

Rhetorical Construction of Jews and Pagans in The Book of Acts (Chapters 14-17)

1. INTRODUCTION

A. On Terminology

B. On the Complexity of the Categories “Pagan” and “Jew”

2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE JEWS CRITICALLY

A. Paul And Companionship

B. Duality of Evil and Good

3. CONSTRUCTION OF PAGANS SYMPATHETICALLY

A. Driving Force: Holy Spirit

B. Sameness with Pagans

4. AUTHORSHIP

A. Genre and Narrative

B. Greco-Roman Background of the Narrative

C. Brother Language in Acts

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The book of Acts is a narrative that tells the stories of the apostles, particularly Paul. We do not know who wrote the book of Acts but almost all of the scholars agree that the author who wrote the gospel of Luke also wrote the book of the Acts of Apostles. Because of the fact that the author who wrote Luke-Acts is anonymous, I will simply call him “the author”. While narrating the story or stories, the author does not only rely on the historicity of the story, but also arranges and follows the same patterns in order to reach a message in every chapter. Every single chapter continues to tell the story from where the previous one stops narrating. It is quite possible to follow the same rhetoric in different chapters and stories throughout the book of Acts. On the one hand, the story is gradually developed throughout the chapters. On the other hand, three figures have never changed: Paul who is the apostle and the main character, the Jews who are opponents, and the pagans who are constructed sympathetically.

The word *pagan* is a Latin term that comes from *paganus* which means *uneducated rural people, villager*. Although the author does not use the term “*pagan*”, which is not a Greek term, uses the term “*ethnoi*” to refer to what, in contemporary English, we would call “pagans” – that is, non-Jews, including those who have or might become Christians. The origin of “*gentile*” also comes from old Latin “*gentilis*” which means “*the nations*”. Most of the passages refer to “non-Jews, *people of other nations than Israel*” which includes Christians. In Greek and in the book of Acts, this refers to “*ethnoi*”. The word “*goyim* [s. *goy*]” in Hebrew has the same meaning as “*ethnoi*”. Although the word “*pagan*” in English is disputed, considering the rhetorical implication of the author, I will use the word “*pagan*” for “*ethnoi*” which are all nations other than the Jews. Therefore, I use the word Jews as

those who do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. The term pagans refers to non-Jews who are people of other nations including God-fearing Greeks.

In this paper, I ask the question how the author of Acts constructs the Jews and pagans rhetorically in chapters, particularly 14 to 17. In other words, how does the author of Acts use the rhetorical figure of *pagans*? To what purpose does he put them? I will argue that while the author portrays the Jews critically, he constructs pagans sympathetically. The author does not give this idea in the beginning of the book of Acts, nor does he express it explicitly. Rather, he progressively develops his narrative by intentionally putting pagans as receivers and accepters of Paul's message. By so doing, the author either implies or explicitly degrades the Jewish image in the eyes of the readers in order to facilitate the spread of Christianity among pagans rather than the Jews.

Although Paul is the main character of the book, the author does not necessarily seek the historicity of Paul, nor does the author arrange the stories and the figures he has depicted as historically authentic. Rather, he focuses on the ways in which pagans can be reached through the Christian faith. I will explain what challenges the author faces in the subsequent chapters. However, the fact that the author does not prioritize the historic authenticity of the narrative does not mean that he totally ignores the authenticity of the narrative. It is quite possible to find some partnerships with Paul's discourses, beyond being contrary to some of Paul's words. In the same way, the narrative does not contrast only with other books but also can contradict itself in the very same chapter. That the author puts the Jews as opposition (Acts 17:13) does not hinder Paul to cite his discourse (Acts 17:25) from 2 Macc. 14:35, 3 Macc. 2:9 which are considered Jewish holy books. That is, despite the fact that the author puts Paul against the Jews, he depicts Paul as having Jewish roots. In fact, it seems that being a "Jew" is not a problem itself, since he does not

refute the Jewishness of Paul and his friends -the apostles-. However, in his rhetoric, two distinct groups, which are the Jews and pagans, are explicit. In other words, the author does not intend to strike a negative attitude. Yet, his appealing to the Gentiles seems to lead him into rhetoric which is sympathetic to the pagans and as a consequence critical to the Jews.

The author gradually cultivates the depiction of Paul through the help of the Holy Spirit and the great disciples of Jesus right before a new and exciting development. As in Acts 15:28, the Holy Spirit confirms Paul's letter to the pagans in the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem. Furthermore, although Paul did not see Jesus in person with his own eyes, the author emphasizes Paul's companionship with these great apostles such as Peter and Barnabas so that Paul would not be corresponded as one who is not related to the Jesus and his apostles. Yet interestingly the author does not reflect the friendship of Paul with the other apostles regularly and consistently. Conversely, he draws attention to Paul's up-and-down relationship with his companions. The problem is not Paul's relationship or Paul himself, but the others who are opposed to him. In the author's narrative, Paul has never made a mistake. If there is a problem with Paul, the ones who take a stand against Paul are the problem makers. Paul is the chief apostle, and he is confirmed and supported by the Holy Spirit and the other apostles. God and Holy Spirit are always with those who have the right understanding and are on the side of the winners (Acts 5:35-39). In the end, Paul does not need any companionship, because he is the very one who is "the apostle to pagans".

A. On Terminology

Who is a Jew¹? What makes someone a Christian? At what point would a Jew's ideas about Jesus make him/her a Christian? And would someone inhabiting this border region be a Christian Jew or a Jewish Christian –or neither? There is no simple and enduring answer that exists to such questions, in particular considering in the first century that theologically, culturally, racially diverse milieu. Difficulty of the terminology and the identity of the groups are because of both sharing the similarity and participation, and “the parting of the ways” between Judaism and “the way” “*tēs Hodou*” (Acts 9:2, 19.9, 23; 24. 14, 22). Since the Jesus, Paul and the first Christ-followers were surely Jewish², they have an inheritance of being and having Jewishness. Yet because of believing in Jesus as the Christ “*ho Christos*”, they are parting their ways from Jews.

Whereas Judaism is somehow clear-cut, the complexity of the issue raises from not just that they are the Christ-followers, but also that they are being anti-Judaism or anti-Jewish albeit they are Jews. The latter may not be specific enough to specify whether it denotes people, or customs, or religion.³ It would be unfair to generalize that all the Christ-followers are anti-Jewish. This difficulty emerges from the fact that they were all Jews, so it is not that clear what the term “Christian” correspond to in the first century. Is Paul the Jew “anti-Jewish” because he objects to characteristic attitudes toward the law maintained by most of his fellow Jews?

¹ Josephus defines it as following: “*Ioudaioi* is the name they are called by from the day that they came up from Babylon, which is taken from the tribe of Judah, which came first to these places, and thence both they and the country gained that appellation.” Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.5.7. However, the author of the book of Acts does not restrict the definition to Judea, rather, he also includes the Hellenized Jews who live outside Judea and are involved in Greek culture.

² Sanders, E. P., *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 1-12.

³ Dunn, James D. G., *Jews and Christians*, 180.

