I  Paul and “Paul”: Paul’s letter to the Philippians in light of Acts 20:18-36*


In his famous and well-known chapter on methodology (”Methodenkapitel”), the Greek historian Thucydides reflects about the function of speeches in history-writing (1.22). Here he reveals some remarkable insights into his compositional techniques as a history-writer:

As to the speeches that were made by different men it has been difficult to recall (διαμνημονεύσαι) with strict accuracy (ἀκρίβειαν) the words actually spoken, both for me, as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports (ἀπαγγέλλουσιν). Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said.¹

As we learn from this short passage of the Peloponnesian War, the historian’s composition of speeches has to deal with a few technical issues and interpretive challenges because he writes partly about events he has not witnessed himself: the composition of speeches is (a) based on different types of reports and sources; (b) should reach authenticity, and (c) has to be adjusted to the overall narrative purpose. The composition of speeches thus necessarily has to go through historiographical interpretation. Particularly in and by means of speeches, the historian can and must articulate to a huge degree his particular interpretive view of history. Consequently, a reshaping of historical protagonists will take place especially when the historian frames his figures as orators.

Since Martin Dibelius (“Die Reden der Apostelgeschichte und die antike Geschichtsschreibung”) the insights on ancient methods and aims of historiographical “speech-making” have been applied consistently to Lukan studies. In the case of Acts, it is now a widely shared scholarly methodology to read the diversity of speeches inserted into the narrative as the historian’s intentional

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attempt to make his narrative sound authentic. The historian, for instance, implements a “biblicizing style” or “archaizing effect” (e.g., Acts 3:13), or points to the diversity of languages that are used by the different protagonists of his story (Acts 2:8; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14). The historian, in other words, uses the speeches as elements for further interpreting the history of events (pragmata): the elements of analepsis and prolepsis are inherent to speeches as they help arrange the narrative account into a coherent more story. In regard to the quest for Lukan sources – especially in the case of Pauline speeches (Acts 13-28) – scholarly opinions still differ: did Luke know and use Pauline letter-writing when he shaped or re-shaped the image (or “picture”) of Paul – especially as an orator – in Acts?4

The quest concerning Luke’s usage of Pauline letter-writing is frequently put into a much wider interpretive frame. On the one hand, we could discuss how the image of Paul is (re)shaped in a variety of post-Pauline writings up to the end of the 2nd century CE: from Pauline pseudepigraphy up to the Acts of Paul we could explore how Paul is perceived and reproduced as an apostle – including or excluding his own letter-writing activity. Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, on the other hand has, among others, broadened the debate about Lukan sources in Acts far beyond the speech sections: he even suggests reading a re-narrating passage like Acts 9:1-25 as a “narrative history based on the letters of Paul.” By showing how Acts 9 recalls or echoes several Pauline letters (esp. Gal, 1 and 2 Cor), Buitenwerf ultimately reaches the conclusion that Acts in general “depends” on Pauline letters (p. 85). As many other scholars before and after him (e.g., R. I. Pervo), Buitenwerf also finds it difficult to imagine “that the author of Acts ... did not have access to Paul’s letters” (p. 85). Pauline letters had been spread. They must have been known especially to an author like Luke who in general and by (self)definition was so eager to collect all kinds of available materials on the past (Lk 1:1-4). Even though we can thus presuppose a Lukan knowledge of Paul’s letters, I would make two critical remarks to Buitenwerf’s proposal:

First, I would avoid the use of the term “literary dependence” when describing Luke’s way of “using” Pauline letter-writing. As I intend to show in this paper,

