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"Speech Unhindered": A Study of Irony in the Acts of the Apostles

by

Alexander Lorne Damm
Bachelor of Arts, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1996

Thesis
Submitted to the Department of Religion and Culture
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
Wilfrid Laurier University
1998

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Classical irony (ἡ εἰρωνεία) in the Acts of the Apostles. Recent studies of irony in Luke-Acts do not focus much on the Classical concept, developing their argument rather on more recent understandings. Although building on this literature, this thesis is grounded in a Classical understanding of irony, applies this to Acts, and reflects on its significance for Luke-Acts as a whole.

While contemporary writers often tend to understand irony as "incongruity between expectation and reality," first century CE Greek speakers saw irony or *eironeia* as a person's behaviour, specifically as "pretension" or posturing. This behaviour, always calculated, conveys a feeling or knowledge which does not match the conveyer's "real" feeling or knowledge. *Eironeia* takes two broad forms. The first is transparent; this is pretension which one person wishes another to recognize as such, sometimes defined as "saying one thing and conveying another." The second is opaque; this is pretension which one person does not wish another to recognize, but rather to assume is candid behaviour, and it aims to mislead.

Acts rarely offers clear examples of *eironeia*. Opaque *eironeia* comes from the unreliable character Festus, who pretences respect and fairness to Paul, seeking to mislead him. Behaviour somewhat like opaque *eironeia*, and transparent *eironeia*, come from the reliable character Paul, marking his preaching to Jews and to Gentiles. Behaviours somewhat like *eironeia* come from God, but should not be labelled as such.

Eironeia and behaviours like it hint that Luke-Acts draws on New Comic theatre to help interpret its content. Taken together, the use of *eironeia*-like behaviours, of *agnoia* ("ignorance"), *peripeteia* ("reversal"), and other New Comic aspects, suggests that we must pay more attention to Luke's knowledge of New Comedy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some students look back on the schooling struck by the positive effect of a professor not only on their academic development but on their outlook and treatment of others. I count myself as one of these students. For several years Professor Michel Desjardins has encouraged me to study texts carefully and to think more openly. For his encouragement and attention to detail, not least in this thesis, and for his unfailing patience and kindness, I am deeply grateful.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of Classical irony, ἡ εἰρωνεία (*eironeia*), in the Acts of the Apostles. Our thesis begins by asking what irony means to interpreters of Acts. It then asks what irony meant in antiquity, and finally, whether we find such irony in Acts. These are questions, in fact, with which we began. But only in hindsight, in light of a tentative conclusion, are we really coming to appreciate perhaps the key question: Why focus on Classical irony?

The question matters because, as is appreciated, features of Classical literature, to which Acts belongs--including character behaviours, forms, styles, rhetorical devices, and so on--may provide hints of the presence of broader, Classical "genres."[1] Granted, each feature can provide only one hint. But each hint can help us to understand what Acts' author, whom by convention we will call Luke, knew when writing of the Christian mission after the life of Jesus. Such hints can show us what genre(s) Luke used to help interpret characters and events in Acts, which has consequences for what those characters and events mean.

Some contend that we should consider modern conceptions of irony, and not only conceptions from Classical antiquity.[2] We reply that *Classical* irony appears under-

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[1]For these terms and their sources, see below, chapter four.

[2]See regarding irony in Luke-Acts, Jerry Lynn Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," Ph.D. diss. (University of Virginia, 1991), 45-47 with 70-71, 72-73; Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*,

studied in Acts. In consequence, we suggest, Acts' relation to *New Comedy* (ca. 320 BCE-)[3] is not fully appreciated. The infrequent attention to Acts *vis-à-vis* specifically New Comedy is suggested by Richard Pervo, who describes a reluctance among scholars to discover reminiscences of motifs usually deemed low-culture and/or pagan.[4] But perhaps another reason (to a degree part of the first) is insufficient attention given to Classical irony and to associated behaviours, which hint at this genre.[5]

Searching for things Classical with an eye on Acts' genre is not new. Recent overviews of so-called "Lukan genre debates"[6] show that scholars frequently seek comparisons between Acts and ancient literary genres, in order to help confirm or refute broader analogies. While acknowledging that analysis of Luke-Acts shows the text to encompass the genre of "history" (including works by Herodotus, or Josephus),[7] at least

---

Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, no. 72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 61-62. Here Camery-Hoggatt and Ray do not exclude Classical irony, but their examination of it within the context of other, more recent, images of irony indicates to me that their attention to it is not as pronounced as it could be.

[3]Our sources of information on New Comedy are offered in chapter four, below.

[4]Richard I . Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), xi-xii, 58-59. Pervo only mentions in passing, and through use of Graham Anderson's study of ancient "comic novels," that Acts is like New Comedy (58 n. 2, 59, 61 n. 16). But his point that many interpreters would downplay New Comedy's influence is implicit.

[5]Classical irony is found in ancient comedy (and was also often regarded in antiquity as an unsavoury kind of behaviour), thus making it a feature which some interpreters might wish to overlook in Acts. But irony is not found only in ancient comedy, and thus, independent of any association it has with comedy and unsavoury behaviour, there has certainly been missed opportunity to acknowledge its presence in Acts.

[6]Quotation from William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 5.

[7]On which, see for example Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1998), 21-24

two scholars have placed the emphasis elsewhere.[8] One is Charles Talbert, whose examination of Acts' prologue, and of Acts' Greek words and phrases, leads him to suggest the role of a philosophical "succession narrative" (with resemblances to the writing of Diodorus Siculus and Diogenes Laertius).[9] Another is Loveday Alexander, who, in studying the same prologue, concludes that "the closest parallels . . . are to be found in Greek scientific and technical manuals. . . .This has important consequences for . . . understanding of the literary genre of Luke's Gospel and Acts."[10]

Of particular importance, some scholars point to features of Acts which suggest the influence of (at least a parallel to) tragic theatre. Robert Tannehill has made correspondences, including a "recognition scene" and a "tragic reversal" for the people of Israel (the Jews). Certain scholars have searched for features, including Classical irony, which suggest the influence of *comic* theatre or of a set of themes informing it and other literary genres. Dan Via and Jerry Lynn Ray, especially, have explored Classical irony in Luke and in Acts, using it to suggest Luke's awareness of comedy. Via points to "the generative image which lies at the origins of Greek comedy" (i.e., to

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(here on the connection to Herodotus); see also Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum series, 64 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 386-89, 392-93 (here on the connection to Josephus).

[8]For more information see Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 2-3, 14-21.

[9]Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 4-13; reference to philosophers on 7.

[10]Loveday C. A. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, no. 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), n. p. (quotation from book preface); see also 210-12.

rituals which came before comedy), as appearing in Acts; Ray points to comedy in general.[11]

Our goal is to build on these studies by grounding ourselves in Classical irony, by applying this to Acts, and by suggesting that *eironeia* (and other behaviours like it) indicates that, in combination with other features of Acts, this text may be somewhat dependent on Greek New Comic theatre--to say nothing of many other genres which may have had equal or greater impact. We caution, in one scholar's words, that "we are not suggesting that [Luke] is consciously or unconsciously imitating" New Comedy.[12] We seek only to show that Luke seems to have known literary conventions which, in a particular combination, indicate that he knew of New Comedy (or of other genres having a similar blend of conventions).

We close this introduction in a way similar to that in a recent study, whose author has encouraged me to ask particular questions when studying the New Testament.[13] Certain of these we ask of people who read the New Testament as a holy book of writings having present relevance (in which there is nothing wrong). We encourage Christian readers to ask how they would interpret features of Acts in light of their similarity to New Comedy. If Acts portrays God as a God who permits the greater

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[11]These sources we discuss in more detail below, in chapters two and four. Quotation from Dan O. Via, Jr., *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament: A Structualist Approach to Hermeneutic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), xi.

[12]Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 62.

[13]See Michel Desjardins, *Peace, Violence and the New Testament*, The Biblical Seminar, 46 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 13-14.

number of Jews to be "hardened" against him and impious, and if New Comedy portrays certain gods/goddesses similarly, would one regard Acts' portrayal as inspired (i.e, as embodying truths given by God)? Or the New Comic portrayal as inspired? If Acts portrays Paul as one who hoodwinks his opponents, and New Comedy portrays a "parasite" character similarly, should one emulate Paul? Or does Paul's behaviour remain in some way superior and principled? There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. We also suggest, from Richard Pervo, that Christians could become more comfortable with the notion that Comic theatre informs canonical texts. At base, we encourage Christian readers to consider affinities among certain canonical and New Comic texts, and what those imply for viewing the former.

To allow for such questions, we divide our work into three chapters. In chapter two, we review what scholars say about irony; here we find precedents, possibilities for analysis, and opportunity to consider some current limitations. In chapter three, we explore irony in Classical antiquity. Known to Greeks and to many Romans as *eironeia*, we will find this term to denote speaking and acting that is not mundane, but rather "unhindered" or sophisticated. In chapter four, we apply our understanding to Acts, in the hope of finding examples of *eironeia*. With these, we seek to interpret one of the many ways in which it can enrich our understanding of Acts.

CHAPTER TWO
ACTS AND *EIRONEIA*: *EIN (KLEINER) FORSCHUNGSBERICHT*

"The best way to suppose what may come, is to remember what is past."
George Savile, 1st Marquess of Halifax[1]

These words offer guidance for the student of Luke-Acts. As recently as 1991, Jerry Lynn Ray concluded that "there are few studies on irony in Luke-Acts."[2] We must first discover the studies which exist, to learn what precedents and lessons they offer.

The following literature review has three parts. The first outlines our own premises or approach to the topic of *eironeia.* The focus of this review is on parts two and three. Part two summarizes the bulk of literature on irony in Luke-Acts. Part three analyzes that literature, in an effort to comprehend irony and its presence in Luke-Acts.

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[1]From *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, revised 4th ed., ed. Angela Partington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 321.

[2]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 25. Ray offers the most recent literature review of the study of Lukan irony. Parts two and three of our review are modelled on sections within Ray's review, but our contents and scope often differ from and expand on his. His study of literature on irony in Luke-Acts is limited to three works: Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 1, *The Gospel according to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), and its companion volume, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990); James M. Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice: Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986); David P. Moessner, "The Ironic Fulfillment of Israel's Glory," in *Luke-Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives*, ed. Joseph B. Tyson, 35-50 (Minneapolis: Ausgburg, 1988). Ray also considers Jakob Jónsson's *Humour and Irony in the New Testament Illuminated by Parallels in Talmud and Midrash* (Reykjavik: Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóds, 1965), which, as we will see, examines Acts; but Ray places this in his more general review section, "Irony in the New Testament." See Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 19, 25-29. Certain other works referring to irony acknowledge a precedent in Tannehill's *Narrative Unity*, but none offer a review of other literature.

It is an epilogue to this *Forschungsbericht*, but also a prologue to the thesis as a whole.

Few of our questions or conclusions are new. We will draw them together, however, from a variety of sources which have not always given enough attention to irony; and we will articulate and add to them. Our conclusions will become the base on which we will build our study of irony in Acts.

A. *Narrative Criticism*

We have two main approaches to our work. The first we present here, because it affects our terminology and observations throughout. The second we present in our next chapter. In order to help describe *eironeia* and to ground our interpretation of it, we turn to *narrative criticism*, primarily as it is described by Luke-Acts literature[3] and Mark Powell's *What Is Narrative Criticism?*[4]

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[3]Including studies of irony. Our conclusions in some ways depart from these studies, but we use the same narrative critical approach. The clearest precedent is Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 30-34; another (oft-acknowledged) narrative-critical Luke-Acts study is Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 1, 6-7 (narrative criticism) with 8-9, xiii and 12 (applications); Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 1-2, 135; and Moessner, "Ironic Fulfillment," 35-39 (see "plot," "narrator," "reliable witness" and other narrative-critical terms here, and throughout his essay). These are only studies of irony; there are several other helpful narrative-critical studies, to which we refer below, this note and this chapter.

"Literary criticism" Powell regards as a similar but more general, framing approach to narrative criticism. Helpful sources stating this approach have been: Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 1-38, esp. 7-14 (approach), 90-103 (approach; here he focuses on "genre," which he puts under the heading of literary criticism; see on this 94-95); Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 36-56; 57-60. For discussion and application of narrative or literary criticism in studies of comic theatre, which has helped us to make comparisons with Luke-Acts, see for example R. L. Hunter, *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 59 (on "plot"); Netta Zagagi, *The Comedy of Menander: Convention, Variation, and Originality* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press), 143 ("plot"), 206 (index, references to characterization, e.g., on 32: a "negative character"); and Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 12, 16, 28-31 (on "narrative"), 28-31, 45, 45. These studies on comedy do not necessarily use only narrative or literary criticism; but they do apply some of its images and terms. Others we refer to below, at the beginning of chapter four. For discussion of them in narrative criticism generally, see the table of contents to Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), vii-viii (for discussion specifically of a "negative character," see our mention of "unreliable characters" in the text, below).

[4]Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* Powell shows us that this approach aims to help us to make sense of the text; see *What is Narrative Criticism?* 2-3. Powell also makes the following informative

"Narrative criticism" denotes acceptance of particular premises of a text's author, three of which especially interest us. We present these in roughly the same order as Powell. First and most basic,[5] we examine Luke-Acts in a certain light: without disregarding its seeming assortment of forms and concerns,[6] it is helpful to our comparison with comedy that we label both "narratives."[7] Powell defines this and other, associated terms:

> A *narrative* may be defined as any work of literature that tells a story. . . . Narratives have two aspects: story and discourse.[8] *Story* refers to the content. . . . A story consists of such elements as events, characters, and settings, and the interaction of these . . . comprises what we call the plot. *Discourse* refers to the rhetoric of the narrative, how the story is told.[9]

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remark: "Attention to irony is essential to narrative criticism." While his understanding of irony (see Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 27-32) differs from ours, the general point he makes here is important.

[5]Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 23.

[6]Acknowledgement of such variety (which includes the narrative) is in Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 1, 3-5; see esp. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 4.

[7]On viewing Luke-Acts as a narrative, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 1 (initially drawn to our attention by James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 17, and Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 1. I have not seen New Comedy referred to as a "narrative," but what matters is that scholars describe it using such terms as "plot" (which means there is a "story") along with "characters"; these terms, as we show above, are relevant to study of narratives. See Zagagi, *The Comedy of Menander*, 15. Dana Sutton cautions against a strictly narrative-critical approach to comedy; see *Ancient Comedy: The War of the Generations*, Studies in Literary Themes and Genres (New York: Twayne, 1993), x-xi.

[8]Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 23. ("Story and discourse" Powell quotes from Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978].)

[9]Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 23. He goes on to specify four sorts of discourse (i.e., which help to convince and more simply to convey information to the reader): 1. "Evaluative point of view"; 2. "Narration (specifically a 'reliable narrator')"; 3. "Rhetorical devices," particularly "symbolism and irony"; and 4. "Narrative Patterns (e.g., chiasm, climax, interrogation)." Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 23-33.

This has implications, contends Powell, for keeping our attention on the complete and "unified" narrative.[10]

Second, Powell encourages us to recognize who matters to the narrative and how, by means of a "speech-act model."[11] We will use this and simplify it.[12] Who matters to our understanding of Classical *eironeia*? First is the "narrator--the voice . . . [used] to tell the story,"[13] for this voice conveys *eironeia*.[14] Second is the "implied reader . . . 'in whom the intention of the text is to be thought of as always reaching its fulfillment,'"[15] for this personage actually identifies *eironeia*.[16] Both personages,

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[10]As Tannehill says, we "do not explore the possible sources of Acts and seldom comment on the historical events that may lie behind the story" (Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 4). The same may be said for redaction. In Powell's words (he refers to narrative criticism's more general, framing, approach, called *literary criticism*): "1. Literary criticism focuses on the finished form of the text. . . . 2. Literary criticism emphasizes the unity of the text as a whole. . . . 3. Literary criticism views the text as an end in itself." Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 11, 6-8, with 23 (and on redaction, see also 2). Several of these points are also noted in Luke-Acts studies (see for example, Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 3, vol. 2, 4-5). The words "unified narrative" are from Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 1. We will not, in fact, give much attention to the narrative itself--the story (events, characters, settings) and its plot (on all these aspects, see table of contents to Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* vii-viii). Informative in this regard has been Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 28-31, for Via here notes the premise of a "unified" narrative and in this narrative (in Mark's gospel) he finds Classical *eironeia*. On this *eironeia*, see below, chapters three and four.

[11]Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 8-9 (citing Roman Jakobsen [for whom there is no citation], *et al.*, in n. 31, regarding the model in varying degrees of complexity).

[12]Our cue is from Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 7 (he simplifies his use of terms, while acknowledging each term's importance. He usually uses "narrator," specifically, in place of "implied author").

[13]Quote from Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 25 (see 25-27 on narrators).

[14]See for example, Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 137, esp. 142 (narrator as using voice of character); our own study finds that characters (below, chapter three, section D; chapter four, section A. 4) convey *eironeia*, and *eironeia* is what Kurz indicates is conveyed by the narrator, through those characters' voices.

[15]Quote from Powell, quoting in turn Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 38, all in Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 20 n. 27. Powell adds that the "implied reader . . . is presupposed by and constructed from the text itself." Powell, *What Is Narrative*

moreover, connect to the "story"; the former delivers it and its *eironeia*, and the latter hears it.[17] These may seem unnecessary synonyms for a parallel group of terms in the model--"author," "reader" and "text"--but the latter denote different things: "real" personages[18] and all they entail (e.g., Luke the author and Alex the reader).[19] We thus cannot presume that these seek to convey *eironeia*.[20] For precision, we should use appropriate terms, and in this context, narrator, implied reader, and story are most useful.

Third, we must see characters in light of narrative criticism, because *eironeia* is their preserve.[21] There are "reliable" and "unreliable" characters, writes Powell.[22] We

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Criticism? 15.

[16]Further on the implied reader, see Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 15, 19-20.

[17]We are in fact mixing terms from various parts of the model: the proper term to pair with "narrator" and "story" is "narratee" (the personage, notes Powell, "to whom the story is being told. In Luke-Acts the story is ostensibly being told to someone named Theophilus [Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1]." See Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 25-27 (quotation on 27). But we use "implied reader" because we know, as Powell indicates, that the text may well be for people other than Theophilus (27), and that the *eironeia* is to be registered by the implied reader (23 with 27-32). Other terms too we use for a reason: these are most appropriate for our later observations of *eironeia* (if we judge by Powell's definitions of each term, on which, see *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 19-20, 25-27.

[18]Quote from *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 19.

[19]For a full description of these (the various terms which we give and others), see Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 8-9 with 19-20 and 26-27. We follow Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 7, in preferring the term "narrator," over "implied author," since the latter is somewhat distanced from the actual voice which describes what happens in the text. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 9-12 (implied authors), 12-16 (implied readers), both with 136 (on irony), serve as a precedent for our use of "narrator" and "implied reader."

[20]On the narrator and author's possibly distinct views, in general, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 7.

[21]Certain others indicate this, in various ways; see for example, Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-47 with 67-69, 70-71, 72-73; Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 61; Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," in *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*, ed. M. S. Silk

have learned that in the gospel narratives, God,[23] Jesus,[24] the Holy Spirit[25] and (although not always) their human adherents[26] are to be understood by the implied reader as adequate--they offer "true and right" behaviour--while certain characters, especially

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(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 511.

[22]That is, says Powell, in the gospels (see below, this note). The term "reliable characters" we actually take from Tannehill, "Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104 (1985), 70 (re: Jesus, and the apostles Paul, Stephen, and Peter, as reliable characters; Tannehill never calls God a character, but Powell does (see note below; this Tannehill hints also, in "Tragic Story," 70, 82). When Powell discusses "reliability" of characters, he notes: "In all of our Gospels, there are only two basic points of view, the 'true' and the 'untrue,' and the evaluative points of view of all characters may be defined accordingly. Unlike some modern authors, our gospel writers do not allow characters to hover ambiguously between these two poles." Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 54 n. 7 ("unreliable" is quoted from 53; for discussion see 24-25, 53-54). Powell is not clear whether we should include Acts with Luke's gospel, but indicates not (27, 58-67). Powell also discusses characters in the context of "discourse"; of "how" we "understand the story." Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 23. On discourse with respect to characters see 24-25, 51-54. Luke-Acts literature seems to use the idea, and sometimes (albeit rarely, that we have seen) these terms; see also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 15, 16, 118, 310, 316, 322, 331. Interestingly, comedy literature which we have consulted does not use the terms "reliable" and "unreliable" (although notice that Zagagi, for example, says nearly the same: "In most of the texts relating to the soldier in Greek comedy, the character type presented is boastful, stupid, coarse and lustful--in other words, an easy target for satire. The traditional image of the soldier is replaced, in [two Menandrian plays], by a humane, likeable and sensitive character" (*The Comedy of Menander*, 29). Discussion of reliable and unreliable characters in New Comedy is below, chapter three, section D and chapter four, section B. 3.

[23]Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 24-25, 54 ("reliable" quoted on these pages), who in making this point, notes that for Luke, God is a reliable character. This last point is also made by Robert L. Brawley, *Centering on God: Method and Message in Luke-Acts*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 110-11.

[24]This is stated or implied by probably every study. It is implied in Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 1-2 (and with reference to the gospel of Mark, Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 54).

[25]It would appear in light of the Spirit's close association with God and with Jesus, as articulated by Talbert, *Reading Acts: Literary and Theological Commentary*, 4.

[26]As Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism*? 54 (regarding the disciples; Powell does not use the term "reliable"), and Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 9 and vol. 2, 15, caution us. (Tannehill calls Peter a "reliable" character in Acts, but an [at least sometimes, or somewhat] "unreliable" character in the gospel of Luke.) See esp. Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 32; Ray calls Peter, Paul and Jesus "protagonists."

Jews with religious authority, who "kick against" them (Acts 26:14),[27] are inadequate.[28] The former are called reliable; the latter, unreliable.[29] While Luke-Acts scholars understand that this categorization, to be sure, allows characters to cross from one category to another,[30] several use this to clarify whom the implied reader should and should not take as symbols of a "right way of thinking."[31]

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[27]Idiom from *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. A Translation and Adaptation of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur, by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich*. Second Edition, Revised and Augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker from Walter Bauer's Fifth Edition, 1958 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 756 (hereafter BAGD).

[28]Tannehill indicates that certain Gentile characters can also be unreliable. See for example, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 3 with 202-03, for example. Powell makes the main point here, in *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 25 and 53-54 (although he uses only sometimes the terms "reliable" and "unreliable"; quote from 24). Also see Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 32: "The antagonists throughout the narrative are the Jewish religious leaders."

[29]See preceding notes for reference to "reliable" and "unreliable." Powell adds that the narrator too may be considered reliable or unreliable; *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 26. Following Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 7 (whose view is cited by Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 26, n. 4), we assume the former.

[30]See note 28.

[31]Quotation from Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 24. For this understanding among Luke-Acts scholars (with slight variations among each), see especially: Jónsson, *Humour and Irony in the New Testament. Illuminated by Parallels in Talmud and Midrash*, Photomechanical Reprint, with a Foreword by Krister Stendahl, and an Epilogue (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 208, who groups Jesus, God, the Holy Spirit and the apostles; and Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 32, referring to Jesus, Peter and Paul. Neither use the precise words "reliable" and "unreliable." Other studies imply that there are reliable and unreliable character. We have noted Tannehill, above. Just by virtue of Tannehill speaking of missionaries versus "opponents of the mission [vol. 2, 3]," he implies the former to be reliable and the latter unreliable. *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 3, 16, 118, 310, all with vol. 2, 202-03, for example. Notice on 310 Tannehill's caution in assigning certain characters--Festus and Felix, both Romans--the title "unreliable." This will be significant for us; below, chapter four, sections A. 2, 3. See also Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 137, 139-43, 144-46, 149-55; here the words are implied, but never explicitly mentioned in any terms.

Powell's study goes on to point out three "elements" to a narrative: "events, characters and settings." These will be crucial to our appreciation of a narrative, and of *eironeia*, as Powell indicates: if we lack understanding of the context of irony (e.g., events), we will rarely find it. Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 7-10, 25 (quotation).

As an epilogue to our narrative-critical comments, we add a premise from what Powell calls *reader response criticism.*[32] This is articulated by Jerry Camery-Hoggatt in an analysis of Markan irony. Camery-Hoggatt states that the implied reader and the author have "competencies."[33] According to Camery-Hoggatt, such competencies are of "significance for the creation of intentionally ironic reactions on the part of the listener or reader."[34] What do these include? Bases for identifying *eironeia* can, for example, include the reader's understanding of a language (in this case, Greek), and the potential

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Further informative introductions to literary criticism for our study can be found in: Beardslee, *Literary Criticism and the New Testament.* Beardslee stresses the need to recognize literary "forms" in the New Testament and their significance for our understanding of a text (4-5, 11-13: "how the form is related to the religious function" [12]), as well as its use of rhetoric (3-5), the need for our "imaginative participation" when reading (7-11 [esp. 10]), the potential for various genres to influence, simultaneously, a work such as Acts (13). See also Leland Ryken, *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987). Ryken, who points to Acts as a story (18) with relations to other period "genres" of literature (14-15, 18), discusses methods of communicating clearly (for example, repetition, symbolism, "archetypes" [18-22]), and the importance of Classical genres for Acts (19-20, 126-31[on the latter, citing in part E. M. Blaiklock, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 144-45, in n. 4]). And see David Barr, *New Testament Story: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1995), 34-46 (esp. 42-46). Here Barr helps us to appreciate the core concept of a "story." He describes it in terms of a model containing "actants" (the "subject"; "helpers"; and "adversaries") who lie along an "axis of conflict." None of these summaries are exhaustive, but their ideas (Barr's especially, of a story), have ultimately helped to inform our final interpretation.

[32]Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* 16-18, 20. While, however, Powell says that reader-respone criticism is focussed on the "real reader," Camery-Hoggatt is unclear; he seems to write of an "implied reader (or "model reader") although he also indicates the "real reader"; see *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 59-60, x, respectively (and on the "author," see 59, although Camery-Hoggatt also refers to the narrator).

[33]There are "assumed competencies" (competencies in the reader) and "generated competencies" (competencies "generated by the text"). See Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 59-60.

[34]Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 58-60 (quote on 60; the remainder of his chapter, 63-89, elaborates on these). For background, see 57 and 59 and his second and third chapters. On 58-60, Camery-Hoggatt in part draws his understanding of competencies from Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

for its words to deliver "ambiguity," an indicator of irony.[35] This premise has encouraged us to seek our own "competency" of understanding ancient *eironeia*,[36] and will in itself help us to find *eironeia* in Acts.

Having clarified that we see Luke-Acts as a narrative, we turn to consider what studies of irony in Luke-Acts tell us. We will encounter a variety of perceptions, which we summarize so that we may better inform our own work.

B. *Eironeia in Luke-Acts: Some Key Studies*[37]

Our task has been engaged before, but should be engaged again, for we contend that no one source has fully discussed Classical *eironeia* in Acts. Both Ray and Camery-Hoggatt, however, have directly approached it and provide the context.[38] As Camery-Hoggatt writes,

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[35]On which, see *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 63-65. For other competencies and their importance, see 63-89, esp. 63 and 87-89.We will acknowledge, in footnotes, where the approach is helpful. Another approach will be helpful for us later. This is called "genre analysis," a corollary of literary criticism which assumes that texts can evince the impact of different genres of literature. Via employs this, in *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, xi with 90-103, esp. 94-96. Joseph Morris (drawing from James Reese) nicely summarizes Camery-Hoggatt's approach for us. "Irony must be recognized from context . . . ." See Morris, "Irony and Ethics in the Lukan Narrative World: A Narrative Rhetorical Reading" (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1992), 201.

[36]See below, chapter three.

[37]Sources on irony in Luke-Acts which we have not been able to consult include the following: Robert J. Miller, "Prophecy and Resurrection in Luke-Acts" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1986); Bruce Hollenback, "Lest They Should Turn and be Forgiven: Irony," *Bible Translator* 34 (1983): 312-21. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987). All of these sources are cited by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 80 n. 90, 69 n. 68 , 70 n. 70 and 75 n. 81 (respectively); I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Intervarsity, 1980) is also cited in this regard by Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 61 n. 11.

[38]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 25, 29 (referring exclusively to Luke-Acts); Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, ix-xi, 13-14 (referring to irony "throughout the biblical narrative" [ix]). These citations refer not to their actual study of Classical *eironeia*, but to their observations of the study of irony (including *eironeia*). For their contributions, see below, this chapter.

> Before 1970 discussions of irony were widely scattered. When itwas discussed, it was primarily as a matter incidental to some other concern. Studies which focused on irony *as such* were exceptional . . . . Since 1970 however, something remarkable has happened. There has been a growing interest in irony . . . throughout the biblical narrative.[39]

We will not concern ourselves here with the history of irony scholarship. Suffice it to say, with Camery-Hoggatt, that irony is a fairly recent subject of interest.

This said, we examine key studies of "irony." Taking our cue from literature reviews, we cover recent major works.[40] Some have rightly indicated two broad, related understandings of irony. These we too must distinguish. One is Classical, and the other more current.[41] The Classical understanding is of "affectation," sometimes made to be

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[39]Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, ix. Also see Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 10. Mack's opinion differs slightly from Camery-Hoggatt's: he says that "from the beginning (to the twentieth century), it was taken for granted that New Testament texts were to be read as rhetorical compositions (10)". Similar to Camery-Hoggatt, with regard to the gospel of John, see Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 1.

When we say "the task has been engaged before," we mean that several studies of New Testament irony know that irony "as such" (not necessarily just Classical *eironeia*) has been dealt with. See for example, Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 4-5 with 7; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 3, with 4, 70, 88, 94; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 135-47 (who draws heavily from *Narrative Unity*); and Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, 14-15, with 94-95. (Mack does not refer to the study of *irony*, but implies this.)

[40]Although we are not exhaustive. The most recent and most thorough literature review of Luke-Acts is, again, from Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 25-29 (see also his more general review of irony scholarship on the Hebrew Bible and New Testament [11-24]). Another good point of departure remains Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, ix-xi, 1-14.

[41]We base our words on the common catchphrase "the ancient and the modern" (Karl A. Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], 35). Scholars have seen the Classical to be a part of the current understanding. See Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-61 (Classical understanding), 51: "[D. C.] Muecke . . . is able to distinguish certain essential characteristics that he claims are a part of all irony" (citing D. C. Muecke, *The Compass of Irony* [London: Methuen, 1970], 14, 19-20). For details on "all irony," see "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 51-

obvious and sometimes not; this was in Greek called *eironeia*.[42] The current understanding, which envelops but embellishes the Classical,[43] is often attributed to D. C. Muecke:

> In all instances of irony we can distinguish three essential elements. . . . In the first place irony is a double-layered . . . phenomenon. At the lower level is the situation either as it appears to the victim of irony (where there is a victim) or as it is deceptively presented by the ironist (where there is an ironist). . . . In the second place there is always some kind of opposition between the two levels . . . contradiction, incongruity, or incompatibility. . . . In the third place there is in irony an element of "innocence"; either a victim is confidently unaware of the very possiblity of there being an upper level . . . that invalidates his own, or an ironist pretends not to be aware of it.[44]

Strikingly, we will find that several (but not all) indicate or imply "opposition" or

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53, 53-61 (citing throughout Muecke, *Compass of Irony*, and other primary and secondary works).

We over-simplify Ray and others' works by saying there is a "current understanding" of irony. There is, but it is taken as an umbrella understanding; Ray writes that there are several specific understandings from which we may generalize (Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 51, citing in n. 3 Muecke, *Compass of Irony*,19-20). What Ray, Duke, Camery-Hoggatt (more implicitly than explicitly) and others do is separate discussion of what irony was in *antiquity* from what it is *today* (yet acknowledging this includes irony in antiquity). See Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10 with 13, 13 n. 20 (citing Muecke, *Compass of Irony*, 19-20, for the general, current understanding); and Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-6 1(similarly citing Muecke, *Compass of Irony*, 19f.). See also Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 35-38.

[42]This basic sentence mimics the phrasing often used in studies of *eironeia*; "affectation" is the term used by Thomas Rosenmeyer; see Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511 (for detail, see below, chapter three). For acknowledgement of this in New Testament studies (with slight variations among them), see for example Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-47; Jónsson, *Humour*, 21-22, 25-26 (basing in part on various secondary discussions); Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 8-10; Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60.

[43]Ray speaks of "inclusion" of the Classical meaning. See Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 50-51.

[44]Muecke, *Compass of Irony*, 19-20. Our use of this summary, and in dehydrated form (Muecke's is lengthy), follows those who quote him. See Ray, Camery-Hoggatt and Duke's understandings (note 41).

"incongruity" to be irony's core meaning.[45] These include Tannehill's *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, and since his oft-cited words express it succinctly, we repeat them here: irony is "incongruity between . . . expectations and . . . action"; in Acts, "between human expectations and divine action."[46] With these rough understandings in mind, we

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[45]Several of the sources actually do not define the term "irony," but they do "imply." The term we will use, following Tannehill, is "incongruity," since most sources indicate this, i.e., one thing which to some degree opposes (in some sense) another. The idea that many sources focus on incongruity may have been pointed out before, but we certainly see it frequently ourselves. Notice, as has been pointed out, that Muecke does not; he refers only to "elements" (Muecke, *Compass of Irony*, 19-20). We wish here to add that affectation is not incongruity. It may *convey* incongruity--but this is slightly distinct. Classical *eironeia*, moreover, refers to a person's behaviour (words and actions); the current to a broader range of ideas ("situations," for example). Some scholars *embellish* the definition, giving new (related, but not so-titled in antiquity) understandings to the word (see, e.g., Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 50-51). Others *re-interpret* it, saying irony to be incongruity (as we learn from literature below, chapter three, section A. From a Classical viewpoint, it is not; although certainly Jónsson hints even Classical *eironeia* to be "incongruity" [Jónsson, *Humour*, 21]). For irony as conveying incongruity, notice this example from Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, in *Quintilian*, 4 vols., Loeb Classical Library [London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920], 6.2.15-16, cited in Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 47): "The term which is applied to words which mean something others than they express."

[46]To judge by a number of literary critics, Tannehill provides only a partial definition of irony (we highlight it because we feel it is indicative of how Luke-Acts scholars view the term). The accepted "definition" (although critics avoid this term; see Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 53; also Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61; Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 13ff.), is from Muecke. He does *not* claim irony to *be* incongruity (on this see citations of him by Ray, Camery-Hoggatt and Duke, above). Notice the similarity to the Classical understanding; but one key difference is that the Classical refers at most to the *expression of an incongruity*. We offer a general definition in part based on Camery-Hoggatt doing the same, but our definition differs somewhat, and is set in a different context. See *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61. The definition here, we add, is somewhat simple *vis-à-vis* the "formal requirements" stated by Muecke, as cited in Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 13-18, Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 51-53 (from where we take the quote "formal requirements") and Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 61. Our atttention to the notion of incongruity as irony has been encouraged by Carolyn Swearingen's note that this is a common way of envisioning irony; see Carolyn Jan Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic: A History of Indirect Discourse in Rhetoric, Aesthetics, and Semeiotics" (Ph. D. diss., University of Texas at Austin), 2.

See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 156. Tannehill actually writes only the latter, when discussing Peter in Acts 12:1-25. We are encouraged to use this in part based on Plank's similar understanding, of irony as a "contrast between appearance and reality." See Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 37; Ray, "Narrative irony in Luke-Acts," 53 (Ray too speaks of irony as an essence; he begins, "Irony is found where. . ."). Some studies speak of irony in the abstract (for example, "There is irony in . . ."); others speak of irony as a specific noun ("There is an irony in . . ."). Our summary will not distinguish these uses in the studies, and will use the term in both ways, interchangeably.

can label perspectives in the literature, and with the help of others' comments, can later critique some of them.[47]

The Classical understanding is our starting point.[48] Elton Trueblood's *The Humor of Christ* (1964), in defining irony,[49] argues that Jesus was acquainted with affectation; with "feigned ignorance . . . to draw out and . . . confound an antagonist," called *Socratic* irony.[50] For support, Trueblood cites an "ironic question" in Luke 7:24-26: when Jesus asks those curious about John the Baptist, "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind?" he "allows the logic of the

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[47]We follow Camery-Hoggatt insofar as we critique recent works. We even accept some of his own critique, but we are also critical of his own work. See *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 2-3.

[48]This is not the starting point for study of irony. Scholars point to discussions of it dating back to at least the early twentieth century. See for example, reference to Theodor Zahn's *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lucas* (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung Werner Scholl), 762-63, nn. 52, 53; to Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 640; and to Northrop Frye (*Anatomy of Criticism* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957], 34), all in Brawley, *Centering on God*, 118; and reference to Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Kritischer Exegetischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, III, 5th ed. (Göttingen, 1965), 442, in Jean Zumstein, "L'Apôtre comme martyr dans les Actes de Luc," *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 112 (1980): 383 (Haenchen is not said here to use the term "irony" itself, but his concept of "theology of the cross" appears to parallel the current understanding of irony. See our citation of Zumstein, below, in this chapter).

[49]Trueblood defines irony uniquely (and narrowly; see below, chapter three) as "a holding up to public view of either vice or folly, but without a note of bitterness or the attempt to harm. The ironical is always marked by a subtle sharpness of insight, free from the desire to wound." See *The Humor of Christ* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 55.

[50]Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ*, 56 (quotation), 56-57. See examples on pages given in following note. He specifies irony as "humility, either mock or real" (56). The above summary was pointed out and focussed for us by Dawsey's *The Lukan Voice*, 153-54 (particularly 154 n. 26). The quotation from John the Baptist, and any English biblical quotations from here forward, we cite from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (hereafter RSV).

situation to demonstrate itself."[51] This irony is seen by Jesus, he argues (and is not simply Lukan), by readers and at times by those among whom he employs irony.[52]

Classical understandings appear to be Jakob Jónsson's concern in *Humour and Irony in the New Testament* (1965). Jónsson says both that "irony is feinte," and that it "is a disharmony between what is meant and what is said [i.e., here by characters]."[53] In Acts, he acknowledges the latter, used by Luke and sensed by readers[54] and (perhaps)

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[51]Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ*, 58 (quotation), 58-59; on Jesus and irony see further 55 (general definition), 57-60, 63-67, esp. 57, 58, 59, 60, 64, 66, 67 (these latter contain references to Luke's gospel). To this Trueblood adds irony's "amusing" attribute and its pedagogical significance, claiming it "was certain to be more effective than would have been a wholly serious and indicative approach" to teaching. *The Humor of Christ*, 55 (quotations on 58, 59).

[52]On readers: implied in Trueblood's examples, and clear when he speaks of Jesus using irony to teach characters in the story; the irony is at once meant for the reader (Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ*, 58-59, esp. 59-60). When we say "readers," we assume that works referring to ancient readers; whether they refer to modern readers is not always clear; it probably depends on the scholar's theology--whether or not he or she feels that the text "speaks to" modern readers. Trueblood believes so. On Jesus himself: implied, 57-60. On people among Jesus: 57-60. Some scholars refer to "characters" including God and Jesus, characters "in a story" or "in a narrative" (for "within the story," see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 5; others do not. We will not specify, and may sometimes use the terms where a source does not. We assume that the apostles, Jesus, God, the Jews, etc. are characters in a narrative.