We encounter a similar problem with the term “anti-Judaism”. We can ask again whether the author of Acts uses his rhetoric as being “anti-Judaism”. It does not seem to be fair, either. Douglas Hare distinguishes three kinds of “anti-Judaism”. First, politic anti-Judaism –typified by prophetic and sectarian critique of the religious practices of the time. Second, Jewish-Christian anti-Judaism –criticism by Jews who have come to believe in Jesus as Messiah of their fellow Jews who failed to believe so. Third, Gentilizing anti-Judaism –emphasizing the Gentile/pagan character of the new movement and claiming God’s rejection of the “old” Israel.⁴ This distinction can be helpful in terms of specifying the big concept of “anti-Judaism and in terms of” clarifying in what sense the author puts Jews critically and pagans sympathetically in his book. The “Gentilizing anti-Judaism” rhetoric and perspective obviously corresponds to the rhetoric of the author of Acts.

B. On the Complexity of the Categories “Pagan” and “Jew”

I have mentioned the complexity of the issue above, yet this section will elaborate the “pagan” and “Jew” particularly within the frame of Acts 14-17, emphasizing not just complexity but also importance of categories. Looking to two distinct religions and those who believe two different religions, we can observe and distinguish Christianity and Christians, Judaism and Jews. However, in the first century CE, it is not quite clear what and who Christian, Jew, pagan, gentile, or even God-fearer are. Scholars have not agreed on certain terms that are pertinent among them. On the one hand, some argue tha

⁴ Hare, D. R. A., “The Rejection of the Jews in the Synoptics and Acts”, 28-32.

t there are such groups as Jewish Christianity or Christian Judaism, on the other hand some argue that the terms “confiscate more than it illuminates about the origins of the Christian religion.”⁵ Along the same lines, it is evidently anachronistic and positively misleading to consider calling such borderline groups “Christian” at all during this period.

More importantly, whereas we have seen that there is no clear-cut group apart from the “Jews” and the author apparently does not use frequently the term “Christian”⁶, he draws a salient line between the Jews “*hoi Ioudaioi*” and the pagans [gentiles] “*ta ethnē*”. The author does not profess his ethnicity or the ethnicities of the first apostles, who all are Jews. Nor does he enunciate that they are “the Christians”. Rather, by putting two ambiguous terms –they are Jew and pagan- he is pushing this new movement to the “gentile” category. The author intentionally and rhetorically moves from the Jew category to Gentile category. That is, the author pushes “Christian” to the “Gentile” category, despite the fact that the earliest Christians were Jews.

Indeed, the issue can be clarified by identifying “Jew” and by determining how the author of Acts uses Jew and pagan in his chapters. Because, the usage of the term is not necessarily a description of Jews as a whole⁷. The fact that the author uses the term in his own understanding and interpretation, and the author has a pattern of uses, indicates that it is much more important to grasp rhetorical usage of the author regardless of its historicity or reality.

For better understanding, I should underline the importance of the identity and terms by looking to the crucial period of the development of a distinctively “Christian” identity. Because

⁵ Jackson-McCabe, Matt, *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered*, pp. 9.

⁶ He mentions “*Christianous*” twice in Acts 11:26 and 26:28: “It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians” “*chrēmatisai te prōtōs en Antiocheia tous mathētas Christianous*”. And “...Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?” “...*En oligō me peitheis Christianon poiēsai*,” respectively.

⁷ Dunn, James D. G., *Jews and Christians*, 182-87.

it will be anachronistic to use the term "Christian" for the new category that the author is trying to advance, so, as David Horrell offers, I would rather prefer to use the process of “becoming-Christian”⁸ which has a distinct and defined identity and content vis-à-vis Judaism. Although Baur argued that there were only two types of early Christians: Jewish Christians, with Peter as their leader, and Gentile Christians, with Paul as their leader, historically it is difficult to draw such a sharp line between two distinct groups. I will not examine the historicity and reality of the term, rather I will draw attention to the rhetoric of the author. In other words, I agree with this sharp distinction between two groups to the extent of the rhetorical discourse of the author, yet the issue in the first century looks more complicated than it is seen. So, the process of “becoming Christian” looks more accurate, because it both implies the diversity of the groups at that time, and it has become prominent and conceptualized over time.

The process of “becoming Christian” started as a small sect of “Jesus-followers” in Nazareth; before long, the movement expands to include pagans as well as Jews. Under Paul’s influence in particular, these groups of Jews and Gentiles find their common social identity not in the marks of Jewish belonging, but by being in Christ, a faith-commitment enacted and embodied in baptism. Although this new identity looks simply like a religious identity in Christ, it is also a profoundly positive social identity. This new group is not chosen people, instead they are the *true* people of God, not under Torah/law, but they are who fulfill the law in the Spirit’s power. This group thought that they are the true inheritance of Israel with which claims that status of others, i.e. non-Jews, is misguided and has failed.

Besides, “in-group and out-group” language is another important aspect of the formation of the identity, group or term. “As a member of one group or another led to increase of friendship

⁸ Horrell, David, “*Becoming Christian*”: *Solidifying Christian Identity and Content*.1-34.

and bonds within the in-group and, in certain situations, hostility towards out-group members.”⁹ To put it another way, merely the feeling of belonging to a particular group on its own can bring some attitudes to those who are categorized as insiders or outsiders regarding the group boundary. In this social aspect, people tend to exaggerate the differences between categories and simultaneously minimize the differences within the categories. Accentuating their similarity binds their togetherness while they are sharply distinguished from outsiders. In the rhetoric of the author, we can trace the implications and indications of this social boundary. K. G. Kuhn notes that “in the post-biblical period “*Israēl*” was the people’s preferred name for itself, whereas “*Ioudaiois*” was the name by which they were known to others.”¹⁰ Then “Jew” was designated by which Jews were distinguished from outsiders, i.e. other ethnic and religious groups. Therefore, we might say that “*Jew*” always had something of an outsider’s point of view; whereas “*Israel*” and “*Israelite*” was much more an insider designation.

In such social identity, the direction has changed from Jews towards pagans in terms of ethnicity; from Jerusalem, where Paul leaves, towards Athens and later Rome, where Paul settles, in terms of geographical difference over time¹¹. This geographical setting which is based on many Jewish rejection and continuation of the mission in the Gentile stage is reduced to single movement: “from Jerusalem into the Gentile world”¹². The author of Acts explicitly promotes appealing to pagans while putting Jews away from “the new way”. By looking at the Jews from outside –as I exemplified above with the term “*Israelite*” and “*Ioudaiois*”-, he

⁹ Esler, Philip F., *Galatians*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, pp. 42.

¹⁰ Dunn, James D.G., *Ibid.* 186.

¹¹ Richard I. Pervo points out several different models such as thematic, literary models alongside overlapping techniques and propensity toward a fluid. See *Acts* 20-21.

¹² Tannehill, *The Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul’s Mission in Acts*, pp.135, in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 1986. Edited by Kent Harold Richards. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press.

develops a critical language towards them. He uses a sympathetic rhetoric and language towards pagans by implying that they are more teachable than Jews. Nevertheless, Jews are not discarded but under one condition: they can be good, too as long as fitting this new description which pagans are perfectly fitting.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF JEWS CRITICALLY

This section intends to trace the patterns the author has constructed and has gradually developed about the Jews throughout the related chapters. I will elaborate on how critically the Jews are portrayed. Some might think that the author depicts the Jews in accordance with the historical reality; I argue that the narrator puts the Jews in a subordinate and oppositional position carefully and deliberately in order to lay the ground for pagans. To put it bluntly, the author constructs duality of evil and good in the position of the Jews and pagans. Also, while the narrator depicts Paul as a close friend of the apostles of Jesus in Jerusalem, he gradually develops a new language that has no connection to these apostles, is isolated, and he becomes a separate apostle. The apostles of Jesus and Jerusalem are the main roots from which Paul took his authority. However, this step is not an endpoint for the author. Rather, after strengthening Paul's authority, he tries to construct Paul's sole apostleship to pagans.

