter-narration as the light and forgiveness of God. The deconstructive move of the apocalypse to the gentiles—the *novum* that requires a new culture—has its reconstructive counterpart in the creation of a people who receive light in darkness, forgiveness of sins, and guidance in the way of peace," Ibid., 6.

³⁰ See Ibid., 3-4 for Rowe's own critique of previous approaches.

³¹ On the ambivalence of colonial subjects, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 121-113. For the use of Bhabha's concepts of ambivalence with regard to Luke-Acts, see Yong-Sung Ahn, *The Reign of God and Rome in Luke's Passion Narrative: An East Asian Global Perspective* (Biblical Interpretation Series v. 80; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

³² Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.

raises itself, so it will always be subject to reception and the interests of the interpreter.³³ There is simply a lack of direct discourse that expresses the author's own perspectives on the matter.³⁴ Third, there is a myriad of possibilities of cultural interaction in addition to the "for/against" binary, such as assimilation, cooperation, negotiation, cooption and subversion.³⁵ In light of the variegated set of possible responses, one must employ models that allow for, at least the

³³ As Whitmarsh further argues concerning this point, "To identify an author's views on Rome from a text risks an arbitrary foreclosure of meaning... The very fact that critics disagree about the degree to which 'Greekness' can be isolated as an identity discrete from (and occasionally opposed to) 'Romanness' shows the extent of the problem: we cannot 'know' how a 'Greek' 'felt' about 'Rome' without engaging in an interpretative exercise that occludes the violence of its own imposition. How can we identify the author's 'true' feelings? What does it mean to emphasize one area of communication as more intense, meaningful, or sincere than another?" Ibid., 3, referencing Duncan F. Kennedy, "'Augustan' and 'Anti-Augustan': Reflections on Terms of Reference," Pages 26–58 in *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* (ed. Anton Powell; Bristol, Bristol Classical Press), 41.

³⁴ Regarding this point, Douglas Edwards writes, "As E.L. Carr notes, 'No document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought-what he thought happened, what he thought ought to happen or would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought.' In addition, however, modern interpreters must devise strategies for discerning large contextual patterns reflected in the text. Some have sought to resolve the relation of text and context(s) by analyzing how an ideal reader might respond to the text (reader-response). This potentially fruitful approach, however, is frequently limited by very narrow (if any) analysis of the contexts of various readers, often ignoring altogether the assumptions, language, or the use of symbols from the writer's day. The best clue to an author's participation in various webs of power remains the author's own work. There one can often find historical data and social and cultural conventions of the day. Particular language, themes, and choices of images connect a text and its author with the world. Yet a narrative also operates as an integrated unit quite apart from its constituent parts. Writers create narrative worlds that operate by their own internal rules, with no explicit connection to the real world. Both features must be kept in mind," Douglas R. Edwards, Religion & Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10, quoting E.L. Carr, What Is History? (New York: Knopf, 1962), 16.

³⁵ As Vernon Robbins argues concerning this point, "it would be rare for discourse in a text as long as a Gospel or an Epistle to contain only one kind of social response to the world; rather, two or three modes of response interact, creating a particular social texture for the discourse," Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 240.

possibility of, multiple modes of cultural interaction.³⁶ Fourth, critics tend to treat the poetics perfunctorily, less than an object of study and more as a window through which the object is perceived. The problem is that texts are not windows and an author's view toward any given subject may be concealed by the use of other sources, literary conventions, and more. Further attention must be given to the poetics of the text itself and how it relates to broader cultural discourses.³⁷ Fifth, previous approaches almost always treat the Roman Empire as a fixed entity without regional, temporal, and/or representational variations. Since the Roman Empire was especially subject to diachronic development, the various ways in which texts positioned themselves vis-à-vis Rome could change due to the regular succession of emperors and their

³⁶ Peter Holliday provides an important insight on the huristic value of employing different models, "Paul Veyne has suggested that the postcolonial political situation of the twentieth century has tended to circumscribe our understanding of acculturation to limited models of power relations: the weaker party receives from the stronger, and in terms of national originality the people who give their culture are foreigners. He argues that there was a time when, on the contrary, foreign values belonged to the victorious nation like a kind of booty. 'Acculturation is not always a violence worked on a nation; it is always supported by a feeling of legitimacy (even if only the legitimacy of booty), that is by a relation to power," Peter Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7.

³⁷ There are a number of studies that investigate various ways the discourse of Acts interfaces with Greco-Roman discourse. For a representative sample see Penner and Stichele, eds., Contextualizing Acts; William S. Kurz, "Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts," CBQ 42, no. 2 (1980): 171-95; Dennis R. MacDonald, "Classical Greek Poetry and the Acts of the Apostles: Imitations of Euripides' Bacchae," Pages 463-96 in Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts; Text and Editions for New Testament Study 9; Leiden: Brill, 2012); John J. Kilgallen, "Acts 20:35 and Thucydides 2.97.4," JBL 112, no. 2 (1993): 312-14; Douglas R. Edwards, "Acts of the Apostles and the Graeco-Roman World: Narrative Communication in Social Contexts," in SBL Seminar Papers, 1989 (Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers SBLSP 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 362–77; Edwards, Religion and Power; Vernon K. Robbins, "The Claims of the Prologues and Greco-Roman Rhetoric: The Prefaces to Luke and Acts in Light of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Strategies," Pages 63-83 in Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim Upon Israel's Legacy (ed. David P. Moessner; Luke the Interpreter of Israel; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 1999); David Mealand, "After Not Many Days' in Acts 1.5 and Its Hellenistic Context," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 13, no. 42 (1991): 69 -77.

concomitant ideologies, modes of representation, and propagandistic interests. While these developments may have had as much or more to do with rhetoric than reality, they still served to construct Rome for imperial subjects in new ways. The imperial cult, for instance, recognized as playing an active role in constructing Rome for provincial subjects, took on different shapes with each emperor. As Rowe observes, "the cult would have differed under particular emperors. It was not the same under Augustus or Tiberius as it was under Caligula—who, for example, moved in his short principate from forbidding sacrifice to his *genius* to receiving 'direct worship in Rome'—nor under Nero as it was under Vespasian and others. Chronological reality here is phenomenological difference."³⁸ It is critical that any attempt at relating Acts and the Roman Empire acknowledges that for its subjects the empire was a web of complexes, constructed in words, laws, images, taxes, etc. As such, subjects' experience of the empire was highly variegated, and assessing a text's political dimensions is restricted by the use of interpretive models that reduce the subject into simple binaries.³⁹ In what follows, I wish to show how this study seeks to forge a different paradigm in the study of Acts and empire.

Dating Acts

All of the difficulties mentioned above concerning the shortcomings of both sides of the debate grow out of a keen sense that there are a number of challenges facing scholars when relating Acts to the Roman Empire. Beyond merely pointing out the shortcomings of previous

³⁸ C. Kavin Rowe, "Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult: A Way Through the Conundrum?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27, no. 3 (2005): 281. For a critical response to Rowe's article, see Justin R. Howell, "The Imperial Authority and Benefaction of Centurions and Acts 10.34-43: A Response to C. Kavin Rowe," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 31, no. 1 (2008): 25-51; See also Allen Brent, "Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult in Asia Minor," *Journal of Theological Studies* 48, no. 2 (1997): 411-438.

³⁹ David J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Miriam S. Balmuth lectures in ancient history and archaeology; Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2011).

studies, it is also important to acknowledge the blind spots and questions previous approaches have neglected in discussing Acts' political interests from such polarizing angles. For instance, previous studies have neglected to explore how the narrative representation of the apostles relates to imperial representational trends and standards, which this study seeks to correct. In fact, the topic of how Acts relates to its multi-media context, especially its visual milieu, has almost completely been neglected. Due to these shortcomings, there has been a longstanding need to revisit the question of Acts' political dimensions from an entirely different perspective.

The Roman Empire was represented and perceived differently across time and space. Since there is no scholarly consensus on either the date or province Acts was composed, interpreters are faced with the problem of situating the text within a temporally and spatially specific context. This project is admittedly a work of historical imagination in so far as it sees itself as doing the work of a historical critic in seeking to discern larger contextual patterns and situating the text within a particular historical and cultural grid. For instance, it is methodologically problematic to pair Augustan examples with texts written in the second century. The orientation of this project is to approach Acts as a discursive performance from a particular historical period.⁴⁰ This period, I argue, spans the emperor Trajan's twenty-year reign from 98-117 CE, which inaugurated the most extended period of stability the government of the Roman Empire ever saw, and ignited one of the most prolific literary movements of antiquity, which included many of the works of Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, and more. It was also at this time that Christians first emerge in imperial literature,

⁴⁰ This thesis treats Luke's Gospel and Acts as separate literary entities. See Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), for a discussion of the unity of Luke-Acts. See Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 10, for one critique of their positions.

and appear to have been uniformly cast as deviants by Roman writers. This attention, I argue, provoked the need to impose one's own shape on the story and to represent themselves to themselves, as well as others, as a legitimate group that both embodies and contributes to the highest values celebrated in imperial representations of the Trajanic era.⁴¹ The result is an aesthetic, iconographic, and thematic intersection, which is discernible both in the discourse that Acts constructs and through the representational strategies evidenced in the material remains from the period. Such a discourse will be shown to have served a particular purpose within this context of early Christian identity fashioning, community orientating, and social positioning.⁴²

Although most studies on Acts date the composition of the narrative between 80 and 100 CE, this consensus is the result of a scholarly compromise between those who believe the author was an actual eye-witness to the events he reports and those who do not. This has become so solidified in scholarship that there is rarely any justification given for such a dating. A number of recent studies, however, have argued that the evidence overwhelmingly points to a second

⁴¹ This notion of imposing "one's own shape" stems from Stephen Greenblatt's concept of the "autonomy" of self-fashioning. Holliday has found this to be a productive way of thinking about the Roman period and speaks to the theoretical contributors to such a perspective, arguing "Stephen Greenblatt's concept of the 'autonomy' of self-fashioning: 'the power to impose a shape upon oneself is an aspect of the more general power to control identity—that of others at least as often as one's own... Fashioning in this context suggests the achievement of a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, and a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving. For the Roman elite during the Republican period, self-representation is an aspect of what Clifford Geertz describes as 'a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules and instructions—for the governing of behavior," Peter Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration*, 2. As social theorists have now long recognized, conceptions of the past are a constitutive force in constructing and maintaining group identity. In the famous words of memory theorists Fentress and Wickham, "social memory identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future," James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (New Perspectives on the Past; Oxford : Blackwell, 1992), 25.

⁴² One of the major differences between Christian groups and other cults at this time is that they did not construct and express their identities through construction projects. Interestingly, Acts ties memories of the apostles to concrete localities which imaginatively locates Christians in geographical territory.

century dating, which does not necessarily supersede the lifespan of an individual, if one were committed to asserting the author was an eye-witness to the events narrated in Acts. Richard Pervo has recently published the most sustained argument for a second century dating in *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and Apologists*. While Pervo's argument is cumulative and rests on a number of different cases, the center of his argument relies on a series of source critical studies that conclude that Luke drew directly from Josephus (93/94 CE), as well as a variety of Paul's epistles, which presumes enough time had elapsed for the formation of a Pauline corpus to have taken place.⁴³ According to Pervo, Luke knows of eight different Pauline texts, including Ephesians and Colossians, which, by many scholarly reconstructions, would not have been available as a corpus until the second century.⁴⁴ In addition, Pervo traces theological and terminological connections with other early Christian literature that date to the period, such as the Pastoral Epistles and Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians*. Other scholars have also dated Acts to the second century, but often for reasons that differ from Pervo.⁴⁵ For instance, Joseph Tyson argues for a second century dating based on his argument that Acts was written as a

⁴³ Pervo's argument that Acts depends on Josephus as a source is concentrated around two passages, references to rebels Theudas and Judas in Acts 5:36-37 and the Egyptian in 21:37-38, Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 149-200. On the problem of Luke's knowledge of a Pauline letter collection, see John Knox, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," Pages 279-87 in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert* (ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn; London: SPCK, 1968).

⁴⁴ e.g., Acts 9:21 and 22:3; cf. Gal 1: 13-14; Acts 9:23-25; cf. 2 Cor. 11:32-33. Parallels with Galatians seem to predominate. According to Pervo, Luke knows of eight Pauline texts. Tannehill questions whether the supposed date of a Pauline collection cannot determine the date of Acts. Goulder argues that Luke used 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians. See M. D. Goulder, "Did Luke Know Any of the Pauline Letters," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 13, no. 2 (1986): 97–112. For a critical review of Pervo's argument see Robert C. Tannehill, "Dating Acts: between the evangelists and the apologists," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (2007): 827-828.

⁴⁵ Dennis E. Smith and Joseph B. Tyson, eds., *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report* (Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2013).

response to Marcionite Christianity.⁴⁶ In a recently published anthology, *Engaging Early Christian History*, a total of twelve scholars contributed articles with various justifications for reading Acts alongside second century texts and cultural productions.⁴⁷ This project extends out of such conversations, as the three case studies in this dissertation have been presented at the "Dating Acts to the Second Century" session over the course of the last four years at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. It represents a middle position in the dating debate, since it seeks to situate the text between 98-117 CE, which is slightly later than conventional dating proposals that span the reign of Domitian (81-96), yet significantly earlier than other proposals that claim a Hadrianic dating (117-138).⁴⁸

It is my contention that Acts reflects representational trends and interests that emerged as the Flavian dynasty came to an end and inspired subjects new hope of a more promising future for church-state relations. Acts' public portraiture of Paul as a patron of communities fits

⁴⁶ Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006). Shelly Matthews continues this line of interpretation in *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁷ Rubén R. Dupertuis and Todd C. Penner, *Engaging Early Christian History: Reading* Acts in the Second Century, 2013.

⁴⁸ The reign of Nerva (96-98) will be discussed in Chapter Four with regard to the evolving imperial policy concerning Jews in the empire, but his reign was too brief to make any substantial dating claims for Acts. This date also coheres with Malina and Pilch who argue that Acts was written by and for fourth-generation Christians "who wished to know about the firstgeneration experience that accounted for their fictive kinship groups deriving from Paul and rooted in Jesus. Luke tells of what Jesus said and did with a view to its consequences in the story of the Jesus group concluding with Paul. The story develops in a way relevant to third-generation Pauline groups (hence fourth-generation Jesus group members). Documents that tell the story of a central personage located at the origins of some movement groups are usually third-generation documents. And this is what the Gospel of Mark and Matthew are, two of the 'many' who have told the story of Jesus that Luke knows. In other words, from a social-scientific point of view, Luke's prologue (Luke 1: 1-4) accurately describes the well-known third-generation principle: in a situation of radical and irreversible change, grandchildren wish to remember what children wished to forget of the experience of first-generation parents, and this is what 'the many' did. Acts, with telling of the life of Paul, sets Luke-Acts a generation later," Malina and Pilch, Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts, 11; see also 204-206.

particularly well into the political complex of the Trajanic period and contemporaneous trends of provincial representation. As Andrew Wallace-Hadrill argues concerning the second century, "One of the familiar themes of Roman history is the process whereby a city-state spread its membership and institutions over an ever-widening geographical circle, admitting the people of the provinces to its citizenship and their local aristocracies to its ruling orders until it was transformed into a 'world'-state. Emperors play a central role in this process. Despite Augustus' firm lead, the first century A.D. still shows signs of hesitancy and fluctuation; by the second century the process is in full swing...³⁴⁹ The rise of the emperor Trajan to power was both reflective of Roman society's transformation into a "world-state" and an engine for its expansion. Trajan and his family were from Spain, making him the first emperor from outside of Rome. While this would later become more commonplace, at the time it was groundbreaking and carried significant implications for the nature of provincial representations and the rise of their communities in the Roman social structures. This situation provoked a great opportunity for

⁴⁹ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Civilis Princeps: Between Citizen and King," The Journal of Roman Studies 72 (1982): 48. Regarding this point, Giovanni Salmeri argues further, "Scholars still debate which emperor-Vespasian, Domitian, Trajan or Hadrian-was in the final analysis responsible for the choices that opened the Roman Senate to the Greeks of the eastern provinces of the Empire. Some scholars have emphasized that Vespasian, proclaimed by the legions of the eastern part of the Empire, introduced a number of experienced officers and notable citizens of local origin into the Senate; others have stressed that Trajan showed particular sensitivity to the glamour of the great dynastic families, an attitude possibly dating from the 70s AD when, while still a young man, he accompanied his father, who held office first in Syria and subsequently in Asia. In principle, however, the emphasis in the historical interpretation of the selection processes bringing new men to the Senate from outside Italy should be placed less on the intervention and patronage of the emperor, than on the capacity of the provincial areas to bring forth men of sufficient wealth, efficiency, and culture to take a seat in the curia. It is not convincing to argue that the will of a single emperor should be the decisive factor in the arrival of senators from the Greek East. The real factors, rather, were the wealth and traditions of an area that was now able to contribute some of its best men to the administration of the Empire," Giovanni Salmeri, "Central power intervention and the economy of the provinces in the Roman Empire: the case of Pontus and Bithynia," Pages 187-206 in Patterns in the Economy of Roman Asia Minor (ed. Stephen Mitchell and Constantina Katsari; Ceredigion, Wales: The Classical Press of Wales, 2005), 189.

early Christian representational interests as it sought to cast its chief protagonist, Paul, as a Roman citizen who is engaged in creating similar kinds of patronage networks which paralleled Trajanic conceptions and discourses of *imperium*.

As Arnold Ehrhardt recognized already in 1969, "The book of Acts cannot be properly understood if it is not seen within the political setting of its time." This study simply fills a scholarly gulf by interpreting Acts within a particular political setting of a proposed time.⁵⁰ Although the Book of Acts conceals its own moment of composition, it is nevertheless a document that is deeply embedded in a historical moment.⁵¹ While some scholars of Acts may prefer approaching individual passages solely as narrative without reference to any background material external to the text, it is completely warranted to open the text to the outside world, considering how integrally the text relates to its "real life context." Such an approach promises to generate a much more vivid awareness of the relationship of the narrative construction to its actual setting.⁵² The primary objective of this dissertation then is to demonstrate, by way of three case studies, how Acts fashions a public portraiture of Paul in conformity with the representational standards in circulation during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan (98-117 CE). In the end, I anticipate that situating Acts within a definite field of vision will contribute to scholarship in understanding some of the more salient ways the Roman Empire shaped early

⁵⁰ Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Acts of the Apostles: Ten Lectures* (Manchester: Manchester U.P, 1969), 75.

⁵¹ As Walter Liefeld argues, "Opinions differ as to the role of the background information in the interpretation of a biblical narrative. Although a narrative must be read as a self-contained text (that is, within its own world of reference), nevertheless, the characters, events, and ideas of the biblical narrative occurred in 'real' time and history and must not be isolated from that world," Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts* (Guides to New Testament exegesis 4; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1995), 17. The importance of the Greco-Roman background to reading Acts has long been acknowledged and is illustrated by the existence of the multivolume series, *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁵² The previous two sentences were adapted from Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, 99.

Christian discourse.53

Overview of Chapters

Chapter One, focusing on Acts in the context of Trajanic monumentalization, will present the first case study. It aims to advance the central argument of this thesis that Luke's depiction of Paul conforms to Roman imperial standards of representation circulating during the reign of Trajan. It will show how Acts' discursive mode served as a vital part of its political interests and so-called "apologetic aims." Acts venerates the memory of the apostles within a narrative mode that is characterized by its dramatic continuous narrative format, heavy use of realism, and encomiastic style. These stylistic features correlate with parallel developments in Roman commemorative art, epitomized on the Column of Trajan, and illustrate how the method of representation Acts employs shares striking similarities with imperial rhetoric at the time. Part One will survey scholarly attempts at identifying the genre of Acts while Part II will consider how, if viewed from the multimedia context of antiquity, a more flexible notion of genre might emerge and help broaden the debate. Part Three will discuss the Column of Trajan within the context of imperial rhetoric and monumental display. Part Four will compare Acts with the Column, discussing how they correlate in dating and narrative modes. In the end, my justification for reading Acts in concert with the Column of Trajan depends on the observation that they stand as roughly contemporaneous "texts" that both commemorate their male protagonists with common discursive strategies and that the image constructed in Acts stands as a literary monument that sought to participate in the discursive world of imperial rhetoric.

⁵³ Cameron, Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire; Laura S. Nasrallah, Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church amid the Spaces of Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Chapter Two, focusing on the impact imperial ideals had on provincial self-fashioning, will analyze Roman imperial trends of representation circulating during the reign of Trajan. In the first two decades of the second century, representations and perceptions of the emperor experienced a dramatic shift as the emperor began to play more of a paradigmatic role for society as a whole. The impact of this shift has been traced in recent studies of Italian and provincial epigraphic records and the honorific terminology used to celebrate local aristocrats, which drew on the language of imperial virtues. Through this intentional overlap, provincial notables modeled their own authority on that of Trajan and represented themselves as local versions of the Roman emperor, sharing in his particular virtues. It will be shown how the public image of Trajan functioned as a moral exemplar and served as an essential model for the euergetism of local aristocrats in Asia Minor in the early second century. Trajan was regarded as the grand patron who sat at the center of a vast network of patronage, who exercised his exemplary generosity through the dispensation of benefactions across the entire *oikoumene*. Due to the paradigmatic role the emperor played at this time, it is no surprise that there was a striking proliferation of representations of acts of euergetism in the eastern empire (the geographical area of Paul's own mission in Acts) that was unmatched in the period before and after. While this was not the only period in which acts of euergetism were publically commemorated, this study attests to the amplification of such discourses during the reign of Trajan and how they extended out of Trajanic notions of *imperium*. In the end I argue that it is within this representational context that Luke's portrait of Paul is best understood.

Chapter Three, focusing on the depiction of Paul in the provinces, will present the second case study of how Acts' portrayal of Paul conforms to Roman imperial standards of representation circulating during the reign of Trajan. It will focus on three episodes that span the

beginning (Lystra), middle (Ephesus), and end (Malta) of Paul's mission in Acts and analyze how they serve to characterize the nature of Paul's work in the provinces as a community patron who brokers the benefactions of God. Paul is presented as engaged in public discourses and displays which emphasize divine generosity and power, precisely because of the cultural capital such a characterization would have held in a Trajanic context. This image is fashioned on an imperial model, the exemplar of Trajan, who was represented and perceived as the *pater patriae* who ties otherwise scattered people together through generous acts of munificence. In the end, I hope to show that such a strategy was employed in order to represent Paul as fulfilling the duties of a good citizen toward his state and society. Part One will compare Luke's image of Paul pre-Damascus with his image post-Damascus, in order to show the civilizing effects of entering into the community of believers. Part Two and Three will analyze three stops along Paul's journey (Lystra, Ephesus, and Malta) for how they serve to characterize Paul and his mission as a patron of communities. Part Four will demonstrate how this image in Acts of a coalition of interconnected cities joined together into an ever-expanding patronage network conformed to the geographical thinking of the Roman Empire under Trajan and contemporary notions of *imperium.* In the end, it will be argued that the cumulative effect of these episodes is a unified portrait of Paul as a Roman citizen who contributes to the civilizing ideals of Trajan's imperial vocation and serves as a benefit to the empire.

Chapter Four, focusing on Acts within the context of anti-Jewish propaganda, will present the third and final case study, which aims to advance the central argument of this thesis that Luke's depiction of Paul conforms to Roman imperial standards of representation circulating during the reign of Trajan. Here I will investigate the other side of Luke's apologetic and the various ways in which the author negatively characterizes "Jewish" responses to Paul and his

companions. I wish to explicate this image by proposing that Acts characterizes "the Jews" in accordance with a pervasive anti-Jewish misanthropy theme that was adopted from imperial rhetoric, while accommodated to Acts' own contemporary setting to reflect post-70 developments, specifically, anti-Jewish propaganda during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan. Acts represents "the Jews" as a people group whose way of life is ubiquitously misanthropic, with no distinction between Jerusalem, Judaea, or the diaspora, but that all Jews act in a single accord, as lovers of their own group while openly hostile to outsiders, which give them mob power to exert pressure on local officials and the crowds. Part One will survey Luke's depiction of "the Jews" as enemies of Paul, as well as the perspectives of scholars concerning this narrative representation. Part Two through Four will analyze the nature and causes of the heightened anti-Jewish propaganda during the reign of Trajan. Part Five will compare the depiction of barbarians on Trajanic monumental art with the depiction of Jews in Acts to elucidate common strategies for fashioning cultural identity in the empire. In the end, it will be argued that Acts' depiction of the Jews served a pivotal role in how Acts negotiates the place of Christians in the complex of Rome's empire.

In the conclusion, I will first summarize the argument of this thesis and explicate the political theology that runs through Acts, detailing how its narrative represents a retelling of the past that is conditioned by the need for legitimation, representation, and identity. Second, I hope to address any possible objections to my attempt at situating Acts within the representational standards of Roman imperial society during the reign of Trajan. In the end, this project seeks to reframe previous approaches to the question of Acts and politics by focusing on the highly textured discourse in Acts and how the context of the Roman Empire impacted the way early

Christians represented themselves by writing about their past in such a way so as to fashion their identity in the present.

CHAPTER ONE:

Acts and Trajanic Monumentalization

There has always been a symbiosis between the will to power and monumental display.¹

Questions of *how* a subject is presented can be as important as questions of *what* is presented. By what stylistic mode does Acts articulate ideas about the apostles? Was this method integral or inconsequential in fulfilling its purposes? Since stylistic choices in any given era are nearly infinite, though bounded by cultural conventions, *how* a subject is presented is of no slight significance, but rather, can serve as a vital part of how a message is conveyed and how it is received. Although Acts poses as a verbal record of the developments of the apostolic Church as they actually happened, it is better understood as the end product of countless representational choices. Its narrative does not simply present these events as they occurred; rather, it is active in shaping how its audience experiences and remembers them. Modern readers need always be conscious of the difference and distance between the events themselves and the representations of those events, so as to avoid what is often referred to as the "literary fallacy."² The primary objective of this chapter is to situate Acts' mode of representation within its contemporary multimedia context, explicating how the texts' stylistic features relate to

¹ Jaś Elsner, "Inventing Imperium: Texts and the Propaganda of Monuments in Augustan Rome," Pages 32-54 in Jaś Elsner, ed., *Art and Text in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 32. Elsner argues this point is as true for the Roman period as it was for Hitler and Mussolini.

² Bernard Augustine De Voto, *The Literary Fallacy* (Port Washington, N.Y: Kennikat Press, 1969).

broader representational trends and standards, in order to show that Acts is a carefully crafted commemorative narrative put in the service of early Christian self-fashioning.³

Review of Scholarship on the Genre of Acts

In spite of many valuable contributions over the years, research on Acts has yet to fully resolve the perplexing question of genre.⁴ The following three studies are representative of significant contributions made over the last thirty years to the genre debate and the wide-variety of generic categories proposed. Charles Talbert has argued that Acts be categorized as biography, due to what he esteems as a number of significant parallels between Acts and Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd c.).⁵ Richard Pervo, in attempt to reconcile Luke's alleged failure as a historian and success as a writer, has proposed that Acts be categorized as biography, novel.⁶ Dennis MacDonald, in arguing that Acts imitates Homeric epic, has proposed that Acts be categorized as epic.⁷ While attempts at classifying Acts as biography, novel, and epic have all been picked up and expanded in various ways by select scholars, none of the proposals have been widely

³ For a comparable methodology, see Peter Stewart, *The Social History of Roman Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 117.

⁴ Loveday Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (Library of New Testament studies; Early Christianity in context 298; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 133-64.

⁵ Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1975).

⁶ Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987). Pervo defines the novel as "a relatively lengthy work of prose fiction depicting and deriding certain ideals through an entertaining presentation of the lives and experiences of a person or persons whose activity transcends the limits of ordinary living as known to its implied readers," Ibid., 105; Susan M. Praeder, "Luke-Acts and the Ancient Novel," Pages 269-92 in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1981* (SBLSP 20; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981).

⁷ Dennis R. MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer?: Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003). For a critical review of Macdonald, see Margaret M. Mitchell, "Homer in the New Testament?," *JR* 83, no. 2 (2003): 244–60.

adopted because none of them alone can account for all of the major literary characteristics of Acts.⁸ Investigations are plagued by a lack of satisfactory ancient analogues to Acts' distinctive constellation of literary traits. This chapter will not close the debate; rather, it will broaden the horizon in which we look for such analogies.

In spite of the strengths of each of the genre proposals, the majority of scholars argue that Acts belongs to an historiographical genre.⁹ While such a classification is no doubt tied to the interests of some scholars to posit a certain relationship between historical events of the first-half of the first-century CE and the narrative representation of those events in Acts, if even only implicitly, other scholars have resisted this tendency, pointing out that while the genre debate has often developed in parallel with the historicity debate, they are rather separate issues.¹⁰ Classifying Acts within one generic category does not necessarily stake a claim on the historical veracity of the story. As Thomas Phillips perceptively points out, "Ironically... the question of the genre of Acts initially drew attention away from questions of the historicity of Acts and towards the

⁸ For the reception and modification of these proposals, see Sean A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Loveday Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," Pages 31-63 in *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (ed. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke; The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Marianne Palmer Bonz also classifies Acts as epic in comparison with the Latin poetry of the *Aeneid*. See Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

⁹ Thomas E. Phillips, "The Genre of Acts: Moving Toward a Consensus?" *Currents in Biblical Research* 4, no. 3 (2006), 374.

¹⁰ As Bonz argues "Thus, whether one calls Luke-Acts historiography, historical fiction, or even historical epic, the common assumption on which all of these recent studies rests is that Luke the historian need no longer mean Luke the purveyor of historical information or historicity. Indeed, the time would seem auspicious for a reconsideration of Luke's triple role as author, historian, and theologian, as well as for renewed attention to the particular type of dramatic presentation that he adopted to unify all three aspects of his work," Marianne Palmer Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 16.

rhetorical effects of the narrative. Now, however, the question of Acts' genre has come full circle and is again raising the question of historicity. Is Acts history or fiction? In the eyes of most scholars, it is history—but not the kind of history that pre[c]ludes fiction."¹¹ Regardless of those who still insist on the linking of the genre and historicity debate, the search for a generic classification for Acts does not necessarily need to concern itself with judgments of its historicity, but, rather, can explain how its discursive mode uses familiar literary styles associated with historiographical genres for the purpose of advancing its own representational interests.¹²

The wide acceptance of Acts as a type of historiographical writing is further due to the flexibility of this genre in the ancient world. As such, there are a variety of subgenres of history with which Acts is compared.¹³ For a representative sample, this includes Hellenistic history, Jewish historiography, and historical monograph, to list just

¹¹ Phillips, "Genre of Acts," 385.

¹² As Liefeld notes, "The most frequently discussed cause for doubting Luke's reliability has probably been the relationship of Acts to Paul—that is, the alleged differences between the portrait of Paul in Acts and that in Paul's own letters, the absence of references in Acts to Paul's epistles, and the fact that Acts does not feature Pauline themes that were prominently at issue in the epistles," Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, 18. For a representative sample of those works that are supportive of a positive judgment are Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 49; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989); I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian & Theologian* (3rd ed.; New Testament profiles; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988); Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM, 1989); Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

¹³ For such studies, the question has been to what specific subgenre of history does Acts belong? Thomas E. Phillips reviews four of these in "The Genre of Acts," 375-382. For a comparison with biblical historiography, see Brian S. Rosner, "Acts and Biblical History," Pages 65-82 in *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (ed. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke; vol. 1; The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). See also Hubert Cancik, "The History of Culture, Religion, and Institutions in Ancient Historiography: Philological Observations Concerning Luke's History," *JBL* 116, no. 4 (1997): 673–95.

a few representative examples.¹⁴ While there is still no sight of a consensus, the leading scholars in this debate agree that Acts is some form of history driven by legitimating interests.¹⁵ The question still remains, however, as to how this is any different from the *broader* uses of the term "apologetic," which had its purpose in legitimation.

Major debates have transpired over how exactly to situate the text in relation to apologetic literature. Such a classification seems warranted by the fact that apologetic language occurs within the narrative, and with a greater frequency than in any other NT text. Six out of the ten times the verb $\dot{\alpha}\pi\sigma\lambda\sigma\gamma\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\mu\alpha\iota$ occurs in the NT, it occurs in Acts,

¹⁴ For a comparison with historical monograph, see Darryl W. Palmer, "Acts and the Ancient Historical Monograph," Pages 1-29 in *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (ed. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke; vol. 1; The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). For a comparison with Jewish historiography in the Greco-Roman period, see Carl R. Holladay, "Acts and the Fragmentary Hellenistic Jewish Authors," *NovT* 53, no. 1 (2011): 22–51. For a comparison with Hellenistic historiography, see David L. Balch, "Acts as Hellenistic Historiography," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1985* (SBLSP 24; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 429–32; eadem, "The Genre of Luke-Acts: Individual Biography, Adventure Novel, or Political History?," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 33, no. 1 (1990): 5–19; Paul L. Maier, "Luke as a Hellenistic Historian," Pages 413-34 in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts; Text and Editions for New Testament Study 9; Leiden: Brill, 2012).

¹⁵ As Pervo argues, "Despite the numerous proposals about the genre or genres of [Acts]... the leading participants in this conversation agree that their subject is 'legitimating narrative. The adjective describes the *rhetorical function* of these books; their *literary method* lies enshrined in the noun," Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 256. See Introduction for a review of this history of scholarship on Acts and empire. One common approach has been to explain the political interests of Acts as constituting an apologetic address to Roman authorities or citizens with the aim of obtaining tolerance from them for the legitimacy of Christianity's continued existence. See Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Society for New Testament Studies 57; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Alexander argues, "the identification of Acts' genre as 'apologetic historiography' raises problems of its own, Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context*, 192, which refers to the work of R.A. Oden Jr., 'Philo of Byblos and Hellenistic Historiography', *PEQ* 110 (1978), pp. 115-26.

with two additional instances in the Gospel of Luke.¹⁶ It is still debated whether the term "apologetic" is an appropriate designation for Acts.¹⁷ The most common criticism is that Acts lacks the formal structure of an *apologia* in that it does not present direct defensive discourse addressed to an outside audience.¹⁸ Instead, Acts' discursive mode is dramatic narrative, and there is little chance it was ever intended to be read or heard by such outsiders. Therefore, if there is an apologetic agenda at play, its strategies are quite different from those typically associated with apologetic literature.¹⁹ And thus, any

¹⁸ Alexander, Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context, 193.

¹⁹ Recent studies of apologetic literature, however, have also been broadening the definition of this category. See M. J. Edwards, Martin Goodman, S. R. F. Price, and Christopher Rowland, eds., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Jörg Ulrich, and David Brakke, eds., *Critique and Apologetics: Jews, Christians, and Pagans*

¹⁶ Luke 12:11; 21:14; Acts 19:33; 24:10; 25:8; 26:1; 26:2; 26:24. Acts contains two out of the eight occurrences of $\dot{\alpha}\pi$ ολογία in the NT. As Loveday Alexander points out "the reason for this is simple... Luke uses narrative to create a whole series of dramatic situations which call for apologetic speech. Public assemblies and trial-scenes form a significant feature of the narrative, and this dramatic presentation allows the author to present his characters in interaction with a succession of audiences and to elaborate various kinds of self-defence (*apologia*) against a variety of charges," Loveday Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context*, 193.

¹⁷ From this perspective the term "apologetic" is normally thought of as a defense of one's position directed toward outsiders. This view has been common among New Testament scholars since the early 18th century, see W. Ward Gasque, A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975). The language of legitimation, however, has become more widely used. As Liefeld points out, "While considerable space is devoted to Paul's itinerant ministry, the span of the trial narratives is out of all proportion to the rest. This fact has given rise to a rethinking of one previously suggested purpose for Acts: as an *apologia* (defense) for Paul or for the legitimacy of the Christian church and its mission," Liefeld, Interpreting the Book of Acts, 17. See also N. T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 376-377; Lars Dahle, "Acts 17:16–34: An Apologetic Model Then and Now?," *TynBul* 53, no. 2 (2002): 313–16. For a representative example of someone who argues that Acts is an internally directed apology, see David P. Moessner, "Luke's 'Witness of Witnesses': Paul as Definer and Defender of the Tradition of the Apostles-'from the Beginning'," Pages 117-47 in Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul's Claim Upon Israel's Legacy in Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters (eds. David P. Moessner et al.; LNTS 452; London: T&T Clark, 2012).

attempt to maintain the view of Acts as apologetic must take its dramatic narrative mode seriously.²⁰

Thanks to the work of Gregory Sterling, the definition of apologetic is now expanded to include history writing (extended narratives) aimed at group definition and representation.²¹ As Sterling argues, "Luke-Acts defines Christianity both internally and externally. The two are related by the recognition that Christianity is a movement in history. It must understand both itself and the world in which it exists. It was essential therefore to define Christianity in terms of Rome (politically innocent), Judaism (a

in Antiquity (Early Christianity in the context of antiquity v. 4; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009); Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Maijastina Kahlos, eds., Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics (Early Christianity in the context of antiquity v. 5; New York: Lang, 2009); D.W. Palmer, "Atheism, Apologetic, and Negative Theology in the Greek Apologists of the Second Century," Vigiliae Christianae 37, no. 3 (1983): 234–59. For a much earlier perspective, see William Fairweather, "The Greek Apologists of the Second Century," The Biblical World 26, no. 2 (1905). On the relevance of the concept of propaganda to Acts, Droge argues, "Apologetic in the New Testament comprises a study of the 'art of persuasion' employed by the early Christians. Such persuasion evolved in a context of Jewish and Hellenistic thought and laid a foundation for the second century apologists... Much of early Christian literature, including the New Testament, was written to promote and defend the Christian movement. As the early Christians attempted to appeal to the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world at large, use was made of the strategies and methods of Hellenistic religious propaganda. The appropriation of such apologetic-propagandistic forms was essential if Christianity was to succeed in the face of competition from other religions," Arthur J. Droge, 'Apologetics, NT' in ABD I, pp. 302-307.

²⁰ Alexander, Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context, 193.

²¹ For works on the competitive religious environment Acts was composed, see J. B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007); Mary Beard, John North, and S.R.F. Price, *Religions of Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); James Rives, "Graeco-Roman Religion in the Roman Empire: Old Assumptions and New Approaches," *Currents in Biblical Research* 8, no. 2 (2010): 240– 99; Peter van Nuffelen, *Rethinking the Gods: Philosophical Readings of Religion in the Post-Hellenistic Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Clifford Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Jörg Rüpke, *Religion of the Romans* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007). continuation), and itself (*tradition apostolica*).²² Sterling's classification of Acts as apologetic historiography seems quite compelling based on the following description of the genre and its function, "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.²³ Sterling looks to Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* as the most important example of this genre.²⁴ The work of Sterling has greatly influenced the approach of this study, which seeks to maintain the apologetic classification as synonymous with legitimation because it helps to bring into focus the dynamics of self-definition in the rhetorical effects of Acts' extended narrative.²⁵

In what follows, I will add to the genre debate by situating the text within the multi-media context of the Roman Empire, in order to consider how the text relates to its visual milieu, enabling a different perspective that explains how Acts' discursive mode served as a vital part of its apologetic aims in advancing its legitimating interests.²⁶

²² Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum v. 64; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 386.

²³ Ibid., 17.

²⁴ See also Todd C. Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (Emory studies in early Christianity; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 135-145.

²⁵ While some scholars continue to argue for one subgenre over another, there is now a general caution to not restrict Acts within too narrow of a subgenre of history. See Loveday Alexander, "Marathon or Jericho? Reading Acts in Dialogue with Biblical and Greek Historiography," in *Auguries: The Jubilee Volume of the Sheffield Department of Biblical Studies* (eds. David J. A. Clines and Stephen D. Moore; JSOTSup 269; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 92–105.

²⁶ David L. Balch, "Comments on the Genre and a Political Theme of Luke-Acts: A Preliminary Comparison of Two Hellenistic Historians," Pages 343-61 in *SBL Seminar Papers*, *1989* (SBLSP 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989). For a concise introduction to the genre debate, see Phillips, "The Genre of Acts," 365-396; Mark Allan Powell, *What*

Since one of the main obstacles facing attempts to classify Acts within a single generic category is that the narrative shares an affinity with an eclectic mixture of literary works that transcends any one particular category, there is great reason to view Acts from within the multimedia context of antiquity, especially the world of images.²⁷ Such eclecticism was a characteristic of Roman cultural production in general; the tendency to combine a mixture of elements from the Greek and Roman past in the same composition. This is certainly true of visual representations in Roman art.²⁸ For example, Richard Brilliant has identified historical, novelistic, and epic dimensions to the Column of Trajan's visual narrative. To be sure, this was a feature of Hellenistic literature in general as different *topoi* melded together to create new hybrid forms. Heretofore, however, no sustained attempts have been made to include Greco-Roman monumental reliefs when considering suitable analogues to Acts, which can include narrative representations and possess similar discursive modes, strategies, and conventions as found in literature from the period.²⁹ The primary reason for this is not a lack of correspondences, but rather a long-

Are They Saying About Acts? (New York: Paulist, 1991), 5-20.

²⁷ The ancient romance novel is a particularly good example of this tendency. Concrete lines of separation are difficult to make between say history and biography, encomium and apologetic, and so forth. Penner argues that such a feature might be traceable to tendencies within progymnastic exercises. See Todd Penner, "Madness in the Method: The Acts of the Apostles in Current Study," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2, no. 2 (2004), 233-241.

²⁸ For example, defeated Dacians are portrayed on the Column of Trajan in a style that is reminiscent of Hellenistic predecessors while Roman forces are portrayed in a less elaborate and simpler style. This has been described as a prime example of mid-Italic style that is unrelated to the classicizing style of Augustan cultural production. Monuments, in particular, integrate different genres in a way that proves immensely helpful in explaining the combination of specific generic traits in Acts.

²⁹ Elsner argues that monuments can take both visual and verbal forms. See Elsner, "Inventing Imperium," 32-53. This is also argued in Greg Woolf, "Monumental Writing and the Expansion of Roman Society in the Early Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 86 (1996): 22–39. See also Edmund Thomas, *Monumentality and the Roman* standing bifurcation of texts and images.³⁰ Fortunately, recent theoretical work in the field of art history provides frameworks for understanding the interrelationship between texts and images and how they participate in the same communicative process.³¹

The Multimedia Context of Antiquity

In Roman culture, literary productions and performances served alongside a

variety of other media, such as architecture, monuments, sculpture, and epigraphy, to

constitute the ancient media context in which Acts was composed and consumed.³²

Different types of media were employed alongside one another for the shared purpose of

communication and often developed in parallel and in dialogue.³³ Visual displays played

an especially prominent role in the communicative world of antiquity, due, in part, to low

literacy rates, as well as the sheer ubiquity of manufactured images.³⁴ Roman society was

Empire: Architecture in the Antonine Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³⁰ Davina C. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul's Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 16-19.

³¹ This is fleshed out methodologically in Tonio Hölscher, *The Language of Images in Roman Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³² For the relevance of Media Studies to New Testament topics, see Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher, eds. *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture* (The Library of New Testament Studies; New York: T&T Clark), 2012. Stewart argues that "Art above all served to provide a common language of empire, not only for those large sections of the population who made or purchased sculptures, painting, mosaics, and the other art-forms that have concerned us, but also for those who used and viewed them," Peter Stewart, *The Social History of Roman Art*, 162.

³³ Eugenio La Rocca speaks to the communicative role of art and highlights the importance of understanding the artistic syntax. See Eugenio La Rocca, "Art and Representation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies* (ed. Alessandro Barchiesi and Walter Scheidel; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 315.

³⁴ Stewart, *The Social History of Roman Art*, 1-3. For a general introduction to Roman art, see Michael Grant, *Art in the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Jaś Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100-450* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Eve D'Ambra, *Roman Art* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Paul Zanker, *Roman art* (Los Angeles, Calif.; Brighton: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012); Niels Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1988); Fred S. Kleiner, *A History of Roman* visually mediated.³⁵ Images of all sorts decorated the public and private spaces in which individuals lived their lives. Thus, for most of the population, knowledge of the world was largely acquired not by reading texts but by seeing images. There was, however, a close relationship between texts and images within Roman culture.³⁶ Thus, it would be a mistake to approach texts as autonomous artifacts that were somehow independent from the viewing culture of antiquity. Instead, verbal and visual means of communication may be analyzed in tandem with one another since their connections transcend their differing mode of representation and both were a product of the cultures in which they were produced.³⁷ For example, as art historian Richard Brilliant argues concerning the ancient

Art (Enhanced ed.; Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010); Sarah Scott and Jane Webster, eds., *Roman Imperialism and Provincial Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

³⁵ Natalie Kampen "Looking at Gender: The Column of Trajan and Roman Historical Relief" Pages 46-73 in *Feminisms in the Academy* (ed. Domna C. Stanton and Abigail J. Stewart, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), "Visual analysis helps to demonstrate concepts for which clear textual evidence is either lacking or not yet studied. Visual language can be as important, especially in societies in which the majority of people are illiterate, as written texts," 48.

³⁶ Elsner discusses the ambivalence within Roman culture between reading texts and looking at art. Concerning this ambivalence he writes, "Roman writing is ambivalent about how to differentiate the two activities of reading texts and looking at art. Virgil in *Aeneid* 6.34 uses the term *perlegerent oculis* (literally, 'they read with their eyes') for *looking* at the images on the doors made by Daedalus for the temple at Cumae. In his fourth-century AD commentary on this passage, Servius Grammaticus discusses this use of 'reading' for looking at pictures and remarks that it is not incongruous to 'read' a picture since the Greeks use the verb *grapsai* meaning both 'to draw an image' and 'to write a text'. So, already in the testimony of two of the most celebrated Roman works of art from the first century BC—an image and a poem—we meet an intriguing entanglement of the problematics of art and text," Jaś Elsner, "Introduction,"1, referring to his brief discussion of the painted frieze of the Villa of the Mysteries of a boy looking at a book.

³⁷ I have learned a great deal from researching other art historical periods. See David Castriota, "Introduction: political art and the rhetoric of power in the historical continuum," Pages 1-14 in *Artistic Strategy and the Rhetoric of Power: Political Uses of Art from Antiquity to the Present* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 2. novels, "it cannot be a coincidence that the masterpieces of Achilles Tatius, Clitophon and Leucippe and others, are roughly contemporary with those 'masterpieces' of Roman narrative art, the Column of Trajan and the Column of Marcus Aurelius."³⁸ Similar arguments have been made concerning the relationship of other visual and verbal narratives, such as Virgil's *Aeneid*, which, as Peter Holliday points out, parallels the structures of its contemporary visual narratives.³⁹ These particular connections between art and literature are but a few prime examples of the close interplay within Roman culture between images and texts.⁴⁰ Texts and images serve as two types of

³⁸ Richard Brilliant, *Visual Narratives: Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 18.

³⁹ As Holliday argues, "Virgil's entire epic parallels the structures of visual narratives: recurring topoi reflect the repetition of compositional types, such as battles, celebrations of victory, meetings and negotiations, and scenes of religious procession and worship," Peter Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xvii. For a more theoretically charged perspective of this topic, see Michael Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 340.

⁴⁰ In spite of the close relationship between images and texts in antiquity, there will always be fundamental differences between the two. Concerning this, Elsner notes that "images can never replace the written (and vice versa)... While the scroll has a beginning and an end—a linear mode of being read—the paintings which adorn the four walls of this room deny any such prescriptive pattern of interpretation," Elsner, "Introduction," 2. Furthermore, as Valerie Huet argues in the same volume concerning the difference between images and texts, "Reading art does not imply that art can be simply read as a text. The way the vocabulary of art is displayed on a monument changes according to monuments and even according to viewers. Several readings of the same monument may be made, even by the same reader. Unlike writing, there is no such rule in images as a reading from top to bottom, left to right. Some clues can be left on the monument about a preferred order to decipher it, but there is scarcely an obligation to follow them, and, anyway, segmenting a monument into details need not prevent the viewer from perceiving it as a whole. One of the main advantages of reading a monument is that it forces the reader to be aware of his or her methodology and of the analogies and differences between the analysis of a monument and that of a text. It also encourages one to notice the interplay between text and art," Valérie Huet, "Stories One Might Tell of Roman Art: Reading Trajan's Column and the Tiberius Cup," Pages 9-31 in Art and Text in Roman Culture (ed. Jaś Elsner; Cambridge studies in new art history and criticism; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21.

representational media manifesting the same conceptual world. They are capable of mutually reflecting the influences of new developments in rhetoric, historiography, literature, religion, and philosophy.⁴¹ Developments in one medium, such as Roman historical reliefs, often had an impact on other modes of expression in another medium.⁴² Images had the capacity to influence not only how other messages were produced, but also how they were consumed.⁴³ According to "new art history," antiquity's visual

⁴³ Squire considers this possibility in posing the question, "To what extent might a reader's visual conditioning likewise affect responses to texts that circulated separately from the sorts of images which they evoke?" Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 191. As Andrew Laird argues concerning this point, "There is of course no one simple answer to the question of how literary and visual art or media can or cannot be compared—for any period or culture. The kind of answers we get depend on who is answering the question and to what end… no decisive account of art/text comparisons can be given however. This is because comparisons, parallels or analogies cannot ever be discovered, verified or falsified," Andrew Laird, "Vt Figura Poesis: Writing Art and the Art of Writing in Augustan Poetry," Pages 75–102 in *Art and Text in Roman Culture* (ed. Jaś Elsner; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 75. See also Ibid., 101.

⁴¹ Jaś Elsner explains how this relationship has been regarded within the field of art history over the years, "In its formalist phase and even in some of its more perceptualist stances, art history has tried to isolate itself from the literary and historical worlds of texts—to find an integrity of visual signification in images as self-standing, even independent, signs... Yet in the end no aspect of human experience—certainly not visual forms—can be pure enough, sufficiently independent of culture and society, for them to eschew the network of meanings which encompass the written and the visual, the oral and the tactile," Elsner, "Introduction," 2.

⁴² Castriota argues for this view across different historical periods stretching from ancient Near Eastern art up to the modern period, "There can be little doubt that such visual and literary productions were intended to function analogously in relation to one another, using a common means of expression that transcends the differences of medium. If the political glorifications of ancient Near Eastern visual art can already be said to have an emphatic ideology and strategy of presentation comparable to that of contemporary literature, then they also shared its rhetoric, established rules and formats of composition that articulate the messages in a consistent, intelligible, and effective way. Through time and practice artistic and literary political representations continued to evolve in close association, thereby attaining a unity of purpose and expression that remained intact for the rest of antiquity and the Middle Ages into the early modern period, as the various essays in this volume will demonstrate collectively. In the context of visual political art, then, the notion of a rhetoric of power is much more than a metaphor, much more than a literary analogy," David Castriota, "Political Art and the Rhetoric of Power " 3.

remains were an integral part of Roman cultural production and, as such, intricately tied to what Roger Von Dippe has described as "the web of political, religious and social institutions of a society, resulting in a similarity of ideas in different modes of expression... [permitting] free exchange between literature, rhetoric, history, philosophy and art."⁴⁴ Such an approach allows different media types to be analyzed in light of one another, especially if they develop out of the same social and political milieu and evidence shared styles and/or subject matter.⁴⁵ There is a myriad of ways in which visual and verbal media have been further compared; variations depend on the objects under consideration.

Postmodernist developments in artistic and literary criticism have stressed the role of the viewer or reader as active agents in the interpretive process. Differences in the background, knowledge, and culture of recipients results in a polysemy of meaning. Such perspectives provide a framework for thinking about correlations between Acts and the Column that move beyond those resulting from shared patterns of cultural production and concern themselves with issues of reception.

⁴⁴ Roger David Von Dippe, *The Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative in Roman Art, 300 B.C. - A.D. 200* (PhD Diss.; University of Southern California, 2007), 22. Such an approach shifts the emphasis when analyzing art. Instead of focusing solely on aesthetical concerns, it concentrates on the cultural context in which artistic production and reception take place. As Holiday explains, new art history emphasizes "the cultural context in which artistic production and reception occur. Such approaches to Roman art are, of course, hardly novel. During the last century, G. Rodenwaldt, P.G. Hamberg, A. Alfoldi, R. Brilliant, H.P. L'Orange, S. Settis, P. Zanker, and numerous other scholars have explored the powerful connections between Roman society and art, sharpening our comprehension of (primarily) imperial commissions," Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts*, xx.

⁴⁵ The association of art and politics is extremely ancient. Regarding the political dimensions of art, Castriota argues, "art is political in its attempt to propagate a positive belief not only in the apparatus of the state, but also in its divinely-sanctioned status. In view of its ideological breadth and effectiveness we can easily see why art of this kind is as old as the developed urban state and the ruling stratum that shaped it. Indeed, the officially sponsored media of architecture, monumental painting, and architectural sculpture may well have evolved not only for purely religious and utilitarian purposes, but also for practical religious-political reasons, as a concrete and lasting statement of the legitimacy and efficacy of the established order," Castriota, "Political Art and the Rhetoric of Power," 2.

Visual art did not merely reflect the historical conditions and interests at the time of its production; it also served as an agent in constructing that world. Holliday describes visual art as "formative tools in a fluid historical condition."⁴⁶ Works of art play an active role in constructing the social world of antiquity, with the power to change perceptions and shape ideas.⁴⁷ Visual art served and reflected the beliefs, values, and institutions in which they were produced and, in turn, were able to reinforce or alter ideologies.⁴⁸

Within the Roman context, texts and images were both employed by individuals who were competing for status and attempting to achieve their goals through a common means of public representation and self-advertisement. For instance, epigraphy and portraiture served essentially the same range of functions in society, in that they were both employed by individuals to advertise their status and to secure their place in posterity. As Stewart argues, both texts and images could serve in "commemorating the dead or notable people of the past; honouring the living for their achievements and benefactions; providing permanent votive memorials in sanctuaries; and communicating authority and power."⁴⁹ Thus, there could certainly be a significant overlap in the purpose of different media. Roman commemorative art played an especially important role as a visual medium broadly employed to advertise the achievements of individuals in society.

⁴⁶ Holliday, *Origins of Roman Historical Commemorations*, xxi. Roman commemorative art has the capacity to reflect historical conditions and interests circulating at the time of their production, as well as actively construct that world. These are two sides of the same coin.

⁴⁷ Holliday, "works of art are active ingredients of the social matrix and are socially formative products in their own right, making statements that can both change perceptions and mold ideas," Ibid., xxii.

⁴⁸ As such they have the potential to bear a wealth of cultural information that might otherwise be lost to the vestiges of history. See Von Dippe, *Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative*, 29; Castriota, "Political Art and the Rhetoric of Power," 1-2.

⁴⁹ Stewart, The Social History of Roman Art, 77.

As such, commemorative art often features elite males who wished to concretize their place in Roman society by displaying their service to the state.⁵⁰ As public monuments, visual displays had the potential of providing viewers with the very models and language that one could appropriate to assert one's own place in the wider world.

In what follows I will demonstrate that Acts is a product of antiquity's media culture; for it was within this context that its image of the past took shape and its meanings were constructed.⁵¹ Acts propagates memories of the apostles within a richly textured narrative mode that is characterized by its heavy use of realism and encomiastic style. In what follows I wish to correlate these stylistic features with parallel developments in Roman commemorative art, epitomized on the Column of Trajan, in order to show that the method of representation Acts employs belongs to the same discursive world that is embedded within monumental structures of the period.

⁵⁰ Holliday recognizes that narrative art worked alongside other media to create the "urban text" that expressed civic and personal identity. "Narrative forms of historical commemoration did not replace buildings, portrait statues, and coins; rather, Roman nobles used all of them to create an urban text glorifying their city while fashioning their own identity. Hayden White remarks that 'the reality which lends itself to narrative representation is the conflict between desire, on the one side, and law on the other,' raising 'the suspicion that narrative in general has to do with the topics of law, legitimacy, or more generally, authority.' Governing-class Romans commissioned narratives of their achievements to establish their authority and legitimate their power," Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts*, 20. See also Halvor Moxnes for possible connections with Acts, "'He Saw That the City Was Full of Idols' (Acts 17:16): Visualizing the World of the First Christians," in *Mighty Minorities?: Minorities in Early Christianity, Positions and Strategies: Essays in Honour of Jacob Jervell on His 70th Birthday, 21 May 1995* (David Hellholm, Halvor Moxnes, and Turid Karlsen Seim, eds.; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 107–31.

⁵¹ There are several reasons why no study to date has taken such images seriously when considering the variety of representations in Acts. Deeply embedded within academic discourse is a bifurcation between the verbal and visual. Michael Squire attributes such a trend to the Reformation's privileging of word over image and texts as the sole arbiter of proper religious beliefs and practices. See Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 17.

Before moving forward, I wish to clearly state that my reasoning for reading Acts in concert with the Column of Trajan is not to make claims about the geographical origins of Acts. Chances are the author of Acts, along with its readers and sources, never visited the Forum complex in Rome where the Column was originally located.⁵² Rather, my justification for reading Acts in concert with the Column depends on the following three claims. First, both stand as roughly contemporaneous "texts," in so far as they both date to the beginning of the second century CE.⁵³ Second, both share similar purposes in glorifying the memories, perpetuating the honor, and constructing the status of their protagonists. Third, the narrative style of the Column provides the closest non-verbal analogy to the book of Acts extant from antiquity.⁵⁴ In what follows, I will show how these two second century artifacts stand as roughly contemporaneous "texts" that

⁵² For a representative sample of those who do argue that Acts was written for an audience in Rome, see John J. Kilgallen, "Luke Wrote to Rome--a Suggestion," *Bib* 88 2007: 251–55.

⁵³ See Introduction for a discussion of the dating debate. Pervo's dating of Acts to 115 CE puts Acts within 2 years of the construction of the Column.