[53]The reader may sense a tension between these definitions. Jónsson, *Humour*, 21-26. Jónsson draws on Aristotle and Cicero's definitions (21), referring to Aristotle's mention of "understatement" and Cicero's mention of "feinte"). Jónsson seeks to associate humour with irony on 22-26: "Fundamental to both is the sense of the comical (25)." On use by characters, see *Humour*, 90-165, 166-199 (esp. 177-199). On 21-26 Jónsson indicates (i.e., in his opinion), that he uses a Classical definition of irony; on p. 222 and throughout his chapter on Acts (208-222), he acknowledges speaking of a different sort of irony (or as he calls it here, humour); his silence here as to whether he feels it is Classical or not leads us to assume that he thinks it is.

[54]On disharmony, see *Humour*, 222. ("The humour of Acts is different in form from the humour of the gospels, including the Gospel of Luke. The author of Acts does not make use of traditional or proverbial expressions [i.e., "feinte"].") Used by Luke: see *Humour*, 208, 222, both with 209-10, 213. Sensed by readers: this is implied (ancient readers, and possible for current readers) throughout *Humour*; also indicated in *Humour*, 16. See esp. 90 and 165 (Jónsson notes that we can sense humour and irony, but may not. "The student of the humour of the New Testament will find it difficult . . . to state definitely whether words or sayings have originally been meant as humorous. It is also difficult to guarantee that a passage has been understood as humoristic in any context where it may be found" [90]). Implied also on 209, 214, 215, 216. Whether the reader outside the narrative--or people-characters inside narrative--*perceive* irony, is vague in this book.

characters.[55] For example, he finds that Acts 12:20-23 (which recounts King Herod's death) expresses irony akin to "contrast":[56] "Luke . . . describes the contrast between the outward glory of the king . . . and then the sudden visit of the angel of death."[57] Irony can also be the "contrast between cause and effect";[58] when Paul is harassed in Acts 16:19-20, "it is somewhat ironical that prophetic 'preaching' in favor of Paul [16:17] should have the consequences described"[59]--harassment.

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[55]Certainly for Jesus, when using "feinte" (Jónsson, *Humour*, 96, 141); on what awareness Jesus has of "disharmony" (see Jónsson's chapter on Acts), Jónsson does not comment. In this chapter Jónsson does not specify whether God is a character nor what understanding of irony he would have. Human characters at whom "feinte" is directed are aware of it (24, 25, 90-165), but on characters' (e.g., apostles, Jewish authorities) awareness of "disharmony," Jónsson is not clear (208-222); he implies they may or may not be aware of disharmony in which they are involved (209-10, 213).

[56]Jónsson speaks of "irony of the story. . . ." but does not indicate *feinte*, a keyword we saw above. Perhaps he means "feinte," but recall that he opens his book with two definitions, one of which is of "disharmony." This seems a synonym for contrast and appears to define irony here. *Humour*, 214.

[57]Jónsson, *Humour*, 214.

[58]Quotation based on Plank, above, note 41. On irony of causes and effects, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283; vol. 2, 155.

[59]The preaching is in Acts 16:16-18. Jónsson, *Humour*, 215. Jónsson finds other examples in Acts 5:17-32 (see v. 24); 7:41; 8:9-24 (see v. 10); 10:1-48; 12:1-19; 13:50-51; 14:8-18; 17:18-21, 32-33; 18:12-17; 22:25-29. Also he cites 19:23-41; 21:27-39 (regarding perhaps dramatic irony, although Jónsson does not label it that). Jónsson hints at the Classical definition when discussing 17:18-21, 32-33.

There is brief reference (although not explicit) to Classical irony by Hanneliese Steichele (1971). Although he does not use the term , he points to *litotes*, which was for Aristotle synonymous. *Litotes*, which has been called an "exclusively verbal irony of understatement," Steichele discovers in passages including Acts 12:18, where οὐκ ὀλίγος ("not small") is used by Luke to understate a strong opinion. (On *litotes*, see Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 112; see his other examples: Acts 12:18; 14:28; 17:4,12; 19:11; 19:23; 20:12; 27:20; 28:2.) See 46, 48, 49 (further examples on these pages). On 46 he notes the influence here of Classical rhetoric (important for us in chapter three, below). Hanneliese Steichele, *Vergleich der Apostelgeschichte mit der antiken Geschichtsschreibung: Eine Studie zur Erzählkunst in der Apostelgeschichte* (Dissertation, Ludwig-Maximilians Universität in München, 1971), 46. Shortly after, in *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller: Studien zur Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1972), 19, Eckhard Plümacher claims that within Acts 17, we may draw a parallel between the confused reaction to Paul and that, earlier in history, to Socrates. In this Plümacher hints that both used *eironeia* (the cause of the confusion), in the Classical sense of affecting. But he is not clear.

In *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (1977)[60] Luke T. Johnson--implying that he understands Classical irony--suggests it not only to be incongruity between characters' expectations and divine action,[61] but between characters' expectations and *the readers' understanding of divine action.*[62] The evidence is the Jewish court's reaction to the apostles' jailbreak (in Acts 5), a "scene . . . drawn with great irony." Although unclear which characters notice incongruity, Johnson indicates that readers notice it; they sense the jailbreak to be incongruous with the Sanhedrin's confidence in its power.[63]

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[60]Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, 39 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977).

[61]*Literary Function of Possessions*, 196. Actually Johnson is not clear, but we will err on the side of caution and assume that he feels he is discussing Classical irony. On characters' understanding of irony, see footnotes below. Johnson implies also that the reader perceives it. In what way is unclear, although in the last example the reader seems to perceive incongruity without being shocked. Johnson implies the reader's perception in that he is exegeting the text; this act usually indicates the reader will see what the author intended, with the help of the exegete. We first saw reference to irony pointed out by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 65.

[62]Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions*, 196 (citing Jónsson, *Humour*, 209; the citation from Johnson is used by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 65). Jónsson, who is the source of this point, refers only to the former kind of incongruity; Johnson, however, seems to expand the meaning.

[63]Tannehill first noted this (York also, in *The Last Shall be First*, 22); see *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 65. Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions*, 196 (citing Jónsson, *Humour*, 209). Johnson implies that Luke sees the irony, and that ancient readers are meant to see it (whether current readers are is unclear). Johnson also implies that God and Jesus see it. He is not clear whether the apostles or Jewish authorities see it.

Elsewhere in his book, Johnson suggests irony (minus the word) in Peter's idea (Acts 3:23) that one causes their own "rejection" by resisting Jesus' teachings (Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions*, 65-67). Here Johnson hints that readers are to sense incongruity (whether readers are to be surprised--whether *their* expectations are in question--is not clear), along with Peter and the Jews whom he addresses (67). We say that characters sense the irony, because it is conveyed in Peter's speech. It is implicit also that Luke (66), God and Jesus sense it (67). We say that characters sense the irony, because it is conveyed in Peter's speech. Johnson hints at irony further in Acts 3:13-15,17: irony is implied by the Jews' ostracism of Jesus: "their rejection had . . . brought to fulfillment God's plan for the Christ" (64); and Jesus was "rejected . . . by the people he had come to save" (67; on 64 Johnson again contends that irony is sensed by Peter, who speaks these ideas, as well as by God and Jesus; he implies it is also sensed

Richard Pervo, in a 1979 dissertation, later published as *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (1987), also believes that he finds Classical irony.[64] With "contrast between appearance and reality"[65] or "before and after" as one seeming key to irony,[66] Pervo finds it implied in Paul's blind and humbling trip to Damascus (Acts 9:8),[67] and in the story of Herod: "Herod . . . determined to slay Peter, found himself slain" (Acts 12:20-23).[68] Arguing that Acts is a

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by Jewish listeners and by the reader). John York has pointed out another study by Johnson which discusses "reversal of human expectations" conveyed in Jesus' parables. York does not say that Johnson equates reversal with irony, but suggests this, in light of some of his own discussion of reversal (York, *The Last Shall be First*, 23, 166). York, citing Johnson, *Luke-Acts: A Story of Prophet and People* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981), 59-60.

[64]Pervo, *Profit with Delight* (see above, note 37). On irony by author and for characters and readers, see below, note 66. Pervo indicates that he focuses on a Classical understanding of irony (xi-xii, esp. 58-59), although this is not in fact the case.

[65]The quoted phrase is from Plank (Plank does not equate these words with irony). See Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 37. Pervo suggests he agrees when writing of "ironies of characterization, the contrast between what people should be like and the way they are." Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 60.

[66]See Pervo's quotation in *Profit with Delight* (above note). On 59, he may offer a different understanding, but in vague language. "Irony exists in manifold forms, ranging from the crude to the sublime. Rather closer to the former is . . . 'poetic justice'. . . . 'There is,' observed Ovid, 'no law more just than that those who contrive murder should die by their own contrivances' (*Ars amatoria* 1.655-56)." On 59 Pervo refers to "incongruity," although he never equates it with irony. He also hints that irony is affectation (61, referring to Paul's sarcasm in Acts 17, and the narrator's, in Acts 19:32). Implied throughout 58-61 is that the irony is Classical. We take issue with this in chapter three, below.

[67]"Paul . . . wickedly planned to drag Christians from Damascus to Jerusalem in chains. Instead, he is himself led to Damascus by the hand. 'Such is the pitiful state in which the terror of the Christians makes his entry.'" *Profit with Delight*, 60 (quoting and citing in part Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 323).

[68]*Profit with Delight*, 60-61. Other passages in Acts which exhibit irony are: Acts 2:12-13 (59); 13:6-12 (60); 1:19-20; 5:1-11; 9:8; 19:13-16 (60 n. 5); some of these examples he implies have been drawn to his attention by Kirsopp Lake, in F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1920-33), 29-30; A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969 [1933]), 80, 91; and W. Nestle, "Legenden vom Tod der Gottesverachter," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 33 (1936): 246-69. Pervo also cites Acts 23:12-33; 16:37-39; 21:37-39; 22:25-29; 19:13-17; 19:32 (see 60-61).

text with an "entertaining nature"--like comedies[69]--Pervo describes irony as sharing this nature.[70]

In "L'Ironie et la Bible" (1980), André de Robert continues the study.[71] Paraphrasing Søren Kirkegaard that "irony . . . is . . . a way, as with Socrates, to bring someone to the truth," as well as "a genre of mockery,"[72] de Robert indicates that in the Bible, these both describe the (deliberate) ignoring of Greco-Roman assumptions and norms.[73] In other words, irony is the essence of a stance at complete variance with the accepted,[74] which biblical figures (God, Jesus, Paul, the evangelists) express and

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[69]*Profit with Delight*, xi. Specifically, Pervo calls Acts an "edifying historical novel"; a novel aimed to edify (to teach, to enlighten) through, or with the help of, its entertainment (xi-xii, 61, 66, 137 [quotation]). Pervo emphasizes irony to be entertaining in that it offers "humor" (58-59). On comedies as entertaining--and in this as broadly similar to Acts--see Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 58-59, and below, chapter four; Pervo's hint that comedies resemble Acts is a distant precedent for our thesis.

[70]Thesis: Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 136-37 (quote on 137). On irony: *Profit with Delight*, 137 with 58-59, and 10-11 (quote on p. 11). It is implied here that Luke uses and the reader recognizes irony and entertainment (xi, 11[referring in part to Haenchen], 59). Pervo does not discuss God and Jesus, but he hints that they would have understood--indeed have helped to create--irony (60). Whether various characters (Peter, Herod, Paul) involved with incongruity would have recognized it, is unclear (59-61), but suggested, re: Elymas (59); Paul, "forty men," Simon Magus, Gallio (60).

[71]André de Robert, "L'Ironie et la Bible," *Études théologiques et religieuses* 55 (1980): 3-30.

[72]In the sense of "saying one thing and meaning another" (quotation cited in chapter four, below; here from Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60). I do not read this in de Robert's article, but in light of our later study (below, chapter three, section C. 2. a), this appears to be what he means. De Robert, "L'Ironie," 3 with 6.

[73]De Robert, "L'Ironie," 3 (quotation), 12-13, 30. On Kirkegaard, see 3, 4, 30. De Robert adds that what the earliest Christians brought to societal norms was laughter ("le rire")--an expression of irony (11). Phrases which de Robert uses include "ce siècle" ("this age"; quoting Paul) and "les choses sérieuses" ("the serious things"). See "L'Ironie," 3. For further detail and page references, see following note.

[74]This is just one of the definitions; here we over-simplifies de Robert's views. See de Robert, "L'Ironie," 1, 5-7, 8, 13, 15-16, 20-21(one might find other definitions on 6, for example). De Robert gives an example, with respect to Paul: "the tranquil and joyous boldness of the apostle in his confrontations with the world of his time, . . . also . . . his charismatic exhortations: 'Everything is to you, and you to Christ . . . Everything is permitted to me, but not everything is useful . . . Do not conform

readers see--"at least in this [ancient] time."[75] There are examples among Luke and Acts. One is the fact, he claims, that Jesus is on the one hand ostracized and killed, and on the other hand is called the Christ (Acts 2:36);[76] this combination presents a startling picture of the son of God--and thereby expresses "mockery against the high authorities who sit with impunity, who make the law without appeal, who decide without opposition."[77] Another example is the "nature of"[78] Lukan style, which mocks convention in a different sense:

> When he presents the speeches and the acts of Jesus, Luke is interested above all in their sense. He sometimes manifests a profound indifference for their chronology or their topographical

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yourselves to the present world. . .'" (12; on Paul, see 8-13, esp. 8, 9-10, 11, 12). As de Robert adds, "this withdrawl of the faith to the regard of which it is agreed to call 'the serious things,' it is not only withdrawl . . . but . . . an act of liberty very particular of which the nature is the irony" (3, 30). De Robert says further: "One can . . . divine an irony, discreet but forcefully implicated, in the paradoxes and the reversals of values. (The last will be the first.) Or further, in the construction and the principle even of the parables. Because they are not content to say what they say and what one is disposed to admit, but they also say, thanks to a perfectly adapted audience each time, what one does not want to know. And for a reason! To now refuse the double ironic sense of these parables will be a manner well equivocal to make them innocent!" (6). He also applies the term directly to certain phenomena: "*the content* of this . . . good news is an irony" (6). Yet he also stresses: "Irony does not read itself to us as an object of knowledge" (21).

[75]Quote from de Robert, "L'Ironie," 6 (see also 21). For biblical figures, this is not clear, but suggested: 3 (the evangelist John), 5-6 (Jesus), 6 (God), 8 (Paul), 13-15 (Luke). For readers: 5-6, 6-7, 20-21; de Robert also implies this throughout (3-30) just by virtue of pointing out irony to readers (see 8, 13). I do not know whether certain figures perceive certain examples of irony (e.g., whether readers only perceive certain examples of irony). Whether, moreover, de Robert means that all examples of irony are evident today, I am not clear. But de Robert says that "the liberty of Luke is effectively scandalous to *our* [italics added] form of spirit, and . . . it wants to be." We can sense the irony. See "L'Ironie," 5, 21 (quotation), 22.

[76]To follow de Robert's similar words, he in turn quoting Peter (Acts 2:36): "God made Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified." See de Robert, "L'Ironie," 6.

[77]De Robert, "L'Ironie," 6-7 (quotation on 7); see with 3.

[78]De Robert, "L'Ironie," 3 (quotation) with 20-21.

situation. He does not fear to compose freely the significant scenes.[79]

De Robert implies that the significance of this irony is in its capacity to give Christians a model for behaviour.[80]

Francis C. Rossow ("Dramatic Irony in the Bible--With a Difference," 1982)[81] is the first whom we see speak of dramatic irony in Acts, implying it to be Classical--and rhetorically powerful.[82] For Rossow, Acts' description of Paul's snake-wound hand

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[79]De Robert, "L'Ironie," 13 (quotation), 13-24, esp. 20-21 (evidence includes Luke 5). De Robert takes his quote from *Traduction oecumenique de la Bible*. For further discussion of irony, in relation to miracles, see "L'Ironie," 21-24.

[80]Implied in de Robert, "L'Ironie," 3, 30 (and evident from confessional statements on 5). Another argument which de Robert makes is that "laughter" at things not of concern to God can symbolize irony (11). Also in 1980, an argument by Jean Zumstein (pointed out by Tannehill, below) speaks of paradox--which in turn, resembles irony (i.e., incongruity), although he does not use this word. See "L'Apôtre comme martyr dans les Actes de Luc," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 112 (1980): 371-90, esp. 378, 381, 383, 387, 390. The paradox is that "the only way for the witness to proclaim the Word is to create conflict and to be the object of violence" (371-72, 375, 389; quotation from 389; Zumstein only uses "paradoxically," and this rarely; see 383). Zumstein seeks patterns establishing the causal relationship between conflict and proclamation--the paradox--such as Acts 3:1-10 (preaching), 4:1-3 (incarceration), 4:5-8 (in court), 4:9-12 ("witnessing"), 4:17-21 ("reprimand"), 4:23-30 (regather and recapitulate events), and 4:31 ("renewed preaching"; copied from 374). This is one of several examples of a pattern Zumstein finds throughout Acts, in Peter and in Paul's ministry (374, 377-79, 380-88). While not clear, assumedly ancient and modern audiences sense the paradox, as Zumstein uses the term without qualifying for whom (378, 389-90). Tannehill notes this study's thesis. See *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 271 (citing Zumstein's discussion of Acts 26:29; 28:20 ["L'Apôtre comme martyr," 387]).

[81]Francis C. Rossow, "Dramatic Irony in the Bible--With a Difference," *Concordia Journal* 8 (1982): 48-52.

[82]We will later suggest that his understanding is modern. Rossow, "Dramatic Irony in the Bible," 48. Here Rossow writes that dramatic irony "is a source of much pleasure and of occasional meaning to the reader. . . ." However, "what is at stake . . . in all instances of biblical dramatic irony is more than the recognition of a familiar literary device; the reward in each instance is rather a fuller exposure to the saving . . . power of the Gospel" (51). Like de Robert, Rossow argues that irony flows from Christian conviction (48).

(28:3-6) offers dramatic irony "in"[83] the fact that qualities operative in every Christian (sinfulness, loyalty to God) are "unwittingly" allegorized in labels which Paul's Maltese observers give him, but are evident to the reader: "murderer" and later, "god."[84] This understanding may sound complex; what does dramatic irony itself mean?

> Two ingredients are usually present: 1) the speaker's words are true in either a greater or a different sense than he intends them--he has no idea how truly he speaks; 2) the listener or reader is better aware of certain circumstances than is the speaker--he knows something the speaker doesn't.[85]

Further scholars will point to this as dramatic irony.

In 1983, James Dawsey's dissertation brought Lukan irony to the fore as both affectation and incongruity.[86] Published as *The Lukan Voice: Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* (1986), Dawsey equates the noun with "incongruity between Jesus' words that God has hidden the kingdom from the wise and understanding and revealed it to babes, and the words of the prologue [Luke 1:1-4] written in high Attic style to a

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[83]Rossow speaks of dramatic irony as being "in the text" (Rossow, "Dramatic Irony in the Bible," 51); this is a phrase which we have used and will continue to use.

[84]Rossow, "Dramatic Irony in the Bible," 51. He points out in passing other examples, in Luke's gospel: these include dialogue in the Emmaus account (Luke 24:13-35) and the "importunate widow" (Luke 18:1-8). How is dramatic irony significant? By offering readers understanding, "dramatic irony . . . provides the reader with pleasure, and in turn, offers "fuller exposure to the saving . . . power of the Gospel." Rossow, "Dramatic Irony in the Bible," 50, 51 (quotation on 51).

[85]Rossow, "Dramatic Irony in the Bible," 48.

[86]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 25-26, drew our attention to Dawsey's notion of irony as incongruity. See Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*: Incongruity (147, 150); affectation (153-54, since Dawsey in part cites for his understanding of irony Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ*, in nn. 23-26, who refers to Socratic irony). Dawsey seems to use both terms to describe irony.

'most excellent Theophilus,' so that he might 'know the truth concerning the things of which [he] has been informed.'"[87] For Dawsey, the gospel narrator[88] takes an "ironic stance"[89] which, deliberately and falsely, denotes Jesus as a high-status figure, antithetical to whom Jesus would accept.[90] Dawsey concludes by asking, What matters in this incongruous picture? He answers as follows:

> The narrator's misunderstanding of Jesus was the bridge that allowed for full participation in the story and led to decision. The meeting of Jesus and his community would have become possible when the community became so immersed in the character of the narrator that it could be confronted by the incongruity between its words and Jesus' words.[91]

As indicated, Dawsey feels that irony is here noticed by readers (not characters).[92] To make his arguments, Dawsey searches for Greek words and expressions marking off Jesus' "voice" from Luke's.[93]

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[87]Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, 147 (quotation), 148, 150. As an example, Dawsey compares Luke 1:3-4 (narrator) with Luke 10:21 (Jesus); see 147.

[88]Whom he links with Luke (the author); see Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, 153-54.

[89]Quotation from Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, esp. 154, 155 (quotation); see in general 145, 147-55.

[90]This thesis has been clarified for us by Tannehill's summary of it in *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 7, by Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 147, and by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 25-26. See Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, 147-54, esp. 147, 154.

[91]Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, 155.

[92]Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, 147, esp. 155.

[93]Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, 148; for detail, see appendices to *The Lukan Voice*, 157-83.

Irony as incongruity is implied in "Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story" (1985),[94] by Robert Tannehill. As Ray points out, Tannehill speaks of tragic irony;[95] appropriating his words, tragic irony in Luke-Acts seems to be incongruity between the expectation by Jews of their long-anticipated Messiah (see Luke 1-2, e.g., 1:68-69), and their "rejection" of him and his adherents (e.g., Acts 2:33, 36; 3:13-15; 13:44-47; 18:6; 28:24-28); this is incongruous with anticipation of him. Evident in Acts 28, this irony, noticed by audience and certain characters, evokes despair and sadness at that which could have been.

Further works of 1985 allude to irony. One is "The Reversal Theme in Luke's Gospel," a dissertation by Larry K. Drake.[96] He focusses on reversal, a "term used to describe explicit statements concerning a shift from one position or role to another . . . or implicit shifts in thinking . . . brought about by paradox or stories of reversed expectations."[97] Significantly, Drake associates reversal with irony, since we may see in

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[94]Tannehill, "Tragic Story" (see above, note 22).

[95]Ray helps to focus our attention on the irony; see "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 27. Tannehill, "Tragic Story," 72, 73-74, 75, 77, 78 (term only on 78). In his later study, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 318, Tannehill also discusses tragic irony. In the article, he seems to equate "tragic irony" with "tragic reversal" (78-80). Tannehill believes his understanding is of Classical irony. In the article Tannehill often speaks of a "tragic story" (e.g., 74, 83).

[96]Larry K. Drake, "The Reversal Theme in Luke's Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1985). This study was first brought to my attention in York, *The Last Shall be First*, 9-10, 34-38.

[97]Drake, "The Reversal Theme in Luke's Gospel," 8. It appears that both characters' and readers' expectations can be reversed; on 5, Drake speaks of characters. On readers, see 267-68).

both the effort "to cause to take an opposite point of view."[98] This reference to irony is ambiguous, but we see that it is a subject of interest.[99]

Indeed, interest continues during the 1980s. Irony in Acts is often thought to involve actions by Jews. These now receive increasing attention,[100] evident from Robert Brawley's *Luke-Acts and the Jews* (1987)[101] and David P. Moessner's "The Ironic Fulfillment of Israel's Glory" (1988).[102] Brawley considers Luke's use of dramatic irony in Luke 4:16-30 (Jesus' Nazareth speech and the Nazarenes' attack on him), suggesting it to be "incongruity or opposition between what the Nazarenes[103] expect from their actions and what *results* from those actions, an incongruity which they do not realize.

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[98]Drake, "The Reversal Theme in Luke's Gospel," 8 (see also 5-6). To quote Drake, an "aspect of reversal is to cause to take an opposite point of view. . . . Th[is] meaning is found most frequently in studies of . . . irony" (8).

[99]In fairness to Drake, he may offer a clearer definition later in his dissertation. The variety of kinds of reversal which Drake mentions encourages us to acknowledge such variety for irony, as in fact we will find (below, chapter three, sections C. 1, 2).

Hints at irony of some kind (without using the term) are in a 1985 *Festschrift* for Jacques Dupont, entitled *À Cause de l'Évangile: Études sur les Synoptiques et les Actes. Offertes au P. Jacques Dupont, O.S.B. à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire*, Lectio Divina series, 123 (Cerf: Publications de Saint-André, 1985). These essays raise points regarding actions which one may call "ironic," such as in Armand Puig i Tàrrech's observation that in Luke 19:11-28, Jesus' withdrawal from those in need startles the audience's sense of his charitable character; see "La parabole des talents (Mt 25, 14-30) ou des mines (Lc 19, 11-28)," 182-83 (unlike Tàrrech, I interpret the parable allegorically).

[100]This is certainly because, as Tannehill indicates, consideration of the Jews and their relationship to the nascent Christian community has increased during this time. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 2 (and the sources he lists here, in n. 1).

[101]Robert L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology and Conciliation*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, no. 33 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 155-59 with 18 and 23.

[102]See above, note 2.

[103]Brawley is careful to avoid speaking of Jews in general, here. See *Luke-Acts and the Jews*, 17, 17 n. 23.

Readers (and perhaps Jesus himself) do realize." For Moessner, irony is not incongruity, but it describes incongruity or "tension," in this case centering on "Israel":

> The tension between promise [by God, of "glory," in Luke 1-2] and fulfillment [rejection, in Acts 28:26-28] is fundamentally ironic: Israel's rejection actually engenders Israel's glory. Therefore, though from a human perspective the anguish, division, even killing experienced within Israel is "tragic" . . . from the divine intention [and audience viewpoint][104] "tragedy" is at best a misnomer to describe the story of Israel in Luke-Acts.[105]

We can sense ironic tension, says Moessner, if we interpret accurately quotations from or reflective of Isaiah in Acts (Acts 14:22; 13:47-48 and 26:21-23),[106] and its "Deuteronomistic pattern."[107]

Brawley takes up irony in another work, entitled *Centering on God: Method and Message in Luke-Acts* (1990). He does not focus on irony, but says enough to suggest that in a literary work such as Luke-Acts, irony means "opposition or incongruity in the fact that . . . ."[108] Used by Luke and meant for "characters and . . . readers,"[109] irony

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[104]"Ironic Fulfillment," 38. Jesus, Paul and God also recognize irony, for Moessner, "Ironic Fulfillment," 38, 48-49.

[105]Quotation from Moessner, "Ironic Fulfillment," 48-49. I am unclear how Moessner would define irony. It is difficult, moreover, to understand precisely what Moessner means by "tension": see 37-49. Moessner does not believe that the characters comprising "Israel" sense the tension (38-39).

[106]Moessner, "Ironic Fulfillment," 46-48 (textual citations from 48).

[107]Moessner, "Ironic Fulfillment," esp. 50. By virtue of saying that Luke meant to use irony, Brawley and Moessner imply that it is Classical (that it was understood as irony, in antiquity).

[108]When discussing the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Brawley speaks of the "irony that the wounded man's compatriots do not act for his well-being." Here he indicates irony to be

denotes opposition in the fact of the Christ's death,[110] while it can denote the same as a quality of a reversal.[111] Further, Brawley offers examples of irony seen only by the characters God and Jesus, and by the reader (citing in part, Booth); that is, incongruity between "unreliable" characters' understanding about Jesus and Paul, and our own (Luke 7:39; 18:32; 24:18-24; Acts 17:18).[112]

Irony is important in Robert Tannehill's two volume *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* (1986, 1990).[113] From Tannehill we discover irony in Luke-Acts to be an

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"incongruity in the fact that . . . ." *Centering on God*, 219. On irony in literature, see Brawley, *Centering on God*, 123, 13-33. Brawley seems to have roughly the same basic understanding of irony throughout his study.

[109]Brawley, *Centering on God*, 123.

[110]He immediately adds that "with equal irony the crucified one receives divine attestation by the unexpected resurrection." Both examples are from Brawley *Centering on God*, 123. Brawley generalizes the latter example, saying that "with the resurrection suffering becomes vindication, death becomes life" (204 with 210-11). Brawley adds, on a different note: "Ironically, the fact that the God of Luke-Acts is incalculable is another facet of the character of God" (124); for further discussion of irony, see *Centering on God*, 204, 210-11, 219. Brawley's statements are somewhat confusing, for he rarely uses "irony" as a noun, or specifies its meaning.

[111]For example, the reversal (for characters and readers, presumably) of Jesus' resurrection out of death (Acts 2:24; see Brawley, *Centering on God*, 204 and 210, with 123); in general see 210-11. Reversal and "ironic reversal," adds Brawley, is common in Luke-Acts, for example when "death and life reverse" in an unanticipated way, and *most* generally, when "insiders . . . become outsiders" in an unanticipated way. *Centering on God*, 210-11.

[112]Brawley, *Centering on God*, 131. On 204, Brawley notes further irony, perceptible only to readers, not to particular characters: "There is ironic truth in the complaint of the opponents [of Paul, in Acts] that these people have turned the world upside down (17:6)." We are not clear whether irony is in these examples is perceptible to God and to Jesus (on these as characters, see *Centering on God*, 107-38); but that God understands it, see 123; that the reader understands it, is implied here. On 204 and 123, Brawley is, again, unclear.

[113]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vols. 1-2.

"incongruity between . . . expectations and . . . action."[114] In fact, Tannehill implies at least three classes of irony in Luke-Acts (which for him, appear to be Classical).[115] The first is "incongruity between human expectations and divine action."[116] Throughout Luke-Acts, nefarious acts by "opponents" bring advantage--by the action of God--to Christians; when opponents seek to humiliate and eradicate the Christian faith, by crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:1-25), the murder of Stephen (Acts 7:57-60) and the constant harassment of Paul (for example, in Acts 21:30-22:29), they end up not only establishing, but bringing to fruition the Christian faith (expressed in Acts 2:23; 3:17-18; 4:27-28; Acts 8:1,4-5; 11:19-20; 13:27).[117] In other words, this incongruity, understood by Luke, by reliable characters such as God, Jesus and the apostles, by readers, and by opponents themselves (?)[118]--"arise[s] from the interaction of divine and

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[114]*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 156. This definition is implied when he uses irony as a noun, and when he offers examples (see notes below); it arises also from his phrase, "the human experience of irony" (*Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 31). The readers, he indicates, become less and less shocked at the incongruity as the story continues. See *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 155 with vol. 1, 283.

[115]Tannehill never says his definition to be Classical, but he suggests it through this silence, through his discussion of other Classical literary features (*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 35-36; see also "Tragic Story," 75, 79), and in vol. 2, 298-99.

[116]*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 156.

[117]Last example from *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 169. Tannehill expresses the general argument in *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 9, 12; here he summarizes: "God is a God who works by irony" (phrase in vol. 2, 3; vol. 1, 282-84; our attention is drawn to this phrase in part by Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 137). The citations do not refer only to experiences of Jesus, Stephen and Paul; Tannehill here speaks also of Christian missionaries more generally (vol. 2, 101, for example). See in general vol. 1, 9, 12, 283-84; vol. 2, 3,37, 101, 103, 155-56, 169. Examples are drawn heavily drawn from vol. 2. Tannehill has found other expressions of irony in his study, but none receives the attention as the irony of "God's work."

[118]Do the opponents understand? Tannehill is not clear (e.g, vol. 2, 169), but vol. 2, 103, 155-56 indicates that they do. The question arises: if the opponents know that their expectations are incongruous with divine action, why keep the expectations? Tannehill's study does not clearly address this conundrum (see *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 37, 101, 103, 155-56, 169). On Luke (Tannehill here says "narrator" [see

human purposes."[119] The second class of irony Tannehill calls "tragic," indicating, as does his earlier article,[120] incongruity between some Jews' or "Israel's" expectation of communion with Jesus Christ (Acts 28:20) and their action against him.[121] This incongruity appears to be understood by all but the people with certain expectations. There is also a third class of irony (although Tannehill might not regard it this way): Classical irony. Tannehill hints that this is the affectation which Paul employs when on trial, arguing to the Sanhedrin that he is innocent while ostensibly claiming guilt.[122] The first class of irony is, for Tannehill, significant. He sets it in the context of what he calls Luke-Acts' "narrative rhetoric," for it both "remind[s] humans . . . including the insiders favoured by the narrator, of the continuing gap between human understanding and the wonder of God's ways," and encourages the reader to trust in God.[123]

Narrative Unity, vol. 1, 6-7]): vol. 1, 2-3, 6-8, 12; esp. vol. 2, 3. On the reliable characters (on which, see "Tragic Story," 70) of God (although never called a character): *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283-84; Jesus: vol. 1, 282-85; Apostles: vol. 1, 9; vol. 2, 155. Seen initially as a shock; perhaps then, indicates Tannehill, "conventional" (vol. 2, 155); at other points in the book this is not clear. On other reliable characters spoken of in the same way, see vol. 2, 101, 103 in light of previous references. On readers: Tannehill writes that "this irony may have become conventional," indicating it is at first a shock (*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 155; see also vol. 1, 12).

[119]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 283.

[120]On which he indicates his understanding is based; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 318 n. 21.

[121]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 318. Notice the action is not of God. See *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 348-49.

[122]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 298: "Paul's confession is ironic, for there should be nothing wrong, especially in the eyes of the accusers, with what Paul is confessing." Tannehill denotes irony to be incongruity between Paul's ostensible and his true meaning; this borders on affectation (Classical irony), although Tannehill never mentions Classical irony explicitly (see below, chapter four, section four. Tannehill also says (*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 298), that Paul is "mocking," which, we will see (below, chapter three, section C. 2. a), is a good definition of Classical irony.

[123]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 4 (on "narrative rhetoric") and vol. 2, 156 (on "God's ways").

In 1991, Jerry Lynn Ray's[124] dissertation specifies Classical and more current understandings of irony. He is not the first to do so,[125] but he articulates this well. Classical *eironeia,* writes Ray, is "to dissemble [or "affect"] by saying the contrary of, or something other than, what one intends."[126] This observation, coupled with his regarding the *eironeia* as reminiscent of comic theatre,[127] will prove informative for our own study of Acts. Using a narrative-critical approach to elucidate irony, Ray quickly

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[124]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts." See above, 1.

[125]Preceding Ray, see Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 8-10 (we greatly simplify Duke's summary, for he indicates diversity within the Classical and current understandings. But he does draw a sort of line between them [10]. For detail on his views, further in this note, and in *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 8-27). For further explorations of Classical *eironeia*, see Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 40-49 (esp. 45-48) on Paul; see also 47, 58, and on the gospel of Mark, 100, 133, 159. Although focussed on Paul and Mark, Via's observations may be applied to the gospel of Luke, as he implies (xi). Helpful also is Elton Trueblood's work, which we saw earlier.

Informative studies of Classical *eironeia* in other New Testament works include Aida Besançon Spencer, "The Wise Fool (and the Foolish Wise): A Study of Irony in Paul," *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981): 349 (citing, for her definition, Richard Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969], 61), 351, 355 . See also Richard Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), s.v. "Irony" (cited by Morris, "Irony and Ethics," 201, n. 106); Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 38-39, 48-51. Duke's *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 8-10 and Camery-Hoggatt's *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60, also note the ancient understanding, although Plank, Duke and Camery-Hoggatt, like Ray, proceed to add a more recent understanding (see Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 35-38, 39-42; Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10-27, esp. 10; Duke sems to argue, in fact, that the modern definition is in essence ancient--that we may without error apply it to antiquity); Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61. Nonetheless, all of these studies have been helpful precedents for our own understanding of Classical *eironeia*, elaborated in chapter three, below.

[126]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-47 (quotation from 47). Ray gives examples of this (labelling the examples with modern titles variously "verbal irony" and "dramatic irony," on 67-69. Certain of his citations are corroborated by or come from previous scholarship. One can tell that Ray means Classical irony in these examples by use of the term "verbal irony" (see 45-47) and the connections he makes with ancient comedy (45 with 70, 73).

[127]In so doing, Ray indicates that *eironeia* can be found throughout Luke-Acts; this observation was in itself helpful, for in New Comedy, *eironeia* is implied to be found at points throughout a play (below, chapter four, section C. 3). See "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70-71, 72-73 (references to irony in comedy; on these as references to Classical irony, see preceding note); 67-69, 70-71, 72-73 (implies Classical irony can be throughout text); on this, see also Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 133.

moves to its more current understanding: an understanding of "all . . . irony."[128] In his words, "Irony is found where there are observed two levels of contrasted meaning in which some measure of unawareness exists regarding a higher plane of reality."[129] After classifying it into forms such as "situational," "verbal," "dramatic" and "paradoxical," Ray searches for these in Acts,[130] adopting Tannehill's argument that there is "incongruity between human expectations and divine action,"[131] in the following way: "the Jewish rejection of the divine plan of salvation actually brings about its accomplishment."[132] He labels this a "paradoxical irony of events," conveyed by Jesus (Luke 4:16-30; 24:44-49), Peter (Acts 2:14-16; 3:12-26; 4:8-12), and Paul (Acts 13:16-41, 46-47).[133] The irony is significant in itself, but also offers the so-called "'window' through which the reader can catch 'glimpses' of . . . history,"[134] for it answers the "theological" question which Luke asked in his own day: Why was the gospel not

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[128]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 30-34; quotation from 51.

[129]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-53 (definition quoted from 53).

[130]See Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," chapters 3 (92-137), 4 (138-181), and 5 (182-225).

[131]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 156.

[132]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 3.

[133]Ray's main argument, as expressed in this paragraph: Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 7-11. For Ray's understanding of irony, see "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 7.

[134]Quote from R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, Foundations and Facets (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 3 (in part quoting Murray Krieger, *A Window to Criticism: Shakespeare's Sonnets and Modern Poetics* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964], 3-4).

accepted by Jews?[135] For Ray, irony is strongly grounded in a real world, among real people.

There is passing reference to irony in John O. York's *The Last Shall be First: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Luke* (1991).[136] This book, which focusses on "reversal," mentions "irony" by name only once.[137] Even if (like Brawley) York would equate "reversal of expectations" with irony,[138] he appears to claim that it has only some relevance: "the repetition of reversal . . . creates a conventional form." In other words, aside from reversal's possible initial "surprise" to the reader, any inversion of seeming realities would not for Luke's audience be irony once the audience became accustomed to them.[139]

Joseph Morris' 1992 dissertation ("Irony and Ethics in the Lukan Narrative World") describes irony--Classical and more current--in narrative texts, without offering

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[135]On this point, see Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 228, 235-39. G. Wasserberg in private communication also referred to this significance and put it in these terms.