Looking at the chapters, it is profoundly difficult to apprehend who the Jews are in the language of the author. It seems that he sometimes means by the Jews all inhabitants of Jerusalem (Acts chapter 15). He sometimes refers to the Jews in Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus and Rome¹³, as the ones opposing Jesus (Acts 14:1, 18:5-6, 19:10, 28:17 respectively). The author definitely makes distinction not simply between the Jews and the pagans, but he also does make

¹³ The Jews in Rome are primarily the Jewish leaders.

a distinction between the Jews. On the one hand, the Jews are depicted as unbelievers (Acts 14:2,19), on the other hand, the author does not avoid portraying them as believers (14:1, 17:11-12, 18:8). It is true that Tannehill argues that “the repeated references to resistance in the synagogue, followed by a shift to a Gentile location, suggest that the narrator is adjusting to a hard fact”¹⁴. Additionally, Sanders indicates that the author “seems to indicate all the Jewish people as those hostile to the divine purpose”¹⁵. Yet, I would rather argue that this hostile language is authorial deliberate rhetoric, namely, he intentionally assumes such hostile rhetoric that he legitimizes and facilitates missions to the gentiles. That the author does not follow an invariable language for the Jews under all circumstances does make some ambiguities. Yet, if we think in a way which the Jews can be good, as long as fitting the new description which pagans are perfectly fitting, and if we start solving the problem from understanding the authorial rhetoric toward the Jews and the pagan, it definitely solves this problem. The inconsistencies might hinder the narrative from following easily, however, the contrasting description has been given in “subtle shades”. The author fits the description into “various moulds according to Luke’s plan of historical development”¹⁶. Therefore, although the author may accept the salvation of individual Jew, in principle, he portrays the Jews as opponent group by appealing to the pagans. I will elaborate on it in following sections within the boundaries of Acts 14-17.

A. Paul and Companionship

Paul is mentioned as Saul “Σαῦλος” in earlier sections of the book of Acts before he became a follower of Jesus Christ. The author refers to him as Paul right after Paul’s conversion.

¹⁴ Tannehill, Robert C., *Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul’s Mission in Acts*, pp.134-135, in Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 1986. Edited by Kent Harold Richards. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press.

¹⁵ Sanders, Jack T., *The Jews in the Luke-Acts*, SBL, (1987), pp.110, 124.

¹⁶ Sanders, Jack T., *The Jews in the Luke-Acts*, (1986), pp.41; Sanders, Jack T., *The Jews in the Luke-Acts*, SBL, (1987), pp.112.

In Acts 13:9, Saul is called “Paul” the first time. This is not a just a name change, nor does it simply a religious conversion, instead, it does incorporate more profound rhetorical implications.¹⁷ In other words, the author implicates that Paul is not an apostle of the Jews, he is the apostle to pagans. Saul is a Hebrew name which also evokes Jewishness, but Paul is a Latin name with connotation of “paganness”. By highlighting this big change, the author starts forming the foundation of his narrative. Paul did not get only a new name, he also gets a new mission which is spreading the faith “*pistis*” among pagans in the rhetoric of the author.

Paul has an unstable companionship with the great apostles in these particular chapters. It seems that the author needs to consolidate the authority of Paul, who did not see Jesus in person, with other apostles, who, witnessed Jesus in the flesh. For highlighting the companionship of Paul with the other apostles, the author juxtaposes Paul with Barnabas “*ton Barnaban*” (Act 14). Yet as soon as the author thinks that Paul is constructed as an apostle, and also as a companion of the apostle, the author does not conceal the sharp disagreement “*paroxysmos*” between Paul and Barnabas. “They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company” (Acts 15:39). The depiction consolidates Paul's apostolic authority. Indeed, what is striking is that the intention of the author deliberately appears not at the beginning of the story, rather right after the story. Acts 15, where the disagreement is narrated, gives a detailed picture about the Apostolic Council that makes a decision about what rules should be taken for pagans in Jerusalem. Although everyone is depicted as a position that supporting Paul in the depiction, it is not surprising that the only one who is speaking with Paul is Barnabas. “The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul “*Barnaba kai Paulou*” as they told of all the signs and wonders “*sēmeia kai terata*” that God had done through them among the Gentiles.” (Acts 15:12). Barnabas was

¹⁷ Horsley, G.H.R., *Name Change as an Indication of Religious Conversion in Antiquity*, Numen Vol. 34, Fasc. 1 (Jun., 1987), pp. 7-8.

depicted as a companion of Paul initially, shortly after his disagreement, Barnabas is dropped by justifying Paul's righteousness. Barnabas and Paul were juxtaposed so that it would imply that Barnabas is with Paul.

37“Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus” (Acts 15:37-39).

Another example is Peter who is the one standing up with Paul in the Council. Unlike Galatians 2:7-8 and 14-21, Acts 15:7-11 depicts Peter as a supporter of Paul in the circumcision debate at the Council of Jerusalem. Whereas Paul opposed Peter to his face in Galatians 2:11. Peter is depicted as against Gentiles and circumcision: “Peter began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group”. Acts 15:7 asserts opposite one: “I [Peter] should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers”. Furthermore, Peter in Acts 15 does not only support Paul's circumcision decision¹⁸, but he is also depicted as opposite of what Galatians 2 describes. Peter says in Acts 15:10 “why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear?”. Peter speaks as if he were not part of the Jewish community¹⁹. It is not clear what Peter tries to say exactly, yet one thing is clear: Even Peter is against Jews and circumcision, that is to say, Peter is depicted in Paul's letters as being against circumcision. To put it succinctly, it is striking

¹⁸ One of the main issues narrated in Acts 15 is the circumcision matter of pagans. The Council of Jerusalem is assembled because of whether pagans should be circumcised or not. At the end, even Peter approves Paul's decision, which is “The Gentiles do not have to be circumcised”. The depiction implies that those who require circumcision are the Jews (Acts 15:1,5), who are the evil ones; those who do not consider circumcision necessary are Paul, his friends and pagans, who are the good ones.

¹⁹ Richard I. Pervo, *Acts A Commentary*, 354.

that on the one hand, the Paul's letters as antecedent document depict that Peter was never against circumcision, and he was even entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised "*tēs peritomēs*" as in Gal. 2:7, on the other hand, in Acts 15:5-11, Peter is the very one who against some Pharisees defending circumcision and supporting the gentiles.

Gal. 2:11-12: "When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back "*hypestellen*" and separate "*aphōrizen*" himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group "*tous ek peritomēs*". The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray."

As seen, these two narratives are quite different, even opposite to each other. In the letter of Paul, while Peter is depicted as being pro-Jews, against-pagans, and against-circumcision, the author of Acts re-constructs Peter as pro-pagans, and pro-circumcision; and against-Jews. This contradiction is significant not simply because it is an alternative narrative, but also terms of in author's own construction despite the letters were written before.

