

What are They Saying about Luke-Acts?

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Scholarly discussion of Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles in recent years has displayed some of the astonishing breadth of opinion and originality of approaches which have characterized other areas of New Testament Studies. Indeed, van Unnik went as far as to describe Luke-Acts in 1966 as being a "storm centre in contemporary scholarship."¹ The eclipse of the historical critical method as a universally accepted paradigm for study, and the emergence of literary, narrative, rhetorical, social-scientific, feminist, and canonical approaches has led to an explosion of hermeneutical perspectives. Along with much flux, however, certain consensuses have also arisen on a number of critical questions. In addition, however, not a few Lucan scholarly taboos concerning assumptions which cannot be questioned can be seen still to be very firmly in place, and not to have been affected at all by the past fifty years or so of scholarship.

Historical-Critical Scholarship

The back-drop to recent Lucan thought is the huge outpouring of historical-critical post-War German- and English-speaking scholarship. Whilst there was great breadth of opinion, several critical assumptions can be seen to underpin much post-War New Testament thought. One was an acquiescence in a relatively late composition date for Luke-Acts, to which was attached a negative value-judgement as far as its historical reliability was concerned. Conzelmann's *The Theology of St Luke* is a classic example of this. His notion that Luke's conception of history is a way of dealing with the apparent non-return of Christ firmly established Luke-Acts as belonging to the later texts of the New Testament Canon. If anything, it might be evidence of "Early Catholicism", as Käsemann argued, but its worth as a reliable account of the earliest Christian kerygma was less than other texts. This implicit judgement extended to a whole number of other areas, such as, for example, Vielhauer's

¹ W. Van Unnik, "Luke-Acts, a Storm Centre in Contemporary Scholarship" in *Studies in Luke-Acts* ed. L. Keck and J.L. Martyn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980; originally published 1966), pp. 15-32.

view of Acts' virtually worthless status as a witness to Paul's life and thought.² One follow-on to this became the conception of Acts as principally a polemical appendix to Luke's Gospel. It became seen as a document composed simply in polemical opposition to late developments in doctrine within the church: Talbert saw it as written against Gnostics;³ B.S. Easton⁴ and Ernst Haenchen saw it written by an increasingly institutionalized Church as apologetic aimed at a Roman audience. Some of these implicit value-judgements present in post-war historical critical scholarship have been one of the most significant things which more recent synchronic approaches have sought, quite rightly, to jettison.

Even within the framework of historical criticism, however, we must be careful not to present too homogenous a portrait of scholarly diversity. Several very significant critical questions have received very different verdicts. The attitude of Luke to the Jewish people is a question which has elicited great discussion in recent years. The old consensus that Acts represented a decisive turning away from Jews and the embracing of a mission to the gentiles has broken down. Some such as Sanders⁵ have sought to portray Luke as anti-semitic, whilst scholars such as Jervell⁶ have emphasized a diametrically opposed perspective, that the Jewishness of the gospel is crucial for Luke and that he writes mainly for Jewish Christians. Any sense of consensus on this issue seems still to be a long way off.

In other questions, such as that of the unity of Luke's Gospel with Acts, however, opinion has displayed an increasing degree of convergence. With regard to unity, it is always good just to check the language we find ourselves using in terms of what we call Luke's texts. Increasingly firmly bedded in the consciousness of New Testament scholarship is the phrase "Luke-Acts", referring to Luke's texts. We need to remind ourselves that simply by referring to Luke's Gospel and Acts as "Luke-Acts," we are making an implied judgement that these two narratives should be seen as part of one single composition. That judgement could be as unspecific as to say it is probable they were written by the same person, through to an adamant insistence that they form a tightly bound narrative whole. However, one needs to be aware that hermeneutical assumptions can lie hidden in the language used by Lucan scholars to describe the texts they are studying. Since Cadbury's coining of the phrase "Luke-Acts,"⁷ scholarship does seem to have been moving in the

² P. Vielhauer, 'On the "Paulinism" of Acts,' in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, pp. 33-50.