[136]York, *The Last Shall be First: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Luke*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, 46 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991). The introductory chapter to York's book contains a thorough review of literature on reversal, which may complement own review of literature on irony. York, *The Last Shall be First*, 9-38. The most significant source--one which clearly discusses reversal and irony--is David Adams, "The Suffering of Paul and the Dynamics of Luke-Acts" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1979), 23-24. See York, *The Last Shall be First*, 23, 23 n. 7.

[137]See *The Last Shall be First*, 23, in reference to Adams, "Suffering of Paul and Dynamics of Luke-Acts," 23-24, on reversal.

[138]As he seems to do; York, *The Last Shall be First*, 23; why he uses the word "irony" only here is uncertain.

[139]He here adds, "What was perhaps at first a surprise or 'reversal of expectations' in the Magnificat loses its value as a surprise when the form is many times repeated." York, *The Last Shall be First*, 166. What is encouraging for our study is York's conclusion (164-84), for here he examines the parallel between the idea of reversal and that of "chance" in the Greco-Roman world (e.g., 181-82).

definitions.[140] Morris points out (from R. Scholes and R. Kellogg) that irony is constituted by particular characters and/or readers sensing something which others do not.[141] When Morris explores Luke 4:14-30, concluding Luke's concern for "the irony of God's love," irony emerges as incongruity between adverse "human action" and God's loving response, sensed by all but the humans responsible. "In spite of, perhaps because of, human perversity," he writes, Luke's "God brings about the saving of lives."[142]

In 1993, William Kurz's *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative*[143] offers a somewhat distinct definition. For Kurz, irony[144] is present when "the readers

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[140]Morris, "Irony and Ethics," 201-202. There is no clear and general definition of irony, although Morris does write of Classical and later understandings. His clearest comments include: 1) "'Irony is always the result of a disparity of understanding'" (quoting Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* [London: Oxford University Press, 1966], 240); 2) "'Irony is expressing meaning by saying the opposite of what is known or felt'" (quoting Reese, *Experiencing the Good News: The New Testament as Communication* [Wilmington: Michael Glazier], 72); and 3) "When a speaker says one thing, but actually means another, there is 'verbal irony [Classical]'" (citing Roger Fowler, ed., *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987], 128). He does not explicitly label "comedy" a narrative, but suggests this. We have seen the connection and make it later in our discussion (see Hunter, *New Comedy of Greece and Rome*, cited above, note 7).

[141]"Irony and Ethics," 201 (quoting Scholes and Kellogg, *Nature of Narrative*, 240): "In any situation in which one person knows or perceives more--or less--than another, irony must be actually or potentially present. In any example of narrative art there are, broadly speaking, three points of view--those of the characters, the narrator and the audience. As narrative becomes more sophisticated, a fourth point of view is added by the development of a clear distinction between the narrator and the author. Narrative irony is a function of disparity among these three or four viewpoints."

[142]This is not a complete summary of Morris' conclusion. We say "incongruity" because Morris, later in his dissertation, uses Tannehill's understanding of irony. "Irony and Ethics," iv, 273-75, 280-81, 283 (quotation on 275; on Tannehill, see 275 n. 45). On Luke 4:14-30, see iv, 281. Morris adds that for the reader the irony "provides 'assurance' of the excessive love" of God (283; see also 275).

[143]See above, chapter one, note 6.

[144]Irony in this particular text, at least. Kurz adds that irony is created by the narrator. See *Reading Luke-Acts*, 135-37.

share with the implied author . . . insight and information lacking to . . . personae on the lower level of the plot line."[145] Kurz indicates (although he might not put it in this way) at least two "kinds of irony,"[146] the first of which envelops the second: irony is a difference--perhaps an incongruity--between (any human) characters' understanding, and the divine and readers' understanding; irony is incongruity between (any human) characters'[147] understanding and divine action, awareness of which the divine, readers, and particular characters share.[148] An example of the first is in readers and "demonic forces recogniz[ing] Jesus as Messiah . . . before most human participants in the story are aware" (as in Luke 4:34, 41; Acts 16:17).[149] This is simply a difference in understanding.[150] An example of the second is incongruity in the development of

[145]*Reading Luke-Acts*, 135-36 (quotation on 136).

[146]He indicates a variety, which we will not discuss here, in particular because his discussion is ambiguous. See *Reading Luke-Acts*, 135-37.

[147]Implied in *Reading Luke-Acts*, 136. Following Kurz, David McCracken implies irony in Luke's gospel when he writes: "The character encounters in Jesus the possibility of offence." McCracken, "Character in the Boundary: Bakhtin's Interdividuality in Biblical Narratives" *Semeia* (1993): 29. Here McCracken seems to say: the character finds incongruity between their expectations about Jesus and the Jesus they meet. For McCracken, the offence expressed by Jesus is in specifically his language (29, 38). We make the connection to irony because McCracken himself indicates it, connecting Jesus' speech with that of Socrates (38, here citing Mikhail Bakhtin).

[148]*Reading Luke-Acts*, 136-38 ("kind of irony" we quote from 135). Kurz's narrative-critical approach implies that the "demons" (138) are, for Luke, characters.

[149]*Reading Luke-Acts*, 138-39. Kurz, however, might be referring to more than a simple difference between human characters' understanding and that of readers and demons. He may mean incongruity between the human characters' understanding and the readers' understanding, an incongruity which readers sense.

[150]See *Reading Luke-Acts*, 138: "While human observers of Jesus' actions are acclaiming him as a prophet, devils are 'proclaiming' Jesus by his true identity." There is nothing incongruous (albeit there is a difference), implies Kurz, in regarding Jesus as a prophet and as the Messiah.

Christianity due to Jewish ill will (evident in the "scattering as spreading the word," in Acts 8:1,3-5; 11:19-21; 11:25-26).[151] For Kurz, all varieties of irony are united in their role of making "implicit commentary"; irony helps Luke to give his opinion.[152]

The same role for irony is argued by Philip Satterthwaite, in an essay with which we shall close our review, entitled "Acts Against the Background of Classical Rhetoric" (1993).[153] Satterthwaite, who believes his understanding is of Classical irony, goes so far as to say "there is an irony in . . . statements" (as in Acts 25:19 and 21:28, among others), indicating he speaks of incongruity between what "Luke" and readers know, and what "those opposed to, or not committed to, the gospel," say.[154]

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[151]Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 140-43 (citing Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 194, in n. 14), 144-46 (citing Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 101, in n. 26; examples from 144-46). I have not exhaustively presented his evidence; and I include evidence only from Acts, even though Kurz discusses the Gospel of Luke. Some of his examples are from Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*; see Kurz's text for the frequent citations. On 142, Kurz refers to "verbal irony," a conscious or premeditated incongruity as expressed by someone. Here Kurz comes close to defining Classical irony.

[152]Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 135-37 (on 135, the term and idea of "implicit commentary" Kurz draws from Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 149-202).

[153]Philip E. Satterthwaite, "Acts Against the Background of Classical Rhetoric," in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, vol. 1 *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting*, eds. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew W. Clarke (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1993): 37-79. Satterthwaite refers to implicit commentary on 360-67.

[154]Satterthwaite, "Acts Against Classical Rhetoric," 365-66 (he seems on 367 to equate irony with "play with narration and dialogue"). On 370-75 he goes on to discuss "word play" (375) which he might equate with irony, but does not do so explicitly (373). Significantly, on 369 n. 105 Satterthwaite notes that Robert Morgenthaler (*Lukas und Quintilian:Rhetorik als Erzählkunst* [Zürich: Gotthelf, 1993], 331-34), has found *litotes* in the speech by Paul (Acts 17:22-31); we recall this from Steichele (see above, this chapter), and we learned (from Swearingen) that *litotes* represents Classical irony. Satterthwaite makes no mention of it here. A 1995 article by Mark Given suggests awareness of Classical irony (albeit the term "irony" is absent). In "Not Either/Or but Both/And in Paul's Areopagus Speech" (*Biblical Interpretation*, 3 [1995]: 356-72), Given reveals Luke's use of "double-entendre," when Paul speaks of his faith to people in Athens (Acts 17:22-31) (363-65, 367, 372). Words in the speech such as "overlooked" (Acts 17:30) and "faith" (Acts 17:31) have, in Given's words, "two levels of meaning" (363 [quoted words on 368, 369, respectively]): one for Paul and the audience, and one for the supposedly wise Athenians. Hence there is an incongruity of which the Athenians are not even aware.

C. *Irony: Epilogue and Prologue*

What have we learned about irony specifically in the New Testament? We here integrate some observations. From the literature, and from scholarship on irony *per se*,[155] we find that irony often (but by no means only)[156] denotes "incongruity between human expectations or assumptions,[157] and . . . action," action perhaps from the divine, or perhaps from humans, including expectant humans (Tannehill).[158] Similarly, it may denote incongruity between expectations and "reality" (Kurz, Pervo),[159] reality including the *consequence* of action. The "humans'" expectations are from a particular

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"This," concludes Given's abstract, "sets up a situation which the narrator fully exploits to create a highly entertaining reading experience" (356).

[155]See below, chapter three, esp. section C. 2. We have learned these categories from the literature, but we here apply them to the books in ways that certain books might not. We thus impose a particular understanding on the books, to summarize what from our viewpoint they convey.

[156]In the sense that scholars may give it more complex definitions; and in the sense that scholars may give it unique definitions altogether. This emerges in our review. In fact, our summary is heavily based on Tannehill and sources who draw upon his work (Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*; Morris, *Irony and Ethics*; Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts"; Brawley, *Centering on God*, as these together form a large and recent body of similar evidence.

[157]As the literature above shows, the expectations are always from humans (characters or readers).

[158]The reality can be the actions, or results of the actions, of *those with the expectations* (e.g., by "opponents" of Christianity in Acts, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283, vol. 2, 37, 100-101, 155-56; and Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 136-37 with 135, 140 and 144). The actions could be by humans other than those with the expectations, but I do not recall an example.

[159]Or alternatively, between "ignorance" and reality; there need not be expectations--just nescience; see Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 136-37, 140-41(quote [from Peter in Acts 3:17, as cited originally by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 282-84, 288-89). We use the word "reality" slightly out of context from Plank; he gives the phrase "contrast between appearance and reality," but he uses it for the Classical definition (notice he says that "the indirect use of language [Classical irony] reflects a *contrast between appearance and reality*," not that it *is* a contrast between appearance and reality). *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 35.

character or characters (Kurz) and perhaps from readers too (Brawley).[160] If expectations are confined to characters, which means that reality--and in turn incongruity--is to be appreciated by readers (Kurz),[161] the irony is for some scholars called "dramatic irony"; and if such expectations are met by negative outcomes, the irony may be titled "tragic irony."[162]

For Tannehill, *readers* can move from recognizing irony in the sense of having "expectations overturned" (of being astounded), to recognizing irony in the sense of it being "conventional" (there is a difference in degree of exposure).[163] Characters may also recognize irony in the sense of having their "expectations overturned." We would, in sum, label these images together to denote irony as it is currently understood.

On the other hand, we notice some attention to Classical irony (*eironeia*). It is not incongruity, but a kind of conduct by which a person *affects*. Ray focuses on this. As he suggests, *eironeia* is a "pretension" or "affectation" (προσποίησις) of various kinds--conduct which evinces incongruity, but is not, as Plank and others indicate, incongruity itself.[164] For now, it is important to remember this particular idea: "pretension."

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[160]That readers have expectations is an idea pointed out by Brawley, *Centering on God*, although he also admits the readers can be cognizant of the reality and the incongruity. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 136-37, does not make this point; he assumes that only characters can have the expectations incongruous with reality.

[161]On this point Kurz is clearest; *Reading Luke-Acts*, 136-37, 138.

[162]Conversely, Jónsson contends that irony entails "amusement" for those who perceive it.

[163]The question of who perceives irony and how was first brought to my attention by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 61-66.

[164]Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 37; see also Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2.

Looking back, we are struck by three shortcomings. First, the often *en passant* approach to defining irony results in vagueness. Some scholars (Johnson, Brawley, Moessner, Satterthwaite) never define it; others (Tannehill, Kurz, Rossow, Pervo) define it, but, according to the study, not fully, or generically, or perhaps explicitly.[165]

Second, many scholars focus on the current images of irony, to the near or total exclusion of Classical images.[166] Some (see Ray) do this consciously, but others (Johnson, Rossow, Pervo, Moessner) unconsciously, as if *eironeia* did not exist. They frequently claim that irony is "incongruity,"[167] and Duke argues the value of exploring

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[165]This criticism of New Testament studies has been made by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 19 (re: ancient irony) and suggested (re: modern irony, with respect to its being "overly inclusive") by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 50; for this latter criticism of other irony studies and indicating their vagueness, see Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 498. We clearly see vagueness on the basis of our own study. Arguably, these are communcation problems. But communication informs content, and vagueness in words suggests the same in thought (e.g., "The key to irony is [Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*,136]. . ."; "There is irony in [Satterthwaite, "Acts Against Classical Rhetoric," 165] . . ."). Not even the well-known definition from Muecke which we quoted achieves a clear (e.g., one sentence) definition, in our judgement. Muecke, as others note (e.g., Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 51), claims that "irony involves . . . ," not "irony is . . . ," and defends such general statements. For examples of passing definitions in other New Testament studies, see Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61, and the lack of treatment of irony as a noun, in Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 8-27 (he discusses it briefly on 11). See also Drake, "The Reversal Theme in Luke's Gospel," 8 (although in fairness to Drake, his purpose here is not to discuss or define irony). On not filling out the definition of irony, for example, with respect to who (characters, readers) perceives it and in what way, see Jónsson, *Humour*, 215-22.

[166]This criticism has been clarified by others who make it of irony-studies more generally, including Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497-98 (and see below, chapter three, section A). There are exceptions; we recall that scholars at least touching on ancient irony include Trueblood, Jónsson, de Robert, Dawsey, and Tannehill.

[167]For example, while Jónsson speaks of irony as "affectation" (what Classical sources say [below, chapter three, section C.]), his other definition and his examples are of "incongruity." And when Jónsson discusses Acts, even these words seem lost (*Humour*, 208-22). Ray is right to criticize Jónsson "for exhibiting [a] rather loose [definition] of irony" (Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 19). Jónsson, we add, suggests that "incongruity" is a core of Classical *eironeia* (*Humour*, 21-22), but this is a slight misunderstanding (see below, chapter three, section A.)

this.[168] Yet as we will learn, "incongruity" is in not one ancient definition.[169] Ray, Via and Trueblood do examine the Classical view. But Ray's passing examination, in order to look thoroughly into current irony, removes attention from the former.[170]

Third, we might be suspicious that the literature usually assigns responsibility for irony to reliable characters, such as God. Irony often appears a good thing; the incongruity is often inspired, or useful, or meant to teach us in some way. But is irony strictly the preserve of reliable characters?[171] Can *unreliable* characters actually use or make it?[172] It pays to ask, for we will find in Acts that *eironeia* is used by the former and the latter.

Why has scholarship moved in this direction? Two perceptions sometimes colour scholarly conclusions. The first, as has been suggested, is a "presentist"

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[168]Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 10.

[169]Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2, 113-14 (also see appendix, 412-14, where such more current definitions do not appear).

[170]In fact, this is a--partially--recognized problem in the literature. To quote Ray, "loose definitions" are the problem ("Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 19 [quotation], 50-51. As Camery-Hoggatt adds in *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60, 61, dependence on modern paradigms is heavy, thus threatening "anachonistic interpretation." Similarly, see Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 7, 10.

These authors, however, consciously use modern images of irony, and it seems done on the basis of Muecke's definition of "all irony" [Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10]. Does this not distort *ancient* definition? We oppose the following statement from Duke (10): "The surprising truth is that the use of irony in antiquity far outstripped any conscious concept of it. The Greeks' use of the words *eiron* and *eironeia* touches only the tip of a massive mountain of ideas . . . which the ancients did not call irony but which properly deserves the name." Duke goes on to claim that Muecke's definition is attentive to the meaning of *eironeia*. On use of Muecke, see Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 61, and Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10.

[171]We indicate that God is seen as a reliable character above, section A.

[172]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 155-56, indicates that God can use irony which shocks reliable characters, as opposed to unreliable characters. But this does not claim that unreliable characters use irony.

perspective: a tendency to use present definitions for past concepts.[173] It appears noticeably in analyses by Jónsson, Brawley and de Robert.[174] The second, at least as powerful, is the Christian perspective which many bring to their study.[175] Tannehill, for example, sees "God as a God of surprises" not just in Acts, but in the present.[176] Tannehill, Kurz and others (who acknowledge their Christian convictions)[177] are letting those convictions help emphasize irony from God; and in the case of Tannehill and Kurz, this irony receives primary attention.[178]

Perhaps it is better to conclude, with Ray, that there is one fundamental desideratum in the study of irony in Acts. We require a study focussed on Classical irony,[179] which considers its diversity and similarities in Acts, and which is well-informed by previous scholarship.[180] We do not claim we can fill all of these needs. We

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[173]With regard to Luke-Acts studies, see Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 51 (he does not refer specifically to presentism, but to the tendency to being "over inclusive" when defining irony); for observation of presentism with respect to irony in Classical literature, see Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497-98.

[174]See Jónsson, *Humour*, 22; Brawley, *Centering on God*, 131; de Robert, "L'Ironie," 3-4.

[175]For Tannehill, the first class of irony is particularly significant, since from his Christian perspective it belongs to God's present work (Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 3).

[176]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 2-3, on which he writes that "modern Christians have something to learn from struggles with this issue in Acts." On these pages it is possible that his own convictions are causing him to emphasize the irony regarding God, which he discussed earlier.

[177]For example, Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 3-4; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts* 137.

[178]See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 9, 12; vol. 2, 3; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 138-40, 144-46.

[179]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 25, 29.

[180]Our conclusion is also informed by York's complaint (*The Last Shall be First*, 10) in his study of reversal in Luke: "No attempt has been made to define precisely what is meant by the term 'reversal' in the Lukan context and then to ascertain the purpose or function reversal has in the Gospel as a whole. A

will, however, proceed with these in mind as we explore *eironeia*. To put it another way, we know what has passed, and are thus in a position to suggest what may come.

great deal of scholarly effort has focused on isolated sayings or parables, often removed from the Lukan context, in order to pursue the elusive historical Jesus, but no effort has been made to determine what purpose the author might have had for incorporating this pattern in his Gospel."

CHAPTER THREE
IN SEARCH OF ANCIENT *EIRONEIA*

"Irony is a concept expanded rather than inspected."
Thomas G. Rosenmeyer[1]

We now consider the approach required to elucidate *eironeia* in Acts. Most studies encourage an approach to irony of some kind. Some encourage us to keep grounded in the Classical origins of the term. We learned this from Ray and Via, among others. Let us now build on their efforts. We seek something approximating *Luke's* image of irony--which we now call *eironeia.* Luke was a Hellenistic author.[2] For his *eironeia*, we must step back into the Hellenistic (or more generally, "Classical") world in which he wrote. Whether or not *eironeia* had the same meaning(s) as it does today matters not, for the moment. What will matter in this chapter is to define it, as best we can, from an ancient viewpoint or viewpoints, on the basis of ancient evidence.

We step back with precedents and help from others. For over a century, it is known, scholarship has sought to clarify our images of Classical *eironeia.*[3] We saw,

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[1]Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497.

[2]On this see Helmut Koester, *History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, vol. 1, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), xxix-xxx.

[3]Several studies note this fact or imply it in their introductory footnotes. Several of these point to Otto Ribbeck, "Über den Begriff des εἴρων," *Rheinisches Museum* 31 (1876): 381-400. For this reference, see for example, J. A. K. Thomson, *Irony: An Historical Introduction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927; Folcroft Library Editions, 1974), 3, who suggests that this article was the first modern discussion. See also n. 1 in Leif Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," *Hermes: Zeitschrift für*

moreover, that New Testament scholars--including, here and there, Luke-Acts scholars--seek the same clarification. They motivate us to do the same, but with an eye to expanding their information.

Before we attempt this, we note a few limitations. First, we cannot examine all relevant literature; we later list several references for those seeking more detail. Second, we are aware from Jónsson that we focus on *eironeia* as seen by Hellenes but not Hebrews[4]--to whom, scholars note, Luke had connections.[5] We agree that an ideal study should consider both.[6]

A. *Preparing to Study Eironeia*

As mentioned, we are informed by precedents. In chapter one, we examined studies of irony in the New Testament. Here we examine studies of *eironeia* in other

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klassische Philologie 99 (1971): 409, and G. G. Sedgewick, *Of Irony, Especially in Drama* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1935), 4. In English-language scholarship, the earliest study may be Francis M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934 [Edward Arnold, 1914], 136-38 (as pointed out by Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 45-46). Further scholars point to Thomson's *Irony* (above) to be another early English-language study. See for example, Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 190, n. 4, and indicated in Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 20. References to sources which actually inform us about Classical irony will be made clear at the appropriate points below.

[4]Jónsson, *Humour*, 35-40 (see 39) with 41-89. (Jónsson separates "Greek and Roman humour" from "Jewish humour.") We recall that when he refers to humour, he may indicate irony as well (*Humour*, 22-26, 36-37, 73, 85-86, 208-222; one should examine all of these references together for the impression).

[5]Jónsson, *Humour*, 51, 92 (for example; along with reference to other evangelists). See also Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 54-55.

[6]Implied by Jónsson and by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 11-12 (and see 11-49); Ray implies on 11-12 that irony is the same in both milieux. For the present, to appreciate irony in Jewish religious texts (if it is in fact distinct), we recommend consulting studies such as Jónsson's; see Jónsson, *Humour*, 5, 39-40, 92 (for example). For another reference to irony in this tradition (that is broadly similar to a kind we discuss in the following pages), see Thomas Jemielity, *Satire in the Hebrew Prophets*, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

Classical literature. Specifically, as in other studies,[7] we wish to outline how scholarship has prepared us--how it has helped us to elucidate--ancient *eironeia.*

First, an oft-made point which helps frame other studies will help to frame ours. Ancient *eironeia* is, we have learned, a phenomenon which undergoes alterations. But we have also learned that it remains somewhat static.[8] We must remember this as we consider the first century setting in which Luke wrote Acts.

A second oft-made point is traced to D. C. Muecke.[9] This is, in Camery-Hoggatt's words, "the difficulty of offering a concise definition."[10] Others too have

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[7]All points we make in the following section have been made, in themselves or in combination, in introductions to previous studies. Our introductory section is modelled (to some degree) on, but does not mirror, each of these introductions. See for example Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61, and Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (both of whom, as we do below, refer to Muecke, *Compass of Irony*, 19-20). Also see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 409, who outlines his predecessors' conclusions before proceeding to his own study; similarly, see Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 1, 5-7, 10, 12.

[8]These two observations are implicit in Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 4, 5, 11. If not in these words, the idea is common in nearly every study of irony which we have seen, even though the specific conclusions may differ among the sources or from our own. We first noticed the idea from Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61 (insofar as he refers to great variety among definitions, and yet gives a definition encompassing every sort of irony); and from Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10; Camery-Hoggatt refers to irony including more modern forms. See also the following key indications: Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 409 nn. 1-3, 416, 418, 420-21, 422 (citing in part Otto Ribbeck [see above, note 3], Rudolf Stark, "Sokratisches in den Vögeln des Aristophanes," *Rheinisches Museum* 96 [1953]: 81, and Wilhelm Büchner's studies; on the latter, see the following reference to Büchner): Wilhelm Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," *Hermes: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie* 76 (1941): 356 with 358; N. J. Lowe, "Tragic and Homeric Ironies: Response to Rosenmeyer," in *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*, ed. M. S. Silk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 521 (citing Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic* and Thomas Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 502-12); Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 4 with 5, 6, 7, 25 (Sedgewick "discusses only drama"; see 25). We appreciate the idea of continuity especially from Ernst Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," in *Klassische und Romantische Ironie: Zum Ursprung dieses Begriffs* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 15-16, 24; we appreciate change especially from Thomson, *Irony*, 168, 171, and we appreciate both from Sedgewick, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 122-26, for example. Whether explicit or implicit, there emerges in every analysis we considered some sense of irony as the same across antiquity, yet also as undergoing variations.

[9]All ideas in this paragraph from Muecke's *Compass of Irony* are taken through Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61. (This point is from *Compass of Irony*, 4, plus his "opening statement," says Camery-Hoggatt, for which there is no page reference.)

[10]Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60.

pointed to diversity within the word.[11] Most importantly for Muecke and others after him is that we *can* in some form "come to grips" with irony.[12]

Third, we learn from J. A. K. Thomson that *eironeia* was "pervasive."[13] Like Thomson, we will see *eironeia* in several so-called "genres": theatre, philosophy and (interestingly enough) in religious debate among Jews and Christians. This makes, already, a case for its appearance in Acts.

Thomas Rosenmeyer best articulates the fourth point: "From the New Critics . . . to the latest deconstructionist, irony is a concept expanded rather than inspected."[14] Rosenmeyer and others speak of irony as a concept.[15] Most importantly, he encourages us to enunciate irony for certain periods of time or groups of people, in particular the Greeks and Romans. We must, in other words, avoid what he calls a "catchall" concept for *eironeia*.[16] He avoids it himself,[17] as does Carolyn Jan Swearingen, who elaborates:

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[11]Swearingen, for example, writes: for Aristotle, "Sometimes irony is verbal technique, sometimes an act of deceit, sometimes an effective strategy. . ." ("Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 114).

[12]To imitate Muecke's words, in Muecke, *Compass of Irony,* 19-25, in Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 61. Muecke is also cited in Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 13. The secondary literature on Classical *eironeia* encourages us that we can write actual definitions of irony, allowing for much variation (see below, section C. 1).

[13]Thomson, *Irony*, 2. In fact (based on previous critics' conclusions), we will try to offer a more historically realistic understanding than does Thomson, who argues that "their [the Greeks'] whole attitude to life is touched with irony" (2), and goes on to list particular meanings which we conclude do not denote irony (18, 34-38, 39 with 53, 101, 116-26 [for example]; on such meanings, see below, this section). Our understanding lessens the case that irony as Thomson sees it was "pervasive." Our understanding, which is narrower, we present below, this section.

[14]Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497.

[15]Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497; see also Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 409.

[16]Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497 (see 497-504).

[17]Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497-98, and especially 502, 511-12. He here qualifies himself as speaking only of drama, but the definition and examples which he offers on 510-12 are "not restricted to drama."

> It was not until the nineteenth century . . . that irony began to denote the many complex phenomena which we tend to regard as ironic today: deliberately misleading an audience's expectations in order to produce a sudden, and often enjoyable, reversal in apparent meaning; situations in which one person, or the audience of a work of art, has more knowledge than others and thereby stands in an "ironic" relationship to the other participants; the belief that language itself is inadequate and thereby makes all of us unwilling *eirons* because we can never say exactly what we mean; and the belief that a sophisticated understanding of the conventions of language robs us of spontaneity and sincerity.[18]

This warning finds support from N. J. Lowe[19] and others to varying degrees,[20] and from

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[18]Swearingen makes this observation, as we do, at the beginning of her study ("Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2). On her examination of ancient irony, see "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2-7, 163-72, for example.

[19]Lowe, "Tragic and Homeric Ironies," 520 with 522.

[20]We have learned of roughly three positions regarding ancient irony. The first is articulated best by Rosenmeyer (in agreement with Swearingen and Lowe, above). Rosenmeyer also alerts us to position two (below) and critiques it. The first position: "Forensic [Classical] irony appears to have been the only type studied by the ancients" ("Ironies in Serious Drama," 502; for critique of position two, see also 497-98, and Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2). The ancients did not envisage or conceive of other types. We find this position persuasive.

The second position implies that "Classical irony" was understood in antiquity to denote images we have more recently created. These include what Swearingen above defined as "situations in which . . . the audience . . . has more knowledge than others [i.e., both in the sense of situations, and in the sense of being more aware than all the characters on a stage]"; this Rosenmeyer calls "dramatic irony" ("Ironies in Serious Drama," 497-98). These also include "tragic irony." For examples, see Roy Caston Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and Its Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973 [1936]), 312-14; Maria van Erp Talmaan Kip, *Reader and Spectator: Problems in the Interpretation of Greek Tragedy* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1990), 73-76; and Thomas Gould, *The Ancient Quarrel Between Poetry and Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 198-99. These scholars appear to assume (explicitly or implicitly) that these sorts of irony were articulated in antiquity. We do not agree with this position.

The third position is a sort of middle ground; it is like the first, but less conservative: it argues that we should search Classical texts for irony as it is called today, because, in Duke's words, "the use of irony in antiquity far outstripped any conscious concept of it. The Greeks' use of the word . . . *eironeia* touches only the tip of a massive mountain of ideas, assumptions, and styles which the ancients did not call irony but which properly deserves the name" (*Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10). Or as Sedgewick says, "How pervasive and how profoundly rooted in ancient literature was the *sense* of it [irony] (not the *word*, remember), you may learn from . . . J. A. K. Thomson" (see above, this section). See also Alba Claudia Romano, *Irony in Juvenal* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1979), 20-21; a similar position is taken by N. J. Lowe (personal communication, Email, Royal Holloway, University of London [Jan 30,

our own research: several Classical (and New Testament) scholars bring anachronistic images of irony to bear on texts which are anachronistic, while some are more cautious.[21] Some begin by highlighting ancient *eironeia*. But they often quickly move beyond this to discuss meanings like those which Swearingen lists, which results in an appreciation of irony that would have surprised a first-century audience. Our concern in this section is to isolate that ancient understanding of irony.

In his study of Classical irony (1927), Thomson prepares us further. Like Rosenmeyer, Lowe and Swearingen, he specifies what irony meant for many ancient peoples,[22] but he advises us not to find irony in only a few specific forms, or simply where there are Greek or Latin words for it.[23] As he says, "not only the literature of the

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1998]). There are subtle variants within each scholar's argument; for example, Margaret S. Swanson writes: "Irony as a theatrical device was the invention of the Greeks. Though it was not until the nineteenth century that the term 'irony' was applied to tragedy, it is present in . . . *Oedipus Rex*." Margaret Millen Swanson, "Irony in Selected Neo-Hellenic Plays" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1979), *non vide*. On the idea of irony in "sense [and] word," see Thomson, *Irony*, cited in Sedgewick, *Of Irony* (above, this note). We do not agree with this third position.

In fact, the second position may be correct. Could irony have been perceived in the above ways, but not labelled? For us, there is no ancient evidence (as cited in secondary analyses) which, to our knowledge, defines irony other than as "pretension" (προσποίησις; see below, this chapter, section C. 1). Moreover, it is recognized that terms such as "dramatic irony" arise much later (see for example, Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497).

We leave the question open and make no final judgement. However, we will in caution, define irony based strictly on where it is labelled. Whether or not it existed elsewhere is a subject for later study. We are safest to cleave to explicit definitions we *have*--not to venture beyond.

We will return to this issue at the close of section A in this chapter; in particular, we will summarize our position on whether we should consider "tragic irony" and "dramatic irony" to be necessary to study as ancient irony. We will also summarize how we should regard "the sense of irony" versus "the word 'irony.'"

[21]See the second position, described in the footnote above. Among New Testament studies, Trueblood's is encouraging. He notes that the Classical irony of Jesus has been overlooked; has not been recognized as irony. (Trueblood, however, does not refer to people placing current images of irony over it; *The Humor of Christ*, 59-61).

[22]Thomson, *Irony*, 2, 10-16 (for example).

[23]Pointed out for us by de Robert, "L'Ironie," 3; see also Sedgewick's citation of Thomson in *Of Irony*, 20.

Hellenes but their whole attitude to life is touched with irony."[24] We take this blend of wariness and openness into our own study. Admittedly, it is a mixed blessing; it helps us search more realistically for ancient *eironeia*, but it has helped lead Thomson to the "expanded" defintions (above) about which we must be wary.[25]

B. *Coming to Terms*

Like some other investigations of Classical *eironeia*,[26] we first examine terms with which we must be familiar; or more precisely, the etymological layout.[27] Outside of a lexicon, one comprehensive list appears in Ernst Behler's recently revised essay.[28] For a fuller list, we will draw together information from some lexica of ancient Greek and Latin. To do so, as Behler indicates, will help us to come to some appreciation of the ancient concept.[29]

In Greek, we find the so-called *Vorfahre* of "irony" to be ἡ εἰρωνεία; in Latin, the cognate is *ironia*. For the former, Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon (1996 ed.) lists

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[24]Thomson, *Irony*, 2 (quotation from here). See also Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60.

[25]See Thomson, *Irony*, 34-38 (especially 35), 139-43 (for example).

[26]For example, Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5-7, 10 (as cited in Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 70; here Swearingen explores the issue, too [19, 70]).

[27]For this concern, see Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 70.

[28]Ernst Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," chap. in *Ironie als literarische Moderne* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997 [essay a revision of 1972 essay]), 21.

[29]Behler, *Ironie als literarische Moderne*, 21.

not only εἰρωνεία, but also the seeming equivalent nouns τὸ εἰρώνευμα (pl. τὰ εἰρωνεύματα); the proper noun ὁ εἴρων (sometimes rendered "ironic man");[30] the verbs εἰρωνίζω and εἰρωνεύομαι; the adverb εἰρωνευικῶς; and the adjectives εἰρωνικός and εἰρωνευτικός.[31] To this we add the following, from Sedgewick:

> The *Century Dictionary and Encyclopedia* of 1911, glosses *eiron*, the ironist . . . as if the word came from *eirein* [εἴρειν], to say or speak. (A derivative now commonly accepted is from the Ionic εἴρομαι, to ask, or more definitely, to ask questions.)[32]

If this is correct, then, by association, we may add from Liddell and Scott further terms to the list above, including εἴρω (active voice of the verb εἴρομαι), the adverb εἰρομένως ("running on"), and a verb identical in appearance to that given above, εἴρω ("to fasten together in rows"). Perhaps we may even include τὸ εἶρος (wool), for wool does in a sense "pretence," inasmuch as it is a cloak. Strikingly, not *one* of these words appears in the New Testament; but just as striking is that a closely related term does appear, if only once--and that is in Luke-Acts.[33] To this we will have cause to

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[30]See Zoja Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, and the Ironic Man," *Classical Philology* 63 (January, 1968): 22-23 (here quoting Aristotle, *Physiognomica* 3. 808a27-29).

[31]From *A Greek-English Lexicon*, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie and with the co-operation of many scholars. With a Supplement (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 490-91. No further forms are offered in: BAGD, 228; G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Fascicle 2 (βαρβαρεύω--εὐσυμαθήτω) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 421-22. In fact, the number or variety of forms given in these sources is lesser.

[32]Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 7 (also cited by Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 8 n. 4).

[33]This conclusion is based on examination of *The Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament, With the New International Version*, eds. John R. Kohlenberger III, Edward W. Goodrick and James A. Swanson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 212 (hereafter *GECNT*), which indicates that the

return later. In Latin, Lewis and Short's *A Latin Dictionary* (1879) and the later *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968), present the noun *īrōnīa (or īrōnēa).*[34]

C. *Classical Eironeia*[35]

To expound Classical *eironeia*, we must specify two points. One concerns our time-period. This is important, for Classical antiquity spans nearly one thousand years.[36] Studies of New Testament irony do not specifically delineate the timeframe from which they draw their understanding of Classical analogies. Like most, we begin

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word is not to be located in the United Bible Societies version of the text.

[34]*A Latin Dictionary, Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary. Revised, Enlarged and in Great Part Rewritten by Charlton T. Lewis, and Charles Short* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), 1000; *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

In this section we have not provided citations of passages in which the words are used, as given in lexicons and dictionaries. Examples from our own research we will give in the text, below, sections C. 1, 2, and D.).

[35]As we start our investigation, we specify two further qualifications. 1) There are several sources which we have not had time to consider. These include, for example: Walter J. Ong, "From Mimesis to Irony: The Distancing of the Voice," *Midwestern M. L. A. Bulletin*, IX (Fall, 1976), cited in Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 65; Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); V. Jankelevitsch, *L'Ironie, ou la bonne conscience*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1950); W. Preisendanz and R. Warning (eds.), *Das Komische: Poetik und Hermeneutik* 7 (Munich: W. Fink, 1976). Vlastos' work, and several other studies, focus on specific periods in which irony was used, or on specific variations of the word.

2) In future, we also intend to explore research on what are pointed out to be terms which overlap with or have the same meaning as, irony. These include, for example, the following list provided by Pavlovskis: "*asteïsmos, sarkasmos, antiphrasis, paroimia, myktērismos, chleuasmos, charientismos.*" Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 27. Another term is *allegoria*; see Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 6. In this study, we do not consider such terms.

[36]Studies focusing on irony *vis-à-vis* a particular author have encouraged us to keep in mind what irony would mean in the first century (i.e., during Luke's life). See for example, S. M. Braund, *Beyond Anger: A Study of Juvenal's Third Book of Satires*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 24-27, 68, 130-31, 143, 197-98, and see introduction ("Anfang") in Morgenthaler, *Lukas und Quintilian*, in which the comparison of rhetoric as studied by Luke and by Quintilian (both first century authors), helps encourage us to see there may be a precise or distinct meaning of irony in the first century CE, on which to focus.

with Classical Greek history (after ca. 500 BCE);[37] but we focus on the first century CE, when Luke likely wrote Acts (ca. 80-100 CE).[38]

A second point: as Thomson indicates, we must have a sense of *eironeia*'s background to appreciate it better.[39] How, or why did it come to be? Most studies commence with the appearance of the term εἴρων,[40] but Thomson pushes beyond, to ask, Why *eironeia*?[41] Pre-Classical Greeks[42] constructed irony within the context of theology, specifically the belief that the gods had a sense of "jealousy" (ὁ φθόνος);[43] Thomson expresses this clearly:

> On the whole it is best to keep out of his [the god's] way, in case he notice you and do something unpleasant to you, if only to remind you of your position. . . . It is best in his case also to lie low, to "escape his notice," as the Greek word says. Pretend at least to be of no importance in his sight, and then perhaps you may have a little fun and prosperity. For the gods are jealous.[44]

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[37]Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 411; Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 340; Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 6.

[38]See Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, xxxiii (citing Conzelmann, "Luke's Place in the Development of Early Christianity," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, eds. Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981], 298-316). In our attention to focussing on irony within the *first century CE* we have been prompted by Morgenthaler, *Lukas und Quintilian*, 10-11 with 416-18, who, in his study of the two writers, implies that it is significant for study of Luke's rhetoric that he and Quintilian lived at roughly the same time.

[39]Thomson, *Irony*, 4-10 (especially 4-5, 9-10).

[40]See Thomson, *Irony*, 3 (see 2-3).

[41]For Thomson's contribution, see notes 43-45.

[42]On whom, see Antony J. S. Spawforth, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Greece (prehistory and history)," 649.

[43]On this question, see Thomson, *Irony*, 4-9 (especially 8, from where the quote is taken).

[44]Thomson, *Irony*, 8.

In other words, *eironeia* was the prudent act of shielding one's own success by portraying oneself as naïve.