⁵⁴ As Castriota has written concerning the communicative function of ancient Near Eastern art, "It has become a commonplace, at times even a cliché, to conceive of the visual arts as a kind of language. Historians of art have no problem seeing a work metaphorically as a text whose form and content may be understood or clarified through the careful exegesis of stylistic and iconographical analysis. Such methodological precepts are largely unavoidable, for while the nature and perception of the visual arts are primarily visual, their discussion or study falls inevitably within the domain of language in verbal or literary form. But the analogy between art and language or literature is no mere methodological expedient, particularly when we remember the basic significative function of artistic representation. No less than language, art is a medium of communication, and its narrative, symbolic, and allegorical capacities are as real and effective as those of any verbal or literary creation. Recent trends adapting the study of semiotics to the history of art and art criticism have gone far in explaining the underlying intellectual bases for these similarities, in which art and language appear as parallel manifestations of a deeper, unifying conceptual urge," David Castriota, "Political Art and the Rhetoric of Power," 2.

commemorate their protagonists within common discursive strategies, and as such, mutually shine light when read alongside one another.⁵⁵

The Column of Trajan and the Rhetoric of Monumental Historiography

The Column of Trajan is one of the most remarkable and well-preserved monuments from the Roman period. The Column was dedicated in 113 CE and stands a towering 100 Roman feet tall, monumental proportions for that time and ours.⁵⁶ The Column is made up of a series of 17 hollow drums of Luna marble stacked on top of each other and is decorated with an unprecedented helical frieze that spirals along the surface.⁵⁷ Located inside the Column's shaft is a winding staircase which one entered through a doorway on the southeastern side of the base in order to climb to the summit and to stand on a balcony. From there the viewer had a breathtaking view of the surrounding Forum as a whole, the other adjacent imperial fora, and the city of Rome (See fig. 1 in Excursus One). Trajan was buried together with his wife, Plotina, in golden

⁵⁵ See Penner's general justification for such approaches in Dupertuis and Penner, eds., *Engaging Early Christian History*, 1-15.

⁵⁶ This measurement does not include the Column's supportive base and crowning statue. For more technical architectural details, see Lynne Lancaster, "Building Trajan's Column," *American Journal of Archaeology* 103, no. 3 (1999); Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Round Trajan's Column," *TLS* 3162007, no. 5424 (2007).

⁵⁷ The Column served as a model and inspiration for a number of later constructions, most famously, the still-standing Column of Marcus Aurelius, as well as two additional columns in Constantinople, the Columns of Theodosius and Arcadius, which are no longer extant. More recently it served as an inspiration for the 9/11 firefighter's memorial in New York City (See figs. 2 and 3 in Excursus One). For studies on the Column of Marcus Aurelius and its relationship with the Column of Trajan see Martin Beckmann, *The Column of Marcus Aurelius: The Genesis and Meaning of a Roman Imperial Monument* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011); I. M. Ferris, *Hate and War: The Column of Marcus Aurelius* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: History Press, 2009).

urns inside the base that supports the Column.⁵⁸

The Column is decorated with a frieze that extends to 625 feet, winding 23 times from the bottom of the Column to the top. It depicts Trajan's two Dacian campaigns (101-102 and 105-106 CE) in over 150 episodes and includes a combined total of some 2,500 figures.⁵⁹ The reliefs depict the campaigns as a benevolent undertaking that served to bring peace and civilization to those outside the *Imperium Romanum*.⁶⁰ In those scenes that depict bloodshed, Trajan is often removed from the violence by at least one compositional scene. In those scenes that Trajan actually does appear at the site of a battle, the artist uses reverse positioning and blocking structures to separate him from the violence. Furthermore, the army is depicted working hard on various construction projects (encampments, fortifications, boats, felling trees) more often than in battle, while auxiliary forces are envisioned doing most of the fighting.⁶¹ There are a limited number of additional scene types, including *adlocutio* scenes, sacrifice scenes, Trajan's reception

⁵⁸ Trajan died at Selinus in Cilicia after a failed military campaign against the Parthians. His ashes were transported to Rome and placed in the pedestal of the Column. His wife Pompeia Plotina was placed there after her own death in 121. This was an unusual instance of burial inside the pomerium. The circumstances surrounding Trajan's death are a little uncertain. See Martin Goodman, *Roman World 44BC-180AD* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 69.

⁵⁹ For the use of the Column as a source for the Roman army, especially on the realities of life on the march and battle conditions, see Richter, Danae. *Das römische Heer auf der Trajanssäule: Waffen und Ausrüstung: Marsch, Arbeit und Kampf.* (Mentor: Studien zu Metallarbeiten und Toreutik der Antike und Zyperns Herausgegeben von Reinhard Stupperich und Richard Petrovszky Band 3; Mannheim: Bibliopolis, 2014).

⁶⁰ Scenes depicting battles and sieges only represent a quarter of the total number of friezes. For a concise history of research on the Column, see Ibid., 9-11.

⁶¹ Natalie Kampen "Looking at Gender: The Column of Trajan and Roman Historical Relief" Pages 46-73 in *Feminisms in the Academy* (ed. Domna C. Stanton and Abigail J. Stewart, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 60. In attempt to make the legionaries identifiable in their building activities, they are unrealistically depicted wearing their armor. For a detailed description and analysis of the auxiliary troops and their equipment depicted on the Column, see Danae Richter, *Das römische Heer auf der Trajanssäule*, 184-283.

of embassies and prisoners, marches, and sea voyages.⁶² The reliefs serve as visual history in a monumental form.⁶³

The Column of Trajan's spiraling sculptural relief serves as a commemorative narrative aimed at shaping public memory of Trajan and his accomplishments. Penelope Davis analyzes the complex ways in which the Column constructs what she calls "a living memory."⁶⁴ She explores how its architecture served to promote the perpetuation of Trajan's memory. Situating the Column within the context of monumental tombs during the period, she argues that it served to manipulate physically and cognitively its viewers, much like Augustus's mausoleum complex. Davis concludes that "sculptural

⁶³ The Column served a variety of functions. First, it served to commemorate the Dacian wars; the booty of which served to fund the construction of the Forum. Second, the Column commemorated the adjacent hill, which was removed for its construction. Third, it served honorific purposes in extolling the accomplishments of Trajan and the Roman army. Fourth, it served funerary purposes as its base was used as Trajan's tomb. These purposes cohere with what Roger Von Dippe describes as the function of Roman monuments in general, to magnify the status of their honoree or sponsor within a culture where "the mainspring of elite society was the pursuit of *gloria* in this life and *memoria* after death," Von Dippe, "Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative," 21. See Valerie Huet, "Stories One Might Tell of Roman Art," 10, which reviews the work of Salvatore Settis in discussing the various meanings and functions of the column. As Natalie Kampen succinctly puts it, "It was thus a visible marker for the Forum and its axial orientation, a military monument with images to remind the populace of Roman victories, a tomb or cenotaph for the emperor, and perhaps an unconscious reminder of the phallic power and fertility of the emperor and the state," "Looking at Gender," 52-53.

⁶⁴ Penelope J.E. Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," *American Journal of Archaeology* 101, no. 1 (1997): 41. Coarelli argues concerning this point and its relation to funerary traditions, "A solution such as a column, with a tomb at the base and a statue of the deceased at the top, fits easily into the area of ancient funerary traditions: the statue is not only a sign to remind us of the presence of the deceased, but also projects his image toward the sky, thus alluding—in the emperor's case—to deification. In fact, according to the elder Pliny (*naturalis historia* XXXIV27), 'The function of the columns was to raise (the honored one) above other mortals.' Trajan's statue, as can be deduced from the coins, wore a breast-plate and held a lance in its left hand: this was a 'triumphal' type of image according to ancient terminology," Coarelli, *The Column of Trajan*, 16.

⁶² Coarelli, *The Column of Trajan* (Translated by Cynthia Rockwell, Rome: Colombo, 2000), 16. 29.

and architectural form come together most successfully in the service of viewer manipulation, conspiring to perpetuate Trajan's memory and to enforce reenactment of honorific rituals... the frieze encouraged the visitor to circumambulate the sacred burial spot, in order to commit the deceased to his resting place, and to reenact and perpetuate rituals performed at the emperor's burial."⁶⁵

The Column of Trajan is itself a particularly illustrative case of the interconnectedness between texts and images in Roman society. The Column has four noteworthy connections with texts. First, its helical frieze was designed to resemble a long literary scroll wrapping the column.⁶⁶ Second, it visualizes the same Dacian campaigns described in Trajan's now lost self-authored book of the same event. Third, it stands in the middle of two libraries flanked on each side.⁶⁷ Fourth, the Column stands on

⁶⁵ Ibid., 58–59. For a concise history of the Column, see Paul Zanker "Preface" Pages VII-VIII in Filippo Coarelli, The Column of Trajan (Tranlated by Cynthia Rockwell, Rome: Colombo, 2000), who notes, "The Column of Trajan could be used as an example to show how every generation of researchers concentrates on different questions. Whereas in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century publications, the interest was still focused on deciphering the images, in 1896, Conrad Cichorius's interest was the potential exact reconstruction of the wars: the images were to fill in gaps in the literary tradition. In the 1930s, at the peak of historico-artistic research, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli concentrated on the genial 'Maestro of Trajan's works,' who together with the great frieze that was subsequently re-used in the Arch of Constantine, also supposedly planned the entire relief of the column. The latest generation of scholars has primarily looked at questions of ideology and content in the typology and sequence of images, thus related to the overall horizon of Trajan's contemporaries. Under this perspective, the work of Salvatore Settis and Tonio Hölscher has highlighted some completely new aspects of the relief. The actual sequence and the faithful representation of battle episodes are seen as less important than the description of the rituals of war following precise rules, in order to stress the way the emperor and his enemies behaved," VII.

⁶⁶ On the origins of the winding frieze, see Filippo Coarelli, *The Column of Trajan*, 11.

⁶⁷ It is hypothesized that one could have viewed the upper registers of the Column's helical frieze by standing on top of the libraries. Thus, further creating links between the Column and the library. As Kampen puts it, "The Column of Trajan thus belonged to an extensive architectural and decorative program in which military,

a base that explains the monument's purpose with actual inscribed words.⁶⁸ Although the

Column serves as a prime example of the interconnected relationship between texts and

images, it also complicates this relationship since it poses several visual problems, thus

presenting several difficulties for interpreting the Column.⁶⁹ Concerning the Column's

near illegibility, Valerie Huet has argued,

without the help of reproduction techniques, most of its so-called historical reliefs are invisible to the viewer. The viewer who stands at the foot of the column sees enough to know that the whole column is covered with reliefs but not enough to know what they represent. Thus the study of the column depends entirely on the availability of modern techniques of reproduction.⁷⁰

In spite of the visual problems the Column's design poses to the viewer, it stands in close

relation to texts, illustrating the interface between texts and images in Roman society.

intellectual, commercial, legal, and religious elements were integrated into a complex set of spaces," " Looking at Gender," 52.

⁶⁸ Huet, "Stories One Might Tell," 21. The base's inscription reads "Senatus populusque romanus/ Imp(eratori) Caesari Divi Nervae f(ilio) Nervae/ Traiano Aug(usto) Germ(anico) Dacico pontiff(ici)/ maximo trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVII imp(eratori) VI co(n)s(uli) VI p(atri) P(atriae)/ Ad declarandum quantae altitudinis/ mons et locus tant[tis ope]ribus sit egestus" (The Senate and People of Rome (dedicate) to the emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan, son of the divine Nerva, Augustus, Germanicus, Dacicus, high priest, empowered as tribune for the seventeenth time, proclaimed emperor for the sixth time, consul for the sixth time, father of the nation. To indicate how high (was) the mountainous place (that) was leveled to (build) a work of such magnitude") [CIL VI 960], translated by Filippo Coarelli, The Column of Trajan, 4.

⁶⁹ Richard Brilliant further argues concerning the difficulties in reading the Column, "The relative obscurity of so much of the relief, the difficulty in maintaining the continuity of the narrative because of the circling upward movement of the helix, and the constant separation between the viewer's experience of time and the progress of event would seem paradoxical if the principal purpose of the reliefs was to present the Dacian Wars in linear, chronological order," Brilliant, *Visual Narratives*, 94.

⁷⁰ Huet, "Stories One Might Tell of Roman Art," 12. As R. Bianchi Bandinelli famously put it, "'no one could ever follow with the eye the detailed narration on the relief wrapped around the column, just as no one of the time could have appreciated the details of the Parthenon frieze at a height of eighteen meters in narrow space between the temple columns.' Certainly, 'from the galleries of the two libraries that were erected flanking the column one could certainly see the relief at various heights; but was always a vertical reading. There was never a way to follow the narration around the spiral relief," quoted in Coarelli, *The Column of Trajan*, 19.

In what follows I wish to correlate Acts' own mode of representation with parallel developments in Roman commemorative art typified on the helical frieze of the Column of Trajan. My purpose is to show that stylistic features transcended particular media and that Acts venerates the memory of the apostles in conformity with the same representational methods found on contemporary Roman monuments. In the end, I will argue that Acts is itself an example of monumental rhetoric that sought to participate within a particular contemporary discursive mode in order to lay claim to social power and legitimize the place of Christians in the wider world.

Continuous Narrative Style

The first stylistic feature of Acts I wish to correlate with the Column of Trajan is that of a continuous narrative style.⁷¹ The Column's helical frieze sequences together a series of dramatic episodes into an extended narrative format from beginning to end, detailing the Roman army's various journeys, building programs, and conquests into Dacia.⁷² The continuous narrative is only interrupted momentarily in a single scene located halfway up the Column of a winged victory, marking the transition from the first

⁷¹ Concerning the "unifying framework" that the helical frieze creates, Coarelli argues, "The series of scenes steadily unfolding along the strip that winds around the column constitutes a solution that is perfectly up to expressing the sense of linear time: this is the unifying framework within which each episode fits coherently, without losing its individuality," Ibid., 29

⁷² As Susan Mattern reminds us, it is significant that Trajan undertook the conquest of Dacia himself. Previous emperors were content to entrust major campaigns to specially appointed commanders, or to make an appearance just long enough to gain a military reputation, Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 94. Concerning this issue, Fergus Millar argues, "Trajan foreshadows the pattern which became clearly established in the middle of the second century, and which continued unbroken up to the end of the fourth, whereby emperors conducted major military campaigns in person," *Rome, the Greek World, and the East: Volume 2: Government, Society, and Culture in the Roman Empire* (Ed. Hannah Cotton and Guy Rogers, Vol. 2; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 26.

to the second Dacian war (see fig. 4 in Excursus One). For this reason, the Column of Trajan's helical frieze coheres in style with a class of Roman historical reliefs commonly referred to as "continuous narrative style."⁷³ This class of Roman art is somewhat rare and has few Greek antecedents. In fact, the full development of the historical continuous narrative style came into full effect in the Roman period during the reign of Trajan.⁷⁴ The importance of this style to the overall effect of the Column is vital in contributing to its success as a triumphal monument and an historical record of events ⁷⁵ Roger Von Dippe argues that "without the continuous style the journeys, ceremonials, sacrifices and battles would be episodic and disconnected. The format links the events into a continuous whole, whereby the *virtus* of Trajan and the *industria* of the army lead inevitably to ultimate success."⁷⁶

The continuous narrative style in Roman visual art has recently been defined as consisting of "two or more events from the same story, occurring at different time periods

⁷³ Hamberg "The helical frieze of the column... represents the events as one single uninterrupted stream, where great dramatic effects alternate with minor episodes, all being linked together through the unceasing repetition of the daily tasks of the campaign, of uneventful fortification work and perpetually recurrent marches and transfers," Per Gustaf Hamberg, *Studies in Roman Imperial Art* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1968), 128.

⁷⁴ Von Dippe, "Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative," 354. Excluded from this category are those monoscenic reliefs that comprise a large number of extant Greco-Roman compositions.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 73.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 423. Hamberg succinctly describes an early sequence that creates the continuous narrative effect, "Trajan himself is depicted in the group at the head of the second column as commander in chief and subsequently recurs scene after scene as the omnipresent and untiring leader. The next picture is an important council of war (VI), after which come in rapid succession transfers (VII), sacrifices (VIII), adlocutio (X), works of fortification (XI, XII), interrogation of spies caught (XVIII), the first great pitched battle (XXIV) and so on, all in an unbroken sequence of events either directly linked to each other without the slightest break, or separated by means of some discreet caesurae indicating a turning-point in the narration," Hamberg, *Studies in Roman Imperial Art*, 109.

and featuring the same protagonist in at least two distinct activities. These sequential events are not separated into definitively segregated regions of space. They share a background that may contain landscape or architectural elements or may be completely blank, consisting of so-called negative space."⁷⁷ It is not a coincidence that the Column of Trajan so perfectly coheres with the defining characteristics of Roman continuous narrative art, for, due to its remarkable survival, it has helped in the very process of defining this class by Roman art historians.⁷⁸

On the Column, the emperor Trajan serves as the focus of the narrative as he appears 59 times over the course of roughly 155 scenes. He is portrayed playing several different roles, including priest, helmsman, judge, supreme military commander, benefactor, merciful captor, receiver of embassies, and more (see fig. 5 Excursus One). The different scenes are sequenced into a continuous narrative by the strategic mapping of events onto a unified geographic setting of the Dacian landscape. This technique is

⁷⁷ Von Dippe, "Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative," 17.

⁷⁸ C.f. Hamberg who notes that certain details on the Column do not support its complete classification as a realistic narrative, "the accessories are presented in such number, such scale and from such a visual angle as best conforms compositionally with the actual grouping of the figures and the realistic development of the action. This optical disproportion of scale has for many been a stumbling-block in their estimation of the Trajan Column in its character of realistic narrative. Victims of contemporary dogmas of perspective or photographic interpretation of nature, they have found it difficult to understand the extent to which this freer treatment of the material has been a pre-requisite for realistic portrayal, historical intelligibility and artistic clarity... this composition is no visual picture of the magnificent panorama a passage of the mighty Danube with the whole of Trajan's army must have offered to a spectator. Although the representation is far removed from what we are accustomed to term Naturalism, it is at all events none the less an objective description of reality, intended to convey what really happened and nothing else," Hamberg, *Studies in Roman Imperial Art*, 109.

illustrated best in those scenes at the beginning of the narrative that exert much energy to frame the map-like background that runs throughout (see figs. 6 and 7 Excursus One).⁷⁹

The use of the continuous narrative style was but one choice among several possibilities to represent the Dacian campaigns. After all, the Forum in which the Column stood served as a monumental display of Trajan's military success, replete with statues of Roman heroes and captive Dacians, exotic decorative marble, diverse architectural styles, and the sheer size and grandeur of the buildings themselves all attested to Roman victory. Furthermore, Trajan could have chosen to list his successes in a way that modeled Augustus' engraving of the *Res Gestae Divi Augustae* (see figs. 8-9 in Excursus One). Instead, Trajan chose to represent his victories with particular detail in a monument that displayed continuous narrative art.⁸⁰

The Romans employed a number of different narrative styles in works featuring the continuous narrative form.⁸¹ Cicero classifies these in terms of plain, middle, and grand style.⁸² And given the embeddedness of rhetorical forms within Roman narrative art, these various styles produced different narrative choices in commemorative art. The

⁷⁹ John W. Stephenson, "The Column of Trajan in the Light of Ancient Cartography and Geography," *Journal of Historical Geography* 40 (2013): 79–93.

⁸⁰ Raymond Chevallier, *Aiôn: le temps chez les Romains* (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1976), 157.

⁸¹ The variety of narratives transcended the image/text divide in both their style and function. As Holliday explains "Historical narrative was an important vehicle by which the Roman elite fashioned themselves vis-à-vis their peers, lower Roman orders, and non-Romans. Whereas the narratives of written history were generally restricted to an audience of literate aristocrats, historical art joined oratory to address a larger, often nonliterate public. A consideration of how Roman aristocrats construed both themselves and the usefulness of history in patterning their identity—a fundamental part of the habitus—will prove beneficial before examining specific monuments of Roman historical commemoration," Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts*, 1.

⁸² Cicero, *Brut.* 74.

Column follows the plain style of Roman narrative art quite closely. Concerning this type, Van Dippe writes, "Italo-Etruscan elements and a factual, unornamented style may be equated with the plain style in rhetoric. The plain style in narrative art was limited to the portrayal of recent historical and biographical events, and choice of the plain style was dictated by a desire to profess *Romanitas* and the possession of antique virtue."⁸³ Conversely, Von Dippe identifies another Trajanic continuous narrative frieze, the Great Trajanic frieze, within the grand style tradition. "An alternative choice for historical narration was the grand style, derived from art of the Hellenistic ruler cults. This style, employed for statues of Greek gods and heroes, conferred a superhuman gloss on achievement, reflecting the divine favor accorded to the rulers of the Hellenistic monarchies" (see figs. 11-12 in Excursus One). ⁸⁴ The middle style was also employed in continuous narrative art, and was, according to Von Dippe, "designed for enjoyment and decorative qualities, was most frequently chosen for recounting the stories of Greek mythology, and Italo-Etruscan elements were usually excluded from such stories."⁸⁵ The

⁸³ Von Dippe, "Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative," 159.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 159. The Great Trajanic Frieze was roughly contemporary with the Column and provides additional support that the continuous narrative style emerged in Roman commemorative art in the Trajanic period. The Great Trajanic Frieze was reemployed on the Arch of Constantine dedicated in 315. It was most likely used to originally decorate the Forum of Trauan. The frieze is now divided into four portions, but once formed part of a continuous narrative frieze. One section of this frieze is noteworthy because of its depiction of Trajan on horseback mowing down a cluster of Dacians. The image is reminiscent of a mosaic of Alexander from the House of the Faun in Pompeii, where the Macedonian king leads the battle against Persian opponents. Another noteworthy scene is of Trajan's *adventus* in Rome with Victoria standing behind him places an oak wreath on his head. See Gerhard Koeppel, "The Column of Trajan: Narrative Technique and the Image of the Emperor" Pages 245-257 in *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.)* (ed. Philip A. Stadter and Luc Ven der Stockt, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 245.

⁸⁵ Von Dippe, "Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative," 159.

style that is represented on the Column was predominantly reserved in Roman society for narratives representing events from the recent past and may have originated as a style particularly aimed for popular consumption.⁸⁶

As we turn to Acts, we must concede to finding something very similar to the continuous narrative style featured on the Column. Acts does indeed evidence the work of an author who was interested in shaping the memory of the apostles into a linear sequence of what would otherwise be a series of disconnected dramatic episodes. As Hans Conzelman recognizes, "The most important stylistic means used to achieve this picture of unilinear development is the schematization of Paul's work into missionary journeys. This has dominated the historical picture to the present day."⁸⁷ There is no doubt that Luke's historical schematization has greatly influenced conceptions of the apostle's life and work. Luke stands in a Pauline tradition whereby the image of Paul has already undergone considerable transformation.⁸⁸

Another example that illustrates how the narrative mode in Acts can be likened to the continuous narrative style featured on the Column is pointed out by Michael Thompson, who argues that when the "we" passages are read together they form a

⁸⁶ In contrast to the continuous narrative format found on the Column and the Great Trajanic Frieze, are the figurative panels decorating Trajan's Arch at Beneventum. Trajan is represented in frieze-frame compositions standing next to personifications, divinities, and fellow mortals. Thus, rather than telling the story of Trajan's accomplishments, the Arch magnifies his achievements in static compositions. Koeppel, "The Column of Trajan", 246; Von Dippe, "Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative," 73. For a discussion of the Column of Trajan and its relationship with the Arch at Beneventum, see Tonio Hölscher "Bilder der Macht und Herrschaft," in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 127-144.

⁸⁷ Hans Conzelman, *The Theology of St. Luke*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), xliii.

⁸⁸ Ibid., xlv.

"continuous geographical narrative."⁸⁹ Each successive "we" passage begins from the same general location the previous passage stops. Several studies have demonstrated the importance of Acts' geographical interests.⁹⁰ This is due, largely, to the organizing role travel plays in both narratives. The economy of travel is given special attention on the Column as both a display of *Romanitas* as well as a structuring principle of the narrative as a whole. On the Column, travel takes place on both land and sea. The Column is structured around two major wars against the Dacians that each begin with several scenes detailing the conditions, preparations, and mastery of Trajan and the army's travels by way of sea. In addition to this, there is an additional travel campaign detailed halfway through the first of these Dacians wars, effectively organizing the visual narrative into three campaigns, all initiated by extended sea travel scenes (see Fig. 7 in Excursus One). Thus, there are three main groups of scenes that depict boats and ships. As Coulston puts it, "In many respects the reliefs of Trajan's Column are all about travel: travel of emperor and army to win victories, explore new regions, meet new peoples and to collect the royal gold which went to pay for the massive building complex within which the Column stood."91

The Column's interest in water crossings is developed in a set of scenes depicting Roman troops successfully fording rivers and an index of *Romanitas*. The flip side of this

⁸⁹ Michael B. Thompson, "Paul in the Book of Acts: Differences and Distance," *Expository Times* 122, no. 9 (2011): 426.

⁹⁰ Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context*, 115; James M. Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon," Pages 483-544 in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (David W. J. Gill and Conrad H Gempf, eds.; The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁹¹ Jon Coulston, "Transport and Travel on the Column of Trajan," in *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (ed. C. E. P. Adams and Ray Laurence; Roman Archaeology Conference; New York: Routledge, 2001), 126.

is that Dacians are repeatedly depicted as completely inept in water. There is a comical scene of Dacians unsuccessfully crossing a river which serves to contrast them with the scene of the Romans expertly crossing. This theme is further developed in the depiction of Roman bridge building. Perhaps the most important of these is the depiction of the famous bridge built by Apollodorus of Damascus, Trajan's chief military architect and advisor, who is credited for constructing a monumental bridge between the two Dacian campaigns. The structure is portrayed bridging the great river Danube and offering a dry passageway connecting Roman territory with the frontier. This image shows its impressive size, built with a combination of stone and wood. The bridge scene stands in contrast with the dilapidated wooden bridge built by Dacians.

That travel too serves as a key feature and organizational structure for Acts is not contested. Viewing Acts in light of the Column provides perspectives of viewing the interest in travel in Acts as an attempt to characterize Christians as participating in Roman cultural activities and having the same capacities. Coulston notes that depictions of travel on the Column too have this symbolic capacity to confer cultural capital on Trajan and his army. "It will be clear that various forms of transport were crucial to the campaign movements of Roman armies. However, these were primarily depicted on the column not so much as part of a realistic narrative as to help define the nature of Trajan's victories which were won through his army's inherently Roman culture and capabilities."⁹²

⁹² Coulston, "Transport and Travel," 107. Similarly, Eleni Manolaraki writes concerning Pliny's own use of nautical motifs, "Pliny uses extensive nautical motifs in both the Panegyricus and several letters in which he reflects on his imperial encomium. In both these texts, Pliny puts marine imagery to work for both his political and his

That Acts adopts a dramatic continuous narrative style similar to that found on the Column is evidenced in how the stories surrounding the election of the twelfth apostle are linked together. The author's interest in a dramatic continuous presentation is demonstrated through the crafting of a dramatic story that includes 1) Peter interpreting an ancient oracle, which announces that scripture foretold the betrayal of Judas (1:16-20); 2) details concerning the need for a twelfth apostles (1:21-22); 3) the identification of Barsabbas and Matthias (1:23); and 4) the casting of lots (1:26). Here, the election of the twelfth apostle is presented in a vivid and continuous manner.

Luke's use of the extended narrative form might seem, in retrospect, an obvious stylistic choice in which to carry out the author's purposes, since there were a sufficient number of other early Christian narratives circulating at the time, some of which the author seems to have been familiar with, including the Gospel of Mark. At the time of composition, however, such a decision might not have felt like such an obvious choice, especially considering the predominance of the epistolary form as a means of early Christian communication, especially from within the Pauline circles, which the author seems intimately aware.

The observation that Acts and the Column both employ a common extended narrative format as their chosen form of representation is not sufficient enough to connect these two objects. It is enough, however, to pose a question about the importance of continuous narrative as the chosen mode of representation and whether it has relevance for understanding the contemporary significance of Acts' intended message. Its

literary agenda," Eleni Manolaraki, "Political and Rhetorical Seascapes in Pliny's Panegyricus," *Classical Philology* 103, no. 4 (2008): 374-394.

persuasive effect, above all, need not go unnoticed in creating an "illusory matrix of continuity," that events followed in the same order as they appear in the constructed narratives.⁹³

Verisimilitude

The second stylistic feature of Acts I wish to correlate with the Column is the extensive use of verisimilitude. An intricate part of the Column's continuous narrative style is the use of a realist visual grammar intended to heighten viewers' impression that what they see is unmediated reality of the purely documentary sort.⁹⁴ This technique

⁹⁴ Regarding the close relationship between continuous narrative and verisimilitude, Wickhoff argues "The sort of task that this continuous principle of representation set itself in Trajan's time is shown by a work in which the illusionist style seems to open all its flood-gates," Ibid., 112. Winter analyzes Assyrian use of a realist visual grammar, "Like the modern news photograph, the narratives attempt to provide a pure spectatorial consciousness of 'historical reality'... They are aimed at 'a kind of zerodegree of reality' as opposed to the fictive elements of myth or legend, but the operational word here is 'aimed,' for in the art of the period, as with the written texts as well, there is an ideological 'end' to the apparent historicity of the representations. In fact, content is carefully manipulated, and the spectator is enjoined to participate in a foregone conclusion: only the enemy fall; the Assyrians never lose and, given the strength of the king and the benevolence of the gods, are never even wounded. The historical record is thereby selected and arranged; reality is invoked, but the artifact of construction is also apparent... I would say rather that the similar desires to represent events as reality all spring from very similar imperialistic concerns, as Ramses II was as much involved with validating his Empire in Syria as was Assurnasirpal," Irene Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The Stele of the Vultures and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of

⁹³ Brilliant, *Visual Narratives*, 96. Franz Wickhoff articulated the significance of the emergence of the continuous narrative style within art-historical perspectives, claiming, "*A new Western and Roman art* has risen before our eyes. Developed in orderly succession from the traditional art practice of the Italic peoples, it introduced with illusionism into the antique a final principle which is at work to the present day. With the establishment of this principle the development of art, that had begun in Egypt and passed through so many different phases among the peoples of the Mediterranean basin, is completed and closed. An incessantly active imagination had allied itself to the realistic tendencies of this Western art, and out of the materials that deceptive illusionism offered had created a new kind of narrative, the *continuous*," Franz Wickhoff, *Roman Art: Some of its Principles and their Application to Early Christian Painting* (Translated and edited by Mrs. S. Arthur Strong, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), 114.

involves extraneous details that are superfluous to the plot, such as all of the niceties surrounding depictions of architecture, weapons, costumes, ethnography, and beyond. Such intentional realism creates verisimilitude (see Fig. 14 in Excursus One).⁹⁵

One of the consequences of this stylistic feature is that the history of scholarship on the Column has been dominated by historicizing approaches that treat the images as eyewitness evidence to supplement inadequate historical sources. Such a purely historical approach was brought into question over the last half-century, however, as scholars began to notice efforts of schematization, artistry, and political ideology.⁹⁶ It is necessary to be aware of the reality-effect created by such rhetoric, for the Column serves not as a neutral window into reality, but is actively engaged in constructing reality for viewers. To this point Sheila Dillon adds,

Certainly the overabundance of details and the level of specificity and precision in the depiction... help to substantiate and authenticate the veracity of the historical narratives. Designers of Roman historical reliefs certainly want us to take these images as objective (and inevitable) historical truth; the wealth of precise

⁹⁵ For a discussion of whether there was originally color on the Column and its contributions to the monument's reality effect, see M. Del Monte, P. Ausset, R.A. Lefevre, "Traces of ancient colours on Trajan's Column," *ARCM Archaeometry* 40, no. 2 (1998): 403–12. According to Stewart, this is the nature of representational art in general during this period, "Representational art… purports not to be selective: it appears to present things as they appear. This is how things were—it seems to declare—take it or leave it!" Peter Stewart, *The Social History of Roman Art*, 117.

⁹⁶ The history of interpretation of the Column parallels history of interpretation of Acts. The Column was first seen as an annalistic history, providing an authentic account of the places and sequence of major events in the war. In 1920's it was argued to have an extra-historical dimension as a piece of art and propaganda. Now the focus is more in analyzing it in terms of political ideology, message and viewer reception. Many scholars in past generations and a number still even today have interpreted the realism in Acts as reflecting the veracity of its contents and its legitimacy as a historical source. For discussions of the historical value of Acts, see W.W. Gasque, "The Historical Value of Acts," *TynBul* 40, no. 1 (1989): 136–57; C. K. Barrett, "The Historicity of Acts," *JTS* 50, no. 2 (1999): 515–34.

the Ancient Near East," in *On the Art in the Ancient Near East* (ed., Irene Winter, Culture and history of the ancient Near East v. 34; Boston: Brill, 2010), 17-18.

details... encourage us to do just that... The column reliefs, like most of Roman imperial art, are symbolic representations of imperial power and knowledge.⁹⁷

As Stewart similarly recognizes, "The image of the emperor promoted in these sculptures was underpinned by documentary detail. Its ideological meanings are literally given verisimilitude by their realistic narrative context."⁹⁸ Lastly, regarding the Column's use of realism, Von Dippe comments,

The Column of Trajan presents a concrete expression of Roman social and cultural values. It functions primarily as a triumphal monument, a fulfillment of the Roman desire for *laus* and *gloria*, and as a justification for the conduct of a war. The method chosen to magnify the [Dacian] victory was to emphasize the historicity of the record, so that it would be accepted as a valid reason for praise. Contributing to this validation was adoption of the plain style of didactic rhetoric, together with a realistic account of the war that depends as much on grinding toil, craftsmanship, planning and dedication as it does on bravery in battle.⁹⁹

In sum, the Column is not a passive monument, but actively constructs reality for its

viewers through its use of a realist visual grammar in order to illicit praise from its viewer

for the victory.

An example of a contrasting mode is the Great Trajanic Frieze which features the emperor Trajan in two sequential scenes, depicted in the Grand style, following depictions of Hellenistic leaders. Although it is roughly contemporaneous with the Column and also having a continuous narrative form, the Frieze differs in many respects in mode of representation. It shows the diversity even within this same subgenre of

⁹⁷ Sheila Dillon, *Representations of War in Ancient Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 206. Kampen argues that between the rich detail and the great length of the frieze, one gets the impression that one is seeing 'documentary reality.' This is furthered, according to Kampen, partly by the repression of images of women, who are included in only 8 of the 155 scenes, while the rest are filled with men. According to Kampen, the absence of women was intened to be seen as "natural," since war was thought of as 'men's business,' Kampen, "Looking at Gender," 53.

⁹⁸ Stewart, *The Social History of Roman Art*, 118.
⁹⁹ Ibid., 423.

Roman historical reliefs. Whereas the Column of Trajan is saturated with strategies of realism, the Great Trajanic Frieze makes no attempt to convince its viewers of the historicity of the events it depicts (see Fig. 13 in Excursus One). Rather, it is constructed in the Grand style that seeks to awe, amaze, and evoke reverence. The Column of Trajan, on the other hand, aimed at persuading its viewers that its contents represent an unmediated view of actual happenings involved in the two Dacian Wars.¹⁰⁰

Admittedly, determining the degree of historicity represented on the Column is problematized by a lack of additional sources against which its veracity can be measured. What remains is a version of the war by Cassius Dio written over a hundred years after the event, and only preserved in an epitomized form in a manuscript dating to the eleventh century.¹⁰¹ Because of this it is difficult to determine what value the Column has as an historical source. What is clear, however, is that there are several features that are contrary to expectation of such an event. For instance, the legionary forces of the Roman army are predominantly depicted in various construction projects, rather than in battle,

¹⁰⁰ Regarding the added sense of realism on the Column, Coarelli, notes, "The very nature of [the Column's] episodes, and the presence of the chronological thread that links them together, permits us to read the whole like a chronicle. It should be stressed that the tone here is kept intentionally 'low,' or matter-of-fact, and does not depart from the lines of a basically realistic tale. The hero-worshipping 'high' tones of Hellenistic origin are not used: such tones, however, are certainly there in other sculptures of the Forum, and especially in the great frieze taken to the Arch of Constantine, where Trajan is depicted as about to charge the Dacian lines on horseback, following the well-known scheme of the 'battle of Alexander,'" Coarelli, *The Column of Trajan*, 29. See fig. 10 in Excursus One.

¹⁰¹ As Brilliant notes regarding the effect of the realist visual grammar on scholarly opinions of the historicity of the account, "This omnipresent factual detail, ranging from elements of costume to weapons to ethnographic and topographic depictions, has captured the attention of many scholars and convinced them of the historicity of the representations. No wonder, since the lavish use of realistic detail functioned as an effective rhetorical device to further the illusion of authenticity." Brilliant, *Visual Narratives*, 100–101.

fighting against Dacian opponents. There is little doubt that such a depiction sought to

present Roman legions in favorable light and as a way of representing Roman

imperialism as a civilizing mission (see Fig. 13 in Excursus One).¹⁰²

While such realism pervades the Column, it is not to be regarded as an

uncomplicated window into the ancient world.¹⁰³ As R.R.R. Smith has argued concerning

the purpose of Rome's use of realism in its visual displays.

In spite of often-repeated warnings, it remains difficult for modern viewers not to look into ancient images and pictures as uncomplicated windows on to the ancient world, unproblematic reflections of what it was like. This was of course the aim of antiquity's realist visual grammar—to conceal highly structured, coded, often tendentious representations beneath an aura of truthful inevitability. Things were just like that.¹⁰⁴

The real purpose of the Column is not to document the war, it is to glorify its protagonist

and represent Roman efforts in Dacia as a benevolent mission to civilize the barbarous

territory. To reiterate Dillon's point quoted earlier, it stands as a symbolic means of

representing Roman power.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ The Column's interest in shaping viewer's perspectives is a characteristic of Roman historical reliefs in general. As Smith argues, "A variety of detailed studies has shown how the huge narrative panels known as 'Roman historical reliefs' were carefully composed pseudo-narratives whose actions epitomised key imperial virtues and exemplary activities in which the emperor was in reality actively involved: expansion of

¹⁰² Elizabeth Wolfram Thill, "Civilization Under Construction: Depictions of Architecture on the Column of Trajan," *American Journal of Archaeology* 114, no. 1 (2010).

¹⁰³ On the question of the Column as an historical source, as well as a consideration of the propagandistic influences of its narrative representation, see Danae Richter, *Das römische Heer auf der Trajanssäule*, 420-431.

¹⁰⁴ R.R.R. Smith, "The Use of Images: Visual History and Ancient History," Pages 59-102 in *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome* (ed., T. P. Wiseman; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 79. Similarly, Kampen assesses the realist visual grammar in its ability to construct "truth." "The coalescence of the documentary, the mythological, and the ideological creates a political program that is constructed as Truth—temporally and geographically specific but also inevitable and timeless," Kampen, "Looking at Gender," 67.

It is no coincidence that Acts too employs a verisimilar mode of narrative representation as it tells the story of Christian beginnings. Acts creates verisimilitude by texturing its discourse with a sense of realism through the heavy use of extraneous details. For instance, in the process of narrating the healing of the lame man in Acts 3, the following details are given: it is 3 o'clock (3:1), the man was lame from birth (3:2), he was carried by others and sat before the temple gate called "Beautiful" (3:2). It is said that Peter looked intently at him (3:4), while the lame man fixed his attention on Peter in return (3:5), so Peter took him by the right hand while his feet and ankles were made strong (3:6), and he jumped (3:7). These meticulous details serve to create verisimilitude and confirm the veracity of the story. What is significant is that the narrative actually depends on such realism when it is appealed to in the following chapter in order to confirm the event and add even more details, namely that the man was forty years old (4:22). The effect of such a narrative mode of representation is that it makes the improbable seem probable by creating an added sense of veracity to the narrative.¹⁰⁶

the empire, care of the army, care of the people, proper relations with the gods, proper relations with the senate," R.R.R. Smith, "The Use of Images: Visual History and Ancient History," 92.

¹⁰⁶ As Mitzi Smith argues, "Luke obfuscates the synthetic aspects of his story. One way he accomplishes this obfuscation is by preempting any suspicion about the complete authenticity and truthfulness of the reality constructed in Acts. He has claimed to write an accurate chronology superior to previously written accounts (Luke 1:1-4; cf. Acts 26:26)," Mitzi J. Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles: Charismatics, the Jews, and Women* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2012), 66. This point is further argued in the memorable words of Richard Pervo, "Luke knows how to make the improbable look probable. He can so bedazzle his audience that the critic must patiently point out how the components do not cohere, engaging reluctantly in the technique of slicing up a great painting in pursuit of what often seem tawdry goals. The metaphor is not accidental. That tradition that made Luke an artist recognized that he is a painter rather than a photographer. Historians prefer photographs. Luke gives them paintings," Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 9. Pervo further argues, "As a competent writer, Luke knew how to create

As strange as it may seem to modern sensibilities, the inclusion of the miraculous did not necessarily take away from an ancient readers' impression of a narrative's interest in realism.¹⁰⁷ Even on state art, where an interest in presenting the subject matter as plausibly as possible was of paramount importance, details of the miraculous and supernatural persisted. For example, one of the very first scenes of the Column, just as the Roman troops cross into Dacia, a river deity, Danuvius, is portrayed emerging from the waters to watch approvingly as the army progresses across a bridge.¹⁰⁸ By way of analogy, the occasional appearance of angels in Acts does not necessarily detract, at least by popular standards, from the narrative's interest in plausibility.¹⁰⁹ What is common in both of these texts is that the miraculous and/or supernatural take up a proportionate amount of the overall narratives (see Fig. 14 in Excursus One).

Another one of the most commonly employed strategies by which Acts creates verisimilitude is the extensive use of toponyms. Toponyms are used in Acts to refer to a range of locales and are regularly used to articulate the ethnic variety of characters.¹¹⁰

verisimilitude. The plausibility of a narrative does not establish its historicity, nor do minor details, such as the age of a patient or the duration of an illness, prove that a miraculous cure actually happened. Verisimilitude is more important for writers of fiction than for recorders of history. Literatures of differing eras and cultures exhibit varying conventions of 'realism.' The description of the disturbance at Ephesus (Acts 19:23-40) may strike modern readers as highly realistic, at least in part, but it does not conform to the general tenor of ancient historians' descriptions of such events. Realistic touches, like bits of local color, help the reader to enter the story world. They can also be features of pure fantasy. The navigational details and temporal markers that recur throughout Lucian's True History are quite like those found in Acts 27:1-28:16. Acts is not fantasy, but the issue remains: verisimilitude does not establish historicity," Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁷ Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 135. Compare with the Column of Marcus Aurelius' depiction of the rain miracle.

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion of this scene, see J. B. Campbell, *Rivers and the Power of Ancient Rome* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 156.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7.

¹¹⁰ 1:12; 3:2; 3:11; 5:12.

Barnabas is introduced as being from Cyprus (4:36), Paul is from Tarsus (9:11), Apollos is from Alexandria (18.24), Aquila is from Pontus (18.2), and Jesus is from Nazareth (2:22).¹¹¹ This rhetorical tactic, however, is not restricted to those belonging to "the Way." Certain "Jews" are said to have been Cretans, Arabs, Egyptians, etc.¹¹² In addition to these uses, toponyms are employed to refer to locations in Paul's travels. Often, these are used to indicate rather than narrate such stops and visits. As such, the highest number of toponyms are concentrated in those chapters that detail Paul's journey, with the highest number found in chapter 27. Loveday Alexander, in an attempt to explain Acts' extensive use of place-names, argues that they may "be used in a narrative to create an impression of geographical verisimilitude—the sense that the narrator (and hence the reader) was 'really there."¹¹³ In this respect, Alexander demonstrates that Luke parallels Xenophon (Alexander's choice as a representative of the historical genre) more closely than he does Chariton (Alexander's choice as a representative of the ancient romance novel). However, as Alexander argues, Acts possesses an even higher interest in the use of toponyms compared to both historical writings and the novels.

Juxtaposing Acts with the Column engenders new questions about the use of such a grammar of realism. Acts and Roman historical reliefs construct narratives that give the impression of historical truth, yet in reality, both construct an image of the past that was deeply influenced by historical circumstances conditioning cultural production at the

¹¹¹ 4:10; 4:36; 9:11; 18:24 ¹¹² E.g. 2:9-11.

¹¹³ Alexander, Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context, 115.

time. Both are self-consciously constructed representational media intended to transmit an ideology and persuade viewers toward their vision.¹¹⁴

Encomiastic Rhetorical Style

The third and last stylistic parallel between Acts and the Column I shall discuss is the use of an encomiastic rhetorical style. While the combination of continuous narrative and realism on both the Column and Acts provides an illusion of reality, they are both ultimately driven by a similar end—constructing a rhetoric of praise.¹¹⁵ An important stylistic parallel between Acts and the Column is the common use of encomium, which was a part of epideictic oratory concerned with praising subjects in such a way so as to inspire imitation. It served in Classical rhetoric to commend subjects and elevate them to

¹¹⁴ Richard Brilliant once argued concerning Roman art and Roman imperial policy that "propaganda is not used, merely, to create a favourable climate of belief or opinion; it is used to channel the energies of the public exposed to it and repeatedly—a public whose beliefs are conditioned by propaganda so that they will act in concert in some desired manner, that is a manner or direction useful to the creators and disseminators of that propaganda," Richard Brilliant, Commentaries on Roman Art: Selected Studies (London: Pindar Press, 1994), 373. As Stewart argues concerning this point, "We have seen repeatedly how various kinds of Roman art were used as instruments, working in society to achieve particular ends... we have seen how works of art embodied and perhaps reinforced ideological assumptions about how society was structured and which values it should enshrine... we shall examine the power of works of art to affect people's feelings and behaviour, even to prompt them to acts of violence," Stewart, The Social History of Roman Art, 108. For a broader discussion of political propaganda in classical antiquity, see K. A. E. Enenkel and Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer, eds., The Manipulative Mode: Political Propaganda in Antiquity: A Collection of Case Studies (Boston: Brill, 2005).

¹¹⁵ Hamberg highlights the link between the use of realism and encomium, "it will probably be inadequate, and even completely erroneous, to characterize the Roman historical types only as realistic reproductions of events. Very often they have certainly, both in accordance with the intention of the authorities and of the artist and pursuant to the view held by the ancient spectator, been given a moralizing signification that in their eyes has considerably increased the value of the types, and which sometimes may even have been regarded as alone justifying their existence," Hamberg, *Studies in Roman Imperial Art*, 42.

the level of examples.¹¹⁶ The common use of encomiastic rhetoric to extol their protagonists puts the Column and Acts more in the realm of panegyric than historical documentary. They serve to exalt their protagonists as exemplary men who serve as paragons of virtue. Historical figures then would serve to model for readers the ideal character of the state and individuals.¹¹⁷

Depictions of Trajan and the army on the Column are designed to inspire emulation among viewers. These images serve as symbols of what it meant to be a good Roman male leader.¹¹⁸ Similarly, the book of Acts devotes much attention to depicting Paul as a paragon of many of the same virtues esteemed in the reliefs, such as piety and fortitude, in order to explicate his office as a deserving leader of imperial society.¹¹⁹ Paul's vision on the road to Damascus plays a pivotal role in the development of his character within Acts: here he is transformed from being "furiously enraged" (26:11) all the time to being quite lucid and sober minded post-Damascus—and thus, a good example, which others can imitate.¹²⁰

Penner analyzes Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 6:1-8:3) in light of Luke's apologetic interests and Greco-Roman historiography, which has provided a critical contribution to the field by situating Acts within the broader discursive world of ancient historians, and in explicating what Penner refers to as the "sociocultural, rhetorical, and ideological

¹¹⁶ E.g. Pliny's Pan. 91.1, 95.4.

¹¹⁷ Penner, In Praise of Christian Origins, 128.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of encomium and monuments, see P. A. Roche, "The *Panegyricus* and the monuments of Rome," Pages 45-66 in Paul Roche ed. *Pliny's Praise : The Panegyricus in the Roman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 41. See Ibid., 105 for a discussion on the relationship between encomium and monuments.

¹¹⁹ John Clayton Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (Society for New Testament Studies 77; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹²⁰ See Chapter Three for an extended discussion on this topic.

texture of their historiographical world."¹²¹ He demonstrates how history writing during the Roman period reflects a heightened interest in moral and epideictic qualities, the type that concerned itself with praise and blame, encomium and invective. In support of this he cites several examples, including that of Cicero who asks to what branch of rhetoric epideictic, judicial, or deliberative—history belongs.¹²² Cicero argued epideictic was the most appropriate type of rhetoric to classify history. Certainly not all historians held this same view, nor does all of history during the Roman period fit comfortably within this category. Rather, what emerges is a sense that history was generally thought to teach virtue by example. Historical figures then would serve to model for readers the ideal character of the state and individuals.¹²³ From the Roman perspective, therefore, history was the basis for mimesis. As Penner extends these observations in his analysis of the Stephen episode, he argues

[A]side from advancing the plot connections and adding to the complete narrative, Luke also uses the Stephen account to elaborate and amplify the epideictic themes of his composition. In particular, Luke utilizes the compositional technique of *synkrisis* to draw the newly formed *politeia* founded by Jesus into comparison with the Jewish *politeia*, used as a foil to enhance the praiseworthy features of the nascent Christian movement attested in 6:1-7. Thus, Stephen is contrasted with his adversaries, and the conclusion is that the former is truly law-abiding and righteous while the latter are depicted as his mirror opposites.¹²⁴

Similarly, John Clayton Lentz approaches the last eight chapters of Acts from the perspective of how the trial scenes serve to explicate Paul's social status and virtuous character.¹²⁵ For instance, in 22:28, Paul's own inherited citizenship is compared to the

¹²¹ Ibid., 114.

¹²² De Or. 2.66-67

¹²³ Penner, In Praise of Christian Origins, 128.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 300.

¹²⁵ Lentz, Luke's Portrait of Paul, 67.

tribune's own purchased citizens.¹²⁶ There is a clear strategy in Acts to compare Paul with other actors in order to make implicit judgments on their character.

On both the Column and in Acts encomiastic rhetorical style worked in tandem with, not independent of, the grammar of realism in creating a rich narrative effect. At the same time as history writing served to praise and blame its subjects, there was a heightened expectancy and standard for narrative plausibility. Concerning the relationship between encomium and history, Todd Penner writes, "within a rhetorically saturated culture, only a plausible narrative had such value, and thus the historian was implored to refrain from extreme and overt panegyric—wherein the details were not 'objective' but determined by the bias of the historian—as this detracted from the profitability of the narrative." ¹²⁷ Thus, the very utility of narratives as encomiastic productions depended on their overall credibility. Acts', as well as the Column's, own combination of encomium and realism is certainly reflective of these broader historiographical patterns.

In sum, Acts has capitalized on a particular rhetorical form that carried a certain cultural currency in which those ambitious for social power could capitalize on in their own self-fashioning.¹²⁸ As Peter Holliday argues concerning the Roman period, "Style

¹²⁶ Other points of comparison include 21:38; 22:28; 24:25.

¹²⁷ Penner, In Praise of Christian Origins, 128.

¹²⁸ This concept comes from what Bourdieu calls "cultural capital" which is a practice by which aspiring persons employ their acquired knowledge and sophistication as a kind of social commodity. Holliday uses this concept with regard to the use of different styles in Roman elite self-representation. As Holliday argues, "Roman aristocrats begin to deploy style itself as a self-conscious means of laying claim to social power. I will propose that issues of style become part of the cultural capital exploited by such Romans," Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration*, 195.

itself was capable of holding political significance."¹²⁹ As such, style itself could serve as a cultural capital one could exploit in order to lay claim to social power. Trajanic monumentalization concretized the very representational mode and standard ambitious persons could appropriate in representing their individual and/or collective identities and asserting their place within the wider world.¹³⁰ The narrative aesthetics of Acts were very much a product of the cultural history of the Roman Empire and served early Christian interests in asserting their own place in imperial society at a particular point in history. By paying attention to the Column, one can learn a lot about the *manner* by which Luke seeks to sculpt Christian identity through the creative shaping of the inherited tradition. In this sense Acts serves as a mediator between social ambition and political ideals as it constructs a public image of its protagonists that is in accordance with the moral, social and cultural imperatives of society.¹³¹ The particular narrative mode chosen to express this was an integral element in this construction.¹³²

¹³¹ Here, I am drawn to the perspective of Woolf who argues for the importance of writing and monuments in defining identities, "Writing, I suggest then, was important in Roman monuments, because words were the only images precise enough to convey the complex names and relationships that defined the identities of individual Romans. With the expansion and complexification of Roman society, the need to define identities precisely became increasingly important. Other societies might manage with coats of arms or totemic animals, but the primary function of monuments in the early Empire was as devices with which to assert the place of individuals within society. Aspects of this concern have already emerged in the arguments that Roman monumental writing often seems to have been used by individuals to assert their incorporation into a larger whole; that the object of monuments was often to establish or preserve a particular relationship;

¹²⁹ Ibid., 213.

¹³⁰ For an example of this phenomenon during the reign of Augustus, see Mario Torelli, *Typology & Structure of Roman Historical Reliefs* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 134, who analyzes the Ara Pacis in terms of how it changed the structure and language by which subjects represented their own status. See also Kathleen Lamp, "The Ara Pacis Augustae: Visual Rhetoric in Augustus' Principate," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2009): 1–24; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Language of Augustus in His Cups," *TLS* 101896, no. 4881 (1996).

Conclusion: The Book of Acts as a Literary Monument

Although the Book of Acts has been regularly received as a clear, unmediated window into the early happenings and heroes of the early Church, it is the end product of a long series of representational choices. Since stylistic options are nearly infinite in any given era, *how* a text presents its subject is often of grave consequence, with the chosen form serving as an integral part of the overall message it wished to convey and influencing how it was received. Thus, this Chapter has inquired of the very method Acts employs to propagate memories of the apostles. It was argued that both Acts and the Column share three of their most defining stylistic features, including a dramatic continuous narrative format, a heightened sense of realism, and an encomiastic rhetorical style. In addition, both share similar purposes in glorifying the memories, perpetuating the honor, and constructing the status of their protagonists. Given that these two "texts" stand in parallel in both form and function, it is incumbent on us to acknowledge how deeply Acts' stylistic choices are tied to the text's political context, in so far as its narrative style conforms to the representational mode and standards developing at the

and with the idea that monuments were believed to offer individuals a chance of evading complete oblivion after their deaths... No simple formula exists for explaining why inscriptions were set up, but the desire to fix an individuals' place within history, society, and the cosmos provides a plausible psychological background to 'the epigraphic impulse'," Woolf, "Monumental Writing and the Expansion of Roman Society in the Early Empire," 28-29.

¹³² See Von Dippe, "Origin and Development of Continuous Narrative," 28, for a similar argument for visual narratives. Luke capitalized on a particular rhetorical form in presenting his narrative. In this sense the text of Acts serves as a mediator between social ambition and political ideals. Interests in acquiring and perpetuating honor and status could be governing principles in determining style. Whitmarsh has argued that "it is undesirable to consider literary aesthetics in isolation from the circuits of 'power," Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), vii. See Figs. 15-22 in Excursus One for additional photos of the Column.

period. Future approaches to questions concerning the genre of Acts will only benefit from broadening the horizon in which one looks for analogous traits and takes into consideration the multimedia context of the Roman world and the free exchange between different media. Reading the book of Acts in connection with the Column's own visual display helps situate Acts' heroic idealization of the past as a historically embedded cultural performance that emerges from the very material and discursive world within which it was composed.

EXCURSUS ONE: IMAGES FROM CHAPTER ONE

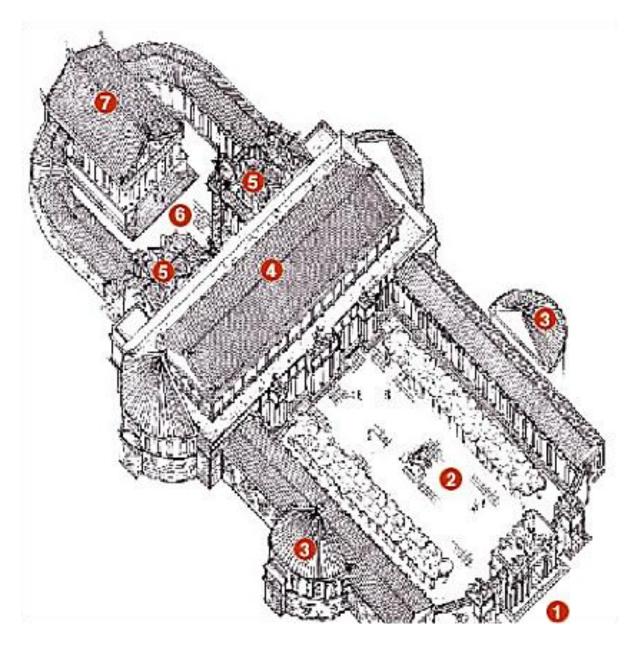


Fig. 1: Reconstruction drawing of the Forum of Trajan showing (1) the triumphal entrance, (2) a statue of Trajan on horseback, (3) hemicycles, (4) Basilica Ulpia, (5) two libraries, (6) Trajan's Column, and (7) Trajan's temples.
© Kevin Lee Sarring and James E. Packer



Fig. 2: Column of Marcus Aurelius, c-193 A.D., Rome. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 3: 9/11 Firefighters Memorial, 2006, New York City. <u>http://www.fdnytenhouse.com/fdnywall/</u>



Fig. 4: Winged Victory located halfway up the Column marking the transition from the first to the second Dacian war. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

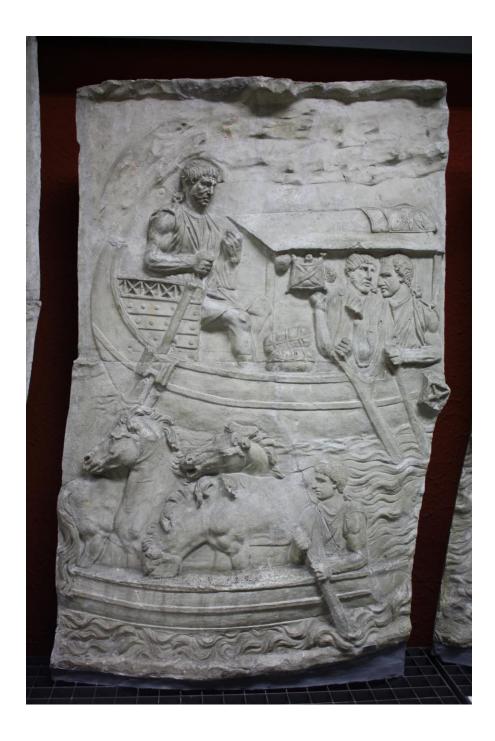


Fig. 5: Trajan as helmsman. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 6: Beginning of Column frieze featuring landscape comprised of Roman forts. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 7: Coastal Roman city with impressive buildings and fortification. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 8: *Res Gestae Divi Augustae*, Rome. The original dates to 14 C.E. This reproduction is from the time of Mussolini. Perspective one of two. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 9: *Res Gestae Divi Augustae*, Rome. The original dates to 14 C.E. This reproduction is from the time of Mussolini. Perspective two of two. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 10: Trajan addressing group of soldiers Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 11: Reconstruction of the Great Trajanic Frieze that was appropriated on the Arch of Constantine, Rome, 312 C.E. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 12: Selection of the Great Trajanic Frieze that was appropriated on the Arch of Constantine, Rome, 312 C.E. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 13: Roman troops engaged in construction project consisting mostly of stone material. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 14: Danuvius, a river deity, depicted emerging from the waters to watch approvingly as the Roman army progresses across a pontoon bridge. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 15: Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Perspective one of seven. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 16: Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Perspective two of seven. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 17: Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Perspective three of seven. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 18: Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Perspective four of seven. Photo by Drew Billings.