³ C.H. Talbert, *Luke and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966).

⁴ B.S. Easton, *Early Christianity: the Purpose of Acts and Other Papers* (London: SPCK, 1954).

⁵ J.T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (London: SCM, 1987).

⁶ J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1972).

⁷ H.J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: Macmillan, 1927).

direction of a consensus that that their unity should be emphasized more than their dissimilarity, and that questions of possible separate authorship should be dropped. This has certainly been a considerable thrust behind several narrative-critical works, such as Tannehill's,⁸ which seek to point to an over-arching literary structure. Many have also emphasized Luke's theological coherence, such as Robert O'Toole.⁹ It is true that some have sought not to lose sight of the differences between Luke's gospel and Acts, such as Parsons and Pervo, in *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts*,¹⁰ but even this is within a context where a presupposition exists that the two texts share the same author, and, to some degree, should be read together. We see, therefore, on the critical question of narrative unity, a greater degree of consensus emerging than existed forty years ago.

Literary Readings

One of the most significant developments in Lucan scholarship has been the emergence of ways of reading Luke-Acts which credit the finished text as we have it with an integrity that makes it suitable for study as it is. In other words, these readings focus attention on how the text works as a written construct, how it interacts with the reader, and prioritize how its flow and impact are shaped by its status as a literary creation. On a macro-level, as has already been mentioned, these sorts of readings have done much to emphasize the unity of Luke-Acts as a narrative entity. However, on a micro level, literary readings have done much to highlight overlooked themes and motifs running through Luke's texts. Many of the short contributions to *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts* accomplish just this. Parsons,¹¹ for example, points to the significance of the motif of Jerusalem. He looks at various first century views of Jerusalem's significance and sees how this would be recognized by the implied reader we can construct. In this context Jerusalem becomes both the end of the story of Jesus, as the goal of his journey, yet also the start of the story of the Church. Other literary perspectives can help nuance many of the combative certainties historical criticism has frequently advanced: two other contributions in the same work, Thomas Phillips' 'Subtlety as a Literary Technique in Luke's Characterisation of Jews and Judaism,'¹² and Richard Thompson's 'Believer

⁸ R.C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, vol. 1, 1986, vol. 2, 1990).

⁹ R.F. O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984).

¹⁰ M.C. Parsons and R.I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1993).

¹¹ M.C. Parsons, 'The Place of Jerusalem on the Lukan Landscape: an exercise in symbolic cartography,' in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in honour of Joseph B. Tyson* ed. R. Thompson & T. Phillips (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), pp. 155-172.

¹² T.E. Phillips, 'Subtlety as a Literary Technique in Luke's Characterisation of Jews and Judaism,' in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts*, pp. 313-326.

and Religious Leaders in Jerusalem: Contrasting Portraits of Jews in Acts 1-7,¹³ both offer intriguing insights into the much ploughed furrows of the debate about Luke's attitude to the Jews. Both these readings resist the idea of overly-simplified conclusions. Phillips claims Jesus wishes to transform Jewish religious life, and re-establish the correct relationship between soteriology and worship rather than sweep away Jewish practice; Thompson shows Luke presenting us with two different images of the people of God, not a simple anti-semitic dichotomy of Jews versus the Church. All these nuanced insights are the result of careful attention to the literary character of Luke's texts.

Literary readings have also seen increased interest in the question of the genre of Luke-Acts, especially the genre of Acts. Loveday Alexander, for example, has used a close examination of the conventions concerning prefaces¹⁴ in the Ancient World to argue Acts should be seen as an example of "middle-brow" scientific writing. Richard Pervo¹⁵ has also argued that Acts is most profitably compared with the novels of Greek culture. In such a context, Acts would be presumed to be a fictive creation. By contrast with Pervo, Brian Rosner¹⁶ has argued the literary context it is most illuminating to place Acts in is that of the Hebrew scriptures. He sees Acts as steeped in Septuagintal language and as regularly depicting people modelled on Old Testament figures.