One fascinating indication of the longevity and thus importance of the so-called "divine jealousy"[45] may exist in Acts itself. For Pervo, there is "irony in the fact" that "Herod . . . determined to slay Peter, found himself slain."[46] We cannot be sure there is *eironeia* here.[47] But we suggest that the belief prompting it is present. For Luke, the fact that Herod "did not give God the glory" (Acts 12:23) after being extolled by a mob of people, explains his death.[48] Crucial here is a historically Greek conviction of the result of human arrogance, and this underlies *eironeia*.[49]

We now expound *eironeia* as it probably existed during Luke's life.[50] None of our ideas are novel. However, we lay relative emphasis on two broad forms of *eironeia*, more so than do studies by Swearingen, Behler, Bergson and others.[51]

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[45]For example, Thomson, *Irony*, 9.

[46]Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 60. The passage in question is Acts 12:23.

[47]Phrases such as "irony exists . . ."; "irony is found in . . ."; and "irony is expressed by . . . ," are common in the literature.

[48]Quotation from RSV (Acts 12:23).

[49]This also suggests that Luke, aware of what Herod might at least have done, exhibited εἰρωνεία.

[50]N. J. Lowe's essay speaks of the "anatomy of irony." This helps to clarify what we wish to discuss below. See Lowe, "Tragic and Homeric Ironies," 531.

[51]We will try to describe "aspects" of *eironeia*, although with most previous studies, we will present whole definitions by ancient authors. Swearingen ("Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," xii-xiii, 12-26, for example), Behler ("Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 15-16, for example) and Bergson ("Eiron und Eironeia," 416-17, for example)--among others--all blend thematic and chronological summary, and are a precedent for us to do the same. One precedent for our attention to aspects of *eironeia*--to a diachronic kind of summary--is Jónsson, *Humour*, 26 (like us, Jónsson calls these "aspects").

1. *Pretension*[52]

We begin, like most studies, by touching on the most central meaning of *eironeia* throughout antiquity. Leading up to and during the first century CE, we find entrenched for irony what Büchner calls a "ribbon," or meaning.[53] Broad consensus exists on this issue.[54] We begin by quoting from Bergson, who offers perhaps the closest summation: "We must consider irony a sort [of concept] of the voice (vox media), whose basic meaning cannot be separated from the common concept of προσποίησις."[55] Indeed, several studies summarize by stating that "*eironeia* is pretension."[56]

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[52]This opening section is modelled somewhat on the introduction in Sedgewick's discussion, and our translation of προσποίησις comes from him. However, we use our own words and structure, we elaborate, and we consolidate various sources. Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5, 7. Moreover, we in part model our general structure on his essay (common definition; variant aspects). But our specific breakdown of irony's aspects differs (see Sedgewick's [7-27]). See below, sections C. 2, a) and b) for precedents. We list further precedents for our structure below. We do not, moreover, follow Sedgewick's categorization of irony into "comic irony" and "tragic irony" (*Of Irony*, 26).

[53]Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358.

[54]That is, there is consensus that irony is pretension (see following sentence, in text above). However, beyond this, each source adds to its definition certain aspects which do not correspond to those in other sources. See Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5 (we differ on what are irony's objectives); Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416-17 (he summarizes only up to a certain date); Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358 (his definition is too limiting, and he here refers to only the "late period"); Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 15-16 (the "kind of pretension" he cites is too limiting); see also Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511, and Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 122, 163-69. Behler also uses the term *dissimulatio* to define irony (see "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 15-16). As we will show below, *dissimulatio* is in effect, or in simplest terms, "pretension."

[55]Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416. As he adds at the bottom of 417, "the Eiron is on the whole a pretencing person." (Bergson refers only to Greek-language ideas here, but he goes on to equate some Latin-language ideas with it; see "Eiron und Eironeia," 416 with 420-21.)

[56]This general phrase is a catchphrase. Studies often add, however, to it; this will become evident in the discussion below. This is not the only way of defining the term. As Ray points out, Quintilian gives it a close but somewhat different meaning: irony is "the term which is applied to words

Let us break apart this definition into its three components. The noun ἡ εἰρωνεία[57] refers first to an act which a person,[58] often called an *eiron*, expresses through some medium (for example, bodily action, including the voice).[59] Scholars use various terms, including "act," "behaviour," "quality" and "attitude."[60] Without excluding other terms, we will most often use "behaviour."

Second, προσποίησις,[61] as rendered into English by Sedgewick, means *pretence*--or more accurately by Liddell and Scott, pretension.[62] By pretension, we

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which mean something other than they express." *Institutio Oratoria*, 6.2.15-16, quoted by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 46.

[57]As we show below, this section, there was not only a Greek word, but a Latin word for "irony."

[58]On one person as expressing irony, see Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511 (he here specifies "a single character"); on the *eiron*, see for example, Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 22-25.

[59]On this idea of various modes of conveying irony, which is in the literature, see below, section C. 2, a) and b).

[60]"Act" (Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 113); "behaviour" (Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 6); "quality" (Thomson, *Irony*, 169); "attitude" (Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 422). The terms are not necessarily used to describe every possible sort of irony; we list them just to show possible ways of describing the term.

[61]The German literature often translates the term ἡ προσποίησις as "die Verstellung" (see for example, Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358; Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 16; Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416 with 418, would appear to accept Büchner's rendering of the term). In German, the word means: 1) pretence, and 2) disguise. Arguably, these are one and the same. But "pretence" seems more *proactive* than "disguise." We will, based on our own research and the two terms implied in German, envisage *both* terms in προσποίησις. We appreciate the German translation for making this clear.

[62]Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. At this point it is important to add that the Latin term, if we understand its translation correctly, is somewhat different from the Greek. The Latin is *dissimulatio*, which the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* translates as "hiding." This implies that *dissimulatio*--that irony--could entail simply keeping one's mouth closed, or running away (forms of hiding). Sedgewick indicates (and every study using the word προσποίησις implies by definition of this word) that "pretension" includes not only hiding, but the more proactive element of "shamming" (Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 503, quoting Demosthenes), which is part of hiding something. See

mean both an act of "disguising," and (although not certain), a more proactive act of "pretencing."[63] Pretension is basic, through the ages, to the term irony. We add from Rosenmeyer that when we speak of pretension, we speak of it as being "deliberate" or "intentional," for the person conveying it--not inadvertent.[64]

Third, we articulate, with Rosenmeyer, that the pretension "has a victim."[65] Pretension shows that the victims, those "duped" by the pretension,[66] as Swearingen puts it, can be individuals or a larger "audience."[67]

Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5-6 (who also equates προσποίησις with *dissimulatio*). Helpful in reinforcing the idea of pretension has been the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*'s definition of *dissimulatio*: "The concealment of one's real identity"; " pretended ignorance"; "Socratic irony" (for reference to the latter, see below, section C. 2. b). But I am not clear, in the end, whether *eironeia* need only refer to behaving proactively (for suggestion that it need not, see Pavlovskis' citation and discussion of Aristotle in "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 24, 25).

[63]See our uncertainty regarding this, below, conclusion of section C. Interestingly, Trueblood uses the word "real" instead of "pretended" to describe irony from Socrates. The former seems to go directly against the latter, and would appear to be incorrect. See *The Humor of Christ*, 56.

[64]Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 502, 511.

[65]Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511 (he takes the term from Muecke, *Compass of Irony*).

[66]Rosenmeyer adds that "the victim may be the audience." This kind of *eironeia* we will not study in Acts. See Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 502.

[67]Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 109. Idea is also indicated by Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 413 (citing Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25).

As we said above (note 54) our definition of irony repeats near-identical conclusions in the literature. However, these conclusions diverge in subtle ways; each of these, I feel, is somewhat unsatisfactory.

Some studies (including general studies of irony in antiquity and beyond) are too general. Paul Duke, for example, recognizes that "irony is dissimulation," but he leaves the definition at that point. Other scholars are too specific; they conflate into irony images and points better related to a few authors or specific sub-periods. Ernst Behler is a case in point. For Behler, Classical irony "presents itself as a figure of speech, as a rhetorical technique called *dissimulatio*; that is . . . as that way of pretence, to express by the word the opposite of the meaning, but the tenor of the speech indicates that a discrepancy exists between the spoken word and the intended sense" (Behler, "Von romantischer zur klassischen Ironie," 16). Neither the secondary nor primary discussions conclude this, i.e., that we may consistently see irony "as a rhetorical trope," or as having a "tenor" which gives away the "intended sense." On this

Scholars cite ancient comments which, for all their differences, agree that "irony is pretension."[68] We cite a few here. Sedgewick discusses the term *vis-à-vis* Aristotle (384-322 BCE), in his work *Nicomachean Ethics*;[69] and Bergson explains how it appears in the *Sophist* by Plato (429-347 BCE).[70] In this latter work, the figure Kratylos links the terms when speaking of Socrates: "he makes nothing clear and he ironizes (εἰρωνεύεται) towards me, he himself pretencing (προσποιούμενος)."[71] Aristotle calls irony a "pretence towards the smaller/lesser" (προσποίησις ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον),[72] and scholars note other, similar, ancient definitions. One of these (frequent in ancient sources, and here provided by Büchner) is "to say [certain] things by means

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question, see our discussion of "transparency," below. Other authors, who do not offer a single summary (for example, Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416-17, 420-21; Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 122-26, 163-69, 412-14), remain more conscious of the acknowledged richness of the term. Others (for example, Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 510-11), acknowledge that their summations are somewhat narrow, by necessity of being summations. Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 510-11. We will further acknowledge these articles later in our discussion.

One reason why Ray and Camery-Hoggatt's studies (for example) may provide too wide a definition of irony is that the literature they use (aside from Muecke's *Compass of Irony*) to explore ancient irony is all quite old. We are trying to correct this possible flaw by studying recent conclusions on ancient irony. See Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45 n. 5; Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60 n. 4.

[68]A very commonly used phrase; see for example Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5.

[69]Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 7.

[70]These dates taken from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Plato," by Julia Annas, 1190.

[71]Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 410, citing Plato, *Sophist*, 384 A-B. Also see Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 70 (citing Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11), for Plato's use of εἰρωνεία. This quotation in the text, and following quotations, I have translated from the Greek, unless otherwise noted. However, the Greek quotations themselves are drawn from the secondary literature. If a source gives a translation, I use that trranslation. We say "figure" since the source (Bergson) does not specify "character," as in a narrative; but we will apply the term ourselves at points in our thesis below, without specifying whether the literature does or does not use the term.

[72]Idea and part of translation from Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 7. (He says: "'A pretence tending towards the under-side' of the truth.")

of the opposite things."[73] This example, from the Greek author Anaximenes (ca. 380-320 BCE),[74] refers to pretension, even though the person(s) experiencing it--the "victim"--actually sees it him- or herself.[75] Among Latin authors, says Bergson, pretension was the basic meaning of Latin terms used in place of εἰρωνεία,[76] namely *dissimulatio*, *simulatio* and *illusio.*[77] For example, we learn from Swearingen that Quintilian (ca. 35-90/100 CE)[78] defines "irony . . . [as] 'spoken illusion' (*illusionem*

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[73]Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 355. Also see Büchner's citation of the Greek author Tryphon's definition, in "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 354-55. It is important to add, from A. C. Romano, that "Cicero enlarged the concept of irony, which from then on no longer meant only saying the contrary of what is meant but could also mean saying something different" (Romano, *Irony in Juvenal*, 20).

[74]For dates, see Donald A. F. M. Russell, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Anaximenes (2)," 86.

[75]We discuss "transparency" later. Büchner makes this point in "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 355.

[76]Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420-21(for all three of the terms given above); see also Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356. Bergson adds that the Greek term was still to an extent used by Latin speakers (420).

[77]The following translations from the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*: *Dissimulatio*: "hiding." *Simulatio*: "putting on an appearance." *Illusio*: "Saying the opposite of what is meant." (As we learn later [below, section C. 2. a]), these terms are referring to very different "kinds of pretension"; but to pretension nonetheless.) These are only some of the translations given in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

Swearingen helps to refine dissimulatio; in fact she says it was unacceptable (as we further discuss below, section C. 2. a, b). She says: Cicero "rules out the 'Greek' concept of irony-as-dissembling . . . in part because it is not worthy of the exemplary Roman orator." In other words, dissimulation lacks principle, and is thus an invalid term (Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 169). She is the only one to rule out the term, which we thus do not follow; on *dissimulatio*, see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420-21 (with 416).

Principle aside, however, Cicero believes--in a technical sense--that irony *is* dissimulation, because he describes irony with words such as "understatement" and "assumed simplicity"--precisely what the Latin dictionary defines as dissimulation. (Terms cited in Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 168-69.) What we should conclude is that irony *is*, for Cicero, dissimulation; but it must also be what other scholars call "urbane [mannerly] dissimulation." (On this definition, see for example, Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420-21 [citing Cic. de orat. 2, 269]).

[78]On dates, see below, section 2. a.

vocant)," and Cicero (106-43 BCE) sees irony where there is "understatement" and "what you think differ[s] continuously from what you say."[79] A definition slightly different than pretension is offered by Quintilian (cited by Ray): *eironeia* is "the term which is applied to words which mean something other than they express."[80] This definition, however, remains nearly the same as "pretension." Variations aside, we see, as Bergson indicates, that pretension remains the root idea.[81]

2. *Pretension in the First Century CE*[82]

Knowing that *eironeia* denotes pretension or "affectation,"[83] what more can we say about it among first century Greek speakers such as Luke?[84] We can never know precisely what Luke meant by *eironeia*, but we can approximate. Below we prioritize evidence from the first century and we summarize it by author, to minimize conflation.[85]

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[79]Quotes from Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 169, 167 (respectively).

[80]Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.15-16, quoted by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 46.

[81]Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420-21.

[82]The following definitions are not as elaborate or thorough as in the secondary discussions. We take what we feel is most important in them.

[83]This, again, is a translation offered by Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511.

[84]For semi-precedents for this structure, see following note. On the evangelists' Greek language, see Koester, *History,Culture, Religion*, 108-110 (whether Luke spoke other languages we do not know).

[85]For example, mixing an objective (stated by one author) with a specific form of pretension (stated by another). We take this caution from Thomson, *Irony*, 168-71, who warns us of diversity among Classical understandings, and Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 414 (in reference to Aristotle's definitions) 416-17 (comparing various thinkers' definitions), who implies we should not mix aspects of different definitions. However, we feel that to a point conflating definitions is reasonable, since by the

We see two kinds of *eironeia*, or pretension. They differ in the user's basic objective.[86] The first, borrowing a word from Wilhelm Büchner, is transparent, and the

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first century, enough time had passed probably to allow certain fine differences among definitions to become blurred; we admit, however, that during the first century BCE/CE, Cicero and Quintilian continued to define irony precisely and at points distinctly vis-à-vis each other (see Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 163-69). Nonetheless, this does not mean that others could not overlap, blend, colloquialize or simplify their defintions. On the many meanings of *eironeia* which emerge from various authors and periods in antiquity. see for example Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356, 357, 358. Our belief in a cautious approach to definition within antiquity is encouraged by, among others, Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 409, 416-17.

A precedent for our focus on the first century is in Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358 [355-58], who speaks of *eironeia* in the "late period" (he starts with the rhetor Tryphon ["late first century BCE"; for this dating, see Peter Barr Reid Forbes and Nigel Guy Wilson, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Tryphon," 1557] and proceeds through to Pseudo-Justin [between ca. 200 and 300 CE; on these dates see reference to "Epistle to Diognetus," below, this chapter, section C. 2. b]. But as Bergson ("Eiron und Eironeia," 409, drawn to my attention by Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 518 n. 8) points out, we should be wary that Büchner includes behaviours like *eironeia* under the name *eironeia* (see "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 339, 358). For another precedent, see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416-417, 418, 418-20, insofar as he writes of *eironeia* for Greeks as generally constant. Scholars who summarize what is constant about *eironeia* across antiquity include Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 502, 503, 511; and Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 10-13.

We note here that we have studied *eironeia* in Old Comic theatre, as pointed out by literature on it. We are informed by this, although in a general way, as the secondary literature and some key examples clarify what *eironeia* is. For *eironeia* in Old Comedy, see Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 136-38, 209-11 (connection to tragedy, as noted by Thomson, *Irony*, 34); Thomson, *Irony*, 3-4, 10 (more generally 10-16), 26-33; Kenneth McLeish, *The Theatre of Aristophanes* (New York: Taplinger, 1980), 53-54; and although focussed on New Comedy, see on Old Comedy, Ph.-E. Legrand, *The Greek New Comedy. Κωμῳδία Νέα*, trans. James Loeb, With an Introudction by John Williams White (Westport: Greenwood,1970 [reprint of 1917 ed. by William Heinemann, London and G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, originally published by the Annales de l'Université de Lyon]), 165. We have also consulted *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes*, Edited and With an Introduction by Moses Hadas (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1981). See for example: *Clouds*, 107, (see Thomson, *Irony*, 26-33); *Knights*, 71, 92-93 (see Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 138); and *Acharnians*, 62 (as pointed out by Thomson, *Irony*, 19-26, esp. 21, 26). These secondary discussions first pointed out and clarified examples, in some measure.

[86]These we learn from the literature, but it does not necessarily use these terms. Büchner uses the word "transparent" (*durchsichtig*) in "Über den Begriff der Eironeia" (page reference unclear), and Rosenmeyer speaks of "forms" of irony, although not using exactly the same categories ("Ironies in Serious Drama," 501-502. Articulation and even stress of these two kinds is not new, although they are not necessarily called "forms"; see Büchner ("Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358; Büchner's summary is more complex). See also Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416-17 with 418-20 (esp. 420), 422 (again more complex but containing the basic division which we follow); and especially, for the division stressed, see Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5 ("a pretence . . . the purpose of which is mockery or deception of one sort or another"); Rosenmeyer indicates these two categories *vis-à-vis* drama in "Ironies in Serious Drama," 502, 510-12. Perhaps further literature articulates the two categories more than I appreciate, but there seems a lack of clarity regarding whether and for whom *eironeia* is pretension in which "the victim . . . is intended to catch on" [quoting Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511]; that is, whether a

second is opaque. Transparent pretension is to be seen by others as just that--concocted behaviour. Cicero's oft-quoted definition is "'Saying one thing and meaning another' . . . . leaving the truth to be understood from tone, gesture, or known circumstance."[87] Opaque pretension is *not* to be seen by others as pretension, but rather as normal, candid behaviour. Both kinds of *eironeia* have various underlying objectives; "transparent" and "opaque" denote simply how the *eiron* wishes others to interpret their pretension.

For each kind of *eironeia*, we begin with first century evidence, confident that this informed Luke. We then offer evidence pre- or post-dating the first century, about which we are more cautious.[88]

a) *Transparent Pretension*

This sort of transparent *eironeia* we have learned not only from irony literature but already from some New Testament studies.[89] A key first-century source is accepted

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person using *eironeia* seeks--or does not seek--it to register with another person. Scholars do differentiate the two, but fail to convey this as clearly as they could. See for example Swearingen, "Irony, From Trope to Aesthetic," 109-110, 112, 114; Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 15-16 (Behler's introduction does not even acknowledge opaque *eironeia*, while later points of his article do, e.g., 23-24). Also, Trueblood notes distantly what we see: "Socratic irony is feigned ignorance employed in such a way as to draw out and finally to confound an antagonist, *though frequently the antagonist is not aware of what is happening to him* [emphasis added]." See *The Humor of Christ*, 56.

[87]See Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5 (full quotation); Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60 (first part of quotation). Further documentation is in the following section.

[88]On the idea (in general) of constancy in *eironeia* from before through the first century, see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416 with 420 (he implies a basically constant meaning for Greek speakers, although with many variations among theorists).

[89]See for example, Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10.

to be Quintilian (ca. 35 CE-90/100 CE),[90] who, although a Latin speaker, is competent in Greek, and can thus define *eironeia* for Greek speakers (as he claims).[91] Used by a person[92] for objectives of "mockery,"[93] "laughter" and disputation,[94] transparent

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[90]We learn this from secondary literature, on which see below, note 94. Quintilian's dates from Roland Gregory Austin and Michael Winterbottom, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Quintilian (Marcus Fabius Quintilianus)," 1290.

[91]We can ourselves tell that Quintilian (probably) spoke Greek, from his use of Greek terms. See Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, in four volumes, trans. H. E. Butler, vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1921), VIII. vi. 57, 59 (hereafter cited as Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*). We can also tell he tries to present a definition for Greek speakers, because he indicates this is his aim ("I shall follow my general rule and rest content with the Greek term"), although Bergson ("Eiron und Eironeia," 420-21) indicates that Quintilian offers a "narrower" defintion." See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IX. ii. 44 [quotation], 46.

[92]It is in a sense obvious that the behaviour will come from some being; that it comes from a person is often indicated, and I have seen no primary text examples of the behaviour coming from a divine being. On irony from a person, see Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511 (who is the only one I know to specify: "by a single character," although he shows examples [512] of *eironeia* from "demons or spirits" in modern drama); see also Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5; Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 163. This is also indicated by any source which speaks of an *eiron*--a person expressing *eironeia*; see for example Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25; Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358.

[93]We saw this specific term (*der Spott*) and application first in Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 357.

[94]Among perhaps other objectives. Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, in four volumes, trans. H. E. Butler, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1921), VI. iii. 85-86 ("laughter"; notice here such laughter [cf. 84-86], presumably for a third party, overlaps with a "success at disputation," that is, a rhetorical [or as Rosenmeyer says *forensic* (Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 502, 511] objective, one aimed at "defeating an opponent." The terms referred to in this passage, *simulatio* and *dissimulatio*, are not equated with *eironeia* by Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book VI (above), in Book IX. ii. 44 (re: *dissimulatio*) nor by, for example, Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420-21 (re: *simulatio*). See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VIII. vi. 55-59 (on "mockery," as Quintilian himself says). Quintilian implies, when these citations are put together, that the three objectives may overlap. Even if he does not mean this, it seems possible. Whether or not the mockery and humour is to be interpreted as kind or unkind is unclear here, although *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VI. iii. 85-86 implies it is unkind, i.e., used to get someone. For secondary discussion, see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 419-20 with 420-21; Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 25-26; Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 357; Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 4.

pretension[95] is that of which another person, "the victim . . . is to catch on."[96] Quintilian writes of two specific kinds:

> [*eironeia* as] simulation implies the pretence of having a certain opinion of one's own, [*eironeia* as] dissimulation consists in feigning that one does not understand someone else's meaning.[97]

Quintilian suggests this "affectation [to be] in word and deed,"[98] and acccording to

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[95]Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VIII. vi. 54-59 (esp. 54), for example. See also Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 414, and Behler, "Von klasssischer zur romantischen Ironie," 25-26.

[96]This sentence is patterned on that by Rosenmeyer: "Forensic irony: agressive or defensive dissembling, simulation or affectation, contributed by a single character, via a single formulation or a unitary posture, designed to hurt a victim. Audience perception clicks in almost immediately; the victim also is intended to catch on without delay." What Rosenmeyer means by "via a single formulation or unitary posture . . ." is unclear, but indicates that *eironeia* is not affectation of opposing feelings. The quotes in our text above and here are from Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511.

[97]Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VI. iii. 85. For further definition, see *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VIII. vi. 54-55, and IX. ii. 44-46. (These references were taken up first by and are found in, Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420 n. 1, 421 nn. 1, 2, who specifies the various specific meanings.) We add here that for Quintilian, "[in] *irony* . . . we understand something which is the opposite of what is actually said." On this distinction see Romano, *Irony in Juvenal*, 20. Quintilian goes on to make specific differences between two kinds of *eironeia*: "the *trope* is franker in its meaning, and, despite the fact that it implies something other than it says, makes no pretence about it. . . . But in the *figurative* form . . . the speaker disguises his entire meaning, the disguise being apparent rather than confessed." Swearingen discusses these in "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 167.

Notice somewhat of a difference between Quintilian's definition and that we cite from the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, of *dissimulatio*: "The concealment of one's identity"; "pretended ignorance"; "Socratic irony."

[98]Quotation from Theophrastus, *The Characters of Theophrastus*, trans. J. M. Edmonds, *Herodes, Cercidas, and the Greek Choliambic Poets (Except Callimachus and Babrius)*, Edited and Translated by A. D. Knox, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 41 (hereafter cited as Theophrastus, *Characters*). In fact (as has been noted with respect not only to Quintilian but also to Aristotle and Cicero), for Quintilian "words" are the key medium for *eironeia*; other actions are not necessary, and one would usually find *eironeia* in speeches or verbal debates (see above notes for his comments). But other media can matter. Quintilian, Aristotle and Cicero (again, as has been noted), indicate this: "A man's whole life may be coloured with *irony*, as was the case with Socrates, who was callled an *ironist* (εἴρων) because he assumed the role of an ignorant man lost in wonder at the wisdom of others" (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* [trans. Butler], IX. ii. 46).

Swearingen, he feels that it is unprincipled (or in narrative-critical terms, "unreliable").[99] Greek evidence from Plutarch (pre 50 CE-post 120 CE) somewhat supplements this definition.[100] Used in order to deride somebody,[101] *eironeia* is a transparent "understatement,"[102] but it is unclear whether Plutarch views this *eironeia* as principled, as something a reliable or at least a decent person would express.[103]

See Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 25-26; on Aristotle, see Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23 n. 19, re: irony "in speech and in action." Büchner adds that in the "late period," transparent *eironeia* in words was at least *accompanied* by other actions: see "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 355). We will further mention this topic in our section on opaque pretension.

The remark by Quintilian on Socrates is confusing: is Socrates' pretension transparent or opaque? Is he in fact trying (to use Aristotle's words), "not only [to] pretend that he has less than his actual resources but also [to] deny what he actually knows, concealing instead the fact that he knows"? (Quotation cited by Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23-24; Pavlovskis confirms on 25 that Aristotle refers to opaque pretension.)

[99]That he does not, see Swearingen "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 163-64, 165 [quotation], 166. Quintilian himself is not clear; see Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VIII. vi. 55, in which Quintilian indicates it *can* be reliable ("It is permissible to censure with counterfeited praise and praise under a pretence of blame"); see also *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VI. iii. 84-86; IX. ii. 44-46 (unclear). Swearingen has a different focus and opinion: Quintilian feels *eironeia* is not admirable, "perhaps because he could not have the upright orator delighting in deceiving his audience." (Interestingly, Swearingen says that in *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), VIII. vi. 54, Quintilian feels "irony . . . is . . . false, and to be avoided." But here, at least, he says nothing of the kind. Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 163.)

[100]For these dates and on Plutarch, see Donald A. F. M. Russell, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Plutarch," 1200-1201.

[101]Mockery of one or more people. See Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 165 (in reference to Aristotle and Cicero), and Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 22. We feel that we can apply this to any definition of *eironeia* without fear of conflating, for it seems arbitrary whether or not one or more people are present to hear it. Quintillian hints at this; see Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (trans. Butler), IX. ii. 46.

[102]"Understatement" does not in fact characterize Quintilian's definition, but is reminiscent better of Cicero, whom we discuss below, this section. For the word, application to mockery and use by Cicero, see Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 166-67, 169.

[103]The example was first pointed out by Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 357 (see text and n. 4; it is unclear to what Büchner refers when he calls this "εἰρωνεία in the older sense" [357]). Plutarch writes of the Roman military commander, Fabius Maximus (a seemingly reliable character), and Marcus Minucius (a sort of unreliable character, albeit he is Roman and fighting aloangside Fabius); both are officers in the Roman command, during the First Punic War (264-241 BCE) against Hannibal of Carthage (on which, see Brian M. Caven, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Punic Wars," 1277). To

We can support and enhance this with pre-first century evidence. Let us focus on Cicero (106-43 BCE),[104] not only because scholars do,[105] but also because he somewhat describes a Greek speaker's understanding.[106] Again we see that "*eironeia*," having a rhetorical objective (including "mockery"),[107] "is transparent pretension."[108]

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appreciate the *eironeia*, we quote a lead-up passage: "When [Fabius] reached the camp, he found that Minucius was no longer to be endured. He was harsh in his manner, puffed up with conceit, and demanded the sole command in his due turn. This Fabius would not grant, feeling that the sole command of a part of the army was better than the command of the whole. . . . When Minucius put on lofty airs and exulted because the majesty of the highest and greatest office in the state had been lowered . . . on his account, Fabius reminded him that his contention . . . [should not be] with Fabius, but rather, were he wise, with Hannibal. If, however, he was bent on rivalry with his colleague in office, he must see to it that the man who had been triumphantly honoured by his fellow-citizens [Fabius] should not be proved more careless of their salvation and safety than the man who had been ingloriously outraged by them [Minucius]." *But Minucius regarded all this as an old man's dissimulation (εἰρωνείαν)* [emphasis added], and taking the forces allotted to him, went into camp apart by himself." The *eironeia* appears to be, as has been noted, "sarcasm," or "understatement." Quote from *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, vol. 3, *Pericles and Fabius Maximus, Nicias and Crassus*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1916), X-XI (149-151). See also Anaximenes (380-20 BCE): "And this is irony--to say things by means of the opposite names [dative of instrument: ἐν τοῖς ἐναντίοις ὀνόμασι]. (This is our translation of the Greek, although modelled on that of Tryphon given in the German below; from Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 355). Behler ("Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 15-16, 24-25) and Swearingen ("Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 166-67, 412) note that Aristotle and Cicero also speak of transparent irony.

[104]On these dates, see John P. V. D. Balsdon and Miriam T. Griffin, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Tullius Cicero, Marcus," 1558-1559.

[105]Among Latin speakers. See Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 163 (*eironeia* among "Romans"), 163-72; Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420 (*eironeia* among "Romans"), 420-22; Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 15-16 (application to all antiquity); Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356-57.

[106]See Swearingen's paraphrasing of Cicero in "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 167, 169 (and implied on 168). See also Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 420-21 (although Bergson cautions on 420 that "the meaning of the word for the Greeks was far more diverse than for the Romans"); Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356-57 (although he is clear there are differences). Cicero does seem aware of Greek (as indicated by Swearingen on 168); see Cicero, *De Oratore*, In Two Volumes, I, Books, I, II, With an English Translation by E. W. Sutton, Completed, With an Introduction, by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1959), II. lxvi. 270 (hereafter cited as Cicero, *De Oratore*). Regardless, we will see that Cicero's Latin description accords roughly with that from Tryphon, a Greek speaker (below, this section).

[107]For this see Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356 (he says that for Cicero, *eironeia is* "mockery"); Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 167 (*eironeia is* "jesting"); both studies also (with qualifications) speak of Cicero's image of *eironeia* as related to rhetoric, specifically: see Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356 and Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 166-

We quote Cicero (cited by Swearingen): "when your words differ from your thoughts, not . . . when you assert exactly the contradictory *antiphrasis* . . . but when the whole tenor of your speech shows you to be solemnly jesting, what you think differing continuously from what you say." [109] Much of this we find also from Aristotle,[110] and from Tryphon (post 50 BCE),[111] as quoted by Büchner:

> Irony is a speech way, which expresses the opposite through the opposite [or, "one through the other"] in connection with an expressive tone and attitude.[112]

While Tryphon denotes speech for conveying *eironeia*, for Cicero there can be other

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67, 169-170.

[108]This is roughly the way in which Bergson puts the idea (see above).

[109]We take this quotation from Swearingen. What kind of transparent pretension? (Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 167, citing D. O., II. lxvii, 269 [see also "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 163, 169]). We first saw a more general version of this definition -- "irony is saying one thing and meaning another"--in Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60. A. C. Romano adds that for Cicero, *eironeia* "meant [not] only saying the contrary of what is meant but could also mean saying something different" (*Irony in Juvenal*, 20). Swearingen, moreover, specifies that "understatement and solemnity, [are] the two characteristics which Cicero says are definitive of irony" (Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 169).

Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356, makes clear that such pretension "is not restricted to mocking small-posture, but . . . includes each ridicule, by which the opposite is expressed through the opposite."

[110]Swearingen paraphrases Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: 1) "Irony defined as an effective argumentative strategy--blame by praise" (notice how this definition resembles the more modern idea of "incongruity." 2) "Irony explained as conveyed by tone, which indicated opposite meaning is intended." "[Irony as] lexical rhetorical schemes based on 'false,' 'incomplete,' but 'effective' plays on words: *homonymas*, etymology, *synthesis/diaresis*, *diastasis/diastolae*, *skomatta*, *antiphrasis*" (Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 412).

[111]On Tryphon ("late first cent. BC"), see Peter B. R. Forbes and Nigel Guy Wilson, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Tryphon (2)," 1557.

[112]Tryphon as quoted in Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 355 n. 6 (quoting from *rhetores Graeci* III 205 Sp.). This quote I translate from the German; the Greek is as follows: "εἰρωνεία ἐστὶ λόγος διὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου τὸ ἐναντίον μετά τινος ἠθικῆς ὑποκρίσεως δηλῶν."

media,[113] evident when he recalls the contemporary importance of *eironeia* from Socrates, who he hints used dress and deportment to accentuate his speech.[114] We add that while Cicero sees *eironeia* as the preserve of reliable people, not all ancients would agree.[115]

b) *Opaque Pretension*[116]

This is pretension which an εἴρων hopes that others interpret as normal, true behaviour. It is saying or doing something in an effort to shroud an incongruous feeling or knowledge, and in turn some objective.[117] We have found no first century evidence,

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[113]As scholars have pointed out, on which, see above, note 98.

[114]See above note. When Cicero speaks of Socrates' *eironeia*, he describes it as transparent, although this is not perfectly clear. See Cicero, *De Oratore*, II. lxvi. 270 (Swearingen mentions this passage, but is not explicit on this issue, in "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 169). We remind ourselves that *eironeia*, of any type, is calculated or pre-planned; see for example, Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 122-23, 163.

[115]For reference to Quintilian on this, see above, this section. See also negative opinions from Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, and the philosoper Philodemus, all cited by Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26, although it is unclear whether the reference is to transparent *eironeia*.

[116]The closest precedent I have found for this title is "hidden . . . irony." See Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 512. Studies of such *eironeia* in the New Testament include Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45 with 70-71, 72-73; Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 35-36 (and here, n. 5).

[117]We pattern our expression somewhat on Aristotle's: "The ironic man . . . denies what he actually knows, concealing instead the fact that he knows" (see Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23-24; or, adopting Rosenmeyer's words ["Ironies in Serious Drama," 511], "the victim . . . is [*not*] intended to catch on"). "Opaque" means that the *intent* of the *eiron* is not to have another person see they are pretencing (we often see this term called "deception" in the literature; see for example: Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 36 n. 5; Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137; Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 109). Even if (to take Aristotle's more altruistically motivated opaque pretension of "modesty"), the *eiron* knows that "his listeners will not forget his real, solid attributes" (quotes and interpretation from Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 24), the point would seem to be not to make them feel they are being misled, but to have them honestly feel, if only temporarily, that the *eiron* is "less than he is." Despite the evidence for this (which we saw earlier), notice that Rosenmeyer, speaking of "ironies in serious drama" (i.e., tragedy), downplays *eironeia* as opaque (502,

but we have evidence from before and after, including oft-highlighted definitions by Theophrastus (ca. 372-ca. 287 BCE)[118] and Aristotle (384-322 BCE).[119] Although each definition has specific nuances, we will generalize or conflate them, since we believe that such could have occurred by the first century CE.[120]

Used "to attack . . . to defend"[121] or otherwise to assist oneself,[122] opaque

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511-12). We hold that in other "settings," including Comic theatre, and actual exchanges between people, including rhetorical debate, *eironeia* is often opaque. The reason is that it only makes sense to be opaque (see our discussion of *eironeia* in the Latin Comedy *Miles Gloriosus*, below chapter four). On definitions which inform our summary above, see esp. Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137 (who takes information from Plato); also indicated by Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5; Taplinger, *Theatre of Aristophanes*, 53-54; Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 109-110 with 169; see also the notes which follow in this section, below.

[118]Dates are generalized from those given by Robert William Sharples, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Theophrastus," 1504-1505.

[119]For dates see Martha C. Nussbaum, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Aristotle," 165. We pattern our emphasis on these two figures on: Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25-26; Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 340, 342-43, 346-47, 350, 353; Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 411-14, 414-15, 416.

[120]The problem of our generalizing is that thinkers in Luke's day continued to offer precise and distinct definitions (see Swearingen's summary of Cicero and Quintilian in "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 163-69). Such conflation finds a precedent in Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358, and is encouraged by Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5: "In essence it is a pretence . . . the purpose of which is mockery or deception of one sort or another." We add that we include meanings from slightly before Aristotle's time--from Plato (ca. 429-347 BCE), which are probably as admissible as those of Aristotle from the point of view of their distance in time from Luke (see below, this section, note 121).

[121]The objectives given here and in the following note we here conflate, although ancient authors may have specified only certain of them. The quote "the irony of attack or defence," is from Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 501. It applies here even though Rosenmeyer refers only to transparent pretension. Examples: 1) Aristotle, in *Rhetoric*: "As it is never clear how close they are to harming you it is also never certain if they are far removed from doing so" (2. 5. 1382b19-22, cited in Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 22). 2) Plato, re: "deceit": "*eiron* . . . . especially . . . meant the man who masks his batteries of deceit behind a show of ordinary good nature" (Plato, *Laws*, 908 D, paraphrased in Francis M. Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137 n. 4. 3) Plautus (ca. 254-184 BCE) offers a specific example: in his comic play *Miles Gloriosus* ("The Braggart Soldier"), a slave aims to humiliate his master, the braggart soldier, for enslaving a woman as his wife. One means to achieve this is to behave in a very obsequious manner towards the soldier, so that he cannot clue into the intrigue against him. On the slave as an *eiron*, see Erich Segal's introduction in Plautus, *Four Comedies*, Translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Erich Segal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996),

pretension refers specifically to "self-denigrating" behaviour, although Plato refers also to "good natured" behaviour--innocence and politeness.[123] Examples are varied. For Theophrastus, self-denigration is naïveté (ignorance about daily affairs), meekness and flattery, but is also "contradictory behaviour" which, explains Büchner (cited in Pavlovskis), denigrates oneself by giving an appearance of caginess;[124] "the *eiron*

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xxiii-xxv. (Plautus' dates from Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, xiv-xv.) 4) Euripides: *Electra*, 1124: "claiming uncertainty or ignorance to safeguard truth and deflate victim's assumptions." (These are Rosenmeyer's words, in "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511. He is unclear whether such *eironeia* is opaque or transparent.) Notice in some of the above examples, that the objective overlaps with the meaning of pretension itself.

[122]On these (which Bergson calls "selfish"--and which Rosenmeyer would call "defensive" [501-02, 511]), see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 414-16 (referring to Aristophanes, Demosthenes and Theophrastus), 415; in general (*eiron* as "swindling or fraudulent"), see Thomson, *Irony*, 3-4. Examples: 1) Demosthenes: on protecting oneself: "Each of you . . . fleeing everything, ready, might begin to practice irony, some having money to pay the property-tax, some of you being able to go to war [but in neither case doing so, to help Athens]." Gk: "ἂν . . . ἕκαστος ὑμῶν . . .πᾶσαν ἀφεὶς τὴν εἰρωνείαν ἕτοιμος πρὰττειν ὑπάρξῃ, ὁ μὲν χρήματ' ἔχων εἰσφέρειν, ὁ δ' ἐν ἡλικίᾳ στρατεύεσθαι . . . ." Our translation of Dem. 4, 7, in Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 414 n. 1 (discussion of on 413-14, 416; see also Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26 [citing Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 348]). 2) Dio Cassius: (see below, section C. 2. b). 3) Theophrastus: see Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26 (citing in part Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," in n. 36). 4: Aristophanes: Wespen (164 ff.), described by Bergson: "Philokleos helps himself with a lie, to come out . . . of his guarded house, to whom one of the . . . guards . . . remarks, 'What a pretext, how ironically [εἰρωνικῶς]!'" (Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 411). On Theophrastus, see Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26 (citing in part, in nn. 34, 35, Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 348): "The *eirōn* . . . appears, first and foremost, as a lazy man."