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2 See C. R. Holladay, Acts, 42f.
3 To the Lukan image of Paul in general: B. Heininger, "Reception," 309-338, 328ff.
5 R. I. Pervo, Acts of Paul, 41f. shows how APl is in his image of Paul similar and different to Acts: In both cases, Paul is shown as a "wandering missionary"; however, Paul’s message in APl has a "strongly anti-establishment edge, rejecting the official forms of authority ...". See also B. L. White, Remembering Paul.
the relation between Acts and Pauline epistolography is much more complex – as the general principles of how Luke (re)shapes the image of Paul in Acts are much more diverse (s. below). Second, in contrast to how Buitenwerf in his interpretation of Acts largely repeats the long lasting prejudice that “as historiography, Acts is not very reliable” (p. 61), I would argue, instead, that – seen specifically in light of Thucydides’ methodological reflections mentioned above – Luke’s attempt to reshape rather than to record Paul by creative means has to be seen as an authenticating strategy. This is especially true when Luke presents Paul as an orator and creates speeches that cannot be verbatim reports, and thus are hardly “historically precise” – because Luke has to rely on various, manifold, and partly divergent kinds of “sources.” Luke in fact reproduces Paul. Luke himself would consider this way of (re)shaping Paul to be the most accurate depiction of the apostle’s life and mission (deeds and words). Reshaping rather than recording the “past” is how historians – especially within speech sections – claim to achieve historiographical accuracy.

In a manner similar to how Thucydides describes the principles of historiographical speech-making, therefore, Luke has to be reproductive. He has to combine, reshape and interpret what were most likely oral reports or testimonies, contemporary images of Paul, and the Pauline letter-writing in a meaningful sense. As a historian, Luke recalls and revisits Paul as a protagonist of his historiographical account, indeed adequately, and this means from his, i.e. Luke’s, interpretive point of view. By programmatically reproducing the image of Paul, Luke uses (a) eyewitness reports (“How was Paul remembered as an orator?”), (b) contemporary, evaluative images of the apostle (“From the perspective of later decades, what did Paul actually contribute to the mission and expansion of the gospel message?”) as much as (c) Paul’s own literary products (that is, his letter-writing).

Such a revising Lukan approach to “Paul” is – as I argue – in particular to be found in Acts 20:18ff. The image of Paul here must be the creative result of Luke’s consultation and reproduction of the diversity of “sources” he could examine. As I have indicated elsewhere Acts 20:18ff. contains a variety of motifs and literary devices that make it highly plausible to imagine an intertextual relation between Acts and Paul’s letter to the Philippians. First, the motif of Pauline humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη: Acts 20:19; see Phil 2:3), related to a concept of service (δουλεύειν: Acts 20:19; see Phil 1:1; 2:7, 22) performed amid tears (δάκρυοι: Acts 20:19; see Phil 3:18-21), presents an inventory of semantics that is typical, if not specific of Philippians – especially since the term ταπεινοφροσύνη only occurs once in the authentic Pauline letters (Phil 2:3). Also Luke’s mention of elders/
presbyters (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1: “bishops and deacons”) and “praying” (Acts 20:36; Phil 1:9) interconnects both texts. Second, Luke draws on metaphors which he finds in Philippians. The motif of δέσμοι (Acts 20:22f.; Phil 1:7, 13ff.; in both texts used as a metaphor) and the agonistic metaphor of running (Acts 20:24; Phil 3:13f.) pick up Paul’s language and terminology used particularly in this letter. Third, in terms of its personal or even emotional tone Acts 20:18ff. takes up the general narrative outline of Philippians which presupposes a cordial friendship of Paul and his audience (reflected in Acts 20:37f.). Fourth, we can identify in both texts similar concepts of the Pauline “self”: Carl R. Holladay points out in regard to Acts 20:24 how Paul’s way of valuing “one’s own life … transcendently rather than self-referentially is a firmly established Pauline sentiment (Phil 1:18-26) that resonates with the Lukan Jesus” (see Lk 9:23ff.; 12:23; 14:26; 17:33).  

The close intertextual relation between Acts 20 and Philippians does not exclude the possibility of Luke having various other Pauline letters in his mind. Rather, the observation of intertextual relations between Acts and Philippians – here and at other places (e.g., Acts 16:10 and Phil 4:15) – leads to the question: what does Luke do with Philippians? Does he allude to it, does he intentionally create echoes, or does he merely quote Pauline language? And why does the auctor ad Theophilum neither mention the (epistolary) source behind the speech nor Pauline letter-writing as such? Does letter-writing in Paul’s case have a bad connotation? Or does Luke, for whatever reason, simply want to ignore Pauline letter-writing as such, and/or Philippians in particular?