B. Duality of Good and Evil

The author of the book of Acts exhibits his literary skills eloquently in order to persuade the readers. One of the fundamental ways that he represents the Jews and pagans is to demonstrate them in duality. I argue that by constructing the duality of good and evil, the author aims to not simply take the side of good, but also, he wants his readers to take the side of good and to be a good. Of course, the good side represents Paul, not the other apostles, who have disagreement with Paul; and pagans not the Jews. This duality is the main feature the author

frequently applies: Jews-pagans, deniers-believers, and slave-girl “*paidiskēn tina*”²⁰, who is depicted as against Paul and Barnabas- Lydia, who is a believer in Jesus (Acts 16:11-18). By doing so, the author develops a literary style, a coherency, and a thoroughness which shape a conspicuous rhetoric in a duality.

Although the ethnic and religious identity in the first century of Paul is quite ambiguous, the author draws a clear line between the Jews and the pagans. This hard-edged narrative is the prominent feature of his rhetorical discourse. Throughout the chapters, the author tells the narrative in Jews-pagans dichotomy. Paul starts his journey with the Jews from the synagogues (Acts 14:1, Acts 17:1-2), and then Paul is either being stoned (Acts 14:5) or pagans are being stirred up by the Jews (Acts 14:2). Wherever Paul preaches at, pagans are the ones who are depicted as receivers, the Jews are the ones who are rejecting the message of Paul.

Chapter 16: “**13** On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. **14** One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God “*sebomenē ton Theon*”. The Lord “*ho Kyrios*” opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. **15** When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.”

“**16** Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future “*paidiskēn tina echousan pneuma Pythōna*”. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling... **19** Then her owners “*hoi kyrioi autēs*” realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. **20** They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar “*Houtoi hoi anthrōpoi ektarassousin hēmōn tēn polin, Ioudaioi hyparchontes*” **21** by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

²⁰ Pervo, *Acts A Commentary*, 404-405.

In Acts 16:13-15, the author introduces a “good woman” who is a God-fearing one “*sebomenē ton Theon*” whose name is Lydia from a Greek city Thyatira in Asia Minor. She is a dealer in purple cloth, that is, depicted as well-to-do. The Lord “*ho Kyrios*” opens her heart to respond to Paul’s message. She receives Paul’s message and she is baptized with her household. Right after this vivid depiction, the author describes another “evil woman” who had a spirit by which she predicted the future “*paidiskēn tina echousan pneuma Pythōna*” (Acts 16:16). Although this evil woman does not do anything against Paul, her owners “*hoi kyrioi autēs*”²¹ are the cause of Paul to go jail with Silas. The verse implies that those who accept Jesus as the Lord “*ho Kyrioi*” are the followers of Paul, which takes side with good, those who have other *kyrioi* other than Jesus are the followers of evil. Admittedly, it is not a coincidence that the narrator puts these two to opposite depiction side by side. Indeed the purpose is not necessarily Paul and the acts of the Paul Apostles. Rather, the author has a certain narrative structure which promotes Paul with such categories as mostly the gentiles are fitting in. Conversely, the Jews are described as those who adapt an attitude against Paul. Therefore, I conclude that although the author does not aim at narrating simply the acts of Paul and other apostles, he constates Paul as an apostle to the good one who are pagans alongside depicting other side as evil-doers.

Richard I. Pervo points out that although this passage looks not to be fitted in the chapter, the author does not construct this opposition narrative pointless. This narrative demonstrates “the superiority of Christianity to vulgar religion which resembled the superstitions hawked in public

²¹ Also, “*ho Kyrios*” in verse 14 refers to Jesus, whereas “*hoi kyrioi autēs*” refers to masters of the evil girl. The author uses this kind of inversions and reversal of the syntax in order to annihilate the use of the opponent and reconceptualize his own “real meaning”.

squares by unscrupulous quack”²². The slave-girl and the well-to-do Lydia is created in a dichotomy degrading one side, while eulogizing the other side by taking a stand.

In chapter 16, the author definitely constructs a Jewish-pagan dichotomy and duality of good and evil. Yet, whether this particular passage is a collision between Jews and pagans or Christianity and vulgar polytheism is not that explicit. Nevertheless, it can be clearly seen that the author quite simply constructs the narrative in a contrastive rhetoric. Hence, Paul is taking the good side which is of pagans, and the other is the evil-doer: either Jews or vulgar polytheists. This is the authorial ploy persuading readers only one side: of Gentiles.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF PAGANS SYMPATHETICALLY

After explaining how the author constructed characterization of the Jews, in this section I will turn to the construction of the pagans. Although the author depicts that both the Jews and the pagans “*Ioudaiōn te kai Hellēnōn*” are believers “*pisteusai*” in the very first verse of the chapter fourteen, later on, he has created a rift between the Jews and the pagans. The pattern is quite straightforward. Paul turns to pagans, not the Jews, because of the unbelieving Jews “*hoi apeithēsantes Ioudaioi*” who refuse to believe and stir up the other Gentiles and poison their minds against the brothers. (Acts 14:2).

A. Driving Force: Holy Spirit

This passage will show how the author puts the Holy Spirit in the narrative right before Paul commences his mission to pagans. Whereas the Holy Spirit has the same functions the author follows throughout the book, there are two basic different spirits the author states. One is “*psuchē*” (Acts 14:21) and another one is “*to Pneuma*” which both mean “spirit or wind” in

²² Pervo, *Acts*, 404.

Greek. While the author mentions “*psuchē*” once, “*to Pneuma*” has been stated several times. The author prefers to use “*to Pneuma*” or “*to Pneuma to Hagion*” for the Holy Spirit in the chapters. He does not explain a duality as body and spirit, nor does he affirm that a human consists of two distinct parts as *psuché* and *pneuma*. However, this “spirit language” holds a sort of special rhetorical hints. In other words, this distinction shapes his rhetoric in terms of constructing a clear distinction between these two categories. Furthermore, he uses “*to Pneuma*” not only for “the Holy Spirit”, but also for the Spirit of Jesus “*to Pneuma Iēsou*” (Acts 16:7) which is the good spirit. On the other hand, aforementioned slave-girl has the evil spirit “*pneuma Pythōna*” (Acts 16:16). A continuous dichotomy is here as a good spirit, which Paul takes side, and evil spirit. The rhetoric of the author serves a clear dichotomy again between good side and evil side.

Chapter 15: “**7** After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles “*ta ethnē*” might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. **8** The heart-knowing God showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit “*to Pneuma to Hagion*” to them “*autois*”, just as he did to us “*hēmin*”.

I have shown repeatedly in previous sections that the author depicts that Paul has never started his missions without any help. The author reinforces the authority of Paul either with the apostles or with the Holy Spirit. Whereas the apostles can vary, be replaced by another and Paul consonantly falls out with the apostles, the Holy Spirit is depicted as a permanent and an intimate friend of Paul. The Holy Spirit is not simply a friend, but also an accepter (Acts 15:8) a supporter, (Acts 15:32), an approver, a decision-maker with the apostles (Acts 15:32), and a guide (Acts 16:6).