Not all primary sources specify the same objectives; nor does each necessarily link its objectives with another's form of pretension. We will, however, conflate these, as other sources have done before us. A historically sensitive reader might criticize this (some scholars themselves, such as Bergson, keep each ancient author's images of *eironeia* separate; see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 409 with 416-17). But we would suggest that by the first century, enough time had passed from the extant definitions we have, that the minor, subtle differences among them would have disappeared, among all but theoreticians or academics. We say this on the basis of *eironeia* in Greek and Latin comedy; on this see below, section E, and see chapter four.

Whether the pretension is to one or more people is insignificant: regarding Aristotle, this is indicated by Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 165; Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23, 24 (here applied to particular examples of pretension, but which we can safely assume apply to all).

[123]As summarized by Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137 (his reference to Plato is Plato, *Laws*, 908 D).

[124]That this pretension is opaque is indicated by Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416; Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25-26 (citing Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 348, on 26, nn.

shirks responsibility and therefore presents himself as less capable of assuming it than he actually is."[125] Aristotle specifies self-denigrating behaviours ranging from "feigned stupidity" to "the concealing of [other] capabilities"[126] and material possessions.[127]

34, 35); Behler, 'Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 22, esp. 23.

[125]Naiveté: "He (the *eiron*) pretends he has not heard when he hears, and says he has not seen when he sees." Meekness and flattery: "The dissembler (*eiron*) will be disposed rather to go up to an enemy and talk with him than to show his hatred; he will praise to his face one he has girded at behind his back." Contradictory behaviour, evincing elusiveness: "When he would sell you anything, no, it is not for sale; when he would not, why then it is." Also: "He'll look into this, doesn't know that, is surprised at the other; this again is just the conclusion he came to himself." There are other behaviours which mark *eironeia*, such as excuse-making: "He . . . makes pretences, as that he's but now come upon the scene, or joined the company late, or was ill abed." Theophrastus, *Characters* (trans. Edmonds), 41. In light of the tendency for Theophrastus' *eiron* to act in inconsistent ways, the meekness and naiveté may not be intended as such (we suspect this from reading Büchner's analysis, which follows in this note). It is Büchner whom certain scholars we use have cited to show that Theophrastus defines *eironeia* as self-denigration. Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia" 348, cited by Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26 (words quoted above are Pavlovskis.') See on Theophrastus also Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 415-16 (who draws on the same passage from Büchner), and Behler, "Von klassischer zur romantischen Ironie," 22, esp. 23. We add (from Bergson), that Theophrastus' image of *eironeia* was intended to capture behaviours he saw in "practical life," while Aristotle envisioned it among mainly philosophers. Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 414-15. Greek quote from Theophrastus, *Characters* (trans. Edmonds), 40. The idea, and that of "contradictory behaviour" evincing "elusive[ness]," and the quote, are from Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26. Here Pavlovskis and scholars he cites agree that Theophrastus' *eironeia* denotes "affectation of the worse" (Theophrastus, *Characters* [trans. Edmonds], 41). But why an *eiron* affects in this way is debated; only Büchner reasons that an *eiron* so affects in order to self-denigrate, i.e., "pretence towards the smaller/lesser" makes oneself look incompetent (see Pavlovskis' words in text above, cited in this note). Other interpreters whom he cites disagree (R. G. Ussher, *The Characters of Theophrastus* [London, 1960], 35, and *Theophrast: Charaktere*, ed. and comm. P. Steinmetz [Munich, 1962], 37; in Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26 nn. 32-33).

[126]Demosthenes writes specifically of pretension conveying inability or unfitness (in material [financial] and physical terms), see above, note 122). Quotation from Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25.

[127]"Feigned stupidity" (quoted from Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137), implies Aristotle, can take different forms (the quotation in the text above paraphrases the following: "The ironic man . . . not only pretends that he has less than his actual resources but also denies what he actually knows, concealing instead the fact that he knows." Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23-24, quoting *Magna Moralia* 1. 33. 1193a28-37, and Pavlovskis' own words ["conceals . . . capabilities" on 25]). "Conceals . . . capabililties" is quite encompassing, yet these are nearly the words Aristotle himself uses (Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23, citing *Magna Moralia* 1. 33. 1193a28-37). We should assume this includes almost any skill (see Demosthenes, in note above). "Material possessions": Aristotle suggests this in the following remark: "Those who engage in pretense about obvious and simple things

Strikingly, self-denigration is regarded by Aristotle and others as unsavoury (or we could say "unreliable") since it usually involves harming others or using them for one's benefit,[128] but for Aristotle, "mock modesty"--self-effacement of talent and knowledge--is reliable when aimed to teach and to "relax" others.[129] Theophrastus and Aristotle, moreover, allow for pretension "in word and in deed [although not necessarily both]."[130]

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are called humbugs . . . , and are despicable. . . . Spartan apparel is an example. . . . But those seem attractive who use irony in moderation" (Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 24, citing *Nicomachean Ethics*, 4. 8. 1127b22-32; see also Demosthenes, in note above). *Self-effacement* is another form of pretension to which Aristotle refers: "The *eirons*, speaking to the smaller, appear more grateful, on the one hand, with respect to manners; because for the sake of advantage, they do not consider it good to speak, but fleeing trouble." Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 413 n. 3 (citing *Nicomachean Ethics* Δ 7. 1127b 22ff.). We learn from Swearingen that pretension is of particular grades; she writes of Aristotle as speaking of "understatement." Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 109-110, although she adds irony could have a variety of other definitions (114).

The literature appears vague as to whether and when Aristotle defines *opaque* pretension "to the less." That he does, see Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 10, 112: "The success of his words lies in the extent to which they are taken to be reality." See also Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 24 (implicit in quoting Aristotle; but see his comments on 23, 24); Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 411-12, is unclear (due to difficulty in translation).

Pavlovskis is clear there is "considerable difference between . . . Aristotle and [Theophrastus]," yet the naiveté and flattery are in our judgement, similar (Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25).

Cornford offers a helpful summary of pretensions for our study of Acts: "the Ironical man is given to making himself out worse than he is. This is a generalised description, meant to cover all types of self-depreciation" (Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137).

[128]See for example (regarding Aristotle and Demosthenes) Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23, 25; Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 411-14 with 416-17, acknowledges this but stresses Aristotle's view of *eironeia* as principled (Pavlovskis among others acknowledges it too, in "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 24, 25, while Swearingen remarks: "By separating ethics from rhetoric, and both of these from rational philosophy, he [Aristotle] created the kind of compartmentalized discourse which allows me to say '[irony], when considered from an ethical point of view.'" She adds that when he did consider *eironeia* from this point of view, he saw it as principled and unprincipled. Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 125 (quotation), 109, 112 (re: on 112, Aristotle's opinion of *eironeia* as principled [citing Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11-13]) .

[129]Pavlovskis sees in Aristotle's *eironeia* at least two broad strands--unreliable and reliable--defined by whether the objective is nefarious or altruistic. Idea and quotation from Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25 (quotation from 24).

[130]"Word and deed" from Theophrastus, *Characters (*trans. Edmonds), 41; on Aristotle, see Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23 (the reference is actually not to *eironeia*, but to

A good example is *eironeia* which scholars find in Aristotle's description of Socrates. This will be significant for Acts. Notice that the opaque pretension--self-denigration--is reliable:

> There is nothing ignoble in asserting one's dignity among the great, but to do so among the lower classes is just as crude as to assert one's strength against an invalid. . . . He [the "high-minded man"] speaks and acts openly: since he looks down upon others his speech is free and truthful, except when he deliberately depreciates himself in addressing the common run of people.[131]

We also see an example of *eironeia* that is unreliable. This Büchner provides from the Roman Emperor Tiberius (42 BCE-37 CE),[132] as described by Dio Cassius' (164 CE-post-229 CE) *Roman History*.[133] We use this example (albeit later than Luke), because it occurs in a historical text--a "genre" fairly similar to Luke-Acts[134]--and is closer to Luke's life than the evidence from Theophrastus and Aristotle. The following passage from Dio sets the context.

"truthfulness"; yet "word and deed" in the one suggests word and deed in the other. I cannot recall the source which presents "word *or* deed."

[131]This passage is quoted by, among others, Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 24, although we quote this version from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Translated, with introduction and notes, by Martin Oswald, The Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), bk. 4, 1124b.10, 20, 25.

[132]On these dates and on Tiberius generally, see John P. V. D. Balsdon and Barbara M. Levick, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Tiberius," 1523.

[133]On Dio and his text, see John William Rich, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. "Cassius Dio," 299. Here we learn that Tiberius is to be viewed as an "unreliable" character, since Dio portrays him as a morally corrupt and heinous person.

[134]On the term and the idea, see Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 2, 21.

At first he [Tiberius] kept saying he would give up the rule entirely on account of his age (he was fifty-six) and of his near-sightedness (for although he saw extremely well in the dark, his sight was very poor in the daytime); but later he asked for some associates and colleagues, though not with the intention that they should jointly rule the whole empire, as in an oligarchy, but rather dividing it into three parts, one of which he would retain himself, while giving up the remaining two to others.[135]

With this in mind, notice how Dio believes this to have been self-denigration:[136] "Now when . . . the whole Roman world had acquiesced securely in his leaderhip, Tiberius accepted the rule without further dissimulation" (εἰρωνευόμενος).[137] Here *eironeia* seems to be an opaque self-denigration, in order to aggrandize power.

"Self-denigration" in Classical literature is *proactive*; to "affect" means actively

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[135]Dio Cassius, *Dio's Roman History*, With an English Translation by Earnest Cary, on the basis of the version of Herbert Baldwin Foster, in Nine Volumes, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1924), LVII, 2.4.

[136]Büchner is somewhat unclear; he suggests *transparent* pretension here ("Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 357; see 355-57), which did not strike us as the sense of Dio's words. We sense that it is opaque, and we find support from a historian's reading of the texts. Barbara Levick (*Tiberius the Politician*, Aspects of Greek and Roman Life [London: Thames and Hudson, 1976], 78 with 78 n. 24), indicates--although herself somewhat unclearly--that for Dio, Tiberius is trying to hide his real desire for power. In n. 24, Levick pairs Dio's analysis with that by Suetonius (*Twelve Caesars* 24. 2), and when we read Suetonius, we find that he too portrays Tiberius as hiding a desire for power, even if not very well; Tiberius is not feigning in order to make his desire for power evident. (Hence it would appear that Levick and Suetonius support our view.) See Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. Robert Graves (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1957), 24. 2 (see 24. 1-2).

[137]*Dio's Roman History*, LVII, 7.1. Although unclear, a third possible example in this category (discussed by Büchner) is from the Christian author Pseudo-Justin, in the *Epistle to Diognetus* [between 200-300 CE], which is critical of Jewish customs. Justin writes: "Their timidity concerning eating and the superstition concerning the Sabbath and the alazoneia of circumcision and the eironeia of fasting and of [observing] the new moon, and ridiculous things worthy of no word; I do not consider to have need to learn about." Büchner indicates (although this is unclear, too) that there is an effort to appear pious and meek before God through these actions. They represent therefore a sort of "pretension to the less." (Example from *Epistola ad Diognetum*, as cited by Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356-57 (see also 356 n. 6). On dating of the letter, see Wolfram Kinzig, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Epistle to Diognetus," 547.

to concoct one's behaviour.[138] Could pretension, however, also simply denote being tacit? If a person is discussing a topic and is not revealing facts about it, is there pretension? Aristotle suggests this, although he indicates that the pretension is also proactive. This leaves us uncertain.[139] We know, however, that opaque pretension denotes any self-denigration (Aristotle) or "good nature" (Plato)[140] that an *eiron* wishes people to interpret as just that. It may be "reliable" if aimed to help others or to combat a nefarious person,[141] or "unreliable" if aimed to attack.

D. *Eironeia in Comedy*

One milieu for *eironeia* is Greek New Comic theatre (and its Latin language adaptations). We will reflect on this in more detail later, as it will be significant for our analysis. For now, three points are of importance. First, *eironeia*--specifically, opaque pretension (self-denigration)--is a behaviour of certain, human characters in New Comedy. Second, *eironeia* and the *eiron* expressing it are to be seen by the audience (in

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[138]Cicero, as quoted in Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60 (with word in brackets added, since Cicero refers to transparent, not opaque, pretension).

[139]For Aristotle's comments see Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 22 [quoting *Rhetoric* 2. 5. 1382b19-22], 23-24 [quoting *Magna Moralia* 1. 33. 1193a28-37], and 24 [quoting *Nicomachean Ethics* 4. 8. 1124b30-31]; the quote from *Magna Moralia* indicates there must be, in addition to shrouding, more proactive pretension.

[140]Quote and description from Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137.

[141]This idea is not held by all scholars who study comedy, preferring to see in the *eiron* an unreliable character; see following note.

some sense, at least) as "reliable."[142] Third, the *eiron* sometimes pretences to a particular character. This character is called an *alazon* (ὁ ἀλάζων; although certain ancients actually labelled this character also an *eiron*).[143] This unreliable character, interacting with the *eiron* at points in the comedy, expresses ἡ ἀλαζονεία, one translation for which is "boasting."[144] Fourth, the audience of a comedy is attuned to the *eiron*'s pretension; unlike the *alazon*, we are meant by the playwright to watch such that opaque pretension on stage is not opaque for us.[145] These four ideas will become

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[142]In Acts studies, a significant precedent for our argument here (*eiron* as reliable) is from Ray, who implies the *eiron* is reliable by seeing this character in Jesus ("Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70-71, 72-73), and similarly Via (*Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 45, 133); Ray even uses a synonym for "reliable"--the "protagonist" (Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 32). As well, Thomson hints at this in *Irony*, 19, and Cornford is very clear (calling the *eiron* "the protagonist or hero"), in *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 2-3 with 136-38, esp. 139. Earlier, however, we saw that an *eiron* in comedy rarely appears reliable in others' estimation; this point is made by Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2 with 70 n. 19; Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11; and Thomson, *Irony*, 3-4, all of whom discuss or imply the opinion which an audience of (Old) comedy has of an *eiron*. As well, the fact (as we discuss later), that *eironeia* in New Comedy is modelled at least somewhat on that described by Theophrastus (who, notes Pavlovskis, saw it as extremely unsavoury ["Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25-26]), may leave us wondering how an audience could see an *eiron* as reliable. Perhaps the *eiron* was unreliable, but he (the examples I have seen are of males) was decent insofar as he worked against the unreliable *alazon* (on which, without using the term "unreliable," see Segal's discussion in Plautus, *Four Comedies* [trans. Segal], xxiii, in the following note).

[143]On the notion of the *alazon* and this character's relation to the *eiron*, see Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 136-38, (Old Comedy); and Erich Segal's comments in Plautus, *Four Comedies* (trans. Segal), xxiii (regarding Latin Comedy [which is very similar to Greek New Comedy, on which, see chapter four below]). On the equating of *eironeia* and *alazoneia*, see Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 417 (who quotes Ariston-Philodemus: "Eironeia ist eine Art ἀλαζονεία"). Whether Bergson means that we can equate exactly *eironeia* and *alazoneia* is unclear (according to our reading of Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26), but it is suggested.

[144]See Michael Walton and Peter D. Arnott (re: *alazon* as "boaster"; other references to *alazoneia* I cannot find, although they do use terms such as "boasting), *Menander and the Making of Comedy* (Westport: Greenwood, 1996), 98.

[145]Indicated in part by Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 61 (Camery-Hoggatt adds that the *eironeia* will "shock" the audience, and that it is up to them to perceive instances of it). Implied in Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 136-38 (just by virtue of his describing it to the reader); and in part by Sedgewick, *of Irony*, 25. See also Plank, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction*, 39.

important when we consider connections between New Comedy and Acts.

E. *Recapitulation*

This chapter has explored what the literature considers to be *eironeia*, so that we may identify it in Acts. Perfect precision is unattainable but unnecessary, for we believe that people in the first century, in various parts of the Roman empire, certainly incorporated their own subtleties. We acknowledge, moreover, that the meaning of *eironeia* is itself unclear, at times. The best course is to keep as our centre of gravity προσποίησις, and to look for this idea in Acts.

CHAPTER FOUR
EIRONEIA: A HINT AT NEW COMEDY IN ACTS?

In this chapter, we apply awareness of Classical *eironeia* to Acts. Do we find *eironeia*, explicitly or implicitly? What might its significance be for Luke-Acts as a whole? Our answers are tentative. We feel there is not much "pure" *eironeia*; what we find are usually cousin behaviours of it. If, however, we add up these behaviours and place them in the context of Luke-Acts more generally, we begin to see the possibility that New Comic theatre (beginning ca. 320 BCE)[1] matters to this text. We suggest that New Comedy should be taken more seriously in regard to Luke-Acts than it now is.

We first consider evidence for *eironeia* in Acts. We then bring together this evidence and explore it in combination with other particular aspects of the text.[2]

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[1]On this dating of New Comedy, see Menander, *The Dyskolus of Menander*, ed. E. W. Handley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 4. Peter George McCarthy Brown generalizes to "the last quarter of the 4th century BC onwards, but generally regarded as ending its creative heyday in the mid-3rd century." Brown, in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Comedy (Greek), New," 370. Unlike Brown, we have left out an "end-date." This is because, while ca. 250 BCE might have marked the end of New Comedy's "heyday," we learn from the literature that it still existed on stage well beyond Luke's life.

[2]This approach to Acts (and concluding a link with comedy of some kind) is not new; Dan Via's book asks the same questions *vis-à-vis* Mark and Paul, exploring not only *eironeia,* but the rest of what Via calls the "comic structure," using a structuralist-literary method. Our method differs somewhat, we focus on New Comedy, and we give more attention to *eironeia per se*. See Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, xi, 1-31 (method, in 1-31), 40-49, 99-101, 133 (for example). For further reference to Acts (now explicit) and its *eironeia* evincing comedy (period of comedy not specified), see Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70-71, 72-73, all in light of 45 (here citing secondary sources on *eironeia* in theatre). Jónsson implies an understanding of *eironeia* in Comedy in introductory chapters, and refers to it in the Synoptic gospels, but does not (explicitly) refer either to *eironeia* or Comedy, in his chapter on Acts. See *Humour*, 21-22, 22-26, 36, 37 with 91 (i.e., here using the words "comical" and ἀλαζών in discussing the synoptics), 90, 127 (refers to "a tragedy"), 208-22 (although on 215-16,

A. *Classical Eironeia in Acts*

We begin with qualifications to our research. First, we have likely not found all of the instances of *eironeia* in Acts. Second and related, we are sometimes unclear whether we may title behaviours "opaque pretension." In Acts, there is often opaque shrouding, or hiding, or "lying";[3] this, however, may not qualify as "affectation." Because Classical literature does not define "affectation," we are sometimes uncertain of precisely what constitutes affectation in Acts. But this need not prevent us from finding evidence which, if not *eironeia per se*, is certainly close.

Our slim consideration of Acts' companion volume, the gospel of Luke, may justify some skepticism in our interpretation. But we have searched enough with Classical images in hand to begin to show *eironeia*--even though we seldom find it in proper or complete form--and to reflect on its meaning for Luke-Acts as a whole.

Jónsson's discussion of Paul vis-à-vis Socrates suggests Paul to be an *eiron*, perhaps as in Comedy; see similarly on 220 Paul's "irony" in Acts 22:25-29. In fairness to Jónsson, we may be missing his understanding of Classical and comic *eironeia* in Acts, but if so, it is because his language is vague. He suggests on p. 222 [see with 21-22, 36-37], moreover, that he has not found such *eironeia*-in-Classical comedy, in Acts). De Robert speaks both of irony and of the "comic," but we do not see connections to actual comedy ("L'Ironie," 11). Pervo, if one reads closely, links "irony" in Acts to ancient Comedy, but nowhere elaborates; he does hint at *eironeia* (61). See *Profit with Delight*, xi, 58-59, and 58 n. 2, 61 n. 16. To make what Pervo says clearer, see our own discussion of comedy's "entertainment" or humour, below. Encouragement to set a behaviour somewhat like *eironeia* in its Classical context comes from York, *The Last Shall be First*, 23 (see with his final chapter), and we have seen various references to behaviour as "comic" (e.g., in Haenchen, *Acts*, 386, cited by Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 63 n. 20). And significantly, Tannehill's *Narrative Unity* has encouraged us to see irony throughout a text (Acts, and Luke-Acts; see above, chapter two), which is itself parallels New Comedy (secondary literature does not restrict *eironeia* to any one part of a play; see for example [although she does not use the word], Zagagi, *The Comedy of Menander*, 151-52. Also indicated, for example, in references to *eironeia*-like behaviour which is found throughout *Dyskolus*. in *Menander: Plays and Fragments*, trans. Norma Miller (London: Penguin Books, 1987), hereafter cited as *Dyskolus*.

[3]Quotation from Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 122 (referring to Plato).

1. *Points of Departure*

In denoting Acts' *eironeia*, we use three criteria.[4] The first and most important is to recall our definitions of transparent and opaque *eironeia* (chapter three). *Eironeia* appears to originate from human characters; the divine (at least, according to ancient polytheists) is absent. The degree of principle seen in *eironeia* varies; we might expect it from a reliable character, or from an unreliable character. The key issue amid the variety is pretension; even though it need not equate with *eironeia*, it is at the least associated.

Our second criterion lets us modify--but only somewhat--this definition.[5] Since

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[4]Acts itself never uses the word *eironeia*, as de Robert, "L'Ironie," 3, writes. Most studies of Classical and of Luke-Acts' irony begin with some criteria (usually, a definition). See for example Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-50 (his separation of Classical from later irony is particularly informative; see 45-47 vs. 47-50; his effort to clarify irony as a whole--i.e., "irony" with Classical and more current meanings taken together (echoing and drawing on, on 51, n. 30, Muecke, *Compass of Irony*, 19)--is also helpful (50-51, 51-53 although it moves beyond Classical *eironeia)*. See also Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2, and Rosenmeyer's distinguishing of definitions in "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511-15.

[5]That is: 1) some conflation among definitions (e.g., pairing an objective understood only by Aristotle, with an example of affectation understood only by Theophrastus); and 2) other minor variations. We allow for these, based largely on reason: we expect that over centuries, conflation and minor variation would be natural. We allow also based on certain precedents. For example, while Rosenmeyer encourages precise definitions (i.e., Classical or current, on which, see below, this note), the general nature of his Classical definition implies room for various permutations of aspects of *eironeia* (e.g., some kind of "aggressive or defensive" objective can be paired with either of "dissimulation, simulation or affectation"); "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497-98, 501-02, 511. See similarly: Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11 (on Aristotle) and Thomson, *Irony*, 4 ("In every new dialogue Plato was giving a new extension to the meaning of irony"). *Contra* our approach would appear to be: Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416, who gives specific definitions for each theorist, implying conflation among them or variation from them to be inadmissible. Most articles do not clarify whether and to what extent they feel conflation and variation is acceptable, although Rosenmeyer allows for specific variations in objective and in combination with transparent or opaque pretension; "Ironies in Serious Drama," 511-12.

Our precedents for remaining cautious (not altering the basic meaning of pretension; not stepping outside the objectives which we have learned) include Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to

we find *eironeia* in assorted milieux,[6] we must allow *eironeia* various emphases and implications, and loci in cultures and religious systems.

This criterion shades off into a third. Based on *eironeia*'s treatment in some primary and secondary literature, we will suggest allusions, brief passages and even single words to denote *eironeia*.[7] We need not see a full definition in one place to conclude there may be *eironeia*. Moreover, we will accept as *eironeia* meanings which

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Aesthetic," 2 (and see above, chapter three), and Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497, 501-02. See also Lowe, "Tragic and Homeric Ironies," 522.

[6]As acknowledged by Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 114 (quote) with 111-12; 112; 109 (respectively: "a verbal technique"; "as a species of comedy"; "a trait of character, a manner"), and generally 113-14 (including possible overlap, 112 [citing Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11-13]). Swearingen does not say "milieux," but does refer to "categories," a roughly similar idea (113; see also 109, 114). Also acknowledged by: Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 411, 418-20, 414 (quotation), 412-14, 416 (quotation), 415 (respectively: theatre; rhetorical trope; "in . . . philosophical system"; in "practical use" [here citing in part, on p. 415, n. 2, Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26]), and more generally, on 416; Bergson does not say "milieux," but does on 416 refer to "social surroundings," indicating roughly the same idea. See also: Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 496, 500, 510 (see subtitle there); Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Marks's Gospel*, 61; and Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 136-38 (all speaking of theatre, Camery-Hoggatt specifying on p. 61, irony in comic theatre and tragic theatre); Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 5-6, 6 (quotation); 10 (quotation), 13 (respectively: "as a verbal figure"; "a life in all its manifestations seems to possess irony"); again, there is no use of "milieux." See also Thomson, *Irony*, 3 (on *eironeia* generally); 3-4, 34-35 (in tragedy and in comedy; citing in part Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*); 116, 121, 125-26 (in historical texts; although on p. 125, Thomson says this is "tragic irony," not irony distinct because it is in a historical text); 167 and 169 with 171 (quotation)-72 and esp. 188, 190 (on the "dialogue," although again, there is equation with "tragic irony" and "comic irony").While the above authors do not appear to use "milieux," some have spoken of "context." The point is that authors write of *eironeia* belonging to different occasions; "irony as . . ." is a catchphrase.

[7]Primary literature: see Theophrastus, *Characters* (trans. Edmonds), 41: "Dissembling would seem, to define it generally, to be an affectation of the worse in word and deed; and the Dissembler will be disposed rather to go up to an enemy and talk with him than to show his hatred. . . . He pretends he has not heard when he hears, and says he has not seen when he sees." The fact Theophrastus gives the meaning "generally," then proceeds to list disparate behaviours, suggests that we *can* see any one of these as an "example of" *eironeia*. Secondary literature: for allusions and brief passages; for single words, see for example Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, as cited in Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 412; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 331, 348 (the latter example is not of irony, but is illustrative); Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 411; see here the simple, short act of the character fleeing the house ("What a pretext," says an observer; "How ironically!"); and the brief example (Acts 12:22) of *eironeia* towards Herod (i.e., in one sentence), pointed out by Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 72-73.

date far back into antiquity, perhaps out of use in Luke's time.[8]

2. *Arrangement*

Our arrangement of evidence is informed by previous studies. We have set *eironeia* in the context of particular characters or character-groups: namely, reliable and unreliable. Studies of Acts, whether or not they explore *eironeia*, envision two or three characters or character-groups: Jewish critics of the apostles (including Paul), the apostles themselves, and God.[9] *Eironeia* is not limited to characters within these groups;[10] still, this arrangement remains useful, since it ends up showing that *eironeia* among the groups differs somewhat.[11]

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[8]In so doing we disagree with Büchner, who speaks of *eironeia*'s specific meanings as being "narrowed and expanded" over time ("Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 356). We follow Via; even though Old Comedy is out of favour in Luke's day (Via does not acknowledge this, [40-49]), Via proposes it in the thought of Paul. See *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, xi, 40-49. We have, moreover, precedents for drawing on relatively old (although not specific) meanings: see for example, Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 70 n. 19 (regarding the meaning of *eironeia* in Plato's life as hailing from an earlier time); and Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 422 with 414-15.

[9]Perceiving the Jewish authorities as a "character group" was encouraged by Powell, who uses this term. See *What is Narrative Criticism?* 58. Certain recent studies seem to envision God as a character. See Brawley, *Centering on God*, 110-11. Implied in Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 137, 140, 144 (and in any source which relates God to other characters, e.g., Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 9 with 12, in reference to the gospel of Luke). Whether God is considered together with human Christians, or separately, seems to vary.

Here we refer only to studies of Luke-Acts' irony. Not all studies refer to three groups. See for example, Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 101, 155 (here implies God, Jesus and the apostles we are to perceive in one group; on this see also vol. 1, 7 and I, 9, re: all apostles, with vol. 2, 15, 70, re: Peter, Jesus); Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 140, 144, esp. 137 (but also see 136-37, 138); Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," iii with 32; especially clear is Jónsson, *Humour*, 208.

[10]See reference to Simon Magus in essay, below, section A. 3.

[11]In narratives, the only type of explicitly labelled *eironeia* is from their human characters (on which, see chapter three); we thus do not consider possible *eironeia* from strictly the narrator towards us, or towards all characters. In this we follow Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 502, 511-12. For examples, see our analysis, below. Many Luke-Acts studies suggest that a set of characters will express a particular kind of irony; Ray suggests this in "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 67-75 (re: characters roughly supportive of Christianity, or at least opposed to the Jewish authorities: Jesus in Luke 24, to the Tyrians and Sidonians who pretence to Herod in Acts 12:22). See also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* vol. 1, 283-84 and vol. 2, 3, for example (re: God).

Below we speak of *implied readers*, since it is these whom Luke wants to recognize *eironeia*. These learn the story from the *narrator*, who seems to speak of unreliable characters and reliable characters. We explore unreliable characters first, and reliable characters later.

3. *"O full of all deceit . . ": Eironeia and Jewish Critics*[12]

Scholarship virtually never notes that Classical *eironeia* (or behaviour close to it) is used by people who criticize the apostles--in other words, by unreliable characters.[13] We will label these "Jewish critics," although, as we will see, not all are Jewish and not all are entirely critical.[14]

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[12]Quote from Acts 13:10. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 11, uses the term "Jerusalem critics." We recall choosing the term independently, from a different context altogether.

[13]There are several semi-precedents. 1) Perhaps the closest is from Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 141-142, who referring briefly to "verbal irony," describes in effect transparent pretension; this is in the "mocking of Jesus on the cross" (Luke 23:35-59; example on 142); 2) perhaps in Jónsson, *Humour*, 215-16; 3) Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 16, 35-36; and see Tannehill, "Tragic Story" (for example; only in the latter does he say "irony"). Here he implies incongruity from the Jews, evident in their "turn away from fulfillment when it was readily available" (16); indeed he would call this act "ironic." 3) Tannehill also finds Jews to "*contribute* to" [37] irony, although this is not their intent (rather, God's). For example (in discussing the content of Peter's Pentecost speech in Acts 2:1-41): "The residents of Jerusalem and their rulers, blind to God's purpose, act to rid themselves of Jesus and are responsible for their actions, but this very act contributes to God's purpose of enthroning Jesus as Messiah." From *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 37 (see pp. 36-37); see this with a more general conclusion about the Jews and irony, as Tannehill recommends (37, n. 28) in *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283-84 (and in vol. 1 also, 9, 12 and vol. 2, 2-3, 101. See further our summary of Tannehill and Kurz in chapter two, above. Neither of Tannehill's examples of *eironeia*, nor their relation to the Jews, reflect our conclusion (although they encourage us to see Jewish figures' relevance to *eironeia*). Tannehill does discuss Classical *eironeia* on occasion (see below, section A. 4), and he borders Classical *eironeia* in saying that "God works by irony" (this sounds like "God works by *pretension*"). But as we will show (below, section A. 5), these acts from God accord more closely with *reversal* (ἡ περιπέτεια), as Tannehill and Kurz themselves point out. On God "working by irony," see *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 284, vol. 2, 3. 3) Kurz refers to "dramatic irony" in the fact that Jesus is known by "demons," but not by Jews; see *Reading Luke-Acts*, 138. 4) Brawley hints (although his analysis is confusing) at irony from Jewish opponents of Jesus ("At his trial opponents beat the blindfolded Jesus and command him, 'Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?' But the irony turns on those who mock Jesus"). Brawley, *Centering on God*, 131. 5) See also Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 60 (although when he refers to "ironies of characterization," of certain Jewish opponents, he does not refer to their deliberate pretension, but rather to their real qualities, of which they are unaware).

[14]Expressions such as "*eironeia* expressed by" and "*eironeia* from" are fairly common.

Two distinct appreciations of *eironeia* (or behaviours close to it) appear among Jewish critics.[15] They are infrequent, and very few correspond precisely to *eironeia*, but they do suggest *eironeia*'s impact, or perhaps the relation to a set of similar behaviours. We see one example in the story of Paul's so-called "third missionary journey" (key sections include Acts 23:12-16,21; 25:3).[16] We suggest that there is clear *eironeia*, specifically *opaque pretension*, expressed by one character in this story. Prior to Paul's appearance to explain his actions to the Roman Governor Festus (Acts 25:6-12), we learn that Paul is in trouble, for "the Jews" (Acts 23:12, 25:2; οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) are "ready to kill him" (Acts 23:15-16; 25:3). Luke here refers once to a "plot" (ἐπιβουλῆς [Acts 23:30]) and thrice to a "deceit" (ἐνέδραν [Acts 23:16,21; 25:3]). Plots and deceits *per se* do not express *eironeia* unless they involve "feigning simplicity" or "mask [ing]. . . batteries of deceit behind an ordinary show of good nature [assumedly including neutrality]."[17] Such feigning, or pretencing, is unclear in chapter 23,[18] but does appear in

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[15]We will not compare every aspect of *eironeia* in Acts with Classical definitions. The reader may refer to chapter three, above. But when we see one or more of what we judge to be significant differences, we explain them.

[16]These are passages directly concerned with *eironeia*; an appreciation of the story of which they are a part includes 23:12-30 and 25:1-12. Chapters 23 and 25 seem to narrate the same "plot."

Acts 25:1-3,9 contains not the only references to "deceit" of Paul; see also 23:12-30 (especially 23:12-14, 21). But here deceit, although close to pretension, is not clearly that, i.e., nobody is "feigning" to Paul, unless one translates 23:15 as indicating the tribune should pretence to Paul; this is unclear. Nonetheless, their plan *implies* they would pretence to Paul, by not telling him what they sought to do. See below, note 19.

[17]Quotes from Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 138, 137, respectively (for equation of the two images, see his discussion on 137-38).

[18]Deceit itself is not "affectation." However, it implies affectation, for if the Jews were in Paul's presence, they would act as if they did not know of a plot--thereby affecting. But is affecting merely to shroud? We are not sure: Classical evidence indicates that *eironeia* requires "saying something different" (quote from Romano [referring to transparent pretension], *Irony in Juvenal*, 20. Evidence: Cornford,

25:9, on the part of governor Festus. Festus has learned that the Jews' "deceit" (25:3) cannot work without Paul's ignorance of it: "The first among the Jews revealed to him [Festus] with respect to Paul . . . requesting a favour[19] for themselves against him, in order that he [Festus] might send for him into Jerusalem,[20] [the Jews] making a deceit to kill him along the way" (Acts 25:2-3). It is implied that Festus will use a pretext[21] (thus using pretension, himself) to have Paul come to Jerusalem.[22] Indeed, Festus clearly uses pretension (25:9) with Paul.

> Festus, wishing to grant a favour to the Jews[23] . . . said to Paul, "Do you wish, having gone up to Jerusalem, there to be judged before me?"

Origin of Attic Comedy, 137 [citing in part Plato, *Laws*, 908 D, in n. 3], on which, see text above; Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," on Theophrastus [citing in part Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 348 nn. .34, 35]). The evidence, however, also suggests that if a person speaks on a topic, while simply not conveying their awareness, expertise or confidence about it (not necessarily appearing obtuse, or humble), the person is pretencing. Aristotle indicates this in *Magna Moralia* 1. 33. 1193a28-37: "The ironic man . . . pretends that he has less than his actual resources"; see also his comments in *Nicomachean Ethics* 4. 8. 1124b30-31, which sugggest this (from Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23-24), although here his contrast of "truthfulness" with *eironeia* suggests that *eironeia* must denote an actual "lie." In sum, we are unclear, without sufficient number of Classical examples, what all may classify as "pretension."

Notice the deceit is carried out by several people; an *eiron* (at least in theatre, according to Rosenmeyer) is an individual (see above, chapter three). But we judge this insignificant in and of itself to rule out *eironeia*. I do not recall a precedent for this.

[19]This specific word's translation from BAGD, 419 (BAGD may deliberately avoid some translations for the passages in question; we suggest them, citing BAGD simply for the English translation).

[20]". . . might send for him into Jerusalem [for himself; for Festus]."

[21]On pretexts as pretension, see for example, Theophrastus, *Characters* (trans. Edmonds), 41; also Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," (on Aristophanes' *Wasps*). "Pretension" and "pretext" can actually be one and the same.

[22]One might argue that Paul has little choice in the matter. But notice that in 25:10-11, Paul does have choice, for he successfully asks for recourse to the Roman emperor; this is evident from King Agrippa's statement that it is indeed Paul's option to exercise recourse to the Emperor (Acts 26:32).

[23]BAGD, 419. Also, the middle voice verb-phrase "to grant a favour [for himself]" (χάριν καταθέσθαι), suggests Festus' "selfish" objective (just as is possible for a Classical *eiron*).

Festus gives Paul the sense of a call to a fair trial. His language, however, indicates his awareness that by calling Paul to Jerusalem, the Jews can easily dispose of him.[24] Festus uses this again in 25:20, "feigning simplicity" to the Jewish king, Agrippa:[25] "I, being at a loss for myself with respect to the controversy at hand,[26] was saying if [Paul] might wish to journey into Jerusalem and there to be judged." This is simply not true; Festus and the implied reader recognize he is not "at a loss" but is ready to dupe Paul. In short, Festus acts like an *eiron* of whom Plato or Aristotle writes.[27] While the Jews come close

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[24]In fact, the RSV clarifies our reading of Festus' *eironeia*, for it repeats the word "favour" (χάριν) to refer to what the Jews "ask of" Festus (Acts 25:3), and to refer to what Festus actually obliges before asking Paul "to come to Jerusalem" (Acts 25:9).

The way we express ourselves ("X . . . but Y") finds precedent in the literature. Notice this sentence from Cornford: "[The *eiron* can show] ignorance and self-depreciation, but lets you see all the while that he could enlighten you if he chose, and so makes a mock of you." *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 138 (Cornford refers to transparent *eironeia*; our point is that we pattern our phrasing on this).

[25]I think one can say this, in that Festus would not want to say to the Jewish king that he was planning illegally to kill a prisoner.

[26]Or "these matters" (RSV).

[27]Plato: from Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 137 n. 3, paraphrasing Plato, *Laws*: "the [*eiron*] . . . masks his batteries of deceit behind a show of ordinary good nature." Aristotle: compares *eironeia* to truthfulness: "The ironic man . . . not only pretends that he has less than his actual resources but also denies what he actually knows, concealing instead the fact that he knows." [Still, the literature is not clear whether Aristotle means the eiron conveys his real meaning through a pretence (transparent); or whether he pretences in order to lie (opaque).] Aristotle also hints at objectives as drastic as murder behind *eironeia*, if we trust Pavlovskis' account (whether Pavlovskis refers to opaque pretension is unclear; regardless, we consider this objective similar to Festus'. Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 22 with 23 and 24).

