

## Hellenistic παιδεία and Luke's Education: A Critique of Recent Approaches\*

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This essay offers a critique of recent works that claim for the author of Acts a high level of rhetorical sophistication. The paper attempts to begin to fill a gap in Acts studies by exploring two skills of the curriculum of tertiary rhetorical education and asking how these are exemplified in the curriculum itself. In this way an attempt is made to provide a more sophisticated parallel reading, one that avoids shell comparisons that can often lead to distortion. The two skills explored are intertextuality from the Greek classics and speech construction. It is suggested that—from the perspective of the rhetorical curriculum—the author of Acts probably lacked a rhetorical education.

**Keywords:** Luke-Acts, education, rhetoric, intertextuality, speeches, Atticism

The pendulum of opinion on Luke's literary capabilities has often swung from one side to the other during the last two centuries. To the extent that the Gospel of Luke was part of the Synoptics, authors such as M. Dibelius, K. L. Schmidt and R. Bultmann considered this writing an example of *Kleinliteratur*.<sup>1</sup> A more optimistic conclusion was reached by Blass and Debrunner:

[A]lmost nothing of proper classical education appears in these authors [Luke, author of Hebrews and Paul]... Yet many a good classical form and construction and many a word from the cultured literary language (often beside corresponding vulgar expressions), indicate that Paul and Luke and the author of the Hebrews must have had some kind of grammatical and rhetorical education.<sup>2</sup>

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1 M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. B. L. Woolf; New York: Scribner, 1935) 1–2 and *passim*; K. L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964); R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. J. Marsh; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, rev. ed. 1963) 368–74.

2 F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963) 2. Equally nuanced is E. Norden, *Die Antike*

At the present, with the burgeoning of rhetorical criticism, it seems that the pendulum has swung to the other side from Bultmann. Consider the following two opinions. M. Parsons, noting Luke's apparent facility in making a narrative clear, concise and plausible, reaches the conclusion that Luke 'cut his rhetorical teeth...on the *progymnasmata* tradition'.<sup>3</sup> This is to make a statement about Luke's level of education (and hence his possible literary capabilities): the *progymnasmata* were generally taught at the *tertiary* level of literate education, a level that only the elite within Graeco-Roman culture would reach.<sup>4</sup> Bolder still is the conclusion recently reached by M. Martin in comparing Luke to other authors of *bioi*. He concludes that Luke's rhetorical sophistication in the employment of *synkrisis* is greater than that of highly educated authors such as Philo and Plutarch.<sup>5</sup> Our estimation of Luke's education and literary prowess, it appears, has come a long way.

Is there evidence that Luke had reached the tertiary level of Hellenistic literate education? Authors such as Parsons and Martin, among others,<sup>6</sup> would answer in the affirmative, basing their response, it would appear, on formal parallels. Formal parallels, however, can be problematic and reductionist when attempting to use them to answer fundamental questions about a text and its author. Parsons, for example, states that Luke, following the *progymnasmata*, shows himself adept at *ekphrasis* (vividness in description). The question that must be asked is: Adept in *whose* eyes? Would an educated Greek who had read Herodotus's detailed descriptions of the walls of Ecbatana (1.98) think Luke to be satisfactorily descriptive? Would this reader think Luke equally skilled at *ekphrasis* when comparing him to Thucydides' description of the Plataean siege (3.21) or of the plague (2.47-54)?<sup>7</sup> The persuasion of Parsons's parallels can thus vary, depending on the

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*Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Teubner, 5th ed. 1958) 484-5, who states that while many parts of Acts would have come across to an ancient reader as competent Greek, others would have felt un-Greek.

3 M. Parsons, 'Luke and the *Progymnasmata*: A Preliminary Investigation into the Preliminary Exercises', *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (ed. T. Penner and C. V. Stichele; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 43-64, at 44.

4 See A. Missiou, 'Language and Education in Antiquity', *A History of Ancient Greek: From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity* (ed. A.-F. Christidis; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007) 1182-92.

5 M. Martin, 'Progymnastic Topic Lists: A Compositional Template for Luke and Other *Bioi*?', *NTS* 54 (2008) 18-41, at 41.

6 Other recent works that operate with a high view of Luke's rhetorical level include Penner and Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*; C. K. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). This list, of course, is not exhaustive.

7 I mention Herodotus and Thucydides since Theon, 68, suggests their descriptions as good examples of *ekphrasis*. The Greek edition consulted is the Patillon edition in the Budé

literary milieu in which they are read. This, in turn, makes it difficult exclusively to use surface parallels to determine Luke's educational level.

In fact, there appears to be a pattern in the method of these readings. First, analogies with the Septuagint are minimised. For example, Rothschild's four features of rhetorical history—recurrence, prediction, guidance and epitomizing—are all amply found in the Septuagint. While she recognises this, she downplays the parallels significantly. Secondly, there is a tendency to mention only the *positive* parallels. That is, only those features that apparently obtain in Luke-Acts are brought up. What about features of Graeco-Roman literature that are absent or which are significantly different in Luke-Acts? For example, granted that both Graeco-Roman historians and Luke include speeches, how is their respective use of speeches *different* from one another? Thirdly, and related to this last point, many (but by no means all) of the parallel readings are primarily structural and hence are shell comparisons. However, beneath the shell there may be significant differences that could call into question the validity of the structural similarities.

In this essay I shall focus on this last aspect. In particular, I propose to (1) read some of the material in the curriculum of tertiary literate education; (2) abstract two skills of the curriculum; and (3) explore how these skills are employed *in the curriculum itself*. In this manner I hope to shine a light not only on the surface of the curriculum but also on the ground beneath it. Only then will I ask if these two skills—both at the exterior and interior level—are present in Acts.

### 1. The Curriculum of Tertiary Education

By the time the student would reach this level, he would have become thoroughly familiar with some of the core authors of Hellenic civilisation, primarily poets (Homer being the towering figure).<sup>8</sup> This was the highest level of 'formal' education that a student could reach. Although it is clear that other subjects—such as philosophy—were studied at the tertiary level, there is no doubt that

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series. The English translation followed is that of G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

8 For detailed analyses of primary and secondary education, see H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Seuil, 7th ed. 1975) 215–77; S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley: University of California, 1956). More recent explorations, taking a more systematic approach to the papyri in Egypt, are R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), and *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2001); T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998); and Y. L. Too, ed., *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

rhetoric was the dominant one.<sup>9</sup> One can conclude from the sources that very few of those who began the education cycle were able to reach the tertiary level. For example, Lucian's father commented on the obstacles and necessary sacrifices for those wishing to reach the summit of *paideia*: 'Most of them thought that higher education (παιδεία) required great labour, much time, considerable expense, and conspicuous social position (τύχης...λαμπρῶς)'.<sup>10</sup> The papyri also offer some support in this matter: the most common extant authors in schooltext papyri are Homer, Euripides and Menander as well as gnomologies. These sources were studied mainly at the primary and secondary level.<sup>11</sup> In fact, it could be said that with some exceptions rhetorical education was the domain of the elite in Graeco-Roman culture.<sup>12</sup>