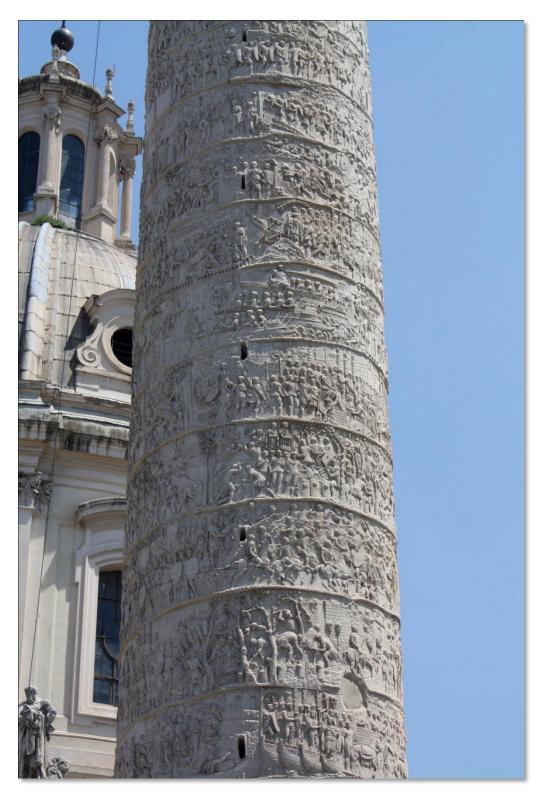


Fig. 19: Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Perspective five of seven. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 20: Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Perspective six of seven. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 21. Column of Trajan base decorated with enemy's armor, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Perspective seven of seven. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 22: Casts of Column of Trajan reliefs, c. 113 C.E., Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

CHAPTER TWO:

Imperial Virtues and Provincial Representations

Chapter Two, focusing on the impact imperial ideals had on provincial self-fashioning, will analyze Roman imperial trends of representation circulating during the reign of Trajan. In the first two decades of the second century, representations and perceptions of the emperor experienced a dramatic shift as the *princeps* began to play even more of a paradigmatic role for society as a whole. The impact of this shift has been traced in recent studies of Italian and provincial epigraphic records and the honorific terminology used to celebrate local aristocrats, which drew directly from the language of imperial virtues. This chapter will show how the public image of Trajan functioned as a moral exemplar and served as an essential model for the euergetism of local aristocrats in Asia Minor in the early second century. Through this intentional semantic overlap, provincial notables modeled their own authority on that of Trajan and represented themselves as local versions of the Roman emperor, sharing in his particular virtues. Trajan was regarded as the grand patron who sits at the center of a vast network of patronage, who exercised his paradigmatic generosity through the dispensation of benefactions across the entire *oikoumené*. Consequently, there was a striking proliferation of representations of acts of euergetism in the eastern empire (the same geographical area of Paul's own mission in Acts) at this time that was unmatched in the period before and after. While this was not the only period in which acts of euergetism were publically commemorated, this study attests to the amplification of such discourses, their identification with Trajan, and the heightened premium they held for provincial representation in the early part of the second century.

100

The Emperor in the Roman World

The advent of the monarchy was a decisive moment in shaping not only the political, but also the cultural life of the Roman empire.¹ The installation of an emperor provided a new unifying symbol for otherwise geographically far-flung territories. There were no other symbols of equal distinction and geographical reach.² As a symbol, the emperor helped to universalize Roman imperial claims and legitimate the particular social order upon which the state rested, which together provided a new level of ideological unification for an otherwise fragmented empire.³ The combination of literary references and the material record convey the impression that images of Roman emperors were nearly ubiquitous. The emperor was represented visually in public through monuments and statues erected in cities of varying size across the empire.⁴ Coins were minted carrying imperial images and circulated to all corners of the empire.⁵ Monumental

¹ Several studies have proposed that the emperor was central both to the political system and the cultural fabric of the Roman empire, as both an actor and a symbol. In the words of Carlos Noreña, "the Roman emperor was no mere ornament in the Roman imperial superstructure. Partly as an important actor in his own right, and partly as a deeply resonant symbol, the Roman emperor had a deep impact on both the political system and the cultural fabric of the Roman empire," Carlos F. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5; Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1992), 363-464; Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

² Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 8.

³ Ibid., 13. See Wallace-Hadrill for a review of scholarship on the Roman emperor by modern historians, "Civilis Princeps: Between Citizen and King," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 72 (1982): 32.

⁴ Harriet I. Flower, "A Tale of Two Monuments: Domitian, Trajan, and Some Praetorians at Puteoli (AE 1973, 137)," *American Journal of Archaeology* 105, no. 4 (2001).

⁵ Andrew Burnett, *Coinage in the Roman World* (London: Seaby, 1987); R.A.G. Carson, *Coins of the Roman Empire* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990). For a discussion of Trajanic coins and chronological developments, see Wolfram Weiser, "Kaiserliche Publizistik in Kleinformat: Die Münzen der Epoche des Kaiser Traian," in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 145-162.

structures, such as temples, libraries, and other complexes invoked ideas about the emperor, whether or not they were used for purposes associated with the so called "imperial cult."⁶ Epigraphic texts proliferated during the imperial period and often carried the names of emperors, as well as their special titles, records of achievements, and virtues.⁷ Imperial travels also served as a medium for advertising ideas about the emperor, and afforded subjects the opportunity to view their ruler in person.⁸ In domestic contexts, a variety of small-scale objects carried images of the emperor, such as seals, mirrors, lamps, medallions, and gems.⁹ Beyond the visual remains, reference to the emperor in the dating of events and documents is also well attested. Through the wide diffusion of images of the emperor in a variety of media, the monarchy transformed public space and constructed the emperor as omnipresent in almost every part of public and private life.¹⁰

Much of this material production took place in Rome, beginning during the reign of Augustus, a time when a centralized program was conceived directed toward unifying the empire.¹¹ Simple top-down models, however, are no longer exclusively used to conceptualize the

⁶ Robin Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1996); Björn C. Ewald and Carlos Noreña, *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Amanda Claridge, "Hadrian's Lost Temple of Trajan," *Journal of Roman Archaeology.* 20 (2007): 54.

⁷ J. M. Hojte, "Imperial Visits as Occasion for the Erection of Portrait Statues?" Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik, no. 133 (2000): 221–35.

⁸ Anthony Birley, *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1997).

⁹ Noreña, Imperial Ideals, 14–15.

¹⁰ Gunnar Seelentag, "Imperial Representation and Reciprocation: The Case of Trajan," *The Classical Journal* 107, no. 1 (2011): 73–97.

¹¹ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 76 (1986): 66–87; Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

process.¹² Provincials also actively participated in the creation of this system.¹³ Ideas about Rome and her empire were by no means only imposed from Rome to the provinces, but very much the product of provincials and their cities seeking to engage in competition for the favor and attention of their government.¹⁴ Together, Romans and provincials constructed the emperor as standing at the center of the known world and of holding supreme significance.

The ubiquity of the emperors' image would have helped keep the idea of the emperor in the collective consciousness of his subjects, indelibly impacting the cultural life of the empire.¹⁵ While the symbol of the emperor could be put to several different uses by different actors, one of the primary ways the Roman emperor served as a symbol for subjects was as a moral exemplar.¹⁶ There was a robust discursive tradition of celebrating the superior qualities of rulers that stretched from Isocrates and Xenophon in the fourth century BCE well into the third century CE in the philosophical schools.¹⁷ The *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* is a prime example that dates to the advent of the monarchy.¹⁸ The result of all of this is that it made the emperor's virtues a part of

¹² S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1-22; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 19-48.

¹³ Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Classics and contemporary thought 6. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Yanir Shochat, "The Change in the Roman Religion at the Time of the Emperor Trajan," *Lato Latomus* 44, no. 2 (1985): 317–36.

¹⁶ M. P. Charlesworth, *The Virtues of a Roman Emperor: Propaganda and the Creation of Belief* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1937).

¹⁷ Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 53–54.

¹⁸ Kathleen Lamp, "The Ara Pacis Augustae: Visual Rhetoric in Augustus' Principate," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2009): 1–24. As Noreña points out, "The very idea of the Roman emperor—a monarch ruling over some sixty million subjects—was already quite powerful, and was by itself enough to support some measure of ideological unification within the Roman empire. But the symbol of the Roman emperor could be articulated and expressed in many different ways, and even subtle changes in these different modes of representation could alter the discursive and ideological nature of this symbolic system—with important

public discourse and placed a high premium on the imperial character itself.¹⁹ As Carlos Noreña argues, "Roman emperors did not always live up to these ideals, of course, but the insistent celebration of imperial virtues by aristocratic writers, and the equally insistent commemoration of these virtues by the imperial regime, gave a pronounced ethical thrust to public discourse in the Roman empire, and conditioned the manner in which aristocratic Romans, including the emperor, understood the nature and ends of political power."²⁰

While the idea of Roman imperial exemplarity had been present since the time of

Augustus, this conception of the emperor reaches new heights during the reign of Trajan.²¹

Trajan was represented as one of the supreme moral exemplars by imperial subjects. In Pliny's

Panegyricus, over 30 virtues are ascribed to the emperor.²² As Paul Roche argues, "His [Pliny's]

innovation in terms of political thought is not at issue. But the fragmenting of these into an

¹⁹ Ibid., 57; Paul Veyne, "What Was a Roman Emperor? Emperor, Therefore a God," *Diogenes*, no. 199 (2003): 3–22.

²⁰ Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 57.

²¹ Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Civilis Princeps," 47; Carlos F. Noreña "The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues," *Journal of Roman Studies* (2001): 146–68. See the following for a discussion of Trajan's ascension to the throne, Andrew Berriman and Malcom Todd, "A Very Roman Coup: The Hidden War of Imperial Succession, AD 96-8," *Histzeitalte Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 50, no. 3 (2001): 312–31. For a concise survey on the political circumstances revolving around Trajan's ascension to the throne, see Werner Eck, "Traian—Der Weg zum Kaisertum," in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 7-20. On the revival of Augustan values, see Alain M. Gowing, *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 102-131.

²² Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 37; Roger Rees, "To be and not to be: Pliny's Paradoxical Trajan," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 45, no. 1 (2001): 149–68.

implications... for the nature of the relationship between the central state and local aristocrats. It is not just the diffusion of the idea of the emperor, then, but rather the diffusion of multiple ideas of the emperor, conceptualized and articulated in very specific ways... For it is only through careful attention to the particular ideas, ideals, and values associated with the emperor, and to their changing historical contexts chronological and geographical patterning, and, above all, degree of prominence in relation to one another, that we can fully grasp the impact of this symbolic system on the political structures, social hierarchy, and cultural fabric of the Roman empire," Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 21.

unprecedented array of properties and the heaping of them onto the emperor in (as far as we can see) unparalleled quantity is both a significant reflection of Pliny's rhetorical agenda and strategy in the *Panegyricus*, and a powerful index of the public centralization of all virtuous behavious into the person of the emperor.²³ Pliny explicitly talks about Trajan serving as a model for others on multiple occasions.²⁴ Repeatedly, Pliny refers to Trajan as "*optimus*" which is the superlative form of the adjective *bonus* ("good") and means "best.²⁵ The term implies moral excellence when applied to a person and has strong philosophical and ethical undertones.²⁶ It is evocative of the Ciceronian notion of "the good man" (*vir bonus*). Such honorific terminology was indicative of a broader conceptual shift of the emperor as a model for society, in contrast with *dominus*, a title Trajan regularly refused which expressed domination.²⁷ An individual who was described as *optimus* was also an exemplar by definition.²⁸ It was in this sense that Trajan

²⁸ As Noreña argues, "In his *Panegyricus*, Pliny weaves the ideal of the *optimus princeps* throughout the speech. Not only does he repeatedly refer to Trajan as *optimus princeps*... he also offers a short lecture on the meaning of the term *optimus* and explains why it applies especially to Trajan (*Pan.* 88; cf. 2.7). And Pliny, like Velleius, can be explicit about the emperor's paradigmatic role: 'for we do not need power [sc. over us] so much as an example. Indeed, fear is an unreliable teacher of what is right. Men learn better from examples. In fact, the idea of imperial exemplarity was present right from the very advent of monarchy at Rome, and can be found stated clearly in the *Res Gestae*," Ibid., 289. See Seelentag for a methodology that considers the role and class of the different audiences in the construction of the imperial image, especially the senate, plebs, and the military, Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 14-26.

²³ Paul Roche, "Pliny's Thanksgiving: An Introduction to the *Panegyricus*," Pages 1-28 in *Pliny's Praise: The* Panegyricus *in the Roman World* (Ed. Paul Roche, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10.

²⁴ *Pan.* 36.1, 56.1, 91.1, 95.4.

²⁵ The use of the term *optimus* was officially incorporated into Trajan's titulature as *optimus princeps* between 114 and 117. The title appears on coins from 103, but it is not until 114 that this becomes a standard acclamation of the emperor.

²⁶ Gunnar Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians: Herrschaftsdarstellung Im Principat* (Hermes Bd. 91; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004), 240-247.

²⁷ Trajan's refusal of this title does not prevent Pliny from addressing Trajan as "*Domine*" in his letters of correspondence. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 287, 291-292.

fulfilled his duty as the *civilis princeps*, which was a conception of the emperor whereby he was regarded as a model for the entire citizen body.²⁹

The specific qualities that are attributed to any given emperor are significant; for they can provide a means of tracking the changing currents of imperial ideology and help us assess the variable resonance of the virtues themselves at any given period.³⁰ Therefore, it is significant that there was a dramatic fluctuation in the honorific terms that appear during Trajan's reign, even if it was ephemeral. This stands in contrast to the slower-moving changes in much of the honorific terminology of the period. The evidence shows, however, that this is not reducable to mere terminological fluctuation, but a rather critical transformation in representational trends between the Flavian dynasty and the High Empire. This study is not interested in cataloguing all of the different virtues attributed to Trajan. Rather, it is interested in determining which of these virtues were singled out and emphasized beyond all others.³¹

³⁰ Ibid., 37-38.

²⁹ C.f. Pliny's *Pan.* 2.4. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Civilis Princeps," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 72 (1982): 32–48. As Wallace-Hadrill argues concerning the importance of this image of the emperor for society as a whole, "An emperor whom ritual and ceremonial raised above the level of human society, whose power was represented symbolically as deriving from 'outside', from the gods, owed nothing to the internal structure of the society he ruled. To act, by contrast, as a member of that society, as the peer of its most elevated members, was (symbolically) to associate autocratic power with the social structure. Civility both reinforced the social hierarchy by demonstrating imperial respect for it, and strengthened the autocracy by linking it with the social structure. The moderation of the emperor placed his own dignity on the same scale of values as that of his subjects. To be honoured as a god like Caligula with exotic sacrifices of flamingos created an unbridgeable gap between sovereign and subject. But if to be thrice consul was considered an honour even by an emperor, it was an honour worthy for his subjects to aspire to. To be honoured in the same coin as his subjects ensured that the currency retained its value," Ibid., 47.

³¹ Cf. Nünnerich-Asmus, Annette, ed. *Trajan. Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie. Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 2002.

The following section will explore the particular ways in which Trajan served as a paradigmatic figure in the Roman world, specifically, how he became the primary paradigm of generosity in the first two decades of the second century. In turn, it will be shown that there was a proliferation of representations of provincial munificence during this period, which was inspired by the imperial example of the emperor as the great public benefactor.

Trajanic *Indulgentia*

Hannah Cotton argues in her insightful study on the concept of *indulgentia* ("generosity") during the imperial period that it was not until the reign of Trajan that the term, and others similarly used to express the emperor's supreme generosity, first became established in the ideology of the principate.³² Although *indulgentia* has a fairly wide semantic range, and may be translated as "generosity," "lenience," or "indulgence," it is primarily used to refer to "the natural affection and emotion which the parent feels towards a child."³³ Instead of functioning like other terms that simply refer to individual qualities, *indulgentia* refers to an entire disposition of one who acts as a parent. In association with the Roman emperor Trajan, it signaled his role as a paradigmatic paternal figure whose parental *indulgentia* demanded the filial *pietas* of subjects.³⁴ As Noreña explains, "*indulgentia* mas construed as a virtue to which imperial *beneficia* could be ascribed, from *alimenta* programs and patronage of the arts to the remission of debts owed to the treasury and the abolition of judicial sentences. Numerous texts make it clear that the concrete favors bestowed by the emperor were thought to flow directly

³² While the term is used in the brief reign of Nerva, it is fully incorporated into the ideology of the principate during the reign of Trajan.

³³ Hannah Cotton, "The Concept of Indulgentia under Trajan," *Chiron* xiv (1984): 262; Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 281.

³⁴ Cotton, "The Concept of Indulgentia under Trajan," 262; Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 1.

from his *indulgentia* and other personal qualities."³⁵ Noreña cites the Trajanic jurist Iavolenus Priscus as an example of how intimately tied imperial virtue was to imperial favor, "we ought to interpret a favor of the emperor [Trajan] as amply as possible, since it comes from his divine *indulgentia*."³⁶

In Pliny's epistolary correspondence with Trajan, the term *indulgentia* is abundant.³⁷ This is not surprising considering Pliny's tendency to faithfully reflect the currents of his day and the general predilection felt for the term.³⁸ The term is used in a variety of contexts, especially to define the relationship between the emperor and Italian provincial communities.³⁹ For instance, the term is used to refer to the *Institutio Alimentaria* ("Institution for the distribution of provisions to the poor"), which provided monthly support to several hundred thousand boys and girls across Italy.⁴⁰

³⁸ Cotton, "The Concept of Indulgentia under Trajan," 262; A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

³⁹ As Cotton further points out, "The emperor's *indulgentia* is also invoked in the context of the status of cities. Amisus in Pontus is a city both *libera* and *foederata*, and owing to the *beneficium indulgentiae tuae*, as Pliny tells Trajan, it enjoys the use of its own laws (X, 92). In his reply (X, 93) Trajan puts it slightly differently: it is owing to the *beneficium foederis* that Amisus enjoys the use of its own laws. It is likely that Pliny is speaking loosely, referring all privileges to the *indulgentia* of the living emperor. Trajan's rephrasing of Pliny's words shows that even if he is aware of Pliny's implied flattery, nevertheless he prefers to emphasize the objective legal situation," Cotton, "The Concept of Indulgentia under Trajan," 257.

⁴⁰ The program was funded by the interest accrued from loans Trajan provided to landlowners. CIL XI 1147; IX 1455. Martin Goodman, *Roman World 44BC-180AD* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 194.

³⁵ Noreña, Imperial Ideals, 281.

³⁶ Ibid., 281.

³⁷ In discussing the function of Pliny's pre-Bithynian correspondence, Noreña argues, "They were vehicles in the extensive networks of imperial and senatorial patronage that bound emperors and subjects together. And, far from being 'private,' it was precisely this type of personal patronage through which emperors governed their far-flung empire... a fundamental aspect of Roman government during the imperial period," Carlos Noreña, "The Social Economy of Pliny's Correspondence with Trajan," *American Journal of Philology* 128, no. 2 (2007): 242.

The emergence of *indulgentia* as an official term at this time was the product of the imperial regime emphasizing its own imperial paternalism.⁴¹ The emperor was presented as a benevolent ruler whose *indulgentia* made him accessible to subjects who were welcome to make requests they otherwise had no right to make.⁴² The most anyone could do was to trust in the emperor's generosity in making their appeals. The emperor magnanimously gave to his subjects, not because they deserved it, but because of his own indulgentia. This created what Cotton defines as an "indulgentia-pietas bond between the paternal princeps and his subjects [which] excludes a relationship of reciprocity: it is the extinction of *amicitia*—in the old sense—between him and his subjects. The omnipotent princeps who monopolises all beneficia doles them out to his subjects, not for a return in kind, which the latter cannot dream of ever being able to make, but in return for *pietas*, and this perforce makes the beneficiary an inferior."⁴³ Because of the emperor's magnanimity he stood closer to the gods than to his peers, as he assumed the role of parens over his subjects.⁴⁴ Consequently, requests to the emperor often took a form that paralleled the way one would appeal to the gods. As Fergus Millar argues in support of Cotton's study, "however successfully Trajan lived up to the model of the *civilis princeps* (a princeps who behaves like a citizen), as he clearly did, it is very striking... that almost every one of Pliny's letters uses the words 'to indulge' (indulgere) or 'indulgence' (indulgentia). That is to say, vis-àvis the Emperor, even a high-placed senator like Pliny adopted the rhetorical posture of a humble petitioner."45

⁴¹ Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 263.

⁴² Seelentag, "Imperial Representation and Reciprocation," 83.

⁴³ Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 266.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 266. For a discussion on how Trajan postured himself with regard to the gods, see Daniel N. Schowalter, *The Emperor and the Gods: Images from the Time of Trajan* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

⁴⁵ Millar, Rome, the Greek World, and the East, 32.

This paternal conception of the emperor became an amplified discourse that found expression in other related terms. For example, it is no coincidence that this is also a formative period for the concept of *liberalitas* ("liberality") in imperial rhetoric.⁴⁶ As Noreña argues, "it is in the epigraphic record that the virtue of *liberalitas* first crops up, in official inscriptions set up under Trajan, and only later, under Hadrian, that it appears as a coin type."⁴⁷ The term is also prominent in texts such as Pliny's *Panegyricus*, where it appears over a dozen times, as well as on several surviving inscriptions dedicated to Trajan.⁴⁸ Due to the prevalence of additional terms that overlap in meaning with *indulgentia*, there is good reason to believe in the rootedness of the concept in the consciousness of the age.

Roman emperors were regularly presented as great public benefactors to their subjects. The importance of this theme in imperial representations is illustrated by its prevalence in public inscriptions, Suetonius' biographies, and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, to give just a few examples. This was especially true in Rome where the *princeps* actively pursued programs to satisfy the needs and desires of the urban plebs.⁴⁹ This involved a number of strategies from grain distribution to construction projects to the funding of elaborate spectacles. Public works performed by emperors were understood within the framework of imperial *indulgentia*, *liberalitas*, and *munificentia*, which were considered virtues that emperors were obligated to exercise as an intricate part of the political system of the Principate.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 262; C. E. Manning, "Liberalitas: The Decline and Rehabilitation of a Virtue," *Greece & Rome Greece and Rome* 32, no. 01 (1985): 73.

⁴⁷ Noreña, Imperial Ideals, 235.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 87-88. Noreña goes on to explain "In this dedication, the symbolic relationship between the emperor, the supreme benefactor, and the urban plebs of Rome, expressing itself here in corporate terms through the institution of the 35 tribes, is celebrated both by the emperor's benefaction and by the virtue that motivated it, his personal generosity," Ibid., 223.

⁴⁹ See section below.

Generous acts which were seen as contributing to the cultural sphere of Rome and the provinces served as representations of imperial *indulgentia*.⁵⁰ This can be illustrated by imperial milestones of the Trajanic period. Milestones were a common feature along roads in Italy and the provinces and often contained official inscriptions expressing honorific terminology to emperors.⁵¹ It is not until Trajan, however, that we get *multiple* official inscriptions on such milestones that contain honorific terminology.⁵² This is significant because it provides a

⁵² In the words of Mary Boatwright, these milestones were "unusually expressive," as she explains, "The milestones for Trajan's Italian roadwork are unusually expressive, although the information never includes what agent may have supervised the work championed by Trajan. For example, milestones on the Via Appia and on the road from Naples to Puteoli note that Trajan finished a project Nerva had begun, and some from the Via Appia add that the roads were of hard gravel or flinty stone (e.g., Smallwood, #406, CIL X 6835, ILS 285). Trajan's work on the Via Salaria is specified as reinforcement against rockfalls from the mountain (ILS 5856), and his restorations on the Via Flamina were made with new substructures to reinforce the subsiding road (CIL XI 6619). The numerous milestones from the Via Traiana all stipulate that the work was done sua pecunia, at Trajan's own expense. One inscription, from a bridge of the Via Traiana, stipulates that Trajan constructed 'the road and bridges from beneventum to Brundisium" (ILS 5866). The apparent ubiquity of Trajan's Italian roads, and the details on his milestones, are reflected in praise by Galen. In a lengthy metaphor for the continuing need to perfect the Hippocratic 'road to healing', Galen details some eight types of improvements Trajan made on roads in Italy (10.632-33, ed. Kühn)," Mary T. Boatwright "Trajan Outside Rome: Construction and Embellishment in Italy and the Provinces" Pages 259-277 in Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.) (ed. Philip A. Stadter and Luc Ven der Stockt, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 265-266.

⁵⁰ Paul Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People: 'Popular' Architecture in Rome," Pages 45-88 in *The Emperor and Rome : Space, Representation, and Ritual* (eds. Björn Ewald and Carlos Noreña; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁵¹ Concerning the strategy of building roads to advertise the emperor's impressive resources, Susan Mattern argues, "the reign of Trajan emerges as an era of more spectacular, ostentatious spending, on everything—but especially in war. We have noted his new road, the *via nova Traiana*, which covered the length of the province of Arabia; the milestones all bore the same proud inscription: '[Trajan's titles], having reduced Arabia to the state of a province, opened and paved a new road from the borders of Syria all the way to the Red Sea.' The road no doubt served a practical function in the Parthian wars, but is seems to go beyond that, too; it seems designed to impress. The same is true of Trajan's famous rock-cut road at the iron Gates of Orsova on the Danube—a sight still impressive in modern times, though now underwater; and also, of course, accompanied by a suitable inscription. As Cassius Dio notes, the emperor 'spent a great deal on war and a great deal on works of peace,' Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 148, referencing Cassius Dio 68.7.1.

perspective on various ways a single emperor could be honored. The majority of Trajanic milestones draw on the language and ideology of civic benefaction. On two of these inscriptions from Rome, Trajan is hailed "enricher of the citizens" and "most generous."⁵³ In another, Trajan's expansion of the seating at the Circus Maximus is attributed to his *liberalitas*:

To the imperator Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus Germanicus Dacicus, son of the deified Nerva, pontifex maximus, in the seventh year of the tribunician power, with four imperatorial acclamations, consul five time, father of the fatherland, the 35 tribes (have dedicated this), since, by the *liberalitas* of the best emperor, their perks have been enhanced by the expansion of seats.⁵⁴

This served as a dedicatory inscription found on a statue in honor of Trajan and explicitly links the Cicus Maximus restoration to Trajan's personal *liberalitas*, and was promoted as a significant public gesture.⁵⁵ In Pliny's description of the Circus, he notes how it is now worthy of the Roman people as conquerors of the world.⁵⁶ As Guner Seelentag argues, Trajan's markets, beyond their practical function, would have also been seen as a symbol of imperial *liberalitas*.⁵⁷

What is striking is that references to the imperial *indulgentia* and *liberalitas* emerge

simultaneously in official and non-official sources during the years spanning Trajan's reign,

including legal writings, imperial proclamations, dedicatory inscriptions, and more.⁵⁸ This lexical

correspondence is indicative of a wide circulation of this conception of Trajan.⁵⁹ From the

⁵³ Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 223-224.

⁵⁴ *ILS* 286; Ibid., 223-224; cf. Cassius Dio 68.7.2

⁵⁵ Paul Roche, "The Panegyricus and the Monuments of Rome," Pages 45-66 in Pliny's Praise: The Panegyricus in the Roman World (Ed. Paul Roche; NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 55

⁵⁶ Pliny's *Pan.* 51.3.

⁵⁷ Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 400.

⁵⁸ David Johnston, "Munificence and Municipia: Bequests to Towns in Classical Roman Law," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 105–25.

⁵⁹ As Cotton notes, "Unfortunately, due to the hazards of transmission, it is not possible to explain the emergence of indulgentia at this time with any degree of certainty to contemporary events and intellectual currents, such as the emperor's return from the Dacian wars or the passing of a new edict," Cotton, "The Concept of Indulgentia under Trajan," 246.

perspective of Cotton, this is not simply a coincidence of transmission, but an indicator of broader currents in imperial ideology which can help us assess the variable resonance of the concept at this time. Pliny the Younger argues that the emperor is guaranteed an eternal legacy, not by the physical monuments he leaves behind, but by the nature of his reputation. As Pliny puts it,

And knowing your wisdom as I do, I find it less remarkable that you set aside or limit those titles which are mortal and must perish; for you know where lies the true, eternal glory of a prince. Therein are the honours over which devouring flames, passage of time, the hands of a successor have no power. Arches and statues, event altars and temples must all decay, to be lost in oblivion, for posterity to neglect or revile; in contrast, a spirit which is above ambition, which can hold in check the temptations of power unbounded, blossoms as the years go by and hears its praise most often on the lips of those who are least forced to sing it. Moreover, an emperor is no sooner elected than his fame is assured for all time, for better or worse; he need not seek a lasting reputation (it will last in spite of him) but a good one: and this is preserved not in portraits and statues but in virtue and good deeds. His form and features too, so short-lived as they are, are not so well expressed in silver and gold as by his people's love. That happy fortune is yours to enjoy, in every way you could desire, for your radiant face and beloved countenance dwell in the words, the looks, the thoughts of all your subjects.⁶⁰

In the course of celebrating the emperor's Dacian campaigns, the Column of Trajan also depicts numerous instances of imperial generosity. A conspicuous example of this is of a scene that portrays a seated Trajan giving various gifts to his troops. One particular soldier walks away happy carrying a sack full of rewards over his shoulder that he received directly from the emperor (see fig. 1 in Excursus Two). Another conspicuous scene entails Trajan directing the embarkment of Dacian women and children to protect them from the ensuing battle line (see fig. 2 in Excursus Two). As Patricia Trutty-Coohill notes, "in its cinematographic technique, [the Column envisages] an unending succession of generous acts."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Pliny, *Pan.* 55.8-12. See Roche, "The Panegyricus and the Monuments of Rome," 52.

⁶¹ Patricia Trutty-Coohill, "On Generosity East and West: The Beauty of Comparison," Pages 17-32 in *Sharing Poetic Expressions: Beauty, Sublime, Mysticism in Islamic and Occidental Culture* (Ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka; New York: Springer, 2011), 19.

Trajanic Discourses of Imperium

The heightened emphasis on the emperor Trajan's generosity and its increased association with and seeming monopolization by the imperial regime is a major emphasis of the Trajanic period and developed in tandem with a new conception of the *imperium* where the emphasis was on the tangible benefits the emperor provides for his subjects and the international network of patronage that he stood in the center of, which extended from Rome to the provinces.⁶² Pliny reflects this reigning ideology in his *Panegyricus*,

I turn now to the abundance of the grain-supply (*adfluentia annonae*), equal, in my view, to a permanent cash handout. It was this that once brought Pompey no less honor than when he banished bribery from the elections, drove the pirates from the sea, and illuminated West and East with his triumphs. Nor was Pompey more civic-minded than our Father, who, by his influence, wisdom, and good faith has opened roads that were closed, constructed harbors, created overland routes, brought the sea to the shores and the shores to the sea, and has integrated diverse peoples in trade to such an extent that local products seem to belong to everyone. Is it not clear that every year abounds in the things we need without any harm done to anyone? Harvests are not stolen as if from foreign lands to rot in our granaries while our allies wail in vain. They themselves bring whatever their soil produces, whatever their climate nourishes, whatever the year brings; nor, weighed down by new exactions, do they come up short on their regular taxes. And the imperial treasury makes its purchases openly. The result is this abundance (*copiae*), this grain-supply that benefits both buyer and seller, this plenty (*satietas*) here (sc. in Rome), and the absence of hunger anywhere.⁶³

It is striking the degree to which Pliny attributes the benefits of empire to the individual role of

Trajan himself. The emperor's public image was officially propagated and communicated ideas not only about the emperor and the inhabitants of Rome, but the entire empire under his administration. The beneficiaries of the imperial system are perceived as the inhabitants of Rome, as well as the entire population of the empire, which is striking in the context of a consular speech at Rome celebrating the *annona*, a benefit for the people of Rome. Imperial rule

⁶² For a discussion of visual images from the reign of Trajan, see Tonio Hölscher "Bilder der Macht und Herrschaft," in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 127-144.

⁶³ Pliny, *Pan.* 29.

was projected to have a positive impact on the daily lives of subjects in both Rome and the provinces.⁶⁴ According to Pliny, it is due to Trajan's magnanimous policies that the benevolence of the empire is brought into sharp relief. Trajan's extensive building programs of new roads and ports, which included the famous Portas Traiani, were part of a single comprehensive plan that projected a new conception of the empire.⁶⁵ As Bennett argues concerning Pliny's perspective, these efforts "implanted in the public consciousness that... Rome was becoming but one city, if the principal, amongst a commonality of peoples and communities."⁶⁶ This new representation and perception of the evolving imperial order set up the trajectory that eventually brought about Hadrian's *Panhellenion*, and the *constitution Antoniniana*, which involved granting citizenship to all free men.

⁶⁴ "Other imperial benefits mentioned by Pliny include the alleviation of drought conditions in Egypt (30.5, 31.3-6); the spread of fertility (*fecunditas*) everywhere (32.2); the granting of various tax immunities and remissions (38-41); and the settling of rivalries between cities (80.3)," Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 102, footnote 3.

⁶⁵ New roads and harbors were built, for example, at Centumcellae and Ancona. Beyond the purposes of imperial representation, these new constructions boosted the Italian economy by facilitating trade. According to Mary Boatwright, Throughout his reign and in almost every province he sponsored road-building (including bridges) and road-renewal. Italy boasts some eleven Trajanic roads. For instance, from AD 98 until at least 112, Trajan continued Nerva's restorations on the Via Appia, but he included bold innovations such as cutting through the coastal rock-pillar at Tarracina. Although the many extant milestones specify that Nerva began the paving (incohavit) and Trajan completed it (consummavit), Cassius Dio later credits Trajan alone for the amazing project (Cass. Dio 68.15.3). Trajanic roadwork is also attested for other Italian road systems, from smaller ones like the Via Sublacensis and the Via Nova Traiana in Etruria, to larger ones like the Via Flaminia, where in AD 114/115 Trajan had a bridge restored ove the Metaurus river at modern Fossombrone. The Via Traiana of 109, providing an alternative to the Via Appia, ran from Beneventum to Brundisium via Canusium and Barium. It was featured on Trajanic coins, from aurei to asses, and its beginning is marked by the Arch of Beneventum. The Via Traiana is attested by so many extant milestones that we can infer they marked almost its every mile, at least up to 168 miles from Rome," Mary T. Boatwright "Trajan Outside Rome," 265.

⁶⁶ Julian Bennett, *Trajan: Optimus Princeps* (2nd ed.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 210-211, italics mine.

The *imperium* was represented at this time as an ever-expanding and increasingly interconnected network organized around the most generous and protective of emperors. According to the reigning ideology, provincial territories were thought to be peacefully linked to one another in trade by improved roads and harbors, which allowed otherwise scattered people into an integrated system of empire-wide scope.⁶⁷ These Trajanic conceptions of the *imperium* were markedly different from his predecessors, at least in presentation. Trajan's generosity extended out of his paternal concerns in such a way that his subjects simply no longer had any outstanding needs. As Bennett argues,

[M]ore than any of his predecessors, [Trajan] *can* be credited with a personal ideology directed towards the administration of the empire. Fully comprehending the consequences of his actions, he adopted a forward-looking manifesto that was not content with simply rectifying the abuses and mistakes of previous regimes. Instead, each and every one of his many reforms was generated by a visionary speculation that conceived of a unified political, economic and military system for the Roman empire at large. Trajan is credited for developing the concept of the *imperium* as a strategic commonwealth of otherwise distant *ethne* who share a conscious policy of internal trade. Hadrian's Panhellenion is the logical conclusion of the system Trajan initiated, and contributed toward the political and economic successes of the second century.⁶⁸

This coheres with what John Richardson has argued that the nature of "empire" is no simple,

static notion. Rather, empires have varied greatly in structure, practice, and in conception. ⁶⁹ In

⁶⁷ As Boatwright notes, "Trajan's identification with important and beneficial harbors is famous. Pliny lyrically (though somewhat obscurely) describes Trajan's port at Centumcellae, Italy (*Ep.* 6.31.15-17, AD 106), in praise echoed two centuries later by Ruilius Namatianus (*De red.* I.239-45). Trajan's port at Ancona is celebrated on the arch the Senate and People of Rome dedicated to him there, as we have seen (Smallwood, #387, AD 114/115, translated above). His great hexagonal harbor at Ostia, essential to Rome's food supply, was featured on coins as 'Portum Traiani'. It may be associated with other Trajanic engineering work on the lower Tiber as well as some building in the city itself. The emperor's fame for port installations is so widespread that he is usually credited with the harbor at Tarracina, despite the absence of unequivocal evidence," Boatwright, "Trajan Outside Rome," 267.

⁶⁸ Bennett, *Trajan*, 64. See also Mary T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, 204-210.

⁶⁹ As John Richardson argues with reference to other political entitites, "Even if we confine our attention to the period since the end of the nineteenth century, when the idea of

Richardson's research, he traces how the term *"imperium*" shifted in its use from the period of the late Republic to the time of Augustus and beyond. Before Augustus, the Romans did not have a term for "empire," as it is used today to refer to a territorial entity. Rather, *imperium* was used to refer to a person's or collective's power over another; their ability to command and order others in accordance with their will. During the reign of Augustus, however, the term *imperium* came to increasingly refer to something one could delineate on a map.⁷⁰ Conceptions of the *imperium* continued to develop through the Augustan period to connote both the republican notion of "power as possession," as well as the early imperial notion of "power as territorial extent." During the reign of subsequent emperors, there continued to be fundamental shifts in both how the empire was represented and perceived. This can be illustrated through a variety of means, not least of all the evolving language of imperial iconography, architecture, foreign policy, and even images of the emperor himself.⁷¹

imperialism first began to be discussed and explored systematically, it is clear that the imperial structures and activities of, for instance, the British and French empires or of the USSR and the USA show enormous differences between them. In antiquity, what we now call the Persian and the Athenian empires in the fifth century BC were widely disparate, not just in terms of scale but also of concept and of the relationship of the rulers to the ruled. To come closer to the subject-matter of this volume, it is clear enough that within the history of Roman imperialism between the emergence of Rome as a Mediterranean power in the third and second centuries BC, when imperial activity consisted in sending armies out from the city against foreign foes in foreign lands, and the situation of the second century AD, when the Roman emperor ruled an extensive and varied empire, whose boundaries required defense and whose territories were governed and administered, we are dealing with a quite different sort of structure, both in terms of practice and of concept," John Richardson, "Imperium Romanum Between Republic and Empire," in *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power: Proceedings of the Third Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, C. 200 B.C. - A.D. 476), Netherlands Institute in Rome, March 20-23, 2002 (ed. Lukas de Blois; J.C. Gieben, 2003), 137.*

⁷⁰ As Richardson notes, "What this variation in the use of language indicates is different notions of what the Roman empire was, and therefore what the object of Roman imperialism consisted of," Ibid., 147.

⁷¹ Susan E. Alcock, *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Susan E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta : The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Elizabeth Fentress and Susan

Trajan fashioned himself as championing a paternalistic interest in the affairs of the provinces.⁷² As Bennett argues, the "emperor developed to a fine art the existing procedures of imperial benefaction to the Roman people as a means of presenting himself as the perfect ruler... he was careful to let it be known on inscriptions and on his coinage that these were personal gifts of a benign and all-providing princeps."⁷³ It was on account of his work in both Italy and the provinces that Trajan became worthy of being called *pater patriae* ("father of the homeland").⁷⁴ And as long as this was the projected image of Trajan, he could mask any program of reform as stemming from his benefit of the people.⁷⁵

In sum, representations and perceptions of the imperial project evolved considerably during the reign of Trajan.⁷⁶ The empire did not exist in some hypothetical sense, but as a series of representations and discourses that were regularly subject to change and controlled by the propagandistic interests of individual emperors, as well as their administrators and subjects. While these developments may have had as much or more to do with rhetoric than reality, they still served to construct Rome for imperial subjects in new ways. Through a combination of art

Alcock, "Romanization and the City: Creation, Transformations, and Failures: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the American Academy in Rome to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Excavations at Cosa, 14-16 May, 1998" *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 2000; A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik, *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text* (Boston: Brill, 2003); Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Johann Arnason and Kurt Raaflaub, eds., *The Roman Empire in Context: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

⁷² Bennett, *Trajan*, 113.

⁷³ Ibid., 212.

⁷⁴ Trajan initiatially refused this title out of concern for showing *moderatio* but originally accepted it in 98.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 212. The reason for this probably has to do with following in the path of Augustus and out of interest in maintaining a modest public image, not to mention to contrast himself from Domitian. Following Nerva's death, Trajan was elected by the senate as Nerva's successor, granting him the offices of *pontifex maximus* and pater patriae, 'Father of the Fatherland.' See also Ibid., 52.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 137.

and politics, Roman officials established the image of a new imperial order, a new vision of empire.⁷⁷

Trajanic Patterns of Provincial Representation

In this section, I wish to extend the discussion by demonstrating that the public image of Trajan, which highlighted his munificence to Italy and the provinces, served as a malleable model upon which provincials fashioned their own public image. While some may doubt the potency of the notion of the emperor as a model for society and the impact this had on actual life and representational trends in the provinces, this section will show that there is a clear correlation that at the same time the emperor's munificence was being emphasized in the official ideology, there is a dramatic spike in the representation of provincial giving in Asia Minor.⁷⁸

In Arjan Zuiderhoek's recent study, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire: Citizens, Elites and Benefactors in Asia Minor*, he surveys trends in the epigraphical evidence of depictions of provincial elites in Asia Minor as benefactors from the first through third centuries CE.⁷⁹ The first graph represents all datable benefactions in Zuiderhoek's sample and gives a

⁷⁷ Jaś Elsner, "Inventing imperium," 35, who addresses a similar set of issues during the reign of Augustus. Here, I am interested in the development of representations and perceptions of imperial power as defined by John Richardson, "The representation and perception of imperial power refers to how one group of people, presumably the Romans, produced by image or by word an account or picture of the empire which was then received and interpreted by others," John Richardson, "Imperium Romanum Between Republic and Empire," 137.

⁷⁸ Carlos Noreña, has provided a convincing model for assessing the impact the emperor had on the culture of the empire. He provides a detailed analysis of specific ideals and values the central state used to represent the emperor on coins. He then assesses the response of local communities to these ideals by documenting a high degree of lexical correspondence between the honorific terms employed in dedications to the emperor and the representations of the emperor, as well as subjects, in epigraphic texts found in the provinces. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals*, 290.

⁷⁹ Arjan Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire: Citizens, Elites, and Benefactors in Asia Minor* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.

broad chronology of the first three centuries CE (see fig. 3 in Excursus Two).⁸⁰ The graph highlights the dramatic proliferation of representations of euergetism from the end of the first century to the early third century. This graph successfully highlights the change that took place starting in the early part of the second century, specifically during the first two decades that spanned the reign of Trajan. It suffers from some chronological imprecisions due to the fact that a large number of the benefactions could only be dated within a given century or half-century.⁸¹ Therefore, Zuiderhoek compiled a second graph from his data pool that only included the benefactions of provincials in Asia Minor that were datable to the reign of specific emperors. While this graph details the same basic pattern of late-first to early-third century increase of provincial representations of munificence, it brings into focus the unprecedented proliferation that emerged during the reign of Trajan (see fig. 4 in Excursus Two).

According to Zuiderhoek's database, there was a striking explosion of attestations to acts of euergetism during the reign of Trajan and the representation of public generosity in the eastern province grew to unprecedented heights. Zuiderhoek does not make an attempt to give an account for the fluctuation that takes place from emperor to emperor, except to note that it is difficult to give an account for all the irregularities of the data pool. While Zuiderhoek is not able

⁸⁰ Zuiderhoek explains the restrictions of his data, "It is well known that the dating of inscriptions is often problematic. Only a relative minority of texts contain information of a sufficiently precise nature to allow us to assign a more or less exact date to them. A larger minority of texts can be dated to the reigns of individual emperors or to imperial dynasties. Many inscriptions, however, have to be dated on the basis of stylistic characteristics of text or monument or on the basis of the archaeological context in which they are found. Needless to say, many such dates are imprecise ('second century AD', or, if one is lucky, 'second half of second century AD') and provisional. Finally, there is a category of texts of which nothing more can be said than that they belong to the imperial period. These I have labeled 'not datable' for the purpose of the present enquiry, which after all limited to the Roman imperial period alone. I have mostly taken over the dates provided by the most recent editions of the inscriptions," Ibid., 17-18.

⁸¹ See Zuiderhoek's discussion on why he does not think these findings are simply creating a chronology of the epigraphic habit, Ibid., 20-21.

to provide a sufficient explanation for the subsequent, dramatic decline under Hadrian, he does, however, question whether Hadrian's frequent visits to the eastern provinces had a negative impact on provincial giving. "Did the emperor's frequent travelling in the eastern provinces perhaps discourage local benefactors, making them realize that they were simply no match for serious imperial outlay?²² While he admits this is merely speculative, he is attuned to the fact that the emperor himself could directly affect broader representational trends in the provinces, even if it is a negative impact. The situation under Trajan, however, is quite different than under Hadrian. The emperor's image as the great public benefactor was crafted in such a way so as to serve as an imperial exemplum, or model, upon which provincials fashioned their own selfrepresentations and authority.⁸³ During this period local benefactors in the provinces emulated the emperor's munificence in giving generously to communities, funding festivals, public amenities, and more. Trajan's own displays of generosity to the provinces seem to have placed a special premium on municipal notables representing themselves as participating in the same qualities as the emperor. In essence, they were representing themselves as local versions of the emperor, as subjects who share in the emperor's particular virtues, and who claim them as their own.⁸⁴

For this reason Zuiderhoek's study is quite significant in providing new insights into the construction and expression of provincial identity at this time. This observation is further supported by the research of Carlos Noreña, who explains provincial tendencies of "copying the emperor."

⁸² Ibid., 20, footnote 33.

⁸³ Ibid., 111-112. For a discussion of Trajan's personal funding of building projects in Asia Minor, especially in Ephesus with the Library of Celsus, see Christof Berns "Private Feigebigkeit und die Verschonerung von Städtbildern," in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 73-82.

⁸⁴ Noreña, Imperial Ideals, 290.

Local aristocrats were formally rewarded with these honorific inscriptions in exchange for services performed on behalf of the municipality, above all for civic benefactions such as paying for a new building or sponsoring an afternoon of gladiatorial combat. These aristocrats, in other words, were prominent benefactors of their local communities. And here, too, these local magnates were copying the emperor, for the emperor was the grand patron at the center of a vast, empire-wide network of patronage, displaying his paradigmatic generosity through the dispensation of gifts and benefactions far and wide.⁸⁵

There are countless examples of provincial copying from other periods in Roman history. As

Antlar Heklar's general observation of Roman portraiture claims,

In imperial Rome, portraits of emperors and their families, now widely recognised from images on coins and from statues set up in public places, had enormous impact upon the form of portraits of private individuals. In various parts of the Roman Empire commemorative funerary portraits were made for the first time. Surviving examples reveal an interest in copying court hairstyles, contemporary jewelry and dress...⁸⁶

In both visual and verbal texts there are lines one can trace between the public image of any

given emperor and his contemporaries. This convergence is especially noticeable in the

epigraphic evidence that stems from the time of Trajan. For the Trajanic period, it appears that

the emperor encouraged a new ideology where patronage and benefaction were increasingly

defined in terms of civic virtue.⁸⁷ As Nicols argues, "Roman tradition and the imperial ideology

⁸⁵ Ibid., 292. Noreña further questions, "How much resonance could civic benefaction have retained when the ruler of the Roman world was no longer imagined primarily as a model civic benefactor? The consequence of such a change would have been that the power, wealth, and statuses of these local notables would no longer be legitimated primarily through civic benefaction and local patronage. And that would have been a change with empire-wide ramifications, since the empire depended on the vitality of its citites and the municipal aristocracies who controlled them," Ibid., 295.

⁸⁶ Antal Hekler, *Greek & Roman Portraits* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1972), 96. The author gives specific examples of how Vespasian's features were reflected in private portraiture. For a discussion of Trajanic portraits and types of depictions, see Dietrich Boschung, "Ein Kaiser in vielen Rollen: Bildnisse des Traian," in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 163-171.

⁸⁷ John Nicols, "Pliny and the Patronage of Communities," *Hermes* 108, no. 3 (1980): 384. Nicols further argues, "This conclusion should not be interpreted to show that, by exercising a formal or informal patronage of communities, an ambitious senator could expect to receive the

assigned the patronage of communities to the duties of the good citizen toward his state and society. Hence, prestige was acquired by fulfilling all obligations successfully.³⁸⁸ Individuals could depend on the benefaction system as a means of expressing their local, regional, and imperial identities. For the Trajanic period in particular, the patronage of communities carried a heightened capital because it served as an institution that reproduced on a smaller scale that of the emperor, who was venerated as the supreme benefactor to the provinces.⁸⁹ Political power was gained and exercised through patronage networks. The emperor, provincial governors, and local elites could not expect to carry out their rule without cultivating patron-client relationships within the jurisdiction they were active. Trajan was seen as solely occupying the top of this social hierarchy, governing the empire as the *optimus patronus*. Provincial notables, in turn, were not only expected, but were supposed to use their positions of power to grant *beneficia* on their communities and friends.⁹⁰ Showing generosity toward a community became the defining qualities of an *optimus civis*.

In spite of the dramatic social inequality that distinguished the empire's elite from the masses then, there was an unmatched display in public generosity, more so than most other preindustrial societies. This is especially striking in light of the fact that euergetism had a long

⁸⁸ Nicols, "Pliny and the Patronage of Communities," 377-378.

consulate in due course. For, though the emperor might encourage senators to perform this service, there was no commitment on his part. Nor was it necessary for him to make such a commitment as communities would naturally seek out those senators who were known to have influence with him (cf. ILS 6106). Rather, patronage of communities belongs, as does oratorical ability, to the useful and the decorative. Both, though potentially dangerous to the old as well as the new government, were turned to the service and ornamentation of the state. They provide, indeed, the public justification for wealth and honors received at the emperor's hands, but would be useless to anyone who did not have the appropriate loyalties and connections," Ibid., 384. See Pliny, *Pan* 44.7 for such incentives.

⁸⁹ Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," 248–249; Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, 133-201.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 245–246.

history that pre-dates the empire, stretching to the early Hellenistic period and arguably all the way back to Archaic Greece.⁹¹ In the Roman period, however, public giving rose to a place of new importance and political significance. The term "euergetism" is a neologism that was invented by modern ancient historians and derives from the Greek honorific title *euergetes* ("benefactor") a title awarded to generous individuals.⁹² For instance, the text below comes from an inscription that records the honors of an individual, Dionysius, who was remembered as a *euergetes* of the people, a good man who was generous to the citizen body of Smyrna.

Ο δήμος Διονύσιον Διονυσίου ἄνδρα ἀγαθὸν ὄντα περὶ τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ εὐεργέτην τοῦ δήμου. 93

Many of the epigraphical records included some version of the term *euergetes* to commemorate and honor the generosity of an individual.

There were various types of public giving that were considered acts of euergetism.⁹⁴ For instance, donors would give small bequests of money to private clubs in order to finance

⁹¹ Philippe Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs* (Athènes: Ecole française d'Athènes 1985);

⁹² For a concise history of the term and scholarship, see Zuiderhoek, *Politics of Munificence*, 6–12,

⁹³ "The people (honor) Dionysius, the son of Dionysius, who is a good man to the body of citizens and a benefactor of the people." Regarding this inscription, one scholar notes, "The phrase *aner agathos* regularly appears in the inscriptions as an honorific for civic benefactors... The honorific, *euergetes tou demou*, registers the gratitude of the *polis* towards its benefactor. It forms the background to Luke's portrayal of Christ as an exorcising and healing benefactor (Acts 10:38... However, in contrast to our inscription, the honour accorded Christ is redirected towards God. For *euergesia*: Acts 4:9, 1 Tim. 6:2; *euergetes*: Luke 22:25. On the New Testament avoidance of *eu-* compounds, see *New Docs* 2 (1982) 106," S. R. Llewelyn, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. Vol.* 9, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002). See Georg. Petzl, *Die Inschriften von Smyrna* 2,1. 2,1. (Bonn: Habelt, 1987).

⁹⁴ Arthur Robinson Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968); Mitchell Dean, "The Genealogy of the Gift in Antiquity," *TAJA The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 5, no. 1-2 (1994): 320–29; Michael L. Satlow, ed., *The*

commemorative acts at the donor's gravesite. Or donors could give gifts to their native towns for the construction of public amenities. Strict boundaries between civic munificence and other types of public giving cannot be clearly drawn.⁹⁵ Nor is it always easy to determine the social values involved. Euergetism could assume many shapes, forms, and meanings, which made it that much more potent as a social activity, as Zuiderhoek himself recognizes,

When one goes through the sources, it quickly becomes evident that, for the ancients, a wide and fairly flexible gamut of acts could, depending on circumstances, qualify as public benefactions. Of course there were some main trends in gift-giving, but on the whole the ancient conception of civic euergetism seems to have been fairly fluid. This fluidity had a clear function... for it allowed parties to present a fairly wide range of actions and behaviours as acts of civic munificence, and hence to increase the amounts of social (prestige), political and ideological benefit that could be reaped from them."⁹⁶

Though there may have been a variety of actions that fit into the category of euergetism,

not all acts of public generosity could automatically turn a person into a *euergetes*.⁹⁷ The

granting of this honor depended on the public acceptance of the gift and the granting of the

appropriate honors in exchange.⁹⁸ Benefactors could expect a number of things in return for their

generous acts of euergetism. For instance, a community could respond by honoring the

benefactor with a statue that includes an honorific inscription recounting the public work.

Erecting the statue in a public space could be accompanied with a ceremonial dedication, which

could include the people chanting in praise of the benefactor's gift. In distinguishing benefaction

Gift in Antiquity (The ancient world: comparative histories; Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

⁹⁵ Zuiderhoek, The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire, 9-10.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 10, italics mine. See also Arjan Zuiderhoek, "The Ambiguity of Munificence," *Histzeitalte Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 56, no. 2 (2007): 196–213.

⁹⁷ Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 2006), 269-270.

⁹⁸ Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire*, 11.

from other acts of giving, one needs to pay close attention to the honors received in return for it.⁹⁹

Scholarship on patronage typically identifies the following three characteristics.¹⁰⁰ First, patronage is a type of asymmetrical relationship between two parties of unequal status—typically referred to as patron-clients in modern scholarship. Second, the relationship involves the reciprocal exchange of goods and services. Due to the asymmetry of the relationship the value exchanged is also asymmetrical, goods and services were unequal in value and in kind. Third, it is different from a commercial transaction in that the relationship is personal and of some duration. Therefore, for the purpose of this chapter, patronage will be understood by this three-part definition of a sustained, asymmetrical, social relationship that includes an unequal exchange of goods and services. Showing generosity toward a community was seen as a type of benefaction which created a formal or informal patronage relationship.¹⁰¹

Patronage could take a variety of forms and was not limited to simple exchange of gift for honors. One of the predominant forms in the imperial period is brokerage and, not incidentally, also happens to be of great relevance to the characterization of the apostles in the book of Acts. Within a brokerage relationship the broker-patron serves as a mediator who grants clients access to the resources of a more powerful patron.¹⁰² A prime example of brokerage comes from Roman

⁹⁹ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁰ See Wallace-Hadrill *Patronage in Ancient Society;* Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Kathryn Lomas and Tim Cornell, eds., *Bread and Circuses: Euergetism and Municipal Patronage in Roman Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism* (London: Penguin, 1992).

¹⁰¹ Nicols, "Pliny and the Patronage of Communities," 383–384. Nicols argues, "Few historians would disagree with the statement that patronage is one of the most important, and yet elusive bonds in Roman society," Ibid., 365

¹⁰² As Halvor Moxnes argues, "Well-connected members of the Roman elite served as brokers between the central government (the emperor) and local cities. Members of the

administrators precisely because of the way the imperial system was structured, which venerated a single ruler who monopolizes a rich array of powers that required go-betweens for wider distribution, and for making the emperor's resources available at the local level. The other form of patronage that is relevant for our discussion of Acts is that of a patron or benefactor to a community. Communities themselves would often times seek out powerful outsiders, coopting them as patrons, typically connected with soliciting *beneficia*.¹⁰³

There are several theories that explain not only the persistence of patronage during the empire, but also its growth. One, it helped maintain social tranquility at a time when wealth and power were accumulating at the very top of the social hierarchy.¹⁰⁴ It also provided a source for social distinction and capital for individual benefactors. In this sense, it served as a field of intense competition among members of the local elite. Furthermore, it could serve as a system of social welfare in the case of a famine or for the support of the poor.¹⁰⁵ Social theories abound in the study of Roman patronage and carry a significant amount of explanative power for any given representation of generosity during the empire.

provincial elite had the same function between a local administrative center and the surrounding rural districts... Brokerage involves a relationship between several actors. The same person may simultaneously be a broker (mediator) between higher and lower-ranking people or groups, and a patron to clients below him. In traditional societies brokerage serves multiple purposes. Relations between center and periphery cover a wide range of areas: economic and administrative as well as religious and cultural. Since brokerage can deal with multiple aspects of relations between the center and periphery, different persons can acts as brokers. A broker can be a representative for the central power, for instance a military commander, or a wealthy landowner in the village, or even a 'holy man' (Brown 1971). In a wider sense certain groups or professions can serve as brokers, such as teachers, priests, and artists. Thus brokers form a channel of communication between the power and the culture of the urban elite ('the great tradition') and the traditional norms and values of village peasants ('the little tradition' Malina 1981)," Halvor Moxnes "Patron-Client Relations," 248–249.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 249; See also Nicols, "Pliny and the Patronage of Communities," 384.