Synchronic readings have also emphasized the rhetorical structure of Acts. The fact that nearly a third of the work form direct speeches has made this a favourite amongst advocates of rhetorical criticism, though their individual verdicts and judgements can vary considerably. If one takes the example of Paul's speech in Miletus (Acts 20.18-35), Kennedy¹⁷ and Watson¹⁸ hold it to be an "epideictic" discourse – i.e. they put it in the category of rhetoric that involves adherence to beliefs and values in the present and future.

¹³ R.P. Thompson, 'Believers and Religious Leaders in Jerusalem: Contrasting Portraits of Jews in Acts 1-7,' in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts*, pp. 327-344.

¹⁴ L. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁵ R. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: the Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

¹⁶ B.S. Rosner, 'Acts and Biblical History,' in *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting* ed. Winter and Clarke. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 65-82.

¹⁷ G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill NC: North Carolina University Press, 1984).

¹⁸ D.F. Watson, *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in honour of George Kennedy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

Witherington,¹⁹ however, takes a contrary line and insists it is a “deliberative” speech, because it concerns a decision to be taken in the future. Whilst some rhetorical criticism can easily seem to disappear into a miasma of technical jargon and linguistic casuistry, and frequently tends only to concentrate on certain chunks of Acts, their insight into the conventions of ancient rhetoric has done much to restore the value placed on the significance of the speeches. Rather than simply being dismissed as factually implausible by scholars schooled in historical critical methods, they are now seen to be a crucial part of the theological and narrative unity of the work.

Social-Scientific Readings

A further example of an area where new perspectives have been found is in the application of social scientific methods to the study of the Scriptures. Those advocating this approach argue that the only way we can get close to legitimately understanding a series of First Century texts is to have as deep a knowledge as possible of the cultural context in which they were produced. By contrast with historical critical methods, which use a text as the means to hypothesize the community that may have produced it, this approach seeks to understand the text by investigating the context in which it was written. Approaches taken by scholars such as Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey in their collection of essays, *The Social World of Luke-Acts* emphasize very strongly the process of reading. Malina²⁰ points to the two horizons of the cultural assumptions implicit in the text as it stands and the cultural horizon of a modern reader. A reading which is, in his words, “considerate” seeks to bring those two horizons to some sort of convergence. The principal means of doing this is contextualisation. The fact that the texts we are dealing with are produced by “high context” societies (i.e. societies whose texts presume context is understood and leave much to the imagination of the reader), means this is all the more needful.

In this collection of essays, a fascinating range of new insights are encountered. Malina’s and Neyrey’s chapter on First Century Personality show that many of the questions asked by modern scholarship are simply expressed in terms of a completely wrong paradigm. To ask, for example, how Jesus, the individual,

¹⁹ B. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

²⁰ B.J. Malina, ‘Reading Theory Perspective: Reading Luke-Acts,’ in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, ed. J.H. Neyrey (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 3-24.

understood himself and his ministry is to impose a modern post-Enlightenment understanding of individual personhood on a text that conceives of dyadic personal identity in terms of collective and relational dynamics. They highlight how the virtue of obedience is given greater significance in collective, pre-modern societies, and that that could be a more incisive lens through which to understand Luke's presentation of Jesus: Christ as the entirely obedient Son of the Father could have been a much more radical image of perfection in its context than a technical assertion of divinity could have been. Richard Rohrbaugh's²¹ chapter on the pre-industrial city produces some intriguing discoveries into the context against which Luke writes his Parable of the Banquet (Lk 14.16-24); these make Luke's version of the parable a much more socially radical challenge than the version Matthew produces of a simple eschatological allegory. Luke uses the urban context of some of his readers to show that membership of the Church precludes the sort of exclusive table fellowship enjoyed by urban elites. This story isn't about people being invited to the banquet from the countryside, but about urban non-elites being invited to share the same table with those who consider themselves elites.