Festus' *eironeia* also resembles an example of *eironeia* from Theophrastus: [The *eiron*] makes pretences [i.e., false excuses] as that he's but now come upon the scene, or joined the company late, or was ill abed" (Theophrastus, *Characters* [trans. Edmonds], 41). Festus' objective, however, is more heinous than for Theophrastus.

to *eironeia* by hiding their "plot" from Paul, Festus expresses it by "pretencing to the less."[28]

A similar but less certain example of *eironeia* is from Ananias (Acts 5:1-4). Pretencing "in deed," and for seemingly "selfish" reasons,[29] Ananias "pretends to have less than his actual resources,"[30] for the narrator says that Ananias appeared before Peter having "misappropriated from the profit" (5:2). We cannot be sure this is pretension--certainly it is not explicit--for Ananias does not claim to be poor. Still, it is very close, and Peter's accusation of "lying" (ἐψεύσω) finds explicit parallel in Aristotle's definition of *eironeia*--both the word and its unreliable nature.[31]

Alongside opaque pretension (self-denigration), unreliable characters evince an

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[28]We add two less certain examples among unreliable characters (These do not show clearly the aspects of *eironeia* given in chapter 2): 1) *(Acts 13:4-12)*: in the pericope of the Jewish magos (Bar Jesus). *Eironeia* by Bar Jesus is possible from the Greek text, if we consider possible translations from BAGD. Three key words are applied to him: διαστρέψαι ("to mislead" or "to turn away"); δόλου ("deceit," for example; encouragingly, we find Plato uses exactly this word to describe what an *eiron* shrouds; see *Laws*, 908D, quoted by Cornford: δοξάζων μὲν καθάπερ ἅτερος, εὐφυὴς δὲ ἐπικαλούμενος δόλου καὶ ἐνέδρας πλήρης); and ῥαδιουργίας (can also mean "deceit" or "fraud"). These words suggest Bar Jesus' pretension to the less. But we cannot confirm this, for we do not know his objective; and we do not know whether he *feels* he is "deceiving." (If he does feel he is deceiving, his behaviour to Sergius Paulus is *by definition* pretension to the less, e.g., "feigned simplicity" or "showing an ordinary good nature," or perhaps "pretended knowledge or aristocracy." 2) *(Acts 7:19)*: by Pharaoh, in Stephen's speech. "This one [Pharaoh], having taken advantage of [or, "tricked"] our line, did bad things to our fathers." Pharaoh deceives, which implies he pretences simplicity at some point. The above are major objections to considering these examples to be clear *eironeia*.

[29]The objective parallels almost exactly what Demosthenes noted regarding *eironeia*: holding on to one's money (above, chapter three).

[30]Quoting Aristotle, *Magna Moralia* 1. 33. 1193a28-37 (cited by Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 23).

[31]See Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 3. 7. 1234a3, speaking of *eirones* as "lovers of falsehood" (*philopseudeis*), as cited by Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25.

additional, albeit rare, expression of *eironeia*. This is called ἀλαζονεία; specifically, "pretended knowledge, or pretended aristocracy which is later revealed to be a sham."[32] Simon Magus[33] illustrates this (Acts 8:9-11),[34] for he "was practicing magic and confusing [or, "astounding"] the people of Samaria, [he] saying with respect to himself to be a great person" (Acts 8:9). Whether or not he is "pretencing" (i.e., purposefully) is unclear.[35] But he clearly augments his status. He is, moreover, like the *eiron*, exposed "to be a sham," for in 8:13, after he abandons magic ways for Christianity, his magician's ethics (it seems) earn him further, now explicit, condemnation (8:18-24). If

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[32]According to Aristotle (for other authors' views, see above, chapter three; Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 113 (citing Aristotle's *Poetics*; "being revealed to be a sham," need not, I think, be necessary). I am not certain that Swearingen is correct, for I cannot find other evidence that Aristotle said this. On the other hand, Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 417, shows this was known to Ariston-Philodemus, Aristophanes and Plato, and Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," shows the same for Ariston-Philodemus. Beyond Bergson's equation of the terms, however, some of the details given about *eironeia* as *alazoneia* are unclear.

Ray provides somewhat of a precedent for locating *alazoneia* in Acts. As we repeat later, he argues its expression from Herod (Acts 12:21); Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 72-73. The examples I cite, however, are to my knowledge my own, as is their title *eironeia*.

[33]He does not really fall into the category of critic; we learn, rather, that he is naive in requesting baptism for a fee (see Acts 8:9-19).

[34]The closest precedent is in Jónsson, *Humour*, 210 (but he does not capture quite the right image of *eironeia* (although recall, his earlier, general definition is reasonably accurate); "Luke describes him [Simon] with a touch of irony as a person who really succeeds in acquiring the recognition of his countrymen as 'something great.'") Simon does not precisely display "pretended aristocracy," but comes very close, and based on the few number of Classsical examples should be admissible here. (From the standards of those who have searched for *eironeia* before us, such as Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70 n. 72, and 72-73, we can afford in this particular case, not to be excessively precise.)

[35]Some literature on Classical *eironeia* sees its antonym as *alazoneia*. It defines both as "affectation." But in some cases it is not clear that the *alazon* "affects"; this character seems actually to believe he is in some way exceptional. See for example the play *Miles Gloriosus*, in which the "braggart soldier" (Pergopolynices)--after whom, notes Segal, the play is titled "Alazon"--seems to feel he is indeed an incredible person. Plautus, *Four Comedies* (trans. Segal), xxiii (citing Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 4. 7) and 6 with 4, 50, 55 for example (although, on 52, Pergopolynices may be deliberately elevating himself).

Luke does not call this *eironeia*, he might call it *alazoneia*, since the ancients often paired it with *eironeia*.[36] In any event, we have some evidence for *eironeia* among Jewish critics.

4. *"I have made myself a slave to all":[37] Eironeia and the Christian Leaders*

Another group of human characters who pretence are reliable. These are the main Christian leaders,[38] namely Peter and Paul--especially Paul. Some literature recognizes their *eironeia*, even cases we consider below, but does not dwell on it, and

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[36]On this, see chapter three, section D; and Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70 n. 72. *Alazoneia* is further suggested by the fact that in Acts 12:20-23 (the Herod-story, containing possible *eironeia* and *alazoneia*), we find the character expressing *alazoneia* (Herod) to be closest to Simon. On *eironeia/alazoneia* in Acts 12, see Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 72-73 (and essay, below).

Regardless, we might find Simon's action to resemble *alazoneia* in light of Pseudo-Justin's reference to Jews (although it is much later than Luke [the text in question, the "Epistle to Diognetus," is dated ca. 200-300 CE, and this with uncertainty; yet it may still be illustrative]): "Indeed, their [the Jews'] timidity concerning eating and the superstition concerning the Sabbath and the *alazoneia* of circumcision and the *eironeia* of fasting and of observing the new moon, and ridiculous things worthy of no word; I do not consider to have need of to learn about . . . ." (cited from Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 357 n. 6; this is my own translation from the Greek.) Indicated here, as Büchner sees, is inherent "braggadocio" in being circumcised. Could Luke see this *alazoneia* in Jewish critics? In Acts 15:1, 5 there is a protest by Jewish-Christians (15:1) and Pharisees (15:5) against Gentile restraint from circumcision; a protest which the apostles decide (thus Luke would seem to believe) is unfair. Perhaps Luke is implying the very act of circumcision to be *alazoneia*. And perhaps we may thus also call this *eironeia*. Against this, the apostles have no problem in Acts 15 with circumcision for Jewish adherents to the faith (it is implied), so Luke may not feel circumcision to be "bragging." Moreover, no character in Acts clearly "brags" about circumcision. At the least, we suggest the possibility for Luke interpreting circumcision as *alazoneia*, if not *eironeia*. (On the "Epistle to Diognetus," see Wolfram Kinzig, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. "Epistle to Diognetus," 547). Bar Jesus' "deceit" (Acts 13:10) we might interpret as *alazoneia*, although this is unclear.

[37]1 Corinthians 9:20 (RSV).

[38]We refer to the twelve apostles, Paul (see, e.g., Acts 14:14), and to other Christians (Acts 11:26, 26:48) (e.g., Timothy [Acts 16:1] who in this reference is denoted not an "apostle" but a "disciple"). On the term "Christian" as applied to such leaders, see for example Acts 26:28.

may not label it as such.[39] This section explores how and to what extent it arises.

We find two possible expressions of *eironeia*, the first of which is opaque. This, in turn, we see as "affectation . . . in word and deed."[40] In fact, it is difficult to say "affectation"; but we come close to one of Aristotle's definitions, with all of its aspects. Pavlovskis elaborates this definition:

> Aristotle, while he demands truthfulness (*aletheia*) from the great-souled or proud man . . . still permits him to use irony on occasion; when speaking to the multitude, for example: "he is truthful, except in what he says ironically; for he is ironic to the common people."[41]

Pavlovskis adds that "occasionally, such . . . may facilitate the teaching process: people

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[39]See above all Ray (who attributes ancient irony to reliable characters, using the seeming synonym "protagonists" ["narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 32]), "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 67-69, esp. 70-71, 72-73, his more general discussion on 45-52, and examples cited in chapter two. Ray uses variously the titles "dramatic irony" and "verbal irony"; neither technically apply as they are not given in Classical literature. (On this see Rosenmeyer, "Ironies in Serious Drama," 497; Richard J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 65 (as cited and challenged by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 286 n. 2); Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 133 (referring to Jesus, in Mark's gospel); Via implies that Jesus the *eiron* is a reliable character (as do, in some measure, most of the sources listed here). See also: Jónsson, *Humour*, 209 (his Classical definition seems fairly accurate; but when he explores Acts, he does not once clearly label an example of pretension; as Ray says, his use of the term is "loose"); Plümacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, 19 (hints at *eironeia* without using the term); Given, "Not Either/Or but Both/And" (above, chapter two); Brawley, *Centering on God* (with reference to Jesus, in Luke's gospel), 131; neither, however, capture quite the right sense of *eironeia*. For other, less direct precedents, see discussion above, chapter two. Even though some of the above examples do not use the term *eironeia* or give quite the right definition, they do draw our attention to important passages. Several precedents, moreover, refer to Paul, which have encouraged us to look for *eironeia* in his behaviour; see Barr, *New Testament Story*, 322.

[40]Quoted from Theophrastus, *Characters* (trans. Edmonds), 42. The first example we cite uses words; the second, actions.

[41]Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 4. 8. 1124b30-31, quoted by Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 24. Pavlovskis adds on 24 that the *eiron* "cannot use irony with the intent to deceive or to have a private laugh at the expense of his audience."

are more willing to accept lessons from a humanly fallible man than from an aloof teacher of majestic grandeur."[42] Paul affects not in precisely the same way, but he *does* do so in a related way.[43] As an evangelist, he endears himself to particular audiences by presenting a message which will not offend, or appear unusual and perhaps intimidating. In other words, he presents "mock modesty";[44] he makes his faith seem more relatable, and less uncertain, than it really is for his audience. Its objective resembles a blend of Aristotle's "pedagogic aim," and the "forensic" aim (as in New Comedy);[45] one neither as strong nor of quite the same kind as for a Classical *eiron*, but similar.[46] Paul's own

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[42]Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 25.

[43]We refrain from the title *eironeia* because the pretension is so subtle--more an editing than self-denigration--and this is not implied in Aristotle's example. This is in addition to the possibility for giving it another name of "parasite" behaviour (see below). But the fact Paul says he is (in 1 Cor 9:20) "making myself a slave to all" implies self-denigration; it suggests we can understand Paul's redaction in Acts as related to pretension.

[44]This does not accord precisely with Aristotle's undertanding; nor do we mean that Paul is necessarily insincere; rather, that his preaching has certain emphases according to the context. On Paul's sincerity, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* (see below, this chapter).

[45]"Forensic" ("attack," or "defence"), insofar as Paul struggles to obtain others' conviction to Christianity. On the idea of struggle by an *eiron* in Old Comedy, see Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 136-38 (citing Aristotle's *Ethics*, n. 137, n. 2). We would suggest the same in Greek New Comedy, for although we cannot find an example in which we are told explicitly that we see an *eiron*, we do have such an explicit example (we believe) from Latin Comedy, which is acknowledged to have drawn from, and been shaped by, New Comedy. The example is in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*. We contend with Erich Segal that the slave, Palaestrio, is an *eiron*; Segal notes that *Miles* was originally (in its Greek language form) called "Alazon," a title which on the basis of the (acknowledged) traditional pairing with--and struggling against--an *eiron*, suggests that the audience is to take Palaestrio (or whoever was the slave in the Greek version) as this *eiron*. Plautus, *Four Comedies* (trans. Segal), xxiii [citing in part Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, for the theoretical background]. (On Latin Comedy and its links to Greek New Comedy, see essay below. We acknowledge that in using Rosenmeyer's term "forensic," he does *not* claim (with a couple of exceptions) in reference to all kinds of milieux, that *eironeia* is opaque, but rather transparent. See his examples in "Ironies in Serious Drama," 510 with 511-12 (exceptions given on 512).

[46]A third example, although not specified in the literature as *eironeia*, is well-known. This is Paul's "Areopagus speech" (Acts 17:22-31). We discuss this below.

words (although not Luke's) elsewhere illustrate that *he* views his behaviour as somewhat *eironic*: "I have made myself a slave [ἐδούλωσα] to all, that I might win the more" (1 Cor 9:20).[47]

To illustrate, we take the *eironic* deed first: Paul's preaching (Acts 16:4-5) with Timothy circumcised (16:3).[48] This occurs during Paul's second missionary journey. The following passage indicates his preparation to pretence, especially in light of the fact that it is necessary due to a large number of potentially suspicious people.

> Paul wished this one [Timothy] to come out with him, and having received him, he was circumcising him, because of the Jews being in those places; for *everyone* [ἅπαντες] knew that his [Timothy's] father was a Greek. (Acts 16:3)

It is not so much circumcision itself as the preaching immediately after, that is "*eironic*."[49] Having circumcised Timothy, Paul's preaching gives Jews who dislike his

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[47]Quotation from RSV. Swearingen puts Pavlovskis' comments another way, by calling Aristotle's definition of *eironeia* "understatement." This clearly denotes the use of words, and Aristotle seems to refer to transparent pretension. Nonetheless, Paul's circumcising of Timothy is a sort of physical understatement (Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 109, 112 [here, in n. 37, citing in part Sedgewick, *Of Irony*, 11-13]).

[48]Here it is only in deed, which is perhaps atypical; but not if we read somewhat ahead in time to Pseudo-Justin (see above, chapter three), who refers to particular actions (certain associated with, or containing, words; others, e.g., circumcision, clearly not) as *in themselves eironeia* and *alazoneia*. We are encouraged that Paul's action could be taken as, or could contribute to, *eironeia*.

[49]This point is minor, but *eironeia* is a behaviour in the presence of others. Hence we should focus on preaching with Timothy circumcised. Granted, the reference by Pseudo-Justin (above, chapter three) to "the alazoneia of the circumcision" suggests that we may take the act in itself to be *eironeia*. (The question of whether we call the act *alazoneia* is a different one. Arguably, we could say Paul's preaching is *alazoneia*, if we interpret the circumcision, in light of Pseudo-Justin's reference, to be "boasting" in the eyes of the Jews. But this seems unlikely, as the Jews themselves probably did not regard circumcision as "boasting.")

work the sense that, like him, Timothy is at the least Jewish. This might lessen offence among Jews (or Jewish-Christians) suspicious (see for example Acts 15:1-2,5) of the potential for painting a Gentile tone over their Jewish convictions. In short, Paul's preaching *affects*--in a proactive way--the "modesty" of which we wrote above. Luke might thus regard it as *eironeia*.[50] We may make similar observations of Acts 21:24-26,[51] in which Paul's presence in the Temple having "shaved the head," and engaging in other ceremonies of temple "purification," is done that he might not face such harsh criticism from Jews suspicious of his Jewish grounding (Acts 21:20-23). Tannehill disagrees, but this remains worth suggesting, in part at least, if we read the text simply as it appears.[52]

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[50]This we can support in two ways. First, there is contextual evidence from Pseudo-Justin (see above, chapter three). Although later than Luke, Justin offers fascinating, if distant, support for our interpretation. He remarks that "the alazoneia of circumcision . . . I do not consider to have need to learn about." Although Paul describes circumcision with *alazoneia*, the fact this is *eironeia*'s companion-name suggests he may have regarded circumcision *in such terms*. Second, we find support (albeit very broadly) from Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 190 and Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews*, 151-52, both in n. 23): "This activity [circumcision] probably arises from the . . . concern not to offend Jews." (Tannehill discusses this concern also in Acts 15:1-35 [183-93, with various secondary citations].) Tannehill does not speak of preaching with a circumcised Timothy as *eironeia*, but implies that Paul (regardless of how considerate he is of Jews [190]), is feigning, insofar as he would not otherwise circumcise a Gentile. (Tannehill, however, would not say "feigning." He says: "In this case circumcision is not viewed as an improper imposition of Jewish regulations on a Gentile. Rather, Paul, and evidently the narrator, assumes that it is right to take Jewish feelings into account.")

[51]See 21:17-40 for the story leading up to these passages.

[52]*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 270-71: "Paul's action may seem superficial in itself, but in the context Paul is risking his life in order to make clear that he affirms the right of Jewish Christians to live according to the law." "Indeed," adds Tannehill, Paul's agreement to the proposal can be understood as a sign of his respect for his Jewish heritage and his desire to lay claim to it." In short, Paul's sincerity rules out any notion of *feigning* (see 270-71).

Tannehill may be correct. But we at once defend our qualified glimpse of *eironic* behaviour for three reasons: 1) Tannehill himself hints that the "Jerusalem church leaders" (268) do have an at least somewhat practical motive in having Paul go into the temple in Jewish guise ("Because the Jewish Christians are 'all zealots for the law,' this charge [that Paul does not approve of Jewish law] must be

Paul's "affectation . . . in word" follows in Acts 22:1-21 and in 26:12-18.[53] Let us focus on Acts 9:19 *vis-à-vis* Acts 22:1-21--renditions of the so-called "conversion story" of Paul. Among these pericopes we cannot compare the words of the character "Paul," since in Acts 9 only the narrator speaks. Nonetheless, in Acts 22, parallels between Paul's addressing of Jewish auditors, and his number of positive allusions to Judaism, suggests that *were* Paul narrating Acts 9, he would refer neither as much nor as favourably to Judaism.[54] The evidence suggests this. While in 9:1 we learn that the pre-conversion Paul is anti-Christian, in 22:3-5 we learn also that Paul was and is "an enthusiast of God." While in 9:10 a "disciple . . . Ananias" is used "in order that [Paul] might see" (9:12), in 22:12 Paul adds that Ananias is "a devout man with respect to the

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immediately laid to rest. The church leaders propose a way of doing so." *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 268); 2) Tannehill agrees broadly with what we say below, that Paul has a practical motive for redacting his *speech*; Acts 22 and 26 contain "defense speech[es] . . . meant to refute the charge that Paul is a renegade from Judaism" (and thereby, adds Tannehill, to help bring about their conversion? *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 277 ["defense speech"], 268, 275 [quoted sentence]). We thus ask: If Paul here *speaks* in particular ways to particular groups, could Luke not have him do the same in *deed*, for the motive of defense? How, at the least, can we rule out such a practical motive? 3) See Tannehill's implication that Paul is being practical in [what we see as] a similar situation, in Acts 16:1-3 (see above, note 50). See also 272, on which, most basically, Tannehill indicates that it is Luke who makes Paul say what he says; not necessarily Paul's own speech.

[53]For further examples, not directly related to these, see also Acts 28:17-22, in which Paul's address to Jews in Rome seems arguably redacted to offend neither Jews (he never even mentions "the Jews" by any name; see 28:17:21), nor Romans (see 28:18).

[54]It has been claimed before that in Acts 22 and Acts 26, *vis-à-vis* Acts 9, the Lukan Paul redacts his speech, and for various reasons; for this see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 275 (quote, and reference to Acts 26), 276-77, 278-82 (all on Acts 22); 317, 318 (on Acts 26). Tannehill is not clear for Acts 22 (275-81), nor for Acts 26 (315-18), whether he regards Paul as "feigning" or not--he refers to it as a "strategy" to "persuade" (quotes 276, 279); but on 279, he *does* indicate Paul to be feigning [in at least one place in Acts 22] and the same on p. 317 [on Acts 26; although here and esp. 318-19, he also indicates Paul to be sincere]. We wish simply to suggest new titles for the behaviour, whether "feigning" or redacting with sincerity. It could be *eironeia*, or at least "eironeia-like," as we claim here; or perhaps "parasite"-like behaviour (which we learn about in New Comedy, below). The specific examples which we give, we have found independent of secondary discussion.

Law."[55] By subtly redacting his story to make events sound more "modest,"[56] the Lukan Paul is somewhat[57] "pretencing to the less,"[58] even though, if we trust Tannehill, Paul

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[55]One could find other differences among the stories, which suggest that in Acts 22, Paul does *not* redact to suit Jewish auditors. Moreover, one may interpret redaction not as "modesty" but as Paul's "playing up" Jewish elements in his past.

[56]That is, agreeable.

[57]But this is not *eironeia* proper. The best evidence for this is Luke himself. In the gospel (24:28) is found the *only* reference to pretension (προσποίησις) in the entire New Testament. Here it occurs in Jesus' "feigned ignorance" to the two men *en route* to Emmaus. Notice that the ignorance is quite strong; Jesus really appears to have no concept of whom the men speak. If this is what Luke means by "pretension," then Paul's *redaction* is either quite a watered-down form, or most likely not pretension at all. Yet it is still a "deliberate" alteration of speech with a somewhat "forensic" objective (here, trying to achieve conversions).

[58]Near-*eironeia* appears further in Acts 26:12-18 (a speech to Agrippa), if we compare with Acts 22:6-16. The one example we have found suffices to show this. While in 22:7 Paul says, "I heard a noise [or "voice"] saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why do you pursue me?" in 26:14 Paul says, "I heard a voice saying to me by means of the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why do you pursue me?'" Notice the additional reference to "Hebrew dialect." It is probably no coincidence that Paul speaks in front of Agrippa, a Jewish king; even though Agrippa speaks Greek (e.g., Acts 26:28), we suggest, the king being a Jewish official, that the implied reader is to assume that he probably knows Hebrew. For secondary discussion, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 316-18. And for general discussion of Paul's behaviour without the labe *eironeia*, see Barr, *New Testament Story*, 322.

The implied reader finds similar near-*eironeia* in Paul's so-called "Areopagus speech" (Acts 17:22-31), and, more briefly, in a speech to pagans at Lystra (Acts 14:15-17). If we compare these with Paul's approach to Jews in Acts 17:1-2 ("according to the custom for Paul, he went in to them and dialogued [for himself] with them for three sabbaths from the scriptures [ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν]"), then Paul's implied avoidance of scripture with pagans suggests he is de-emphasizing Christianity's Jewish character. Whether one or the other is "more accurate" for Paul I do not know; see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 271]. Again, in all of the above cases, we give a new title for recognized behaviour.

In the former, a speech to Athenian philosophers (17:18), Paul leaves little room for describing the Jewish aspects of Christianity. He may accept such Jewish aspects, since he elsewhere uses Jewish prophetic quotations (whether in enough contexts to indicate he is trustworthy I am not sure; see for example, Acts 28:25-27) Yet with the Athenians, Paul focuses simply on an omniscient God (17:24-28), and on God's intangibility--at least his atypical, non-idol appearance (17:24-25, 27, 29). In other words, while Paul preaches honestly, he refrains from communicating that with a pagan audience; *he pretences modesty with regard to his faith.*The objective we might interpret as educational; Paul's restraint from Jewish language and images--his understatement when speaking of God--can only make his words sound more appealing to an audience which, it has been argued, could regard Jewish piety with suspicion and dismissivenes (on which, see Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 518).

The implied reader also observes near-*eironeia* in Peter's story of Cornelius, if we compare what the narrator tells us (Acts 10:1-33) with Peter's own account to Jewish Christians (Acts 11:2-18). The evidence is slight, but illustrative. In 10:17 we see Peter to be "perplexed . . . with respect to what might ever have been" (re: the "vision" in 10:11-16). But in 11:17, while speaking of the vision, Peter eliminates this reference, adding a note of certainty.

does not (or, not only) feign everything he says.[59]

A second, clearer, expression of Pauline *eironeia* entails *transparent pretension*;[60] as Mark Given notes, *double-entendre*--in this case, to, and for, the Athenians (Acts 17:22-31). Given illustrates this well, although he misses the connection to *eironeia*.[61] We propose it for Acts 17, in part from precedents.[62] We cite

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[59]One further example of opaque pretension we cite from Ray. He perceptively suggests that in Acts 12:20-23, *eironeia* is expressed by the Tyrians and Sidonians when they flatter King Herod with a divine address (12:22), such flattery being--if "pretended"--one *eironic* behaviour. Ray supports this by noting that to complement this *eironeia*, Herod expresses *alazoneia* (" . . . having clothed himself with respect to kingly clothing . . . [Herod] was publicly speaking to them [12:21]"). Ray's interpretation is plausible; we do not know, however, whether the people are *pretencing* to Herod. This is essential to *eironeia*, but is not clear here. See Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 72-73.

[60]One example which has encouraged us to look for it, is from Tannehill, who notes Paul's "irony" in 24:14, when speaking to Felix: "He mockingly makes the confession that Tertullus . . . expected ('But this I confess to you . . . ') and then picks up Tertullus' reference to the Christian way as a 'sect (αἵρεσις)' (vv. 5, 14). Paul's confession is ironic, for there should be nothing wrong . . . with what Paul is confessing. . . . The ironic tone reappears in vv. 20-21, where Paul defines his 'crime' (ἀδίκημα, RSV: 'wrongdoing') as his declaration before the Sanhedrin that he is on trial concerning the resurrection of the dead." *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 298. Whether Tannehill actually understands Classical *eironeia* is unclear, but he does point it out.

[61]Actually, Given comes very close, by seeing Paul's behaviour in light of Socrates (whom we saw in chapter three to be regarded as an *eiron*): see Given, "Not Either/Or but Both/And," 365. There was, we saw earlier in our study, reference by Haenchen to *eironeia*, of which Given may be aware.

[62]See preceding note. Given offers the closest precedent. See also Jónsson, *Humour*, 215-16 (here he refers to Socrates as being like Paul, and indicates [in light of his definition of *eironeia* on pp. 21-26], that Paul expresses *eironeia*. His words, however, once again "loose": "Without being conscious of their own position they have got into an ironical situation [216]"). For other precedents, see the implication of *eironeia* by Plümacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, 19 (his reference to Socrates). Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 153, hints at such *eironeia*, but somewhat distancing himself from the concept, speaks of "dramatic irony" in the fact that "the [Athenians'] "Anastasis" blunder . . . allows the Lukan audience to feel superior in knowledge even to Greek philosophers." Pervo also hints at this in *Profit with Delight*, 61 (on Acts 19:32) and 61 n. 11.

If we assumed that Paul's *double-entendres* are opaque, then we have been encouraged by Palaestrio's similar behaviour in *Miles Gloriosus*, in light of Segal's observation that Palaestrio is an *eiron*. However: 1) Palaestrio's *double-entendres* are opaque. 2) We cannot conclude that Palaestrio is an *eiron*, nor that he uses *double-entendre*. First, it is never stated. Second, plays such as *Miles* are written in Latin, while Luke writes in Greek. 3) Although we have suggested from the literature that the *eiron* and *alazon* are in Greek New Comedy (above, chapter three, section D), Legrand cautions (see below, this chapter) that the *eiron* and *alazon* together are uncommon in Greek New Comedy [the kind

from Given's study two examples of such possible *eironeia* (an *eironeia* here "perceived by the *eiron* and audience").[63] Given proposes that the Athenians and the implied reader see the respective meanings "superstitious" (δεισιδαίμων [17:22]) and "culpable moral failure" (ἀγνοοῦντες [17:23]), at one and the same time as the ostensible implications of "religious" and "non-culpable epistemic failure."[64] This is the sort of *eironeia* we saw (generally) among Quintilian, Tryphon and Cicero ("when your words differ from your thoughts . . . when the whole tenor of your speech shows you to be solemnly jesting").[65] *Eironeia* of this nature may appear in at least one Latin comedy, *Miles Gloriosus*.[66] While not in the Greek in which Luke wrote, it is tempting to suggest

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performed during Luke's life]; moreover, nowhere in Greek New Comedy have we found transparent pretension. (Paul's, again, may be opaque.) 4) In Acts we do not find Paul otherwise behaving for a long period like an *eiron*.

[63]Perhaps the main difference from Classical *eironeia* is that the Athenians are not Paul's "enemy" to the degree for a Classical *eiron*; Paul is, after all, preaching among them (see Acts 17:16-17, 22-23). If Paul is "mocking them," he does not really do so (in Rosenmeyer's words) to "hurt."

A further example of such "sarcasm," here specifically as a *double-entendre*, may be Paul's address to the Roman Governor Felix (Acts 24:10). This may appear unlikely in light of the widely acknowledged effort by Acts to "endear to Rome," but Paul's remark seems so unusual in light of other statements, it could be *eironic*. He says to Felix: "I speak in defense for myself, understanding you being judge [κριτήν] out of many years for this nation." What is awkward for the reader is "judge"; it *may* be out of character for Paul to refer to a Roman as "judge" of Jews; while Paul never calls God the sole judge (see Acts 23:3), Peter is clear the judge is not a Roman--but Jesus: "this is he who was appointed by God judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42).

[64]Given, "Not Either/Or but Both/And," 364-66, who when speaking of *double-entendre*, indicates that Paul sought to convey *both* implications of a word (see abstract at beginning of his article). Given discusses this with further examples. We add an example from elsewhere in Acts. In 1:17, Peter refers to the "service [τῆς διακονίας] of Judas," in having helped to have Jesus executed (1:16). By virtue of according with prophecy (1:16), Judas does offer "service." Yet this may also be a *double entendre*, by which Peter abuses Judas. One reason this is not *eironeia* proper, however, is that Judas (the "victim") is not present.

[65]Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 167 (citing Cicero, *De Oratore* II, lxvii, 269).

[66](In this we have also been encouraged by Kenneth McLeish's pointing out of *double-entendre* in Old Comedy, on which, see below, this chapter.) Palaestrio the slave, in the presence of Pergopolynices the

the *eironeia* was also understood in the Greek comedy of his day.

We have suggested that behaviour from unreliable characters (e.g., Ἰουδαῖοι) and reliable characters (Paul) resembles *eironeia*. Their pretension suggests it. We would at least argue for some descendancy from Classical *eironeia*, or membership in a *family including eironeia*. There are, however, two reasons for arguing against *eironeia* here, which we take from Bergson.[67] First, although we do not expect exact parallels, most of our examples do not parallel closely enough the Classical examples we know. The case in point is Paul's tendency to redact his speech to appease potential converts. He does use understatement (typical of *eironeia*), but the subtlety and editing (not so much self-denigration), and his failure to hold to a "unitary [consistent] position" are not in Classical literature.[68]

Support for our caution lies in Acts' vocabulary. Not only is εἰρωνεία, strictly speaking, nowhere in the New Testament, but also a number of equivalent Greek words

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soldier, says to a woman standing nearby: "Look, I've told you before--must I tell you once more? This great stud always must be rewarded." As Segal translates it, the reference could be taken as a sort of compliment to Pergopolynices. But "stud" is translated from the Latin *uerres*, for which the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* offers the possible translation "uncastrated male pig." Perhaps this is equates with "stud," but it might have an unsavoury sense. This would appear possible in light of Palaestrio's caustic asides about Pergopolynices (see Plautus, *Four Comedies* [trans. Segal], 51, 52; quote "stud" from 53); on the character of Palaestrio and his attitude to Pergopolynices, see below, this chapter). The Latin translation ("uerri") is in *Plautus*, With an English Translation by Paul Nixon, in Five Volumes, III, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1930), 236. Whether Palaestrio wants Pergopolynices to notice the latter meaning is unclear. Whether or not *double-entendre* existed in New Comedy, McLeish shows its role in Old Comedy; see his discussion of "bawdy" in *Theatre of Aristophanes*.

[67]Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416 (originally drawn to our attention by Rosenmeyer [see above, chapter three]). Speaking of Classical literature, Bergson indicates that we should not conclude *eironeia* where we do not see the word. This basic caution informs our own caution, below.

[68]See the examples in chapter three.

(e.g., σαρκάσμος) fail to appear in Acts.[69] We are fortunate to find the New Testament's only use of *eironeia*'s seeming companion word, προσποίησις, in Luke 24:18.[70] But it appears only once,[71] and if for Luke it denotes *eironeia*, why does he never use the term elsewhere? The lack of clear parallels and key words for behaviours in Acts leaves us to suggest that Luke probably does not see them as *eironeia*.[72]

A second reason for our caution is that similar behaviours in some Classical literature have other names. We cannot delineate all of these, but can illustrate with certain examples. Let us momentarily jump ahead to Greek New Comedy, which we will compare with Acts. Do we find *eironeia* there? We are discouraged, for while P. Arnott and M. Walton tell us that Menander knew of it,[73] and Graham Anderson suggests its place in the "comic novel,"[74] we learn from Ph. E. Legrand that *eironeia* is

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[69]Above, chapter three (these words we take from Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 27, who draws them from Quintilian).

[70]"Jesus, acting as if he was going further . . . ." This translation is from *GECNT*, s. v. "προσποιέω."

[71]Moreover, translation of this term as "acting as if," while in the *GECNT* (which always quotes the New International Version of the Bible), is not in the RSV, which translates it as "appeared to be."

[72]In saying this we argue against the notion that one need not see a term to see its meaning, as intended by the author.

[73]They add, in fact, that "one of Theophrastus' own pupils was Menander." See Walton and Arnott, *The Making of Menander's Comedy*, 98, 97 (quotation).

[74]Which, cautions Graham Anderson, *draws* on but does not mirror, New Comic theatre (in fact, each of these writers uses New Comedy as part of his mixture of genres"). Anderson does not give us an impression of what *eironeia* in comedy is, aside from "pretences" which express "playful incongruity" (even the latter point is not clear). *Eros Sophistes: Ancient Novelists at Play*, American Philological Association American Classical Studies Series no. 9 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 87 (irony), 88 (on New Comedy and "genres," and "playful incongruity"), 90 ("pretences"), 87-90 (in general).

uncommon in New Comedy,[75] and this caution is borne out by the number of Menander[76] commentaries which each speak hardly, if ever, of irony (we do not even see the term *eironeia*).[77] Certain commentaries, moreover, use different Classical titles to denote behaviour like *eironeia*. For example, when we see flattery characterizing Theophrastus' *eironeia*, [78] we must remember that Theophrastus also writes strictly of "flattery" (ἡ κολακείας), and that Menander even wrote a play called Κόλαξ ("The Flatterer"). [79] As well, we find in Menander's *Dyskolus* ("Old Cantankerous")[80] behaviour which nearly mirrors Paul's, but we do not find Menander using *eironeia* to describe it; as Handley points out, we see it assigned to a distinct character, a "cook"

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[75]Legrand, *The New Greek Comedy: Κωμῳδία Νέα*, 166. (Legrand speaks primarily of the *eiron*, but seems to treat *eironeia* in the same way.) Granted, Legrand writes before the more recent discovery of a whole play by Menander, entitled *Dyskolus* (on which, and on other texts of Menander found after 1917, see Miller's discussion in Menander, *Plays and Fragments*, 15). But that Legrand is right, see our observations in the coming sentences. Walton and Arnott indicate that Menander used *eironeia*, but offer no specific examples (see above, note 73).

[76]The reader may wonder why we are referring to one playwright, Menander. As we will repeat later, Menander is not simply understood as a New Comic playwright but as a key playwright for New Comedy as a whole. On this (and for a general introduction), see for example William Geoffery Arnott, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Menander," 956-57 ("Menander . . . [was] the leading writer of New Comedy . . . although in his own time less successful . . . than Philemon").

[77]See for example the indices in: Zagagi, *Comedy of Menander*; A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); T. B. L. Webster, *An Introduction to Menander* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1974); and Handley, ed., *Dyskolus of Menander*. Granted (at least) one of these, by Handley, appears to overlook ancient irony altogether. (See the reference to "dramatic irony," a modern term, in Handley, ed., *Dyskolus of Menander*, 311.) Regardless, the term does not appear often. This is supported further by the fact that in *Dyskolus*, Chaireas (whom Sutton calls "ironic," below, this chapter), never appears after the first act, which Handley points out (*Dyskolus of Menander*, 141); this suggests that if *eironeia* is used, it cannot have a major role.

[78]Our drawing together of ancient flattery (κολακείας) and *eironeia* we found initially in Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 358 (for example).

[79]On which, see the index to William Geoffery Arnott, *Menander*, vol. II, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[80]As translated by Miller, in Menander, *Dyskolus* (trans. Miller), 19.

named Sikon.[81] Speaking to Getas, Sikon says,

> Perhaps your request was made without delicacy. Some people have no idea how to do a thing like this. *I've* found the art of it. I cater for thousands in Athens, *and* I bother their neighbours and borrow pots from them all. You need a soft approach when you want a favour. An older chap answers the door: I promptly address him as "Father" or "Dad". If it's an old woman, then "Ma". If it's a middle-aged woman, I call her "Madam". If a youngish servant, then "My dear chap".[82]

This quote undoubtedly calls to mind Paul's redaction. Such redaction Luke could have titled *eironeia* (others have seen in the New Testament *eironeia*, acknowledging it does not contain the word).[83] But Luke probably did not; we infer this from E. W. Handley, who shows that one of *Dyskolus*' characters, expressing behaviour nearly akin to Sikon's, is called a παράσιτος ("parasite")--not an *eiron*.[84] Perhaps his behaviour

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[81]On these lines as typical of the character of a cook, and for commentary making no reference to *eironeia*, see Handley, *Dyskolus of Menander*, 219 (more general discussion on 219-21); on the popularity of a cook in New Comedy, see *Dyskolus of Menander*, 5-6, and 199 for reference to the cook and his behaviour's importance to the plot. All of these points have encouraged us in our analysis of Paul.

[82]From *Dyskolus*, Act Three, 488-496 (trans. Miller).

[83]De Robert, "L'Ironie," 3. In saying this, we repeat an argument used by scholars who make a claim for Luke's understanding and use of modern images of irony. See above, chapter three. Encouragement of *eironeia* generally in New Comedy, and prompting us to see Paul as expressing it, comes from Sutton's comment about Chaireas, (the "parasite," on whom, see below, this chapter), who as Handley noted behaves much like Sikon (and Paul). Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 45 (who calls Chaireas "lightly ironic"). Chaireas says: "A friend asks me for help--he's in love with a call-girl. I go straight into action, grab her, carry her off, get drunk, burn the door down, am deaf to all reason. Before even asking her name, the thing to do is to *get* her." He continues in the next paragraph: "But if a friend is talking about marriage and a 'nice' girl, then I take a different line. I check on family, finance and character." From *Dyskolus*, Act One, 58-60 (trans. Miller).