¹⁰⁴ Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence in the Roman Empire*, 5.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 12.

In sum, the patronage system was extensive and shaped the social world in which subjects existed. Civic involvement and the bestowal of benefits on the populace were absolutely central to conceptions of the ideal Roman. Civic patronage was a requisite for those of elite status and, as a result, became a common theme in both visual and verbal forms of imperial-period representations. The fact that Trajan himself was represented in accordance with this theme evidences that euergetism conformed to the representational standards of public life and spoke the language of Roman power.¹⁰⁶ Having established these points, I wish to turn now to an extended description of a few of the most remarkable architectural accomplishments of Trajan, especially the new Forum complex, and how they served the purpose of projecting his image as the patron of the people.

Monumentalizing Trajan as Patron of the People

The reign of Trajan was marked by aggressive expansion into new territories on both the northern and eastern frontier, extending the reach of Rome's dominion to a wider geographical span than any preceding or succeeding period in Roman history.¹⁰⁷ Out of all of his imperial

¹⁰⁶ Regarding imperial exempla, Zuiderhoek argues, "This is a fascinating topic, worthy of investigation as such, but it does not, I think, provide a *sufficient* explanation for the peculiar proliferation of elite public generosity in the eastern provinces during the high Empire. For that, we have to look primarily to the effects incorporation into the Empire had on the internal sociopolitical dynamics of polis society," Ibid., 111, footnote 78, italics mine.

¹⁰⁷ Trajan's universal rule was expressed in a variety of ways. Trajan is depicted with a 36cm diameter globe at the fountain in Ephesus. See Richard Oster, "Christianity and Emperor Veneration in Ephesus: Iconography of a Conflict," *Restoration Quarterly* 25 (1982): 143–49. This turn to conquest is significant, for as Millar argues, "There is ample evidence to suggest that after the great expansion of the Augustan period people regarded the Empire as a coherent geographical and strategic entity bounded by the three great rivers: Rhine, Danube, and Euphrates. A conflict thus arose between that conception and the long tradition and ideology of continuing conquest. When in Fronto's words 'the imperium of the Roman People was extended by the emperor Trajan beyond the hostile rivers,' Florus could rejoice that the Empire had found its youth again, and Tacitus couple complain of the inertia of earlier emperors in terms which strikingly recall the content of the poem on the Dacian war which Pliny's friend Caninius Rebilus composed in Comum," Millar, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East*, 188-189. For a

endeavors, Trajan's success in the summer of 107 after subjugating the region of Dacia (the area that roughly constitutes what is today Romania) into a Roman province proved to be one of the most celebrated triumphs Rome had ever seen.¹⁰⁸ In the words of Susan Mattern, "No conquest in the imperial period brought any emperor greater glory; none was depicted on monuments so vast; none was commemorated in language so reverent."¹⁰⁹ It was the largest military campaign in Rome's history, employing roughly half of all the empire's legions. The booty acquired provided a new degree of prosperity to the emperor's purse and, in turn, his capital.¹¹⁰ Upon Trajan's return to Rome, he initiated a program of urban renovation which entailed numerous building projects, which, out of competition with his Flavian predecessors, surpassed nearly all of Rome's structures in both scale and grandeur.¹¹¹ In particular, the Baths of Trajan on the Oppian Hill and the Forum and Markets of Trajan served as public amenities for the people of

discussion of Trajan's aggressive military action, see Michael Alexander Speidel, "Bellicosissimus Princeps" in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 23-40.

¹⁰⁸ Trajan declared war on the Dacians in the spring of 101, in attempt to counter the threat they posed and to win military fame. The Roman army was reinforced by units from across the provinces. By the autumn of 102 a peace treaty was exacted and the Dacian leader, Decebalus, became a Roman client, with a part of his kingdom being annexed to the Roman Empire. In celebration of this victory, Trajan took the name "Dacicus" in the same year, and celebrated a triumph in Rome. Trajan led the army in a second conquest in the summer of 105, which ended with Decebalus' suicide, the annihilation of most of the Dacian troops, and the looting of the royal treasury. From the year 106 forward, Dacia was transformed into a province and placed under the control of a governor and two legions. Trajan celebrated a second triumph in the summer of 107.

¹⁰⁹ Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 209.

¹¹⁰ This was the last instance in Roman sources where vast movable spoils were taken from the conquered district and brought to Rome. See Millar, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East*, 23.

¹¹¹ On urban development as a imperial priority and strategy during the reign of Trajan, see Michael Zahrnt, "urbanitas gleich romanitas Die Städtepolitik des Kaisers Traian" in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 51-72.

Rome, but were essentially victory monuments financed from the war booty.¹¹² These building achievements would convince many that they were living in a climactic new age in imperial history where new heights of peace, prosperity, and civilization would be enjoyed around the world. Above all, they served to construct a public image of Trajan as the great patron of a vast multi-ethnic empire.¹¹³ In what follows, select Trajanic building projects will be analyzed for how they not only contributed toward his carefully crafted public image, but also encouraged a system of participation and collaboration.

Roman emperors consistently directed their generosity to the construction of architectural complexes that served to provide amenities and entertainment to the *plebs urbana*.¹¹⁴ The

¹¹⁴ Regarding the imperial period, as Elsner argues, "the introduction of an account of one's buildings was entirely new in a Res Gestae or autobiographic description of a man's achievements. The Res Gestae of Pompey, for instance, accounts of which are preserved by Pliny the Elder and Diodorus Siculus, had not mentioned his building activities. Yet no further imperial panegyric would miss the opportunity to praise an emperor through his buildings. The precedent of Augustus' autobiography-incscribed for his successors to see in the heart of Rome-introduced a trope which would become a generic feature of imperial biography and panegyric, culminating in Procopius' remarkable sixth-century attempt to praise Justinian solely through his buildings. At the same time, by tying the image of buildings to the idealised biography of the emperor, the Res Gestae confirmed an innovation demonstrated also by Augustan coinage. Before the last year of Julius Caesar's life, ROman coins had not normally portrayed living Romans. Yet---in a marked imitation of Hellenistic practice---not only was virtually every official issue of Augustan coins marked with the portrait of the princeps on the obverse, but many of these coins united the portrait with an image of Augustus' buildings on the reverse. The paenegyrical reflex whereby portrait and monument were interrelated to confer grandeur on the portrayed was one displayed in both visual and textual forms, on both coinage and epigraphy... futherfore there is good evidence that the section describing the buildings in Rome had a privieleeed position in the lay-out of the text... emphasis on Augustan construction projects leads to the suggestion the he was using buildings specifically to elicit support from the

¹¹² Additional public amenities were built out of the proceeds acquired from the war, for example the *aqua Traiana* at Rome and the *via Traiana* that stretched from Beneventum to Brundisium, which was reported to have been paid for by Trajan himself "with his own money" (*sua pecunia*), Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 146. Cf. Boatwright, "Trajan Outside Rome," 265.

¹¹³ For a discussion of the political motivations of Trajan for his constructions in Rome, see Annette Nünnerich-Asmus "Er baute für das Volk?! Die stadtrömischen Bauten des Traian," in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 97-124.

emperor's building efforts in the public concentrated on the most conspicuous of places, those sites most often associated with and popular for public entertainment and their elaborate spectacles.¹¹⁵ These included Augustus' famous Naumachia, situated just west of the river Tiber, the Circus of Caligula and Nero located near the Vatican, and the grandiose Stadium with Odeon located in what is now the Piazza Navona, built by Domitian for the competition of Greek athletics and music.¹¹⁶ Conversely, the theaters of Pompey, Marcellus, and Balbus, were built before Augustus and were sufficient enough that they did not need replaced by subsequent emperors.¹¹⁷ The Flavian amphitheater, otherwise known as the Colosseum, was a prime example of architectural patronage in the sphere of popular entertainment.¹¹⁸ Zanker argues that

different political constituencies he needed to satisfy... buildings in Rome build on an Augustan ideology of space in Rome... Literally, the Res Gestae inscribes Augustus through his buildings into the geography of Rome," Jaś Elsner, "Inventing Imperium," 42-44.

¹¹⁵ "As sole *patronus* of the *plebs urbana*, the *princeps* was also responsible for the provision of *spectacular*. These, the imperial spectacles, are to be carefully distinguished from the *ludi*, those shows regularly given by the magistrates which had originated in religious festivals, even if an exhibition of gladiators (*ludi honorarii*) was usually added to the programme," Bennett, *Trajan*, 60,

¹¹⁶ Goodman, Roman World, 94.

¹¹⁷ Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People," 68.

¹¹⁸ See fig. 5 in Excursus Two. Mary Boatrwright, concisely surveys authors under the empire who wrote about ancient figures and valorized their own building accomplishments, "By Trajan's day there was a strong tradition and generally positive evaluation of patronage to cities and sanctuaries. Plutarch introduces his account of Pericles' buildings in Athens to extol the great fifth-century leader, to mark his permanent impact on the perception of Greece, and to show how he extended the benefits of empire to Athens' entire populace (Plut., Per. 12.1, 12.5). When the scope of political ambitions routinely transcended the boundaries of individual poleis, Hellenistic kings expanded the ethos reflected by Plutarch, to sponsor buildings in not only their own cities but others as well. Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), for example, gave to Antioch a temple of Jupiter Capitolinus with gilded ceilings, to Tegea a marble temple, to Megalopolis money to finance city walls, to Delos altars and statues, and to Athens (continued construction of) the temple of Zeus Olympios, all within a relatively short reign (175-164 BC); Livy 41.20.5-9, Polyb. 26:10-12). As demonstrated by the imposing monument L. Aemilius Paullus dedicated in Delphi after the Battle of Pydna in 167 BC, at least some Roman generals, despite the brutal rapacity of Republican interaction with the Greek East, recognized the significance of such gestures. Julius Caesar showily disbursed this type of liberality (Suet., Caes. 28.1), and Augustus set the model that a good emperor should also be a prolific builder, attending not only to Rome

the Colosseum's architectural design illustrates in an exemplary way the two primary concerns in imperial patronage of theater buildings: "regulating" the populace and offering a symbolic vision of their part in the larger political system.¹¹⁹

Recreational bathing was a popular form of leisure activity where citizens met with one another and experienced community.¹²⁰ Several bathing complexes were funded by emperors, including the baths of Agrippa, Nero, and Titus.¹²¹ The reign of Trajan, however, brought about a new scale and grandeur in imperial bathing architecture.¹²² The baths of Trajan were built over the then destroyed *Domus Aurea* of Nero. At the center of the compound laid an area for bathing, which was only a part of a much larger and more complex structure.¹²³ It was surrounded on the outside with green space and gardens, while the complex itself was demarcated from the busy surrounding area with tall buildings around the perimeter.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 70.

but also Italy and the provinces. Most notably after natural or man-made disasters, building activity redounded to the emperors' own glory as well as to the majesty of the state (cf. Virt., *De arch.* I.1.2)," Mary T. Boatwright "Trajan Outside Rome," 259.

¹²⁰ See Fikret K. Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992); Garrett G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). Zanker describes how the architecture provided different types of community experiences, "There were multiple and different possibilities for encounters in the constricted spaces of the hot rooms and in the large halls of the bathing complexes. On the one hand, the use of the baths, particularly the 'changing rooms' and the hot rooms, was, on a logistical level, superbly organized. Especially in the latter rooms the visitor had no other choice than to follow the order of the various spaces. The large central halls, swimming pools, courtyards, and gardens, on the other hand, offered ample space for free movement and thus also for chance, uncontrollable encounters. The interaction between freedom of movement and the strict ordering of movement reflects, in a highly paradigmatic way, the principles of social order in the imperial period," Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People," 64-65. See also Mark Wilson Jones, *Principles of Roman Architecture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000); James C. Anderson, *Roman Architecture and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

¹²¹ Bennett, *Trajan*, 150.

¹²² Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People," 61.

¹²³ Ibid., 65.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 63.

The Forum of Trajan was the centerpiece of Trajan's building program in Rome and stood as one of the most marvelous monuments in the ancient world.¹²⁵ Situated in the heart of Rome, it formed the single largest complex in the imperial city. More than anything, it employed monumental architecture to express Trajan's identity as the great patron of the empire. Construction of the Forum began soon after Trajan's victorious return from his second Dacian campaign and was substantially completed by 112 CE just before Trajan and the Roman military traveled eastward on campaign to combat Rome's greatest neighboring foe, the Parthian Kingdom.¹²⁶ Thus, construction of the Forum was chronologically framed by Trajan's expansionistic enterprise, and, in turn, aimed to advertise them to a metropolitan audience and legitimize such efforts as benevolent undertakings.¹²⁷ Fig. 7 in Excursus Two details the main

¹²⁵ I am here dependent on and thankful for the recent reconstructions proposed by archaeologist, James Packer, who has generated more knowledge of the Forum complex than ever before. See James E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: A Study of the Monuments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: A Study of the Monuments in Brief* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); "Report from Rome: The Imperial Fora, a Retrospective," *American Journal of Archaeology* 101, no. 2 (1997); "Trajan's Glorious Forum," *Archaeology* 51, no. 1 (1998).

¹²⁶ Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 12. Cass. Dio 68.16.3. According to an inscription found at Ostia, 112 also corresponds to the completion of Trajan's new seaport at the mouth of the Tiber River, Ibid., 4.

¹²⁷ Trajan was the first emperor to hold multiple victory titles—*Dacicus, Germanicus, Parthicus,* Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy,* 196. One of the strategies whereby the column deemphasizes the martial character of the mission is found in the inscription, which does not mention the war except Trajan's title "Dacicus." The issue of audience is important to understanding the impact of Roman art and architecture. Speaking across art-historical periods, Castriota argues, "For whom was this rhetoric intended? Various possibilities arise from a practical point of view. There was the general population, whose confidence and support were indispensable to the maintenance of an established order, and the uppermost social stratum or aristocracy whose backing was equally important to the king or ruler. In the imperial context of Akkad, Assyria, or Rome and her successors, the triumphal imagery of war and conquest would seem inevitably to aim at the intimidation of subject peoples as well as the confidence of the home front," Castriota, "Introduction" 4. As Brilliant similarly argues, "The Romans of the Empire were masters in creating visual, public images of power, translating the verbal and nonverbal fabric of social and political relations and of historical events into the symbolic forms of a monumental art... for the statue to do its work, to present the overwhelming image of the

structures within the forum, which included an open courtyard flanked by two enclosed promenades, an enormous basilica, two libraries, and a temple. Standing between the two libraries was the most innovative element in the Forum, the Column of Trajan. It was designed by one of the greatest architects from antiquity, Apollodorus of Damascus, Trajan's chief military architect, who is responsible for several construction projects, least of all a monumental bridge spanning the River Danube erected to facilitate military travel during Trajan's Dacian campaigns.¹²⁸ It was the booty acquired during these wars that paid for the construction of the Forum. Recent excavations in Rome have yielded exciting new insights into the Forum complex designed by Apollodorus on behalf of the emperor Trajan.¹²⁹

emperor as master (dominus), an audience was required, responding to the rhetorical qualities of the artwork, to the manner of its imposition on their consciousness, "Richard Billiant, "I Come to You as Your Lord': Late Roman Imperial Art," Pages 27-38 in Artistic Strategy and the Rhetoric of Power: Political Uses of Art from Antiquity to the Present (ed. David Castriota; Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 27.

¹²⁸ See fig. 6 in Excursus Two. This was probably the longest bridge ever built by the Romans. Concerning the bridge, Cassius Dio writes, "Trajan built a stone bridge over the Ister, for which I cannot admire him enough; there are other very magnificent works of his, but this is beyond them. For there are twenty piers of squared stone, and their height is one hundred fifty feet excluding the foundations, and their width is sixty feet; and these are one hundred seventy feet apart from each other, and they are linked together by arches. How could anyone fail to marvel at the expense made on them?" Cassius Dio 68.13.1-2 referenced in Mattern, Rome and the Enemy, 149. Marko Serban, "Trajan's Bridge over the Danube," The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology 38, no. 2 (2009): 331-42. A bridge is depicted on the Column's frieze. Apollodorus himself wrote a literary treatise about the bridge. The Danubian bridge extended an unprecedented 1,135 meters long. Each end bore a statue of Trajan between two trophies. It was dismantled by Hadrian soon after his accession. In Rome, Apollodorus was also responsible for Baths of Trajan, an odeum, and probably Trajan's markets. John W. Stamper, The Architecture of Roman Temples: The Republic to the Middle Empire (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 175. See also Edmund Thomas, Monumentality and the Roman Empire: Architecture in the Antonine Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4, on the monumentality of the structure and its advertisement on coins. See Cassius Dio 69.4.1. On Trajan's markets, see Lynne Lancaster, "Building Trajan's Markets," American Journal of Archaeology 102, no. 2 (1998); eadem, "Building Trajan's Markets 2: The Construction Process," American Journal of Archaeology 104, no. 4 (2000).

¹²⁹ Packer, The Forum of Trajan in Rome: A Study of the Monuments.

The following will provide a thick description of buildings that constituted the Forum of Trajan with an eye to the following questions.¹³⁰ How does it further express the reigning royal ideology of the emperor as patron of the entire *oikoumené*? How would the diverse population in Rome have understood its meaning? This section will be organized around the typical sequence of sights one would experience as they enter the front of the Forum and proceed to its far end. What was the meaning and role of such imperial space within Roman society? How does it compare to other contemporary cultural productions? How does it cohere with and differ from the adjacent imperial fora in Rome?

The Forum of Trajan stood as the last and largest of the imperial fora, which aimed not only to surpass but also to tie together those fora constructed by Trajan's imperial predecessors, namely the one begun by Julius Caesar and completed by his successor (Forum Iulium), Augustus (Forum Augusti), Vespasian (Templum Pacis), and Domitian (Forum Transitorium).¹³¹ The Forum of Trajan sits in the center of Rome, between the Capitoline and Quirinal Hills, parallel to the Forum Iulium and forming a right angle with the Forum Augusti, and extending the north-south axis of the Templum Pacis.¹³² It thus stood in over a hundred-year-tradition of fora architectural conventions, though maintained a high degree of innovation in both size and lavishness. Extending to around 310 m in length and 185 m at its widest, Trajan's Forum was nearly twice the size of the Forum Augustum which was built over a century before. Therefore,

¹³¹ The Forum Transitorium was dedicated by Nerva after Domitian's death.

¹³⁰ Although new information now exists concerning the Forum's design and decorations, its meaning and role as an imperial complex continues to be contested among modern researchers. John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 315* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 19-41.

¹³² For a discussion of the "architectural quotations" in the Forum of Trajan with the other imperial fora, see Gunnar Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 318-328.

in addition to unifying the fora, it served as the ultimate climax of these previous imperial fora.¹³³ According to Stamper, "Its grandeur and magnificent scale were meant to be understood as a newly achieved perfection in imperial architecture and political symbolism." ¹³⁴

While there were notable differences between the forums of Trajan and Augustus, the latter's forum had a temple dominating the open courtyard while the former's had a basilica. The Forum of Trajan was designed to emulate structures found in the Forum Augustum, such as the large hemicycle exedras extending out of the forum porticos.¹³⁵ This is not coincidental, but rather an important way Trajan advertised his own relationship with the past and the claims it made of the present.¹³⁶ It set Trajan and his achievements within a broader historical framework. As Gunnar Seelentag points out, the lack of a temple on the far side of Trajan's forum meant there was a second gate giving pedestrians direct access to Trajan's column without having to pass through the triumphal entrance, courtyard, or basilica.¹³⁷

The architectural style used to construct the Forum blends different forms associated with specific locales such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece, which had the affect of symbolizing "the idea of continuity in the Empire."¹³⁸ Throughout the Forum complex viewers could have also marveled at the expensive multi-colored marbles imported from distant places in the empire

¹³³ As Stamper notes, "The plan of its principal space was essentially a mirror image of the Templum Pacis on the opposite side of the Forum Augustum and the Forum Transitorium. It had similar dimensions, a similar colonnaded enclosure, and similar statuary and trees. The complex was laid out symmetrically with a progression of buildings and spaces totaling 310 meters in length," Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples*, 175.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 175.

¹³⁵ In addition to this, the architectural decorations are much closer to the Forum Augustum than to any of the Flavian buildings. The influence is so pervasive that it has been described by some as an "Augustan revival." Further similarities include the colonnades, attic zone, and rear hemicycles, Ibid., 175, 182.

¹³⁶ Thomas, *Monumentality and the Roman Empire*, 212.

¹³⁷ Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 311. There is archaeological evidence of such a gate. There is still debate as to which gate served as the main entrance.

¹³⁸ Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples*, 175.

(see fig. 8 in Excursus Two). To further enhance the international mode of architecture and décor, Packer identifies four provincial prototypes which influenced the Forum's design, including "large-scale temples of Egypt and Mesopotamia, from the markets or shrines of the Hellenistic East, from the early imperial legionary camps of the northern frontier, or from the urban architecture of provincial northern Italy of the first century [CE]..."¹³⁹ It was through and through a cosmopolitan structure intended to advertise Rome as not only the capital of Italy but the whole world. This sets Trajan and his achievements within a broader cosmological framework.¹⁴⁰

Visitors to the Forum would enter either through the central triumphal arch or one of two smaller lateral arches which all stood on the slightly curved south side facing the Forum of Augustus. Mounted on top of the central arch stood a charioteer statue, probably of gilt bronze, depicting Trajan in triumphal procession accompanied by a winged Victory who likely held a wreath over Trajan's head. They were pulled in a six-horse chariot restrained by two attendants of the goddess Roma, possibly Amazons, who lead the emperor in triumphal procession. Flanked on both sides are trophies composed of the defeated enemy's armor and two additional female attendants. These arches project forward into the Forum design symmetrical.¹⁴¹ Although there are no archaeological remains of this triumphal entrance, it was advertised on coins, which serve

¹³⁹ Packer also identifies several local prototypes as well: "the Theater and Portico of Pompey and the portico erected by Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus in 146 and rebuilt by Augustus as the Porticus Octaviae, and the Forum of Augustus himself, which supplied many of the elements of the plan and the cool classicizing style of the architectural elements," Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 174.

¹⁴⁰ Packer argues, "stated in the contemporary imperial international mode, his plan for the Forum of Trajan was an intelligent blend of oriental, Gk, Italic, and Roman elements that visually expressed Rome's unique position as the capital of the Mediterranean World," Ibid., 174.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 54-60

as important sources of information for those structures which are now lost to history. This entrance, designed as a triumphal arch, initiated the martial theme that ran throughout (see fig. 9 in Excursus Two).¹⁴²

Upon entering through these arches, visitors would encounter an expansive open courtyard paved in a dazzling white marble and surrounded by porticoes stretching across the entire left and right side.¹⁴³ Packer argues, "the simple proportions of the open space and the rhythmic repetition of the columnar facades evoked a sense of human order and scale, of well being, of a tranquility conditioned and sustained by latent power."¹⁴⁴ Standing along the central axis of the forum square was the colossal equestrian statue of Trajan, the *Equus Traiani*, successor of a similarly monumental statue audaciously erected in the Forum Romanum by

¹⁴² Secondary entrances were located on the sides connected to the Trajan's markets and the Forum Iulium. Lawrence Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 175. See Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 314-315, for a discussion of coins depicting key structures in the forum, namely the basilica, the equestrian statue, the column, and the entrance. The coins representing the basilica and column were issued in 112 CE during the construction phase.

¹⁴³ Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 313.

¹⁴⁴ Packer. *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 112. Zanker provides a useful summary of the history of the development of porticoes in the city of Rome. "The first of these porticoes had been erected, beginning in the second century BC, by victorious generals as 'victory sanctuaries.' With these structures, the generals sought to provide the citizens of Rome with something akin to the much-admired urbanity of Hellenistic civic culture while simultaneously giving them their share of the war booty. The finest of these porticoes were built by Greek architects in the most modern Hellenistic style. The Greek character of these structures as well as their artful and sumptuous decoration—including artworks seized from the conquered enemy, a typical element of the later "popular" buildings constructed by the emperors—had thus already found a firm formulation... The emperors renovated and expanded these older structures and, on the Campus Martius, added new porticoes to them, several hundred meters in length. The halls and exedrae of the imperial fora, for their part, also stand in the Republican tradition. Both Caesar and Augustus sought explicitly to create with their new for a not only sanctuaries and stages for state ceremonies, but also much-needed public spaces that could serve multiple functions. On an everyday level, the porticoes and exedrae of the imperial for a were intended above all to accommodate legal and administrative activity," Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People," 50.

Domitian and then destroyed as a result of the *damnatio memoriae* issued upon his death.¹⁴⁵ Although this Trajanic statue no longer exists, its image was also minted on coins serving as our primary source of knowledge of the installation.¹⁴⁶ The statue's grandeur is attested by Ammianus Marcellinus, who reports that Constantius, when visiting Rome in 357, envied the statue and commissioned a replica back home while greaving not being able to build as glorious of a stable as Trajan (enviously referring to the magnificence of Trajan's Forum).¹⁴⁷ A number of additional statues would have been visible from the courtyard.¹⁴⁸ Situated on the arches of the Basilica were additional charioteer statues, reinforcing the symmetry between the north and south side of the forum.

Bordering the entire east and west side of the courtyard were Corinthian colonnades slightly raised from the forum floor by three steps (see fig. 10 in Excursus Two). Standing above

each column was a series of Dacian statues, roughly 8 feet tall, some of which were later used on

¹⁴⁵ Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 336-348.

¹⁴⁶ The image represented on these coins vary in detail so the exact nature of this statue is not certain. In one version, the emperor is depicted on horseback trampling a Dacian enemy. See Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 313.

¹⁴⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus includes the oldest known report on the visit to the Forum complex of Constantius II, "But when he came to the Forum of Trajana, a construction unique under the heavens, as we believe, and admirable even in the unanimous opinion of the gods, he stood fast in amazement, turning his attention to the gigantic complex about him, beggaring description and never again to be imitated by mortal men. Therefore, abandoning all hope of attempting anything like it, he said he would and could copy Trajan's steed alone (*equus Traiani*), which stands in the center of the vestibule carrying the emperor himself. To this prince Ormisda, who was standing near him... replied with native wit: 'First, Sire, said he, command a like stable to be built.'" (XVI 10, 15-16), translated in Filippo Coarelli, *The Column of Trajan* (Tranlated by Cynthia Rockwell, Rome: Colombo, 2000), 3.

¹⁴⁸ "Trajan and his successors set up a great number of statues of generals and other distinguished men (S.H.A. M. Aurelius 22.7; Alex. Sev. 26.4; Tacitus 9.2; Sid. Apoll., Carm. 8.8, 9.301). A great many inscriptions belonging to these statues have been found, some of which are explicit about their having been erected in Foro Traiani or in Foro Ulpio (CIL 6. 1377=31640, 1599, 1710, 1721, 1724, 1727, 1749,; ILS 809, 1098, 1244, 1275, 1326, 2949, 2950)," Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 175.

the Arch of Constantine. This has its parallel in the Augustan forum where caryatids adorned the comparable area (see Figs. 11-16 in Excursus Two).¹⁴⁹

In between these statues, in the bays of the intercolumniations, were shields with enlarged portrait heads of past historical heroes, such as emperors and empresses, numbering around 60 total.¹⁵⁰ Repeatedly carved into the attic of the Colonnades was an inscription reading "EX MANUBIIS" (from spoils) communicating to viewers how the Forum was financed. Inside the colonnades was a sizable rectangular space enjoyed by the urban plebs for promenades.¹⁵¹

Towering above the central axis of the forum square was the Roman panopticon, an image of Trajan mediating between heaven and earth, the colossal 13 plus foot statue of the emperor that stood on top of the 100 foot Column of Trajan, which was visible over the Basilica roof looming above visitors standing in the courtyard.¹⁵² The statue depicted Trajan holding a globe in one hand, signaling the universal extent of his imperium with a spear in his other hand.¹⁵³ This statue, lost in the Middle Ages, was replaced in 1588 with a statue of St. Peter, still visible today.¹⁵⁴ What would it have been like to ascend the Column staircase onto the balcony,

¹⁴⁹ Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 61.

¹⁵⁰ See fig. 17 in Excursus Two

¹⁵¹ See fig. 18 in Excursus Two. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 60-69.

¹⁵² See previous chapter for discussion of Column.

¹⁵³ Numismatic evidence indicates the statue stood on a dome while holding a spear in one hand and an orb (representative of world domination) in the other. "Originally the column seems to have been designed to be surmounted by an eagle (see B.M. coins, Rom. Emp. 3 pl. 41.7), but then a statue of the princeps himself was substituted. From the representation on coins (see B.M. coins, Rom. Emp. 3 pls. 16.19 and 20, 17.1 and 2, 19.11 and 12, 21.15, 39.4 and 5, 40.1, 2 and 11, 41.6, 42.3), the column was slow in taking shape, and eagles that had in a second design been intended to flank the base were ultimately omitted. We have no authoritative representation of the statue of Trajan on the summit," Lawrence Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 175.

¹⁵⁴ In 1162 a law was passed promising the death penalty to anyone who tried to damage the column.

overlooking the Forum of Trajan, the surrounding imperial fora, and the city of Rome?¹⁵⁵ Guner Seelentag points out that the Column's belvedere would have given viewers the opportunity to admire the radiant bronze roofs of the market and the forum buildings.¹⁵⁶

Standing perpendicular to the central axis of the Forum was the largest building in Rome, the massive Basilica Ulpia (Ulpius was Trajan's family name), which was the centerpiece of the entire complex and stood dominating the opposite side of the courtyard (see figs. 20-22).¹⁵⁷ As Guner Seelentaage points out, the Basilical Ulpia was the largest structure of its kind in the Roman world.¹⁵⁸ Its dimensions were about 400 feet long and 200 feet wide, not including the apses extending out on both ends. Four avenues of trees served to naturalize the artificial environment and its invasive pageantry of imperial pomp. It was one of the most impressive buildings of imperial Rome, built with a combination of white and colored marble. The Basilica is in some ways comparable to the Basilica of the Forum of Pompeii, though the former was significantly larger and more ornate than the latter. Similar to the main entrance of the Forum,

¹⁵⁵ See Fig. 19 in Excursus Two. Penelope Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," *American Journal of Archaeology* 101, no. 1 (1997): 61, argues that the Column served as the first belvedere in Rome designed specifically as a viewing station. This is an important part of her argument which see the Column as concerned with viewers' bodily manipulation in the perpetuation of Trajan's memory.

¹⁵⁶ Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 314. Furthermore, Seelentag considers what function the useful internal staircase served. Beyond giving viewers access to views of the surrounding area, it may have held certain ritual significance. Participant could circle counterclockwise ascending the internal staircase, creating a border with magical powers that protected its center. In support of this, Seelentag references a number of Roman rituals that employ circular motion as a part of their ritual procession, such as the Triumph. See Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 401. The top of the Column would have stood at the same height as the top floor of the markets nearby, Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 400.

¹⁵⁷ The open square measured 118m long and 189m wide; porticoes were 12m deep. Lawrence Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 175. Not only was it the largest single structure and the most lavishly decorated in the Forum, it was, as argued by Stamper, "the most directly linked to the day-to-day projection of the emperor's authority and power," John Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples*, 179. See Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 146–163.

¹⁵⁸ Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 314.

the Basilica's central entrance was shaped as a triumphal arch. Along the attic and the pedestals above were more inscriptions, this time listing the myriad of ethnic names of the legions who had fought in the Dacian wars.

Having a basilica in the middle of the Forum deviated from its predecessors in Rome where there the focus typically revolved around a temple.¹⁵⁹ The roof was elevated to allow light to shine into the building, rendering visible the interior frieze of bull-slaying Victories. It is reminiscent of an Egyptian style used in temples millennia before. The Basilica Ulpia became one of the most important official centers in the capital. Trajan used the Basilica for a number of imperial activities.¹⁶⁰ It was used to receive foreign dignitaries, as well as to preside over legal trials and ceremonies.¹⁶¹ Additional Dacian statuary, larger than those along the colonnades, stood on the attic of the Basilica, roughly 10.5 feet tall, their bodies made of white purple-veined marble (pavonazetto) and their heads and hands of white marble.

¹⁵⁹ According to Stamper, this is due to the military camp serving as the primary model for the Forum, *The Architecture of Roman Temples*, 179.

¹⁶⁰ According to Packer, it was there that "Hadrian burned official records of debts owed the state; and in the reign of his successors, numerous imperial acts took place in the Forum. Following the example of Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius may have destroyed tax records there, and he adorned the Forum with statues: one dedicated to his tutor, Marcus Fronto; and several to those honored for their achievements in the Marcomannic Wars. There too, he auctioned the imperial jewels and official robes in order to pay for the Marcomannic Wars. As a special honor, his official heir, Commodus, while still a child, handed out imperial donations and presided in the Basilical Ulpia, the east apse of which was called the Atrium Libertatis ("Liberty Hall"). One of the Forum's chambers, called Opes ("riches"), was a bank for the deposit of senatorial valuables. New laws were frequently posted in the Forum, while the summi viri ("public heroes") were honored with statues like that set up to commemorate the Emperor Aurelian (A.D. 270-275), justly saluted in his own day as Restitutor Orbis ("the restorer of the world"). Indeed, these honorary statues were only part of what must have been a program of conscientious maintenance kept up by the imperial government throughout the third century.... In the latter part of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, slaves still gained their freedom in the Atrium Libertatis, and statues in the Forum continued to honor public figures like Sidonius Apollinaris.... In the days of Venatius Fortunatus (A.D. 600), the Libraries were still suitable settings for public recitations," James Packer, The Forum of Trajan in Rome, 4-5.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 179.

Exiting the north side of the Basilica Ulpia, one enters another courtyard.¹⁶² This one consisting of the Column of Trajan flanked by two libraries.¹⁶³ The west library contained texts written in Latin while the east library contained texts written in Greek, following a tradition established in earlier imperial libraries.¹⁶⁴ Decorating the interior of each library were colossal statues, perhaps of Trajan and Minerva. The inclusion of the libraries within the forum complex was quite significant. It served to characterize Rome as the capital of learning.¹⁶⁵ They were likely the largest libraries in Rome at the time and could hold an estimated 10,000 volumes.¹⁶⁶

Hadrian is responsible for completing the Forum by dedicating on the far north side a Temple to his deified predecessor, the newest members of the Roman pantheon, Trajan and his wife Plotina.¹⁶⁷ It is unclear, however, whether or not a temple was a part of the original plan drawn up by Apollodorus.¹⁶⁸ In size it equalled the temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum of

¹⁶² See figs. 23-27 in Excursus Two. The courtyard measures 24m wide and 16m deep. Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 175. As Niels Hannestad points out, "these were the most important libraries in Rome—among other things it contained Asinius Pollio's collection—it also housed certain types of state archives. Here were found the minutes of the Senate, and the imperial correspondence and diaries. Trajan's own account of Dacian wars must have been here as well. In a camp, the legion's archives were similarly located," Niels Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (Åarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1988), 152.

¹⁶³ "Famous in antiquity, this Library also included archival materials—the edicts of the emperors and praetors, decrees of the Senate—and rare books like Caesar's autobiography and Trajan's commentaries on the Dacian Wars. To use the collection, a reader would have asked the procurator bibliothecarum for the permission of the praefectus urbi," James Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 78.

¹⁶⁴ Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians*, 314.

¹⁶⁵ Catharine Edwards and Greg Woolf, *Rome the Cosmopolis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14, 16.

¹⁶⁶ Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 84-85, 99.

¹⁶⁷ See fig. 28 in Excursus Two. Since the temple complex has not yet been excavated our knowledge of the structure comes primarily through coins.

¹⁶⁸ Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 83, argues that it was "planned as an integral part of the Forum"

Augustus and, according to its depiction on coins, had a similarly tall podium.¹⁶⁹ The temple's dedicatory inscription reads: "The Emperor Trajan Hadrian Augustus, son of the deified Trajan Parthicus, grandson of the deified Nerva, Pontifex Maximus with Tribunician Power, Consul for the third time, by decree of the Senate [dedicates this temple] to his deified parents, Trajan Parthicus and Plotina."¹⁷⁰ Thus, word and architectural design came together in the Forum to venerate Trajan during his lifetime and for posterity.

The martial character of the Forum is one of the most prominent organizing themes of the entire complex. The presence of triumphal arch-shaped entrances, depictions of the emperor on horse back, statues of captured Dacians, all serve to commemorate Trajan's military exploits. In addition, on the roofs of the porticoes flanking the central courtyard were images of horses and military trophies, and the repeated phrase *ex manubiis*. The very concept of an open forum with a central, perpendicular Basilica follows the typical plan of a military camp. The Basilica corresponds to the *principia*, the main building within the camp. Likewise, the location of the libraries corresponds to the place the legions' archives would have been stored. Behind such archives, in an area corresponding to where the Temple of Trajan was erected, would have stood a sanctuary that held the legion's standards and an image of the emperor.¹⁷¹ These elements are crucial to making the Forum of Trajan a commemorative monument to the Dacian triumph. It extolls the superiority of Rome over the "barbarian" outsiders.

The Forum served a critical role in Trajan's imperial project by fostering a consensual feeling among its visitors of the benefits of imperialism as the guarantor of peace, prosperity, and

¹⁶⁹ Also corresponded in size to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and the Templum Pacis. Similarities with Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus include its general plan, virtually identical sized pronaos (width of 34 to 36 meters), and use of the Corinthian Order. See Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples*, 173. See also Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 83.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 80.

¹⁷¹ Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples*, 179.

civilization, not just in Rome, but for the whole world. It concretized and disseminated conceptions of a new and evolving imperial order where Rome was but the capital of an ever-expanding confederation of different peoples who could all theoretically become Roman through enculturation. As Jaś Elsner argues,

Art and architecture made possible the rituals of Roman daily life, images naturalized the appropriateness of that life through repeated representation; together those rituals and images formed a potent means of "Romanization"—of bringing the still ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse communities around the Mediterraenan into a single imperial polity.¹⁷²

This was brought into symbolic form through its use of an international mode of architecture that blended different forms associated with specific locales from Italy to Mesopotamia. In several ways it brought all of the constituent people groups of the empire into the same place; whether that be experienced in the multi-ethnic makeup of its visitors, the Dacian statuary on display, the list of legions from all around the empire who contributed to the war, to the reliefs on the Column showing different ethnic groups fighting both on the Roman and the Dacian side. Throughout the Forum complex viewers would have marveled at the expensive multi-colored marbles imported from distant places in the empire. It masked the violent imposition of Trajanic expansionism behind the benevolent veneer of a peaceful incorporative policy.

In general, markets and fora were a popular type of public space emperors could embellish to express their patronage to the urban masses.¹⁷³ We know from ancient authors that porticoes were especially enjoyed as public spaces and, as such, intentionally built for leisurely promenades, quite independent of whatever primary purpose of the building to which they

¹⁷² Jaś Elsner, Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph, 13.

¹⁷³ Figs. 29-30 in Excursus Two.

belonged.¹⁷⁴ In this way, they provided an elaborate network of covered space that wound throughout the city and its most important areas, providing important public space that was universally accessible. A large number of these porticoes were intentionally joined together as part of imperial architectural patronage.¹⁷⁵

The importance of the Forum exceeded its practical use. It is a paragon of monumental architecture, which, according to Edmund Thomas' definition, "involves buildings whose 'scale and elaboration exceed the requirements of any practical functions that a building is intended to perform'. The corollary of this observation is that monumental architecture has a meaning beyond its practical function."¹⁷⁶ The Forum concretized and represented a new and evolving imperial order. It represented the empire to subjects and communicated what it meant to be Roman. As one commentator puts it, "In mapping out the concept of self-improvement through Romanization, Trajan's Forum, Basilica, and Column proclaimed a benevolence that masked the hard realities for outsiders—especially the non-elite functionaries—the slave and freedmen lawyers, doctors, architects, engineers, surveyors, and teachers who would have frequented the

¹⁷⁴ See Martial 2.14; Horace *Carm.* 1.8; Ovid *Ars* 1.77-79; Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People," 48, 54.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 59-60.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas, *Monumentality and the Roman Empire*, 4. As a whole, the Forum of Trajan served a number of different functions. It served as a gift to the Roman people where open space was granted amidst the spatially congested urban environment. It provided public space for a variety of interactions, whether they be formal or convivial. The complex as a whole advertised Trajan's military accomplishments against the Dacians in two successful campaigns. It was, in fact, the wealth acquired from these campaigns that funded the building project in the first place. Inscriptions, statuary, and reliefs remind the visitor of this at every turn of their visit in the Forum. A visitor would have encountered the image of the emperor in every part of the Forum. For officials the Forum provided designated space for judicial matters, distributing largesse, and archiving. These are but only a few of the several functions the Forum of Trajan served. All of the surrounding fora shared, in part, the common task of supplementing the limited space in the Forum Romanum. See Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome*, 4. See also Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman Temples*, 182.

Forum and especially the libraries flanking the Column."¹⁷⁷ Laura Nasrallah argues that the Forum puts into visual form a number of discourses concerning empire, including justice, piety, ethnicity, and paideia brought about during the second sophistic.¹⁷⁸ Many of the structures found within the complex certainly echo the broader discursive world.¹⁷⁹ They serve as poetic manifestations of these discourses and parallel other cultural poetics evidenced in the diverse forms of cultural production, including literature, statues, architecture, and more. The Forum of Trajan expressed and articulated the conditions of the time, especially by projecting an image of the emperor as the *optimus patronus* on behalf of the *plebs urbana* and benefactor *par excellence*. Thus, these constructions served a legitimizing purpose in a system where authority was predicated on the need to justify one's rule through acts of munificence.¹⁸⁰

Conclusion: Trajanic Standards of Representation

The emperor built not only in Rome but also in the Italian peninsula and the provinces.¹⁸¹ These construction projects, however, were shown to differ in kind from those in Rome, in that they were restricted largely to utilitarian constructions, such as walls, sewers, streets (11 new

¹⁷⁷ John Clarke, Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans, 40.

¹⁷⁸ Laura Nasrallah, "The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Cities, and Hadrian's Panhellenion," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 3 (2008): 533–66.

¹⁷⁹ On the influence the Forum had on near contemporary provincial architectural and iconographic programs, see the discussion of the Traianeum in Pergamon and the Library of Celsus in Ephesus in Thomas, *Monumentality and the Roman Empire*, 9-10, 12.

¹⁸⁰ Zanker compares imperial Rome with other periods in how the emperors demonstrated their power not though the building of elaborate residences, but by building for the Roman people. As he argues, "The particular structure of imperial Rome only becomes evident when the ancient city is compared to the monarchical centers of other times and cultures. Whether one looks to ancient Chinese and oriental temple and royal residences or the Baroque urban arrangements in Turin, Mannheim, or Karlsruhe, the royal residence always dominates the city, whether open to it (Karlsruhe) or isolated from it (Beijing). Were an uninformed urban planner to study the layout of imperial Rome, he would likely locate the centers of power and the religious cult in the imperial bath-buildings or the Colosseum rather than in the *domus* on the Palatine Hill," Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People," 77.

¹⁸¹ Stephen Mitchell, "Imperial Building in the Eastern Roman Provinces," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 91 (1987): 333–65.

roads in Italy alone), harbors, and water systems. In Mary Boatwright's comprehensive survey of Trajan's architectural benefactions in Italy and the provinces, a total of sixty constructions were considered, and three-quarters were utilitarian.¹⁸² The emperor's patronage to the provinces was expressed in the area of infrastructure while local benefactors took it upon themselves to patronize the building of larger complexes that shaped the cityscape.¹⁸³ As Boatwright argues, "the investigation of Trajan's architectural patronage outside Rome underscores a fundamental, but ostensibly paradoxical, element of this emperor's successful reign: the co-existence of collaboration and autocracy."¹⁸⁴ All of these constructions illustrate how the emperor served as an exemplar of public generosity for the empire as a whole, providing a potent symbol and model for provincials to fashion their own identity and assert their place in the world.¹⁸⁵ Thus, it is no coincidence that these years saw the highest increase in epigraphical material honoring local benefactors.¹⁸⁶ This was seen as an entire imperial system in which anyone with means

¹⁸² Mary T. Boatwright "Trajan Outside Rome: Construction and Embellishment in Italy and the Provinces" Pages 259-277 in *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.)* (ed. Philip A. Stadter and Luc Ven der Stockt, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 267. These construction projects largely aided commerce, communication, and military. While most of Trajan's constructions were in Italy, six are are in Syria (Antioch), five are in Cyprus, three in Asia, two in Cyrenaica, in Crete, Dalmatia, and possibly one in Lusitania. Conversely, Trajan's roads and engineering works are attested throughout the provinces. See Philip A. Stadter "Introduction: Setting Plutarch in his Context" Pages 2-26 in *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.)* (ed. Philip A. Stadter and Luc Ven der Stockt, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 18. For a concise survey of Trajan's different types of construction projects throughout Italy, see Henner von Hesberg, "Die Bautätigkeit Traians in Italien" in *Traian: Ein Kaiser der Superlative am Beginn einer Umbruchzeit?* (ed. Annette Nünnerich-Asmus; Mainz: Von Zabern, 2002), 85-96.

¹⁸³ Zanker, "By the Emperor, for the People," 48.

¹⁸⁴ Boatwright "Trajan Outside Rome," 260. As Philip Stadter puts it, the construction in the provinces, topped with the fried of Trajan's column and Pliny's Panegyricus, indicate an "ideology of practicality and cooperation," Stadter, "Setting Plutarch in his Context," 18.

¹⁸⁵ Fig. 31 in Excursus Two.

¹⁸⁶ Bennett, *Trajan*, 139.

could claim a place in Rome's empire.¹⁸⁷ In the following chapter, I wish to situate the book of Acts within the context of provincial representation during the early part of the second century in attempt to contextualize the image of the power and beneficence of the Christian community, whose mission is depicted extending across the *oikoumené*, connecting otherwise distant lands within a patronage network extended through the mission of Paul and centered on the benevolent Christian Deity. It will be argued that the image that emerges in Acts is an imperial one, drawn from Trajanic discourses of empire, in order to establish the identity of "the Way" within the Roman web of power.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 138.

EXCURSUS TWO: IMAGES FROM CHAPTER TWO



Fig. 1: Soldier carries over his shoulder a sack full of rewards which he received directly from the emperor. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

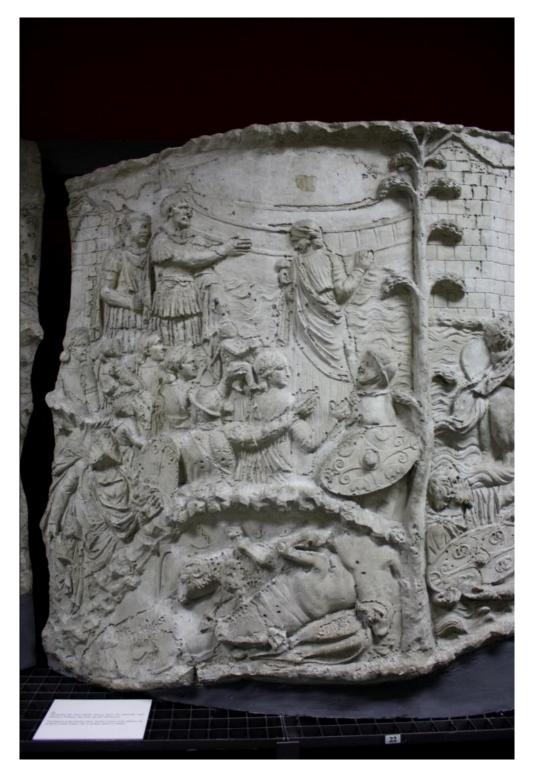


Fig. 2: Trajan oversees the safe transportation of a line of Dacian women and children away from the site of conflict. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

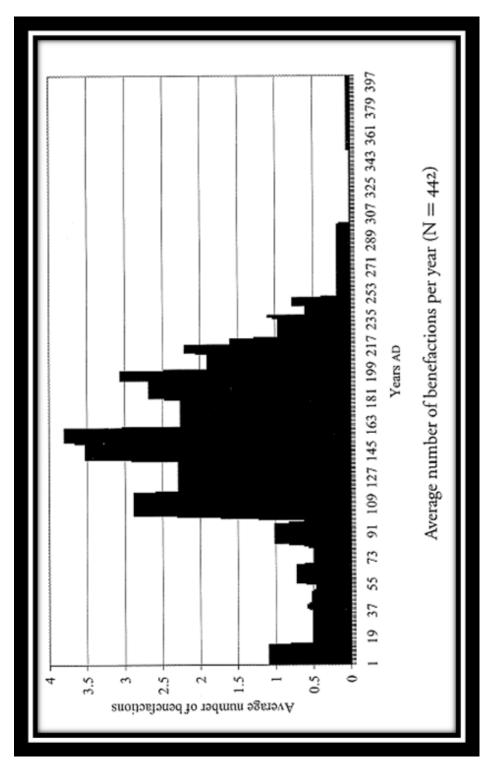


Fig. 3: "Average number of benefactions per year." Image from Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence*, 18.

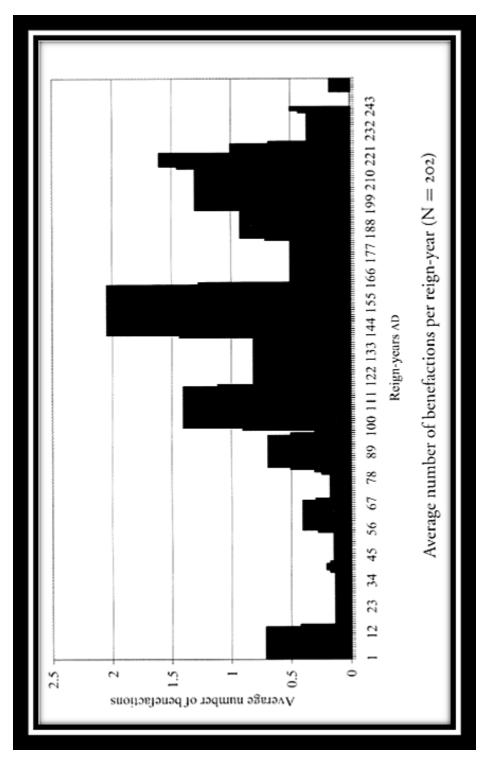


Fig. 4: "Average number of benefactions per reign-year." Image from Zuiderhoek, *The Politics of Munificence*, 19.



Fig. 5: Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum). Rome, c. 80 CE. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 6: Scale model (1:1500) of Apollodorus of Damascus' bridge across the Danube. Original site is Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania, 103-105. Model from Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

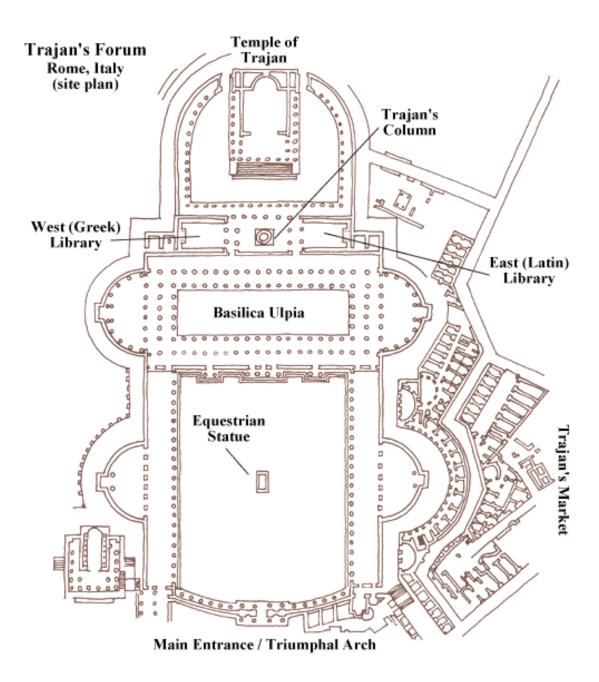


Fig. 7: Overview of Trajan's Forum © Copyright Kevin Lee Sarring and James E. Packer



Fig. 8: Marble Floor remaining from Basilica Ulpia. Rome, c. 113 CE. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 9: Front entrance to Forum designed as a triumphal arch. Rome, c. 113 CE. © Copyright Kevin Lee Sarring and James E. Packer



Fig. 10: A view of the Forum's courtyard with equestrian statue. Rome, c. 113 CE. © Copyright Kevin Lee Sarring and James E. Packer

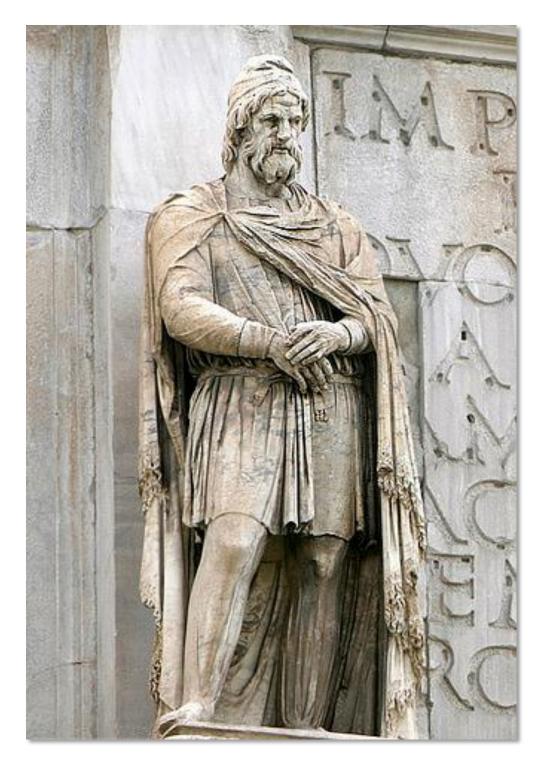


Fig. 11: Dacian statues, roughly 8 feet tall, reused on the Arch of Constantine. Rome, c. 312 CE. © Copyright William Storage



Fig. 12: Mold of Dacian statue from Museo della Civiltà Romana. The original's present location is the Gardens of Villa Borghese. Rome, c. 113 CE. Photo by Drew Billings.

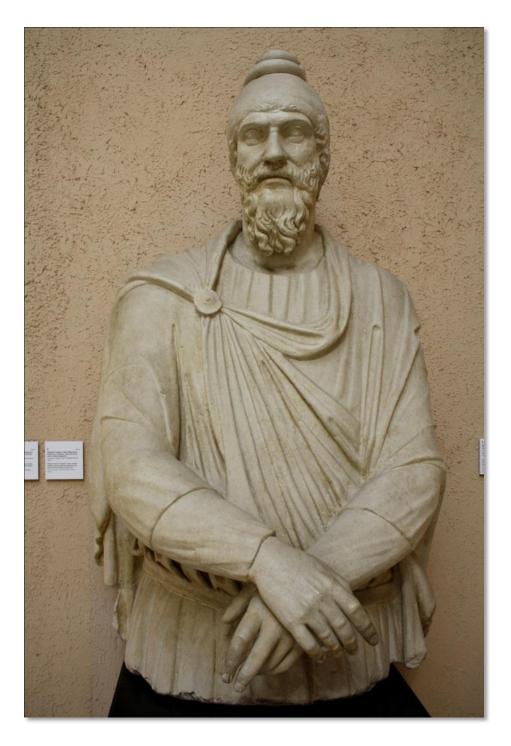


Fig. 13: Mold of upper part of a Dacian statue from Museo della Civiltà Romana. Original in Vatican Museum, Vatican City, c. 113 CE. Photo by Drew Billings.

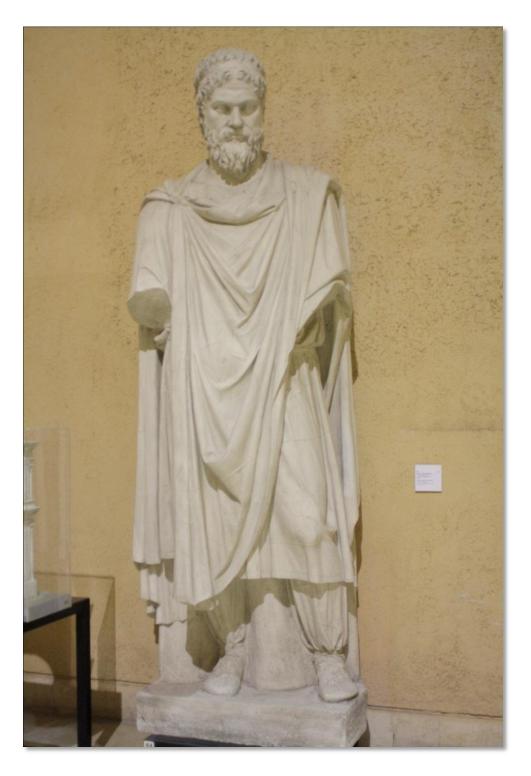


Fig. 14: Mold of Dacian statue from Museo della Civiltà Romana. The original stood in the Forum of Trajan. Rome, c. 113 CE. Photo by Drew Billings.