The emphasis which this sort of social-scientific approach lays on the context, which the processes of reading require, is very welcome. The question of what context is, however, remains not entirely answered. Is the definitive context against which we should read a text necessarily that which is found at the same time as the text was written? Are there some psychological processes which appertain to all human societies which can be used to understand the context of the New Testament? For example, does the experience and reactions of a Twentieth Century millenarian sect have nothing to tell us about the psychological context against which we should read some of the more apocalyptic sections of the New Testament? A further point which ought to be noted is that whilst social-scientific readings tend to claim to read texts synchronically, they are still, to some degree, dependent on the apparatus of historical enquiry; it is just that the focus of that enquiry is no longer the text itself but the environment judged to be its context. This still throws up questions to do with whether that apparatus is capable of exhaustively accounting for that context. On top of this, there are the dangers inherent in

²¹ R.L. Rohrbaugh, 'The Pre-industrial City in Luke-Acts: Urban Social Relations,' *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, pp. 125-50.

importing theories which act as the foundation of hermeneutic speculation from disciplines often entirely divorced from theological reflection.

Committed Readings

A number of further readings have emerged from contexts where the committed perspective of a certain group is used as a hermeneutical prism to explore Luke-Acts. These are frequently minority groups or individuals whose experience has led them to see themselves as oppressed in some way include. They include, for example, the perspectives of liberation theologians, work done by African-American exegetes, and the increasing number of works produced under the aegis of Queer Theory. We will examine here, as an example of a committed reading, the work of feminist critics.

Much early feminist scholarship responded positively to Luke-Acts because of the way in which Luke is perceived to display a greater interest in female figures: he frequently includes female figures who act in a way which is parallel to many male ones in the gospel; and Acts creates a picture of a Church in which women played significant roles. However, by the 90s, many feminist critics had begun to accuse Luke of being complicit in just as deep-seated an acquiescing in patriarchy as any other New Testament writer. The collection of essays edited by A.-J. Levine²² displays a great breadth of such approaches and verdicts. Many feminists see in Luke's portrayal of Mary a liberating figure: Turid Seim's²³ essay points to Luke's asceticisation of women through the figure of Mary. Mary's significance is not just to be found in biological pregnancy, but in her role as proto-typical disciple. By dislocating her significance from solely being about pregnancy, Luke offers Mary as a model of the ascetic woman. Brigitte Kahl's²⁴ essay uses a much more synchronic reading of Luke 1 to explore the process of reading in a context of oppression, and to ask where interpretive authority lies. A feminist hermeneutic of suspicion can, according to Kahl, unearth some very positive perspectives in Luke, but that is a different question from whether Luke intended them to be found there! Other critics find much wanting in Luke's portrayal of women. Mary Rose D'Angelo's²⁵ contribution situates Luke's texts within First Century notions of

²² A.-J. Levine (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to Luke* (London and New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

²³ T.K. Seid, 'The Virgin Mother: Mary and Ascetic Discipleship in Luke,' in *Feminist Companion to Luke* ed. Levine, pp. 89-105.

²⁴ B. Kahl, 'Reading Luke Against Luke,' in *Feminist Companion to Luke*, pp. 70-88.

²⁵ M.R. D'Angelo, 'The ANHP Question in Luke-Acts,' in *Feminist Companion to Luke*, pp. 44-69.

masculinity. According to Angelo, as an exclusive text written by a literate elite male for other male elites, it regards only men as appropriate ambassadors for the Christian kerygma. Women do have roles to play, but only in conformity with the “back to basics” morality of the campaign initiated by Trajan which tried to restore ancestral mores: women could only have influence as ascetics, such as Mary or Anna; or as patrons, such as Mary Magdalen, Joanna, and Susanna, Lydia and Priscilla.

Feminist criticism has managed to highlight a whole range of presuppositions which have characterized male readings of Luke-Acts for centuries. One side-effect of this is a tendency to create a “canon within a canon” in Luke, with much comment on the infancy narratives, the story of Martha and Mary, the woman in Luke 7.36-50, and the women who support Jesus mentioned in Lk 8.1-3. It is important to note, too, that feminist critics are not all wedded to one single critical model of exegesis; many use historical and redactional methods, others synchronic readings; others emphasize the importance of context. Neither do they always come to similar judgements about Luke-Acts’ significance when read by women. What unites them, though, is their insistence on the importance of the perspective from which one reads – and the particular degree to which their insights as women have frequently been over-looked.