2. Conceptual analogies? Tacitus’s depiction of Seneca in and beyond ann 12-15

By entering the field of ancient historiography another time, we might learn more about Luke’s concept of reproducing Paul rather than recording him. We will, for now, look at the field of early imperial historiography, specifically at Tacitus’s reproduction of Seneca. Here we can study, first, how a historian re-models the image of a historical agent who may well also be a letter-writer, and, second, how historiography transforms, or “manipulates” letter-writing.

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8 C. R. Holladay, Acts, 397.
9 Luke might have esp. 1 and 2 Cor – see the motifs: “aliment” in Acts 20:33f. and 1 Cor 9:12ff.; the “weak” in Acts 20:35 and 1 Cor 8:12; “giving” in Acts 20:35 and 2 Cor 8:8f. and 9:7 – in mind.
In Tacitus’s *Annals* 12-15 we find the most comprehensive Tacitean engagement with Seneca. This section contains his only explicit references to the philosopher. In *Annals* 12-15 comprises the first mentioning of Seneca (12.8.2) – as being remitted by Agrippina of banishment – up to the philosopher’s suicide (15.60-64). James Ker has demonstrated how Tacitus all the way through depicts Seneca in a “Tacitean portrait” (p. 305), indeed, both, in his deeds or historical achievements as a statesman and in his literary activities. In terms of, both the philosopher’s image as well as the reception of his works, *Annals* 15.60-64 seems to be the “hermeneutical key” to Tacitus’s interpretation of Seneca. How does Ker in general describe the profile of the “Tacitean Seneca?”

### 2.1. Remodeling the image of Seneca as a historical agent in *Annals* 12-15

According to Ker (a) the Tacitean portrait of Seneca is always characterized by incidents “Tacitus does *not* mention” (p. 307); (b) Tacitus’s “entire narrative on Seneca exhibits the tendency toward an ‘audience-based’ portrait ..., incorporating the conflicting judgments of several internal audiences” (p. 308); (c) Seneca’s character is “pulled in different directions by certain structural pressures in the *Annals*” (p. 308); (d) already Tacitus’s “first mention of Seneca ... introduces many motifs that will recur ...” (*Annals* 12.8.2; p. 313).

(e) We might add to this list of compositional principles, which Tacitus follows when reproducing “Seneca,” the fact that the historian, especially in the part on the Neronic time (*Annals* 13-16), frequently makes use of forerunning historians like Cluvius Rufus (e.g., 14.2.1), Fabius Rusticus (15.61.3; 13.20.2; 14.2.2) and Pliny the Elder (15.33.3) – these authors are most likely to be Tacitus’s “triumph of sources” (Quellentrias; e.g., 13.30). The bonds to his sources impact the way in which Tacitus creates his story. Even though he has shown earlier in his *Annals* a critique of F. Rusticus who was, from Tacitus’s perspective, much too close a friend of Seneca (*Annals* 13.20.2), he might follow F. Rusticus (*Annals* 15.61.3) especially in the report of Seneca’s death (*Annals* 15.60-64), and hereby accept the pro-Senecan tendencies which he finds here. The overall portrait of Seneca in the *Annals* is thus not fully cohesive (see, e.g., *Annals* 15.60.2 *versus* 15.45.3).

To sum up: A historian like Tacitus obviously has a concise idea of how he would like to reproduce a crucial historical protagonist. By collecting and in-

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vestigating literary and documentary (e.g., *ann 15.74*) sources and testimonies of a wider range, he would create his particular portrait of Seneca by (a) leaving things out, (b) taking his contemporary, partly dissenting (reading) audience into account; (c) Tacitus’s portrait of Seneca has to fit the overall narrative frame and argument of his writing – (d) the way in which the very first mentioning of the protagonist is created, might already be decisive; and (e) ultimate narrative cohesion is intended, but not achieved (s. tendencies of sources). What can we learn for our field of Acts-and-Paul-studies from how Tacitus (re)shapes the image of Seneca into *his* portrait?