The curriculum of rhetorical studies varied according to location, rhetor and period. This was particularly the case with respect to the preliminary exercises or *progymnasmata*. Quintilian, for example, writing ca. 95 CE, believed that the *grammatici* could instruct pupils in the easier exercises of aphorisms, chreiae and *aethiologiae* (*Inst. Or.* 1.9.3), but he was not pleased with the fact that certain rhetors thought it beneath their profession to teach the *progymnasmata* (*Inst. Or.* 2.1.2). Approximately two decades later, Suetonius (*De Gramm.* 4) stated that in his own day the *grammatici* had completely taken over the *progymnasmata*. The reason for this was not the attitude of the rhetors (as in the period of Quintilian), but rather the apathy and youth of the pupils. Thus, Roman education, roughly during the period in which Acts was written, was in a stage of transition, with the *progymnasmata* increasingly becoming the domain of the secondary level of literate education. With the Greeks there was equal variation. R. Webb notes that in the handbooks from Theon onward the exercises are all grouped together, thus possibly suggesting one teacher for all the *progymnasmata* at the tertiary level.<sup>13</sup> Kennedy, on the other hand, by observing Theon's handbook, suggests that Greek teachers probably taught both grammar and rhetoric.<sup>14</sup> This is corroborated in Strabo, who stated that his teacher, though a grammarian, taught both grammar *and* rhetoric (*Geog.* 14.1.48). We can thus conclude that

9 A reading of Pseudo-Plutarch's essay *De liberis educandis* could lead to the conclusion that philosophy was the essential subject of tertiary education. More balanced is Lucian's *Somnium* 12, where lady *paideia* lists among those whom she has immortalised *both* rhetoricians (Demosthenes) and philosophers (Socrates). On the debate see especially Morgan, *Literate Education*, 193–6.

10 Lucian *Somnium* 1.

11 Morgan, *Literate Education*, Table 15. See also M. Winterbottom, *Roman Declamation* (Bristol: Bristol Classical, 1980).

12 See Marrou, *Histoire*, 291–2; Morgan, *Literate Education*, 82–8, 190.

13 R. Webb, 'The *Progymnasmata* as Practice', *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (ed. Too) 289–316, at 297.

14 Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 2.

there was fluidity during the Late Republic and Early Empire, with the result being that the *progymnasmata* could be engaged either at the end of the secondary level or at the beginning of the tertiary level.

The exercises included the following: chreia, fable, narrative, *topos*, description, *prosopopoeia*, encomium, *synkrisis*, thesis and *nomos*.<sup>15</sup> These were methodical exercises that were meant to isolate the separate threads that went into the composition of a historical work or a declamation (Theon, 60). The student laboured in each exercise, attempting to hone each individual skill in order to be well rounded for the final goal of composition and speech-giving. Quintilian (*Inst. Or.* 2.5.1–12) also strongly encouraged the reading of history and oratory at this stage. He argued that the pupil could profit by reading these works during class while the rhetor abstracted for him the separate skills (e.g. cause, narrative, amplification) that could be discerned in the work. Thus, the teacher would act as a sort of guiding physician in the autopsy of histories and speeches while his pupils looked on and learned. Quintilian points out that Greek rhetoricians (or rather, their assistants [*adiutores*]) followed this path.

The student, having finished the preliminary exercises, moved to the zenith of rhetorical education, namely declamation. This consisted of two types, the *controversiae* and *suasoriae*.<sup>16</sup> The former dealt with forensic situations, in which the student delivered a speech-in-character arguing for the side of the case that he took. The student would have to determine the *stasis* of the case in order to put forward a persuasive argument for or against. *Controversiae* thus prepared the student for judicial speeches. Cribiore correctly notes that the Greek rhetors focused their *controversiae* on historical themes from the classical period (e.g. Persian wars, Peloponnesian war). In this case the student would take on the *persona* of a historical character and defend himself against an accusation.<sup>17</sup>

The *suasoriae* dealt with counsel on a particular course of action and were thus useful for training in deliberative speeches. Again, the characters were primarily taken from the Greek classics. Examples include: Alexander debating on whether he should sail the Ocean to conquer new lands or halt, and Agamemnon deliberating on sacrificing Iphigenia for fair winds.<sup>18</sup> It would be apparent that in order to declaim on these subjects the student needed to have a solid knowledge of the characters, circumstances and the classical world as a whole. It would have been impossible to do a competent job on *prosopopoeia*, for example, if the student was not steeped in the classical world.

15 By the fourth century the exercises were fixed at fourteen with Aphthonius and Libanius (see C. Gibson, *Libanius' Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008]).

16 On declamation, see S. F. Bonner, *Roman Declamation* (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 1949) and D. A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University) 1983.

17 Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 232–3.

18 The Elder Seneca *Suasoriae* 1.1–16; 3.1–7.

Anachronisms and historical monstrosities would have crept in if the student was ignorant of one aspect or another of the period he was attempting to portray. One can thus see that at this level all the knowledge accumulated at each successive stage—gnomic sayings, Homeric exegesis and study of prose authors—was necessary if the student was successfully to declaim and write a literary piece.

## 2. Literary Competencies of the *pepaideumenoi*

An individual who had navigated through all levels of education would have naturally accumulated extensive knowledge and developed a large number of abilities to put to use in the composition of speeches or literature. Consequently, it is not possible, given the limited scope of this essay, to explore all these competencies. I would like, however, to focus on two aspects of the arsenal of the rhetorically educated man.

### a. Knowledge of the Greek Classics

Though the highly educated man of the Principate lived in a world considerably different from the golden age of Hellenic civilisation, it is no exaggeration to say that his studies transported him to that glorious past. His education, from beginning to end, was a sustained exposure to the fifth and fourth centuries that left a profound mark on his worldview. In primary education, the pupil learned to read and write by copying, among other things, ancient maxims. He was exposed to three of the great Greek classics, namely Homer, Euripides and Menander. At the secondary level the student's knowledge of Homer was deepened, to the point where, in some cases, the poet's words would have been burned into his mind.<sup>19</sup> But Homer was not the only poet studied: as at the primary level, Euripides, Menander and Hesiod were looked at more closely.<sup>20</sup> At the tertiary level the prose genre was dominant. Looking at Theon's *progymnasmata*, the historical writers most referred to by him in his illustrations of the exercises are Thucydides (17 times), Herodotus (16 times) and Theopompus (8 times). Plato is referred to ten times, and from the orators Demosthenes is given pride of place with 19 references (followed by Isocrates with six references). Homer is quoted extensively and other poets occasionally.<sup>21</sup>

Two important observations emerge from the above. First, with the exception of prose at the tertiary level, the student of Hellenistic *paideia* was exposed to the same authors at all three levels. Although there was an *approfondissement* of these

19 On the reading of Vergil for Roman students, Orosius stated that the Aeneid was 'burned into his memory' (*adv. pagan.* 1.18.1). Interestingly, Orosius states that the person responsible for this was the *ludus litterarius*, not the *grammaticus*. I owe this citation to R. Kaster, 'Notes on "Primary" and "Secondary" Schools in Late Antiquity', *TAPA* 113 (1983) 323–46, at 334.