The construction of the Holy Spirit is such a distinct part of the rhetoric of the author which we hardly encounter in any other narrative. The beginning of Acts (Acts 2:4) and the story of the beginning of the mission to pagans (Acts 10:44-48) are marked by the experience of the Spirit. Although Paul does not have a real friend from the apostles anymore, since he is in a big disagreement with Barnabas and Peter, his best and perpetual friend is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a steady guide of Paul towards pagans. Paul had been supported by the Apostles of Jerusalem before. The author describes the apostles as Paul's temporary companions with whom Paul consolidates his authority. Now, the Holy Spirit is the one who is the perpetual companion supporting him. The fact that the apostles are described as temporary friends is not the only difference between the apostles and The Holy Spirit in terms of companionship. Also, the author associates the apostles with Jerusalem which implies geographical component to the rhetoric, whereas he associates the Holy Spirit with Athens where pagans have lived. It is one of the main patterns that the author describes Jerusalem and the apostles of Jerusalem as temporary while constructing Athens and the Holy Spirit as a perpetual, permanent companion of Paul. That is why the author portrays the coming of the Spirit not as subsequent to but part of the conversion-initiation experience.

Chapter 16: “**6** Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit “*hypo tou Hagiou Pneumatos*” from preaching the word in the province of Asia. **7** When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus “*to Pneuma Iēsou*” would not allow “*ouk eiasen*” them to.”

Unlike in the stories about Philip (8:26-39) and Cornelius (10:1-48), the role of the Holy Spirit in 16:6-8 is negative. The Holy Spirit is not the only one who tells Paul what to do, but also tells him what not to do. The narrator does not clearly explain the means of these

revelations, yet he puts the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus in the same position and function. Although the fact that the author mentions the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus separately implies that these are two different identities, he uses them as having the same function which orients towards pagans.

“**28** It seemed good “*edoxen*” to the Holy Spirit “*tō Pneumati tō Hagiō*” and to us “*hēmin*” not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements. **29** You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols “*apechesthai eidōlothyōn*”, from blood “*haimatos*”, from the meat of strangled animals “*pniktōn*” and from sexual immorality “*kai porneias*”. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.” (Acts 15:28,29)

Verse 28 is stated right after the Council of Jerusalem upon circumcision debate. The assembly decides to send a letter including 4 rules: to abstain from 1) food sacrificed to idols “*apechesthai eidōlothyōn*”, 2) blood “*haimatos*”, 3) the meat of strangled animals “*pniktōn*” 4) sexual immorality “*kai porneias*”. While replacing these 4 rules by the Jewish law, which pagans do not have to follow, the author embeds the Holy Spirit in such an important event in order to consolidate Paul’s authority and mission to pagans. This consolidation is not for pagans but for the apostles and the Jews, too. By setting these rules with the Holy Spirit, he aims at reaching pagans easily and reducing the negative reactions of the Jews and the Jewish Christians who have Jewish roots. It is so interesting the way in which the author of the book of Acts portrays the apostles with the Holy Spirit on the same ground: “It seemed good “*edoxen*” to the Holy Spirit “*tō Pneumati tō Hagiō*” and to us “*hēmin*”” (Acts 15:28). The author suggests that these rules are decided by the apostles but he adds that the rules for pagans are approved by the Holy Spirit which is equal to the Spirit of Jesus, i.e. Jesus himself. In this way, if we trace the storyline the author follows carefully, we can see how the author constructs the narrative and how he

makes connection between two things. At the end of the story, the letter from the assembly is equal to the Holy Spirit and to the Spirit of Jesus who follow the same track as Paul.

Having examined how the author equates Paul and the Holy Spirit, now I will explore how he constructs Paul with pagans on the same ground.

B. Sameness with Pagans

“We too are only human, like you.” “*hēmeis homoioatheis esmen hymin anthrōpoi*” (Acts 14:15).

Another main feature of the narrative is Paul’s discourse equating the Jesus followers with pagans so that he underscores how sympathetically he approaches them. Some people might consider the narrative of the author as a part of the historicity of the story, but I argue that the rhetoric of the author creates a new language which brings together the apostles with pagans on the same ground. The fact that the author puts pagans in a superior position naturally results in degrading the Jews in the rhetoric of the author. Since the author starts narrating the missionary journey of Paul from the synagogues, it might be a big claim to assert that the author explicitly maintains a stance against the Jews. Indeed, initial encounter with the Jewish community was positive (Acts 13:14–16, 42–43)²³. However, the narrative follows a linear development for the pagans, against the Jews. I argue that the author prioritizes and highlights the commonality and sameness with pagans on every occasion, rather than aiming at the Jews. By so doing, while the author constructs pagans as humans like themselves “*homoioatheis*” by drawing attention to their sameness with pagans, he places the Jews in a lower position.

²³ Schnabel, Eckhard J., *Jewish Opposition to Christians in Asia Minor in the First Century*, Bulletin for Biblical Research 18.2 (2008), pp. 235.

Verse 15 explicitly points to pagans as human beings like the apostles themselves. It is not certain to what extent the author makes the concession to his faith, yet in spite of the fact that these apostles were Jews, the author tries to both construct them close to pagans and to bring pagans with the apostles. The chapter starts by narrating what Jews did against Paul and his apostle friends. When the apostles come by a Greek city, Lystra, the narrative reveals sympathetically the discourse of the apostles towards pagans which says “*we are, too, human like you*” (Acts 14:15). Then the next verses in the same chapter again emphasize that “They [the Jews] stoned Paul “*lithasantes ton Paulon*” and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead “*nomizontes auton tethnēkenai*”” (Acts 14:19).

15 “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you “*homoiotheis*”. We are bringing you good news “*euangelizomenoi*”, telling you to turn from these vain things “*toutōn tōn mataiōn*” to the living God “*theon zōnta*”, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. 16 In the past, he let all nations “*ta ethne*” go their own way “*tais hodois autōn*”. 17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy” (14:15-17).

19 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium “*apo Antiocheias kai Ikoniou Ioudaioi*” and persuaded “*peisantes*” the crowd. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead (14:19).

I am not sure if we make such a big claim that the author read widely in Greek philosophy, by which I mean a deep acquaintance with primary philosophical sources, yet in general it seems that he tries to claim by looking from Greek eyes. Paul relies on the natural phenomena such as rain from heaven and crops in their seasons “*ouranothen... hyetous... kai*

karirous karpophorous" (14:17) rather than applying to only abstract theological/metaphysical bases. The author tries to exhibit Paul as a Greek philosopher by showing advance proof to assume the existence of one God.²⁴ Here Paul highlights two things: the one God and his power manifested throughout the universe.²⁵ Although this thought might also be partially based on Hellenistic Jewish philosophy, it is rooted most commonly in the Greek/Stoic philosophy, that is, the Stoic "natural theology". This language is indeed different from which it has been used for the Jews. It is obvious that this rhetoric is the resultant of covalent bond between the pagans and the "Christians". However, by keeping the Christians and the pagans on a common ground, the author does not abandon Jewish roots of the new movement²⁶, nor does he explicitly make the concession to his faith. What he does is to appropriate a good number of key verbs from Jewish mission literature such as vain things "*tōn mataiōn*", to turn "*epistrephein*" and living god "*theon zōnta*" (14:15)²⁷, and to invite pagans to abandon polytheism. Alternatively, he does summon them to the living God, because He has created all things.

In addition to these, verse 19 is literally an insertion that makes the differentiation between the Jews and the pagans visible. Although the main point in this particular passage is creating a common ground between the new movement and the pagans, the fact that the author mentions the Jews in a bad light in verse 19 emphasizes the sharp distinction between them. Considering both "*homoiothentes*" with the pagans and that the Jews persuaded the crowd and stoned Paul vividly reveals the author's rhetorical goal.