Remodeling the image of Paul, (a) Luke does not give us a full picture of Paul’s achievements either: he intentionally leaves things out: Luke does not mention Paul’s violent death in Rome; he does not reveal particular interest in mentioning Paul’s collection mission which was so decisive for Paul’s self-understanding (e.g., 1 Cor 16; 2 Cor 8-9; but see above: Acts 20:35; see also: 24:17); and most evidently, Paul’s letter-writing activity as such is ignored. Instead, Paul is frequently shown as an orator who primarily speaks to the public instead of addressing specific communities (as he does in his letter-writing). Is the historical figure of Paul the letter-writer transformed by Luke into the image of “Paul” the orator then? And why is this? When comparing Acts 20 and Philippians a striking difference comes to light: Philippians is a *captivity letter*, while Acts 20:18ff. is composed as a *free speech* in front of an ecclesial delegation. Luke obviously wants to show Paul in his farewell scene as a free man rather than as a prisoner, when predicting his personal fortune.

(b) As we see most clearly in the prologues, Luke takes his contemporary audience into special account when composing Luke-Acts. Superficially, Acts 20:18ff. is meant to be a farewell speech in which Paul prepares the Ephesian elders for his impending leave. However, interestingly enough, Paul does not meet with the elders in Ephesus directly but at a different place: in Miletus. Macedonia as a constitutive area of Pauline missionary activities and letter-writing (Phil, but also 1 Thess) does not play any role here (last time mentioned in Acts 20:1, 3). Could this choice of topography be explained by “audience-based” expectation? Do effectively different, eventually competing places and regions of Paul’s (former) sphere of influence in and beyond Asia Minor have to be reconciled at the time when Luke composes Acts? Seen in light of how geography is re-modeled when Philippians is supposedly re-shaped in Acts 20:18ff., and how Luke relocates the Ephesians to Miletus, we might reconsider the situation of early Christ-believing communities at the end of the 1st century CE.

(c) The portrait of Paul in Acts 20:18ff. is shaped according to the concept of a farewell scene. Hereby, the *farewell* as such is as important as the *predicting* character (*prolepsis*) of Paul’s speech: we know the stylistic features of ancient
farewell discourses from “biblical and early Jewish literature” (e.g., Gen 27:1ff.; 49; Tob 14:1ff; T12 Patr),14 but also from New Testament texts (see, e.g., John 14-17; 2 Tim 4).15 The farewell is expressed via speeches, treatises, or letters; according to the literary motifs and devices, which are typical of the farewell discourse. Acts 20:18ff. also provides a short construct of history (v. 18f.), followed by a reference to the apostolic integrity (v. 19-21) and a prospect on personal fortune (v. 22f.); Paul emphasizes his subordination under divine plans (v. 24) and prepares his audience/the readers of Acts for separation (v. 25); as a church-leader, Paul gives a final testimony (v. 26f.), expresses admonition and warnings (v. 28-30), encourages his audience to memorize the apostolic exhortations (v. 31) and explains the present aim of exhortation (v. 32); the speech is concluded by a final proof of apostolic integrity (v. 33-35).

The farewell discourse in Acts 20:18ff. does not function as ultima verba, which is – in ancient literature a “literary topos, esp. in biographic and historiographic literature, in rhetorical literature and in purely literary works” which was “intended to illustrate the character and attitude of the dying person.”16 Tacitus also portrays Seneca as expressing ultima verba within the report of the philosopher’s exitus (ann 15.60-64).17 Seneca hereby recalls his friends “from tears to fortitude” (ann 15.62), and last of all addresses his wife (ann 15.63), who wants to depart this life together with her husband. Luke’s portrait of Paul in Acts 20:18ff., by contrast, is placed in a literary context where Paul – at the same time – looks back and ahead. In both perspectives, he wants to make obvious his apostolic integrity in order to sum up earlier history and to prepare for the coming needs of self-defense (Acts 22ff.). Luke is not interested in focusing on Paul’s death as such – neither here nor elsewhere in Acts.

(d) Paul is first mentioned in Acts 8:1. The first reference to Paul, who is at that time witnessing Stephen’s martyrdom, is decisive for how Luke will shape the image of the Paul in and beyond Acts 20:18ff. Stephen’s speech and martyr-
dom, the accusations brought up against him (Acts 6:14), and the consequences of his death for the Jerusalem community (Acts 8:1-3) intertwine the story of Acts with the Jesus-story in the gospel narrative (Lk 21:20ff.), and help implement the global missionary program (according to Acts 1:8: the early community of Christ-believers cannot stay any longer in Jerusalem but has to spread). It is Paul, whom we, certainly by Lukan intention, first meet as a bystander of Stephen’s brutal death, and who himself will only shortly thereafter be “converted” into a Jesus-follower (Acts 9), who will finally and ultimately accomplish the world-wide mission program (Acts 28:30ff.).