20 See Criatore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 197–201.

21 I did not include in this count the Armenian additions.

authors at the successive levels, the authors largely remained the same. Pliny the Younger's suggestion that the thing was not how wide one read but how *much* (of the same authors) bears this out.<sup>22</sup> The result was thorough knowledge of the core authors.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, and as the consequence of this profound knowledge of the classical authors in the proper context (or register, to use the vocabulary of sociolinguistics), the writer or speaker could (and *should*) deploy his knowledge of the classics in his quotations, allusions and style. When reading authors roughly contemporary with Luke, such as Plutarch, Arrian, Cassius Dio and Lucian (all highly educated), one is struck at their saturation with the Greek classics, not excluding prose works. Quotations, allusions, images and myths of the glorious Hellenic past abound. A turn of phrase here or a particular form of diction there raises their discourse and imbues their work with solemnity. The classical world with all its symbolic significance provides a dense intertextual web linking these authors to a prestigious past and in the process marks them out as the elite of their period. They thus portrayed their high level of education by means of an intertextuality based on the prestigious authors of the Greek past.

The observations above lead to the important topic of Atticism. Starting in the first century BCE, a movement arose that sought to revitalize the dignity of the Greek language. It was felt by many men of letters (partly influenced by a Stoic philosophy of language) that the Koine lacked the vitality and beauty of the Attic Greek. Therefore, literary critics such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus encouraged a certain amount of *imitatio* of the classical writers. This movement is rightly called 'classicism'.<sup>24</sup> By the second century CE, however, what had begun as an attempt to rehabilitate Greek prose (partly as a reaction to Asianism) had turned into an extreme form of language purism that castigated any literature that did not closely imitate the classical masters. Vocabulary aids were produced by lexicographers such as Phrynichos and Moeris where the current (Koine) form of a term was listed and rejected, and the Attic form to be employed supplied. This linguistic situation had inevitable social ramifications: it was a badge of the elite to be able to atticise since only those who had reached the tertiary level of literate education had obtained the necessary intimate knowledge of the classics to be able to deploy it. There is no doubt that one could have learned a phrase of, say, Demosthenes, by listening to a Sophist or by attending a festival. But the

22 Pliny the Younger *Ep.* 7.9: 'multum legendum esse, non multa'. I owe this quotation to Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 194.

23 See Morgan, *Literate Education*, 67–73, for a list of core and peripheral authors, the latter of whom only a minority of students mastered.

24 On which see S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 19–21; A. Wifstrand, 'Luke and Greek Classicism', *Epochs and Styles: Selected Writings on the New Testament, Greek Language and Greek Culture in the Post-Classical Era* (ed. L. Rydbeck and S. E. Porter; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 17–27, at 17–19 and *passim*.



ability consistently and elegantly to Atticise was virtually impossible without a thorough knowledge of the Attic authors: *imitatio* is extremely difficult if the author is not saturated with the literary model.

Atticism was an extreme manifestation of the elite post-classical Greeks' preoccupation with their language and how it functioned to define their 'ethnic' identity. It served *inter alia* to mark a contrast between the elite Atticists and the masses, showing their superiority as educated men. It would be a mistake to conclude that all those who had reached the tertiary level of *paideia* were given to classicism or Atticism. Some immediately observed its superficiality;<sup>25</sup> others found it inappropriate to Atticise in the genre in which they were writing.<sup>26</sup> Yet, we can be certain (as the literary sources demonstrate) that both the educational material in which they had immersed themselves and the classicising/Atticising atmosphere of the period were a source of pleasure and pressure so that the *pepaideumenoí*, in the proper register, would stamp their works with the sign of the Greek classics. This is very important to keep in mind when we examine Luke's level of education.

#### b. *Elaborate Speeches*

Even a superficial knowledge of Greek narrative shows how fundamental recorded speech was to its configuration. From the standpoint of the genre of history, Thucydides was viewed as the master and was thus often imitated with varying degrees of success.<sup>27</sup> Historians from the Hellenistic and Roman periods included numerous set pieces which had a variety of functions in the overall works. There are at least two features of speeches that rhetorically educated students would have acquired and imitated: their length and their agonistic character. I shall briefly develop these below.

The reader who has been accustomed to the speeches in biblical narrative is struck at their relative brevity in comparison to the speeches of Graeco-Roman historians. The classical prose authors studied at the tertiary level of *paideia* had certainly included very long and elaborate speeches. One thinks, for example, of the lengthy speeches in Book One of Thucydides. Though shorter than Thucydides, Xenophon's *Hellenica* includes several set pieces in Book Two. The student at the tertiary level thus had models to imitate when it came time to compose his own prose works. If one also keeps in mind that orators

25 See, e.g., Cicero *Brutus* 284–91, whose chief critique was that the Attic orators were too varied in their style for contemporaries to impose a uniform style and call it 'Attic': "Atticos", inquit, "volo imitari". Quos? nec enim est unum genus' (285). Cicero, we may note, is not without bias in this statement, as he had been accused of being florid and hence Asian in his style.

26 E.g. Epictetus and Galen.

27 Although Dionysius of Halicarnassus found numerous faults with some of his speeches: see *De Thuc.* 37–41, 43–47. On the attempt to imitate Thucydides' speech-reporting by amateur historians, see Lucian, *Hist. conscr.* 15, 26.



such as Demosthenes and Lysias served as literary models, then it is not at all surprising that the introduction of lengthy and highly rhetorical speeches into historical works was a constant feature of Graeco-Roman history.

The second feature of the speeches that I would like to discuss is their agonistic character. By this I mean how endemic close argumentation and refutation were to speeches. This should not be surprising given the competitive nature of *paideia* and of the culture as a whole.<sup>28</sup> In addition, if the student was going to be effective in judicial and deliberative speeches, it was necessary both to present a persuasive argument and to counter that of another. Thus, one finds that the ability to produce counterarguments was pervasive in the *progymnasmata*. The student, to be sure, had to learn to defend and refute in the exercises on confirmation, refutation and theses. But it is noteworthy that already in such early exercises such as the *chreiae* and fables the student was honing his skills at debate. He was to expand, restate and comment on *chreiae*, but at the same time he had to be thinking of how to refute with the proper arguments (Theon, 101–105). He was to learn by heart Aesop's fables, expand them and concoct fables of his own, but at the same time he had to refute and contradict them (Theon, 72–78). Argument and counterargument by means of logic, syllogisms, knowledge of laws and ancient citations thus provided part of the fabric of tertiary education. One of the ways in which authors were able to exploit this agonistic element was by the introduction of *pairs* of speeches. Thus, one voice answers another in argument and counterargument for the prosecution of an individual; one carefully argued opinion on a proposal for a future action is offset by another opinion suggesting a different tack. It was in his speeches that the persuasive power of the *pepaideumenos* was best seen. A reading of the speeches of Thucydides and Demosthenes, for example, amply illustrates this agonistic character: the arguments are tight, the use of maxims abounds and intertextuality is employed for persuasion. This feature must be kept in mind when examining the speeches in Acts and their relation to Graeco-Roman historiography.