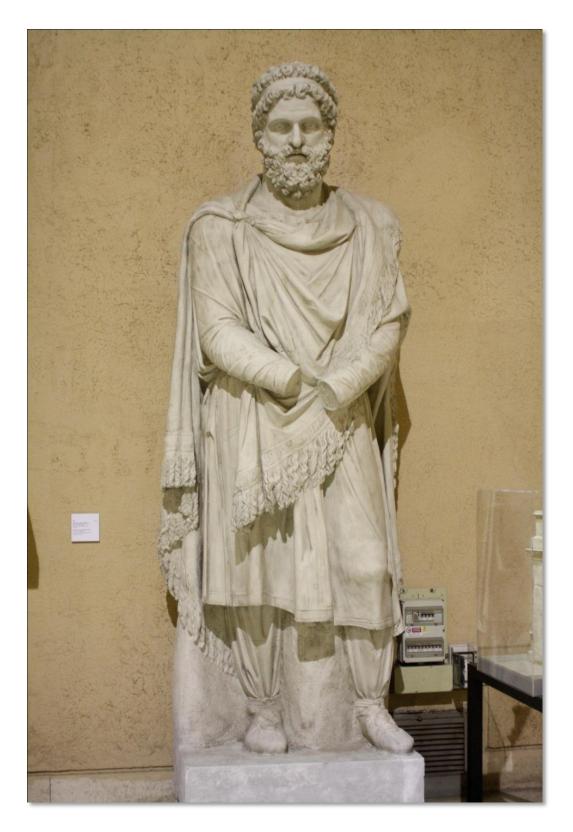


Fig. 15: Mold of Dacian statue from Museo della Civiltà Romana. The original stood in the Forum of Trajan. Rome, c. 113 CE. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 16: Arch of Constantine with four Dacian statues in the upper register. Rome, c. 312 CE. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 17: Colossal head of Agrippina Minor (wife of the Emperor Claudius and mother of Nero) from Trajan's Forum, attic storey of the portico around the forum, 106-112 CE, Museo dei Fori Imperiali. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 18: Collonnades lined the east and west sides of the Forum's courtyard. Rome, c. 113 CE. © Copyright Kevin Lee Sarring and James E. Packer

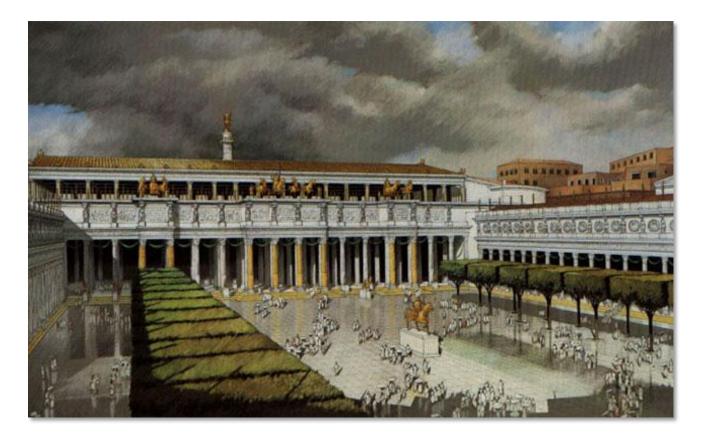


Fig. 19: The top of the Column of Trajan is depicted towering above the Basilica Ulpia. Rome, c. 113 CE. © Copyright Kevin Lee Sarring and James E. Packer



Fig. 20: Basilica Ulpia facing west. Rome. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 21: Basilica Ulpia facing south. Rome. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 22: Basilica Ulpia facing east. Rome. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 23: Digital reconstruction of a library in the Forum from floor level. Rome. Computer-reconstruction by Joost van Dongen.



Fig. 24: Digital reconstruction of a library in the Forum from balcony. Computer-reconstruction by Joost van Dongen.



Fig. 25: Digital reconstruction of library ceiling decorated with colored tile. Computer-reconstruction by Joost van Dongen.



Fig. 26: Library facing northwest. Rome. Photo by Drew Billings



Fig. 27: Library facing west. Rome. Photo by Drew Billings

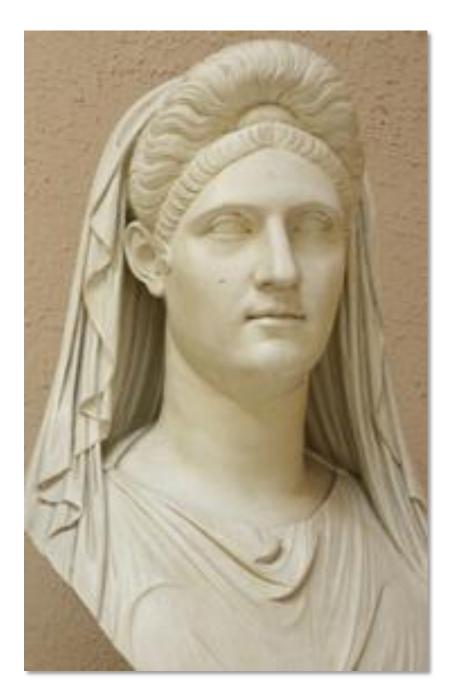


Fig. 28: Bust of Plotina with her head veiled from Vitali Collection, Torlonia Museum, Rome, c. 117-138 CE. Cast from Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

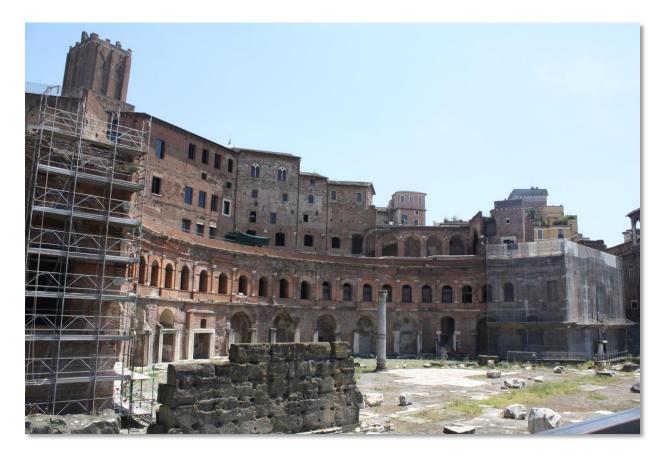


Fig. 29: Markets of Trajan in Rome facing southeast. Rome. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 30: Markets of Trajan in Rome facing east. Rome. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 31: Bust of Trajan in celebration of his 10th year of his reign from the Vatican Museum, Vatican City. Cast from Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

CHAPTER THREE

Paul in the Provinces: The Politics of a Public Portraiture

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).¹ This promise occurs at the beginning of Acts as the final words of Jesus, announced just prior to his *apotheosis* to heaven and concurrent exaltation.² The statement serves a programmatic role in introducing and framing the worldwide mission of the male protagonists in the following narrative that follows as foreordained, expansionistic, divinely propelled and empowered.³ In one dramatic episode after another, Paul is depicted bearing witness to the good deeds of Christ, through emboldened speech and miraculous demonstrations, binding together otherwise distant lands within the benevolent *patria* of the Christian deity. Luke's assertion, placed in Jesus'

¹ All New Testament translations are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted. The Greek is from the twenty-sixth edition of Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece*. For political interpretations of this verse, see David L. Tiede, "Acts 1:6–8 and the Theo-Political Claims of Christian Witness," *WW* 1, no. 1 (1981): 41–51. See Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 44, for a discussion of the phrase "the ends of the earth" and its use in ancient accounts of world missions, such as Heracles, Alexander the Great, and Dio of Prusa. See also Bertram L. Melbourne, "Acts 1:8 Re-Examined: Is Acts 8 Its Fulfillment?," *JRT* 57/58, no. 2/1-2 (2005): 1–18; Albert Kaumba Mufwata Cissolah, *Jusqu'aux Extrémités De La Terre: La Référence Aux Prophètes Comme Fondement De L'ouverture Universaliste Aux Chapitres 2 Et 13 Des Actes Des Apôtres* (Cahiers de la Revue biblique 67; Paris: J. Gabalda, 2006); Daniel Marguerat and Emmanuelle Steffek, "Luc-Actes et la naissance du Dieu universel" *Études théologiques et religieuses. 87, no. 1, (2012): 35-56.* For a discussion on the role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts, see James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991); Alan Bale, "The Ambiguous Oracle: Narrative Configuration in Acts," *NTS* 57, no. 04 (2011): 530–46.

² See Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts* (Guides to New Testament exegesis 4; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1995), 80-82, on the ascension and its association with eschatology and Jesus' exaltation.

³ Acts 2:9-11 also anticipates the apostles' worldwide mission. See James M. Scott, "Acts 2:9–11 As an Anticipation of the Mission to the Nations," Pages 87-124 in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles* (ed. Jostein Adna and Hans Kvalbein; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament WUNT 127; Berlin: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

mouth, leads us to wonder: In the midst of Roman claims to possess the *oikoumene* and unite otherwise distant lands under the leadership of a single and benevolent world-ruler, what role did such imperial claims and rhetoric play in shaping early Christian discourse and knowledge of self?⁴

This chapter will argue that Acts constructs a public portraiture of Paul that conforms to the representational standards and trends of Roman imperial society circulating in the early second century. Acts presents Paul as an itinerant delegate of the apotheosized κύριος to the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. During his visits to Lystra (Acts 14), Ephesus (19), and Malta (27), Paul is envisaged actively mediating God's beneficent gifts in "word and deed" to those willing to receive them. Such a discourse will be shown to have served a particular purpose within the context of early Christian identity fashioning, community orientating, and social positioning as it cast the narrative in the language of Roman power.

This chapter will employ the epigraphical research from Asia Minor (the primary location of Paul's travels in Acts), discussed in Chapter Two, as evidence of the status indices and standards by which provincials represented themselves in the public sphere.⁵ To briefly review the argument here, there was a dramatic shift in the representation and perception of the emperor in the first two decades of the second century as Trajan was venerated to play more of a paradigmatic role for society as a whole. The impact of this shift was traced in recent studies of Italian and provincial epigraphic records and the honorific terminology used to celebrate local

⁴ On the topic of geography in the Roman period, see Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Jerome lectures 19; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Colin E.P. Adams and Ray Laurence, eds., *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2011); Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

⁵ See Richard Oster for a representative example of using epigraphic inscriptions in the study of Acts, Richard Oster, "Acts 19:23–41 and an Ephesian Inscription," *HTR* 77, no. 2 (1984): 233–37.

aristocrats, which drew on the language of imperial virtues. Through this intentional overlap, provincial notables modeled their own authority on that of Trajan and represented themselves as local versions of the Roman emperor, sharing in his particular virtues. It was shown how the public image of Trajan functioned as a moral exemplar and served as an essential model for the euergetism of local aristocrats in Asia Minor in the early second century. Trajan was regarded as the grand patron who sat at the center of a vast network of patronage, who exercised his paradigmatic generosity through the dispensation of benefactions across the entire *oikoumene*. Due to the paradigmatic role the emperor played at this time, it is no surprise that there was a striking proliferation of representations of acts of euergetism in the eastern empire that was unmatched in the period before and after. While this was not the only period in which acts of euergetism were publically commemorated, Chapter Two attests to the amplification of such discourses during the reign of Trajan and how they extended out of Trajanic notions of *imperium*. It is within this representational context that this chapter argues Acts' portrait of Paul is best understood. It is my contention that situating Acts within such a context contributes to our understanding of the text and how it narratively constructs its heroes in ways that are both culturally relevant and temporally specific. In this chapter, I wish to elucidate an often overlooked "political theology" in Acts, which is most clearly articulated in those passages that feature Paul's mission to the provinces. This is not a study which seeks to expose Lukan intent or motivations. Rather, it is a study of comparative discourses and seeks to explain why at least some early Christians started to talk the way they did about their early heroes and their place in the world.⁶

⁶ On the notion of finding a place/home, see Vernon K. Robbins, "Luke-Acts: A Mixed Population Seeks a Home in the Roman Empire," Pages 202-21 in *Images of Empire* (ed., Loveday Alexander; JSOTSup 122; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991).

⁷ "[You know] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

⁸ The words of Peter illustrate this point, "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:22-24). Danker argues that the Greek language has a number of terms that constitute the language of benefaction in antiquity, forming an extensive semantic field. Terms that were regularly associated with benefaction language are extensively used in Luke and Acts (e.g. *dikaios*). The term "benefactor" is used here as an umbrella term that assumes this diversity of manifestations. The term could be used of any type of figure on the spectrum that ran between divinities and humans. There were a variety of different media of exchange that could be considered benefaction, including displays of generosity, the exhibition of moral competence, and the performance of extraordinary deeds. See Halvo Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," in The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation (ed. Jerome Nevrey; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 268.

which marks the beginning of the Gentile mission.⁹

A few scholars have argued for the prevalence of the benefactor paradigm at different

points in Acts.¹⁰ As Moxnes argues,

It is axiomatic for Luke and others that God is the ultimate benefactor and patron of all... Jesus is God's broker. The central theme of the Gospel is that God acts as a benefactorpatron through Jesus. Jesus is not a patron in his own right, distributing his own

⁹ The Graeco-Roman system of benefaction also seems to play a role in framing the miracle stories of the Gospel of Luke. In the story of the healing of the centurion's servant in Luke 7:1-10, a centurion seeks out Jesus to obtain a grant of power that is beyond the centurion's own resources, namely the healing of a servant who is at the point of death. The centurion seeks a group of elders of the Jews to mediate the exchange and to gain access to someone he does not otherwise have a connection with. The elders make their appeal to Jesus on behalf of the centurion's own habit of acting as a benevolent patron to his own client network, Jesus proves to be one who extend his beneficence to a gentile. Luke 22:24-30 marks what is perhaps the most explicit interaction with the Graeco-Roman system of patronage in the Gospel of Luke. Here, one finds a dispute among Jesus' disciples regarding issues of status and honor. Jesus responds by drawing attention to the system of honor employed by the Gentiles. Jesus observes that Gentile leaders act as patrons out of their own self-interest, taking the title of euergetes. Here, the critique is not of the patronage system itself, but how it is used, not to the benefit of clients, but to construct a society where clients are limited in their resources by the need of patrons to maintain their power and control through benefaction. The lesson is that benefaction not be pursued for the sake of return, not, as some have argued, as including no return at all for all benefaction involves a return. God is then conceived as the model patron who can give without the expectation of a return, even if the gifts God gives cannot but indebt a return. God models a pattern of generosity that gives to the grateful and ungrateful, which others should aspire toward if they truly want to understand who is deserving of status and honor in this world. See Bonnie J. Flessen, An Exemplary Man: Cornelius and Characterization in Acts 10 (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2011); David L. Matson, Household Conversion Narratives in Acts: Pattern and Interpretation (JSNTSup 123; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Daniel Marguerat, "Saul's Conversion (Acts 9; 22; 26)," in The First Christian Historian: Writing the "Acts of the Apostles" (trans. Ken McKinney, Gregory J. Laughery, and Richard Bauckham; SNTSMS 121; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 179–204; Jason T. Lamoreaux, "Social Identity, Boundary Breaking, and Ritual: Saul's Recruitment on the Road to Damascus," Biblical Theology Bulletin 38, no. 3 (2008); Richard A. Bondi, "Become Such as I Am: St. Paul in The Acts of the Apostles," BTB 27, no. 4 (1997): 164–76. For research on the Gentile mission, see Charles H. Talbert, "Once Again: The Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts," in Reading Luke-Acts in Its Mediterranean Milieu (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 161–73; James A. Meek, The Gentile Mission in Old Testament Citations in Acts: Text, Hermeneutic, and Purpose (London: T&T Clark, 2008); Jacques Dupont, The Salvation of the Gentiles: Essays on the Acts of the Apostles (New York: Paulist, 1979).

¹⁰ Meals and food distribution are seen as dominant forms of patronage in Luke-Acts. See Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," 268.

resources, but a broker who gives access to the benefactions of God. He mediates between the people of Israel and God."¹¹

The centrality of the benefactor paradigm to Luke's characterization of Jesus and the early followers is brought into even greater relief in Luke's portrait of Paul and the depiction of his mission to the provinces.¹² In what follows, I will explore the image of Paul constructed in Acts, in terms of how the picture of Paul extends the texts' focus on the creation of the patronage network of benefaction that stretched across the *oikoumene*.¹³

Part I. Becoming Paul (Acts 8-13)

Paul is first introduced into the narrative as a Pharisee named "Saul" who is present in

Jerusalem at a council that is indicting Stephen for speaking against the temple and the law.¹⁴

¹² It is important to stress that the argument made above does not claim that the benefaction model was new, I am rather arguing that it became increasingly associated with the emperor in the period Acts was written and, as a result, carried a particular premium because it became a more amplified and dominant discourse. On the reception of Paul's image in modern media, see L. Joseph Kreitzer, *Pauline Images in Fiction and Film: On Reversing the Hermeneutical Flow* (The Biblical Seminar 61; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Cilliers Breytenbach and Jens Schröter, *Die Apostelgeschichte und die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung: Festschrift für Eckhard Plümacher zu seinem 65* (Boston: Brill, 2004); Eckhard Plümacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller: Studien zur Apostelgeschichte* (Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972).

¹³ "It is clear from Luke's description of the Twelve that they also should be defined as brokers. They were called by Jesus, given shares of his power and authority to heal and to preach the kingdom of God, and became his followers and clients. In their deals with new followers they in turn became patrons in the form of brokers... some of the same confusing broker terminology used of Jesus is also used of the apostles," "Patron-Client Relations," 260–262. See also Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Social-science commentary; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 227-229.

¹⁴ Stephen's defense climaxes with the following accusations against the council, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it" (Acts 7:51-53). The council's response to Stephen's malignant verbal assaults serves as a prophetic fulfillment of Stephen's accusations as the Jerusalem leaders are

¹¹ Ibid., 258-260.

This event triggers a "severe persecution" against the church in Jerusalem with Saul playing a prominent role actively "ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison" (8:3).¹⁵ It is this picture of the persecuting Saul which comes to characterize his pre-Damascus life in Acts. In fact, Saul is seen as the "driving force" of the persecutions that follow.¹⁶

Immediately following the stoning of Stephen, devotees flee from Jerusalem to retreat into the surrounding areas. In response, Saul "still breathing threats and murders against the disciples of the Lord," emerges as the principal agent who extends the persecution beyond the confines of Jerusalem, requesting from the high priest letters to the synagogues at Damascus "so

envisaged taking up the very mantle of their ancestors by "opposing the Holy Spirit," "persecuting the prophets," meanwhile becoming "betrayers" and "murderers" of the "Righteous One," not to mention "law breakers." The council "became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen," they instantly morph into a lynch mob and drag Stephen out of the city to stone him (7:58). Meanwhile, Saul first appears in the narrative standing in approval of this broken judicial process.

¹⁵ For a discussion on the role of Jerusalem in Acts, see M. Areeplackal, "The Symbolism of "Jerusalem" in Luke-Acts," Bible Bhashyam 37, no. 2 (2011): 100–151. For a discussion of the Stephen episode, see François Bovon and Bertrand Bouvier, "Étienne le premier martyr: du livre canonique au récit apocryphe," in *Die Apostelgeschichte und die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung: Festschrift für Eckhard Plümacher zu seinem 65* (Eds. Cilliers Breytenbach and Jens Schröter, Boston: Brill, 2004), 309-332.

¹⁶ Martin Hengel, "The Pre-Christian Paul," Pages 29–52 in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians: In the Roman Empire* (Edited by Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak. New York: Routledge, 1992), 44, argues, "On the one hand [Luke] gives 'the young man Saul' only a subordinate role at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58). In the persecution that follows, however, Saul is the driving force. He arrests Christians in their homes and as judge votes for the death penalty (Acts 8:3; 9:1; 22:4, 19; 26:10f). Here it is presupposed against historical reality that Jerusalem courts could carry out death penalties. The mild advice of Gamaliel (5:39) seems to have been forgotten. Luke is evidently exaggerating in order to heighten the drama in his account; the persecutor is depicted in terrifying colours in order to make the Christian missionary shine out all the more clearly."

that if he found any who belonged to 'the Way,' men or women, he might bring them to Jerusalem'' (9:2).¹⁷

In a later passages, as Saul/Paul recounts an earlier stage of his life, he attests to personally inflicting physical harm on believers. "Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and *beat those who believed in you*" (22:19, italics mine). This is repeated again during another reminiscence in chapter 26, where Paul recounts having played an active role in condemning believers even to death. These passages further flesh out Luke's pre-Damascus portrait of Paul, as driven by uncontrolled hatred and inflicting physical harm on others even to the point of their demise.¹⁸ While it seems clear that these passages serve the purpose of fleshing out Paul's pre-Damascus portrait in negative light, we might wonder why the author portrays Paul's pre-Damascus life in this particular way and what contrasts are being constructed?

It is no coincidence that Paul's procedures in "seeking out" followers of "the Way" contrasts sharply with imperial instructions regarding the proper Roman procedures and judicial processes for carrying out the same task in Bithynia under Pliny's watch. In Trajan's correspondence with Pliny he addresses the governor's inquiry concerning how one should properly respond to Christians. Trajan writes,

You have followed the appropriate procedure, my Secundus, in examining the cases of those brought before you as Christians, for no general rule can be laid down which would establish a definite routine. *Christians are not to be sought out (conquirendi non sunt)*. If brought before you and found guilty, they must be punished, but in such a way that a person who denies that he is a Christian and demonstrates this by his action, that is, by worshipping our gods, may obtain pardon for repentance, even if his previous record is

¹⁷ Commentators have puzzled over Luke's chronology of assuming an independent Christian community just two or three years after Jesus' crucifixion, see Ibid., 48.

¹⁸ Philip H. Kern, "Paul's Conversion and Luke's Portrayal of Character in Acts 8–10," *TynBul* 54, no. 2 (2003): 63–80.

suspect. Documents published anonymously must play no role in any accusation, for they give the worst example, and are foreign to our age.¹⁹

Here Trajan represents himself as a wise and fair arbiter of justice, a model for Pliny and a symbol of a new age of imperial justice.²⁰ That Trajan gives Pliny specific instructions *not* to seek out Christians is instructive in interpreting Acts' pre-Damascus characterization of Paul. It sharply contrasts with Roman ideals and serves as a negative contrast to Trajan's instructions on how to properly conduct a just trial for the same purpose. Therefore, if one were to take the Pliny-Trajan correspondence as an instance of imperial self-fashioning, following Eleanor Leach, Carlos Noreña, and others, Acts' portrait of the pre-Damascus Saul is intentionally constructed to fail to live up to contemporary imperial standards of representation.²¹

¹⁹ Pliny X.97, *OWC*, italics mine. The correspondence between Pliny and Trajan has been discussed at great length by A. N. Sherwin-White's commentary, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966). More recently, the collection has also been discussed by Wynne Williams, *Correspondence with Trajan from Bithynia (Epistles X)* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990). For a discussion of this passage, see Martin Goodman, *Roman World 44BC-180AD* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 315.

²⁰ As a general overview of Book 10 of Pliny's letters, the collection contains 124 letters, 73 of these are addressed from Pliny to Trajan, and 51 from Trajan to Pliny. The first 15 letters were written between 98-103 CE, while Pliny was in Italy; the rest of the collection was written when Pliny was the governor of Bithynia and Pontus, from ca. 110 to 112. See Carlos F. Noreña, "The Social Economy of Pliny's Correspondence with Trajan," *American Journal of Philology American Journal of Philology* 128, no. 2 (2007): 240–241. Noreña has convincingly argued that Pliny the Younger's correspondences with Trajan serves, in addition to their purported role as official transaction of imperial concerns, as "vehicles for the self-representation and public image of both correspondents. What made these letters mutually beneficial to Pliny and Trajan is the impression that emerges from them, artfully constructed, of a personal friendship between senator and emperor. Because Pliny and Trajan both benefited from being seen to correspond with one another on intimate terms, their letters can be interpreted as symbolic exchanges in a system in which the demonstration of friendship could serve as an important bearer of social capital," Ibid., 239.

²¹ Eleanor Winsor Leach, "The Politics of Self-Presentation: Pliny's 'Letters' and Roman Portrait Sculpture, "*Classical Antiquity* 9, No. 1 (Apr., 1990): 14-39. As Leach argues concerning the appropriateness of "self-fashioning" as an analytical tool in the Roman period, "Although the term 'self-fashioning' is most familiar in its application to self-presentational discourse of the English Renaissance, it is not inappropriately invoked in a Roman context. As Stephan Greenblatt observes, it was in fact the elite of the Classical world who established the

The pre-Damascus image of Saul is constructed in exclusively negative ways. He is depicted "seeking" Christians out and driven by a desire to inflict harm on the church; he is livid, malignant, violent, and "furiously enraged." As Acts 26:9-11 reports, "By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so *furiously enraged* at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities." The image of Paul pre-Damascus is a conspicuously un-Roman portrait. His life is characterized as one deprived of the values that are esteemed so highly in imperial representations of the period Acts was composed.²²

The pivotal moment in Saul's life takes place while traveling on the road to Damascus, on his hunt for followers of "the Way." Saul falls to the ground at the sight of a great light from heaven and hears Jesus' voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me (9:4)?" As a result, he is temporarily blinded and led by his traveling companions into Damascus where he is visited by Ananias, a visionary of Jesus who receives an insight into Saul's future, "he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before the Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (9:15-16). As a consequence, Paul is appointed as an ambassador of Jesus, one who is sent ($\dot{\alpha}\pi\sigma\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\omega$) (26:15-18). The nature of this sending is to Gentiles in order to grant forgiveness, a place among those

precedent for understanding 'self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.' The concept of self-fashioning as a verbal process provides a useful perspective on Pliny's letters because it deemphasizes the value judgments fostered by traditional debates about their authenticity as correspondence and promotes recognition of the interweaving of life and literature on a rhetorical plane. Beyond this it comprehends a necessary dialectical interdependence of self and society. With reference to Renaissance examples, Greenblatt asserts, "the power to impose a shape upon oneself is an aspect of the more general power to control identity—that of others at least as often as one's own," 15. See Goodman for a concise description of the clear ambivalence of Trajan's response," Martin Goodman, *Roman World*, 327-328.

²² See figs. 1-4 in Excursus Three for images of Trajan on Column as embodiment of justice and mercy to outsiders.

who are sanctified, and to exhort them to "do deeds ($\epsilon \rho \gamma \alpha \pi \rho \alpha \sigma \sigma \sigma \nu \tau \alpha \varsigma$) consistent with repentance" (26:20).²³

The image of Paul's life after the Damascus experience starkly contrasts with the life depicted pre-Damascus. The image of Saul as an "enraged" persecutor who is violently opposed to the church will serve as a foil for the later Paul who never again participates in such thuggish actions.²⁴ He becomes the hallmark of self-control and lucidity. Paul's mission then becomes centered on extending the divine benefits to the nations and to transform them into "doers of good."²⁵ Paul's Damascus experience is paramount in his newfound lucidity, marked by speaking soberly and truthfully, able to fulfill his appointment of converting others to this civilizing faith.

Saul's role as an appointed mediator of divine gifts, or *beneficia*, begins to develop almost immediately after the Damascus experience. In Acts 11:27-30, as Barnabas and Saul are teaching in Antioch, prophets come down from Jerusalem and predict that there will be a severe famine over the entire *oikoumene*.²⁶ In response the disciples decide that "according to their

²³ For a discussion on salvation to the Gentiles in Acts, see Jens Schröter, "Heil für die Heiden und Israel: zum Zusammenhang von Christologie und Volk Gottes bei Lukas," in *Die Apostelgeschichte und die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung: Festschrift für Eckhard Plümacher zu seinem 65* (Eds. Cilliers Breytenbach and Jens Schröter, Boston: Brill, 2004), 285-308

²⁴ For a discussion on another potential foils in Acts and its relationship to history, see J. Brian Tucker, "God-Fearers: Literary Foil or Historical Reality in the Book of Acts," *Journal of Biblical Studies* 5, no. 1 (2005): 21–39.

²⁵ Festus interrupts Paul as he continues to describe his vision on the road to Damascus, exclaiming, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!" (26:24). As Lentz points out, there is great irony in Festus' response since it was the pre-Damascus period of Paul's life that was marked by insanity, while he is consistently portrayed after Damascus as being calm, collected, and quite sober minded. Thus, "Paul has converted not to madness but sanity," John Clayton Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 83.

²⁶ Contrast this image with the following story of King Herod's arrest of Peter and failure as a proper benefactor to the people of Tyre and Sidon (Acts 12). On the cultural significance of

ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul" (11:29).²⁷ This vignette contributes to a picture of the Christian community functioning as a benevolent society with trans-regional concerns, with Barnabas and Saul as their delegate brokers.²⁸ Soon after Barnabas and Saul deliver the relief funds to the

famines among Greeks and Romans, see Peter Garnsey and Isabelle Rozenbaumas, *Famine et approvisionnement dans le monde gréco-romain: réactions aux risques et aux crises* (Paris: Belles lettres, 1996).

²⁷ That the story of the disciples' response to the famine is juxtaposed with King Herod arresting Peter and ultimately dying is significant. "Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they came to him in a body; and after winning over Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for a reconciliation, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat on the platform, and delivered a public address to them. The people kept shouting, 'The voice of a god, and not of a mortal!' And immediately, because he had not given the glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died" (12:20-23).

²⁸ In the opening chapters of Acts, the community of believers is also depicted as a beneficent society, characterized by their unity in belief, possessions, and regard for each other. Acts 2:44 serves as a summary statement, but actively constructs a positive image of the community's defining qualities. This is followed by Acts 4:32ff, where there is another summary section that introduces two sequential stories that serve to characterize the Christian community as a benevolent society. The community's response to the benefactions of God was to become a beneficent society together. In Acts 4:34, the reader is told that there was not a needy person in the community because the those who owned land or houses sold them and directed the proceeds of what was sold to eliminate any needs in the community. "They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need" (4:35). Barnabas emerges in 4:34 as a paragon of such benevolence by selling his field and placing the proceeds at the apostles' feet for redistribution. Acts projects its own contemporaneous ideals onto the earliest days of the community. The story of Ananias and Sapphira functions as a negative example of this ideal. Instead of following Barnabas' lead in selling his land and placing the proceeds at the feet of the apostles, Ananias and Sapphira sell a piece of property, although they withheld a portion of the proceeds for themselves, instead of laying it at the apostles' feet for re-distribution among the needy in the community (5:2). When they both miraculously die as a putative punishment for their deceit, the lessons emerge that the Christian community needs to protect its identity as a benevolent community. David R McCabe, How to Kill Things with Words: Ananias and Sapphira Under the Prophetic Speech-Act of Divine Judgment (Acts 4.32-5.11) (LNTS 454; London: Continuum, 2011). For an extended discussion of the cultural significance of the theme of unity in Acts, see Paul J. Achtemeier, "An Elusive Unity: Paul, Acts, and the Early Church," CBQ 48, no. 1 (1986): 1–26; Alan J. Thompson, One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in Its Literary Setting (LNTS 359; London: T&T Clark, 2008). See also Steve Walton, "Primitive Communism in Acts? Does Acts Present the Community of Goods (2:44-45; 4:32-35)

communities in Judea, they go to Jerusalem and are called by the Holy Spirit while they are worshipping and fasting: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (13:2). Saul, Barnabas, and John are sent out after the laying on of hands to begin their divinely appointed mission which takes them around Cyprus and beyond.

The visit to Cyprus is of paramount importance to the unfolding characterization of Saul—who is going to acquire the name "Paul."²⁹ Upon departing from Jerusalem, Saul and his traveling companions set sail and travel throughout Cyprus "proclaiming the word of God in the synagogue of the Jews" (13:5). During this voyage they come across a certain "magician" named Bar-Jesus, who is described as a "Jewish false prophet." Together with this character Barnabas and Saul are brought into the company of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus, an "intelligent man" who "wanted to hear the word of God."³⁰ Bar-Jesus is envisaged standing between the disciples and the proconsul trying to oppose them and to keep Sergius Paulus "from the faith." It is precisely at this point in the narrative that Saul is referred to as "Paul," acquiring the name he will be referred by throughout the rest of Acts.

Acts is the sole source of information about Paul's change of names. It is surprising that the transition to this new name does not occur at the time of his call, but rather after encountering a high official in the provinces with the exact same name—*Paulos* (13:9). According to this episode, Paul's namesake is the eminent Roman governor, Sergius Paulus. Hengel and others attribute this to the fact that Paul is here for the first time in a "pagan" environment as a

as Mistaken?," *Evangelical Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (2008); Alan C. Mitchell, "The Social Function of Friendship in Acts 2:44–47 and 4:32–37," *JBL* 111, no. 2 (1992): 255–72.

²⁹ For a discussion on Luke's method(s) of characterization, see David B. Gowler, "Characterization in Luke A Socio-Narratological Approach," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 19, no. 2 (1989): 54–62.

³⁰ Christoph W. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of the Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT 108; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

missionary. The absence of Saul in the letters, according to Hengel, is that "the missionary to the Gentiles uses only his non-Jewish name in the letters may be an indication that the ancient royal name had now become unimportant to him, as was his descent from the tribe of Benjamin (Romans 11:1; Philippians 3:5)."³¹ There are several problems, however, in positing that this name change is not a Lukan emphasis, or even invention. For instance, the name "Paul" is extremely unusual in the Greek East among non-Romans and is simply never used among Jewish contemporaries, which Hengel himself acknowledges. Furthermore, the name Saul does not occur among Diaspora Jews.³² Paul is a Latin name and, as such, further ties Paul to imperial standards of representation.

³¹ Hengel, "The Pre-Christian Paul," 31. For studies that compare and contrast the two images of Paul found in his letters and Acts, see David P. Moessner, Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul's Claim upon Israel's Legacy in Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters (New York: T & T Clark, 2012); Philipp Vielhauer, "On the 'Paulinism' of Acts," Pages 33-49 in Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert (ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn; London: SPCK, 1968); Thomas E. Phillips, Paul, His Letters, and Acts (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2009); Gregory E. Sterling, "From Apostle to the Gentiles to Apostle of the Church: Images of Paul at the End of the First Century," ZNW 99, no. 1 (2008): 74–98; F. F. Bruce, "Is the Paul of Acts the Real Paul?" BJRL 58, no. 2 (1976): 282-305; Eric Franklin, Luke: Interpreter of Paul, Critic of Matthew (JSNTSup 92; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); Odile Flichy, "The Paul of Luke, A Survey of Research," in Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul's Claim Upon Israel's Legacy in Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters (ed. David P. Moessner et al.; trans. James D. Ernest; LNTS 452; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 18-34; Daniel Marguerat, "Paul Après Paul: Une Histoire De Réception," NTS 54, no. 03 (2008): 317-37; Stanley E. Porter, Paul in Acts (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001); Robert L. Brawley, "Paul in Acts: Aspects of Structure and Characterization," in SBL Seminar Papers, 1988 (Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers SBLSP 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 90-105; B. J Koet, "Paul in Rome (Acts 28,16-31): A Farewell to Judaism?," in Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts (Studiorum Novi Testamenti auxilia 14; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 97-118; Christopher N. Mount, Pauline Christianity: Luke-Acts and the Legacy of Paul (NovTSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2002); Christopher Mount, "Paul's Place in Early Christianity," in Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul's Claim Upon Israel's Legacy in Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters (ed. David P. Moessner et al.; LNTS 452; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 90–115.

³² Martin Hengel, "The Pre-Christian Paul," 31. Hengel notes that he "found only one later example in the great Aphrodisias inscription" of a Jewish man named Paul, footnote 2, pg. 51. Regarding the historicity of Paul's change of name, Martin Hengel argues "the objection that

In this episode, Acts highlights Paul's good qualities by *synkrisis*, a literary technique that develops characterization through the juxtaposition of two characters who can either be used to confer qualities from one to the other or can serve as contrasts.³³ This technique is used here to connect Paul favorably to the esteemed Roman official, Sergius Paulus, who bears qualities one would expect from a good governor; he is intelligent, accessible to his subjects, and eager to hear the word of God. As a result, Saul becomes Paul and makes Sergius Paulus a believer. To say the least, a close relationship is forged between the two characters, a fact that is signaled beyond the observation of Paul's name change. Conversely, *synkrisis* is also used in this episode to develop a contrast between two types of religious associates, one a magician who tries to keep the governor from "the truth," and the other a Roman supporter preaching the "word of God." As

Paul never mentions his complete three-part Roman name [does not] mean anything, since this usage was not always customary in Greek-speaking circles and went against the custom of Judaism and of early Christianity. The important thing for Christians was not the privilege of an earthly citizenship but the fact that they were brothers and sisters," Ibid., 31.

³³ Another example of this narrative strategy appears in 11:22-26 as Barnabas is envisaged as a "good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." He is sent from the Jerusalem to the Christian community in Antioch presumably to oversee the mixing of different ethnic groups who are co-mingling and the growing number of believers. It says that when Barnabas "came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion" (11:23). The positive characterization of Barnabas as one who bridges inter-regional developments within the church and who responds appropriately to the gifts of God also contributes to the unfolding characterization of Saul, whom Barnabas singles out by traveling to Tarsus to look for him and brings him back to Antioch to teach alongside of in the church at Antioch for an entire year to "a great many people" (11:26). Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, 92.

³⁴ The nature of the believers' power is brought into greater focus as other claimants of divine brokerage are brought into the narrative to serve as a foil. For instance, when Philip is in Samaria, he comes into contact with Simon, a local magician, who claimed to be someone great, identifying himself with the source of his power. Thus, according to the narrator, many were confused in honoring him as "the power of God that is called Great" (8:10; ὑτός ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη μεγάλη). However, after Philip convinced Simon to become a believer, Simon continued to follow Philip around, for he was "amazed when he saw the signs and great miracles that took place" (8:13, θεωρῶν τε σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις μεγάλας γινομένας ἐξίστατο.).

is depicted as a paragon of *pietas*, which is exemplified in his extermination of "bad religion" in opposing Bar-Jesus. Acts reports that when the proconsul sees Paul oppose the magician, "he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord (Acts 13:12)." This episode contributes greatly to the narrative construction of Paul's post-Damascus public portraiture. That Christians not only possessed moral virtue but also promulgated it for their converts is a major message that the portrait of Paul seeks to convey.³⁵

The question I wish to pose in bringing this section to a close is how the various details discussed up to this point relate to Acts' unique claim that Paul was a Roman citizen. Do these episodes narratively construct, explicate, distillate, or subvert a Roman identity for Paul? What is the composite portraiture that emerges in detailing 1) Paul's moral transformation after

After meeting Peter and John, Simon attempts to offer them money for the gift, which was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands (8:18). "Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (8:19, $\lambda \dot{\epsilon} \gamma \omega \nu \cdot \delta \dot{\sigma} \epsilon \kappa \dot{\alpha} \mu o \dot{\tau} \dot{\tau} \dot{\nu} \dot{\epsilon} \dot{\xi} o \omega \dot{\alpha} \nu$ $\tau \alpha \dot{\upsilon} \tau \eta \nu \dot{\iota} \nu \alpha \dot{\phi} \dot{\epsilon} \dot{\alpha} \nu \dot{\epsilon} \pi \iota \theta \hat{\omega} \tau \dot{\alpha} \zeta \chi \epsilon \hat{\iota} \rho \alpha \zeta \lambda \alpha \mu \beta \dot{\alpha} \nu \eta \pi \nu \epsilon \hat{\upsilon} \mu \alpha \ddot{\alpha} \gamma \iota o \nu$). Peter condemns Simon's request, perceiving such abilities as "God's gift" which cannot be purchased with money (8:20).

³⁵ Up to this point in the narrative, Acts has clearly focused on the civilizing effects of Saul coming to faith. The moral transformation that takes place in the transition from Saul to Paul parallels imperial claims that Rome's own authority is based on its moral superiority. D'Angelo recognizes there is a confluence of Roman ideology and Lukan apologetic, "Behind this depiction of Paul lies the Roman conviction that their claim to empire is based upon their own moral superiority. The apologetic of Acts works not by depicting all Roman authorities as beneficent, but by applauding Roman values and processes (24.16) and by arguing that Christians are more Roman than they-as Paul is more Roman than his jailers and shows himself morally and socially fit to rule those who have put him in bonds... the concern for elite Roman status is conspicuous in the portrait of Paul in Acts," D'Angelo, "The ANHP Question in Luke-Acts: Imperial Masculinity and the Deployment of Women in the Early Second Century," in A Feminist Companion to Luke (eds., Amy-Jill Levine with Marianne Blickenstaff; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 60. Acts venerates Paul as a model for emulation. Readers could find in this image one who is worthy of respect and imitation. As Lentz points out, this is a part of epideictic oratory which seeks to provoke a response from the hearer to emulate the example of the person being honored, Lentz, Luke's Portrait of Paul, 66-67. See also Bruce W. Longenecker, "Moral Character and Divine Generosity: Acts 13:13-52 and the Narrative Dynamics of Luke-Acts," in New Testament Greek and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Hawthorne (ed. Amy M. Donaldson and Timothy B. Sailors; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 141-64.

Damascus; 2) the generosity of Paul and his community in providing relief support during a famine; 3) Paul's Latin cognomen; 4) Paul's close association with a Roman official from Cyprus? The problem that has arisen in scholarship is that the discussion of Paul's citizenship has been restricted largely to historical questions to the neglect of other questions. Even if Acts is not inventing Paul's citizenship, it is certainly emphasizing it, which is clear from the fact that it is repeated on three separate occasions.³⁶ While the veracity of this claim has been heavily debated, there is simply not enough evidence to determine conclusively whether this reflects historical reality, source material, or Lukan invention.³⁷ It is my contention, however, that whether or not Paul was actually a Roman citizen, this further contributes to a Lukan emphasis that runs throughout the narrative.

³⁶ Peter van Minnen, "Paul the Roman Citizen," JSNT 17, no. 56 (1995): 43–52.

³⁷ As Martin Hengel argues, "there is no reason for doubting Luke's information that the apostle had Roman citizenship. The reasons brought forward against this are not convincing. Thus Paul may have been flogged three times (2 Corinthians 11:25) because he deliberately kept quiet about his citizenship in order to follow Christ in his suffering. We must also take into account the possibility that the city magistrates may not have felt themselves constrained by his claim to privilege. That Paul never mentions it does not mean anything, since he keeps quiet about almost all private matters. Had he been a mere *peregrinus* Paul would have been condemned in Judea without much fuss and would not have been sent to the imperial court in Rome," Martin Hengel, "The Pre-Christian Paul," 30–31. Hengel further reasons, "We can only guess how Paul's ancestors acquired this citizenship. The most important way in which the privilege spread among Jews was through the emancipation of Jewish slaves by Roman citizens... According to Philo the majority of Jews living in Rome were Roman citizens. Having been brought to Italy as prisoners of war, they were freed by their owners who 'did not compel them to corrupt their ancestral laws'. Augustus 'did not expel them from Rome nor deprive them of Roman citizenship on the grounds of their Jewish faith' (Embassy to Gaius 155, 157)... So it seems most likely that Paul's forebears were given Roman citizenship unasked for when they were freed by a Roman citizen. Jerome reports that Paul's parents came from Gischala in Upper Galilee and that they had been carried off to Tarsus in the upheavals of war (Commentary on Philemon 23). The young Paul had gone with them. This contradicts Acts 22:28, where Luke makes Paul say that he was born a Roman citizen. If Jerome were right, Paul would only be a libertinus and not a full citizen. On the other hand, it does seem likely that Paul's forebears became slaves as the result of war. How and why they came to Tarsus remains an open question. The reason might be connected with their Roman master, and they could have come by a roundabout route, even via Rome. Tarsus was a metropolis in which numerous Roman citizens lived," Ibid., 32-33.

The cumulative effect of these episodes that detail the process by which Saul becomes Paul serve the purpose of constructing a Roman image of Paul that conforms with broader patterns of provincial representation.³⁸ In the following section I wish to further explicate how Acts' characterization of Paul emphasizes his Roman identity and shows him excelling in living up to the obligations placed on him by his citizenship by demonstrating his civic generosity. Paul fulfills his civic obligations by acting as a patron to communities. Demonstrating Paul's Roman citizenship is a driving force in Acts' characterization, and his experience on the Damascus road helps him become a better citizen and activate his *Romanitas*.³⁹

Part II. Paul and the Patronage of Communities

"The word of God continued to advance and gain adherents" (Acts 12:24). These words

introduce the Pauline mission in Acts, framing it in terms of a divinely sanctioned and propelled

³⁸ It is no coincidence that Roman colonies serve as important narrative setting throughout Acts, including Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Troas and Philippi, Ibid., 31–32.

³⁹ I agree with Jerome Neyrey's observation that "When Paul's citizenship is discussed, scholars have tended to ask strictly historical questions, such as, "If he was born a citizen [Acts 22.28], how did his father gain the honor?" and "How could he prove his citizenship? Did he carry a *libellus* recording the honor?" There simply are no data for answering these questions; and in this inquiry, we focus on the social status Luke claims for Paul, not the historical verifiability of his claims," Jerome Neyrey "Luke's Social Location of Paul: Cultural Anthropology and the Status of Paul in Acts," in History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts (Ben Witherington, ed; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 276–279. For a discussion of the gender dimensions of constructions of Romanitas, see Natalie Kampen "Looking at Gender: The Column of Trajan and Roman Historical Relief" Pages 46-73 in Feminisms in the Academy (ed. Domna C. Stanton and Abigail J. Stewart, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995, "The emperor's] manliness is inextricably interwoven with his Romanness and his imperial rank, all three of which become descriptors for his ideal status and for his right to lead. In a sense he guarantees victory because he embodies Roman virtue as well as Roman power. The compositional relationships among scenes serve to demonstrate this nexus of power and virtue," 57.

mission that is now expanding, through Paul's travels, around the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. Through the spread of "the word" in the second half of Acts, the message of Jesus continues to register progress. As the "word" grows (6:7; 12:24; 19:20), the readers and hearers know that the geographic and ethnic expansion of the people of God is being referred to. The narrative of Paul's travels details the movement from Israel throughout the Roman world. In this mission of outreach to the nations, Paul is characterized as one of the principal proclaimers of the word.⁴⁰ He is the chief instrument in announcing God's beneficent gifts that come through Jesus, an image that accords with cultural categories that would have been available to the author. I wish to move the overall discussion forward by analyzing Paul's visit to three communities, in order to pay close attention to how they contribute to Luke's fashioning of this public image.⁴¹ What kind of relationship is envisaged between Paul and the various communities he tends to in Acts? How does this relationship further shape Paul's public image? Upon what contemporary models does this image depend? How does this relate to broader trends in provincial representation? These questions will be addressed in the following section.

Paul in Lystra (Acts 14)

Paul's so-called "first missionary journey" takes off after Cyprus and includes major stops at three significant Roman colonies, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra.⁴² Throughout this cycle, the narrative devotes significant attention to Paul's ability to perform healings, which

⁴⁰ As Danker claims, "St. Paul is the principal apostolic superstar in Luke's narrative," "Graeco-Roman Cultural Accommodation," 403.

⁴¹ On the "public" nature of Paul's image, see Mary Rose D'Angelo "The ANHP Question in Luke-Acts"; Jerome H. Neyrey, "Teaching You in Public and from House to House' (Acts 20.20): Unpacking a Cultural Stereotype," *JSNT* 26, no. 1 (2003): 69–102. For a discussion of the public-private distinction in the Roman period, see Carlos Noreña, "The Social Economy of Pliny's Correspondence," 240-254.

⁴² For a general description of this episode, see Carsten Oerder, "Paulus in Lystra: Missionar, Wundertäter, Apostel" Pages 43-74 in Das Paulusbild der Apostelgeschichte (ed. Rudolf Hoppe and Kristell Köhler, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2009).

will prove to be of central importance to Acts' characterization of Paul. Just prior to Paul's fleeing Jewish-instigated hostilities in Iconium, Acts reports "So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace $(\tau \hat{\varphi} \lambda \delta \gamma \psi \tau \hat{\eta} \zeta \chi \alpha \rho \iota \tau o \zeta \alpha \upsilon \tau o \hat{\upsilon})$ by granting signs and wonders $(\delta \iota \delta \delta \nu \tau \iota \sigma \eta \mu \epsilon \hat{\iota} \alpha \kappa \alpha \iota \tau \epsilon \rho \alpha \tau \alpha)$ to be done through them" (14:3). Here, bold speech and powerful demonstrations are explicitly linked together, serving a common purpose on behalf of the mission of the word.

Upon entering Lystra, the reader is immediately introduced to a new character. "In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth" (Καί τις ἀνὴρ ἀδύνατος ἐν Λύστροις τοῖς ποσὶν ἐκάθητο, χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὃς οὐδέποτϵ πϵριϵπάτησϵν, 14:8). The severity of his condition leaves no room for doubting the authenticity of the healing, as we are told that there is no strength in his feet; that he was crippled from birth; and that he had never walked. Paul notices him as he is speaking, "fixes his gaze" (ἀτϵνίσας), and "saw" (ἰδὼν) that he had faith to be healed. Paul orders him to stand on his feet, so the man leaps up and begins to walk.

This episode creates close links between the mission of Paul and Peter by closely paralleling an earlier healing story where Peter and John encounter a man lame from birth, begging for alms in front of the temple gate (3:1-11).⁴³ In both stories Peter and Paul look

⁴³ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 290. In Acts, the apostles are described as a group of uneducated, ordinary men who were chosen by Jesus in Galilee (1:2; 2:7, 4:13), but continue after his exultation with bold speech and powerful deeds. Their names are listed as Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James (1:13). They appear together at the beginning of Acts as a group, chosen by Jesus (1:2), present from the beginning, witnesses of the baptism of John (1:22), of the resurrection (1:22), for the 40 day period following Jesus' resurrection (1:3), and witnesses of Jesus' ascension (1:9). They elect Matthias as Judas' replacement to restore their number to twelve total (1:26). They were instructed to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the father (1:4). They are described as devoted to prayer and fellowship with women followers, including, Mary, the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

"intently" (ἀτενίσας) at the men and effectively cure them. The disabled men in both instances "jump up" (ἐξαλλόμενος 3:8; ἥλατο 14:10) and "walk around" (περιεπάτει 3:8; 14:10). The parallels continue as both stories proceed with the disciples deflecting the honors for the benefaction to God's own munificence, of which the disciples are merely mediators in Acts. Peter says, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?... *To this we are witnesses*. And by faith in his

As Haenchen argues, "Peter and Paul are figures drawn from the same model: they embody the apostolic ideal as seen through the eyes of Luke's age. That they preached the same doctrine Luke would not have doubted for a moment... a generation which thinks itself the last does not write for posterity... The first vehicles of the 'Word of God' are the twelve Apostles. They are witnesses of Jesus' life and resurrection; to this extent the whole of Christian missionary preaching goes back to them. At the same time it is they--mostly represented by Peter--who inaugurate the principal stages of the Christian mission. Peter preaches the first missionary sermon in Jerusalem; he and John successfully complete the mission to the Samaritans; with the baptism of Cornelius Peter upon the mission to the Gentiles, which of course is then endorsed by the other Apostles and the whole community of Jerusalem. From that point the Twelve fade out of Acts--they are actually mentioned for the last time in 16.4" Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles; a Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 80-93. The apostles are imaged in Acts as the select recipients of the message and power of God. In the Pentecost narrative, the apostles stand as ambassadors to an international audience on behalf of God, addressing Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phyrigia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, and Rome (2:9-10). The apostles are empowered by the Spirit's articulate power to speak before an international audience of both Jews and proselytes about the "mighty deeds of God" (τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ) (2:11). It is, in fact, such demonstrations of power that the crowds respond in either amazement or condemnation. Thus, the Spirit's manifestations of deeds of power become the recurrent setting in which crowds divide into sympathizers or haters of the Way. In Acts 2:43, three thousand persons were added to their number, while "Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles" (2:43). The apostle Peter is given special narrative attention in the first half of Acts. He stands up among the believers to address the crowd during the election of Matthias, demonstrating his special role among the apostles (1:15-22). Peter is portrayed as a master interpreter of God's ancient oracles, announcing that scripture foretold the betraval of Judas (1:20), the need for a twelfth apostle (1:21-22), the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (2:17), and the arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus (2:23). See also Nelson P. Estrada for a discussion of Acts 12 as a sequence of rituals concerning status transformation, From Followers to Leaders: The Apostles in the Ritual of Status Transformation in Acts 1-2 (JSNTSup 255; London: T&T Clark, 2004); Richard Bauckham, "James, Peter, and the Gentiles," in The Missions of James, Peter, and Paul: Tensions in Early Christianity (ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; NovTSup 115; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 91–142.

name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you" (Acts 3:12-16, italics mine).⁴⁴

While these healing stories share many of the same characteristics as other healing stories found in the Gospels and beyond, it is explicitly framed in Acts as an act of benefaction. This is set up from the beginning with the lame man depicted as sitting before the temple gate, hoping to receive gifts of alms. Peter proves not to be the typical temple attendee. Instead, he acts as an independent broker of divine power, who operates in the name of his divine patron on behalf of the lame man.⁴⁵ After Peter miraculously heals him, he begins to direct his praise to God, recognizing the ultimate source of the apostles' power.⁴⁶ The language of benefaction is used explicitly with regard to the miracle of healing when on the following day, after Peter and John have been taken into custody, they stand on trial before a council of Jerusalem leaders, and are

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the use of the parallel biographies of Peter and Paul for the purpose of identity construction, see Coleman A. Baker, *Identity, Memory, and Narrative: Peter, Paul, and Recategorization in Acts and Early Christianity* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2011); "Early Christian Identity Formation: From Ethnicity and Theology to Socio-Narrative Criticism," *CBR* 9, no. 2 (2011): 228–37; "Peter and Paul in Acts and the Construction of Early Christian Identity: A Review of Historical and Literary Approaches," *CBR* 11, no. 3 (2013): 349–65. See also Andrew C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective* (Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs; Waynsboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007).

⁴⁵ Edwards argues, "Christians did not have the benefit of a social system that allowed systemic expression of cosmic power brokers, at least in public display. Nevertheless, literary sources depict Christians brokering the divine amid the imperial, regional, and local systems in ways similar to those of the elite classes throughout the empire... The early apostles and disciples soon were perceived as cosmic power brokers. Initially these apostles, who emulate Jesus, the ultimate power broker from the Christian viewpoint, were loosely understood to be persons especially endowed to interpret the biblical tradition. Originally, apostleship may have required having known the earthly Jesus," Douglas R. Edwards, *Religion & Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 108.

⁴⁶ Kindalee Pfremmer De Long, *Surprised by God : Praise Responses in the Narrative of Luke-Acts* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

questioned about the previous day's events.⁴⁷ Peter gives his defense before the temple authorities,

Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a *good deed* ($\epsilon \dot{\upsilon} \epsilon \rho \gamma \epsilon \sigma i \alpha$) done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (4:8-10).⁴⁸

Peter is conceived of as a broker of divine beneficence on behalf of all who "call on the name of Jesus." This serves to forge a patronal relationship between the apostles and the healed man, which is envisaged as he "clings" (*kratountos*) to Peter and John.⁴⁹ That this healing event is construed as an act of benefaction is supported by the use of the term " $\epsilon \dot{\nu} \epsilon \rho \gamma \epsilon \sigma i \alpha$," language commonly used in public accolades for benefactors.

⁴⁸ During Stephen's speech, he refers to Joseph's dealings with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Due to the enabling of God, Joseph was able to "win favor" and "show wisdom," which caused Pharaoh to appoint Joseph as ruler over Egypt and his own household (7:10). Pharaoh, in turn, shows favor to Joseph, as well as his family, "Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh" (φανερὸν ἐγένετο τῷ Φαραώ τὸ γένος [τοῦ] Ἰωσήφ). Thus, rulers have shown kindness to God's elect representatives. This favorable situation, however, was volatile, and depended on whether the rulers had the proper knowledge of God's agents. Therefore, when another king arose in Egypt, who did not know Joseph, nor his family, the favorable treatment stops. "The pharaoh at the time dealt craftily with our race and forced our ancestors to abandon their infants so that they as the deliverer of his people from the hands of oppressive rulers. In 7:34, God said to Moses, "I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning. and I have come down to rescue them. Come now [Moses], I will send you to Egypt" (ἰδών είδον την κάκωσιν τοῦ λαοῦ μου τοῦ ἐν Αἰγύπτω καὶ τοῦ στεναγμοῦ αὐτῶν ἤκουσα, καὶ κατέβην έξελέσθαι αὐτούς καὶ νῦν δεῦρο ἀποστείλω σε εἰς Αἴγυπτον, 7:34). The Exodus tradition, as recounted by Stephen in Acts, is the story of God working as liberator through Moses, to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of their Egyptian overlords (7:35). Jesus is cast is similar terms, as the prophet like Moses, "God will raise up a prophet for you from your own people as he raised me up" (προφήτην ὑμιν ἀναστήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὑμῶν ὡς ἐμέ.) (7:37).

⁴⁹ The healed man continues to stand beside the apostles in the following chapter as well, see 4:14.

This episode serves as one of several instances in which demonstrations of power serve as the context in which a crowd gathers, and divides in their response.⁵⁰ While some are filled with "wonder and amazement" ($\theta \dot{\alpha} \mu \beta \sigma \nu \varsigma \kappa \alpha \dot{\epsilon} \kappa \sigma \tau \dot{\alpha} \sigma \epsilon \omega \varsigma$) at what took place, others do not respond as positively (3:10). Peter addresses the divided crowd, asserting that the healing effect was not the product of their own power ($\delta \dot{\nu} \alpha \mu \mu \varsigma$) or piety ($\epsilon \dot{\nu} \sigma \epsilon \beta \epsilon \mu \alpha$) (3:12).⁵¹ Jesus serves as the

⁵⁰ At several key junctures in Acts, the favor of the crowds is shown to rest upon the apostles, demonstrating that they are not rabble rousers, but a peaceful and beneficent association that contributes to the well-being of the polis. When the captain of the temple and his entourage of police officers go to prevent Peter and his associates from teaching in the temple, even the temple authorities knew that the favor of the people rested on the apostles, and not themselves. Thus, they sent the police to receive the apostles without the use of violence, "for they were afraid of being stoned by the people" (ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ τὸν λαὸν μἡ λιθασθῶσιν.) (5:26). This serves as a significant narrative construct, as the apostles and their associates are pitted against the temple authorities.