²⁴ Pervo, *Acts*, 358-59.

²⁵ Bultmann asserts that the idea "one God and manifesting through nature" is deeply rooted in certain Hellenistic (Stoic) philosophy. *Theology of New Testament*, V.I, pp.67-72.

²⁶ What I mean by the movement is Christianity.

²⁷ Conzelmann, Hans, *Acts of Apostles*, 110-11.

Another indicator that directly demonstrates the author's sympathy for pagans is to show them as brothers "*ton adelphōn*", in return of representing the Jews as unbelievers "*apeithēsantes*" as in Acts 14:2. This verse is so striking that we can conclude what kind of approach the author uses in his rhetoric. Even this very verse can be the gist of the author who has a certain attitude for pagans and against the Jews. Pagans are brothers, the Jews are the ones who do not believe, provokes pagans and poisons the minds of pagans who are the brothers.

This verse is so striking that we can conclude what kind of attitude the author uses in his rhetoric. that even this very verse can be the gist of the author

"The Jews who refused to believe "*hoi de apeithēsantes*" stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers "*kata tōn adelphōn*²⁸" (14:2).

Since Greek does not have two different words for "brother" and "sister", the author uses the same one for both of them: "*hoi adelphoi*" which corresponds to both.

"After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia[’s house] "*pros tēn Lydian*" , where they met with the sisters "*tous adelphous*" and encouraged them. Then they left." (Acts 16: 40)

The verse probably implies only sisters. Because in the same chapter verse 13-14, the author mentions that the apostles sit down and began to speak to the women who have gathered there "*tais synelthousais gynaixin*". Regardless of the gender, the author calls pagans as brothers, which indicates the sameness.

²⁸ The chapters 14-17 mentions a number of the verb "brother": Acts **14:2**; **15:1,2,3,6,13,22,23,25,32,33,36,40**; **16:2,40**; **17:6,10,14**. I will elaborate on it later in the following chapter "Authorship" under the title "C. Brother language in Acts". I demonstrate that the author basically uses "*adelphos*" to denote three different groups: The apostles, the Jews and the pagans.

Brotherhood is generally considered within the same religion. The apostles call each other as “brothers”.

After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers “*adelphoi*”, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. (Acts 15:7)

“James spoke up. “Brothers,” “*adelphoi*” he said, “listen to me.” (Acts 15: 13)

The author, however, broadens the boundary of the concept so as to include pagans who are not really parts of the faith, yet.

“The apostles “*Hoi apostoloi*” and elders “*oi presbyteroi*”, your brothers “*adelphoi*”, To the brothers among the Gentile believers “*adelphois tois ex ethnōn*” in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.” (Acts 15: 23)

It is the opening of the letter which the apostles are supposed to send to pagan brothers. The author indicates that the apostles not only call themselves brothers, but also call pagans brothers. It is also really important in terms of rhetorical indication that the letter is sent by the apostle brothers to the pagan brothers. It seems that the author broadens the boundary of the word “*adelphos*” from the consanguineal meaning to such wider conception including the pagans. Indeed, the pagans never share the same ethnicity, nor do they have a common belief system with the Christians. The author, however, pushes the Christians to the pagan group in the “brother language”.

All in all, the author constructs the Holy Spirit, and uses the “brother language” towards pagans in order to consolidate the tie between early Christians and pagans and to give a strong message for those who read the book so that they could read them sympathetically.

4. AUTHORSHIP

Most of the scholars agree that the author of the book of Acts is also the same one who wrote the Gospel of Luke. Considering the unity of Luke-Acts, I agree with the statement that the same author wrote both of them. As for the authorship of Acts, there are certain aspects that the author employs as following: first, orders and connections; second, “summaries, which interrupt the flow of the narrative in order to abstract from it an image and thereby to indicate its meaning”²⁹; and third, the insertion of speeches such as in Lystra and Areopagus.

The connection implies that in fact it is not Paul’s will to orient his preaching from the Jews to the pagans. Rather, Paul is rejected, despite his all efforts, then he turns his face towards pagans. The implication of the author is that Paul have done whatever it took to save the Jews, yet they have never accepted Paul’s mission. There is nothing to do for Paul, but only turning to the gentiles. It is a dilemma that although author uses salvific language mainly based on the Jewish thought such as the one God and living God, his main theology is the debate with the Jews and appealing to the pagans. It looks it is a dilemma that the author depicts the Jews as the ones who reject Paul, even though he starts preaching from synagogue “*tē synagōgēn*” (Acts 13:5,14-15; 14:1; 17:1,10,17). On the one hand, he frequently calls the pagans brothers, he does not avoid calling the Jews brothers on the other. Acts 1:14; 6:7; 9:31; can be shown as examples of the summaries. It looks that these summaries interrupt the order of the narrative, yet it is especially significant in terms of his emphasis. I think Acts 14:19 is kind of this narrative. While the context is of the pagans, 14:19 highlights the contrast between the Jews and the pagans. Not only are themes enough to understand the book of Acts, but also should be examined what kind of genre the author creates.

²⁹ Conzelmann, *Acts of Apostles*, xlii-xliii.

A. Genre and Narrative

For ancient writers probably there was no such sharp distinction as we have today in academia for improving our understanding of the text. Although some might object to approaching the ancient texts by deciding the genre, or even might argue that genre is nonsense for an ancient text, I suggest that genre can help us to understand the ancient text, since deciding the genre of the book corresponds to some historical, cultural and theological content. As S. M. Praeder asserts, “identification of Luke-Acts as an ancient novel secures for it a place in a recognizable literary historical context”³⁰. I argue that even though the author does not adhere to one particular genre in the book of Acts, the genres the author espouses in the narrative tell us to what purpose he does put such categories as “Jew” “pagan” and even “Christian”.

The intention of the author and the audience whom the author addresses is also important in terms of what kind of rhetoric Acts developed. I should admit that I do not mean to suggest that the author has one specific audience, nor do I want to imply that the author has a lucid purpose mentioned in the book. Instead, what I simply mean is that as long as we trace the groups that the author constructs as a tandem, this definitely will help us to grasp what intention and audience motivates the author to establish his book in this way. To put it bluntly, since we realize that the author categorizes two distinct groups as Jews and pagans, and that these two categories are constantly competing in the rhetoric of the author, we can trace a pattern and characterization between these two groups as the Jews and the pagans. At this point, we -as ancient text readers- concede the importance of the genre and narrative in understanding the text, because “genre is an instrument of interpretation, shaping the way that readers understand texts

³⁰ Praeder, Susan Marie, *Luke-Acts and the Ancient Novel*, SBLSP 20 (1981), pp. 289.

by reference to prior narratives that bear some relation.”³¹ The theology of the book is hidden not just under its speeches but also its narrative. The theology of the book is embellished by its distinctive rhetoric in the narrative. Once we have some idea about what kind of rhetoric the author employs, this will shed some light on the intention of the author in the narrative.

Authorial intention is difficult to follow, and it can abound and vary³². But in this paper I argue that since the author constructs the Jews critically and the pagans sympathetically, his most obvious intention is to create a third category, which is being called Christians “*Christianous*” (Acts 11:26). He does this by denigrating the Jews, and elevating the pagans, and also pushing “*Christians*” to the pagan category rather than simply constructing the narrative on a pure history and facts.