### 3. Luke among the *pepaideumenoí*?

In the first part of this paper I provided a sketch of the curriculum of the tertiary level of Hellenistic literate education. In the second section I abstracted two skills that authors educated to the highest level displayed in their literary works, namely, intertextuality from the Greek classics and agonistic speeches. We have now reached the place where we can compare these core aspects of *paideia* to Acts. How does Luke fare in comparison to the educated elite of the Empire? Specifically, when we concentrate on the matter of intertextuality and speech reporting, does Luke demonstrate a facility like that displayed by those who had reached the tertiary level of literate education?

<sup>28</sup> On the competitive nature of *paideia*, see Morgan, *Literate Education*, 79–85.

### a. *Intertextuality*

In what follows I shall not focus on intertextuality in the broad sense of generic imitation or large architectonic comparisons. Rather, I shall concentrate on specific links such as quotations, allusions and phraseology—precisely the type of intertextuality that demonstrates intimate knowledge of the classical authors in which the highly educated were steeped. There are several verses that scholars have identified as possible connections between Acts and Greek literature.

#### i) Acts 5.39

This verse is found in the speech of Gamaliel that covers 5.34–39. The disciples had gravely upset the Jerusalem authorities by refusing to comply with their command to stop preaching in the name of Jesus (5.27–28). In fact, when confronted once again with their disobedience, the disciples responded that they would obey God rather than men (5.29), thus insinuating that in their failure to acknowledge the messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth the Sanhedrin was no longer operating under God's authority. Not surprisingly (given their recent execution of Jesus), the Sanhedrin now wished to execute the disciples. At this highly tense point the Pharisee Gamaliel intervened. He had the disciples step out, and delivered a speech that had the ironic result of the liberation of the disciples for further gospel preaching (5.42).

In the *peroratio* of the speech Gamaliel resorted to a historical example to drive home his point that the Sanhedrin should wait rather than tempestuously execute the apostles. The reason for this approach, argued Gamaliel, was that if the movement turned out to be from God, the Sanhedrin would have found itself fighting God himself: μήποτε καὶ θεομάχοι εὕρεθῆτε. It has been noted that the verbal form of θεομάχος appears in Euripides' *Bacchae* in 45 and 325. Most commentators agree that there is probably no literary dependence on Euripides.<sup>29</sup> More recently, however, J. B. Weaver has called attention to how well Acts 5 (as well as Acts 12 and 16) interconnects with the framework of the *Bacchae*. That is, in both works the mention of God-fighting is framed within the context of prison-escape and combat against a new deity.<sup>30</sup> This could thus suggest that Luke may have known the *Bacchae* and thus may have participated in Hellenistic education, where Euripides was a formative author.<sup>31</sup>

29 See C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (2 vols.; London: T&T Clark, 1994–8) 1.298; H. Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. J. Limburgh, A. T. Kraabel and D. H. Juel; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993) 43; G. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (2 vols.; Freiburg: Herder, 1980–2) 1.403.

30 J. B. Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany: Prison-Escape in Acts of the Apostles* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004) 94–147 and *passim*.

31 See R. Criore, 'The Grammarian's Choice: The Popularity of Euripides' *Phoenissae* in Hellenistic and Roman Education', *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (ed. Too) 241–58.

Two observations are pertinent here. First, even if it could be proven that Luke had read Euripides, that does not provide sufficient evidence to suggest that he was therefore *highly* educated—Euripides’ pre-eminence in Hellenistic *paideia* was found mostly at the *primary* level. Furthermore, we noted that statements from the poets were employed in gnomologies (again, the domain of primary education) not only because they taught the students to read and write but also because they inculcated morality in the young minds. A statement about avoidance of becoming a θεομάχος would fit extremely well in ancient culture, where individuals were bombarded with warnings about *hubris*. Thus, even if Luke pulled the term right from Euripides, this is not proof that he was *highly* educated. Secondly, it should be observed that the verbal form θεομαχεῖν was already employed in Hellenistic Judaism (2 Macc 7.19) in the context of oppression of the people of God by a tyrant. In addition, the fragmentary Hellenistic Jewish author Artapanus appeared to exploit the above motif in his story of Moses’ imprisonment and miraculous prison-release in the face of the Egyptian king’s oppression.<sup>32</sup> It would therefore appear that Hellenistic Judaism had already taken over the motif of the God-fighter to portray a foreign monarch’s vain attempt to destroy the Jews.<sup>33</sup> It is more likely, given Luke’s overall Jewish framework, that his intertextuality in Acts 5.39 stems from the soil of Hellenistic Judaism rather than from direct knowledge of the Greek classics.<sup>34</sup> Even if the latter were the case, it does not support an argument for participation in rhetorical education.

ii) Acts 17.28

Another possible intertextual link with Greek literature is found in the Areopagus speech. This is possibly Paul’s most polished sermon in the entirety of Acts from a rhetorical point of view. It begins with a textbook *exordium* in his praise of the Athenians’ *pietas* in order to gain a favourable hearing (17.22). There followed an ingenious transition to the *narratio* in v. 23 with the mention of the ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ. The *pathos* is palpable in vv. 25b and 27, and the argument is logical (v. 29—as befits the occasion in Athens!). In the course of his argument Paul offered corroboration in v. 28 (γάρ) by offering a quotation from Aratus’ *Phaenomena* 5: τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν.<sup>35</sup> This is one of the few explicit

32 Artapanus Frg. 3.23–26.

33 It is most remarkable that Luke would use this theme of the *Jerusalem* authorities!

34 Thus also more recently D. Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres (1–12)* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2007) 190: ‘L’expansion du motif au-delà du mythe dionysiaque fait penser que Luc ne l’a pas emprunté directement à Euripide, mais qu’il l’a reçu par l’intermédiaire du judaïsme hellénistique’.

35 It is difficult to say with certainty whether the expression ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκοσιν of v. 28 refers to what has just been said or to what follows or to both. If it is anaphoric, then it may stem from Epimenides. There are, however, difficulties in ascertaining the true source of the triad (see Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2.847). On the other hand, there is no doubt that the final clause was in fact contained in Aratus’ poem.

quotations in Acts from a *corpus* other than the Greek Bible. Might not the quotation of this Greek poet in the mouth of Paul be an indicator of Luke's education?<sup>36</sup>

In fact, a quotation from Aratus' *Phaenomena* is not a token of elevated education. First, it comes from the genre of poetry, which was predominant at the primary level. Secondly, and perhaps more telling, is the fact that Aratus' poem was extremely popular during the Hellenistic period. In the words of C. J. Tuplin: 'The *Phaenomena* achieved immediate fame...and lasting popularity beyond the circle of the learned poets: it became the most widely read poem, after the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in the ancient world'.<sup>37</sup> We seem to be dealing here, therefore, with the sort of cliché wisdom that could have easily been picked up in the streets. Lastly, it should be mentioned that the poem had already been cited by the Hellenistic Jew of the second century BCE Aristobulus (frag. 4). It appears, therefore, that long before Luke the poem had been pressed into apologetic duty by Alexandrian Jews. We saw that this was also the case with respect to the maxim of Acts 5.29.