⁵¹ Peter takes center stage following Saul's conversion. He is depicted as itinerant, traveling amongst the believers. While visiting the saints in Lydda, Peter heals Aeneas, a paralyzed man who had been bedridden for eight years. At the announcement of his healing, Peter makes sure the source of his power, "Jesus Christ," is given the credit he deserves. Those residents of Lydda and Sharon who see the man healed turns to the Lord and become believers that God's power is active in Jesus and his apostles (9:35). Immediately following this episode, Peter heals a woman named Tabitha (Gk. Dorcas), who was "devoted to good works and acts of charity" (9:36; αὕτη ἦν πλήρης ἔργων ἀγαθῶν καὶ ἐλεημοσυνῶν ὧν ἐποίει). Once again, the effect of this healing is that news spread throughout the area, and many came to believe in the power active in Jesus' name (9:42). As Moxnes argues, "Women in Luke-Acts are primarily described in their relations to Jesus and to his disciples or early Christian missionaries. They use their resources to care for Jesus or male leaders in terms of hospitality, providing food and a place to stay... In the description of Paul's travels, a wom[a]n named Lydia played an important role as his benefactor in Philippi (Acts 16.14-15). Luke here described the relationship between Paul and Lydia as a complex patron-client relationship. Lydia was a seller of purple goods, and thus probably belonged to a number of active working women of relatively low status, but who had the opportunity to enhance their status through their own work and initiative. One of the ways they could do that was by being patrons. She had her own house and household, which was baptized together with her. She was an independent woman of a type found in many communities, who gave room to a house church. In this she performs the function of a patron... But in Luke's story it is Paul who is the superior, since he is on a special mission from God (Acts 16.9) and thus serves as a broker between God and Lydia and her household. Moreover, the situation reflects a pattern of reciprocity in which Paul gives the greatest gift and Lydia reciprocity. Lydia has her heart opened by God when she hears the words preached by Paul and she is baptized. In response, she implores Paul to come to her house and stay there, as a sign of recognition that she is faithful to the Lord. This pattern is identical with the reception of the

principal agent of the beneficence of God. As 3:16 clearly asserts, "And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you" (3:16, καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ όνόματος αύτοῦ τοῦτον ὃν θεωρεῖτε καὶ οἴδατε, ἐστερέωσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ πίστις ἡ δι' αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ τὴν ὁλοκληρίαν ταύτην ἀπέναντι πάντων ὑμῶν). "Faith" refers to the type of relationship Peter seeks to promote between Jesus and the man born lame, as well as between Jesus and the Jerusalem audience. It presupposes familiar relationship models found between two humans, as well as between humans and celestial agents, modeled on the world of civic benefaction. For those who call "on the name" of a powerful benefactor, whether they be divine or human agents, one is choosing to relate to that person as a client, while they reciprocate by serving as the benefactor. This model is common for understanding divine-human relationships throughout the Graeco-Roman world. Gods bestowed benefits and recipients responded with praise and honor. Jews thought of God as a patron as a primary analogy of conceiving divinehuman relations. Frederick Danker recognizes the degree to which the benefactor paradigm shapes this passage, as he argues,

seventy disciples in Luke 10.7-9. And so, hosting the apostle is a reciprocity for the favor which he provided. But Lydia as the host/patron is inferior in role and status to the apostle/broker. Paul's acceptance of her insistent invitation means a recognition of her loyalty and a granting of honor... Luke describes Lydia as a patron who considers her benefactions as an act of reciprocity for the far greater spiritual benefits that she has received. Moreover, her patronage is offered very humbly; is her gift is accepted, she in fact receives the larger gift of recognition of her faith. In this way patronage is accepted, but always at the discretion of the apostle. In contrast to Acts 16, the apocryphal Acts of Peter narrates that the privilege of patronage is reciprocity for healing is denied by the apostle... in this new community of believers Christ or the apostle/missionary is the patron-broker representing the ultimate benefactor, God himself... The usual pattern of patronage with its unequal relationship between patron and client is now put within the structure of the new community and transformed," Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," 262–262.

Luke shows that Peter and John are mere instruments for the display of God's beneficence that is authorized through appeal to the name of Jesus. The evangelist concludes the passage with Peter's definitive statement concerning the one name: 'Salvation is to be found in no other. In all the world there is no one else whom God has given to save us' (v. 12). Not all benefactors are saviors, but all saviors are benefactors. Yet not all saviors are chosen to confer God's singular benefit of salvation. Jesus alone qualifies for the task. He is the Superstar of superstars. All human beings are God's offspring (17:28), but Jesus is the unique Son of God.⁵²

In light of the use of benefaction language and imagery in this story, one would rightly expect it also to be present in the parallel episode of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra. As it was mentioned above, the similarities between the stories create an implicit link between the missions and identities of Peter and Paul, and certain expectations of apostleship. In 14:11, after seeing the disabled man get up on his feet to walk, the crowds began to shout in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Thinking Barnabas was Zeus and Paul, Hermes, the priests of the temple of Zeus brought oxen and garlands to the city gates and desired to offer sacrifices to the visiting gods.⁵³ The people of Lystra knew that if the gods had decided to pay them a visit, they must respond with the proper honors. This reaction exploits a pattern already established in Acts of people responding in obeisance to great acts of benefaction. Such a response seems fitting considering the pervasive conception of gods as benefactors. Acts gives particular attention to detailing how crowds respond to the powerful deeds of the apostles because it serves to focus the narrative on clarifying the categories they do and do not fill in the civic context. The reader is already prepared to judge the people of Lystra's response negatively because there is value placed on where praise is directed. The crowd conspicuously fails to

⁵² Frederick W. Danker, "Graeco-Roman Cultural Accommodation," in *1983 Seminar Papers : One Hundred Nineteenth Annual Meeting, December 19-22, 1983, the Loews Anatole, Dallas, Texas* (ed. Kent Harold Richards; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 40. See also E. M. Heen, "Radical Patronage in Luke-Acts," *Currents in Theology and Mission.* 33, no. 6 (2006): 445–58; Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (First-century Christians in the Graeco-Roman world; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994).

⁵³ See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for a possible basis for Luke's story.

regard Paul and Barnabas in an appropriate way and to acknowledge the ultimate source of their good deeds.

Although readers of Acts would likely interpret such healing stories as God's enactment of power and benevolence toward humans, this episode would also provoke speculation about the miracle worker's identity.⁵⁴ The response of the crowd in Lystra trying to make a sacrifice to Paul as Hermes and Barnabas as Zeus focuses the narrative on the identity of Paul as a special delegate who channels God's power to the human realm. This further develops Paul's own character as a delegate benefactor with the entire scene structured around the benefaction paradigm. Luke's auditors would have understood such magnificent acts of healing as acts of benefaction.⁵⁵ The crowd's response supports this interpretation at every turn as they seek to reciprocate the divine gift by expressing their gratitude to the gods.

Paul's ensuing speech aims at untying the knot the crowd wraps itself up in. Tearing his robe and rushing out to the crowd, Paul pleads for the crowd to stop regarding them as gods. He asks, "Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them ($\kappa\alpha\lambda$ $\lambda\epsilon\gamma$ οντες· ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; $\kappa\alpha\lambda$ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα, ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καλ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ

⁵⁴ Duane F. Watson, *Miracle Discourse in the New Testament* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 5; Rick Strelan, *Strange Acts: Studies in the Cultural World of the Acts of the Apostles* (BZNW 126; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); John J. Pilch, *Visions and Healing in the Acts of the Apostles: How the Early Believers Experienced God* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2004).

⁵⁵ As Danker argues, "The impact made on Luke's Graeco-Roman public of the numerous miracles of healing requires no comment. Classification of these deeds in the category of extraordinary beneficence is mandatory. They would be expected of one who hopes to compete with Isis or Asklepios," Danker, "Graeco-Roman Cultural Accommodation," 400.

πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῦς, 14:15)." The speech develops into a polished argument that represents animal sacrifice as the product of misdirected human piety. In spite of this, Paul witnesses to the generosity of God as supreme benefactor, stating "and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did *good (agathourgon)* and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (14:17). God is here characterized by God's supreme giving nature. Paul presents God as the ultimate benefactor and, by way of extention, himself as one of the principal channels of divine benefits.⁵⁶ The language of benefaction, *agathourgon*, is used to describe the natural processes of rain and production.⁵⁷ Both these natural processes, as well as the miracle of healing caused by Paul are conceived as witnesses to these continuous benefactions of God. Acts describes that in spite of these deeds the people of Lystra were still barely restrained from sacrificing to them.⁵⁸

The notion that God permitted the nations to "follow their own ways" parallels the statement later found in 17:30 that God "overlooked" the period of ignorance preceded the full revelations which was now appearing. The level of ignorance, however, should not have been as extensive as it proved to be, for, according to the logic of the narrative, the way God is known

⁵⁶ "This maneuver gives him opportunity to show that Paul is a superstar under the direction of the Supreme Superstar or Benefactor," Ibid., 399. Danker further argues concerning the "booming voice," noting "The fact that it is a Septuagintalism does not alter the matter. Graeco-Roman auditors would recognize that Luke-Acts contained in places a goodly amount of odd Greek, but they would interpret this as part of Luke's expertise in communicating a tone of antiquity in a book that would be all the more persuasive because of its suggestion that the themes contained in it bridge the centuries. From the *Res Gestae* (I. 7. 45-46) it was known that Augustus associated his political interests with Roman respect for the values of antiquity. Luke's public would simply covert Semitic constructions into semantic patterns familiar to them from their own cultural experience. Biblical philological criticism can lack much of its potential interest when it fails to take account of this basic phenomenon," Ibid., 399, footnote 41.

⁵⁷ As Danker argues, the use of this term explicitly defines God as benefactor, Ibid., 411. ⁵⁸ In addition to this episode, Paul is conceived as a benefactor in Acts 11 as he takes

charge of the famine relief; as a man of extraordinary power in Acts 19:11; and as a model of Jesus who in Acts 20:32 says that it is more blessed to give than receive.

through rain and harvest ought to have induced certain knowledge among all people and directed their devotion.⁵⁹ People who delight in receiving benefactions should be able to recognize their benefactor and respond with the appropriate praise.

Several factors could have served in motivating Acts' portrait of Paul as chief mediator of divine benefaction to the provinces. After all, as Woolf writes, "an act of euergetism, of civic munificence, could at the same time express [someone's] loyalty to his imperial patron, his civic patriotism, his adherence to the highest cultural ideals of the empire and his pre-eminence among his own people."⁶⁰ What seems particular to this period is that civic involvement and the bestowal of benefits on the populace carried a heightened capital for those fashioning a public image. Civic patronage was a requisite for those of elite status and, as a result, became a common theme in both visual and verbal forms of Trajanic-period representations. Fueling both acts and representations of civic benefaction was a competitive spirit that sought to advance the honor, rank, and privileges of the individual, their families, classes, and clans within society at large.

That Luke intended to highlight Paul's own role as a benefactor, in order to extol his civic virtues, has been doubted by some. The primary reason for this is that the narrative more often than not shows that the product was civic division, not admiration. Danker, however, proposes that such antagonism was not foreign to the world of civic benefaction. He argues that Paul's portrait conforms to popular notions of the "endangered benefactor." As Danker claims,

Descriptions of ancient benefactors, especially those engaged in duties of state, frequently include references to the hazards of crises that they undergo on behalf of their

⁵⁹ Bruce, *Acts*, 293. Bruce rightly points out that the belief in the providence of God in providing rainfall and harvest is a theme from the Israelite Scriptures, as is the conjunction of food and joy. He cites Ps. 4:7; Isa 25:6; and Eccl. 9:7 as examples, 294.

⁶⁰ Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

people. The technical term for such courageous action in the line of duty is '*persistasis*,' derived from a Greek word, which was one of numerous synonyms used by ancient civic committees in reference to endangered benefactors.⁶¹

According to Danker, this also serves as the basic characterization of Jesus, as well.⁶² Therefore, the depiction of Paul's sufferings and persecution in Acts actually further supports the thesis that his authority is modeled on that of imperial patronage. As J. Nicols points out regarding Pliny's

⁶¹ Danker, "Graeco-Roman Cultural Accommodation," 37-39.

⁶² Danker has explained that some scholars have questioned whether the notion of benefaction in Greco-Roman Society is an appropriate model for understanding Luke's presentation of Paul. Danker argues, "Modern studies that focus on the social context for biblical interpretation do not permit evasion of Luke's own statement and the manner in which throughout Luke-Acts, his two-volume work, he interprets Jesus as the uniquely Great Benefactor, who in turn directs the thoughts and energies of his followers into channels of beneficent undertaking." See Danker, Benefactor, vi, for an extended discussion on the language of benefaction: "As used in this book, the English term "benefactor" does not translate any single Greek word, for, as Benefactor demonstrates, the Greek language has a large number of terms that form an extensive semantic field. 'Benefactor' is therefore an umbrella word or generic term that covers the broad spectrum of manifestations of excellence as perceived in the Greco-Roman world, with reference to both deities and human beings. Such manifestations include especially performance of extraordinary deeds, displays of generosity, and exhibition of exceptional moral and spiritual competence, with emphasis on uprightness (*dikaios* is one of Luke's favorite words) and piety. Not all of these features are necessarily characteristic of every subject... Similarly Publius extended courteous hospitality (v. 7). Like the women of Luke 8:1-3, the affectionate recipient of Jesus' bounty (7:36-50), and grateful Zacchaeus (19:1-10), the early Christians showed that they had learned the meaning of beneficence (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). And like his counterpart in the Gospel (Luke 7:5) Cornelius emerges in Acts (10:2-4) as a philanthropist in the public sphere. At Acts 24:2-3 Luke parodies the fulsomeness with which heads of state frequently were lauded for real or imagined benefits. Nor are pseudo- or anti-benefactors, that is, those who falsely pose as sponsors of excellence, lacking in Luke's record. Governor Felix left Paul in prison "to do the Jews a favor" (24:27). Herod Agrippa I appears in Acts 12 as a benefactor, some of whose political favors were paid for by the life of James the son of Zebedee and the arrest of Peter. The ultimate pseudo-benefactor, of course, is the devil, who offers Jesus the world (Luke 4:5-7). Much of the attraction that Luke's Gospel must have had for his ancient auditors indeed relates to the dramatic interplay of beneficence and pseudo-beneficence in Luke's description of the ministry of Jesus (the Gospel) and the work that he continues through his followers (Acts). Of special interest is the role played by Pilate in the execution narrative. Pseudo-benefactor that he is, he hands over Jesus, the Great Benefactor, to a pressure group and releases an enemy of society, a non-benefactor (Luke 23:24-25). The word "benefactor" is of Latin origin. Its antonym is "malefactor" (Greek, kakourgos). Pilate's ignorance of the dimensions of meaning in this moment of history is displayed in his crucifixion of Jesus between two malefactors (kakourgoi, 23:32-33). Later in the day, Jesus declared the beneficence of executive clemency to one of them (23:43)."

Panegyricus to Trajan, "Pliny remarks on several occasions that the *optimus princeps*... is one who accepts his position reluctantly, knowing full well the toils, troubles, difficulties and pains which await him, but having only one desire; namely to serve the state (*Pan.* 2, 4, 7, 21, 79)."⁶³

This narrative cycle ends when Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch. Their mission is celebrated as a monument to God's good deed for how he "opened a door of faith for the Gentiles" (14:27). The magnitude of divine favors to those in Lystra does not prove that Jesus was perceived as a formal patron of the community there, but it certainly suggests a very strong relationship between the two parties. The *beneficia* Jesus conferred on the community indicates that Jesus and Paul were viewed as unofficial patrons of Lystra, even if this position was never formalized in the text.⁶⁴ Paul's service certainly would have merited such an honor, since it was critical at this time that a patron must also be a benefactor. In the end, through the dramatic presentations of the power and beneficence of the Christian deity being channeled through Paul, a patronal relationship is setup with the believers of Lystra.

Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19)

Paul's longest stay in one place is Ephesus, a significant city in many ways in the Roman empire, not the least for its status as a provincial capital. This episode continues to build on Acts' characterization of Paul as a mediator of divine benefits to the nations. Acts 19:11-12 gives a summary of Paul's giftedness, "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them." The pattern continues whereby God's supremacy is articulated in his power and benevolence in dispensing healing and exorcism benefactions

⁶³ John Nicols, "Pliny and the Patronage of Communities," *Hermes* 108, no. 3 (1980): 365–85, 383.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 385, makes an important distinction between formal and informal patrons.

through his ambassador to the needy. Paul's own role in this complex is elevated to exceptional status as one of the principal channels of this divine generosity. Through powerful demonstrations of divine munificence, Paul forges new relationships with yet another provincial city—Ephesus. The bond that this creates is evident as the narrative unfolds.

Similar to the Lystra episode, Paul's display of power through healing incites a response from the crowd that allows the narrative to focus in on clarifying Paul's identity as a specially appointed delegate of God's beneficent mission to the provinces. Paul's healing miracles incite competitors, here, a group of Jewish exorcists, identified as seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva. They are portrayed attempting to co-opt the name of Jesus to exorcise those who had evil spirits. As a result, however, the evil spirits talk back, saying, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? (19:15)" Through a variety of strategies, Acts shapes the tradition of Paul in Ephesus to further explicate his special identity as God's delegate. Again, through synkrisis, Acts creates a contrast between Paul who successfully performs exorcisms in the name of Jesus, and the sons of a Jewish High Priest, who are unable to. This contrast plays an important part in characterizing Paul, not just as one among many potential benefactors, but as a specially appointed benefactor whose power cannot be matched by others. As a result the Jewish exorcists are punished: "Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered them all, and so overpowered them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded" (19:16). These events trigger a series of responses and religious reforms among the spectators in Ephesus.

When this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, everyone was awestruck; and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised. Also many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed their practices. A number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly; when the value of these books was calculated, it was found to come to fifty thousand silver coins. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed (Acts 19:17-19).

Paul serves as a disseminator of the civilizing ideals of the empire, especially in the sphere of religious piety. The message is that Christians serve the empire by introducing legitimate expressions of *pietas* while reducing illegitimate forms such as magic.⁶⁵ In considering the broader social, political, and cultural world in which Acts was composed and consumed, what would these miracle texts have meant to ancient readers and how does this language of power contribute to Paul's characterization?⁶⁶ As Duane Watson argues, "A central role of miracle in narrative is the creation of character and the manifestation of that character in the narrative. Miracles performed by a narrative character develop patterns of persuasion and amplify key themes."⁶⁷ Through the miraculous displays, Paul forges bonds with locals in Ephesus, binding them to himself and the source of his power. As a result of his virtues manifest in civic life, Paul becomes friends with Asiarchs, who were also prominent figures in the civic life of the Greek East.⁶⁸ The implicit identification of Paul with a high-status group adds to the social and cultural capital of his public portraiture.⁶⁹ Paul's visit to Ephesus bring this into sharp relief, as the

⁶⁵ There are many counter-examples in Acts, including the temple of Artemis, see Strelan, *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus.*

⁶⁶ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

⁶⁷ Duane Watson adds the following example in introducing Penner's chapter, "For example, in Roman narratives the Roman emperor is characterized as having political and religious power expressed in word and deed. These characterizations are part of the sociocultural world encoded in the narrative that is being worked out in the rhetoric," Watson, *Miracle Discourse*, 8-9.

⁶⁸ C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 46–47; Neyrey, "Luke's Social Location of Paul: Cultural Anthropology and the Status of Paul in Acts." During the riot at Ephesus, "some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his," sent messengers to him to prevent his engagement in the riot (19.31).

⁶⁹ A similar perspective is argued for Pliny by Carlos Noreña "Self-Fashioning in the Panegyricus," in *Pliny's Praise : The Panegyricus in the Roman World* (ed., P. A. Roche; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 35.

narrative uses the miracle tradition to explicate the apostles' identity. This is brought to the readers' mind in the implicit comparison between Paul and the seven sons of Sceva.

Scholarship has long neglected the central role of miracles in Acts.⁷⁰ As Watson argues,

Partly due to the discomfort of addressing the question of the authenticity of miracles, much scholarship neglects the unfolding of power and miracle in the presentation and performance of the narrative of Acts. Instead, scholarship tends to treat miraculous material in Acts as an element of tradition and focuses on redactional issues of how Luke utilized the miracle tradition. This approach removes the miraculous features of the Lukan narrative from cultural and religious features of its environment, and distances them from the magical and supernatural world of antiquity.⁷¹

In general, miracles in Acts conform to broader patterns of miracle discourse in the New

Testament in that they imagine God as responsive to humans in contexts of disease or distress

and that Jesus serves as the mediator of these benefits to humans, which is often coupled with

responses of fear and/or belief.⁷² The emphasis on Paul's ability to work miracles conforms to

broader patterns of miracle stories in antiquity.⁷³ As Watson further argues,

Luke is writing Hellenistic history, which aims to be plausible for the readers. Thus the manifestations of the numinous in [Luke's] narrative must correlate with the values of the political, social, and cultural power structures. For example, readers anticipated reading about divine men, that is, the wonder-working philosophers, prophets, and kings who

⁷² Ibid., 3.

⁷³ Ibid., 12, "The image of Paul in Acts is quite different from the image presented in both the undisputed and disputed Pauline epistles... Paul refers to his performance of miracles only five times, three directly and two indirectly. He directly refers to them to defend himself as a genuine apostle (2 Cor. 12:11-12), defend his gospel (Gal. 1:1-5), and legitimize his Gentile mission (Rom 15: 17-19); he also refers to them indirectly when he assumes the recipients of his letters know that miracles accompanied by preaching (1 Cor 2:4-5; 1 Thess 1:4-5)."

⁷⁰ Watson, *Miracle Discourse in the New Testament*, 8–9.

⁷¹ Watson further argues, "One contributing factor to this distancing is the desire to separate Acts from similar apocryphal texts, even though the role of miracle in both is similar in form and function. Another factor is the use of comparison from the history of religions approach, which is useful in highlighting patterns of characterization and topics but ignores the function of miracles in the narrative and rhetoric of Acts. As a result miracles in Acts are sanitized and subordinated to other aspects of the narrative, such as the mission to spread of the gospel, rather than explored as manifestations of power that shape the meaning of the text. Luke is understood to emphasize ethics and morality in Acts to keep the reader from being captured by the magical worldview of its Greco-Roman context," Ibid. 8-9.

functioned at the intersection of heaven and earth, combining religious and political power. This is especially expected in the presentation of the emperor as a wonder-worker and source of power and beneficence in establishing a political and civil *oikoumene*. Luke's narrative is co-opting Roman imperial rhetoric in order to present Christ as the founder of a new *oikoumene*. Miracles are not in conflict with Luke's narrative, but integral in showing the messengers of the gospel and their deity to be more powerful and beneficent than the emperor and his conquering force...⁷⁴

Paul's visit to Ephesus focuses on the potency of Paul's healing power with its emphasis on the handkerchief detail, and the response of the seven sons who do not compare to Paul in this sphere. Casting out demons is closely related to miracles of healing because they often imagine the healing of the afflicted person when the demons are cast out.⁷⁵ Paul's travels to Lystra and Ephesus follow a similar pattern and serve a common purpose of displaying the power and benevolence of the Christian deity and to encourage divine-human relationships that are modeled on the patronage system, binding otherwise distant areas to the ever-expanding *imperium* of God. This parallels Trajanic contributions to the concept of *imperium* of an increasingly interconnected network of different ethnic groups that pledges its loyalty to a powerful and

⁷⁴ Ibid., 9, editor here giving overview of Penner's chapter argument. What was the rhetorical effect of this miracle account? In talking about the various methodologies used to analyze miracles stories, one author argues, "Redaction criticism tries to isolate sources, like miracle accounts, that predate the Gospels and trace their modification and placement in the Gospels as a way to grapple with the theology of the Gospel writers. Rhetorical analysis looks at history, form, and theology of miracle accounts, often studied separately, as interrelated constitutive elements... Ancient authors felt free to mold miracle accounts to better serve their rhetorical goals. This understanding moves the discussion beyond the identification of the forms of miracle accounts to what these accounts are trying to communicate beyond the obvious manifestation of divine presence and power. This move is anticipated by ancient authors who embedded topics and argumentation in their miracle accounts and gave interpretive comments about the significance of these miracles. This practice suggests that the formal classification of miracle accounts and their rhetorical functions cannot and should not be neatly separated. The miracle account and the narrative in which it is embedded interpret one another," Ibid., 10-11.

⁷⁵ See also Acts 10 and the honorary language used of Jesus.

benevolent world-ruler who unifies together the empire's great diversity of markets, languages, and geographies.⁷⁶

Paul in Malta (Acts 27)

At the end of Paul's trial in Caesarea before the governor Festus, King Agrippa, and his wife, Bernice, unanimously declare Paul's innocence, saying, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment."⁷⁷ Agrippa confirms Paul's innocence in his report to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor." Thus, in spite of Paul's announced innocence before the governing officials, he is sent to Rome to stand trial before the Roman emperor, as a result of Paul's own appeal.⁷⁸ The narrative that ensues in Acts 27:1-28:14 extensively details the travel itinerary, conditions, and shipwreck that took place in Paul's transfer from Caesarea to Rome.⁷⁹ This narrative block serves as a fitting conclusion to the extended trial scenes that stretch from Acts 21-26 in furthering the theme of Paul's innocence, but, above all, Paul's *Romanitas*, and his status as a model citizen of the empire.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ See figs. 5-7 in Excursus Three. One of the most frequent scene-types used to depict the emperor on the Column of Trajan is that of benefactor. For instance, Trajan is depicted distributing clemency on surrendered Dacian prisoners. Benefaction could be conceived in ways that were not restricted to building projects in the major urban centers or the distribution of money directly to the poor.

⁷⁷ Joshua P. Yoder, "Representatives of Roman Rule: Roman Governors in Luke-Acts," (Diss. Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame, 2012).

⁷⁸ David W. J. Gill, "Acts and Roman Policy in Judaea," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (ed. Richard Bauckham; The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting 4; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 15–26. For a discussion of the Roman trial of Paul, see Alfred M. Perry, "Acts and the Roman Trial of Paul," *HTR* 17, no. 2 (1924): 195–96; Marie Eloise Rosenblatt, *Paul the Accused: His Portrait in the Acts of the Apostles* (Zacchaeus Studies; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1995); Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting 3; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); "The Lukan Defense of the Missionary Prisoner Paul," *TynBul* 44, no. 1 (1993): 193–96.

⁷⁹ F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004), 239-246.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of this passage, see Susan Marie Praeder, "Acts 27:1-28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46,

Travel serves as one of the most salient features in Acts' depiction of Paul, and as the narrative gets closer and closer to Rome, particular attention is given to the vision of Paul as master of the sea (see discussion on travel in Chapter One). While setting sail for Italy, Paul is placed in the custody of Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Cohort, who is said to act kindly toward him, which is no surprise considering that nearly all Romans are depicted acting kindly toward Paul in Acts.⁸¹ Julius permits Paul to go to his friends on shore to be taken care of while in Sidon (27:3). As William Ramsay aptly described the scene, Paul is playing, "The part of a true Roman on a Roman ship, looked up to even by the centurion, and in his single self the savior of the lives of all."⁸²

The narrative depicts a long sea voyage with Paul gradually moving further and further away from the role of prisoner to that of ship commander. Taking the initiative, he addresses Julius and those operating the ship, "Sirs, I can see that the voyage will be with danger and much heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives" (27:10). His warning, however, was not observed, as "the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said" (27:11). Eventually, however, due to a violent wind off the coast

no. 4 (1984): 683–706; Loveday Alexander, "'In Journeyings Often': Voyaging in the Acts of the Apostles and in Greek Romance," in *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays* (ed. C. M. Tuckett; JSNTSup 116; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 17–49; Daniel Marguerat, "Voyages et Voyageurs Dans Le Livre Des Actes et La Culture Gréco-Romaine," *RHPR* 78, no. 1 (1998): 33–59.

⁸¹ "In Acts, Paul is only once physically punished by Roman authority, and, on that one occasion, Paul humiliates the magistrates who punished him," Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, 158. Similarly, Arnold Ehrhardt argues regarding all of Acts 27, "This whole story is told us in order to show the way in which St. Paul's authority revealed itself amongst his fellow-travelers," Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Acts of the Apostles: Ten Lectures* (Manchester: Manchester U.P, 1969), 124. For a discussion of places of custody as narrative settings, see Matthew L. Skinner, *Locating Paul: Places of Custody as Narrative Settings in Acts 21-28* (SBL Academia Biblica 13; Leiden: Brill, 2003); Matthew L. Skinner, "Unchained Ministry: Paul's Roman Custody (Acts 21–28) and the Sociopolitical Outlook of the Book of Acts," in *Acts and Ethics* (ed. Thomas E. Phillips; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), 79–95.

⁸² Quoted in Lentz, Luke's Portrait of Paul, 94.

of Crete, called the "northeaster," the boat was thrown out of control. As a result of "being pounded by the storm so violently" (27:18), they were soon compelled to throw the cargo and tackle overboard, and all of their hope for being saved was lost. "When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest raged, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned" (27:20). Soon after this, Paul stands to address them as one whose chains have virtually disappeared and as the only one suited to revitalize their spirits during the hardship at sea. In the face of hunger and despair, Paul exhorts them to keep courage and instructs them to run the ship aground.

Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and thereby avoided this damage and loss. I urge you now to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For last night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor, and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you' (27:23-24).

Paul's promise of protection is put to the test on a subsequent day when the sailor suspected they were getting close to land and fearful they would crash into rocks. As the sailors made an attempt to escape from the ship to save their lives, Paul heeded a warning to the centurion and his accompanying soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved" (27:31). Eventually they approach land just as Paul had predicted. Meanwhile, the sailors attempt to escape the ship in smaller boats so as to navigate to shore in safety, but Paul cautions the centurion and soldiers that unless they stay in the ship they cannot be saved (27:31). This is an extension of the angel's message that it is by virtue of their proximity to Paul that their safety is ensured. Thus, Paul continues to broker the gifts of God to his fellow travelers.⁸³

⁸³ Paul takes charge by urging everyone to eat. He serves as the host at table and leads a meal in a way that parallels Jesus' own last supper with his disciples. "After he had said this, he took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves" (27:35). In the morning Julius the

Paul's experience on the island of Malta is narrated in two back-to-back episodes that seek to explicate the nature of his civilizing mission and to characterize him as a powerful benefactor. The first episode describes Paul gathering a bundle of brushwood to feed the fire the hospitable Maltans had built to relieve the shipwrecked survivors from the rain and cold. As he is placing the brushwood on the fire a viper unexpectedly leaps out from the heat and fastens itself on his hand. The islanders interpret this as Justice taking vengeance on a guilty man who escaped the judgment of the sea. When Paul does not swell up nor die, they change their mind about him and begin to say he is a god. Once again, the identity of Paul is put into question following a miraculous occurrence.

The second episode is juxtaposed to this by introducing a leading citizen on the island, named Publius, who treated Paul hospitably for three days.⁸⁴ Paul visits Publius' father who is "sick in bed with fever and dysentery" (28:8). Paul is able to heal him by praying and putting his hands on him.⁸⁵ As a result, all of those on the island afflicted with diseases come to Paul and are cured. In exchange for services rendered, the natives bestow many honors on them and send them away with all the necessary provisions. The image of Paul that emerges from these

centurion protects Paul as the other soldiers considered killing the prisoners in fear they would get away in the transition from ship to land. Eventually, they reach safety on the island of Malta where they were welcomed by the natives. Three months later they were able to set sail again and without any further delays or complications they arrived in Rome safely. In Rome, Paul was able to live by himself with only the soldier who was guarding him. The size of the lodging was sizeable enough to hold "great numbers" (28:23). Such an ending to Paul's sea travels is quite appropriate in that it continues to minimize Paul's imprisonment while emphasizing his independent, free-moving condition. It was, in the end, the imperial capital that Paul's mission was unhindered and he was able to live at his own expense for two year and teach "with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:31). In Acts, Paul is most at home in Rome.

⁸⁴ Joshua W. Jipp, *Divine Visitations and Hospitality to Strangers in Luke-Acts: An Interpretation of the Malta Episode in Acts 28:1-10* (NovTSup; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

⁸⁵ Geir O. Holmas, *Prayer and Vindication in Luke-Acts: The Theme of Prayer Within the Context of the Legitimating and Edifying Objective of the Lukan Narrative* (LNTS 433; London: T&T Clark, 2011).

episodes is that of benefactor and broker of God to a barbaric island as part of the civilizing vocation of Paul and his companions.⁸⁶

That Luke intended to depict Paul as setting up a trans-regional patronage network is based on the observation that he confers benefactions on the community at Malta that are similar to those conferred in Lystra and Ephesus, where he was clearly depicted as a benefactor. Furthermore, benefaction language is explicitly used to describe his generous acts, which indicates that the relationship was essentially patronal, even if Paul is not regarded as a formal *patronus* of the city.⁸⁷ The narrative construction of Paul's public portraiture comes to an end in

⁸⁷ As Danker argues concerning the representation of Paul in Acts 27 in, "Graeco-Roman Cultural Accommodation," 403, "In his climactic presentation of Paul's careers as a philanthropist entrusted for outreach to the world with the Gospel concerning the Great Benefactor, Luke shows how Paul undergoes great danger and is responsible for the rescue of a great number of people (Acts 27)... After tossing in a storm for two weeks Paul invites the crew to dinner (27:34). With gestures reminiscent of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Luke 9:12-17), in front of all he gave thanks to God (Acts 27:35). This action signifies that all attention is to be focused on God as Supreme benefactor, and the entire depiction of the terrors of the deep serves to enhance that portrait. At the same time the apostolic superstar's piety is affirmed. The residents of Malta, who had themselves assumed the role of benefactors (28:2), take an opposite view after Paul is bitten by a venomous snake. Not finding their negative perceptions confirmed, they protected themselves against any adverse reaction from powers that were beyond their

⁸⁶ Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 2006), 269-70, "In this climactic story the Christian faith and community come into their own as benefactor to the Roman Empire. Luke saw the church as a means of affirming what was good in Roman life and as an instrument for enhancing, rather than condemning, the process and progress of civilization. Ancient leaders shared with their gods the titles of 'savior' and 'benefactor.' Repeated references to 'salvation' (variously rendered by RSV) point to the locus of true rescue. Successful encounter with 'barbarians' evinces the civilizing power of the faith. Paul works miracles in 27.1-28.10, but not in connection with mission. He is a benefactor to the pagans aboard the ship, Publius, and other Maltese people... Paul on Malta does not appear to be a prisoner and remains free until he reports to Rome... The story ends in the imperial capital. Christians will find their earthly lodgings within this realm." See additional notes on benefaction in Pervo, Dating, which concludes, by saying, "There is no need to argue that the language of benefaction belongs to the civic and moral world of Hellenism. My argument is rather that its appearance in Luke and Acts is characteristic of a later era when Christians were beginning to express their moral convictions in the language of the general culture." See also Richard I. Pervo, Luke's Story of Paul (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 93.

Rome. This is a fitting end place in light of the discussion above. Paul's virtue and innocence have been clearly established. Readers have grown to trust Roman justice as the only hope for peace and security in the world. He is in holding, waiting for a proper trial governed by Rome's high standards of justice. Rome is constructed as a potentially safe place for Christians.⁸⁸ As Lentz points out, "one can almost forget that Paul is a prisoner at all. As Paul arrives in Italy, greeted by the Christians who come to welcome him, the reader receives the impression that the Roman soldiers are there to escort an arriving dignitary, not to guard a prisoner!"⁸⁹ There is much debate concerning the significance of Paul's house arrest in Rome. On the one hand, he is still under guard. On the other hand, he is given a high degree of freedom and not seen as a threat.⁹⁰

reckoning and without hesitation referred to Paul as a deity or divine man. As a centurion named Julius had done earlier (27:1-3), a prominent man named Publius showered Paul with kindness (28:7). Paul reciprocated his benefactions by healing Publius' father-in law (verse 8). Again Paul's piety is highlighted; in acknowledgement of the Supreme Benefactor, he prays as he lays hands on the sick man. Verse 10 is true to the Hellenistic spirit of thescene: the numerous heals are reciprocated with 'numerous awards' (*pollois timais*)... The repeated interplay in Acts 27-28 of philanthropic thematic at various social levels is further indication that Luke's primary paradigm for understanding the significance of Jesus is the culturally embedded phenomenon of benefaction and reciprocity. Of all human benefactors Jesus is the greatest, second only to God, Supreme Benefactor."

⁸⁸ It is my contention that this is all informed in response to Roman imperial propaganda during the reign of Trajan which boasted of Rome as being the home of peace and the emperor a paragon of justice. These are the types of expectations one would expect in a period where the emperor was seen as a champion of justice and the builder of a world renowned basilica known to primarily host trials. See Chapter Two for description of Basilica Ulpia.

⁸⁹ Lentz, Luke's Portrait of Paul, 157.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 167. As Colleen M. Conway reminds us, "He welcomes large numbers of visitors into his own lodging, and as the closing line of the narrative relates, speaks to them with "all boldness and without hindrance" (28.31)," Colleen M Conway, *Behold the Man Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 135. See also Michael Labahn, "Boldly and without Hindrance He Preached the Kingdom of God and Taught about the Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 28.31). Paul's Public Proclamation in Rome as the Finale of a Shipwreck," in *Christians as a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City: Modes of Interaction and Identity Formation in Early Imperial Rome* (ed. Jürgen Zangenberg and Michael Labahn; JSNTSup 243; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 56–76; David P. Moessner, "Completed End(s)ings'

Part III: The Political Theology of Acts

Those studies that have sought to explicate the full dynamics of Acts' apologetic aims have gravitated toward those scenes that feature Paul on trial giving his defense, which creates the impression that it is only with these scenes that the designation "apologetic" applies. In light of recent scholarship discussed in Chapter One, it is a rather problematic assumption that Acts is only being apologetic in those sections where defensive discourse is at play. Those episodes that feature Paul performing other roles could equally serve the text's political purposes. Therefore, the sections above focused on a set of texts which heretofore have been neglected in discussions of Acts as apologetic while demonstrating that one must broaden one's approach in understanding Acts' apologetic interests.

The benefactor paradigm is prevalent in Acts in characterizing the power and benevolence of the Christian community. Jesus is presented as the apotheosized ruler of the world who dispenses a wide variety of *beneficia* to his subjects, including salvation, healing, peace, and freedom. Paul and the apostles are elected to extend Jesus' patronage to all, with the narrative focusing on provincial communities either entering into or rejecting this divine-human bond. Paul is depicted in Lystra, Ephesus, and Malta as engaging in public displays and discourses of munificence, demonstrating Christian superiority in this sphere. That is to say Luke fashions Paul's public portraiture according to contemporary trends in Roman imperial representations. For those who respond *in gratia*, they enter into a network of believers centered

of Historiographical Narrative: Diodorus Siculus and the End(ing) of Acts," in *Die Apostelgeschichte Und Die Hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung: Festschrift Für Eckhard Plümacher Zu Seinem 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Jens Schröter; Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity AGJU 57; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 193–221; Jacques Dupont, "La Conclusion Des Actes et Son Rapport À L'ouvrage de Luc," in *Les Actes Des Apôtres: Traditions, Rédaction, Théologie* (ed. Jacob Kremer; BETL 48; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 359–404.

on a single divine ruler who exchanges gifts for praise. While the depiction of benefaction was not a new thing, there was at the time of composition a renewed emphasis on the display of a supposedly traditional morality in this area. The patronage model provides an interpretive key for understanding Acts' presentation of Paul. Acts capitalized on the fact that Christians did for their fellow citizens what the emperor did for all. Acts fashions a public portrait of Paul that conforms to Roman imperial representational tendencies amplified during the reign of Trajan, in order to forge a place for "the Way" within the Roman empire and to depict the mission of God in the language of Roman power. As such, Acts' depiction of Paul's travels participates within contemporaneous cultural and political discourses that constructs a global imaginary that mimics, even perfects, Trajanic ideals of the *patria* of an increasingly interconnected network of different ethnic groups that pledges its loyalty to a powerful and benevolent world-ruler who unifies together the empire's great diversity of markets, languages, and people groups.⁹¹ As Bennett argues,

Trajan alone developed the principle of the *imperium*, a conscious policy of internal trade within a commonwealth of nations, firmly protected through a well-trained and positioned army. His successor, Hadrian, merely inherited this tradition wholesale and brought it to its logical conclusion... To Trajan, then, belongs the praise for bringing the

⁹¹ As Moxnes argues in "Patron-Client Relations," 245, "A vivid illustration of this attitude is found in several of the speeches of Dio Chrysostom, a famous rhetor and philosopher who is of particular interest to us since he was almost a contemporary of Luke. Dio belonged to a rich family from the town of Prusa in Asia Minor and served both as a benefactor within that town and as a broker between it and various emperors. Therefore, he provides an excellent illustration of social relations within the RE, seen from the point of view of the rich elite (Jones 1978). In several of his speeches he portrays the ideal king, believed to be the emperor Trajan. He gives a picture of the emperor as a patron who acted on the basis of "friendship," not impartiality... In Oratio 44 Dio shows how the emperor ruled the empire and the cities in Asia Minor that were in "alliance" with Rome by personal benefactions. These benefactions were secured through brokers and mediators, one of whom was Dio Chrysostom himself [others included provincial governors, centurions, etc.]," referencing C.P. Jones *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 105-14.

developing principate to its zenith, and the embryonic *imperium* to its nascence. As such, he was assuredly Trajan, *Optimus Princeps*."⁹²

Acts shows how Paul contributes to this new world vision. As such, Paul is presented as an *optimus civis*, closely following the example set by the *optimus princeps*.

Scholars have long noted that Acts places a distinct emphasis on universal claims and aspirations.⁹³ After all, the narrative follows the apostles' restless movement from city to city, starting in Jerusalem and ending in the empire's capital city, Rome. A few scholars have similarly sought to explain the universal aspirations of Acts with an eye to imperial discourse. One of the best examples of this comes from Francois Bovon, who published a 1995 study, "Israel, the Church and the Gentiles in the Twofold Work of Luke."⁹⁴ Bovon questions what connection the universal mission of the Church in Acts has to do with Roman imperialism. He acknowledges that from as early as the Hellenistic period, "universalist accents" are perceivable in classical texts, and in Roman imperial rhetoric, as early as Augustus.⁹⁵ He gives several Augustan examples, including the prophecy of Venus to Aeneas who promises a "dominion

⁹² Julian Bennett, *Trajan: Optimus Princeps* (2nd ed.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 213.

⁹³ Loveday Alexander, "Mapping Early Christianity: Acts and the Shape of Early Church History," *Int* 57 (2003): 163-75; eadem, "In Journeying Often", 17-49. See also James M. Scott, "Luke's Geographical Horizon," in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, vol. 2, *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (ed. David W.J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 483-544; Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (1961; trans. Geoffrey Buswell; Philadelphia; Fortress, 1982). As Danker notes, "Luke's general fondness for the adjective "all" is consonant with his perception of the universal outreach of God in Jesus," Danker, "Cultural Accomodation," 36.

⁹⁴ Francois Bovon, "Israel, the Church and the Gentiles in the Twofold Work of Luke," in *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives* (trans. Jane Haapiseva-Hunter; Princeton Theological Monograph Series 36; Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1995), 82-87.

⁹⁵ Supporting his claims about Domitian he writes "It is significant that Domitian built the immense complex of his palace in an outward direction, toward the sea (Ostia) and the provinces of the Roman empire," Ibid., 209, footnote 1.

without end," which will not be restricted by time periods nor distances.⁹⁶ Furthermore, Bovon shows how Rome maintained within its own founding myths, as recorded by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, an international role and identity, with Romulus inviting foreigners to settle in the future city. While Bovon recognizes that the universalism of Luke is in line with both the Septuagint and early Christian missionary discourses, he concedes that this does not necessarily preclude the possibility that ancient Roman or Greek universalism may also explain Luke's universalism.⁹⁷

Bovon's main claim is that the vision in Acts reflects pretentions of Rome that were peaking during the reign of Domitian (81-96 CE).⁹⁸ He references a selection of material expressions of this imperial claim, including the new port at Ostia and the *Domus Flavia*, the house of Domitian, which looks outward toward the provinces.⁹⁹ Bovon considers what these observations indicate about Luke's attitude toward the Roman empire.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Quote from *Aeneid* I:275-279 in Bovon "Israel, the Church and the Gentiles," 82, using Loeb trans. 1916. In addition, Bovon includes the quote from Horace, "the ancient ways whereby the Latin name and might of Italy waxed great, and the fame and majesty of our dominion were spread from the Sun's western bed to his arising. While Caesar guards the state, not civil rage, nor violence, nor wrath that forges swords, embroiling hapless towns, shall banish peace." Quote from Odes 4:15:13-20 in Bovon 82, using Loeb trans. 1978.

⁹⁷ François Bovon, *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives* (Princeton theological monograph series 36. Allison Park, Pa: Pickwick Publications, 1995), 85. On the origins and ethics of Luke's universalism, see David L. Balch, "Accepting Others: God's Boundary Crossing According to Isaiah and Luke-Acts," *Currents in Theology and Mission.* 36, no. 6 (2009): 414–23; John D. Davies, "Inclusion in The Acts of the Apostles," *ExpT* 124, no. 9 (2013): 425–32; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 138; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

⁹⁸ Bovon, *New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives*, 110, poses a related question, "*What connection is there between the Christian vocation gentium* and this incorporation of foreign peoples in the Roman structures?" For a discussion on the relevance of Claudius to the history of early Christianity, see F. F. Bruce, "Christianity under Claudius," *BJRL* 44 (1962): 309–26.

⁹⁹ Bovon, New Testament Traditions and Apocryphal Narratives, 82.

¹⁰⁰ "Lukan universalism was neither accommodation to Rome nor a polemic against Rome. But it could become either of these. In the eventuality of a positive commitment to the

There is much to commend Bovon's study, most of all, his diachronic approach to the Roman empire and the seriousness by which he seeks to situate Acts within a particular political complex. In the end, however, he may be more influential for having helped frame the question, rather than resolve it. His proposal, for instance, that the Roman pretention to claim universal control peaked under Domitian actually applies much more to the Trajanic context. The material expressions of this imperial ideal that Bovon mentions also do not support his conclusions as easily as he references them. After all, the renovations made to the port at Ostia under Domitian do not compare in size and scope to the monumental harbor built there by Trajan, completed in 113. Furthermore, a Domitianic context fails to accommodate for the largely amiable relationship Acts constructs between its protagonists and imperial officials. There seems to have been an overwhelmingly negative assessment of the reign of Domitian among both Christian and non-Christian authors. In short, it was not a time you looked to Rome and its chief official for security.

Unfortunately, very few scholars have picked up the questions Bovon's study raises. One of the most significant attempts has been made Gary Gilbert who focuses on how the depiction of Jesus' ascent to heaven is cast in the language of Roman imperial propaganda, specifically the *apotheosis* of emperors, such as Augustus.¹⁰¹ From Gilbert's perspective Acts is making a rather

Gospel on the part of Rome, Luke felt that harmony between the Church and the Empire could arise. On the other hand, if Rome betrayed its function in salvation history, then the Church should interpret Luke's theology in an apocalyptic sense against Rome. Official positions are not definitely fixed, for it is not an abstract solution which Luke has elaborated, but a relational one which is to depend upon the response of the Gentiles... if the power of Rome should extend beyond the limits fixed for it by the order of salvation history, that is to say, if it forgets its temporary function, Christian universalism will become immediately active and polemical, as a weapon waiting to be used in the fight against the Roman ideology of peace and universal power," Ibid., 85-86.

¹⁰¹ Gary Gilbert, "Roman Propaganda and Christian Identity," Pages 233-256 in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (eds. Todd C. Penner and

profound theological claim that Jesus is the true ascended Lord over and against Caesar. Gilbert further extends his argument to Lukan universalism in Acts 2, making the case that the Table of Nations mimics imperial lists, such as the *Res Gestae*, in attempt to articulate the universal supremacy of Jesus above and beyond anything Rome could claim for itself. The major shortcoming of Gilbert's arguments, however, is his primary dependence on Augustan period examples, which, while they may be illustrative for Acts, pre-date the composition roughly 100 years. If Gilbert took into consideration diachronic developments that happened between the reign of Augustus and the composition of Acts, he may have noticed that Arabia is first incorporated into the *Imperium Romanum* during the reign of Trajan and also appears as one of the more surprising toponyms in the list of nations in Acts 2:9-11.¹⁰²

Laura Nasrallah has since sought to contextualize Paul's travels to Greek cities in the second half of Acts within the political and cultural discourses of the second sophistic circulating during the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian (117-138 CE).¹⁰³ Nasrallah posits that Paul's

Caroline Vander Stichele; Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series no. 20; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

¹⁰² The kingdom of the Nabataeans was annexed during the second Dacian War (105-106) and became the province of Arabia, which was then controlled by a governor and a legion.

¹⁰³ Nasrallah attempts to situate Acts within the literary world and cultural complex of the second sophistic, "What is important here is that Luke-Acts, unlike its sources in Mark and Q, emerges from and engages the trends of the Second Sophistic: it is a second-century document that strives toward a literary Greek, shows knowledge of Greek historiographical practices, and may even hint at epic aims for Christianity. Acts retrospectively portrays a community that shared its goods in a philosophical way and whose leaders, although *agrammatoi*, or uneducated, offered lengthy and sophisticated speeches. Such speeches drew on the exotic (to Roman eyes) past of the people of Israel yet also spoke to the philosophical themes of the one God and true piety, key topics at the time of the Second Sophistic," Laura Nasrallah, "The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Cities, and Hadrian's Panhellenion," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 3 (2008): 539-540. Nasrallah stresses that the Greek of Luke-Acts does not reach to the level of prose as second sophistic authors, such as Dio Chrysostom. Nasrallah's response to such an objection, however, is that "we do not need such a rhetorically sophisticated Luke-Acts to say that the text is a product of the Second Sophistic. The topics Luke-Acts wrestles with and Christianizes indicate a deep involvement in the main crises and themes of the Second Sophistic.

travels between cities discursively produced a kind of Christian empire parallel to the Panhellenion of Hadrian.¹⁰⁴ Nasrallah claims "Paul's travels, especially to cities in the Greek east, resonate with the logic and functions associated with the creation and promotion of city leagues. The author of Luke-Acts, likely writing in a city of the Greek East such as Antioch or Ephesus, configures a Christianity that fits within the superior aspects of Greek culture and cities under the Roman Empire."¹⁰⁵ Nasrallah references Aelius Aristides' description of an empire of cities in support of this claim.

When were there so many cities on continents or on the seas, or when have they been so thoroughly adorned? Who then ever made such a journey, numbering the cities by the days of his trip, or sometimes passing through two or three cities on the same day, as it were through avenues? Therefore those former men are not only greatly inferior in the total extent of their empire, but also where they ruled the same lands as you, each people did not enjoy equal and similar conditions under their rule, but to the tribe which then existed there can be counterpoised the city which now exists among them. And one would say that those had been kings, as it were, of deserts and garrisons, but that you alone are rulers of cities.¹⁰⁶

Although the passage was written decades after the death of Hadrian, Nasrallah argues that it

participates in the "very type of geographical thinking instituted by Hadrian and mimicked in

Acts."107

¹⁰⁵ Laura S. Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture : The Second-Century Church amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 88.

¹⁰⁶ Aristides, "Roman Orations" 93.

¹⁰⁷ Nasrallah, "The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Cities, and Hadrian's Panhellenion," 541-542 argues, "This brief exclamation makes remarkable claims: under Roman rule there were more and better-organized cities; the roads and seaways were like a grand, new, broad avenue

Moreover, Luke-Acts differs from a text such as Mark, in terms of sophistication of writing style and its approach to the Roman Empire," Ibid., 538.

¹⁰⁴ The Panhellenic league consisted of a minimum of twenty-eight cities located in Achaia, Asia, Crete, Cyrene, Macedonia, and Thrace. It is only mentioned in a few literary sources: Cassius Dio 69.16; Pausanias *Descr.* 18.9 (which does not refer to the Panhellenion, but to a temple dedicated to Hera and Zeus Panhellenios). Epigraphic materials serve as the main source of information for the Panhellenion, which come mostly from Greece. Nasrallah, Ibid., 534-535

While I greatly admire the contributions Nasrallah makes in pushing forward Bovon's proposal and refocusing the political dimensions of Acts, I find a number of problems with the thesis she proposes. The image of Paul's mission and travels in Acts is a lot less developed from what we know about Hadrian's Panhellenion. There is nothing exclusively Hadrianic about the image of Paul's movement from city to city; nor is there the same kind of relationship forged between cities in Acts, compared to the diplomatic relationships that constituted the Panhellenion. For example, Paul does not attempt to foster diplomacy between city-states. Rather, Acts better reflects an earlier period, the beginning of what would eventually develop into the Panhellenion under Hadrian, but much more closely aligned with Trajan's work of linking otherwise distant locals to himself through benefaction into a common *patria*. While Nasrallah recognizes that there were "other emperors" who helped stimulate the process that Aristides celebrates, she still too narrowly attribute to the hand of Hadrian.¹⁰⁸ As such, there is no substantial engagement with Trajanic texts or images. In addition, while Nero and Hadrian are

allowing quick travel through cities; the Roman brought *isonomia* (equal rights) to each city, allowed for each *ethnos* to express itself with true civic status, and disregarded the preferential treatment offered by previous empires. According to Aristides, Rome is not only superior with regard to geography and justice; it is also the meta-city to which the entire *oikoumene* is a suburb. In this role Rome erases traditional ethnic, geographical, and linguistic boundaries: 'You sought its [citizenship's] expansion as a worthy aim, and you have caused the word Roman to be the label, not of membership in a city, but of some common nationality... for the categories into which you now divide the world are not Hellenes and Barbarians... The division which you substituted is one into Romans and non-Romans. To such a degree have you expanded the name of your city. (Aristides, "Roman Orations"63)" In a speech directed to Romans, Aristides shifts the ethnic and geographical map from Greek/barbarian to Roman. Rome is a postmetropolis, swallowing up previous identities and expanding its name to all."

¹⁰⁸ Nasrallah, "Acts of the Apostles," 544, Nasrallah admits that "Although the precise origins of the Panhellenion are unclear, Hadrian himself in 131/132 seems to have founded this league of cities headed by Athens.". Nasrallah further argues, "The scale of the Panhellenion is surprising. While it was formerly thought that the Panhellenion may have met in the Olympieion's precinct, most scholars now think that it occupied a large building of Hadrianic date. This basilica had interior measurements of ca. 64 x 30 m; perhaps accommodating seven hundred or more, it was two and one-third times larger than the Curia at Rome, which accommodated approximately three hundred senators," Ibid., 544-45.

regarded as the two quintessential philhellenic emperors, there was plenty of attention directed to the Greek East by other emperors, although their agendas varied. Thus, the fact that the Panhellenion shares a similar geographical scope as Acts does not necessarily serve as a support for her argument.

After the death of Augustus, the borders of the empire were more or less fixed, stretching from Spain to Mesopotamia, due to little expansionistic interests and efforts of his successors. This changed, however, during the reign of Trajan, when the boundaries of the empire were extended to their greatest extent through his expansionistic military program, which grew out of this new conception of his *imperium*. Similarly, the spread of the word of God to new locals in Acts can be seen as an expansionistic program, produced by Paul's movement from location to location as an ambassador of Jesus. Acts mimics the expansionistic ideals of the time and fashions Christianity as a movement that reifies and contributes toward this new global imaginary. The ever-expanding sphere of Roman rule is comparable to the expanding circle of pious devotees unified under the rule of the single sovereignty of Christ. The realm of control is described as rapidly expanding across the *oikoumene* and reflects the progressive incorporative policies and ideology initiated under Trajan. Acts mimics the expansionistic ideals of the time and fashions Christianity as a movement that reifies and contributes toward this new global vision (see map in fig. 8 in Excursus Three).

Paul's mission around the eastern provinces enabled an informal system of divine patronage to function across vast distances and provided subjects with indirect access to their divine benefactor through brokers like Paul. Paul's travels are intelligible as a method for the creating and maintenance of these patronal relationships. The patronage network created through Paul's travels in Acts produce a Christian parallel to the new world order being imagined and

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constructed during the reign of Trajan. Pliny and others present benefaction as the principal mean by which distant lands are bound together under a single *patria* governed by Trajan. Acts mimics the logic of Trajanic conceptions of empire by replicating this sentiment and depicting Paul in various locations recruiting the loyalty of subjects to the one true God through powerful displays of the Deity's power and benevolence. The sphere of Trajan's rule is presented as a coalition of cities that benefit from the emperor's paternalism and reciprocate loyalty for *beneficia*. Similarly, in Acts God's ever-expanding sphere extends from city to city, creating divine-human relationships modeled on the emperor's relationship with the provinces. Trajanic *imperium* is projected as a coalition of various ethnic groups that express their "*Romanitas*" through local identity symbols and ethnographic markers.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, Acts brings together representatives of different ethnic groups without abolishing differences. Through the depiction of Paul's words and deeds in provincial cities, such as Lystra, Ephesus, and Malta, Acts fashions an image of how Christianity fits within Trajanic notions of a "pluralistic" empire.¹¹⁰

While the studies reviewed above shine varying degrees of light on the question of how Acts' universal aspirations relate to imperial discourse, my own solution employs interpretive models that are also temporally specific, like Bovon and Nasrallah, but date to the reign of Trajan (98-117) to help frame Acts' grand vision of Christianity's triumphal expansion within contemporaneous discourses of empire. It seeks to contribute another case study to this line of

 ¹⁰⁹ For instance, on the Column of Trajan subjected Dacians are not depicted as defeated but as participating in Roman-like activities while keeping their particular ethnographic markers.
 ¹¹⁰ Cf. Nasrallah, "Acts of the Apostles," 534, who argues, "This article argues that Paul's travels to Greek cities in the latter half of Acts, and the geography of Acts more generally, are best understood in light of contemporaneous political and cultural discourses about Greek cities under Rome. Moreover, through Paul's deeds and speeches in key sties like Lystra, Thessalonike, Philippi, and Athens, Acts articulates a theological vision of how Christianity and is notion of one, true God can fit within a "pluralistic" empire and its notions of ethnic difference."

scholarship that stretches from Bovon to Gilbert to Nasrallah, but attempts to re-focus the discussion toward discourses of empire during the reign of Trajan, Hadrian's predecessor, and the one who reinvented the concept of the Roman empire and set in motion what would *eventually* develop into Hadrian's Panhellenion.