In his *apologia* (Acts 22:1) in front of the Jewish people in Jerusalem, where Paul is confronted with accusations, again similar to those earlier brought up against Stephen (Acts 21:28), he himself retells – in Hebrew language (Acts 21:40; 22:2!) – his conversion story (see also Acts 26). Here Paul will explicitly refer back to his earlier role as a persecutor of Jesus-followers (Acts 22:7f., 20). To Luke, Paul is thus not only *the* personal paradigm of the successful global missionary, but also of a “convert” who has to perform a crucial, indeed an ultimate change of roles: the persecutor himself will get more and more into the life-endangering situation of self-defense. Can this narrative motif of a “change of roles” in Acts be seen as a Lukan echo of Phil 2:6-11? In any case, Paul becomes a role-model for those readers of Acts who engage in global mission. It is only once in Acts – indeed, in 20:18ff. – that Paul can explain his personal fortune explicitly to fellow Christians: to the Ephesian community leaders. Everywhere else in his speeches, Paul addresses non-Christian audiences. And it is only in Acts 20:18ff. that Luke would use the term ταπεινοφροσύνη – a term which, because of its ambiguous sounding in the Hellenistic-Roman world, might not belong to Luke’s favorite vocabulary.18

(e) It seems that Luke in Acts cannot draw on precedent historiographical accounts – as Tacitus, for instance, goes back to F. Rusticus. However, historians necessarily have to consult different types of sources (literary, documentary, oral) since they can – even in the case of writing contemporary history – not be constant eyewitnesses of the events narrated themselves. Even though Tacitus aims at creating a cohesive narrative account in his *Annals*, the seams and tendencies (e.g., *ann* 15.60.2, 15.65.1) of the sources are still visible. Seen against this background, we might re-evaluate how much the tendencies that can be found within the so-called “We-passages” in Acts (16:10-17; 20:4-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) differ from other parts in the book – especially those where the usage of Paul’s letters seems likely: as it is the case in Acts 20:18ff.19

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19 See E.-M. Becker, *Birth*, esp. 94-95.
2.2. How history-writing “manipulates” letter-writing

In his portrait of Seneca, Tacitus does not seem to be interested in mentioning the philosopher as a literary author (but see *ann* 12.8.2). In fact, the historian never characterizes Seneca as a letter-writer. However, Ker shows how Tacitus, within and even beyond depicting Seneca in his historiographical writings, “appropriated many words, phrases, colors, and thoughts from the writings of Seneca … Tacitus makes intertextual allusions to Seneca that are not robotic but creative, integrating Seneca’s language and thought into his own work” (p. 314). Such a literary principle of an imitative remodeling is reflected by Seneca himself (*ep mor* 84.5). How does Tacitus make sense of it? In various Tacitean writings, for instance, *ep mor* 70 is echoed and remodeled (see *ann* 15.57 and *ep mor* 70.19ff.; *ann* 15.61f. and *ep mor* 70.5, 27) without being mentioned as such. Ker even goes so far as to claim that “Tacitus infuses his Senecan episodes with the complexity of Seneca’s writing, both as a stylistic and conceptual reservoir and as a form of communication that served as a component of the historical Seneca’s actions” (p. 316). *Ep mor* 70, which reflects the “different factors influencing one’s deliberation about suicide” (J. Ker, p. 324), certainly becomes important for how Tacitus depicts the report of Seneca’s *exitus* (*ann* 15.61f.; *ep mor* 70.5, 27). In *ann* 15.62.1, it is not only Seneca’s literary work as such but rather his “life and … the lessons of his writings” that Tacitus alludes to as an exemplar (J. Ker, p. 324).