A stronger argument for Luke's rhetorical sophistication could be made rather from the fact that he would quote a maxim-like statement from an ancient author in order to cement his argument; or the Socratic parallels from Acts 17 as a whole. Otherwise, a quotation from the well-known Aratus is not at all a strong argument for Luke's supposed high level of *paideia*.

iii) Acts 20.35

As was the case in the two previous examples, the possible connection with Greek literature in this text occurs within direct speech. 20.18–35 is Paul's farewell speech to the elders of the Ephesian church. Paul reminded them of his valiant service (vv. 18–27), warned them of future intrusions from false teachers (vv. 28–30) and employed his own life as paradigmatic. At the very end of the speech Paul cited an otherwise unknown *logion* of Jesus in order to add pathos and reinforcement to his last injunction. The *logion* reads: μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν.

An argument has been made by E. Plümacher to the effect that the statement ascribed to Jesus is actually an imitation of Thucydides.<sup>38</sup> Plümacher begins by noting that a maxim similar to the one expressed by Thucydides has not been discovered in Jewish literature. Therefore, it is quite probable that Luke has taken a refrain from the Graeco-Roman world and placed it on the lips of

36 See M. Dibelius, 'Paul on the Areopagus', *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (ed. Heinrich Greeven; London: SCM, 1956) 26–77, at 51, who appears to state that Luke had firsthand knowledge of the poem.

37 *OCD*<sup>3</sup> s.v. Aratus.

38 E. Plümacher, 'Eine Thucydidesreminiszenz in der Apostelgeschichte (Apg 20,33–35–Thuk. II 97,3f.)', *Geschichte und Geschichten: Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte und zu den Johannesakten* (ed. Jens Schröter and Ralph Brucker; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 127–33.

Jesus.<sup>39</sup> Plümacher notes that the sentiment about the preference for giving over receiving was not exclusive to Thucydides but actually turns up in numerous Graeco-Roman authors.<sup>40</sup> Why, then, one may ask, insist that in the case of Acts the quotation stems *directly* from Thucydides? His answer is that the correspondences between Acts 20.33–35 and Thucydides 2.97.3–4 are so close that the statement is more than likely a deliberate reference to the Athenian historian:

So kongruent, wie die beiden Texte in Inhalt, Topik, Reihenfolge der einzelnen Topoi und in V. 35 selbst im Gleichklang der jeweils eine Maxime formulierenden Worte sind, halte ich es nun in der Tat für wahrscheinlich, daß der Verfasser der Apostelgeschichte das Ende der Paulusrede Apg 20,18–35 in Anlehnung an die beigezogene Thukydidestelle gestaltet hat.<sup>41</sup>

It would be of some significance for our evaluation of Luke's *paideia* if Plümacher were correct. The place of Thucydides in literate education, as we have seen, was reserved for the tertiary level.

Upon closer examination, however, Plümacher's argument turns out to be problematic. First, it is exaggerated to state that the sentiment expressed in 20.35 was foreign to Jewish literature. In fact, I would suggest that a better parallel to Acts 20.35 is found in Sir 29.9–11:

χάριν ἐντολῆς ἀντιλαβοῦ πένητος καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἔνδειαν αὐτοῦ μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς αὐτὸν κενόν. ἀπόλεσον ἀργύριον δι' ἀδελφὸν καὶ φίλον, καὶ μὴ ἰωθήτω ὑπὸ τὸν λίθον εἰς ἀπώλειαν. θές τὸν θησαυρόν σου κατ' ἐντολᾶς ὑψίστου, καὶ λυσιτελήσει σοι μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ χρυσίον.

I have underlined a number of terms that also show up in Acts 20.33–35. In addition, the context of Sir 29.9–11 is remarkably similar to the Acts passage. In Sirach, the injunctions have to do with the care of the poor (πένης) as a response to the commandments of God. In Acts, Paul asserted that he toiled with his own hands not only so as to support himself and his companions, but also that he might 'help' (ἀντιλαμβάνω) those in need. He did this, he stated, so that he might 'remember' (a Semitism which in effect means 'to keep', cf. Exod 13.3; Tob 4.5) the words of Jesus. Thus, as in Sirach, Paul toils to help those in need in order to keep the words (i.e. the command) of Jesus. The connections

39 Plümacher, 'Eine Thukydidereminiszenz', 127.

40 Plümacher, 'Eine Thukydidereminiszenz', 130.

41 Plümacher, 'Eine Thukydidereminiszenz', 129. He adds (130–33) that imitation of Thucydides during the Principate was common, and thus one should not be surprised to find it in Acts. Others who view the *logion* as an imitation of a Graeco-Roman aphorism (but not exclusively stemming from Thucydides) include Conzelmann, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 176; E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (trans. R. M. Wilson; Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) 594–5 n. 5; and J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 514.

between the Jewish thought as found in Sirach and the *logion* of Jesus are striking. I suggest that there are stronger correspondences between the *logion* and Sirach than with Thucydides (the latter has nothing to do with care for the poor).

A second weakness in Plümacher's argument has to do with the wording of the *Spruchwort*. In fact, the Thucydidean maxim states the *opposite* of Acts 20.35. Thucydides states that the Odrysians had established a custom which was the opposite to that of the Persians. This *nomos* of the Odrysians, states Thucydides, was λαμβάνειν μᾶλλον ἢ διδόναι (2.97.4). The statement in Acts, on the other hand, is μακάριον ἔστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν. Thus, it would be necessary to reconstruct in wording what the Persian custom was in order to have a maxim that is similar to Acts 20.35. This is problematic.<sup>42</sup>

To sum up, the sentiment of the *logion* ascribed to Jesus in Acts 20.35 is not foreign to Jewish literature. An important example is Sir 29.9–11 (cf. also Sir 4.31), where both lexical and conceptual ties with Acts 20.35 are very plausible. It should be noted that I am not arguing for direct dependence of Luke on Sirach. Rather, I suggest that the maxim is also found in Jewish literary soil (an example of which is Sirach) and that it is much more likely (given lexical and conceptual ties) that Luke derived it from this quarter than in *imitatio* of Thucydides.