Canonical Readings

A further approach which has developed in recent years is the approach described as canonical reading. By contrast with the historical critical method, which contends there is an objective, non-sectarian historical meaning which can be ascribed to biblical texts, canonical scholars emphasize the fact that the New Testament is the living document of a community of faith. As such, the way in which it has been read over the years as part of an authoritative canon is significant: the fact, for example, that Acts is placed after all the gospels shows that within the Christian canon it is not illegitimate to read it as following on from all the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus, and not just Luke’s. It is true, however, that Luke’s writings could be said to have suffered from their canonical use by Christian communities. Readings from Acts are relatively rare in most lectionaries: the Roman, and the Revised Common Lectionary for Sunday Eucharistic readings draw from Acts only in Eastertide. Within the history of political debate within the faith communities that ascribe to these texts a canonical status, Acts has frequently been seen as not much more than a

place to mine ammunition for a whole series of ecclesiastical disputes, such as the role of women within the Church, or the exact nature of the sacraments of initiation.

Nonetheless, the perspective that it is not illegitimate to read Luke-Acts alongside other New Testament texts within a context which presumes they speak to a shared end rather than in competition with each other is a refreshing one. Robert Wall's contribution to *The New Interpreter's Bible* openly champions canonical criticism, which he described as not sponsoring "any new exegetical strategy; rather it sponsors a particular orientation toward the biblical texts whose principal methodological interests are the text's final literary form and canonical functions."²⁶ Although canonical scholars emphasize the text's role as a narrative creation, its canonical status means that it cannot simply be treated like any other literary text; their use of secular literary theory is more chastened and less uncritical. It also means that other texts of the New Testament are just a legitimate conversation partners for Acts as Luke's gospel. So Wall, for example, brings the perspectives of John's gospel into much of his discussion of Peter, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of Christian witness. He also seeks to undo the assumption that Acts is about the two Apostles Peter and Paul. He places Acts within the much wider company of voices we hear in other New Testament texts ascribed to apostles. These voices he expects to be "contrapuntal, yet complementary"²⁷ – gone is the sometimes debilitating hermeneutic of suspicion, exchanged for a hermeneutic of creative trust.

Conclusions

Having attempted a sketch of some of the main strands of Lucan scholarship it would seem apposite to draw some conclusions.

The first is that although many new perspectives have appeared challenging to the historical-critical method, no one approach has achieved the near universality of acceptance within the academy that the historical-critical hermeneutic did in early- and mid-Twentieth Century biblical scholarship. Just as the great philosophical and political meta-narratives of modernity have given way to a post-modern kaleidoscope of many different competing perspectives,

²⁶ R. Wall, *The New Interpreter's Bible Vol 10* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), p. 382.

²⁷ Wall, *Interpreter's Bible*, p. 383.

so too the voices of a number of hermeneutical approaches compete to be heard within the realm of post-modern scholarly discourse.

A second conclusion is that in a post modern context, many of the more literary and synchronic readings which are so in fashion are increasingly being undermined by the very literary theory they claim to be stimulated by. Some post-modern criticisms of literary approaches have pointed out that the narrative theory of the 40s and 50s on which they are based, and which has only just percolated into theology faculties, is looking distinctly old hat within the world of literary theory. The preoccupation of post-War “New Criticism” with the unity, coherence and structure of stand-alone, poetic texts has given way to deconstructive and post-structuralist readings. Gunn and Nolan, in *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* point to the endlessly shifting, ambiguous, unreliable, almost duplicitous nature of writing: “We understand texts to be inherently unstable, since they contain within themselves the threads of their own unravelling. Language is always slippery ... Deconstructive criticism seeks to expound the gaps, the silences, the contradictions, which inhabit all texts, like loose threads in a sweater waiting to be pulled.”²⁸ A confidence that all literary texts have definite shape, structure, and beauty, which can be read, is no longer so universal.