Representations of Provincials on the Column of Trajan

The Column contains a higher concentration of provincials than on any other Roman state monument, the majority of which are portrayed working alongside the Roman army. Good examples of this are found in the images where auxiliary infantry and cavalry are portrayed in combat against the Dacians. There are several identifiable ethnic groups wearing distinct dress and armor, depicted fighting on the Romans' behalf (see fig. 9-11 in Excursus Three). An equal attention to detail is evident when Trajan interviews embassies composed of different peoples from the eastern empire. At least six different tribes or nations can be identified by dress, physiognomy or hairstyle (see fig.12 in Excursus Three).¹¹¹ John Clarke has pointed out that one of the main features of the overall depiction of the Dacian Wars was that "men who were not Roman citizens did most of the fighting."¹¹² Clarke notes that out of the twenty major battle scenes represented on the Column, the auxiliaries take part in 19 of them, while the legionaries and/or praetorians are found in only 7. Furthermore, auxiliaries fight *alone* in twelve of the 20 scenes. The intended effect, according to Clarke, was that "[Trajan] wanted to make it clear what a prominent role non-Romans took in winning the victory."¹¹³

This begs the question, why would Trajan be interested in giving non-Romans such a pride of place in his Dacian victory monument? Clarke proposes that it had the effect of modeling for

¹¹¹ Von Dippe "Origins and Development of Continuous Narrative," 401.

¹¹² John R. Clarke, Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans : Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 315 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 38. ¹¹³ Ibid., 39.

non-military foreign viewers categories within which they too could fit within imperial society, a class of viewers that would have comprised the majority of people viewing the Column and throughout the empire. It is with this group that Acts' representation of Paul fits best. In his itinerant travels, Paul's mission to the provinces is presented in accordance with the logic of Trajanic imperialism that sought to spread peace and *humanitas* to those without it. In Acts, Luke reconfigures the memory of Paul so that its most salient feature is not that of Paul as prisoner, but of Paul as exemplar of *Romanitas* and disseminator of *humanitas*.¹¹⁴

The Column of Trajan constructed a taxonomy within which civilian viewers could think about their own place within imperial society and its civilizing mission. It set the very terms within which foreigners could orient themselves and effectively helped shape subjectivities to work in accord with Roman values. Richard Brilliant once argued concerning Roman art and Roman imperial policy that "propaganda is not used, merely, to create a favourable climate of belief or opinion; it is used to channel the energies of the public exposed to it and repeatedly—a public whose beliefs are conditioned by propaganda so that they will act in concert in some desired manner, that is a manner or direction useful to the creators and disseminators of that propaganda."¹¹⁵ The Column provided points of identification for non-Roman visitors and modeled ways they could understand their own place within imperial society. It teaches people from outside Rome how they could become Roman. The Column presented the empire as a benevolently expanding incorporative network within which each people group could find a place and rise in its ranks. In short, the author of Acts would have found the Column "good to think with."

¹¹⁴ For examples of ethnic-mixing in Acts, see 2.5; 6.6-8; 9.22; 11.19; 13.1, 5, 44; 14.1; 17.1, 10, 17, 21; 18.3, 4, 19; 21.17

¹¹⁵ Brilliant 1988, 110, quoted in Clarke, Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans, 68.

Conclusion: The Politics of a Public Portraiture

The Book of Acts constructs Paul's personae through a series of dramatic episodes that emphasize his role as a public figure who aspires to contribute to the general welfare of provincial cities he forges relationships. That Paul is portrayed acting in public is of central importance to the construction of this persona. Standing on trial in Caesarea, he defends his actions and declares his innocence, exclaiming, "Indeed the king [Agrippa] knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). Acts fashions a *public* image of Paul that conforms with Trajanic standards of representation by presenting Paul as an ambassador whose mission to the eastern provinces was to construct an imperially inspired patronage network of divine benefaction.¹¹⁶ The mission of Paul in Acts is the principal means by which God's

¹¹⁶ "Dio Chrysostom is an example of a 'public patron,' that is, a person who shows patronage towards a larger community (Jones 1978:104-14). In Oratio 46 he describes how he was mobbed during a grain shortage and accused of holding back his own wealth rather than using it for the public good. This illustrates the typical pressure upon elites from below to share during a period of need. Dio's answer is the elite response from above, and shows his sense of distinction between the elite and the poor. He refutes the accusation and asserts that he had behaved honorably. He proceeds to give examples of what was regarded as honorable behavior by the rich toward the poor: although he was a rich landowner, he did not deprive his neighbors of their possessions or evict them from their small holdings (Or. 46.7-8)... Likewise, Dio gives insights into the various motives for public benefactions on the part of the rich. One such motif was concern for general welfare. Desire for repute (doxa) and honore (time) was a very important motive for patronage, so much so that the term "love of honor" (philotomia) developed the meaning of public munificence. The importance of public opinion and estimation similarly explains a third motif, fear of dislike or envy (phthonos) toward those whose prosperity was conspicuous... Honor was granted in the form of public recognition. Dio gives a large number of examples of how benefactors were honored (Or. 31; 44; Jones 1978: 26-35, 105-14). Statues constitute the highest honor, the word for "honor" (time) becoming synonymous with "statue." Statues had sanctitiy: to erase the names of citizens carved on them meant to inflict shame upon them (Or. 31). Other honors included portraits and inscriptions, proclamations, public burials, and burial games to be celebrated in their memory, presents or a generous reception, invitations to the public table of the city or front seats at the theater. This list shows how patronage was

imperium is envisaged as expanding from city to city. Acts presents a global imaginary that conforms to the geographical thinking of the Roman Empire under Trajan, and does so through the promotion of a coalition of interconnected cities.¹¹⁷ Acts fashions a portrait of Paul that conforms to dominant themes found in Roman imperial representations in order to highlight his *Romanitas* and status as an *optimus civis*. The cumulative effect of these episodes is a unified portrait of Paul as one who contributes to the civilizing ideals of the imperial vocation and serves as a benefit to the empire. Paul is presented in accordance with the highest ideals of Roman society, as a patron to communities, in order to express and shape Christian self-understanding in accordance with broader standards of provincial identity. Through the incorporation of imperial symbols into local contexts, Acts employed the same strategy other provincial groups used to define themselves under the empire. This is what is meant by the political theology of Acts. Such a symbol would have certainly held social capital at a time when Christians were vying for legitimation in a world where projections of a community's power and prestige was a necessary step in increasing their prominence in the cities and garnering political benefits from the imperial system.

transformed into public status," Moxnes "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," 250.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Nasrallah, "The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Cities, and Hadrian's Panhellenion," 536.

EXCURSUS THREE: IMAGES FROM CHAPTER THREE



Fig. 1: Image of Trajan as embodiment of justice and mercy to outsiders as Roman soldier brings Dacian prisoner to the emperor. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 2: Image of Trajan as embodiment of justice and mercy to outsiders as Dacian surrenders to the emperor. Two of four. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 3: Image of Trajan as embodiment of justice and mercy to outsiders as Roman soldier brings Dacian prisoner to the emperor. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 4: Image of Trajan as embodiment of justice and mercy as Dacian surrenders before the emperor. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 5: Image of Trajan acting as benefactor distributing clemency to surrendered Dacians. One of Three. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

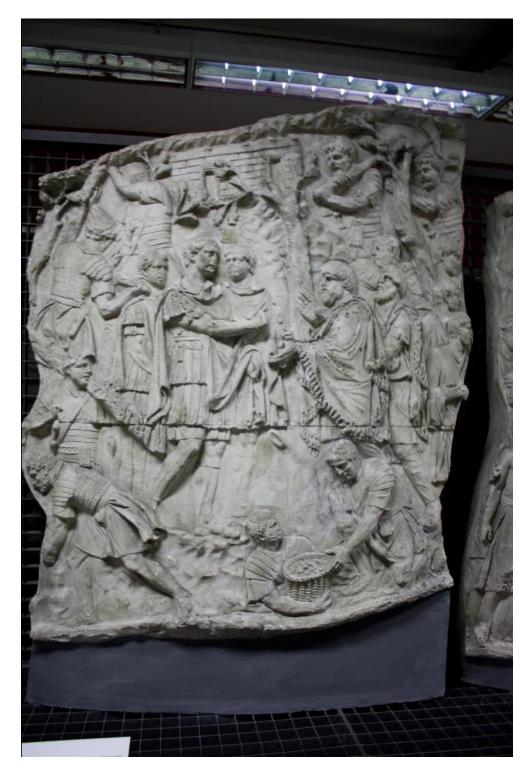


Fig. 6: Image of Trajan acting as benefactor distributing clemency to surrendered Dacians. Two of Three. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 7: Image of Trajan acting as benefactor distributing clemency to surrendered Dacians. Three of Three. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

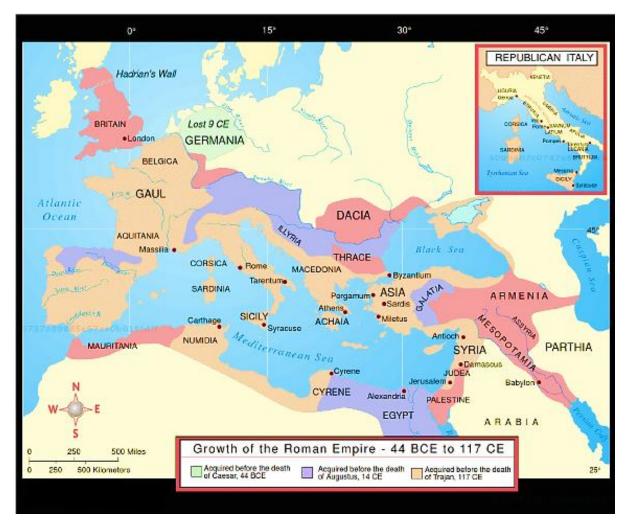


Fig. 8: Map of growth of the Roman Empire, 44 BCE-117 CE. Copyright © Maps.com



Fig. 9: Trajan addresses auxiliary troops from the provinces. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 10: Auxiliaries from provincial territories fight on behalf of Rome against Dacians. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 11: Auxiliaries from provincial territories commit themselves to the emperor's service. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 12: Embassies from the eastern empire commit themselves to the emperor's service. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Acts and Anti-Jewish Propaganda during the Reign of Trajan

This chapter will investigate the other side of Luke's apologetic and the various ways in which the author negatively characterizes "Jewish" responses to Paul and his companions. I wish to explicate this image by proposing that Acts characterizes "the Jews" in accordance with a pervasive anti-Jewish misanthropy theme that was adopted from imperial rhetoric, while accommodated to Acts' own contemporary setting to reflect post-70 developments, specifically, the rise of anti-Jewish propaganda during the reign of Trajan. Acts represents the Jews as a people group whose way of life is ubiquitously misanthropic, with no distinction between Jerusalem, Judaea, or the diaspora, but that all Jews act in a single accord, as lovers of their own group while openly hostile to outsiders, which give them mob power to exert pressure on local officials and crowds. Section One will survey Luke's depiction of the Jews as enemies of Paul, as well as the perspectives of scholars concerning this narrative representation. Section Two will explore the source of Luke's anti-Judaism. Section Three will analyze the evolution of anti-Jewish propaganda during the reign of Trajan. Section Four will compare the depiction of barbarians on Trajanic monumental art with the depiction of Jews in Acts to elucidate common strategies for fashioning cultural identity in the empire. In the end, it will be argued that Acts' depiction of "the Jews" participated within Trajanic discourses of empire and served a pivotal role in how Luke negotiates the place of Christians in the complex of Rome's empire.

Narrative Representations of Paul's Jewish Opponents within Scholarly Perspectives

Scholars have disagreed over the years in their assessment of Luke's attitude toward the Jews.¹ There is a long-standing debate as to how to understand Acts' negative statements, how to account for the occasional positive portrayals, and where the emphasis lies in Luke's perspective. The text itself seems ambivalent at times. A common example of this interpretive problem is found at 17:4 where some (Jews) are persuaded by Paul; 17:5 where "the Jews" respond negatively to Paul, while at 17:13 "the Jews of Thessalonica" incite the crowds against Paul.² While there is yet no scholarly consensus on Luke's view of the Jews, some argue that Luke's main concern is to characterize the Jews as rejected by God as the chosen people due to their own rejection of Jesus and the preaching of Paul. According to this line of interpretation, the gentile mission is seen as extending from Luke's rejection of the Jews.³ Others, however, argue

³ Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982); Lloyd Gaston, "Anti-Judaism and the Passion Narrative in Luke and Acts," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity, Vol. 1: Paul and the Gospels* (ed. Peter Richardson and David Granskou; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 1.127-53; Ernst Haenchen, "Judentum and Christentum in der Apostelgeschichte," ZNW 54 (1963): 155-89; idem, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Westminister, 1971) 721-32; Stephen Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (SNTSMS 23; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 219-38; eadem, "The Jews and the Death of Jesus in Acts," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity* (ed. Peter Richardson and David Granskou; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 1.155-64; Augusto Barbi, "The Use and Meaning of (*Hoi*) *Ioudaioi* in Acts," in *Luke and*

¹ For those scholars who attempt to summarize the various perspectives on this topic, see Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism*, and *the Scholars* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); Jon A. Weatherly, *Jewish Responsibility for the Death of Jesus in Luke-Acts* (JSNTSup 106; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 1-49.

² For contrasting interpretations of these texts, see Marilyn Salmon, "Insider or Outsider? Luke's Relationship with Judaism," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives* (ed. Joseph B. Tyson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 81; and Jack T. Sanders, "The Jewish People in Luke-Acts," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People* (ed. Joseph B. Tyson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 71; idem, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); idem, "Who Is a Jew and Who Is a Gentile in the Book of Acts?," *NTS* 37, no. 03 (1991): 434–55; Lawrence M. Wills, "The Depiction of the Jews in Acts," *JBL* 110.4 (1991): 632-33 Todd D. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and Its Neighbours* (JSNTSup 183; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

that Acts does not reject the Jewish people as a whole, but is rather operating from within the varieties of Judaism of the time, critiquing those factions who reject Jesus as the messiah, or, as others have argued, critiquing the leaders of the Jewish people.⁴ From this latter perspective, it is claimed that Luke's condemnation of certain Jews is similar to the way in which Josephus blames the Zealots for instigating the Jewish War.⁵ Jacob Jervell, for instance, argues this point due to instances in both the first and second half of Acts where Jews do indeed come to faith. From this perspective, the gentile mission is seen in terms of an extension beyond the conversion of the faithful half of Israel.⁶

Acts (ed. Gerald O'Collins and Gilberto Marconi. New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 123-142; Pamela Hedrick, "Fewer Answers and Further Questions: Jews and Gentiles in Acts," *Int* 66, no. 3 (2012): 294–305.

⁴ See James D.G. Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and* Their Significance for the Character of Christianity (London: SCM 1991); Günter Wasserberg, Aus Israels Mitte—Heil für die Welt: Eine narrativ-exegetische Studie zur Theologie des Lukas (BZNW 92; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998); Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 145-48. Lawrence Wills, "Depiction of the Jews," critiques those who argue it is polemical, "It could also be argued that a distinction between 'Jews' and 'Christians' is anachronistic, since early Christians composed a sect within Judaism. This would definitely be true for Matthew, and I think that, whatever Matthew's problems, that Gospel is not guilty of anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism. In Acts, however, we are more likely concerned with a second-century phenomenon. Despite the fact that Paul and the earliest generation of apostles are depicted as pious and unobjectionable Jews, in the author's mind the Christians at the time of writing either are, or should become, a group separated from the recognized body of Jews as met in the Roman world of the last first or second century. They are no longer just another Jewish faction, but a separate movement, who want to be viewed separately by the Roman authorities. We note, for instance, that it is significant for the author that the 'sectarians' acquire the name of 'Christians' in Antioch (11:26), and thus a new identity, and that at 26:28 King Agrippa says, 'Soon you will convince me to become a Christian!' Acts is no longer an inter-Jewish affair," 645.

⁵ Ibid., 646, "We would not say that Josephus was 'anti-Jewish' as a result... but the analogy with Josephus does not provide a means for defending Luke. Luke-Acts represents a stronger and more graphic condemnation of the Jews than Josephus does of the Sadducees; it is closer to Josephus's treatment of the Zealots, and what Josephus says about one group of rebels, Luke in the second half of Acts appears to be attaching to Jews as a whole."

⁶ Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1972). See also Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts* (Jerusalem: Academon, 2003). For an approach to the topic from the perspectives of ethnicity, see Eric D.

Shelly Matthews has succinctly identified the four most common arguments used to

refute claims that Acts is antagonistic toward the Jews.

First, it is stressed that Acts' embrace of what may be termed 'things Jewish'-for example, circumcision (16.3), Nazirite vows (21.23-26), and Pharisaic erudition (22.3)along with its celebration of the Jewish credentials of its key leaders, preclude any argument that Acts is hostile toward Jews. Second, it is argued that Acts' debate with Jews is merely an intramural guarrel and thus that its invective against Israel should be regarded as no harsher than that hurled by a Jeremiah or an Isaiah. Once the text is situated as an in-group prophetic critique, any suggestion that its author is inveighing against Judaism from the outside is precluded as anachronistic. Third, it is argued that Acts' polemic is aimed only at Jewish leaders and not the entire Jewish people. Fourth, it is stressed that Paul's final citation of Isaiah in front of his Jewish audience in Rome, which includes the ominous warning that his audience 'will indeed listen, but never understand, and... look, but never perceive (28.26-27),' should not be viewed as indication that Acts has 'written off' the Jews, as more traditional readings of Acts on Jews and Judaism would have it. Because Paul quotes Isaiah, a prophet of Israel, and because the quotation ends with the hint that God might 'heal them' should they turn, it is argued that Acts' final signal to the Jews is one of openness.⁷

Barreto, Ethnic Negotiations: The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16 (WUNT 294; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); idem, "Negotiating Difference: Theology and Ethnicity in the Acts of the Apostles," Word & World. 31, no. 2 (2011): 129-37. See also Cynthia M. Baker, "From Every Nation under Heaven': Jewish Ethnicities in the Greco-Roman World," in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early* Christianity (ed. Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 79-99; Simon Butticaz, "Has God Rejected His People?' (Romans 11.1). The Salvation of Israel in Acts: Narrative Claim of a Pauline Legacy," in Paul and the Heritage of Israel: Paul's Claim Upon Israel's Legacy in Luke and Acts in the Light of the Pauline Letters (ed. David P. Moessner et al.; LNTS 452; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 148-64; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Jewish Christianity in Acts in Light of the Qumran Scrolls," in Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert (ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn; London: SPCK, 1968), 233–57; Robert L. Brawley, Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation (SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1987); Reidar Hvalvik, "Paul as a Jewish Believer-According to the Book of Acts," in Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries (ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007), 121-53; Leander E. Keck, "The Jewish Paul Among the Gentiles: Two Portrayals," in Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe (ed. John T. Fitzgerald, Thomas H. Olbricht, and L. Michael White; NovTSup 110; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 461-81; Dixon Slingerland, "The Jews' in the Pauline Portion of Acts," JAAR 54, no. 2 (1986): 305-21; Michael J. Cook, "The Mission to the Jews in Acts: Unraveling Luke's 'Myth of the "Myriads,""" in Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives (ed. Joseph B. Tyson; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 102–23.

⁷ Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), online version no page numbers.

While Matthews successfully identifies these key scholarly arguments, she disagrees with their conclusions that Acts' depiction of Jews and the future Jewish-Christian relations is to be viewed positively. Rather, Matthews see Acts as constructing a foundation story for the early Christian movement that reifies a line of separation between what has already become, by the author's day, two distinct groups. There have been other commendable attempts to explain both the positive and negative dimensions to Luke's narrative portrayal of the Jews. In the end, however, one is faced with the question of whether the negative representations outweigh the positive. My own position sides with Matthews and others and is detailed in what follows, namely that while Acts maintains a certain amount of ambivalence toward the ultimate fate of the Jews, the highly charged and negative representations overshadow the few seemingly positive depictions.⁸

Acts 1-7, 12: Jerusalem

Matthews responds to these arguments in the following manner, "Yet, Acts' emphasis on the movement's Jewish leadership, practices, and institutions, or even its celebration of and hope for Jewish converts, is not out of synch with the developing supersessionist rhetoric of protoorthodox, anti-marcionite Christianity. To be sure, Acts is a document that is part of a *developing* supersessionist rhetoric. That this development is in process explains the occasional slipperiness of the rhetoric of self/other in the text. But Acts is well on the way to dividing Christians from Jews, to marking Stephen as belonging somehow to a different social and religious group than that from which the unrepentant murderous mob springs. It is not participating in an intramural debate—a debate within a fixed set of walls—but rather working to construct a different set of boundaries and borderlines."

⁸ Mitzi J. Smith, *The Literary Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles: Charismatics, the Jews, and Women* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 58. tension between the leaders of the nascent messianic movement and the temple authorities. At this early stage in the narrative, the Way's relationship with the Pharisees is still in question, creating an image of a divided Jerusalem with the Temple aristocracy on one side and the populace on the other.⁹

The stoning of Stephen (7:54-60) represents a transitional point within the narrative representation, as the Jewish opponents of the Way extend beyond the associates of the Temple to an ever-expanding group that is increasingly referred to generically as "the Jews" (Iou $\delta \alpha i \alpha i$).¹⁰ By the time Herod has James killed (12:2), he can proceed to arrest Peter because "he saw that it pleased *the Jews*" (12:1-3). Similarly, after Peter miraculously escapes imprisonment, he can exclaim, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from "all that *the Jewish people* were expecting" (12:11). Thus, for the majority of

⁹ E.g. 5:34ff. Lloyd Gaston, "Anti-Judaism and the Passion Narrative Luke and Acts," 127-154; Geir Otto Holmås, "'My House Shall Be a House of Prayer': Regarding the Temple as a Place of Prayer in Acts within the Context of Luke's Apologetical Objective.," *JSNT* 27, no. 4 (2005): 393–416; see also Milton Moreland, "The Jerusalem Community in Acts: Mythmaking and the Socio-Rhetorical Functions of a Lukan Setting," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (ed. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele; SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 285–310.

¹⁰ Shelly Matthews, "The Need for the Stoning of Stephen," in *Violence in the New Testament* (eds. Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 124-5, "In Luke's telling, the death of Stephen through a stoning carried out by an unruly mob underscores Jewish barbarity, creates a breach between the church and the Jews, and brackets Romans out of the originary violence that produced the church's first martyred follower of Jesus and marked its first great expansion... Both the myth of the stoning of Stephen created by Luke and the unreflective certainty about its historicity among biblical scholars need to be interrogated in view of the hydra-headed phenomenon of ancient Christian anti-Judaism. Scholars concerned with the issue of Christian anti-Judaism must consider the effects of Luke's story, in which he constructs a Christian origin and essence that is innocent and violated over and against a Jewish essence that is violent and culpable."

Acts, "the Jews" are represented as an undifferentiated group that is repeatedly depicted opposed to and engaging in acts of violence against followers of "the Way."¹¹

Acts 9: Damascus

Paul is portrayed achieving considerable success in persuading the various communities to which he travels to the faith during his itinerant mission in the eastern provinces.¹² In addition to these reports of missionary achievements, however, Paul is frequently depicted encountering severe opposition by "Jewish" members of these same communities. Paul/Saul begins to experience hostility from Jewish groups of the Diaspora immediately after his conversion. As Saul proclaims Jesus as the "Son of God" in the local synagogues in Damascus, a group of local Jews plot to kill Saul (συνεβουλεύσαντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν). In spite of their vigilance in "watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him" (παρετηροῦντο ὅὲ καὶ τὰς πύλας ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀνέλωσιν), he was able to escape with the help of his disciples, who lowered him over a wall in a basket (9:23-25).¹³

Following this episode, Paul returns to Jerusalem where he attracts the hostility of more Jewish opponents, namely, "the Hellenists," who "were attempting to kill him" (où $\delta \epsilon \epsilon \pi \epsilon \chi \epsilon i \rho o \nu u \ell \nu \epsilon \lambda \epsilon i \nu \alpha \upsilon \tau \delta \nu$) (9:28-29). While Luke does not identify who comprised this group of

¹¹ Terrence L. Donaldson, "Moses Typology and the Sectarian Nature of Early Christian Anti-Judaism: A Study in Acts 7," *JSNT* 4, no. 12 (1981): 27–52.

¹² Richard J. Cassidy, "The Non-Roman Opponents of Paul," in *New Views on Luke and* Acts (ed. Earl Richard; Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 75, "Luke only once explicitly uses the term 'unbelieving' as an adjective characterizing those Jews who rejected Paul's message. However, the understanding that those who oppose Paul do so because they are unbelieving with respect to his message is implicit in virtually all of the other passages in which Luke portrays Paul experiencing hostility from Jews. And for this reason, as well as for the consideration that Christian interpreters need be scrupulously careful in differentiating between the various kinds of 'Jewish' responses that Luke portrays, this adjective will be consistently used to describe Paul's opponents within the Diaspora and (apart from the special case of the high priest and the Sanhedrin officials) also within Jerusalem itself."

¹³ For more on the characterization of synagogues in Acts, see John G. Gager, "Jews, Gentiles, and Synagogues in the Book of Acts," *HTR* 79, no. 1/3 (1986): 91–99.

"Hellenists," it is now most commonly thought to refer to a group of Greek-speaking Jews who were formerly residents in the Diaspora, though now living in Jerusalem.¹⁴ Rescuing Saul from their plot, the believers intercept him, bring him down to Caesarea, and send him off to Tarsus (9:30).

Acts 13: Cyprus and Antioch

Later in the narrative, Paul begins his westward mission by traveling through Cyprus, successfully avoiding Jewish opposition, with the exception of Bar-Jesus, a Jewish magician ($\delta \mu \dot{\alpha} \gamma \sigma \varsigma$) and false prophet who tries to keep Paul from speaking with Sergius Paulus, the proconsul.¹⁵ It is reported that Bar-Jesus "opposed them ($\dot{\alpha}\nu\theta(\sigma\tau\alpha\tau\sigma\ \delta\epsilon\ \alpha\dot{\upsilon}\tau\sigma\tilde{\iota}\varsigma)$) and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith" (13:8). In response, Paul blinds his Jewish opponent and the proconsul comes to believe. This is a significant break in the narrative pattern of Paul's encounter with hostile Jews in that it marks the only instance in Acts where Paul is able to overcome a Jewish opponent. This scene creates an image that unifies Acts' dual interest in defining itself in peaceful terms with Roman representatives, here signified by Sergius Paulus, while at the same time defining itself against the Jews, represented by Bar-Jesus. Throughout the rest of Acts, these dual interests continue to work in tandem.¹⁶

Following this episode, Paul speaks in a synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, attracting both Jewish sympathizers and opponents. Luke writes, "When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and

¹⁴ Cassidy, "Non-Roman Opponents," 75.

¹⁵ See previous chapter for a discussion of this passage.

¹⁶ For other studies that acknowledge this dual tendency, see Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the "Acts of the Apostles"* (trans. Ken McKinney, Gregory J. Laughery, and Richard Bauckham; SNTSMS 121; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 128–54; Gary Gilbert, "Jews in Imperial Administration and Its Significance for Dating the Jewish Donor Inscription from Aphrodisias," JSJ 35, no. 2 (2004): 169–84.

urged them to continue in the grace of God" (13:43). Nevertheless, on the following Sabbath, when the whole city gathered to hear Paul preach, the Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) grew jealous at the sight of the crowd and spoke obstinately against Paul (ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου καὶ ἀντέλεγον τοῖς ὑπὸ Παύλου λαλουμένοις βλασφημοῦντες, 13:45). Luke further reports, "But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region" (ἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι παρώτρυναν τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας καὶ τοὺς πρώτους τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἐπήγειραν διωγμὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Παῦλον καὶ Βαρναβᾶν καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων αὐτῶν, 13:50). Paul and Barnabas survive the tactics of their Jewish opponents who acts as a pressure group by shaking the dust off their feet in protest, continuing on to Iconium.¹⁷

Acts 14: Iconium and Lystra

At Iconium, Paul has great success speaking in the Jewish synagogue, where "a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers" (Έγένετο δὲ ἐν Ἰκονίῳ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ λαλῆσαι οὕτως ὥστε πιστεῦσαι Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων πολὺ πλῆθος, 14:1). Once again, in spite of the missionary success among certain Jews and Greeks, this causes the "unbelieving Jews" (οἱ δὲ ἀπειθήσαντες Ἰουδαῖοι) to oppose Paul by rallying the Gentiles against them. The result is a divided city where "some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles" (14:4). In the end, the disciples are forced to flee to Lycaonia because "an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them" (ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ὁρμὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαίων σὺν τοῖς ἅρχουσιν αὐτῶν ὑβρίσαι καὶ λιθοβολῆσαι αὐτούς) (14:5-6). The Jews of Iconium are

¹⁷ C.f. Wenxi Zhang, Paul Among Jews: A Study of the Meaning and Significance of Paul's Inaugural Sermon in the Synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:16-41) for His Missionary Work Among the Jews (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

constructed as "unbelieving" in opposition to Paul and his companions, whereas the rest of the city populace vacillates between these two poles.

Upon arriving at Lystra, Paul and Barnabas succeed in speaking before a crowd concerning the beneficence of God. Nevertheless, Paul is pursued by "Jews" from earlier cities, "Jews came there from Antioch (of Pisidia) and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead" ($\Xi\pi\eta\lambda\theta\alpha\nu$ $\delta\epsilon$ $\dot{\alpha}\pi\delta$ 'Aντιοχείας καὶ Ἱκονίου Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ πείσαντες τοὺς ὄχλους καὶ λιθάσαντες τὸν Παῦλον ἔσυρον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως νομίζοντες αὐτὸν τεθνηκέναι, 14:19). In this episode, contrary to the mob's intent, Paul survives and returns to the city.

Acts 17: Thessalonica, Beroea, and Athens

Later in the narrative, while Paul is in Thessalonica, Paul is reported going into "a synagogue of the Jews" arguing on three separate Sabbaths that scripture foretold that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead" (17:1-3). Similar to previous episodes, some were persuaded to join Paul, including "a great many of the devout Greeks" and many of the leading women. Nevertheless, Luke portrays the Jews as becoming jealous, inciting "some ruffians in the marketplaces," forming a mob, and setting the city in an uproar ($Z\eta\lambda\omega\sigma\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ δε οἱ Τουδαῖοι καὶ προσλαβόμενοι τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροὺς καὶ ὀ\chiλοποιήσαντες ἐθορύβουν τὴν πόλιν, 17:5).¹⁸ This same group of Jews follow Paul to Beroea and incite the crowds there, causing Paul to flee to Athens (17:13-15), even though Paul found a favorable response.

¹⁸ Benjamin J. Hubbard, "Luke, Josephus and Rome: A Comparative Approach to the Lucan Sitz-im-Leben," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1979 Seminar Papers* (ed. Paul J. Achtemeier; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1979) 59-68.

Acts 18-19: Corinth and Ephesus

While arriving at Corinth, Paul commits himself to testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. Here, once again, the Jews "opposed and reviled" (άντιτασσομένων δε αὐτῶν καὶ βλασφημούντων) Paul, causing him to shake the dust from his clothes in protest. In spite of this opposition, Paul finds a welcoming house next door to the synagogue to conduct his ministry, and still has the great success of converting Crispus, the official of the synagogue, with his entire household, as well as many of the Corinthians (18:8).¹⁹

While still in Corinth, Luke reports "when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul (Γαλλίωνος δε άνθυπάτου όντος τῆς 'Αχαΐας κατεπέστησαν $\dot{\phi}$ μοθυμαδ $\dot{\phi}$ ν οἱ Ἰουδα \hat{i} οι τ $\hat{\omega}$ Παύ $\lambda \omega$) and brought him before the tribunal. They said, 'This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law" (18:12-13). Gallio, however, immediately dismisses the charges and releases Paul from the tribunal, proclaiming, "If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters" (18:14-15). Paul is exonerated from any charges against the state, in spite of Jewish insistence to the contrary.²⁰

Following this episode, Paul arrives in Ephesus where he immediately goes into the synagogue for a discussion with the Jews. They respond favorably and ask that he stay longer, though he is unable to and vows to return at a later date (18:19-21). Upon Paul's later return to Ephesus, he enters the synagogue and speaks for three months. In response, "some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation" ($\dot{\omega}_{\zeta} \delta \dot{\epsilon} \tau \iota \nu \epsilon \zeta$

¹⁹ On the relationship between chapter 18:5-17 and chapter 13, see Wills, "Depiction of

the Jews," 637. ²⁰ Bruce W. Winter, "Gallio's Ruling on the Legal Status of Early Christianity (Acts

ἐσκληρύνοντο καὶ ἠπείθουν κακολογοῦντες τὴν ὑδὸν ἐνώπιον τοῦ πλήθους), causing Paul to relocate with his disciples to the lecture hall of Tyrannus (19:9). Here, Paul stays for two years, and "all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord" (19:10).²¹

Acts 20-28: Final Voyage to Jerusalem

Paul's final encounter with hostile Jews in the diaspora comes just before his final voyage to Jerusalem. While in Greece getting ready to set sail for Syria, the Jews make another plot against him ($\gamma \epsilon \nu o \mu \epsilon \nu \eta \varsigma \epsilon \pi \iota \beta o \upsilon \lambda \eta \varsigma \alpha \upsilon \tau \tilde{\omega} \upsilon \tau \omega \nu$ 'Iouδαίων) (20:3), diverting his travel plans through Macedonia. Upon Paul's arrival in Jerusalem, "the Jews from Asia" (οἱ ἀπὸ τη̂ς 'Aσίας 'Ioυδαῖοι') see him in the temple and stir up the whole crowd and seize him (συνέχεον πάντα τὸν ὄχλον καὶ ἐπέβαλον ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας) (21:27).²² Paul continues to face Jewish opponents while under arrest in Jerusalem and Caesarea. This group is made up largely of those identified as opponents in the opening chapters of Acts, specifically those associated with the Temple cult, including the chief priests and all the council, the High Priest, Sadducees, elders, and more.²³

Throughout Acts, there exists, side by side, both acceptance and rejection among Jews and Gentiles; nevertheless, the emphasis is clearly weighted on Jewish rejection. On the few occasions Paul is able to persuade Jewish people toward the faith, these individuals are seen as exceptional.²⁴ There are a total of twelve times in Acts where Paul experiences hostility from

²¹ For an explication of the contrast between early Christian assemblies and civic riots in Acts, see Robert F. Stoops Jr., "Riot and Assembly: The Social Context of Acts 19:23–41," *JBL* 108, no. 1 (1989): 73–91.

²² There has been some debate among commentators whether "the Jews from Asia" are to be understood as Paul's opponents from earlier or later in the narrative. See Cassidy, "Non-Roman Opponents," 150-62.

²³ See 22:30; 23:2; 23:6; 23:9; 23:14; 24:1; 25:2; 25:15; 26:10, 12; 28:17.

²⁴ As Mitzi Smith further argues, "Luke constructs *the Jews* so as to give readers the impression that they are an authentically ubiquitous group that acts harmoniously, homogeneously, and violently to oppose the Gentile mission. Luke depicts *the Jews* as different from those who accept the gospel (Jewish and Gentile believers), and this difference is always

Jewish groups of the Diaspora. In five episodes, the Jews seek to kill Paul.²⁵ In four episodes,

Paul is forced to leave town due to Jewish opposition. In three additional passages, Paul makes a

the same *everywhere*," *Literary Construction*, 64. Regarding the tendency toward a generalized, undifferentiated view of "the Jews" in antiquity, see Louis H. Feldman, Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 47, "What, however, must be stressed is that in all of these passages the author generalizes about *the* Jews without indicating that there are some Jews who do not fit into the stereotypes or that there are various movements within the Jewish people. The only distinction, aside from the Samaritans and the special, eccentric group known as the Essenes, is between Moses's constitution and the practices introduced by his followers; but the implication is clear that in the time of the writer all Jews think and act alike, so far as their religious beliefs and practices are concerned, whether in the Land of Israel or in the Diaspora. Indeed, it is not until the end of the third century C.E. that we meet a pagan writer, Porphyry (De Abstinentia 4.11), who, citing Josephus's discussion, mentions the division within the Jews among the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes... Similarly, when we hear of the expulsion of Jews from Rome in 139 B.C.E. (Valerius Maximus, 1.3.3), there is no distinction made between those Jews who were guilty of the offense of transmitting their sacred rites to the Romans and those Jews who abstained from such activities. Despite the fact that the Romans were, as a people, generally careful to observe such distinctions in law, the *praetor peregrinus* banished the Jews." See also, Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 8, who argue, "In Luke-Acts, we find such characteristics as contentiousness, stiff-neckedness (meaning being incapable of obeying God properly), envy, greed, and violence, all in the name of Torah and temple."

Cassidy, "Non-Roman Opponents," 75. In a related vein, the book of Acts makes the Jerusalem Jews culpable for the death of Jesus. In Acts 2:22-23, Peter proclaims to the Jerusalem crowd gathered on Pentecost, "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law." On a later occasion, Peter once again, stands before a Jerusalem audience, now in the temple, proclaiming, "You Israelites... The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead" (3:12-15). Standing before the Jerusalem leaders, Peter reiterates their guilt by referring to Jesus as the one "whom you crucified" (4:10). Once again, now standing before the high priest and council, Peter declares, "The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree" (5:30; also 10:33-44). This point is reiterated in Stephen's speech before the lynch mob in Jerusalem, "Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers" (7:52). Paul reiterates Peter and Stephen's claim before the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, where he argues, "My brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God, to us the message of this salvation

solemn announcement that emphasizes Jewish rejection and Gentile acceptance of his message: "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you [Jews]. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46; cf. 18:6; 28:28). It is a curious phenomenon, but quite consistent with Acts' overall ambivalence, that Paul returns to speak in synagogues after the first two of these announcements, with the book essentially ending after the third announcement.

In sum, Luke constructs a predominantly negative depiction of the Jews, envisaged in Acts as Paul's principal opponents. Much more than any other group in Acts, it is the Jews who instigate opposition and act with violence against the texts' chief protagonists. Through various narrative strategies, Acts constructs those following "the Way" as a distinct group from "the Jews."²⁶

has been sent. Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate *to have him killed*" (13:26-28). It would not be possible for Luke to be more explicit about the Jerusalem Jews' responsibility for the death of Jesus in Acts. Contrary to historical probability, as well as the Markan passion narrative, the Jerusalem Jews and not the Roman authorities are responsible for Jesus' death. While it is recognized that Pilate held a trial for Jesus, it was ultimately the Jews who passed the judgment to have him killed, because Pilate repeatedly declared Jesus innocent. Lloyd Gaston, "Anti-Judaism and the Passion Narrative Luke and Acts," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity* (Edited by Peter Richardson and David Granskou. Waterloo; Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 127-54, has argued that the perspective that emerges in Luke and Acts is that *all* Jews, and not just *some* Jews, are responsible for Jesus' death. He bases his argument on several of the passages quoted above, but especially since these speeches are addressed to "men of Israel," "sons of the prophets," "sons of the covenant," "you who received the law."

²⁶ As Loveday Alexander argues, "It is not always easy to determine at what point interfactional polemic within a fragmenting movement becomes inter-sectarian polemic between rival religious communities. In this sense it is not a great step from reading Acts as a defence of Pauline Christianity against Jewish Christianity to reading it as a defence of Christianity tout court before the tribunal of the wider Jewish community. This reading rests on the sound literary observation that a large part of Acts deals with the question of the relationships between emergent Christian groups and the parent Jewish community," Loveday Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (Library of New The significance of this depiction to the history of Jewish-Christian relations is described by Lawrence Wills, who argues, "Luke has gone beyond Paul, Mark, and Matthew in at least one important respect: the split between Luke's fellow Christians and Judaism appears to be complete and in the past."²⁷ Several other scholars have recognized that Acts uses different means to show a definite separation between believers and the Jews.²⁸ Shelly Matthews, for instance, argues, "In this work Luke constructs for followers of 'the Way' a genealogy reaching back into Israelite traditions, and a sociology that drives a wedge between them and their Jewish contemporaries."²⁹ In detailing the origins and cultural inheritance of the Christian movement, Acts succeeds in tracing positive connections. There is a definite line of separation, however, drawn between followers of "the Way" and "the Jews" that is maintained through narrative distillation of Jewish animosity and hostility.

Anti-Jewish Misanthropy in Acts and Antiquity

In Acts, friends and enemies of "the Way" are depicted with great care as a process of socially positioning the Way and shaping a sense of cultural identity. The inclusion of both friends and enemies is an integral part of this process. As one set of social theorists describes this process,

To uncover the values for which a society stands, one need only look at its heroes, and at the mechanisms through which those heroes are commemorated and celebrated... The memory of heroic identities and events reveals the ideals upon which social solidarity rests. Celebration of the remembered past enhances collective commitment to those ideals. Communities benefit from the endurance of heroic events in the collective representations found within individual memory... But might not a society's villains

Testament studies ; Early Christianity in context 298; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 184-185.

²⁷ Wills, "Depiction of the Jews," 653-54; Stephen Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

²⁸ E.g. Richard I. Pervo, *The Mystery of Acts: Unraveling Its Story* (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Polebridge, 2008); Wills, "The Depiction of the Jews," 631–54.

²⁹ Matthews, "Stoning," 124.

reveal as much about its values as its heroes? Might not the creation and preservation of negative images benefit the community as well?³⁰

Acts similarly serves as a community-forming story whose characters help shape readers' own self-understanding and sense of place in the broader environment. The depiction of "the Jews" as enemies of "the Way" contributes to this process of identity formation, albeit negatively. It provides a foil for what not to be like and helps readers identify and/or imagine contemporary threats to their own identity.³¹ Early Christian identity is fashioned in Acts on the back of and in opposition to a predominately negative representation of the Jews.

Contrary to what one might expect, the reason for Jewish animosity in Acts is not Paul's critique of the very essence of Judaism—that Torah observance is insufficient and effectively replaced by Christ—but rather Jewish jealousy at the successful expansion of the Christian mission.³² This becomes one of the most salient patterns of the Pauline mission: expansion

³¹ Gaston, "Anti-Judaism," 127-53.

³⁰ Lori Ducharme and Gary Alan Fine "The Construction of Nonpersonhood and Demonization: Commemorating the 'Traitorous' Reputation of Benedict Arnold," in *The Collective Memory Reader* (ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 296. Erich Gruen, *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011) argues that some attempts at understanding attitudes toward "the other" in antiquity follow models that are too simplistic, "Attitudes to the 'other' were far from uniform. Greeks did not, for instance, restrict themselves to demonization even of Persia, the quintessential foe of Hellas. Their stance (or rather their stances) had considerable nuance, and their associations with the Persian Empire were revealingly variegated. Indeed, the Romans' disposition toward their most fearsome rival, Carthage, took diverse forms, whether approving or demeaning or both at once. Cultural identity did not require creation and disparagement of the opposite. The identities themselves were multiform, a conglomerate of ethnicities in North Africa, in the Levant, even in individual regions of Italy, thus rendering the idea of inventing a serviceable foil particularly simplistic," 1.

³² The general attitude toward Torah observance in Acts is that it has no soteriological significance while still being acceptable for believers of Jewish birth. In 15:7-11 Peter argues that Torah observance is impossible while Paul himself remains observant (e.g. 21:26). Richard Pervo, *Acts* (Hermeneia Series, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2009), 341.

provokes resistance, missionary success prompts repression.³³ As a result, the Jews are constructed in almost entirely contrastive ways, not just with the followers of the Way, but also with the populace of the cities to which Paul preaches. They are characterized by their insistence on acting in opposition to their neighbors, whether it be followers of "the Way," or other members of the civic community. This characterization comes into sharp relief in Acts 13, as Paul and Barnabas' stay in Antioch of Pisidia proves to be most inhospitable. Although Paul's initial sermon wins many gentile adherents, on the following Sabbath, the Jews grow hostile toward the travelers because of their success and attempt to obfuscate their message and chase them out of the city. It is my contention that this episode is narrated from a perspective that would have been familiar to early readers of Acts, for it presupposes a pervasive prejudice among Greeks and Romans against the Jews as a pressure group whose way of existence is characterized by misanthropy, a lifestyle defined by the following four core attributes.³⁴ First, the Jews were viewed as misanthropic *everywhere* because they were thought to share a mutual

³³ Ibid., 11, "The pattern of Paul's missionary work in Acts 13-19 shows little variation. He begins with efforts to win Jews, meets resistance from at least some of them, and leaves town because of civic or legal pressures. Nowhere is Luke's availability to produce interesting variations upon a simple theme more apparent than in this part of his story. The preceding comment reveals skepticism about whether this pattern always or often reflects reality... This use of narrative molds into which to fit his stories is, rather than invention of episodes or poor data, the principal reason for the difficulties of treating Acts as simple history."

³⁴ Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 46. Greek and Roman authors do not seem to distinguish differences in the beliefs and practices among Jews. As Feldman argues, "The impression given is that the Jews, as a people, were universally observant of the laws of the Torah. In fact, Hecataeus (quoted in Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.191) declares that all (*pantes*) of the Jews, though slandered by their neighbors and by foreign visitors and though subjected to frequent outrages by Persian kings and satraps, remained firm in their determination and were ready to face torture and death rather than repudiate the faith of their forefathers. As an example of this obstinacy, he relates the incident (*Against Apion* 1.192) that Alexander the Great gave orders to all his soldiers without distinction to bring materials for the earthworks of a temple that he proposed to restore; in that case, the Jews alone—again with the clear implication that all the Jews were in agreement—refused and even submitted to severe chastisement and heavy fines until the king pardoned them," 48.

loyalty with one another regardless of geographical origin. Second, their mutual loyalty leads them to hate all others groups. Third, the Jews' mutual hatred for others often results in the formation of pressure groups, exercising their power as a collective to influence local leaders to move in tandem with their will.³⁵ Additionally, there was often a fourth component whereby practices such as circumcision, Sabbath observance, and abstaining from pork were interpreted as evidence of the Jews' unsociability.³⁶ Because of a pervasive belief that all Jews everywhere

³⁵ Due to popular belief in the mutual loyalty among Jews, authors such as Horace and Cicero both refer to the political pressure Jews could exert. According to Roman stereotypes, the Jews were able to exert pressure in the political and social realms, while in the meantime pursuing their own group interests. As Louis Feldman argues regarding Cicero (*Pro Flacco* 28.66-67), "Cicero… describes the Jews, in terms almost reminiscent of modern anti-Jewish bigots, as a passionate 'pressure-group,' noting how numerous they are, how they stick together, and how influential they are in informal assemblies. Hence, he says sarcastically, he will speak in a low voice so that only the jurors may hear. These remarks are particularly valuable because here we know the *Sitz-in-Leben*, the actual situation in which he made them, namely a trial in which he is defending a client who has been accused of extorting money the Jews had collected in Asia Minor for transmission to the Temple in Jerusalem," *Jew and* Gentile, 172. See also Pompeius Trogus (quoted in Justin, *Historiae Philippicae* 36.2.16); E.J. Schnabel, "Jewish Opposition to Christians in Asia Minor in the First Century," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18, no. 2 (2008): 233–70.

³⁶ Peter Schäfer, Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 34-118. From the perspective of Greek and Roman authors, circumcision, observance of the Sabbath, and dietary laws were characteristic practices of the Jews and universally observed, without distinction. See Philo Questiones in Genesin 3.62; Strabo 17.2.5.824; Petronius fragment 37; Tacitus Histories 5.5.2-3; Agatharchides (quoted in Josephus, Against Apion 1.209); Suetonius Augustus 76.2; Ovid Ars Amatoria 1.75-76, 1.413-16; Horace Satires 1.9.69. Freeman, Jews and Gentiles, 49-50; 153-158. Concerning circumcision Freeman argues, "despite the adoption of circumcision by several other peoples besides the Jews, the practice was particularly associated with the Jews in the eyes of pagan intellectuals. It is significant that though... pagan intellectuals are divided in their approach to various other practices of the Jews, none praise circumcision. There can be no doubt that this practice served as a crucial mark of identification separating the Jews from other peoples," 158. Furthermore, concerning the Jewish Sabbath, Freeman argues, "we may see that the ancient intellectuals almost universally derided the Jewish Sabbath, particularly what they considered the superstitious abstention from work on that day. But that an antiquarian as important as Plutarch could connect the Sabbath with the worship of the ever-popular Dionysus is an indication that this contempt was far from universal," 167. See also Margaret Williams, The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook (New York: Duckworth, 1998),

shared these four core attributes, they were viewed as a cohesive group that maintained a common hatred for the rest of humanity and lived in accordance with a set of customs which kept them separate from the rest of the population.³⁷

Among ancient writers, the most recurrent charge against the Jews is that of misanthropy. Hecataeus of Abdera, writing from a Greek cultural context at the end of the 4th century BCE, was the first known writer to have described the Jewish way of life as misanthropic.³⁸ Hecataeus writes, "The sacrifices that he [Moses] established differ from those of other nations, as does their way of living, for as a result of their own expulsion from Egypt he introduced a kind of misanthropic ($\alpha \pi \dot{\alpha} \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \sigma \varsigma$) and inhospitable ($\mu \iota \sigma \delta \xi \epsilon \nu \sigma \varsigma$) way of life."³⁹ Although Hecataeus is otherwise rather sympathetic in his description of Jewish origins and customs, this passage

54-59; Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Was Timothy Jewish (Acts 16:1–3)? Patristic Exegesis, Rabbinic Law, and Matrilineal Descent," *JBL* 105, no. 2 (1986): 251–68.

³⁷ Freeman, *Jews and Gentiles*, 124, "Scholars who have examined this corpus [of Greco-Roman authors who make mention of the Jews] have emphasized what they consider the almost universal prevelance of virulent anti-Jewish feeling in the remarks of these writers. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Germany, it became fashionable, as seen in the writings of Felix Stähelin, Ulrich Wilcken, and Hugo Willrich, to cite these passages in promoting the thesis that there was something inherent in the Jews' characteristics that produced hostility toward them wherever they went, especially among those of intellectual attainments. We may, however, remark that, according to my count, 101 (18 percent) of the comments by pagans in Stern's collection are substantially favorable, 339 (59 percent) are more or less neutral, and only 130 (23 percent) are substantially unfavorable, and this despite the fact that the preservation of ancient manuscripts is due, in large part, to the Church, whether in the East or the West. In view of the large number of treatises *Adversus Judaeos*, one might have thought it would seek to preserve passages attacking rather than defending the Jews."

³⁸ Quoted in Diodorus 40.3.4; Katell Berthelot, "Hecataeus of Abdera and Jewish 'misanthropy,''' *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* 19 (2008), 1; Schafer, *Judeophobia*, 163-170; Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 126. Cf. Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 41-72.

³⁹ This is mentioned by Hecataeus in an otherwise relatively positive valuation of Jewish people and customs. For similar sentiments, see Apollonius Molon from the first century B.C.E. (cited in Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.258); Diodorus 34[35]. 1.2; Strabo 16.2.37.761; Tacitus *Histories* 5.5.2; Dio Cassius 37.17.2

defines Jews by their tendency to separate from the wider communities in which they were a part.

What is remarkable is that in the entire corpus of Greek literature, the Jews are the only people ever accused of being misanthropic ($\mu\iota\sigma\dot{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\sigma\varsigma$), as well as inhospitable ($\mu\iota\sigma\dot{\delta}\xi\epsilon\nu\sigma\varsigma$).⁴⁰ This antagonism stemmed from a common perception of the Jews as an unsociable group that was clannish, failing to uphold their civic duty of showing the proper concern for the rest of humanity. A number of scholars have gone so far as to argue that such perceived misanthropic attitudes served as the basis of anti-Jewish sentiments in the ancient world.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Berthelot, "Hecataeus," 6. Examples of other Greek intellectuals who perceived the Jews as a people group that hates the rest of humanity include Manetho (quoted in Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.250), Lysimachus (quoted in Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.309), Apollonius Molon (cited in Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.309), Diodorus (34[35].1.1), Popeius Trogus (quoted in Justin, *Historiae Philippicae* 36, *Epitoma* 2.15), Apion (cited in Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.121), Euphrates (quoted in Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.33), Aelius Aristeides (46 [*De Quattuorviris* 309]), and Neoplatonist Synesius (*Epistulae* 5). Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 128-130; J.N. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 90-94.

⁴¹ On the suitability of the term "anti-semitism" in this context, see Zvi Yavetz, "Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity: A Different Approach." Journal of Jewish Studies 44 (1993): 1-22; Benjamin Isaac, The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 442-446. On the relationship of these motifs with ancient anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, Schäfer Judeophobia, argues "The Jews as the 'evil incarnate,' denying and perverting in their xenophobic and misanthropic hatred all cherished values of humankind, conspiring against the civilized world—this, I would like to argue, is the allegation which crosses the line from the 'justifiable' to the 'unjustifiable,' from 'anti-Judaism' to 'anti-Semitism,' 206. Similarly, Sevenster, Pagan Anti-Semitism, 89, argues, "the most fundamental reason for pagan anti-Semitism almost always proves to lie in the [perceived] strangeness of the Jews midst ancient society. They were strange in the sense that in practically all the countries of the ancient world they were immigrants. This was a strangeness they had in common with various other peoples, but the strangeness that astonished and very soon offended the people in whose midst they lived lay in their way of life and their customs, which always forced a certain degree of segregation upon them... Pagan anti-Semitism in the ancient world is fundamentally of a religious character, even though its attacks were usually directed against the day-to-day way in which Jews lived, dictated as it was by the prescripts of their religion. The Jews always entertain those bothersome scruples about participating in the rites and customs of a country's cult, and often, because of such ridiculous idiosyncrasies, they shun all those festivities in which all the others join in so joyously."

Jewish customs were regularly the source for popular ridicule, even though subjects of the empire were well aware of and wrote about strange customs among populations across the frontier. Such harsh criticism is directed toward the Jews, however, precisely because they maintain these customs while residing within the boundaries of the empire.⁴² On certain instances, Roman authors express remorse for ever annexing Judea in the first place. As Philostratus writes from a later period, "For the Jews have long been in revolt not only against the Romans but against humanity; and a people that has made its own a life apart and irreconcilable, that cannot share with the rest of mankind in the pleasures of the table nor join in their libations or prayers or sacrifices, are separated from ourselves by a greater gulf than divides us from Susa or Bactra or the more distant Indies. What sense then or reason was there in chastising them for revolting from us, whom we had better have never annexed?³⁴³ This perspective persists for centuries, re-articulated even later by Rutilius Namatianus, "And would that Judaea had never been subdued by Pompey's wars and Titus' military power! The infection of this plague, though excised, still creeps abroad the more.³⁴⁴

⁴² Isaac, *Invention*, 478-479.

⁴³ Philostratus, Vita Apollonii 5.33 (trans. F.C. Conybeare, Loeb); Isaac, *Invention*, 452, argues, "The assertion that it would have been better not to annex the Jews is new and relatively rare. We shall encounter it below in a statement by Rutilius Namatianus. The claim that they are unsociable is familiar, but it is interesting to see the specific reasons: the refusal to eat and worship together. Noteworthy is furthermore the assertion that the Jews are more remote than the farthest peoples of the world."

⁴⁴ Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo* 1.395-8; Isaac, *Invention*, 462; Stern, *Greek and Latin*, no. 542; Schafer, *Judeophobia*, 87-89; 163-170. Many scholars argue that Greek and Roman rejection of Jews because of their customs may have originated in Hellenistic Egypt, as Isaac notes, "If so, this is remarkable, for the Egyptians themselves were regarded in this light by the Greeks and Romans. The Egyptian people "resembles only itself," says the treatise on *Airs, Waters, Places*, 19. Horodotus (2.35) writes about Egypt that the climate and rivers, as well as the manners and customs of the people, are the reverse of those in the rest of the world. As for the Jews, even if the idea of their separateness did originate in Egypt, it subsequently became firmly entrenched in Roman literature. Tacitus returns to these themes. He is one of the two Roman authors to repeat the Egyptian-Hellenistic tradition which claimed that the Jews were

Acts presupposes this pervasive prejudice as it portrays Jewish groups in Judea and the Diaspora as insular, bellicose, and hostile toward outsiders, especially followers of "the Way." The Jews are stereotyped as a pressure group, able to instigate a mob scene at will, whose own way of existence is characterized by misanthropy and whose strange practices testify to their unsociability.

Anti-Jewish Propaganda as Imperial Rhetoric

While the accusation of misanthropy was pervasive among the Greeks, it was a much less dominant theme in Roman literature; that is until the reign of Trajan, when the theme gets picked up and intensified by Roman authors, most notably Tacitus and Juvenal. In the twelfth year of Trajan's reign, Tacitus wrote in book 5 of his *Histories*,

[A]mong themselves they [the Jews] are inflexibly honest and ever ready to show compassion, though they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful. Circumcision was adopted by them as a mark of difference from other men. Those who are converted to their way of life accept the same practice, and the earliest habit they adopt is to despise the gods, to renounce their country, and to regard their parents, children, and brothers as of little consequence.⁴⁵

This text represents the resurrection and intensification of the age-old misanthropy theme during the reign of Trajan.⁴⁶ Tacitus detests the Jews because of their refusal to participate in the Roman world and fears the problems this might cause as they continue to attract sympathizers who could infiltrate Roman society.⁴⁷ Ritual observances, such as abiding by dietary laws, circumcision,

expelled from Egypt because they suffered from a plague." See also Tacitus, Hist. 5.3.1; Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*.

⁴⁵ Tacitus *Histories* 5.5, Italics mine, quoted in Isaac, *Invention*, 452-453.

⁴⁶ Schafer, *Judeophobia*, 33.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 194. As Schafer argues, "If we try to determine more closely what distinguishes his [Tacitus'] description of Jewish superstition from that of other peoples, it is clearly the incomparably aggravated anger and contempt which characterizes Tacitus' attacks on the Jews. This, in turn, is an expression of his incomprehension of the paradox that the Jews refuse to be

and keeping the Sabbath, were seen as contributing to their image as an antisocial people who intentionally separate themselves from the rest of the world.⁴⁸

Juvenal's *Satires*, also written during the reign of Trajan, similarly derides the Jews and their sympathizers for being misanthropic and upholding strange practices of Sabbath observance, worshiping the clouds, circumcision, and avoiding pork.⁴⁹ Juvenal writes,

Some who have had a father who reveres the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds, and the divinity of the heavens, and see no difference between eating swine's flesh, from which their father abstained, and that of man; and in time they take to circumcision. Having been wont to flout the laws of Rome, they learn and practice and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses committed to his secret tome, forbidding to point out the way to any not worshipping the same rites, and conducting none but the circumcised to the desired fountain.⁵⁰

According to Juvenal, the Jewish way of life leads individuals to hate anyone who is not a part of

the group to the extent that they are unwilling even to direct non-Jews asking for directions or

lead a thirsty man to a source of water. It is suggested by some scholars that this may allude to a

prohibition against showing the "way" to Gentiles, or, rather, teaching the Torah to non-Jews.⁵¹

The Jewish law was seen by Juvenal to conflict with Roman law, with Jews blindly observing

the former at the neglect of the latter. Regarding the severity of such an accusation, Louis

Freeman argues, "For a nation such as Rome that justly prided itself on the development of an

part of the Roman world and at the same time succeed in proselytizing, in infiltrating Roman society. The human sacrifices of the Britons and the Germans are horribly barbaric, the Egyptians are fanatical and awfully superstitious, but the true danger for Roman civilization is the Jews—and the Christians. The German superstition does not pose any danger to Rome; the Egyptian does to a certain degree, but it can be constrained (by contempt, proper education, and, if necessary, the appropriate intervention of the authorities); the Jewish/Christian superstition threatens to get out of control," Ibid., 192.