*iv) Acts 26.14*

The statement is found in Paul's speech before Agrippa II (vv.1–29). It is an account of Paul's conversion and subsequent controversial ministry. Paul emphasised that his preaching concerning Jesus of Nazareth was in accordance with the Scriptures since in him they had been fulfilled. Paul stated that on his encounter with the resurrected Jesus the latter spoke to him in Aramaic (τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ) and stated: Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις; σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίξειν. The last statement in the dialogue has been identified as a Greek proverb.<sup>43</sup> Though most commentators agree that it is found in various classical authors (e.g. Pindar and Aeschylus), the text that most resembles Acts 26.14 in wording and thrust is said to be Euripides' *Bacchae* 794, although direct correspondence is largely denied.<sup>44</sup> Other authors indicate that the proverb was also a familiar one in Judaism (e.g. Psalms of Solomon 16.4; Philo *Dec.* 87).<sup>45</sup>

It is difficult to reach a firm decision on this matter since there are arguments that can be marshalled on both sides. On the one hand, it is true that in an

42 See the appropriate remarks of J. J. Kilgallen, 'Acts 20:35 and Thucydides 2.97.4', *JBL* 112 (1993) 312–14 in this respect. His remarks, however, are directed towards Haenchen.

43 See O. Bauernfeind, *Kommentar und Studien zur Apostelgeschichte mit einer Einleitung von Martin Hengel* (ed. Volker Metelmann; Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1980) 269; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 210–11; Haenchen, *Acts*, 685.

44 Thus especially Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2.1158 and Bauernfeind, *Kommentar*, 269.

45 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 466 n. 25.

agricultural society the image would be readily available to be employed as a spiritual metaphor. It is also true that, *broadly* speaking, the passages in Psalms of Solomon and Philo employ the image in the context of a struggle between God (in the case of Philo a struggle through conscience) and humans. On the other hand, the way that the proverb is used in Greek authors such as Euripides and Pindar, that is, of the inability of a human to defeat the will of the immortal gods, fits in well with the context of Acts 26.14. The evidence from the sources we possess thus makes it more likely that Luke drew the proverb from the Greek milieu. Whether or not he obtained the statement directly from Euripides is more difficult to say. If he did, it would be evidence that Luke had probably participated in primary education in a Greek context, where, as we have previously observed, Euripides was extremely popular in gnomologies. Indeed, the warning against *hubris* expressed in the maxim about kicking against the goads would be precisely what ancient society would have wanted to inculcate in the pupil. It is interesting that a similar maxim, having to do with *hubris*, was also used in the speech of Gamaliel that we examined previously.

v) Acts 27.41

This verse is part of the narrative of Paul's voyage to Rome. After fourteen days of drifting, the crew finally drew close to the island of Malta. As they were nearing the beach, they hit a shoal (τόπος διθάλασσον) and 'ran the ship aground'. This last clause translates ἐπέκειλαν τὴν ναῦν. Commentators have called this last phrase a 'literary expression'<sup>46</sup> that is reminiscent of Homer. Bruce, indeed, states that Acts 27 'presents one or two unmistakable Homeric reminiscences'.<sup>47</sup>

The following observations are pertinent in determining a Homeric echo here. First, it should be noted that it is somewhat misleading to argue that, because the term ναῦς was used in classical literature and appears only in this verse in the NT, Luke is therefore using a classical expression. In order to label a term 'classical' it is necessary to show that it did not normally appear in the Koine. Otherwise, hundreds of words could be termed 'classical' since the Koine is after all built upon Attic Greek. This was one of Wifstrand's criticisms of Norden's method with respect to Luke's classicism in his Gospel: 'It is not enough to point out that Luke has an Attic term in a passage where Mark has a koine word, since you must also show that the word chosen by Luke *does not occur* in Hellenistic

<sup>46</sup> Thus Haenchen, *Acts*, 708.

<sup>47</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 474. S. M. Praeder, 'Acts 27:1-28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts', *CBQ* 46 (1984) 683-706, at 701: 'In the *Odyssey epikellein* is used with *naus* (*nēus*) of the beaching of ships... Little else except a reminiscence of the *Odyssey* would explain the only appearance of *epikellein* and *naus* in the NT'. See also Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2.1213, though he does not seem to be as convinced as Bruce of the Homeric reference.



prose and also, hopefully, that the one he avoids *does* occur in Hellenistic writers. Then and only then can you reasonably argue for his being a classicist or an Atticist'.<sup>48</sup> In fact, the term νοῦς does appear in non-classical literature such as the papyri.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it is mistaken to state that Luke's use of the term νοῦς (rather than the more usual πλοῖν) in this passage indicates classical *imitatio*. Secondly, given the revival (though argued differently from Hobart) of the idea that the author of Acts was possibly a physician,<sup>50</sup> it is interesting to note that physicians during the Principate travelled often.<sup>51</sup> Thus, it could be argued that a nautical term such as ἐπικέλλω would probably have been known to Luke.

On the other hand, it is true that the spelling ἐπικέλλω is decidedly epic, not found in prose.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the combination of ἐπικέλλω and νοῦς is only found in Homer or in Eustathius's Homeric *scholia*.<sup>53</sup> It is thus striking to find this combination in Acts. This is perhaps the strongest piece of evidence that Luke was familiar with the *Odyssey*.<sup>54</sup> It is more difficult to say whether his use of the phrase was a conscious *imitatio* of Homer or a slip of the pen due to thorough familiarity with the poet. Whatever the case, this may constitute evidence of at least a secondary level of literate education on the part of Luke.

To sum up this section on intertextuality, it will be apparent that Acts' linkage with the Greek classics is minimal. In those places where there does appear to be a connection with Greek authors (Acts 5.29; 17.28; 26.14), it is either with maxims that would have been learned at the primary level or with popular cliché poetry of the Hellenistic period. Only the echo of Homer in Paul's voyage to Rome would indicate that the author had probably advanced to the secondary level of

48 Wifstrand, 'Luke and Greek Classicism', 19–20.

49 MM, s. v.

50 See L. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993) 176–7; M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer, *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien: Die unbekanntes Jahre des Apostels mit einem Beitrag von Ernst Axel Knauf* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) 18–26; A. Weissenrieder, *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke: Insights of Ancient Medical Texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); W. Eckey, *Das Lukasevangelium unter Berücksichtigung seiner Parallelen. Teilband 1: Lk 1,1–10, 42* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2004) 47–9.

51 See Hengel and Schwemer, *Paulus*, 20–1.

52 See Homer *Od.* 9.138, 148; 13.114; Apollonius Rhodius *Argon.* 1.1362; 2.352; 3.575; Numenius, *Fragmenta* 573.3; Phanocles *Fragmenta* 1.15. Later uses of the verb in this particular form are found mainly in *scholia* on Homer (e.g. Eustathius).

53 The closest thing to ἐπικέλλω is Herodotus 7.182: ἐπώκειλαν τὴν νέα. But note that ἐποκέλλω is normally used in prose during the Hellenistic period (e.g. Polybius 4.41; Arrian *Indica* 7.37.5). Note the inferior textual variant in Acts 27.41 with the more prose-friendly ἐπώκειλαν.

54 On Luke's supposed imitation of Homer, see especially D. MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003) although this author remains unconvinced by the parallels he cites, as the method for detecting Homeric echoes appears to be too broad.