A third point is that although many new strands of scholarship bring rewarding insights from a renewed emphasis on synchronic readings, there remain a number of historical-critical questions which still provide the foundation for those readings. Historical questions concerning genre, audience and authorship still operate as the foundations upon which many synchronic approaches are built (though those propounding them may not admit it). The evidence social-scientific approaches garner to produce “context” is equally contingent on historical enquiry. A constantly recurring question still seems to be the status of scientific enquiry using the tools of historical critical method.

A further conclusion is that there still remain within Lucan scholarship several taboos which are continually left virtually untouched. The relationship of Luke’s gospel to John’s is clearly a very under-investigated and lonely furrow, ploughed heroically by Barbara Shellard.²⁹ The response her work has received makes it clear that there is no appetite to investigate what is clearly an area in

²⁸ D. Dunn & D. Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), p. 10.

²⁹ B. Shellard, *New Light on Luke* (London and New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

need of significant work, but which is regarded by many as a no-go area. The similarly neglected area of the relationship between Luke's writings and apocalyptic thought is also in great need of further investigation. Garrett's³⁰ work on the significance of the motif of magic surely points to a need for greater research into the idea of the whole of Luke's gospel and Acts as a description of an apocalyptic clash between Satan and Christ. The strong and continued influence of Conzelmann's thinking still hovers over much examination of Luke's eschatology like a not entirely exorcized spectre. A similar long held prejudice created by historical criticism applies to assumptions about the value of Acts as a source of information about Paul. Although literary examination of Luke's presentation of Paul has done much to re-evaluate their worth, the evidence of Acts is still viewed with great hermeneutic suspicion, whilst Paul's own words in his letters are taken by some as self-authenticating statements of historical truth unalloyed by the slightest hint of any imposed personal agenda on Paul's part. The present state of the synoptic question also seems to be an area where a scholarly consensus has emerged which can stifle other voices. Although Goulder's scepticism about the Two Source Theory is gradually being taken slightly more seriously by some, there seems still to be no appetite to countenance the idea that Luke's sources could be more numerous than many imagine, and that these may include Matthew's gospel. Shellard, for example, has claimed that Luke may have access to some Pauline letters, and that he may even consider Josephus as one of his sources. Many ignore the fact that a satisfactory synoptic hypothesis must include some accounting for the Pauline Jesus traditions Luke includes in his texts.³¹ The idea that the composition of Luke's gospel may be much more rich, varied and complex in a way that might unpick the convenient scholarly consensus concerning the existence of Q is clearly one many do not wish to broach.

It is also evident that a significant re-appraisal of the canonical significance of Acts would seem to be necessary – and that such a re-appraisal could provide a fruitful lens through which to make sense of the more recent strands of Lucan thought. Acts all too often has been relegated to the sidelines of New Testament scholarship. However, if it were seen more as a canonical fulcrum, acting as a bridge between a whole series of New Testament genres and styles, its

³⁰ S.R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil* (Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1989).

³¹ It is clear, for example, that of all the gospels, it is Luke's description of the institution narrative at the Last Supper which is closest to Paul's in 1 Corinthians. Luke also has access to at least one Jesus tradition which he puts on Paul's lips when he quotes it in Acts 20.35.

significance might be appropriately restored: it connects with the Jesus traditions of the gospels, yet seeks to provide a history of the early years of the Church; it is the foundation of our picture of Paul, yet isn't one of his epistles; it is possibly one of the most Hellenistic of the New Testament texts, yet displays the greatest interest in Jewish institutions and religious life; it is seen by some as one of the most cerebrally rhetorical books of the New Testament, yet it displays elements of Jewish apocalyptic mysticism, and fascination with ecstatic vision.

Understood in this light, Lucan scholarship ought quite rightly to see itself as one of the most significant frontiers of New Testament scholarship, the conclusions and perspectives of which have consequences for New Testament theology as a whole.