Moreover, Tacitus provides a variety of allusions to Seneca’s writing without quoting them or making them explicitly visible to his readers. One reason for this must be that Tacitus does not want to quote literary works since he considers them to be already known to the public. In *ann* 15.63.3 Tacitus explains this very phenomenon to his readers: instead of reciting the ultimate discourse Seneca dictates to his secretaries shortly before his death, Tacitus refrains “from modifying” since it “has been given to the public in his own words” (… *in vulgus edita eius verbis invertere supersedeo*).22

As indicated earlier, Luke alludes several times to Pauline letters in and beyond Acts 20:18ff. We could even see in the very end of Acts, in 28:31 (παρρησία) an echo of Paul’s language used in Philippians (Phil 1:20; but also: 2 Cor 3:12; 7:4). In terms of semantics and specific motifs, Paul’s letter to the Philippians

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20 “Epistula” only occurs 57 times in the Tacitean corpus – see D. R. Blackman/G. G. Betts (ed.), *Concordantia Tacitea*, 504 – from which 13 references are to be found in the Annals (1.30.4; 1.36.3; 2.26.2; 2.70.2; 2.78.1; 3.44.3; 3.59.2; 4.34.5; 4.70.1; 5.2.2; 6.2.3; 6.24.1; 16.8.1).
21 I mean literary works except historiography here, which Tacitus uses and quotes as “sources” and competitive forerunners, see F. Rusticus above.
stands clear behind Acts 20:18ff. By not quoting the letter, and by not mentioning it explicitly, Luke does not only leave out valuable information – something different, “manipulative” is going on when letters are reproduced in the frame of history-writing: first, Luke would presuppose the Pauline letters to have reached public status. They are disseminated already and cannot be reproduced as “letters,” but rather within speeches. Second, letters in history-writing, best described as “insertion letters,” per se have a different function: they are either fictitious texts, or they are used (or rephrased) for documentary purpose (e.g., Acts 15:23b-29; Tacitus, ann 14.11).23 In other words: it is the ancient culture of literary activity as such which prevents Luke (and Tacitus) from documenting “real literary” letters and inserting them into history-writing. However, to ignore Paul as letter-writer also has consequences for how Luke reproduces Paul: third, since Luke consciously wants to reshape the image of the apostle, he remodels the “epistolary Paul” as “free speaking Paul.” While the apostle in his letter to the Philippians says farewell to a Macedonian community by epistolary means, indeed as a prisoner, the Lukan Paul gives a speech in Asia Minor. He speaks as a free man and, only in Acts, is Paul able to present his “apostolic” self-understanding to a community delegation of Christ-believers. It is hardly accidental then that only in Acts 20:18ff. can Paul do what he normally does in his letters: address Christ-believing communities.

By tremendously re-shaping the image of Paul, Luke himself chooses how much and what kind of Pauline thinking he wants to preserve and to carry forward. At the same time, Luke’s compositional technique cannot simply be seen as contingent or arbitrary. It seems to me that – as stated above – to Luke three principles are decisive when composing (especially the speeches in) Acts: Luke’s image of Paul is based on (a) eyewitness reports, (b) contemporary, evaluative images of the apostle which Luke shares with his audience(s), and (c) Paul’s letter-writing as such. In a conceptual sense then, what Luke does with Paul is not so different to the way Tacitus “manipulates” the image of Seneca as a literary author.

### 3. Some conclusions for the interpretation of Paul’s letter to the Philippians

Acts 20 and Paul’s letter to the Philippians share a lot of semantics and motifs. Luke probably used Philippians when composing the farewell speech in ch. 20. Could, however, Luke’s reception of Philippians also illuminate our under-

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23 See E.-M. Becker, *Birth*, esp. 100f.
standing of the letter – could the phenomenon of intertextuality lead to *mutual illuminations* of both texts (without necessarily playing themselves out in a kind of a circular argument)? Luke’s supposed reception of Philippians can reveal some intriguing insights, not only into Luke’s compositional technique but also into the early history of reading and interpreting Philippians. Let me conclude with some brief reflections.

(a) As pointed out earlier, Luke does not and cannot see himself limited to sources such as Paul’s letters, for instance the letter to the Philippians, when composing a speech or a farewell scene. He has to consider other sources of information as well (s. above). His interpretive task is to combine and reconcile diverse, partly divergent types of sources and to satisfy his reading audience. This view on Luke might shed interesting light on the (authoritative) status of Pauline epistolography (Philippians included) in the end of the 1st century.