*paideia* in the Greek context. Doubtless some would like mention of the prologues of Luke and Acts in this discussion on intertextuality, and I will deal with these in the Conclusion.

### b. *The Speeches*

The use of speeches in Acts has often been employed as evidence for Luke's awareness of the Greek model of historical writing.<sup>55</sup> In this section I would like, from the perspective of the Greek rhetorical curriculum that we have sketched, briefly to explore how the speeches in Acts fit with the model of Graeco-Roman historiography. That is to say, are the speeches in Acts reflective of the agonistic fabric that rhetorically trained students would have learned in the *progymnasmata* and declamations, and which was demonstrated in the pairing of speeches in literary works? When looked at from this perspective, I suggest that the speeches in Acts are after all not as similar to Graeco-Roman historiography as is often suggested.

The first major speech is Peter's Pentecost sermon in ch. 2. The ostensible purpose of the speech was to convince the hearers that Jesus, who had been betrayed and crucified but yet had been raised from the dead, was the Christ (v. 36). In order to effect this persuasion Peter resorted to arguments based on the authoritative Scriptures (vv. 17–21, 25–28, 34–35). It would thus be fair to say that the discourse had a persuasive function. Viewing the speech from the perspective of the rhetorical curriculum it is striking that there is no rebuttal to Peter's speech. If the attempt was to persuade, then one would have expected—following the Greek tradition—a *second* speech to be set side by side with Peter's in order to see which had the better argument and thus also bring a certain amount of objectivity. In fact, the voice of the 'other' is not given a chance in this speech. Instead, what we are allowed to hear are the words of surprise from the crowd: 'What does this mean?' (v. 12). This sounds a lot like an invitation *to the reader* to pay attention to Peter's sermon precisely to know what the tongues event means. The only agonistic statement is mentioned in v. 13: 'But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine" '. This is hardly a rebuttal! One might expect a response at the end of the speech. Instead, Luke reports that about three thousand were baptised and followed the apostles' teaching. In this, the first major, and in a sense tone-setting speech, there is no argument presented *against* the monumental claims of Peter. I would suggest that this is less than satisfactory from the point of view of the rhetorical curriculum that we have examined.

55 See, e.g., W. C. van Unnik, 'Luke's Second Book and the Rules of Hellenistic Historiography', *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie* (ed. J. Kremer; Leuven: Leuven University, 1979) 37–60; P. E. Satterthwaite, 'Acts against the Background of Classical Rhetoric', *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*, vol. 1 (ed. B. W. Winter and A. D. Clarke; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 355–60.

More overtly judicial scenarios show up during Paul's so-called second missionary journey at Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth. At Philippi, after exorcising a slave-girl who brought great profit to her masters, Paul and Silas received the following accusation: 'These men are disturbing our city, being as they are Jews (Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες), and are proclaiming customs which are not lawful for us either to receive or observe, being Romans (Ῥωμαίοις οὐσίην)' (16.20–21). Capitalising on their sense of Roman identity as citizens of such a centre of *romanitas* as Philippi, the plaintiffs accused the *peregrini* Paul and Silas of disturbance based on the latter's Jewish identity. The charge was probably that of disturbance through magic, as the exorcism of the slave-girl, performed by Jews, would have appeared to the Philippian bystanders. What is interesting to note for our purposes is that Luke reports no rebuttal from Paul and Silas. The charge was indeed a serious one, and yet, even after Paul's citizenship disclosure in vv. 37–38, there was really no defence. The only defence, if a defence it may be called, is the supernatural prison-release that occurs that evening. Again, viewing the episode through the lens of the rhetorical curriculum leaves one wondering why a defence speech was not included.

At Thessalonica, Paul and Silas again received an accusation: 'These men who have turned the world upside-down have come here also... And they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar saying that there is another king, namely Jesus' (17.6–7). The charge was probably that of *maiestas*, a very serious accusation that could incur severe penalties. Remarkably, Luke does not include a defence against this charge. This would have been an excellent place, judging from what a student would have been taught in the *progymnasmata* and *controversiae*, to put a speech on the lips of Paul providing a defence against the *maiestas* charge. It would be the sort of thing that the student would have learned in the exercises on *prosopopoeia* in the *progymnasmata*.

During his stay at Corinth, Paul was taken before the proconsul Gallio and accused of 'persuading men to worship God contrary to the law' (18.12). It is difficult to say what 'law' the Jews were referring to. Yet, it is remarkable that Luke again does not allow Paul to give a response. Instead, Luke makes the surprising statement that 'when Paul was about to open his mouth...' Gallio *himself* broke-in and, ironically, provided a defence that would be used by Paul later in Acts for his *apologia*. This again would have been a very good place to allow the audience to hear Paul's counter-argument against very pertinent accusations. Alexander comments on these apologetic scenarios:

Paul, certainly, is presented as innocent of the particular charge on which he was tried in Caesarea... But he and his associates have incurred a number of other charges along the way which have never in so many words—that is, in the explicit terms we would expect of apologetic speech—been refuted. Mud has a disturbing tendency to stick, and it is a dangerous strategy for an

apologetic writer to bring accusations to the reader's attention without taking the trouble to refute them.<sup>56</sup>

There are other places in Acts where a refutation—either from opponents against the Christian claim or from the disciples against political charges—would have worked very well (e.g. Acts 28.23–29). An individual who had been nourished in the *progymnasmata* and declamations would have found these ideal opportunities to put words on the lips of the speakers and thus add the agonistic dimension that was so central to Greek literature.<sup>57</sup> This is what he was taught during his rhetorical education, and what was reinforced in the culture. And yet, with the exception of the (brief) exchange between Tertullus and Paul in Acts 24, speeches in pairs are not at all the norm in Acts. Rather, the book of Acts reads like a one-way argument, where, as I have observed elsewhere, even the outsiders ironically accent Luke's theology.<sup>58</sup> Of course, it could be said that the reason why counter-speeches are not generally found in Acts is because Luke refused to put words on the lips of speakers that had never been uttered: he was a serious historian, it may be argued, unlike those blasted by Polybius in Book Twelve, who invented speeches *ex nihilo* to parade their rhetorical prowess. In fact, it may be that the portrait of Luke as a sober historian is best exemplified in his use of speeches—but ironically not in his similarity to Greek historians and their use of speeches, but rather in his *dissimilarity* to them. Whatever the case, it remains that Luke did not operate as the *pepai-deumenoí* did in their use of speeches, and this should be taken into serious consideration when assessing his educational level.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this paper I have attempted to put ourselves in the shoes of an individual who had obtained a rhetorical education by analysing the curriculum of tertiary literate education. From the curriculum two skills were isolated—intertextuality and speech construction. These were then explored in Acts, with the results being rather minimal, particularly (ironically enough) in speech construction. As for intertextuality, it was noted that most parallels (to the extent that they were legitimate) were in relation to poetry—the domain of primary and secondary

56 L. Alexander, 'The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text', *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (London: T&T Clark, 2005) 183–206, at 198.