[84]Handley nowhere refers to *eironeia* (even though he implies Menander understands the word), but rather just to "parasite" behaviour. Perhaps Handley is ignorant of *eironeia*; but he seems aware of other Classical character behaviours, such as *kolakeias*, which he here links with the parasite ("a 'sponger' or

would still have been viewed as *eironeia*[85]--but we cannot conclude this in the midst of the term's absence and another term's presence.[86] We suggest *eironeia*'s underlying presence in Acts--but cannot conclude that Luke envisaged the term.[87]

To sum up, if we have not seen *eironeia* in full form, we have seen behaviour fairly close to it; behaviour along the same line or scale.[88] It appears as pretension to the

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'hanger-on' of the kind known variously in Antiquity as 'parasite' and *kolax* or 'flatterer'"), but not with *eironeia.* Handley, *Dyskolus of Menander*, 140 (on Chaireas as parasite, as titled by Menander), 141 (link with Sikon), 140 (on *kolakeias* and link with parasite behaviour).

Supportive, in our judgement, of *eironeia* by Chaireas is the fact Handley somewhat links *kolakeias* and parasite-behaviour--for this implies we may link *kolakeias* also with *eironeia* for an ancient mind--as first suggested to us by Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 339, 358, but criticized as ahistorical by Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 409, 416. But in support of Handley, it is difficult to call Paul's behaviour *eironeia,* in that all rhetoric seems to involve endearing oneself to the audience in question (indicated in Barr, *New Testament Story*, 14). Earlier, we saw Aristotle define *eironeia* under the heading of rhetoric, although not in the sense of tailoring one's speech. One observation from Handley which we are not clear on *vis-à-vis eironeia*, is that *alazoneia* [*eironeia*'s antonym; see above, chapter three], helps to describe Sikon and Chaireas. See Handley, *Dyskolus of Menander*, 141 (word not used explicitly here), 199 (uses explicit word, quoting Athenaeus).

[85]As originally suggested by Büchner, "Über den Begriff der Eironeia," 339, 358 (see above note).

[86]As encouraged by Bergson, "Eiron und Eironeia," 416.

[87]Perhaps another difference lies in the role of the divine in prompting *eironeia*. In no Classical examples have we seen a divine being prompt it, and neither in examples from Peter or Paul. However, the apostles are often said to be "full of Spirit"; indeed, Talbert says that "there is nothing that is not related to the Spirit" (*Reading Acts: Literary and Theological Commentary*, 4). We could guess, then, that the Spirit prompts in some way *eironeia,* or at least approves of it.

[88]Another possible (but doubtful) example of Christians (term in Acts 26:28) pretencing to the less is their shrouding to Jewish critics that "through many tribulations is it necessary for us to go into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Based on Via's analysis of Jesus as *eiron* (Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 48, 133) and suggested by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 101, 155; vol. 1, 12, 283, we might suggest the same here.

We suggest as follows. Adherents of Jesus are "depreciated" by their sufferings (corporal punishment, Stephen's execution, internment), although they do not state that this is beneficial for their evangelization (as in 14:22, 5:41 [Peter, John et al.], 21:13 [Paul]; 22:20 [Paul, regarding Stephen being a "witness" (μάρτυς) who is possibly interpreted to emulate Jesus; on this meaning, see H. Strathmann, "martus," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Abridged in One Volume*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 567]. Most important, even though they state this regarding Jesus (suggested, e.g., in Acts 2:23-24,36), and

less, both opaque and transparent.[89]

5. *Eironeia and God*

In the literature, the recently-highlighted *eironic* character has been God--for scholars who consider God a character.[90] "God works by irony," says Tannehill. God "integrates . . . rejection into God's purpose, overruling human . . . expectations," in the process creating "situations of irony."[91] The character God may work in this way, but the "irony" of which Tannehill writes is not quite Classical *eironeia*.[92] When we

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regarding themselves (14:22 et al.), *they never tell the people who depreciate them.* (Conzelmann notes that the theme is missing from the Areopagus speech [17:2-31]; see *Acts of the Apostles*, 147). Thus the apostles may be "pretencing to the less."

This thesis is unconvincing. First, the apostles are never said to "hide" talk of their suffering. Second, when they "preach" or "say many things" to Jews who are or become hostile, perhaps we should assume they include this. Third, they are very open about everything else, speaking with "all confidence and courage" (aside from Paul's *eiron*ic speech we saw earlier). Fourth, we would expect the apostles to depreciate *themselves*, not only to accept suffering when it occurred. Fifth, they undergo extreme depreciation (e.g., torture), which is atypical of Classical *eironeia*. And sixth, the apostles *may* convey to the Sanhedrin (5:27) their awareness (see 5:41).

[89]The latter examples we may also interpret as *simulatio* (neutral pretension, not "feigning ignorance"), from Quintilian's definition. See above, chapter three.

[90]Some scholars have even seen God as expressing Classical *eironeia*. See for example Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 49.

[91]Tannehill's thesis is taken up by Kurz, Ray (although Ray acknowledges the thesis to reflect a current understanding of irony [Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-50 with 83]), Morris (who acknowledges the same), and Brawley. See above, chapter two.

Tannehill does at times suggest the *eironeia* of which we write, i.e., pretension to the less, in his statement "God works by irony." See *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 284: ". . . the continuing tension between divine action and human expectation. These experiences are sufficiently important in the plot to describe the God of Luke-Acts as the God who works by irony." Tannehill is somewhat vague here; he suggests irony is a "tension," but also that it is *pretension* by God. See *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283-84; also suggested (pretension by Paul), vol. 2, 298.

[92]In Classical eyes, do gods work by irony? The answer (while not conclusive), appears to be no. There is no such thing as a "situation of irony" in Classical literature (see above, chapter three; irony does not describe situations, but behaviour). This negative conclusion is supported from Stoic texts. Stoics

consider *eironeia*, we find that God works by four behaviours close to it--but not, as Ray writes, by *eironeia* in the Classical sense.[93]

a) *Ignorance.* We challenge Tannehill and Kurz's assertion that irony is the *incongruity* of "people [Jewish critics] in the narrative blindly fulfilling God's plan by rejecting the messengers God sends them."[94] In the sense Tannehill intends--incongruity--God may work by irony but not by Classical irony. We are not the first to say this; Ray separates the current understanding of irony in this case from *eironeia*.[95] There are two reasons for this. First, Classical *eironeia* is not said to come from divine or spiritual beings, whereas

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speak of "fate" (ἡ εἱμαρμένη)--which Chrysippus and Zeno link with God-- in a similar (although not identical) way as in Acts (e.g., for Seneca, "The fates lead along the willing subject, but drag along the unwilling." And suggestively, εἱμαρμένη has been linked etymologically with εἴρομαι [to speak]--which in turn we saw linked with εἰρωνεία). [At least some] Stoics, moreover, speak of "necessity" or "divine necessity" (ἡ ἀνάγκη), and earlier, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, fate causes Oedipus' actions to lead to a discordant outcome. But in this secondary discussion of these concepts, we see no reference to "irony" or *eironeia*.

For most of the above references to Stoicism and to fate, see *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, II, s. v. "Fate, Greek Conception of," by John. M. Dillon, 777-78. For the etymological link among εἱμαρμένη and εἴρομαι, and further on the importance for fate among Stoics, see Noel Robertson and B. C. Dietrich, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "fate," 589. Underlying our caution not to equate what Tannehill calls "situations of irony" with Stoic views is absence of specific reference to the concept, in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, VI, 210-14, by Thomas Schmeller, and (from our perusal of the index to) Catherine Atherton, *The Stoics on Ambiguity*, Cambridge Classical Studies Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and indices to other monographs on Stoicism. On the Stoics' dislike of *eironeia*, see Pavlovskis, "Aristotle, Horace, Ironic Man," 26. We are further encouraged by N. J. Lowe's essay, which hints that in tragic theatre, the audience is not to think of "divine control" of human characters as explictly, *eironeia*. Lowe, "Tragic and Homeric Ironies," 522.

[93]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-47 (on Classical irony), with 27-29, 82-83 (on Tannehill). We have been encouraged to see Classical *eironeia* on the part of the divine (of gods, in tragedy). N. J. Lowe's essay speaks of "tragic irony" in New Comedy, indicating that a god's awareness is greater than that of particular characters. He separates this from *eironeia*, but we are still encouraged to ask: If a god keeps to him/herself certain awareness, are they using affectation? Lowe, "Tragic and Homeric Ironies," 523. Swearingen was first to show us that "irony" as Tannehill understands it should not in a Classical context have that title. See Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2, 113, 412.

[94]Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 140.

[95]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-50 with 83.

other, similar behaviours do.[96] Second, Classical *eironeia* does not denote *incongruity,* but pretension.[97] Arguing that (ancient) irony is a "contrast between [somebody's] expectation and reality" is one of the single biggest pitfalls in the literature. Indeed, pretension implies incongruity; "but it is not," to use Swearingen's words, "linked with irony."[98]

Tannehill and Kurz are correct to argue that Luke's God "uses . . . ignorance,"[99] and it is fascinating to learn that such behaviour finds at least a rough precedent in Classical literature (e.g., in Menander's New Comedy), under the title ἡ ἀγνοία..[100] Let us consider this first behaviour of God. In Acts, God appears to permit and to use characters' "ignorance" for characters variously termed "the Jews" (e.g., Acts 28:17, 26-

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[96]These we discuss below, section A. 5. This argument is based on erring on the side of caution. Perhaps by the first century CE a god or God was recognized to express irony. But the striking absence of such figures from ancient commentary on the term suggests that things divine and *eironeia* simply did not juxtapose.

[97]Of course, incongruity is implied in Classical definitions (e.g., if one is pretencing, they are "shielding one behaviour by means of a different one"--thus creating an incongruity. But "incongruity" (or "contrast between expectations and reality") is a step removed. It is a separate noun which is not primarily if ever used explicity with *eironeia.*

[98]For this observation, regarding "reversal," see Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 412.

[99]Quote from Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 140. For discussion, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283, for example: "Humans act blindly (note the emphasis on 'ignorance' in Acts 3:17; 13:27), and the outcome is the opposite of what they intend. For behind their purpose is a stronger, hidden purpose which uses human blindness to thwart human plans." See also Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 140-43 (esp. 140), with 149 and 153-55 (although Kurz does not apply it, that I can see, to all of the examples of Jewish persecution of Christians in Acts of which I am thinking). Kurz acknowledges his indebtedness to Tannehill on this point in general (137 n. 7, citing *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 194 *et passim*).

[100]To be fair, this is *one* label; one *Greek* label. We acknowledge other possible labels, from different genres and from both Greek and Hebrew milieux. On *agnoia*, see Netta Zagagi, *The Comedy of Menander*, 142-43, esp. 149-53, 156. I have learned of this idea as in tragedy, but am struck that it is in New Comedy also.

27), and "Israelites" (e.g., Acts 2:22; 3:12,17), in which it seems fair to include the greater number of Pharisees (e.g., Acts 23:17), Sadducees (e.g., Acts 5:17-18) and members of the Sanhedrin (e.g., Acts 6:12). We perceive this in Acts 28:27, when Paul refers to the Jews' "hearts . . . made impervious" (ἐπαχύνθη), to "eyes . . . closed," and to people "hard of hearing." For Kurz, Paul's charge of "hardened hearts" (ignorance) can explain the Jews' malevolent behaviour throughout Acts.[101] Granted, Peter uses "ignorance" only once (Acts 3:17) and Paul once (Acts 17:29). Nonetheless, it is striking that they use exactly the same word (ἄγνοια) as in a Classical play (Menander's *Perikeiromene),* to describe a fairly similar action.[102]

b) *Reversal.* A second divine behaviour--rightly paralleled with *eironeia,* yet as Swearingen notes, deserving a distinct Classical name[103]--is "reversal" (ἡ περιπέτεια). Tannehill, Kurz and others correctly note this in Acts, and rightly link it to Aristotle's *Poetics*, part of which we quote here:

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[101]Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 140-43 (esp. 140), with 149 and 153-55.

[102]In the Classical literature, a god is *responsible* for the ignorance (on this in *Perikeiromene*, see our reflections in section II, below). In Acts (according to Tannehill and Kurz), the Jews are responsible; God does not choose to make them ignorant. Yet in a sense, by permitting the ignorance, God is ultimately responsible (as Tannehill's words in n.100, above, also suggest). Moreover, Tannehill and Kurz do not appreciate well enough that the Greek text in Acts 28:26-27 employs the passive voice to describe the Jews' ignorance, implying that the ignorance has come from God. In either case, however, God has some degree of control over ignorance, and it is this which finds parallel in Classical literature.

Some have interpreted God's using ignorance as part of his ironic action. *Agnoia* is like Classical *eironeia*, in that it is proactive, and it "leaves the Jews without cognizance of God's intentions"; specifically, to have the mission accepted and succeed. But creating ignorance is not *eironeia*. First, *eironeia* is pretension which leaves it up to one's antagonist not to understand; ignorance forces one not "to understand." Second, *eironeia* seems a human act; creating ignorance we see in the Classical literature to characterize the divine.

[103]Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2, 113, esp. 412.

> Reversal is a change to the opposite direction of events . . .and one in accord, as we insist, with probability or necessity . . . . in the *Lynceus* [for example], the one figure is led off to die, while Danaus follows with the intention of killing him, yet the upshot of events is Danaus' death and the other's survival.[104]

In reversal Tannehill and Kurz have both found a striking and accurate way of envisioning God's behaviour at points throughout Acts.[105] It is reversal which best explains the reality that God's "hidden purpose . . . uses human blindness to thwart human plans."[106] Reversal is noticed especially with regard to Acts 8 and 11.[107] As Tannehill writes, regarding Acts 8:1 with 8:4-5 and 11:19-20:

> The efforts of the Sanhedrin to halt the preaching of the word, carried to an extreme in the stoning of Stephen [8:1], result in the spread of the word in Judaea, Samaria, and Antioch.[108]

Thus we see two significant behaviours from God, describable in ancient parlance and used in tandem: *agnoia* and *peripeteia*.

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[104]Aristotle, *Poetics*, Loeb Classical Library, Aristotle XXIII, ed. and trans. Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), bk 11, 1452a.20-25 (hereafter cited as Aristotle, *Poetics*).

[105]See following note, below. But Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 144 n. 27, notes that Aristotle is not the only source of the concept, in all liklihood, for Luke. And as Swearingen reminds us, there is no such thing as "ironic reversal" (unless, we say, reversal using pretension). See "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 412.

[106]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283 (citing in part, in n. 12, Charles Cosgrove, "The Divine Δεῖ in Luke-Acts," *Novum Testamentum* 26 (1984): 182, 190), for example; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 144 (citing Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 30 and vol. 2, 101 [see notes 27, 26 respectively]).

[107]Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 144 (citing Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 30).

[108]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 101. Kurz (see preceding note, above), drew our attention to the concept of "reversal" here.

Are these behaviours like *eironeia* in any way?[109] *Agnoia* parallels it; *agnoia* is arguably pretension: it enables one character to leave another, with whom they are at odds, without cognizance of a true feeling. And it inherently "pretences to the less," since (at least in Acts) the "awareness" which Jewish critics lack is symbolic of God's awesomeness or omniscience. But *agnoia* cannot be *eironeia per se*, for it is caused by from a divine, not human, character; moreover, while *eironeia* leaves it up to somebody not to realize, *agnoia* forces one not to realize. *Peripeteia* too parallels *eironeia*; Swearingen's analysis, however, cautions us not to equate the two.[110]

We have simply pointed out two behaviours which are cousins to *eironeia*, which come from Luke's God. These will become significant in our final analysis. For now, we observe two further cousin behaviours.

c) *Pretencing on "Human Terms."* The second cousin to *eironeia* we call "pretencing on 'human terms.'" Scholarship has indicated this before.[111] *Agnoia* and *Peripeteia* function by forcing critics into an ignorance for which they cannot explain or find a source. But God can "pretence to the less" by leaving it up to those critics to be ignorant. The clearest evidence is a series of jailbreaks inititated by God's ἄγγελοι (e.g., Acts 5:19, 12:8-10); these are efforts to shroud, but now on strictly "human

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[109]Swearingen first asks this question; see "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 2, 113, 412.

[110]Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 412 (for example).

[111]Above all Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 48 (referring to Paul's image of God). See also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 155-56 (denoting irony as "incongruity between human expecations and divine action," this being the opening of the jail). And see the points made by Brawley, *Centering on God* (above, chapter two), although Brawley does not refer specifically to God as pretencing; it is hinted.

terms"; specifically, when humans are too sleepy to recognize what God is doing. Jailbreaks occur in Acts 5:17-21, 12:6-11 and 16:22-32. By acting in a way which at least gives Jews the option of seeing his intentions, God's late-night jail-cell openings make him seem "innocent," while letting the reader know he is assisting Christians.

Because it is God who pretences, however, it is difficult to imagine the ancients using the term *eironeia* for this. Moreover, the pretension is not proactive; God may appear innocent to those who do not realize he is repeatedly broaching locked jails, but God does nothing directly, or to the face of, those people to convey such innocence. For these and other reasons,[112] it is difficult to conclude that God pretences. Regardless, pretension remains worth suggesting.

d) *The Fact of the Mission Itself.* Based again on Via's analysis, the third cousin to *eironeia* we call the *fact of the mission itself.*[113] God "pretences to the less" by allowing for time and events which he need not, "thereby conveying (artificially) that the mission is subject to these mundane qualities."[114] God can effect change in whatever way he

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[112]A cautious conclusion is supported by Stoic literature. In our discussion of "God working by irony," we specified that Stoics do not appear to share in the idea (although in itself, this is of course limited evidence). Nowhere do the Stoics refer to God, or fate, as expressing *eironeia*. Perhaps they meant this and did not say it; we see in the case of the jailbreaks, moreover, that on a general level, God *is* pretencing. But we have not found (in the Stoics) contextual evidence to suggest that Classical thinkers, and in turn Luke, would apply the term to the divine. We acknowledge also that Classical thinkers and Luke are not necessarily referring to the same divine being.

[113]Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 48; suggested by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283, vol. 2, 3; and see de Robert, "L'Ironie," who may indicate this irony in God having Jesus the Messiah die. Moessner also suggests this (without speaking of pretension) in God's treatment of the Jews (see above, chapter two). Tannehill uses the term "mission" frequently.

[114]When we say "conveying," we refer to the critics and to the apostles. For irony conveyed to both these groups, see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 155-56. The extent to which this pretension occurs I am not certain.

wants, at least sometimes; yet sometimes he chooses not to do so.

It appears the Lukan God could almost instantly bring the mission to a successful conclusion if he so wished. Consider, for instance, his handling of Paul. By rendering, in a very short time and without any seeming compulsion (for example, from prophecy), Paul ineffective as an opponent (Acts 9:3-16) and then effective as an evangelist (e.g., Acts 13:43; 14:21; 16:4-5), God shows how efficiently a mission can transpire. This is also suggested by the Holy Spirit's Pentecost conversion[115] of many people from parts of the Roman empire (Acts 2:1-11), emerging as it does from God restoring Jesus to life (Luke 24:6-7,26,30-31,34).[116]

In light of such power, we suggest that Luke's God could evangelize the Jewish and Roman world quickly--or could at least do so more quickly than Acts portrays.[117] For example, Stephen indicates a *laissez faire* God: while God "saw the bad treatment of my people, and I heard their cries, and I went down to release them" (Acts 7:34), his decision had to wait forty years.[118] Similarly, it is fascinating that in light of God's power to address humans like Paul, God leaves Christian proselytes at Ephesus to say

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[115]When we say "God," we acknowledge that figures supporting God [τὸ πνεύμα ἁγίον and οἱ ἄγγελλοι, for example], sometimes drive certain acts. It is implied, however, that God controls these figures.

[116]See also Acts 7:7; Stephen quotes God: "His [Abraham's] seed will be foreign in a foreign land, and they will enslave it and will treat it badly for forty years, and the nation, *for whichever I decide*, they will serve [emphasis added]."

[117]Part of the reason for this is probably that human beings are implied at points in Acts to have a choice as to how they wish to deal with the Christian faith; there is some free will.

[118]The only force requiring this is God's own will, expressed as prophecy (from which this quote is taken [Gen 15:13-14]).

that "we have heard that there is no Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2). Further, it seems at first surprising that God need convey a (any) message "through the hand of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11:30), considering the directness with which he can address apostles (Acts 1:6-9; 9:4-6; 23:11). In short, as Tannehill points out, there seems no special significance for certain narrative events to transpire in the drawn out or seemingly haphazard way they sometimes do.[119] Whatever the motive, God permits other characters to assume he is "lesser than he really is," that he must act under certain mundane or worldly limitations, or in certain worldly ways.[120]

But there are reasons not to call this *eironeia*. First, God is (broadly) the pretencing character. This, again, does not find precedent in Classical literature; in light of the divine use of *agnoia* and *peripeteia*, we should expect to find--but do not--the same for *eironeia*. Second, there is not quite "the same kind of pretension as among Classical *eirones*"; God indeed allows for redundant events without so saying; but this is not really proactive; to exude "modesty" other than by silence (e.g., to say "I am incapable," or "I must let events transpire in this drawn-out way").[121]

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[119]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 156. At times, there is. For example, Paul's internment and (possible) execution in Rome may appear to represent unnecessary delay and hardship for the mission in light of some of God's previous, "colossal" actions. But scholars have interpreted this delay to be what God desires; he could bypass it, but chooses to use it.

[120]The examples we offer are few; they are just suggestions of actions which God need not let transpire, yet which he does. Other examples may find various explanations which we do not discuss here. The idea that God permits people to do things, while he could control them entirely, is from Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19 with 21.

[121]This use of hypothetical statements from an *eiron* we imitate from Theophrstus, *Characters* (trans. Edmonds), 42-43.

Names aside, we have now considered four behaviours which, in some measure, resemble *eironeia*. *Agnoia*, *peripeteia*, pretencing on human terms, and pretencing in the mission itself, combine to suggest that God's behaviour often borders on *eironeia*, but that it does not fit the Classical strictures.

B. *Eironeia (or Similar Behaviour): A Hint at New Comedy*

When we bring together the apostles' *eironeia*, divine *agnoia* and *peripeteia*, and certain other aspects of Luke-Acts, we begin to see Greek New Comedy. Scholars have explored the role of (Old) Comedy, comedy generally, and tragedy in Luke-Acts,[122] but rarely in any detail. Dan Via's study is probably the most thorough. His and Jerry Ray's analyses even point to *eironeia* as indicative of Acts' "comic structure."[123] But nobody, to our knowledge, has looked specifically to that period of Comedy commencing with the playwright Menander (ca. 344-292 BCE)[124] and continuing for centuries of Classical antiquity. This is known as *New Comedy*, or *Greek New Comedy*. When we look at *eironeia* in Acts, in light of its *agnoia* and *peripeteia*, a sense of Menander's Comedy begins to emerge. We are not stressing New Comedy to the

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[122]See Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*. There are brief treatments in Barr, *New Testament Story*, 327-28 (in part based on the various scholarly opinions) and in Tannehill, "Luke-Acts: Tragic Story" (see below, section B. 3).

[123]Especially Via's. See *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 45 (citing Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 71, 136-39). Ray hardly mentions this, but it is suggested. Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45 with 70-71, 72-73.

[124]On whom, see William Geoffery Arnott, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Menander," 956.

exclusion of other "genres" or texts;[125] we simply say that it merits consideration.

1. New Comedy

New Comedy was a popular type of ancient theatre. The other main type was tragedy. "New Comedy" implies there was "Old Comedy," and the former is seen as somewhat an extension of the latter. But scholars study New Comedy in and of itself, even contrasting it with Old Comedy, and as we do here.[126]

In general terms, a New Comedy is a narrative: it delivers a story. Centering on

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[125]The reader may ask, Why examine New Comedy and not two of its earlier forms, Old Comedy and Middle Comedy? We in fact did consider the possible influence of Old Comedy (like Via), and found both suggestive parallels and discouraging differences. We will not explore these here, although there are enough similarities to dispose us to consider, at least, Old Comedy. For similarities already documented, see Via's book (above, beginning of this chpater). Perhaps the main reason we set aside Old Comedy is Kenneth Dover and Alexis Solomos' observation that (with the exception of attention to Greek language), it was out of favour by Luke's life, a fact we might already suspect, since Old Comedy existed nearly five hundred years earlier. See Kenneth Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 224-25. Dover notes: 1) Old Comedy was (probably) no longer performed by the first century CE (223); 2) Despite some admiration for Old Comedy, there was not the kind which we would expect to motivate Luke to draw on it greatly: "Their [first century Greeks'] effort to project themselves into the past linguistically was not matched by a comparable effort to see the world through the eyes of Classical Athens. 'Atticism' at its worst was . . . like a superstition that one's brain will work better if it is encased in an antique hairstyle and hat" (225). Alexis Solomos, *The Living Aristophanes*, Translation and adaptation by Alexis Solomos and Marvin Felheim (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1974), 249-50. Solomos cites Plutarch's observations to reach this conclusion; interestingly, Solomos adds that Plutarch seemed averse also to Menander's comedy, although he does not make himself clear on this. Be that as it may, we have found evidence which supports the existence of New Comedy during, indeed after, Luke's life; this in itself discourages looking further back, to Old Comedy.

Middle Comedy we have not considered, for Sutton's brief attention to it and seeming dismissal of its significance indicates it probably had little bearing centuries later (Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 41). This is not to say, however, that aspects of either Old or Middle Comedy do not continue in New Comedy; scholars have shown that they do.

For a recent summary of various opinions on what other "genre(s)" impact on Luke-Acts, and Acts in itself, see Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2-24.

[126]These summaries are not complete; the purpose is to understand enough of what happens in the plays to make sense of certain of their aspects, later.

"domestic" issues (such as romantic and family dynamics), it has, like any story, struggle between [it would appear], usually reliable and unreliable characters.[127] What else typifies Comedy? First, the divine (a god or goddess) plays a critical role; their will directs to some degree the ins and outs of the plot (itself critical to New Comedy), through the struggle and the solution.[128] Second, the human characters tend (although not always) to fall into certain blocks of behaviour: we often see a "scheming slave," a "braggart soldier" or a "reclusive elder."[129] Third, as Sutton writes,

> Many New Comedies (and their Roman counterparts) contain important elements derived from such Euripidean plays of intrigue and romance as *Ion*, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, and *Helen*, since they frequently turn on situations of mistaken identities or misunderstood motives, where the revelation of the true identity or motive produces a recognition scene that elicits the plot's climax.[130]

Fourth, although not outstanding, humour punctuates New Comedy.[131] It may result from *double-entendre*, sarcasm, or unawareness of certain characters.

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[127]Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 40-41, xi with 44-45.

[128]Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 43.

[129]Walton and Arnott, *Menander and the Making of Comedy*, 98. Terms here quoted are from various points throughout the literature.

[130]Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 43.

[131]Encouraged by Anderson, *Eros Sophistes*, 87, regarding humour in the ancient "comic novel" (which, as he notes, is related to New Comic stage theatre [88]). Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 61 n. 15, drew our attention to Anderson's consideration of irony in New Comedy, and on 58 n. 2, helped to draw our attention to humour in New Comedy.

2. New Comedy and Acts

The first-time reader of New Comedy and Acts might be struck by certain resemblances.[132] It pays to ask whether we can find these resemblances, as a whole or in allusions, in Luke-Acts. (We speak of Luke-Acts, since Tannehill reminds us to consider the texts' "narrative unity."[133])

There is some general but suggestive historical evidence for connections. "New" Comedy (and its rough Roman equivalent, "Roman" or "Latin" Comedy)[134] was popular at the time Luke-Acts was written[135] (even though it surely underwent changes after our extant evidence, from Menander, and even though the evidence is small to begin with).[136] While the existence of comic "guilds" known as "artists of Dionysus" helps to suggest, as A. Spawforth writes, that New Comedy was in existence throughout the

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[132]We focus on New Comedy. This is because it is hard to assign such a role to Old Comedy (which we considered by studying various sources, including Dover and Cornford). Via does so when analysing the gospel of Mark (and which we could extend to Luke-Acts). But to do so is, in our judgement, anachronistic. This we base on conclusions by Dover and Solomos. Via risks anachronism by basing his conclusions strictly on the ritual leading up to Old Comedy. He qualifies himself by proposing a "structural-generic relationship" between Old Comedy and Acts, not a "causal-genetic relationship." This is fine, but he eventually slips into saying the latter. And if the idea of a structural-generic relationship is true, it still says nothing about the role of comedy in Acts.

[133]See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, xiii, 1-2, for example. But narrative unity may itself be an assumption, if we consider arguments by Richard I. Pervo and Mikeal Parsons, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1993).

[134]On which, see Hunter, *New Comedy of Greece and Rome*, 14-15, for example.

[135]See for example, Peter George McCarthy Brown, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s. v. "Comedy (Greek), New," 370, 371: "Comedy written from the last quarter of the 4th cent. BC onwards. . . ." (370); this indication is rather vague. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy*, 223, is not clear on this, although he notes the common use of Latin Comedy (a semi-reproduction of New Comedy, in Latin); Alexis Solomos indicates its continuation, although he too is unclear (*The Living Aristophanes*, 249-50).

[136]Indicated by, for example, Brown, "Menander," 371.

Greek-speaking Roman Empire,[137] the sheer number of Roman theatres visible today in Mediterranean locales, adds Helmut Koester, should remind us of theatre's presence in the New Testament world.[138]

There is also thematic evidence for the role of New Comedy. Although few and general, three aspects of it encourage us to form bridges with Luke-Acts. The first concerns form. R. L. Hunter has pointed out that New and Roman Comedy has a particular form.[139] It begins with a so-called "delayed prologue" and proceeds through five acts. The prologue, consisting of a character's words to the audience, usually falls after an intriguing first "scene," and both prepare us for what is to come in the play. With some artistic license, we may consider Luke-Acts to have in essence a delayed prologue, which is Jesus' prediction of his career (Luke 4:16-30). This is not technically a literary "prologue"; it has long been accepted that by conventions for written texts,

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[137]On these, see Antony J. S. Spawforth, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v., "Dionysus, artists of," 482-83 (Spawfoth does not refer explicitly to Greek New Comedy). On the existence of both tragedy and comedy in the first century CE, see also Helmut Koester, *History, Culture, Religion*, 95 (Koester here refers to strictly Roman plays, but this implies the existence of Greek language parallels, since so many subjects in the Roman Empire spoke Greek. On language, see Koester, *History, Culture, Religion*, 102).

[138]"Every city," writes Koester, "possessed a theater." Koester, *History, Culture, Religion*, 95. Further and striking evidence for the presence of specifically New Comedy as late as 100-200 CE is offered by W. G. Arnott, who notes that there is still preserved a frescoe of Menander's *Perikeiromene*. The frescoe (in Ephesus) suggests that New Comedy (here written centuries before!) still mattered to some degree during and after Luke's life. See *Menander* (ed. and trans. Arnott), 369. Perhaps further, albeit distant, evidence comes from Kenneth McLeish's observation that "St. Jerome [and] Eusebius . . . enjoyed Plautus and Terence." Plautus and Terence wrote Latin comedies (on which, see above), and Jerome and Eusebius lived during the period when comedy was probably more acceptable, in a Constantinian, Christianized Rome. But the sheer length of time during which these comic playwrights are studied suggests the popularity of Greek New Comedy. McLeish, *Theatre of Aristophanes*, 18. Camery-Hoggatt notes the "civic" importance of theatre, as well; the seriousness with which it was taken (*Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-61).

[139]Hunter, *New Comedy of Greece and Rome*, 24-35 (prologues); 35-42 (five acts).

Luke-Acts' prologue falls at its start (Luke 1:1-4). But for a number of reasons, we suggest Jesus' words can still be considered a sort of prologue.[140] We also suggest that following this prologue, Luke-Acts could be seen as having a "five act" form, roughly akin to that of New Comedy. Luke-Acts' characters repeatedly re-orient themselves to evangelize in a new place--this occurs roughly five times. This we quote, with some changes, from Barr's discussion of Luke-Acts' form:

> 1. The gathering of witnesses in Galilee (Lk 4:14-9:50)
>
> 2. The instructing of the witnesses on the journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27)
>
> 3. The witnessing of the events in Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-24:53); the witness to Jesus in Jerusalem and beyond ([Acts 1:6-2:47]; Acts 3:1-12:25)
>
> 4. The journeys that carry the witness to the nations (Acts 13:1-19:20)
>
> 5. The progress of the witness to Rome (Acts 19:21-28:31)[141]

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[140]Three reasons can be given, basing our discussion on Hunter's description of New Comic prologues. First, as in comic theatre, it is Jesus' words (not Luke's in 1:1-4) which provide a substantive overview of what matters in the text (Luke 4:16-30 is often considered programmatic for the text as a whole). Second, as in comic theatre, Luke grabs an audience's attention by beginning with a striking or puzzling scene rather than with a lengthy narrative. The scenes in Luke 1-3 are lengthy narratives, to be sure; but these scenes seem "attention grabbing," for they describe in a dramatic, drawn-out way, the birth of the Christ. Third, we address the argument that Jesus is not speaking a typical prologue. It is true that in comic play, it is clear when a character does and does not address the audience in a prologue. This seems less clear, however, in a written text. Here, we clearly see when Luke is speaking to the implied reader (Theophilus); but in a way, everything that "reliable characters" (certainly Jesus) say is directed at the implied reader.

[141]Changes to Barr, *New Testament Story*, 300: we omit inclusion of the prologue at the beginning of the gospel and Acts; we omit references to "the origin and spirit-indwelling of Jesus [in the gospel] and the church [in Acts]"; we omit [in point 3] division between the gospel and Acts, leaving one part, not two; we number and label the parts; we add in brackets references included but not so-organized by Barr.

The parallels we propose are far from perfect. How, for example, do we reconcile this five-part structure with the fact that the gospel and Acts are physically distinct texts--unlike a play?[142] Nonetheless, we suggest that Luke might well have felt a delayed prologue and a set of roughly five divisions somehow made sense, or was conventional, and that New Comedy may have encouraged this.[143] The fit is more suggestive than tight; still, it is worth considering.

As well as possibly having a somewhat similar form, Menander's Comedy and Luke-Acts share the idea not simply of conflict (common to any story) but perhaps a specific kind of conflict: what Sutton calls "generational conflict."[144] In New Comedy and in Luke-Acts there are two broad disputants (or parties of disputants), one of whom the implied reader is to see as "good" and relatively young, and the other whom the implied reader is to see as "bad" and old--a character who not only disputes with but is

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[142]Also, how do we address objections by some scholars that Luke-Acts has a far more complex structure than five geographical units? Moreover, as we indicated above regarding Barr's study, we must downplay some textual features in order to show a "five act" form. Further, we note that our image of Jesus and the apostles in Jerusalem (point 3) is somewhat distorted, in that neither in Luke nor in Acts do all events occur in Jerusalem; the setting is not as simple as it appears. Finally, we acknowledge that Luke and Acts each have their own, separate prologues; this suggests we are to regard them more as separate texts than as akin to a single play. But we do not contend that Luke-Acts has a New Comic form. We simply suggest the influence of a New Comic form.

[143]Alternatively, for the claim that Acts *itself* has five acts (a "five-fold division"), see J. C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting* (London: S. P. C. K., 1970), 72-73, as cited by *The New Testament in Literary Criticism*, A Library of Literary Criticism, ed. and comp. Leland Ryken (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1984), 45-46. Michel Desjardins and Günter Wasserberg have encouraged the idea that certain genres and forms of literature would naturally make sense for a first century writer to draw upon, even if writers did not consciously draw on these.

[144]Dana Sutton reminds us that generational conflict is not the only type of conflict in New Comedy. On conflict, see Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, xi, 44-45.

envious of the other.[145] We have seen, with some simplification, that Acts' character-groups fill these roles fairly well.[146] In Luke-Acts, Tannehill indicates two broad sets of disputants. One preaches the Christian faith (Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the apostles), and the second despises that faith; these are the Jewish authorities (the Sanhedrin; most Pharisees) and "the Jews" more generally. Perhaps such disputants come to mind in any story, but we think of New Comedy on two counts. First, the Christians are--metaphorically--of a younger generation than the Jews; their faith, we are told, is not only well-intentioned and "good," but also relatively "young." It is a new, fresh growth from the older Jewish tradition, a tradition which the text encourages us to regard, *in the person of the authorities*, not only as "old" but as presently ill-intentioned.[147] Second, Luke's Jewish authorities do not merely resent the Christian faith; they resent it somewhat in the manner of New Comedy's "older generation": specifically, they resent "because they were jealous," and thus provoke conflict.[148]

Along with connections of form and of generational conflict, we find a third connection: humour. On a general level, we see humour in both. As Richard Pervo has shown, the humour of ancient comedy, based on the slighting or demeaning of

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[145]In Menander's *Dyskolus*, for example, the characters are, respectively, Sostratus (a "suitor" of a young woman) and Cnemon (the woman's father). In such plays, one may find the younger character to be a son, but not necessarily. On these points, see Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 45.

[146]Literature on New Comedy has occasionally pointed also to character groups, reliable and unreliable.

[147]On two sets of characters, see for example, Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 32.

[148]For examples of "jealousy" in Acts [or "zeal," if we translate ζῆλος positively], see Acts 5:17 and 17:5. This is also suggested in Acts 4:15-17.

characters, appears in Luke-Acts. Pervo offers several examples, from the Jewish magicians' loss of their clothing (Acts 19:14-16), to the "wit" in the rapid change in Paul's status in Malta (Acts 28:1-7).[149] Humour is not distinctive to New Comedy, or to the comedy period--or to Acts. But it has some importance here, and it is thus suggestive we see it also in Luke-Acts.[150]

3. New Comedy and Acts: Three Connections

With *Dyskolus*, *Perikeiromene* and other evidence, we now highlight three connections between New Comedy and Acts. The first--if tenuous--regards *eironeia* (or behaviours similar to *eironeia*) as expressed by at least somewhat reliable characters.

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[149]See Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 63, 64-65 (respectively).

[150]Other general similarities include the nature of the divine. In (at least the play) *Aspis*, writes Zagagi, the goddess Tyche (ἡ Τύχη) has enormous power (*The Comedy of Menander*, 145) and is unknowable (*The Comedy of Menander*, 147: quoting Menander, *Aspis*, 248-49: "The affairs of *tyche* are inscrutable"). So in Acts God has been portrayed in these ways (Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 19, 21).