The fact that the book of Acts was written in Greek implies that the author intends to reach primarily Greek-speaking audiences, including Greek-speaking Jews. Although some assert that “the real subject of Acts is Paul”³³, Paul is the main character through whom the author conveys his message towards the audience. That is why he explicitly portrays and overly emphasizes Paul’s role as “apostleship to gentiles”.

³¹ Bale, Alan J., *Genre and Narrative Coherence in the Acts of the Apostle*, pp. 118.

³² Bale, Alan J. argues that the author of Luke-Acts has intentions either consciously and unconsciously. According to Bale it is even much more important to see unconscious intentionality than conscious intentionality. Although the author composes his narrative with a good degree of conscious, his communicative intentions are shaped by more ordinary semi-conscious compositions. The fact that the author imitates and echoes certain ancient texts does not necessarily mean that he was aware of doing so. *Genre and Narrative Coherence in the Acts of the Apostle*, pp. 44-47.

³³ Wallace, Richard and Williams, Wynne (ed. John H. Betts), *The Acts of the Apostles A Companion*, pp.2.

In the concept of the genre and narrative, I should divide the historicity and fictionality of the book of Acts.³⁴ I believe that it is not solely important whether the book of Acts is historically accurate or not, because the book of Acts is part of the canon. In academic milieu, that a text is historically accurate is particularly important. However, regardless of historicity of narrative of the book, the very fact that author builds and connects the story well, and constructs accordingly reveals how subtle and creative he is. As Pervo points out, the author can be “the stupid historian and brilliant writer”.³⁵

Another important point is that unilinear narrative dominates the historical picture in the book of Acts. The story follows a linear development throughout the book alongside Paul’s missions. If we sketch out the book from the very first to the end, we can see clearly that the first chapter starts with the Apostles and other Jews in Jerusalem, then it ends with the pagans at Rome. If we focus on the narrative within chapters 14 through 17, I think it would be more concrete and easier to grasp. The main structure of the related chapters has the pattern of linear movement which starts with the Jews at synagogues, then the narrative proceeds to pagan.

Regarding all this, I argue that the book of Acts should not be read as a pure historical narrative. Rather, I think the author uses historical report fragments for the sake of his own rhetorical construction. As a genre, it would be better to suggest that the author does not

³⁴ Thomas E. Phillips argues that in general there are two great traditions, one of which is British tradition, which is more conservative in historicity of Acts, and other is a less conservative and has a little confidence in the historicity of Acts. Apart from that, he also mentions that C. Talbert discusses proposal for the genre of Acts as biography, R. Pervo as novel, D. McDanold as epic and the consensus of scholarship as history. *The Genre of Acts: Moving Toward a Consensus?*, CBR, 4 no.3 (2006), pp. 365-385.

³⁵ Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 3

construct a historical narrative, but a “legitimate narrative”³⁶ that flows through a linear development.

B. Greco-Roman Background of the Narrative

The author of Acts seems to be familiar with rhetorical technique and “contact with such authors as Homer and Euripides”.³⁷ Considering his writing in “middlebrow *Koine* Greek”, we can infer that he has education that had progressed beyond the elementary level, but not so advanced that it goes beyond his stylistic limitations. That he occasionally accesses and uses Hellenistic Jewish literature indicates that he has a cosmopolitan milieu and an urban background. Based on Luther H. Martin’s article “*Gods or Ambassadors of God? Barnabas and Paul in Lystra*”, I will demonstrate and elaborate the story of Paul and Barnabas who fled to Lystra and Debre by comparing the similar tale in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in this particular section.

“**8** In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth. **9** He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, **10** said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And the man sprang up and began to walk. **11** When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” **12** Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. **13**

³⁶ I borrow the “legitimate narrative” from Pervo. He explains legitimate narrative as following: “Legitimate narrative serves to express the object of the work, whether this is construed more narrowly as the legitimacy of Pauline Christianity (possibly in rivalry to other interpretations) or generally as the claim of Jesus-movement to possess the Israelite heritage”. See Pervo, *Acts*, 21-22. I use this phrase especially for the author’s rhetoric, which legitimizes and justifies the way that pagans are sympathetically constructed.

³⁷ Pervo, *Acts A Commentary*, 7.

The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice.” (Acts: 14:8-13).

This kind of narrative is not intrinsic to the author of Acts. He has adapted the story which has originated and has been circulated in Asia Minor³⁸ to his own narrative by altering the characters. A brief summary of the story of Philemon and Baucis in Ovid’s³⁹ *Metamorphoses* is as follows:

The God Jupiter [Zeus] and Mercury [Hermes] visit Phrygia disguised as human travelers. They visit the people in the city and go from house to house in search of food and spending the night, but they are refused a thousand times. In the end they come to the cottage of old Baucis and Philemon, who show the two visitors their finest hospitality despite the fact that they are poor. They prepare the best meal they can gather, and are astonished at one point to see the wine replenishing itself. Realizing that their guests are divine, they attempt to offer their only goose as a sacrifice, but Jupiter [Zeus] and Mercury [Hermes] stop them. Then the two gods convey the decision on the region for its wickedness, but make an exception for Baucis and Philemon. They lead the couple over to a nearby mountain and then watch while the entire countryside is flooded and their own house is transformed into a magnificent temple. The two gods then offer to give Philemon and Baucis whatever they request, and the couple asks to serve as priests of the temple and to have their lives into two sacred trees: an oak and a linden tree.

This tale and the religious motifs are well-known in the ancient world and seem to form the basis for an episode in Acts. In chapter 14, Paul and Barnabas visit Lystra where is quite close Phrygia, also a Roman colony. Paul heals a man who has been lame from birth, and when

³⁸ Griffin, Alan H.F., Philemon and Baucis in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, pp.62-72.

³⁹ Publius Ovidius Naso was a Roman poet who lived from 43 BCE to about 17 CE. He wrote epic poetry in Latin, and his works have become a major source of information on Greco-Roman mythology. His magnum opus was *Metamorphoses*, a work spanning 15 books and containing some 250 mythic stories that encompass all of history, from creation to the death of Caesar, within a frame narrative.

the crowd see it, they shout that the gods have visited them in Lycaonian language, calling Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes. They attempt to offer sacrifices in honor of the visitors, but Barnabas and Paul angrily put a stop to, insisting that they are mortals.

Zeus is a Greek name for Jupiter, and Hermes for Mercury. The basic idea, then, seems to be that the town-folk of Lystra know the famous story about Jupiter and Mercury [Zeus and Hermes] travelling in the guise of mortals, and they jump to conclusions when they see Paul's miracle. After all, they do not want to meet with the fate that the inhospitable villagers did in the story of *Philemon and Baucis*. But while Ovid's visitors reveal their divine nature and accept hospitality, the two apostles reveal their mortal nature and refuse hospitality.

Almost all commentaries agree on that these two narrations indicate the same narrative patterns, more or less. I also agree that the author of Acts probably customizes the narrative into his own purpose, yet considering Lyconian-speaking peasants, the question of how uneducated crowds did communicate and understand the foreign apostles is still pending. Or if they speak in Lyconian language "*Lykaonisti*" (Acts 14:11), how does Paul and Barnabas communicate with peasants? How likely is it they would have used the names Zeus and Hermes if they were not speaking Greek? Luther H. Martin notes that "focusing on facticity rather than narrativity, many commentators fret over the problem of communication between the Greek-speaking apostles and the Lycaonian-speaking Lystrans reported in Acts 14:11"⁴⁰ It is certain that the author is subtle and sophisticated, yet he skipped these questions or he thought that he deliberately addressed a Greek pagan audience and their familiarity with traditions about Zeus and Hermes is all that matter here. Apart from that, the story of *Philemon and Baucis* goes beyond a simple case of mistaken identity by the superstitious locals. According to H. S.