57 Pairing of speeches is attested in scores of places in Greek historians. One may cite Thucydides as an example: Corinthians versus Athenians (1.68–78), and between individuals, Archidamus versus Sthenelaidas (1.80–86). On Josephus, see the contrasting speeches on suicide, one by Josephus himself (*B.J.* 3.363–68) and the other by Eleazar (*B.J.* 7.320–36).

58 See O. Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts: Poetics, Theology and Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2008) *passim*.

levels of literate education. Strikingly, there was no intertextuality with prose authors, the domain of rhetorical education. Based on these observations, I would suggest that Luke does not display some of the basic distinctive marks of a rhetorically educated individual and that, probably, he was not highly educated *in the literate tradition*.<sup>59</sup>

There will naturally be some objections to this conclusion, to which I now propose to give brief responses. First, it could be objected that although Luke was in fact rhetorically educated, he was writing to people who were not, and hence he chose not to display his learning. This is a legitimate criticism. However, I think that the following observations may offset its potency. First, the criticism assumes that the audience of Luke-Acts was not well educated. Works on the social level of early Christianity, however, have made a good case for viewing early Christian audiences as incorporating different strata of society, by no means excluding the upper strata, which would make it more likely that some of its members were highly educated.<sup>60</sup> There is, in principle, no reason why this type of audience would not have appreciated a denser intertextuality with Greek authors in Acts that would have given the work a sense of solemnity and elevation. Secondly, it is crucial to remember that history belonged to the high register of writings. That is to say, it was precisely in a work of history that the author was expected to dignify his prose with intertextuality and rhetoric. This was not the case with official or technical writings.<sup>61</sup> Thus, it would be very odd if Luke lowered his rhetorical standards when writing a work of history; and this in itself may signal his lack of rhetorical education. Lastly, if Luke concealed his level of education, just how *do* we know that he was rhetorically educated in the first place? At this point scholars who wish to defend the image of Luke as a rhetorically educated individual may take refuge in one of two places or both. One is the testimony of the early church, where authors such as Irenaeus and the Muratorian Fragment, for example, speak of Luke as a physician. But it should be noted that to say that Luke was educated in the domain of medicine does not imply that he was also highly educated in the domain of rhetoric. Just here a lack of nuance on ancient education may confuse the matter. Harking back to Lucian's *Somnium* we can see that after

59 See now R. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) for a similar conclusion though reached by slightly different means: 'Familiarity with rhetorical technique and contact with such authors as Homer and Euripides suggest an education that had progressed beyond the elementary level, but his stylistic limitations indicate that he did not reach the advanced stages' (7).

60 See, e.g. A. J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (London: Louisiana State University, 1977); W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1983) 51–73; Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (trans. J. H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) 69–119.

61 See Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 56–7.

some measure of literate education, the student, depending on several factors, could have continued on to tertiary rhetorical education or could have become an apprentice and learned one of the 'lower' *technai*. Thus, in the case of Lucian, having finished part of his literate studies (ἐπεπαύμην εἰς τὰ διδασκαλεῖα φοιτῶν), it was now to be decided whether he would go on to study rhetoric or learn a *techne* with his uncle (1). We can see from this text that individuals who were fortunate enough to have the possibility of education could have taken a rhetorical 'track' or a more scientific 'track'. That Galen had studied medicine and philosophy (*Lib. Prop.* 2.16) was unusual and due not a little to his father (11.40). Thus, to say that Luke was a physician (a profession viewed today, but not necessarily in the ancient world, as a mark of the highly educated<sup>62</sup>) does not at all imply that he was rhetorically educated: these were two different tracks that only exceptional individuals (and in exceptional circumstances) could have attained.

The second place of refuge is of course the preface to Luke's Gospel. But here again the works of L. Alexander and L. Rydbeck have made a very strong case for viewing Luke's language (especially that of the prologue) as most in tune with ancient *Fachprosa* or technical literature. Thus it is quite probable that the prologue stems from a man who depended on a *techne* for a living and not from a literary man.<sup>63</sup> The preface, therefore, should not be viewed as proof that Luke was a rhetorically educated man.

Although not the principal aim of this paper, I offer the following possible scenario for Luke's education. It is possible that Luke received primary and probably some measure of secondary education in the literate context, but, when it came time for higher education, he did not follow the literate track but followed the scientific or technical track. This would explain his use of the more literate (but not literary) *Fachprosa* and his lack of sophistication in intertextuality and speech-reporting, since he would in this case not have attended lectures with the rhetor. It would be necessary to explore further the scientific educational milieu of antiquity and bring it to bear on Luke's education.<sup>64</sup>

Another option has been recently suggested by Alexander. She argues that Biblical Greek (itself very similar to *Fachprosa*) would have functioned as a high register code in the Diaspora synagogues, much like Attic Greek was a prestige

62 See now the very informative work of V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2004) 87–8, 152–3, 253–60 and his comments on the social status of physicians. With the exception of royal physicians (such as Galen) they were not viewed as part of the educated elite: 'Both papyri and inscriptions place the doctor on the same level as village craftsmen' (152).

63 Alexander, *The Preface*, 168–212; L. Rydbeck, *Fachprosa, vermeintliche Volkssprache und Neues Testament. Zur Beurteilung der sprachlichen Niveauunterschiede in nachklassischen Griechisch* (Uppsala: Berlingska Boktryckeriet, 1967) *passim*.

64 A good start would be L. Edelstein, *Ancient Medicine* (trans. C. L. Temkin; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1967) supplemented now by Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*.

code in the Greek setting. To an educated Greek reader, on the other hand, Biblical Greek would have been seen as lower on the spectrum of the Koine. But for Luke, educated in a Jewish setting, this Biblical Greek would have been a prestige code, entirely appropriate for his literary work. Alexander thus concludes that Luke's thorough biblical linguistic pattern could only have been acquired in a Jewish school, which may mean that Luke was after all Jewish.<sup>65</sup> These observations lead to a series of further questions that must be explored to shed light on Luke's educational level: Did the Jewish system adopt the Greek one but just change its classics from Homer and Demosthenes to Moses and David?<sup>66</sup> Or did this form of *imitatio* develop independently of the Greek movement? Indeed, is *imitatio* inevitable in *any* culture that possesses sacred and authoritative texts?

The matter of Luke's education, we can see, turns out to be complex. But it is important to continue exploring, as the matter of Luke's *paideia* has repercussions for the social location of the early Christians, the way in which we read Acts, the genre of Acts and the standard of historical reporting that Luke may have had. I think, however, that a plausible case has been made to go beyond one-dimensional formal readings to more nuanced core explorations—and in this case, I think it raises serious difficulties for the view that Luke was a rhetorically educated individual.

65 L. Alexander, 'Septuaginta, Fachprosa, Imitatio: Albert Wifstrand and the Language of Luke-Acts', *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context*, 231–52.

66 See Wifstrand, 'Luke and Greek Classicism', 42–3.