There are, admittedly, many contrasts (only some of which we can list here) separating New Comedy from Acts. First, the entire context which Zagagi attributes to New Comedy contrasts that of Luke-Acts. New Comedy speaks of "domestic life" (Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 40), but Luke-Acts seems to speak of more: of activities throughout the known world, of the attitudes of whole religious groups toward God (see Barr, *New Testament Story*, 44-45 with 348). Second, while there is a "positive outcome" in the New Comedy (which we described earlier), quite the opposite has been contended, as Barr writes, by certain Luke-Acts scholars, including Tannehill; "Tannehill (1985) has suggested that Luke-Acts is a tragic story, in part at least, because the new community envisioned in the opening fails to materialize" (Barr, *New Testament Story*, 328; see Tannehill, "Tragic Story," above, chapter two). Third, while Zagagi writes of a "chain of events" in the New Comedy *Aspis*, I am unclear whether such a chain (i.e., A causes B, causes C, etc.), exists in Acts (*The Comedy of Menander*, 148 with 143-48). Fourth, Anderson notes (with respect to the comic *novel*) that piety and spirituality are not portrayed well; they are, in fact, mocked. This, of course, does not resemble Acts' portrayal of Christianity, although as Kurz qualifies, it speaks of pagan piety with derision; see *Reading Luke-Acts*, 152, and Joseph Tyson indicates a somewhat unfavorable portrayal of Judaism; Jospeh B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 181-82. Fifth, while the "comic novel," says Anderson, has a "temptation to parody anything and everything" (*Eros Sophistes*, 91 n. 25), we do not find such capriciously aimed barbs in Acts.

This is a feature of New Comedy. We see it in "comic novels,"[151] and in *Miles Gloriosus*, the once-titled *Alazon*, whose "reliable" Palaestrio[152] is arguably an *eiron*. We perhaps see this also in *Perikeiromene*, on the part of Sosias. Netta Zagagi's study is not explicit in this regard, but suggests *eironeia* near the beginning of the play: "Sosias, Polemon's slave, makes his appearance on the pretext of having been sent to fetch his master's civilian cloak, but his true purpose is to keep an eye on what is going on in Polemon's house."[153] We have not and do not claim there to be Classical *eironeia per se* either here or in Luke-Acts. But as Ray has indicated, we repeatedly see behaviours--Paul's redaction of his work to endear himself to Jews; *double entendre* to the Athenians;[154] the Tyrians and Sidonians' possible false praise of the "boastful" Herod--which are expressed by *eirones* in New or Latin Comedy.[155] We have several cases of

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[151]Anderson, *Eros Sophistes*, 88, 90, who, encouragingly for Comedy, indicates *eironeia* ("irony," he says), to be "playful incongruity" (88). Our reading of Anderson has not clarified *eironeia* any further.

[152]In my interpretation. Relative to the *alazon* Pergopolynices, Palaestrio acts for people's benefit. He thus seems to be "reliable," even if we are also to regard him as having the unsavoury "scheming" quality associated with slaves.

[153]Zagagi never here calls Sosias an *eiron*, and our own reading of *Perikeiromene* has not helped us to find a clearly *eironic* speech from Sosias. Nonetheless, this very idea of shrouding true intentions with pretexts of "feigned simplicity," here in deed, indicates that Sosias expresses *eironeia*. See *The Comedy of Menander*, 151-52.

[154]Whether or not *double-entendre* is regarded as *eironeia in New Comedy* is not clear. But it may be, for McLeish speaks of it in Old Comedy as conveying "irony" (see *Theatre of Aristophanes*, 101) and his noting of *double-entendre* from Dicaeopolis in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* is suggestive, in that Thomson (*Irony*) argues Dicaeopolis to be an *eiron* (see *Theatre of Aristophanes*, 102-03 [although on these pages McLeish gives the names of other characters who I am not sure are considered to be *eirones*]).

But if *double-entendre* is not *eironeia* as found in New Comedy, there may well be examples in Latin Comedy (which suggests in turn it was in New Comedy. See our discussion of Palaestrio's *double-entendre*, above, this chapter.

[155]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70 n. 72, 73. We find a similar example (whether or not Menander called this *eironeia* I am not clear) of opaque *eironeia* in *Dyskolus*, from the servant Getas to

reliable characters reflecting the behaviour of a New Comic *eiron*.[156]

The second connection is *agnoia* from something divine, a connection which Tannehill has located in Aristotle's *Poetics*, but not more specifically in New Comedy.[157] In *Perikeiromene*, *agnoia* in a human character (Polemon) is crucial.[158] Zagagi elaborates; notice the relation of the goddess Ἄγνοια, her "plan," and ignorance:

Sikon: "I've always been a great admirer of you and your art [*aside*] but I don't trust you an inch!" (*Dyskolus*, Act Two, 424 [trans. Miller]). Sikon himself acts similarly towards Cnemon (compare *Dyskolus*, Act IV, 621-35 [trans. Miller] with *Dyskolus*, Act III, 498-514 [trans. Miller]). We also find transparent *eironeia* (from Getas, in frustration at Sikon for not receiving food for his work): "Oh? You're going off to invite people to lunch? As far as I'm concerned, they can come in their thousands. I realized a long time ago that not a bite would come my way" (*Dyskolus*, Act III, 563-65 [trans. Miller]). Perhaps the vaguest suggestion of *eironeia* is in Gorgias' calling Sostratus a "rogue" (*Dyskolus*, Act II, 258 [trans. Miller]). Finally, we see that Getas and Sikon (like the *Miles*' Palaestrio, who is most likely for Plautus an *eiron*), act like "scheming slaves" (*Dyskolus*, Act V, 886-905 [trans. Miller]).

[156]Interestingly, we see in *Dyskolus* that a number of characters (Chaireas, Getas, Sikon) express *eironeia* or *eironeia*-like behaviour. We have seen similarly in Acts (Festus; Paul; to a lesser extent, Peter). This idea (without reference to *Dyskolus*) we learned from Walton and Arnott, *The Making of Menander*'s *Comedy*, 98.

[157]Tannehill makes no specific comparison to New Comedy, but in fairness to him, we see (noted by Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 149 n. 41), that he comes close, for he "links ignorance to the Aristotelian theme of recognition (*Poetics* 1450a) and ignorance (ἄγνοια 1453a-54a)" (*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 35, 36, 57, 169), which have been noted to be commentary on the design of ancient tragedies and commentaries (on which see Sutton, *Ancient Comedy*, 42-43, and Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 143). Tannehill makes a specific connection between ignorance in tragedy and in Luke-Acts in Tannehill, "Tragic Story," 79, esp. n. 19.

[158]This argument is double-edged, for we have argued for near-*eironeia* in Acts without seeing that term.

(Some of the following citations from Zagagi are strictly to *Perikeiromene*, which we should not generalize to New Comedy as a whole.) Zagagi, *The Comedy of Menander*, 149 (quote from 142. See also 151: "Engineered by Agnoia in order to reunite Pataikos' family, this action demonstrates the ambivalent nature of divine influence in the play.") On 142-43, Zagagi states the more general theme: "The influence of the divine . . . on the characters and their actions" (142, citing in part, various sources, in n. 1).

> While in *Aspis* the goddess Tyche exploits the protagonist's . . . natural tendencies--greed, wickedness and selfishness--in order to fulfil her plan, in *Perikeiromene* the divine prologue speaker, Agnoia, Ignorance, achieves her aim by introducing into the protagonist's--Polemon's--behaviour an element which is in sharp contrast to his normal disposition. The fact that we are dealing here with a *negative* pattern of behaviour explicitly exploited by the goddess, in order to achieve an aim which is *positive* in essence, lends the play a special character. . . . [159]

In any event, she notes, what matters is to see "the influence of the divine speaker on the characters."[160] This said, we are struck by similarities to modern interpretations of Luke-Acts. Just on the level of language, some speak of God's "plan," which requires "fulfillment."[161] As we discussed earlier, some also would say there is "a negative pattern of behaviour . . . exploited . . . in order to achieve an aim which is positive in essence"; the behaviour is of certain Jews and Gentiles (e.g., Luke 22:3-4, 47-54; 23:13-

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[159]*The Comedy of Menander*, 149 (more detailed discussion on 149-56). The negative behaviour, she adds, is Polemon's assault of Glykera (he cuts her long hair), and the positive outcome, much later in the play, an "*anagnorisis* [recognition] between her and her father." *The Comedy of Menander*, 154-55.

[160]Quote from *The Comedy of Menander*, 142 (exactly which characters, or whether all characters, I am uncertain). Zagagi indicates this further in *Dyskolus*: "Sostratus is *Pan's agent*, and . . . his persistence in following his desire . . . is in fact a stage in the realization of Pan's will" (*The Comedy of Menander*, 165). This could be said of the apostles in Acts: they are (at least somewhat) driven by the Holy Spirit (*Reading Acts: Literary and Theological Commentary*, 4). On their status both as reliable characters, see essay above. Zagagi adds that "similar patterns of divine-human plot relationship--divine intervention in the later dramatic developments to prevent the plot diverging from the initial plan--are to be found in Euripides' *Ion*, the Plautine *Aulularia* . . . and conceivably also in *Cistellaria*." *The Comedy of Menander*, 166-67, and n. 50.

[161]Barr, *New Testament Story*, 331 (see also 301, 323), refers to "completion" of "God's plan"; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 3, using different words, says: "God . . . move[s] the divine purpose forward." Or in *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 2: "In stories [such as Luke-Acts] . . . events . . . reveal purposes at work and represent movement toward the fulfillment of a major purpose or obstacles which block fulfillment;" and on p. 283, "The death of Jesus . . . . fulfills a predetermined divine plan." I am also encouraged in this idea by Günter Wasserberg.

38; Acts 8:1; 23:33-26:32; 28:23-28), and it is exploited by God;[162] these people seem thus to form a somewhat Polemon-like character. Tannehill and Kurz, in fact, do not contend that God *produces* ignorance; rather, in Kurz' words, "God used the ignorance," or took control of a human *faux-pas*.[163] But "using ignorance" still finds a place in New Comedy (and by virtue of letting Jews decide to be ignorant, God does in a sense dictate *agnoia*).[164] He does not seem to use *eironeia*, for never in Classical literature is this equated with using *agnoia*. Acts gives neither word to God's behaviour,

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[162]Would say *broadly*. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283: "Humans act blindly (note the emphasis on 'ignorance' in Acts 3:17; 13:27), and the outcome is the opposite of what they intend. For behind their purpose is a stronger, hidden purpose which uses human blindness to thwart human plans." See also vol. 1, 9, 12, and vol. 2, 3 with: vol. 2, 37, 65 (citing, for the example of "irony," L. T. Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions*, 196-97), 101, 103, 155-56, 169. Textual citations: we cite Luke 22 specifically, but the passion events generally are cited in *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 9, 12; Acts 8:1 from *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 101; Acts 23:33-26:32 [in reference to "political rulers," including pagans from *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 151; Acts 28:23-28 from *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 346-50. Tannehill does not always specify "Jews" to be those who act unwittingly, but it is explicit or else implied that the behaviour comes from *certain* Jews who dislike the apostles (see *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 101, 151 with 155 [notice Tannehill refers to pagans here: "Not only Jewish religious leaders but also political reulers apear in the narrative as potential threats to the mission"]; 297-98, 346). To link these statements with the general statement in vol. 1, 283 with which we began (see also vol. 2, 3), notice that several fall under his rubric of "irony"--the same idea as in vol. 1, 283.

[163]Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 140-43 (citing on 140, n. 14, Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 194), 144-47 (citing in part on 144, n. 26, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 101, and in n. 27, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 30), esp. 149, and see also 154. Elaboration on "ignorance" or "blindness" itself is found on 149-52, 153-55 [for connection with God's action, see the example of "non-recognition" re: Jesus, on 140 with 149). Kurz for some reason separates "divine working through human blindness" (140), from "the irony of scattering as spreading the word" (144), although his source, Tannehill, makes no distinction, as our previous footnote shows. On this see also *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283 and vol. 2, 3 both with vol. 2, 101 and vol. 1, 194. (Kurz' quote from 149.) For Tannehill, see above note, particularly reference to *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283, esp. vol. 1, 9 (although reading these two sets of pages together, there is some ambiguity in the extent to which God does determine the "ignorance" of the Jews).

[164]For the idea that God's permission is a sort of control, see Jervell, *The Theology of Acts*, 19.

but such seems closer to *agnoia* than to *eironeia*.[165]

Our third point of contact is God's *peripeteia* or reversal, noted in Zagagi's study as a feature of New Comedy.[166] Earlier we saw Aristotle's definition of reversal as characteristic of tragedy (which Tannehill connects to Luke-Acts);[167] and it is this which is acknowledged to be also in New Comedy. It is important for us is to recognize that reversal is adopted by Luke-Acts. We learned from Kurz and others that reversal as we see it in *Poetics* is quite common in Acts, particularly as "God works contrary to expectation by bringing success through growth to a mission which is 'scattered'" (Acts 8:1-4, 11:19-20).[168]

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[165]Most generally, there is a similar role for the divine in the plot: Zagagi has noted the importance (the involvement) in New Comic plots of a god or goddess, while Tannehill notes the same with respect to God in Acts. (Zagagi, *The Comedy of Menander*, 143, 151; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity)*. There are other, related similarities. First, Zagagi implies *agnoia* and *eironeia* (although she never uses the latter) to be separate things; i.e., Sosias does not see what the goddess sees (*The Comedy of Menander*, 151-52).Whether there is a parallel in Luke-Acts is not clear, but encouragingly, Paul does not seem to know "fully" until Acts 28 about God's *agnoia* placed upon "the Jews." The case for divine *agnoia* in Acts and New Comedy is not affected by this. Second, Zagagi notes the plot of *Perikeiromene* (the events and their links with one another) being tightened by the divine's use of ignorance (*The Comedy of Menander*, 150, 151, esp. 143). In Acts, the Jews' ignorance has also been noted as important to the plot; for Tannehill, "humans act blindly . . . and the outcome is the opposite of what they intend. For behind their purpose is a stronger, hidden purpose which uses human blindness to thwart human plans" (*Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 283, here referring to both the gospel and Acts). Third, both *Perikeiromene* and Acts seem to present a mix of human "free will" and divine omniscience. Zagagi indicates this for *Perikeiromene*, as does Tannehill for Acts (*The Comedy of Menander*, 154, 156 and also to *Dyskolus*, on 166); *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, 349.

One important difference is that the ignorant "Jews" are, unlike Polemon, not regarded as protagonists. God, Jesus and the apostles are (see Barr, *New Testament Story*, 43-45, 295, 306, 331).

[166]Zagagi, *The Comedy of Menander*, 162, for example. In *Dyskolus*, Gorgias indicates reversal when he says to Sostratus: "A man really proves his true worth when, although he's well-off, he's ready to treat a poor man as his equal. A man like that will bear any change of fortune with a good grace." From *Dyskolus*, Act Four, 767-70 (trans. Miller). (We make the link between "fortune" and "reversal" based on York, *The Last Shall be First*, on which, see above, chapter two.)

[167]Tannehill, "Tragic Story," 79-80.

[168]To these similarities we add a fourth, initially pointed out by Kurz (citing Culbertson): In Acts and in tragedy (and, for our purposes, in New Comedy), there is a *recognition* (ἡ ἀναγνώρισις) falling near

C. *Summary*

We suggest that the particular *combination* of *eironeia* (or, as we suggest, similar behaviours), *agnoia*, *peripeteia* and other New Comic features must at least open us to the possibility of New Comedy's impact on Luke-Acts. *Eironeia*-like behaviours do not in themselvs point us to New Comedy; nor does *agnoia*, nor *peripeteia* in itself. But when taken together, these features suggest we should take seriously the influence of New Comedy, and add it to our consideration of factors which make Luke-Acts what it is.

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the narrative's close. Zagagi shows that in *Perikeiromene*, there is a recognition, after which "the protagonists move from a state of . . . ignorance . . . to one of knowledge." The same has been pointed out in Acts 28: Paul recognizes how God has dealt with the Jews. One difference is that [at least in *Perikeiromene*], the characters still do not understand the role of the divine; but in Acts, Paul does (28:25-27).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUDING REMARKS CONCERNING ACTS, *EIRONEIA* AND NEW COMEDY

"There are certain people . . . who, when faced with renunciation of the public shows, ask for the authority of Scripture and take their ground in uncertainty, because abstinence in this matter is not specifically and in so many words enjoined upon the servants of God." Tertullian (160-230 CE), *De Spectaculis*, III, challenging a particular Christian opinion of theatre.[1]

On the basis of our last chapter, we suggest that Luke resembles one of the people disliked by Tertullian. In the following pages, we hope to strengthen this suggestion; to see more clearly possibilities for *eironeia* as a window on Acts' debt to theatre. We organize our conclusion into three parts. First, we will review our findings; critical is that Acts' *eironeia* helps to reveal a text whose relationship to New Comic and tragic theatre we must take seriously. Second, we will reinforce the relationship by perusing the gospel of Luke. We will close with a special kind of evidence: what Christians themselves thought about the value of theatre. We have saved this evidence until now because it allows us to bridge our findings about antiquity with the present. It encourages us to draw not too thick a line between Christianity and the performing arts.

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[1]Use of this passage (and dates of Tertullian's life) is taken from Christine Catharina Schnusenberg, *The Relationship Between the Church and the Theatre. Exemplified by Selected Writings of the Church Fathers and by Liturgical Texts Until Amalarius of Metz--775-852 A.D.* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988), 16 (citing *De Spectaculis*, 3. 1-2). The passage itself (and further references to Tertullian) we quote from Tertullian, *Apology; De Spectaculis*, trans. T. R. Glover (Miucius Felix, *Octavius*, trans. G. H. Rendall), Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1931), III.

A. *Review*

Chapter two explored secondary discussions of irony in Luke-Acts. This left us with two impressions, clarified as our research progressed. For want of better terms, let us call one quantitative and the other qualitative. Quantitatively, as Ray says, "there have been no comprehensive or detailed discussions of the phenomenon."[2] Qualitative observations support this, for with hindsight we see the literature has shortcomings. Granted, it has greatly helped us. Ray's analysis especially resembles and is even a partial basis for our own: he describes *eironeia* and finds examples in Acts.[3] Moreover, by denoting certain of these as examples of *eironeia* in Classical comedy, Ray and Via[4] show the presence of "comedy" in its general sense.[5] Tannehill and Kurz's efforts to relate irony to God and the apostles, while somewhat ahistorical, prompted us to consider whether such is valid. And while many studies pay little attention to Classical *eironeia*, they often tacitly observe it (and specify cousin-behaviours), thereby showing us where *eironeia* rests.[6]

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[2]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 25. Granted, works by Tannehill, Kurz, Morris and above all Ray together offer a wealth of information.

[3]Morris' analysis, we recall, is also sensitive to Classical *eironeia*, although in fact, Morris returns to a modern (Tannehill's) understanding of irony, that which includes but goes beyond the Classical definition. See Morris, "Irony and Ethics," 201-204.

[4]Via speaks strictly of Paul's letters and of the gospel of Mark, although it is a small step (as he sees) to transfer his observations, particularly of Mark, to Luke-Acts. Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, xi with 71.

[5]Ray does not specify any particular kind of comedy. Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70, 73. Via specifies Old Comedy; see *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, xi with 44-48, 133. Similarly, and with respect to Luke-Acts, is Jónsson, *Humour*, 21-22, 24-26, all with examples on 208-222. Recall also (with respect to Mark) Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel*, 60-62.

[6]See above, chapter two.

Yet there remain three shortcomings among the studies as a whole.[7] These we may summarize as a poor focus on *eironeia*. First, there is among Luke-Acts scholars,[8] with some exceptions, a casual approach to defining irony, which produces vagueness. Some scholars (Brawley, Moessner) never define the noun; others (Tannehill, Kurz) define it, but not generically and directly.[9]

The second shortcoming is a focus on the modern understanding of irony, at the expense of Classical images. Scholars frequently use notions that irony is "incongruity," specified often as "dramatic" and "tragic." Yet, as these scholars admit, there remains not one ancient reference to such irony.[10] Does focusing on incongruity not thereby fail to give attention where it is needed first, to where studies of irony should ground

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[7]That is, not every shortcoming is in every study.

[8]Yet as we saw in chapter two, there is much understanding of *eironeia* among studies of other New Testament works (by Camery-Hoggatt, Besançon-Spencer, Plank and Duke)--even when scholars go beyond the ancient definition, they deserve credit for incorporating and keeping with the Classical definition.

[9]Arguably, this is simply a communication problem. But communciation informs content, and vagueness or lack of attention in words suggests the same in thought. (See for example in Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 136: "The key to irony is . . ."; and notice the tension in statements from Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1, : "This is a situation of irony"; "God . . . works by irony. . . .") As we said earlier, not even the well-known definition of irony by Muecke achieves a clear (e.g., one sentence) definition, in our judgement. Muecke, as others note, claims that "irony involves . . . ," not "irony is . . . ," and he defends such vague statements. Perhaps they are defensible with respect to modern irony, but not with respect to Classical *eironeia.*

[10]See for example, Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*, 10. Depending on one's translation of certain definitions, one could argue there is a notion of *eironeia* as incongruity. It seems implied in one definition from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, paraphrased by Swearingen: "Irony defined as an effective argumentative strategy--blame by praise" (Swearingen, "Irony, from Trope to Aesthetic," 412). If we blame by praise, we express incongruity. Usually, however, I see the term applied only to affectation.

themselves, in the first sense of the word?[11] Ray and Via's attention to *eironeia* are exceptions; but even Ray's passing examination in order to delve thoroughly into irony as it is currently perceived removes attention from the former. By down-playing or disregarding ancient understandings of irony, reading back into Acts modern terminology, scholars are stretching the ahistorical nature of their narrative approach.

The third shortcoming, rooted loosely in the second, is a lack of attention to Luke-Acts and Classical theatre. Again, Via and Ray are exceptions: they use *eironeia* to suggest a window on the presence of theatre. Independently, other scholars who detect *peripeteia* and *agnoia* also draw links to theatre. But there has not been, to our knowledge, combination of these features with specifically New Comedy in mind.[12] Without these, we cannot appreciate what kind of theatre may be at play in Luke-Acts.[13]

In chapter four, we tried to address these shortcomings by exploring Classical *eironeia*. We saw it through physical acts and through the voice; we saw it as either

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[11]Related is the problem of how to title *eironeia*. For example, although Ray finds Classical *eironeia*, he splits up the examples into categories with modern titles ("verbal irony," and "dramatic irony"). This cannot help us to appreciate the Classical idea. Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 45-47 with 67-69, 69-71, 72-73.

[12]For example, Tannehill and Kurz refer both to irony and to reversal. Indeed, Ray implies that irony suggests Classical comedy (above, chapter four), and Kurz and Tannehill observe that reversal speaks the influence of tragedy (above, chapter four). But these observations are not brought together and added to, in an effort to seek parallels with a specific kind of theatre.

[13]For a detailed study of links to Old Comedy, see Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, xi, 40-49, 97-103 (esp. 98-99). In discussing comedy and Mark in the latter two sets of page citations, Via actually implies recognition of all Classical comedy--thereby including New Comedy. But he never specifies "New Comedy" (see 90-103), and the literature he consults (see his endnotes [111]), does not indicate reference to New Comedy. Encouraging for us has been Via' s relatively detailed discussion of the presence of *tragedy* in Mark; see *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament*, 98 with n. 128 (citing Curtis Beach, *The Gospel of Mark* [New York: Harper and Row, 1959], 48-50), 99 with n. 130 (citing Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy*, 128-30), for example.

"opaque" or "transparent." Variety characterizes its objectives, but these are usually "personal" ("mockery," protection), and can be reliable or unreliable. The key appears to be to remember προσποίησις--in particular προσποίησις ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαττον, "pretence towards the smaller/lesser."

In chapter four, we applied this definition to Acts. Our results were mixed. Encouragingly, we find numerous clear cases of pretension, with varying degrees of subtlety. Certain come from unreliable human characters, in particular governor Festus. Other cases come from reliable human characters like Paul. Paul might display pretension in his speeches (very subtly), in the sense that he uses words for the "practical" purpose of not offending a particular audience.[14] This becomes clearer in his actions, for his circumcising of Timothy and his own participation in Temple purification seem intended strictly to mollify conservative Jews, allowing him to pursue activities which they resent. In both Festus' and Paul's cases, the pretension to others is a "modest" or agreeable attitude. In general, we have seen two sets of figures pretencing, one "unreliable" (the Ἰουδαῖοι and their supporters) and the other "reliable" (in the person of Paul).

We also suggested pretension by God, ranging from his seeming benevolence while opening jails, to his direction of the mission to suggest he requires time and human co-operation, which he does not. Like the human characters, pretension from

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[14]It is hard, however, to say Paul is "pretending," for I am not certain what in Luke's opinion are Paul's "true" beliefs.

God is a sort of "pretension to the less," in that it conveys both to Christians and to Jews--artificially--that God's power is subject to certain limitations.

Our study revealed a small number of cases in which pretension resembled the *eironeia* we see in antiquity. Festus' obviously "feigned simplicity" and kindness towards Paul is clear *eironeia*, and so is Paul's action with respect to how he and others should appear before Jews and Gentiles. Paul's more subtle redaction of speech is somewhat harder to call "affectation," although it lies along the same spectrum. God's action is sometimes "affectation," although the fact it is from a divine character leaves us in doubt of whether it should be called *eironeia*. Certain other of God's actions (*agnoia* and *peripeteia*) may be shaped by *eironeia*; but these are distinct, and the fact that we find clearer Classical names (used also for pagan divinities) recommends that we prioritize them over *eironeia*.

Our fourth chapter, then, in turn pointed us to the theatre. When we put the reliable characters' *eironeia* together with *agnoia*, *peripeteia*, and other tendencies we begin to see a breath of New Comic theatre in Acts.[15] Although we could not link a specific play to it, we saw in Menander's *Dyskolus* and *Perikeiromene* together many of its features. These are typical not so much of Old as of New Comedy--evident in *eironeia*'s co-existence with *agnoia* and *peripeteia*. We stressed, in closing, that we do

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[15]We recall also that New Comedy need not contain only *eironeia*, but also other, sometimes similar, behaviours (articulated in part by Theophrastus, on which see Walton and Arnott, *Menander and the Making of Comedy*, 97-98. *Eironeia*, moreover, we see not often to begin with. On both of these counts, our findings in Acts are encouraging, for we notice *eironeia* sometimes only in part, and with other possible Classical titles.

not suggest a role for strictly New Comedy; we must leave room for other varieties of theatre. In fact, we suggested that *eironeia* from Acts' unreliable characters indicates the presence of tragedy; this *eironeia,* with *agnoia* and *peripeteia,* is found in certain tragedies. We leave this suggestion open to further study. But whether tragedy is present or not, the possibility of links with New Comedy remains.

B. *Eironeia and the Gospel of Luke*[16]

A related point is the following: Can we find *eironeia* in the gospel of Luke?[17] If so, is it reflected by reliable characters, thus reinforcing the importance of New Comedy for Luke?[18] We are not much encouraged by what we find in the gospel. The clearest examples seem to emerge more frequently from Jewish authorities, who act by God's plan yet do so in a way the implied reader sees as unreliable. In the end, we have some, although not strong, support from Luke's gospel that Luke knows of *eironeia.*

Good evidence for reliable *eironeia* comes from Jesus, in Luke 24:28. Ray has already observed Jesus' "pretension to the less" in the so-called Emmaus pericope

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[16]Biblical quotations in the following section are taken from the RSV.

[17]Via's application of *eironeia* to Jesus (implying Jesus in the gospel of Luke), is a suggestive precedent: "Jesus . . . plays the role of the eiron, in fact a kind of double eiron--a hero who makes himself out as worse or less or other than he is. As a man of questionable religious atttainments he turns the tables on the 'authorities' by his authoritative answers; he pronounces sins forgiven and the sabbath set aside. But despite these claims of authority he lets events sweep him away. When he is arrested, he does not resist, and before Pilate he is quite passive" (Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament,* 133).

[18]As Via's analysis (above) suggests. See also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* (above, chapter two, although his notion of irony differs).

(Luke 24:13-35), as he deliberately appears obtuse regarding himself.[19] Ray is correct to see here a "pretension to the less,"[20] and we wish to underscore 24:28 in this regard. Up to this point, Jesus does seem to pretence (24:15-30), but does not express *eironeia per se*. We read that "their [the apostles' (Luke 24:10-13)] eyes were kept from recognizing him" (24:16). Here we notice the passive voice; this indicates[21] that Jesus is not exactly pretencing: the very reason for pretence is achieved through Jesus' (or perhaps God's) use of "hearts . . . impervious" (Acts 28:27) or *agnoia*--or so it would appear from the passive voice. Regardless, pretension--the actual word-- appears clearly in 24:28. Here Luke unequivocally states: "αὐτὸς [Jesus] προσεποιήσατο." This pretension could be taken as *eironeia* as Theophrastus saw it, although there is no clear objective. What matters is to see the term which Aristotle and Theophrastus used for *eironeia*, used here in the gospel. This strongly indicates a Lukan awareness of *eironeia*.

Luke seems to use further examples of reliable *eironeia*, some of which Ray cites. Luke 5:32, for example, offers a *double-entendre* by Jesus.[22] We notice further

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[19]Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70-71. Luke 24:15: "While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What is this conversation you are holding with each other as you walk?'"

[20]Also evident, indicates Ray, in the fact that we see not just *eironeia*, but a sort of *alazoneia*, by the "disciples who think that he is dead." (The *alazoneia* is suggested by the fact the disciples "apparently know more.") The presence of both in comedy, indicates Ray, implies that to see one is to see the other (Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 70-71).

[21]Especially in light of 24:31 ("And their eyes were opened. . . "). One might argue that the disciples do not understand simply because Jesus is pretencing, but it seems that someone else (Jesus or God) is *forcing* the disciples not to see; or, to use the catchphrase we know, is "making them ignorant." Tannehill does not agree (*Narrative Unity*, vol. 2, 348, 349).

[22]Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, vol. 1,9 with vol. 2, 15. "Jesus says to the . . . Pharisees and scribes, 'I have come to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (5:32). Again Jesus is heard to

possible examples. These are from unreliable characters, but the general presence of *eironeia* still suggests Luke's awareness of *eironeia*. A clear example is Peter's "three denials" in Luke 22:34, 54-62. Reminiscent of Theophrastus' comment that "he [the *eiron*] pretends he has not heard when he hears," Peter's avowal that Jesus is a stranger is pure affectation. Granted, Peter does not exhibit the whole range of pretensions which define *eironeia* for Theophrastus. Nonetheless, the links remain suggestive.[23]

C. *Openness to Theatre*

Earlier we quoted Tertullian's unease with those Christians who had (relatively) few scruples about performances on the Classical stage. This is further suggested by the fact that we know of New Comic frescoes in Christian communities such as Ephesus.[24]

In any event, what matters is not so much Tertullian's unease as some Christians'[25] lack of scruples in this regard. Their apparent comfort with New Comedy

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speak ironically, in a sarcastic manner, seemingly lauding his opponents' good qualities, though actually putting them down. His unmistakable meaning is that because he has come to call sinners, he has not come to waste time on those who think themselves upright and in no need of reform." Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 69-70. See further Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 67-69, possibly 70-71, although Ray admits (67), as we do too, that "there are few instances of intended verbal irony [i.e., transparent *eironeia*]" (see Ray, "Narrative Irony in Luke-Acts," 46 with 67, 69, on which he uses the word "sarcasm").

[23]Another good example of *eironeia* from unreliable characters appears in Jesus' warning (Luke 20:47), "Beware of the scribes, who . . . for a pretense [προφάσει] make long prayers (RSV)." I have not seen this term used in the Classical literature, but there remains an image of "mock humility" here which seems in effect *eironeia*.

[24]See above, chapter four.

[25]Albeit none of these, as cited in Schnusenberg's study, are leaders, or "Fathers." We add, moreover, that Tertullian speaks from the late second or early third century, and is a Latin speaker in North Africa. Thus to conclude that we might find similar evidence among first century Greek speakers is tentative.

is significant for us for two reasons. The first is historical. Early regard for theatrical performances--at least aspects of them--indicates that Luke himself may have accepted aspects of theatre which could facilitate his understanding of Jesus, the apostles and their work. We cannot know this for certain; even if we did, we might find that his appreciation was subconscious. We add that most of the lines we draw from Acts to New Comedy we might also draw to tragedy. We do not deny such connections, especially as Acts has features finding precedent in tragedy. These include the oft-noted "tragic ending" of the story, humour, and *eironeia* from unreliable characters. Still, we cannot deny the links with New Comedy, even if tragedy plays the significant role. The fact that New Comedy and tragedy are similar to some extent strengthens our claim. Either way, Christians' endearment to theatre matters historically, for it opens the possibility that Luke felt similarly.

A second reason that lends value to a possible link between Acts and theatre is contemporary. We hope that modern readers (Christian or not) take some encouragement from comparison of Acts and comedy. In this we follow Richard Pervo's direction in seeking to show the ancient novel's impact on Acts. Behind this hope lies some frustration with a modern attitude towards words such as "comedy" and "theatre" in connection with the sacred:

> For over two millenia representatives of the most refined cultural strata have resisted the impetus to provide "improving" books with attractive covers. Ancient arbiters of taste [e.g., Tertullian] rejected mixing the business of serious reading with pleasure. . . . Exegetes, motivated by both cultural prejudice and religious reverence, have

tended to treat canonical texts as throughly grave . . . productions.[26]

For Pervo, a comic novel--a "popular narrative" he notes--need not equate with impiety, and should not set off alarms among Christian readers, let alone, he indicates, readers of any religious texts in any religious tradition.[27] Recognition of this allows us to acknowledge the human elements (conscious or otherwise) in writing a text. Burton Mack has stressed that the Book of Q can help us to consider alternative renderings of early Christianitity.[28] We propose nothing on this scale; but he and Pervo encourage us to recognize the reality, even acceptability, of ideas typically considered non-Christian, on Christian thought, as it engenders tolerance, reduces insecurity towards others, and can perhaps help people see what they regard as inspired in a clearer light.[29]

We do not assert that Acts models itself on Greek New Comic plays. Surveys of Luke-Acts will show in some measure the variety of influences on this text. But we suggest that a culture in which one might live within walking distance of several theatres, might bear on the way one writes a text--including Acts. Mack has suggested that the way in which we interpret our world this century is informed by devices and motifs in our culture; we come to expect, to a degree, that our own lives should reflect

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[26]Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, xi; see also 137.

[27]Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 137 (quote from xii; discussion of on xi, xii).

[28]Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 248-54, for example.

[29]Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 137, 138; see esp. Mack, *The Lost Gospel*, 254-257. All of these points are stated or implied by the authors.

some of the patterns we see in films, newpapers, and books (happy outcomes to problems; avenging of the innocent; lifestyles which imply that inner security is rooted in material wealth).[30] Luke-Acts, as Mack suggests, probably drew upon certain patterns expressed in its culture, including theatre, since theatre was a forum of pleasure and, adds Camery-Hoggatt, education.[31] Ideas expressed in theatre were not necessarily confined to theatre, and there were many alternative ideas having probably no place on the stage--convictions of monotheism,"mystery" religions and moral philosophy (Cynic, Stoic, Epicurean, Platonic and so on). Theatre, however, was undoubtedly a powerful means for expressing certain ideas. It probably made sense to viewers that a divine being had people "act ignorantly so as to reach the divine being's goal"; that a divine being could "reverse" the anticipated impact of some action; and that certain people could--with good objectives--mislead, fail to disclose the truth, or subtly deride others--all expressions of *eironeia*. These people spoke anything but dull language; their language--and action--was clever, at least "pretended"; to appropriate a term from Acts, it was ἀκωλύτος.

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[30]This is Mack's point in *The Lost Gospel*, 256.

[31]Mack refers strictly to the Book of Q and does not refer explicitly to theatre. See Mack, *The Lost Gospel*, 245-258.

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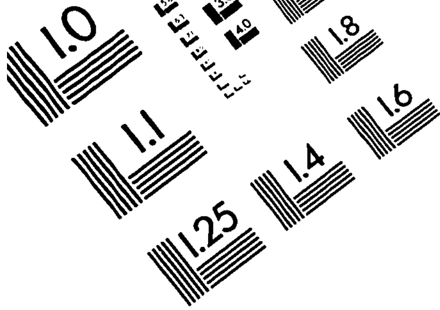

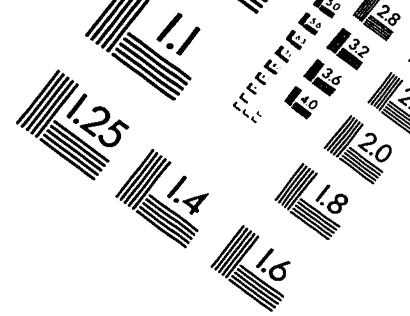

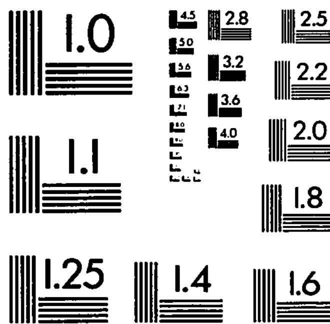

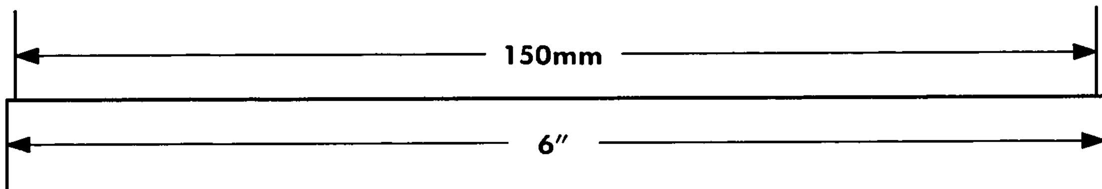

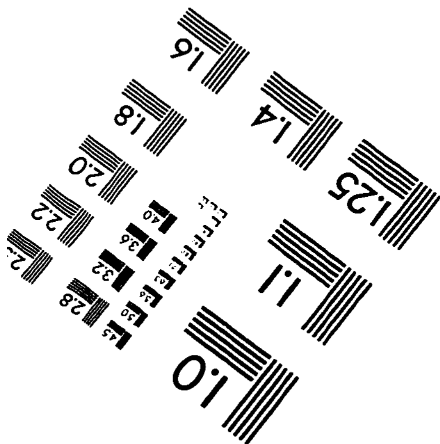

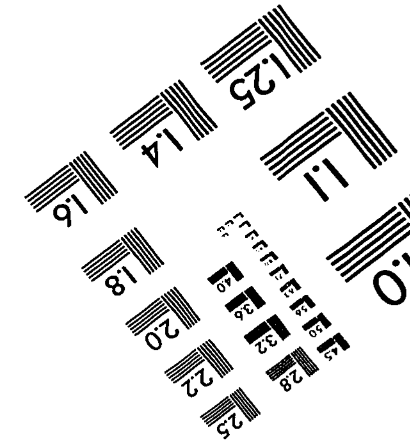

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