⁴⁸ Isaac, Invention, 480; J.P.V.D. Balsdon, Roman and Aliens, 231-232.

⁴⁹ For another contemporary anti-Jewish text, see *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs*, which dates from the year 115 C.E.

⁵⁰ Juvenal, *Satires*, 14:96-106; Isaac, *Invention*, 454.

⁵¹ Feldman, Jew and Gentile, 129.

extremely comprehensive and fair system of law, there was almost no charge graver than this."⁵² In both Tacitus and Juvenal, Jewish practices are seen as instruments that serve to erect barriers between Jews and their neighbors.

Anti-Jewish Rhetoric during the Reign of Trajan

It is my contention that the resurrection of the misanthropy theme in Roman literature is the product of a growing cultural conflict between Romans and Jews; a conflict which peaked during the reign of Trajan, generating a greater intensity of anti-Jewish propaganda. As Goodman argues, "I shall single out the years of Trajan's rule as the period in which it seemed to become clear for the first time that Jews would not be able to live under Roman rule without suffering religious persecution."⁵³

The status of Jews in the empire fluctuated dramatically between the reigns of Augustus and Hadrian.⁵⁴ During the reign of the Julio-Claudian emperors, Romans seem to have regarded Judaea as undeserving of much consideration. It was a territory that required little military attention since it posed little threat to Rome's sovereignty. The outbreak of revolt in 66-73 CE, however, proved to be a turning point for Jewish-Roman relations in Judea and throughout the

⁵² Ibid., 130.

⁵³ Martin Goodman, "Trajan and the Origins of Roman Hostility to the Jews," *Past and Present* 182 (2004): 21. There were certainly exceptions to such negative valuations. Freeman succinctly summarizes these positive remarks, "the picture painted by the ancient intellectuals with regard to the Jews is not one-sided. Indeed, even such detractors of the Jews as Tacitus (*Histories* 5.5.1), at the beginning of the second century, grant the legitimacy for certain rites of the Jews, such as the Sabbath, the observance of Passover, and abstention from pork, by virtue of their antiquity. Similarly, the second-century Celsus (quoted in Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.25), though generally critical of the Jews, is ready to grant that their worship may be very peculiar, but at least it is traditional, which is not true of Christianity. Indeed, he notes that in this respect the Jews behave like the rest of humanity, in that each nation follows its traditional customs, whatever kind they may happen to be," 130.

⁵⁴ Louis Freeman, Jews and Gentiles, 92-102.

Diaspora communities.⁵⁵ An index for this change in perspective is the prominence of anti-Jewish propaganda in the period that followed. The rebellion and its concomitant suppression was claimed by the Flavian dynasty as a legitimizing strategy aimed at ameliorating any questions of Flavian ascension to the throne, pertaining to the family's low birth or their usurpation of power in the civil war of 69 CE. The defeat of the Jews was celebrated as Rome's victory over barbarian oriental foreigners and the Flavians were acknowledged as protectors of Rome's empire.⁵⁶

In spite of the significant losses to Roman troops during the war, Titus celebrated an early triumph in Rome for his victory over the dangerous foreigners. The city center was embellished visually to celebrate this victory. The most visible of these monumental displays was the Temple of Peace, which was likely under construction from the very beginning of Vespasian's reign.⁵⁷ Its

⁵⁵ In spite of these changes, there was much continuity in the privileges Romans afforded Jews in the Empire. See Freeman, *Jews and Gentiles*, 98, who argues, "After the bloody and unsuccessful Jewish revolution of 66-74, one would have thought that the Romans would have reversed their policy of toleration toward the Jews. And yet, though one might well have expected him after the capture of Jerusalem to be vindictive toward the Jews, Titus, when persistently and continuously petitioned by the people of Antioch (Josephus, *War* 7.100-111) to expel the Jews from their city, refused, stating that now that the Jews' country had been destroyed there was no other place to receive them. Thereupon the people of Antioch petitioned Titus to remove the special privileges that the Jews had, but this, too, Titus refused. The non-Jewish inhabitants of Alexandria also, we hear (*Ant.* 12.121-22), asked Vespasian and Titus to deprive the Jews of the rights of citizenship; but these Romans refused this request likewise. Indeed, aside from the admittedly humiliating transformation of the Temple tax into a poll tax called the tax to the *fiscus Iudaicus* for the upkeep of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, the privileges of the Jews were not diminished."

⁵⁶ Lukas de Blois, *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power: Proceedings of the Third Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, C. 200 B.C. - A.D. 476), Netherlands Institute in Rome, March 20-23, 2002 (J.C.* Gieben, 2003), 418, "The Jewish War had been a savage, internal policing operation which had started with ignominious Roman defeat and ended in the destruction of one of the empire's great cities with its magnificent temple. Much was made of it by the Flavians because it was a war against non-Romans, wages successfully during and after Roman civil war."

⁵⁷ Fergus Millar, "Monuments of the Jewish War," 110. Millar supports this claim based on the quote from Cassius Dio who refers to its dedication in 75 CE "In the sixth consulship of

primary message was that peace had been restored following a tumultuous period of civil war and the Judaean War itself.⁵⁸ The space served as a public museum with one of the most elaborate displays of art in Rome that included a plethora of statues, as well as the spoils from Jerusalem. Josephus reports that the Flavians recovered the sacred utensils of the recently destroyed Jerusalem Temple and put them on display in a newly constructed temple precinct dedicated to Peace.⁵⁹ There were three other major monuments constructed in Rome to commemorate the war. Two of these monuments were either entirely or partially completed during the reign of Titus (79-81 CE), namely the "Colosseum" (80 CE) and the Arch of Titus in the Circus Maximus (81 CE).⁶⁰ The third monument, the surviving Arch of Titus, was completed after Titus' death by his brother Domitian (see Fig. 1 in Excursus Four). It is likely, however,

⁵⁹ Josephus, *BJ* 7.123-62. Goodman argues, "Despite the skepticism of many modern scholars, [Josephus'] version is probably correct, since he was present in the Roman camp during the siege and was writing for others who had been there also, but once the Temple had been destroyed, it was impossible for the new Roman regime to apologise for the destruction. Apology would suggest error and the possibility that the powerful god of the Jews would spurn the new emperor who had destroyed his sanctuary. Better by far to claim implicitly that the destruction was deliberate and a reason for celebration," Martin Goodman, "Trajan and the Origins of the Bar Kokhba War," Pages 23-29 in *The Bar Kokhba War: New Perspectives* (Edited by Peter Schäfer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 24.

⁶⁰ Fergus Millar, "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Edited by Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason and James Rives; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 113.

Vespasian and the fourth of Titus the precinct of Pax was dedicated and the 'Colossus' was set up on the Sacred Way. This statue is said to have been one hundred feet in height and to have borne the features of Nero, according to some, or those of Titus, according to others (66.15.1, Loeb Tran.)," 109-110.

⁵⁸ As Millar further argues, "What was known as the 'Templum Pacis' was in fact something more extensive than that, a large, rectangular, forum-like space of some 140 by 150 metres, constructed exactly parallel to the Forum of Augustus, and to the south-east; the space between them would soon be filled by the Forum transitorium. Archaeologically, it is very little known, though some excavations are currently in progress, since most of it lies under Mussolini's Via dei Fori Imperiali. But its design is known from the Forma Urbis—namely a porticoed square with the actual *templum* set into one side, and with six sequences of four oblong boxes marked as occupying the centre. These are generally interpreted as flower beds, but may perhaps rather have been stands on which statuary could be displayed; or they may have been fountain basins," Ibid. 110.

that the "Colosseum" and both arches were under construction while Vespasian was still alive, this is certainly true at least of the Colosseum.⁶¹ While the two arches were built in different locations, they served a common purpose as strategic monuments celebrating the Flavians as the restorers of peace and the victors over oriental barbarism.⁶² As a consequence of this rebellion, the Jews of the empire were prohibited from sending the accustomed half-shekel to Jerusalem as an offering for the maintenance of the Temple and its sacrifices. As a substitution in its place, all Jews in the empire were required to pay this in support of the rebuilding of the temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline hill in Rome, which had caught on fire as a result of the civil war in 69 CE.⁶³

While Vespasian and Titus benefitted greatly from the Judaean war and the symbolic capital it brought them in the visual display of their victory in Rome, the third and last emperor of the Flavian dynasty, Domitian, could not claim the victory as his own, since he was not present in Judaea during the war. Due to his lack of military accomplishments and the little attention afforded him as one who stood in the shadows of his father and brother's fame, upon his accession he needed to advertise his familial connection and so dedicated the Arch of Titus out of familial loyalty to his brother's victory. Consequently, there appears to have been another issue of the Judea Capta coin series toward the beginning of his reign in the mid-80s CE.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Regarding the silence about the 'Colosseum' in earlier literature, Millar notes, "Given the scale of the Colosseum, and the impact which the process of constructing it must have had in Rome, either Pliny or Josephus (in the *Jewish War*) might indeed have referred to it as a prospective major monument which was in the course being offered to the public by Vespasian. But in the event neither does, and the earliest allusions to it in literature are to the first shows to be given there, by Titus in 80," Ibid., 114.

⁶² The Arch that remains standing in Rome today was built overlooking the imperial fora, while the other commemorative arch was constructed on the triumphal route. Goodman "Bar Kokhba War," 24.

⁶³ Cassius Dio 66.7.2

⁶⁴ Goodman "Bar Kokhba," 26.

Upon Domitian's death and Nerva's subsequent enthronement, the new emperor exerted much energy to distance himself from the tyrannical ways of his predecessor.⁶⁵ One of the strategies used to accomplish this was by instituting a change in the Jewish tax, which may have helped some in reconsidering their attitudes toward the Jews, albeit only temporarily. Nerva issued coins in the city of Rome that proclaimed "*Fisci Iudaici Calumnia Sublata*" (See Fig. 2 in Excursus Four).⁶⁶ The precise meaning has been debated.⁶⁷ Molly Whittaker provides a sufficient gloss "abolition of malicious prosecution in connection with the Jewish tax."⁶⁸ On the obverse side of the coin there is an image of a palm tree, a typical symbol to denote Judaea on Roman coins. The overall message is generally interpreted as advertising a beneficial message for Jews.⁶⁹ Martin Goodman has convincingly argued that the coins signal a change in the policies governing Roman-Jewish relations; specifically, an abolition of the Jewish tax during the reign of Nerva.⁷⁰ Goodman and others interpret the reign of Nerva as a period in which the Jews might reasonably hope to be allowed to rebuild their Temple that had lain in ruins for the last twenty-

⁶⁵ According to Suetonius *Domitian* 12; 15.1; Dio Cassius 67.14.1-2; Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.19-20.

⁶⁶ These coins are large bronze sesterces, with the head and titles of Nerva on one side, and an image of a palm tree on the other side. The image of the palm tree is regularly used in Roman iconography to depict Judaea. Goodman argues, "The coins were produced in two separate issues in 96 C.E., in mid autumn and in December, with a third issued in the first half of 97 C.E... These coins have been taken by many scholars as particularly significant evidence of the evolving relationship in the imperial period both between the Roman state and the Jews and, more specifically, between the Roman state and gentiles attracted to Judaism," Goodman "Bar Kochba," 81.

⁶⁷ D.C.A. Shotter, "The principate of Nerva: some observations on the coin evidence," *Historia* 32 (1983), 218-220.

⁶⁸ Molly Whittaker, *Jews and Christians: Graeco-Roman Views* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 105.

⁶⁹ Goodman, "Kokhba," 26.

⁷⁰ This line of interpretation was suggested, though not endorsed, by Harold Mattingly and Edward A. Syenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage Volume II: Vespasian to Hadrian* (London: Spink and Son, 1968), 221.

six years.⁷¹ This would signal the first time in a whole generation that the Romans' harsh policy and attitude toward the Jews might ameliorate and provide new opportunities for improving their status in the empire. Nerva's adoption of Trajan in the autumn of 97 CE, however, coincided with a change in imperial policy toward Jews in the empire. Coins advertising *Fisci Iudaici Columnia Sublata* were no longer minted. One can only imagine the disappointment facing Jews around the empire after reimposing the special tax, triggering a new era of Jewish discontentment, which proved "proportionately bitter and its effects dire."⁷²

The growing conflict between Romans and Jews continued to worsen during the reign of Trajan.⁷³ Trajan's rise to power depended largely on his own military achievements on the Northern Frontier, but also on his family's reputation for military excellence. Trajan's father and homonym, M. Ulpius Traianus, rose from a *novus homo* to patrician status due to the patronage of Vespasian. As one of the three legionary legates in the Judaean war, Traianus served alongside Titus and under Vespasian, supporting them both in their rise to power. The repercussion of Trajan's family link to the Judaean war was enough to end Nerva's beneficent policies to the Jews. Thus, Trajan publically emphasized the reputation of his father, who was deified by 112 CE, alongside his adopted father, Nerva.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Martin Goodman, *Roman World 44BC-180AD* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁷² Goodman "Kokhba," 89.

⁷³ For a concise review of the literary evidence for the status of Jews under Trajan, see E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule, From Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations (Vol 20)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 424-427.

⁷⁴ As Goodman argues, "Thus, however much his son Trajan might be willing to acquiesce in Nerva's policy of a *damnatio memoriae* of Domitian, the reputation of Vespasian and Titus as great generals was important for Trajan's self-image and could not be similarly denigrated. It is striking that, once emperor, Trajan emphasized in public the great reputation of his natural father, who was eventually deified in 112 CE, alongside that of the imperial father Nerva who had adopted him," "Kokhba," 27.

From 114-117 CE Trajan and the Roman army went on campaign to the East, waging war against the Parthians.⁷⁵ During this period of considerable expansion, Jews in the diaspora and Judea revolted, provoking the attention of Trajan's legions.⁷⁶ These revolts were likely of greater importance to those Jews living outside Judea than the Jewish revolts of 66-73 and 132-135. The outbreaks involved Jews in Libya, Egypt, Cyprus, Judaea, and even possibly Mesopotamia as well.⁷⁷ These uprisings are noteworthy for being the only instance of Jewish violence on a grand scale outside Judaea that involved simultaneous outbreaks in different geographical locations. The results were catastrophic for the communities involved, estimates of over 100,000 left dead, with numerous religious sites destroyed, and the intensification of Jewish discontent and mistreatment. What exactly happened? How did these events transpire? What is the relationship between the scattered uprisings? Were they coordinated attempts with delegates moving between each location? There is much uncertainty regarding the specifics of these events due to the nature of our sources, which do not always agree and concern themselves more with the fighting involved than the motivations.⁷⁸

That these uprisings coincided with Trajan's eastern campaign is uncontested. What remains to be debated, however, is the relationship between this campaign and the uprisings, as

⁷⁵ As Goodman argues concerning this point, "The reason for the refusal of Vespasian and Titus to permit such building must lie in their reliance on the capture of Jerusalem as justification to the Roman people for their seizure of power within the Roman state. Nerva and Trajan, who owed nothing to the Flavians and therefore had no need to continue their anti-Jewish policies, might have been expected to permit the rebuilding, and their refusal to do so must have been a severe blow, but even in the *Mishnah*, redacted in c. AD 200, rabbis discussed in great detail the way in which the sacrifices should be carried out, without any hint that their discussion was only theoretical," Ibid., 312.

⁷⁶ E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 389-427.

⁷⁷ Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 104.

⁷⁸ James J. Bloom, *The Jewish Revolts Against Rome, A.D. 66-135: A Military Analysis* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Co., 2010), 180.

well as the motivations that lie behind them.⁷⁹ Some argue that the uprisings were triggered by those who were displaced after the First Jewish War, others argue that it was motivated by heightened messianic expectations, and some see it as a combination of both.⁸⁰ It is widely held that the ferment was, at least in part, the result of a general discontent among Jews for their mistreatment in the destruction of the Temple and the *fiscus Judaicus*.⁸¹ Goodman argues, "On first sight, the extensive and ferocious Jewish mutinies during the reign of Trajan appear to have erupted out of nowhere. However, if we take into account the prolonged and profound social alienation between Jews and non-Jews, the aggressiveness of the Jewish uprising in A.D. 116-117 and its equally fierce suppression makes more sense."⁸² The Jews' taking up arms at this

⁷⁹ "These 60 years of bloody confrontation between Jews and the Roman Empire find no parallel anywhere else in the Roman world. Although the threat posed by the Germanic and Scythian tribes, for example, during the second century far exceeded the trouble caused by the Jews, and although the Romans also faced many other upheavels within the empire's borders (including Boadicca's rebellion in Britain and serious uprisings in Gaul), the Jewish uprisings were more persistent and extensive. Scores of Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean suffered from the conflicts, or encountered the suffering of fellow Jews, whether through the death of family members, their sale into slavery or prostitution, or the official confiscation of property and land. Imperial propaganda, especially of the Flavians but also of Hadrain, spread the word of Jewish defeat and hardship even further in the form of "Judaea Capta" coinage and by legislation; it was advertised through triumphal art and architecture (the arch of Titus being the most famous example). The horrendous outcome of these conflicts became a fundamental component of the experience and consciousness of the generations that followed, shaping the Jewish historical heritage, collective memory, and sense of identity," Yaron Eliav, "Jews and Judaism 70-429 CE," Pages 565-586 in A Companion to the Roman Empire (Edited by David S. Potter; Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 571.

⁸⁰ Bloom, The Jewish Revolts Against Rome, 179.

⁸¹ In support of this view, James Bloom argues, "We can safely say that a general ferment prevailed at the time among the Jews, cause by the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 and by the demeaning *fiscus Iudaicus*, which compelled all Jews to pay an annual poll tax to the Roman state. Jewish texts composed in this epoch, such as the Third Sibylline Oracle, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch insist on an impending cataclysm resulting from a combination of the current political situation, on the imminent coming of the Messiah, the destruction of the wicked, the ingathering of the exilies, the restoration of the Jewish state, and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Surely these second century A.D. texts signify that something was a foot," Ibid., 200.

⁸² Ibid., 183.

particular time may have to do with the opportunistic time of Trajan being occupied with the war against the Parthians.

In addition to these causes, there were local factors at play that provoked the uprisings. For instance, Cassius Dio reports that the Jews in Libya attacked their Greek and Roman neighbors with the utmost cruelty, as violent disturbers of the peace.⁸³ Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev notes, however, that while these details have historically been treated by scholars as objective historical descriptions, it should be considered within the context of vindictive rhetoric whereby Romans contrast their barbarian enemies with themselves.⁸⁴ She notes, "The atrocities attributed to the Jews by Dio are no more striking than the ones he attributes to the Britons when they were revolting against the Romans in 61 CE (62.7.1-3), or to the Bucoli, who revolted against the Romans in 61 CE (62.7.1-3), or to the Bucoli, who revolted in Egypt in 171 CE (71.4.1)."⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev "The Uprisings in the Jewish Diaspora," Pages 93-104 in *Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume 4. The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Edited by Steven Katz, New York: Cambridge, 2006), 94, argues, "Apart from rhetorical exaggerations, the epigraphical material attests attacks directed against temples, statues of gods, and centers of Greek civic life. In the city of Cyrene, in the sanctuary of Apollo, for example, "the baths with the porticoes, ball-courts and other neighboring buildings… were destroyed and burnt down in the Jewish revolt" (*CJZC* 23). The temple of Hecate, too, was "des[troyed] and [burnt down in] the Jewish revolt" (*CJZC* 21), and large destruction is also attested in the Caesareum (*CJZC* 17,

⁸³ 68.32.1

⁸⁴ See the work of Schmidt which succinctly surveys sources from the reign of Trajan and their depiction of barbarians, Thomas S. Schmidt "Plutarch's Timeless Barbarians and the Age of Trajan" Pages 57-71 in *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.)* (ed. Philip A. Stadter and Luc Ven der Stockt, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002). As Kampen astutely observes, "Comparing Trajan to the conquered Dacian men reveals the nature of his ideal Roman manliness. The artists used group direction, pose and gesture, and facial expression to make Dacian defeat clear and convincing. Whereas the Romans march and fight facing to the right most of the time (when they are in or around a fort they sometimes move to the left toward the fort), the Dacians move to the left to fight (unless they are in relation to a fort or are surrounded or being chased)," Natalie Kampen "Looking at Gender: The Column of Trajan and Roman Historical Relief" Pages 46-73 in *Feminisms in the Academy* (ed. Domna C. Stanton and Abigail J. Stewart, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 60.

At around the same time as the events in Libya transpired, Jews in Egypt also arose in conflict with their fellow non-Jewish neighbors.⁸⁶ According to Eusebius, leaders of the uprising in Libya were acting in alliance with the Jews in Egypt, and at some point the Jews in Libya crossed over into Egypt; however, the connection between these two uprisings is still questioned.⁸⁷ The significance of the Egyptian turmoil was the geographical spread of the conflict.⁸⁸ Eusebius wrote that in response to these uprisings, Trajan sent "Marcius Turbo with land and sea forces including cavalry. He waged war vigorously against them in many battles for a considerable time and killed many thousands of Jews, not only those of Cyrene but also those of Egypt."⁸⁹ The consequence was cataclysmic for the Jews in this area. The contemporary writer Appian reports that Trajan "exterminated" the Jewish race in Egypt, which was most likely a gross exaggeration, but may illustrate the extent of the tragedy.⁹⁰

Simultaneously with the uprisings in Libya and Egypt, Jews in Cyprus also began to wage war with their neighbors. Cassius Dio reports that as a consequence of the Jewish revolt Jews were not permitted to set foot on Cyprus, even if driven upon the island by a storm, or they

^{18, 19)} and in the temple of Zeus (*CJZC* 22)." See also A.M. Schwemer, "Der judische Aufstand in der Diaspora unter Trajan (115-117 n.Chr.)," *Biblische Notizen.*, no. 148 (2011): 85–100.

⁸⁶ On the problems of dating, see Ibid., 95.

⁸⁷ *HE* 4.2.3.

⁸⁸ Pucci Ben Zeev CHJ, 95, "According to papyri the conflict took place in "the Athribite district, the vicinity of Memphis (*CPJ 11 438-9*)—a strategic center known for its antisemitism—the Fayum (*CPJ* 11 449), Oxyrhynchos (*CPJ* 11 445, 447, 450), and the Herakleopolite nome (*CPJ* 11 445). Further south, the effects of fighting are recorded for the Kynopolite (*CPJ* 11 445), the Hermopolite (*CPJ* 11 436, 438, 442, 443, 446), as well as the Lycopolite and the Apollinopolite districts (*CPJ* 11 444, 436)."

⁸⁹ HE 4.2.3-4

⁹⁰ BC 2.90; Maria Pucci Ben Zeev, "Greek Attacks Against Alexandrian Jews During Emperor Trajan's Reign," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 20, no. 1 (1989): 31–48.

would be put to death.⁹¹ While this statement has been doubted by certain scholars, there is no evidence of Jewish presence on Cyprus until the fourth century CE in the epigraphical material.⁹²

There is mixed evidence in the sources as to whether there was also a Jewish rebellion at this time in Mesopotamia.⁹³ While Dio does not mention any, Eusebius reports there was in *Chronicon*, yet in *HE* Eusebius reports that Trajan was only suspicious that such an uprising could occur.⁹⁴ Pucci Ben Zeev explains the situation as follows:

If this identification is correct, the Jewish revolt was an episode of the Parthian war meant to prevent Roman conquest. It was certainly not fortuitous that in Mesopotamia the Jews armed themselves and banded together with the other local population groups. This fact may well be explained by the relatively good position enjoyed by the Jews in the Parthian Empire, at least when compared with that of their brethren under the Roman government.⁹⁵

There are several sources which seem to indicate that an uprising also simultaneously

took place in Judaea. While the details of what actually took place are unclear, it was significant

enough to initiate a change in Judaea's status from a praetorian to a consular province, which

brought with it the addition of a second legion.⁹⁶

For the Romans, the greatest consequence of this series of Jewish uprisings is that the Romans were unsuccessful in permanently extending their *imperium* and maintaining control of the Parthian kingdom. This was largely the result of the Jewish uprisings, which required Trajan to remove some of his best generals from the Parthian front. Although the Romans were

⁹¹ 68.32.3

⁹² Pucci Ben Zeev CHJ, 98.

⁹³ Sources concerning this campaign are fraught with problems. As Mattern notes, "The temptation to exaggerate the distances progressed, to convert villages into cities, and perhaps even to invent non-existent people must have been overwhelming. Trajan wrote to the senate during his Parthian expedition that he had progressed farther than Alexander, and Caracalla boasted in his letters that he had subjected the entire east. Both claims, of course, were wildly exaggerated," Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 33.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 99.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 99-100.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 101.

eventually successful in suppressing the revolts, it ultimately compromised their mission to annex Mesopotamia.⁹⁷ Because of the Jewish revolts, the most ambitious military undertaking in the history of the empire, at least since Augustus, failed.

The consequence of these bloody conflicts served a critical role in shaping both Jewish collective memory and identity, as well as the perception and status of Jews throughout the empire.⁹⁸ It likely led to a perspective of the Jews as the opponents of Rome's own triumphal expansion, a striking parallel with their depiction in Acts as they appear opposing Paul's own triumphant, expansionistic movement. The image of the Jews that emerges in Acts seems to reflect these new developments of anti-Jewish propaganda during the reign of Trajan.⁹⁹

While the narrative of Paul and Barnabas being pressured out of the city by a jealous group of Jews in Pisidian Antioch adopts the long-standing perspective of the Jews as misanthropic, it couples it with another motif that reflects Acts' contemporary situation of anti-Jewish propaganda during the reign of Trajan. Thus, when the entire city responds with favor to Paul's preaching by being glad and praising the word of the Lord, the Jews form into a pressure group and incite the crowd, chasing Paul and Barnabas out of town. The pairing of expanding influence with Jewish resistance reflects new developments of anti-Jewish propaganda during the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 102-103.

⁹⁸ Yaron Eliav, "Jews and Judaism 70-429 CE," 571.

⁹⁹ In an appendix to his book *Dating Acts*, Richard Pervo briefly described the same diaspora revolt as a, "highly suitable context for Acts' portrait of the Jews as a subversive, disobedient, and violently obstinate people, and thus to suggest that this portrait did not depend upon animosities aroused by the rebellion of the 60s—antipathies that some might imagine to have faded by the second decade of the second century... Those inclined to date Acts in the second century will regard this period of revolt as part of the milieu for Luke's depiction of the Jews as threats to security and stability... hostility between Jews and others did not appear out of the blue one fine day in the year 115. Rather, what occurred was the eruption of a volcano that had long been belching fire and smoke," Richard Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 369-371.

reign of Trajan.¹⁰⁰ In Acts, the Jews are stereotyped as inherently bellicose and hostile toward the expansion of any collective entity other than their own and ready to exercise as much pressure as necessary to restrict the expansion of the Way.

Depicting Barbarians in Stone and Text

Before closing I would like to bring a few images from the Column of Trajan in dialogue with Acts, in order to further advance the argument that Acts adopts a Roman imperial perspective in its depiction of the Jews. The Column of Trajan is roughly contemporaneous with the compositional date of Acts, Tacitus' *Histories*, and Juvenal's *Satires*, and reflects similar representational standards. As demonstrated in Chapters One and Three, there are a number of similarities between the book of Acts and the winding relief, least of all that both chose similar rhetorical styles as the principal means of glorifying their protagonists. To extend this comparison here, however, there are a number of correlations in the strategies used in Acts to fashion an identity of "the Way" and contemporary Roman imperial strategies.

The importance placed on the detailed depictions of barbarians on the Column indicates how central "the other" was in discourses of Roman imperialism.¹⁰¹ Great concern and detail is given to the careful depiction of various ethnographic markers, such as physiognomy, hair type,

¹⁰⁰ Following WWII, several scholars have accused Luke of being anti-semitic. An example of one who defends Luke from such claims is Walter Liefeld, who argues, "Luke shows such interest in the positive response of individual Jews that it would be unfair to consider him to be anti-semitic at those times when identifies the negative response of what might be 'official' Judaism. To be sure, he quotes statements in the speeches that lay heavy blame on the Jewish society (Acts 2:23), but he also describes the Roman judiciary as sharing in the blame (Acts 4:27). And after instances when Paul is rejected by synagogue audiences, he is still ready to welcome Jews who believe, and Gentiles as well (Acts 17:5-12)," Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts* (Guides to New Testament exegesis 4; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1995), 95.

¹⁰¹ On Rome's attitude toward foreigners, see J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 1979.

and costume.¹⁰² The first few spirals depict the Roman army entering Dacia not as a war machine, but as a benevolent force that has come to bring civilization. Thus, the Roman legions are depicted building better civic structures than actively engaged in war.

As the previous chapter discussed, the column portrays *Romanitas* as something that is inclusive of ethnic differences, with much attention given to the high number of foreigners who fight alongside the Roman army as auxiliary support features the first battle scene to take place on the Column (see fig. 3 in Excursus Four). German auxiliaries support the Romans against the Dacian cavalry. While the legions demonstrate their skills at war, the German auxiliaries struggle to suppress their barbarian tendencies by decapitating the enemies and displaying the severed heads to an emperor who appears to respond with disgust.

By way of contrast, however, Dacians, are depicted as markedly non-Romans who resist being incorporated into the Roman model and violently oppose Trajan's civilizing program. In one battle scene (see fig. 4 in Excursus Four) the deity Jupiter is depicted fighting on the Romans' behalf, hurling a thunderbolt at the Dacians. Thus, heaven and earth join together in the fight to bring civilization to this distant people group.

¹⁰² I.M. Ferris, *Enemies of Rome,* "one of the first things that strikes the viewer is that there was a concerted effort by the artist to represent the Dacians as a distinct ethnic group rather than as undifferentiated, generic barbarians, as was often to be the case in Roman art... As a general observation, on the column the figures of the Dacians are often used in a purely constrastive way, dismantling their fortresses before the arrival of Roman forces, in contrast to an almost exaggerated concentration on the building and construction work being carried out by the Roman troops. Perhaps significantly, these troops are almost exclusively legionaries rather than auxiliaries. This seems to be part of an overall narrative thread that stresses a sense of overwhelming order among the victors and disorder among the defeated barbarians. This is also something that will be noted in the discussion of the Great Trajanic Frieze, but there the contrast was achieved by a different compositional strategy," 65-66. Cf. Roger Tomes, "Why Did Paul Get His Hair Cut? (Acts 18.18; 21.23–24)," in *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays* (ed. C. M. Tuckett; JSNTSup 116; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 188–97.

In a later battle (see fig. 5 in Excursus Four) the scene is divided with Roman legions on the left and the Dacians on the right, the two groups are divided by a diagonal line of shields. Lying at the bottom of the frame are the defeated Dacians, depicted here in stereotypical fashion, the ultimate consequence of any barbarian group who dares to resist Rome's expansionistic, incorporative enterprise. The message is that those who resist will be defeated.

Eventually, the wisest of Dacians bow allegiance before their new Lord, with Trajan receiving them as his subjects with mercy and forgiveness (see Fig. 6 in Excursus Four). Further up the column, a later event is depicted with the emperor approaching a Dacian city on his second campaign; he has supporters left in place to welcome him back to Dacia. Men, women, and children are present to greet the arrival of their emperor (see Fig. 7 in Excursus Four).

Meanwhile, the rest of the Dacians continue with their guerilla warfare, hiding out in heavily forested regions and hoping that they can withhold Roman advances (see Fig. 8 in Excursus Four).¹⁰³ It is just a matter of time before more and more Dacians turn to the emperor for mercy, to which he responds by pardoning them of their sins (see Fig. 9 in Excursus Four). On the Column, Dacians are depicted as a distinct ethnic group rather than as undifferentiated, generic barbarians. They are depicted as inherently bellicose and emotional, constructed in purely contrastive ways in order to show the superiority of Roman discipline and self-restraint. As Greg Woolf argues, "Barbarism in its lowest form was the absence of these qualities, and as a result barbarians were imperfect humans, part way to beasts. The moral qualities attributed to them, both in casual comments and in the ethnographies, were bestial. Barbarians were *feroces*,

¹⁰³ As Kampen notes, "Like other Roman monuments and texts, it posits the need for continual struggle to maintain victory, and it depicts manliness in large measure as the willingness to engage in that struggle while conforming to certain (often unspoken) codes of decorum—codes that distinguish Roman from barbarian, noble from lowly, man from woman," Natalie Kampen "Looking at Gender," 46.

wild like beasts. Their *feritas* was exhibited both in warlike, irrational behaviour and they were also marked out by strange styles of clothing, eating habits and their language. They lacked, in other words, both the general moral qualities of human beings and the culture that defined the Roman elite."¹⁰⁴ Certain scenes of the column are calculated precisely to highlight the more civilized nature of Roman ways and to construct a sharp contrast.

The book of Acts served as a literary monument to the triumphant spread of "the Way" as a benevolent, civilizing force that transforms the barbarous forces of the world, such as Saul of Tarsus, who ferociously swept city-to-city to kill innocent victims transformed into an exemplar of imperial virtues, demonstrating courage, resolve, and piety. In line with other representations at that time, however, one's own qualities were brought into sharp relief when juxtaposed with an outside group most often depicted in largely contrastive ways. Acts constructs a triumphalist narrative of Christianity's beginnings, and as a triumphalist account it has little regard for those it others. As a result, Acts' depiction of the Jews is quite brutal, in spite of certain attempts among some scholars to absolve Luke from anti-Judaism. Acts aspired to participate in the discourses of empire of its time by monumentalizing a public image of "the Way" that extends imperial discourse to itself while promulgating anti-Jewish propaganda developing during the reign of Trajan.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Woolf, Greg. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 60.

¹⁰⁵ As Edwards and Woolf argue in *Rome the Cosmopolis*, "Works of art which on one level served to represent the extent of Rome's power over other cultures could also work to convey the position of particular individuals drawing on new languages of power---indeed actually filling the shoes of the greatest of Greek rulers," Catharine Edwards and Greg Woolf, *Rome the Cosmopolis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57.

Conclusion: Acts' Depiction of the Jews within its Apologetic Framework

Acts' depiction of the Jews was not composed in a vacuum, but reflects common attitudes toward the Jews during the reign of Trajan. Acts casts the Jews as misanthropic, a theme that was adopted from imperial rhetoric, while accommodated to Acts' own contemporary setting to reflect post-70 developments, specifically, anti-Jewish propaganda during the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan. Acts represents the Jews as a people group whose way of life is ubiquitously misanthropic, with no distinction between Jerusalem, Judaea, or the diaspora, with all Jews acting in a single accord. They are depicted as lovers of their own group while openly hostile to outsiders, which give them mob power to exert pressure on local officials and the crowds.

Through Peter's encounter with Cornelius (Acts 10-11) and the broader debate over gentile converts' relation to the law (Acts 15), Acts makes a point to remove the prohibition against eating pork for both Jewish and gentile followers of the way.¹⁰⁶ As such, Christians cannot be accused of upholding Jewish antisocial customs because they have given up their $\mu \iota \sigma \sigma \xi \epsilon \nu \alpha \nu \sigma \mu \iota \nu \alpha$ and have become exemplary citizens of the empire. Thus, they can no longer be identified by their otherness, exclusiveness, and misanthropy by any informed Roman. Christians in Acts soften the continuation of these "strange" customs and adopt forms of conduct and policy that are more palatable to Roman sensibilities.¹⁰⁷

This negative construction of the Jews serves an integral role in Acts' apologetic aims. Acts fashions an image of the Way that aspires to lend legitimacy and social capital to Christians

¹⁰⁶ John Moxon, "Peter's Halakhic Nightmare: The 'animal' Vision of Acts 10:9-16 in Jewish and Graeco-Roman Perspective" (PhD Thesis, Durham: Durham, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

living in the Roman Empire. As Lawrence Wills argues, "The negative depiction of the Jews and the apology in respect to the Roman state go together, as opposite sides of the same coin. They are not to be pursued as separate themes in the redaction criticism of Luke-Acts, but express a coordinated impulse: to define the deconstruction of one relationship and the construction of another."¹⁰⁸ Averil Cameron has convincingly shown that Christians were seen as the quintessential outsiders by authors such as Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius, and as early as the second century, started speaking and writing the "rhetoric of empire" as a strategy whereby they could write themselves into a position of power. It is my contention that the book of Acts represents one of the clearest and earliest instances of Christians writing themselves out of a position of complete disenfranchisement to a position of power by adopting the rhetoric of empire. Thus, it is no coincidence that the very group Acts others by characterizing in purely contrastive ways is the very same group serving such purposes in the empire's capital city. While the Jews became objects of imperialist discourse, Luke removes Christians from being implicated in this discourse while reinforcing the place of Jews in that discourse. In the end, what is most concerning is the thought that Roman imperial ideology and discourse played a major role in shaping the future of Jewish-Christian relations.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Wills, "Depiction of the Jews," 652.

¹⁰⁹ Mitzi Smith has written about the potential this has for later generations, "Often otherness gets reinscribed and fossilized or codified in texts, especially sacred texts. And we tend to uncritically imbibe those literary and discursive constructions of stereotyped and politicized others. Those images likely become foundations for how we view others in the real world. Those images likely become foundations for how we view others in the real world. We impose or reinscribe the stereotyped and politicized others. Those images likely become foundations for how we view others in the real world. We impose or reinscribe the stereotyped and politicized others. Those images likely become foundations for how we view others in the real world. We impose or reinscribe the stereotyped and demonized other upon our world and the world of others, many times unwittingly and sometimes consciously... The construction of the other has to do with the drawing of boundaries in order to clearly distinguish between them and us. The drawing of boundaries becomes necessary because of any fluidity or similarity that exists between them and us. Other involves the obliteration of

EXCURSUS FOUR: IMAGES FROM CHAPTER FOUR



Fig. 1: Cast of panel relief from inside the vault of the southside of the Arch of Titus depicting the Judean triumph. Original is in the Roman Forum in Rome. The procession enters through the triumphal gate carrying the booty seized from the Judean wars. Cast from Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings

sameness and the foregrounding and/or construction of difference," Mitzi Smith, *The Construction of the Other in the Acts of the Apostles*, 3-5.



Fig. 2: Nerva's Fiscus Judaicus Sestertius Coin, 97 CE. Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Wikicommons

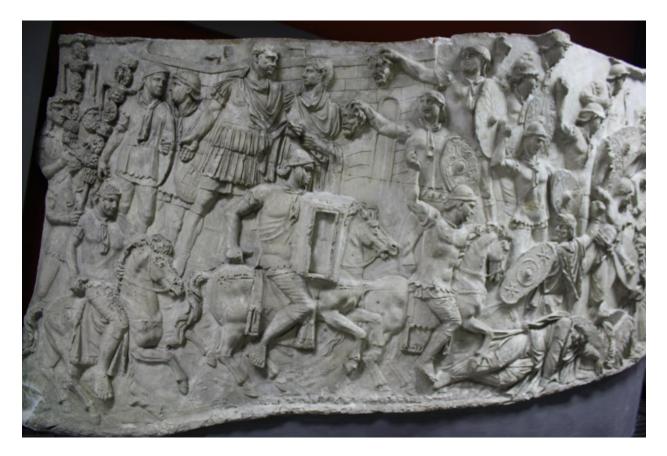


Fig. 3: The first battle scene to take place on the column. German auxiliaries support the Romans against the Dacian cavalry. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 4: A battle scene with the deity Jupiter fighting on the Romans' behalf, hurling a thunderbolt at the Dacians. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 5: Battle scene with Roman legions on the left and Dacians on the right. Lying at the bottom of the frame are the defeated Dacians. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 6: Dacians bow in submission to Trajan. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 7: Emperor approaching a Dacian city on his second campaign. Men, women, and children are present to greet Trajan. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 8: Dacians hiding out in heavily forested regions to engage in guerilla warfare. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.



Fig. 9: A group of Dacians turn to the emperor for mercy. Column of Trajan, Rome, c. 113 C.E. Cast of the reliefs, Museo della Civiltà Romana. Photo by Drew Billings.

CONCLUSION: Imperial Representations and Early Christian Self-Fashioning

Although Acts poses as a verbal record of the developments of the apostolic Church as they actually happened, it is better understood as the end product of countless representational choices. Its narrative does not simply present these events as they occurred; rather, it is active in shaping how its audience experiences and remembers them. In what follows, I will first summarize the overall argument of this dissertation and what it claims concerning the political theology of Acts, demonstrating how its narrative represents a retelling of the past that was conditioned by the need for legitimation, representation, and identity.¹ Then, I hope to address any anticipated doubts others may have toward my approach. In the end, I wish to show how this study reframes previous approaches to the question of Acts and politics and how the context of the Roman Empire influenced the way early Christians represented themselves by writing about their past in such a way so as to fashion their identity in the present.

The Political Theology of Acts

Modern readers will quite likely never know why Luke wrote Acts.² While this dissertation

¹ The book of Acts was written for Christian readers, who at the time of composition, were not using the term "Christian" as a self-designation. Therefore, the readers of Acts were those for whom its commemorative interests shaped the lives and visions of their community. This seems to be the general case in the competitive situation of the Roman Empire for social and political movements of differentiation. As Aleida Assmann argues, "The 'remembered past' is therefore not to be equated with the objectively detached study of the past that we like to call 'history.' It is always mixed with projected identities, interpretations of the present, and the need for validation. That is why our study of memory has taken us into the depths of political motivations and the formation of national identity, for what we have here is all the raw material that goes to the making of identities, histories, and communities… This force is part of what the French call imaginaire. We should not underestimate this a form of imagination as a mere fiction. Such fictions or inventions underpin all cultural constructions," Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 75.

² As Walter L. Liefeld notes, "It is probable that more theories exist as to the purpose of Acts than for any other New Testament book," Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts*

has shown that there is a clear convergence between the pragmatic choices of early Christians and the representational trends circulating across the empire, the motivations of individuals, whether they be ancient or modern, are always difficult to untangle. It is probably impossible to distinguish whether any given cultural production is designed as a conscious strategy for selfpromotion from that generated from an unconscious internalization of Roman values.³ One can say, however, that Acts was very much a product of its age and conforms to the representational standards that were visible and helped construct the broader social environment. This dissertation looked to the multi-media context of the early second century to identify those representational trends and status indices that were central for Acts. Early readers would have intuitively recognized the contemporary significance of certain defining characteristics of Paul's public portraiture. Luke presents "the Way" as a growing community negotiating its place within the larger, and more established structures of society. The virtues they are seen championing depends on their ability to honor, promote, and reproduce within themselves the principles and workings of the larger whole.

It was argued that the image of the power and beneficence of the Christian community, whose mission is depicted extending across the *oikoumené*, connecting otherwise distant lands within a patronage network extended through the mission of Paul and centered on the benevolent Christian Deity is an imperial one, drawn from Trajanic discourses of empire, in order to define

⁽Guides to New Testament exegesis 4; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1995), 21. See also Ibid., 30-32, which includes a survey of six prominent theories about the purpose of Acts, where he concludes, "Proposals regarding purpose are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Even where a dominant purpose can be found for a particular piece of writing, ancillary purposes are legitimate," 30.

³ This tendency may reflect broader patterns among communities across the empire, Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 74.

"the Way" in conformity with Roman standards of representation.⁴ Luke distinguishes his hero as one who contributes toward the civilizing mission and seeks to draw up a picture of Christianity that reproduces imperial rhetoric and values. The image of Paul constructed in Acts served to forge a place for Christians within the networks of imperial patronage and to show how followers of "the Way" can both help reify these networks and contribute to them.

The primary objective for Chapter One was to situate the book of Acts alongside the Column of Trajan in order to illustrate both the relevance of Roman commemorative art to current investigations of early Christian self-representations, as well as the degree to which Acts conformed to Trajanic standards of representation. Roman historical reliefs played an especially important role within this culture as visual media used to advertise the achievements of individuals in society. As such, they often feature elite males who wish to concretize their place in Roman society by displaying their service to the state. It is my contention that such visual media played a determinative role in shaping the contexts in which early Christian discourse was produced. As public monuments, Roman historical reliefs provided viewers with the very models and language they could appropriate to assert their own place in the wider world. By paying attention to the Column, one can learn a lot about the manner by which Luke seeks to sculpt Christian identity through the creative re-fashioning of the inherited tradition. Acts adopts a particular rhetorical form that carried a certain cultural currency in which those ambitious for social power could capitalize on in their own self-fashioning.⁵ As such, the narrative aesthetics of

⁴ Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 30.

⁵ This concept comes from what Bourdieu calls "cultural capital" which is a practice by which aspiring persons employ their acquired knowledge and sophistication as a kind of social commodity. Holliday uses this concept with regard to the use of different styles in Roman elite self-representation. As Holliday argues, "Roman aristocrats begin to deploy style itself as a self-conscious means of laying claim to social power. I will propose that issues of style become part

Acts were very much a product of the cultural history of the Roman Empire and served Christian interests in making sense of their own place in imperial society at a particular point in history.⁶

The flip side of this is that Acts intentionally draws on anti-Jewish discourses in attempt to forge a related, yet distinct cultural identity, following wider representational trends and available discourses. As mentioned in the conclusion of Chapter Four, Averil Cameron has convincingly shown that Christians were seen as the quintessential outsiders by authors such as Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius, and as early as the second century, started speaking and writing the "rhetoric of empire" as a strategy whereby they could write themselves into a position of power. It is my contention that the book of Acts represents one of the clearest and earliest instances of Christians writing themselves out of a position of complete disenfranchisement to a position of power by adopting the rhetoric of empire. Thus, it is no coincidence that the very group Acts others by characterizing in purely contrastive ways is the very same group serving such purposes in the empire's capital city. While the Jews became objects of imperialist discourse, Acts removes Christians from being implicated in this discourse while reinforcing the

of the cultural capital exploited by such Romans," Peter James Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 195. Speaking about the Republic, Holliday argues, "Style itself can be a mode of deploying such cultural capital. Victorious generals placed their artistic booty in the new temples and porticoes they built from their manubiae in fulfillment of vows made before their campaigns. Such displays provided an important conduit into Rome for the penetration of the taste for Greek art and corresponding representational forms following the conquest of foreign artistic centers. Hence territorial control, growing competition for gloria back home, and stylistic eclecticism moved in parallel," Ibid., 197. As Holiday further argues, "Both the material form and the style of Roman historical commemorative art, therefore, constituted a commodity that aristocrats negotiated for power and distinction," Ibid., 203.

⁶ For an example of this phenomenon during the reign of Augustus, see Mario Torelli, *Typology & structure of Roman historical reliefs* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1995), 134, who analyzes the Ara Pacis in terms of how it changed the structure and language by which subjects represented their own status.

place of Jews in that discourse. As such, this negative construction of the Jews serves an integral role in Acts' apologetic aims.

Addressing Anticipated Objections

In this next section, I would like to both anticipate and respond to a few general doubts some may have toward this study. In the Introduction, I proposed that while empire-critical approaches to the New Testament have yielded significant advances, future research would greatly benefit from a heightened particularism when considering the impact the Roman empire had on early Christian discourse.⁷ Specifically, the study of Christian discourse in the Roman world must take into consideration that the empire was subject to diachronic variance.⁸ While scholars may doubt the extent to which we can situate Acts within a particular period (or place) in the evolution of the empire, I find it extremely difficult to explain Luke's work without reference to the Trajanic context proposed throughout this study. This is largely due to the fact that Acts sits in sharp contrast to other early Christian literature, especially the book of Revelation, in how it envisages and positions itself vis-à-vis Rome. This "original achievement" requires further investigation in the conditions shaping *how* it relates the *ekklesia* to its

⁷ As Malina and Pilch argue, "the two-volume Luke-Acts is an occasional writing. Given the fact that it was written for a specific Jesus group in specific circumstances, Luke-Acts is occasional, written at a certain time to realize certain purposes (especially certainty), thus working to keep the ingroup intact. In other words, Luke-Acts was not written for all people of all times... Luke-Acts is not concerned about the outgroup. This means that these volumes are not documents for outsiders. They were not composed to be shared with non-Jesus group members to read, so that they might become Jesus group members. On the contrary, they are documents to be read within specific groups to maintain those groups in their loyalty to the God of Israel as revealed in the experience of Jesus and those change agents commissioned by him. The themes thay they emphasize are themes that the writer and his audience believed the ingroup would find relevant to hear at a certain time and in a given situation... In other words, Luke-Acts was not written for missionizing or proselytizing," Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Social-science commentary; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 9-10.

⁸ Averil. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire : The Development of a Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 4.

environment and *why* it does so in the way it does.⁹ Trajanic discourses of empire appear to have been productive for early Christians thinking about their own place in imperial society. In an age when the imperial project was masked as a benevolent civilizing mission that was integrating a vast territory under a centralized government with a shared set of ideals and values, early Christians may have sought, as seems to be taking place with the book of Acts, to have revamped, re-commemorated the memories of their founders in such a way so as to not only expunge negative traits that didn't fit the ethos but also to make them out as exemplars and contributors of Rome's civilizing ideals and mission. Acts is an attempt to rehabilitate the memory of Paul as a chained prisoner to an emblem of imperial virtues. In this sense early Christian heroes were commemorated in Acts in accordance with cultural frameworks which were shared by the cultural elite and shaped by Trajanic standards of representation. The political values of Acts must be acknowledged as an integral dimension to its narrative aims. It is no wonder that Paul's journey ends in the imperial capital where Paul is finally able to proclaim the kingdom of God with boldness and without hindrance, since such a proclamation and mission is cast in Acts as contributing to the civilizing mission of imperial Rome. The discourse Acts constructs was very much a product of the cultural history of the Roman empire and served Christian interests in making sense of their place in the wider world.

Historical approaches to the New Testament necessitate that attention be given to the Roman imperial setting as a formative context within which early Christian knowledge production took place. While early Christian discourse reflects the impact of this context to varying degrees and in manifold ways, the book of Acts provides one of the most widely acknowledged instances of exchange. This dissertation has demonstrated how Acts

⁹ See Hans Conzelman, *The Theology of St. Luke* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 137.

commemorates the story of Christian origins in such a way so as to *Romanize* "the Way" to a degree that has heretofore gone unnoticed. The nuance of my argument, however, depends on an understanding of "becoming Roman" that is not uniform for all of Rome's subjects and does not obliterate local contributions to identity. It seeks to explain how the vision in Acts serves to join the insider's debate about what it meant to be Roman at a particular time in the evolution of empire.¹⁰

This study does not presume an overly simplistic top-down model of cultural accommodation between Romans and their subjects under the empire. Rather, this study builds off the most recent work of ancient historians, especially in its emphasis on the variegated experience of imperial subjects. I am not simply reifying imperial rhetoric, which viewed the provinces from the perspective of Rome. Subjects did not have to live in or even visit Rome to experience the empire as a manifest reality. It was experienced in the form of tax collection, military presence, and legal proceedings. It was made palpable through the visual displays of coins, architecture, civic rituals, and religious processions. Images of Rome were ubiquitous and helped to administer the vast territory by creating the impression of an omnipresent and omniscient state.

David Mattingly argues from the perspective of archaeology the cultures of Rome's subjects were entirely changed in the period following their incorporation into the Roman Empire.¹¹ For instance, new religious cults were established, new cities built, dining customs and diets changed. Economies were transformed by new commercial developments, taxation, and

¹⁰ Language adopted from Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 20. See further discussion on this below.

¹¹ D. J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Miriam S. Balmuth lectures in ancient history and archaeology; Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2011).

currency changes. Local topographies were transformed through deforestation, the construction of roads and bridges, and the imposition of monumental structures. Social relations changed through the establishment of new networks of power, the displacement of thousands due to colonization, slavery, and commerce. Aesthetical tastes were transformed, influencing how women wore their hair to whether men shaved their beards. It influenced how people bathed, dressed, and decorated their houses. Such cultural changes were not restricted to the upper echelons of society either; rather, Roman cultural influences are visible even on the most inexpensive pottery vessels and altars.¹²

Beyond the material manifestations of Rome's cultural influence, what internal effects did the empire have on Rome's subjects? Tim Whitmarsh has focused on the various ways Roman imperialism influenced knowledge production. He demonstrates that the subjective effects of Roman cultural changes were as important as the material effects, although it remains a more difficult reality to map by nature due to problems of psychologizing our ancient sources. The saying remains true for the Roman period that empires mess with people's brains and that even the most mundane aspects of life were refashioned by this context.¹³

¹² Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, ix-x.

¹³ Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1-40. In the introductory chapter of *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, it is argued that a major theme that emerges, "Throughout the papers in this volume we can see the manipulation of the cultural artefacts to create images that we may associate with ethnicities, identities and cultures. However, what seems to be crucial to any understanding of cultural identity is to remember that there would have been more than one way of reading an identity or self. Indeed, as can be seen from the papers in this volume, a person might present his or her self in a specific manner, however outsiders might read that image in a completely different manner. There can be no single reading, only multiple readings and rereadings at a later date. Such a view questions the objectivity of the process known as Romanisation, since people manipulate images to negotiate their identity and power relations with strangers through the deployment of the material record. Such a view questions the supposedly 'objective' basis of material culture in simply reflecting what happened in the past. Similarly, the historical record displays the representation of identities and the attribution of

"Becoming Roman," however, was not uniform for all of Rome's subjects, nor did it obliterate locally distinctive identity markers. Roman imperialism was a highly variegated phenomenon and fails to be adequately explained using top-down, Romano-centric models often referred to as "Romanization."¹⁴ After all, there was no single cultural form of Roman civilization one could point to as the standard by which provincial culture might be measured.¹⁵ Rome itself was a cultural melting pot and was subject to the same sort of cultural changes as those found in the provinces. Furthermore, there was no one kind of "Roman" against which all others might be measured. Approaches to the topic need at once take into consideration both the unity and diversity of the empire.¹⁶ As Greg Woolf has argued, "Becoming Roman was not a matter of acquiring a ready-made cultural package, then, so much as joining the insiders' debate about what that package did or ought to consist of at that particular time."¹⁷ New identities emerged as a result that hybridized local and imperial forms.¹⁸

identities to others, rather than simply describing how these people lived. What we see in both the archaeological and the historical record is a process whereby identity is a negotiable concept," Ray Laurence, "Introduction" Pages 1-9 in *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire* (eds. Ray Laurence and Joanne Berry, London: Routledge, 1998), 8.

¹⁴ The term "Romanization" has been used by modern scholars to explain some of the processes by which such diverse people groups come to think of themselves as Romans. The utility of the term has been criticized more recently, because it has been used inappropriately to misconstrue the process of cultural change as a one-way, unitary process. This was not a uniform process and in no way did cultural diversity disappear under such processes. How then did provincials come to think of themselves as "Romans." What sort of beliefs and practices did it entail? To what extent is there a recognizable pattern in the self-fashioning of those who claim Roman culture for themselves?

- ¹⁵ Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 7
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 7 (referencing and quoting Harris 1971, 147)
- ¹⁷ Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 20.

¹⁸ On the dynamics of cultural identity under Rome, See Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1998); Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Paul Zanker argues this point with regard to Augustan art, "when we recall the principles on which modern advertising is based—the subliminal absorption of an image through constant repetition, regardless of the context—we can believe that the long-term effect on the Romans, even when unconscious, was not inconsiderable."¹⁹ Zanker argues that imperial images had an effect on ancient viewers in shaping their perceptions, values, and aesthetic sensibilities. The influence of these images is demonstrated in how the domestic sphere regularly reproduced images decorating the public sphere. While all of the stylistic correlations between Acts and the Column can be explained by coincidental stylistic similarities due to both being produced within a common cultural milieu, it is critical to note that narrative art had its own reciprocal effect on other modes of expression. Too often art is seen as a holding a passive role in society, where it merely reflects the society in which it was produced rather than asserting a formative influence on beliefs, practices, and aesthetical tastes. Monumental art, such as the Column of Trajan, would have been especially effective in strengthening and disseminating dominant ideologies as it sought to inspire viewers to support the state and fulfill their civic and military obligations.

Lastly, efforts to define and achieve status in Roman society also exercised a considerable influence on the composition of Acts. Through select stylistic and content choices an author could compose a narrative that aroused the admiration of readers by depicting its protagonists as compatible with and excelling at certain standards of behavior. From this perspective, Acts serves as a mediator between social ambition and political ideals. Interests in acquiring and perpetuating honor and status could be governing principles in determining the manner in which a subject is represented.

¹⁹ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Trans. Alan Shapiro; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 273.

Conclusion

Hermeneutical considerations are critical in one's approach to Acts, perhaps even more so than other New Testament documents. After all, it is an enigmatic text that conceals the location in which it was written, the audience for whom it was written to, as well as information regarding the particular time, location, and method by which it was circulated. Meanwhile, my own exegetical lens seeks to take seriously the fact that Acts did not develop out of a vacuum. This means that as far as my project is concerned, attempts are made to discern what wider cultural knowledge is embedded in the text that is both spoken and unspoken. The objective has been to elucidate these broader contextual patterns by connecting Acts' distinctive constellation of language, themes, and images to other representational media. This approach goes against other methods of literary analysis that treats Acts as a self-contained textual artifact independent of broader influences in cultural production. While such an approach can have great value, it does not deserve the pervasive treatment it has received over the years, and faces several serious problems as a method in exploring the political dimensions of Acts. This study has sought to broaden the discussion and investigate of Acts and Empire and show additional narrative blocks that early readers of Acts would have interpreted as interfacing with Roman imperial discourses.

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