(b) In light of Acts 20:18ff., Paul’s letter to the Philippians seems to be perceived by Luke as a farewell discourse since the historian draws on it to a remarkable extent. The debate about Philippians’s literary genre and rhetorical purpose (see J. Reumann) might be enriched by comparing Philippians to Acts 20:18ff. and by observing how the letter was read and interpreted by Luke.

(c) Having said this, we will also have to make crucial distinctions between both texts. Even though Acts 20:18ff. and Philippians are close in terms of semantics and motifs, and even though both texts might share conceptual features of ancient farewell discourse literature, significant differences come to light: first, Acts 20:18ff. contains a farewell *speech*, which is pretty close to farewell discourses which we know from the Jewish world (s. above), while Philippians entails consoling motifs also, which rather derive from consoling literature of the Greco-Roman world.24 *Second*, Luke’s overall purpose of presenting Paul in ch. 20 is apologetic; in his letter-writing to the Philippians, in contrast, Paul intends to implement mimetic ethics. *Third*, while the epistolary setting has an *ethical* purpose in Philippians, it widely serves an *apologetic* purpose in Acts 20:18ff. Luke transforms the ethical teacher Paul, whom he finds in Philippians, and Paul’s legacy therein, into the paradigm of a Christ-believing witness who practices *apologia*.25 As such a paradigm of an “apologist,” the Lukan Paul finally appears as a moral example: accordingly, the reader might understand in a new way, and indeed different to Phil 2:3, what ταπεινοφροσύνη and παρρησία are about.

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24 See the rich discussion about “consolation” in Philippians; see G. L. Parsenios, *Departure*, 25ff.

25 Luke in fact might be stimulated to do so since Paul himself describes his situation in his imprisonment as *apologia* [Phil 1:7] – a self-description chosen, in order to foster Paul’s concept of mimetic ethics.
(d) In his perception of Philippians, Luke sees himself no longer bound to address any specific congregation: In Acts 20 he rather remolds early Christian topography in a quite complex way (Macedonia, Ephesus, Miletus). Luke is obviously less interested in documenting or recording precisely any (written) communication of Paul with particular communities in Asia Minor or Macedonia. Rather, the historian wants to show Paul according to Luke’s own geographical concept: as an orator to the public who will be an ultimate martyr; only because he is forced to self-defense, he will reach Rome and thus finally complete the global missionary strategy.

(e) The book of Acts as a whole and Paul’s letter to the Philippians share a certain affiliation to the city of Rome: in Acts, Luke sends his most prestigious figure – Paul – finally to the caput mundi; in Philippians Paul seems to be in Roman captivity (Phil 1:12ff.; 4:22). How is “Rome” anticipated in both texts? To Luke, Rome is a place of expectation and hope. Here, Paul – a Roman citizen – might receive fair treatment; here, Paul can preach the βασιλεία even in παρρησία and without any hindrance (in contrast to all the obstacles he had to face in his earlier career, especially in Asia Minor). To Paul the letter-writer, the city of Rome – even though it is not explicitly mentioned in Philippians – is a place where a final decision will be made about his personal fortune. As a prisoner the apostle anticipates his sentence of death.

In that Luke transforms, reproduces, or “manipulates” Paul’s letter to the Philippians in Acts 20:18ff. – a letter being written amidst Paul’s anticipation of his impending death – into a proleptic announcement of his pending leave, the historian finally also crucially remolds the image of Rome and the nature of Paul’s farewell: first, instead of becoming an estimated place of death in the near future (as indicated in Philippians), Rome is seen by Luke as a promising, if not successful center of coming preaching activities. Second, while Paul in Philippians shapes in effectu a kind of ultima verba which he uses for the purpose of ethical instruction, Luke makes Paul’s farewell in Acts 20:18ff. to be a topographical incident: indeed, Paul’s farewell is about his leave from known areas to unknown places like Rome, where the goal of finally “witnessing” globally (e.g., Acts 23:11; see 1:8; 9:15-16) is reached.

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