⁴⁰ Martin, Luther H., *Gods or Ambassadors of God? Barnabas and Paul in Lystra*, p.153, n.8.

Vernsnel, the author of Acts [or Paul himself] inserted his own—mistaken—interpretation of the locals' preference for Zeus and Hermes of the Lycaonians.⁴¹ The Lycaonian gods going under those names were not the well-known Olympian deities with their well-known functions of king and messenger of the gods. They were a regionally very popular, non-Greek, divine couple, with different functions, who were later identified with these two Greek gods.⁴²

It is not fitting to be identified with deities for Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:14), however identification of them is not problematic for the author of Acts who tries to adapt the preceding tale into his account at all. If so, what is the intent and purpose of the author of Acts for including in his account of the Lystrian pagan mission the identification of the two apostles with Zeus and Hermes?

As I have mentioned above, early in the first century, Ovid had told a similar story set in nearby Phrygia in which Jupiter [Zeus] and Mercury [Hermes] also appear together disguised as mortals,⁴³ a motif of deity or other superhuman being wandering about on earth in disguise that was as familiar in the Hellenistic world as it is in folk tales generally. These two gods are reported as having visited and been hosted by Philemon and Baucis in the same region in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The tale, of course, is not a mirror image. The difference between Ovid and Acts is that in the *Metamorphoses*, the strangers were deities mistaken for mortals, while in Acts they were mortals taken for deities. But both mistakes involve the divine pair, Zeus and Hermes. The two gods appear together on an inscription from this region.⁴⁴ In fact, the association between Zeus and Hermes and their appearance together in human form had already reflected in

⁴¹ Vernsnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 42.

⁴² Vernsnel, *Ibid*, 42-43.

⁴³ Martin, *Ibid*, 152-155.

⁴⁴ Conzelmann, *Ibid*, 110.

a local tradition in which they had been identified with Hittite-Luwan deities. Ovid seems to take up and adapted inside his own tale. Not only Ovid, but also taken up by the author of Acts who has shaped it in accordance with the mission terminology of pagan world. Indeed, it is needless to investigate whether they are local deities or local gods in Phrygia [or Lyconia]; the fact is the deities are recognized as Zeus and Hermes and that the author of Acts situates them in a larger Greek pagan context in light of missionary efforts to the Christian mission.

As for the specific deities, namely Zeus and Hermes, it is also important to understand that Zeus and Hermes were “guarantors of emissaries and missions” in Greek tradition.

If anyone, while acting as ambassador “*presbeteis*” or herald, conveys false messages from his State to another State, or fails to deliver the actual message he was sent to deliver, or is provided to have brought back, as ambassador or herald, either from a friendly or hostile nature, their reply in a false form, - against all such there shall be laid indictment for breaking the law by sinning against the sacred messages and injunctions of Hermes and Zeus (Plato, *Leg*, 941A, translation Loeb).

It was considered a sin against Hermes and Zeus to deliver a false message. As Martin puts it, “Hermes guarantees that what is to be spoken is not false message but ‘good news’”. Considering Zeus and Hermes and their well-known functions, it is no surprise that it is Paul who is made out to be Hermes because “he was the chief speaker” “*ho hēgoumenos tou logou*” (Acts 14:12) and message bearer, delivering the God News.

Hospitality extended to strangers is another important parallel theme between these two stories. Just as Jupiter and Mercury visit a thousand homes before they find one that welcomes them by *Philemon and Baucis*, Lystrans comes after Barnabas and Paul have been rejected at Antioch and Iconium. The Jews reject to give Barnabas and Paul hospitality but then they are

welcomed by Lystrans who are pagans. Zeus and Hermes are particularly relevant, as they were seen as patrons and protectors of travelers in foreign lands.

Although the passage is in appearance an entertaining account of mistaken identity, the author of Acts is placing his own story “in the context of classical Greek tradition”, reinforcing the legitimacy and the truth of the Christian mission to pagans and reminding readers of their obligations regarding hospitality when receiving Christian missionaries. In so doing, however, the author subtly reinforces a sharp contrast between the pagan and Christian views of deities that should be replaced.

The author tends to be more of a painter who has used artistic techniques in his narrative rather than a photographer who can be associated with historians.

“As a competent writer, Luke knew how to create verisimilitude. The plausibility of a narrative does not establish its historicity, nor do minor details, such as the age of a patient or the duration of an illness, prove that a miraculous cure actually happened. Verisimilitude is more important for writers of fiction than for recorders of history. Literatures of differing eras and cultures exhibit varying conventions of ‘realism’.”⁴⁵

As for the larger goal in this paper, once we can trace the rhetoric of the narrative in this particular adaptation and its response in the audience, we can have some clues tracing what messages the author has intended to send. The best characteristic narrative of the book is a kind of “legitimizing narrative”. This is certainly a narrative, because he is narrating the story, rather than making a dialogue or writing down a treatise. His story definitely seeks to legitimate his theology comprising the pagans, and the Jews, to the extent of fitting the category. This is the new Christian body that the author erects on the base of his narrative.

⁴⁵ Pervo, *Ibid*, 11.

C. Brother Language in Acts

Peter Arzt-Grabner examines the use of sibling language –the term brother “*adelphos*” and sister “*adelphe*”- in Greek papyri, and concludes that these terms were widely used throughout Greco-Roman antiquity. The usage of *adelphos* proposes a close relationship between the sender and receiver. This term (masculine and feminine) was used not only in literally, but also metaphorically. The metaphorical use of the term includes social connotation sometimes by friends, sometimes by officials and sometimes by business partners. That is, the term *adelphos* was used to express closeness, solidarity, and some kind of bond of engagement.⁴⁶

We encounter the term *adelphos* not only in Greco-Roman accounts, but also in the Bible, both in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. The term was used in the Hebrew Bible for relations and relationships like nephews (Gen.14:4), members of the same tribe (2 Sam 19:12), and allies (Num. 20:14). It was also used in a moral sense like kinship (Prov.18:19), of friends (Job 6:15) and so on. In the New Testament *adolphes* is used for common discipleship (Matt. 23:8), and spiritual kinship (Matt. 12:50), yet most importantly in Acts it is used many times for believers of the same faith in a salient sense.

Brother language, which includes both brother and sister regardless of gender, was prevalent in Greco-Roman and ancient Israelite accounts. Familial language was used in a variety of small-group setting to refer to fellow members as “brothers” or [less often] “sisters” as well as to leaders as “mothers”, “fathers” or “papas”. When someone called another person, who shared the same guild in society, as a *brother*, it was connoting affection, friendship and solidarity, indicating a close relationship within a group and inferring that the association was a

⁴⁶ Arzt-Grabner, Peter Johann, “*Brothers*” and “*Sisters*” in *Documentary Papyri and in Early Christianity*, pp 185-204.

kind of second home.⁴⁷ Based on this prevailing language in the ancient period, it is not surprising that the author of the book of Acts and his audience -albeit the lack of any reference to particular community- were familiar with the brother imagery, and the author uses such language more than fifty times in his rhetoric.

From the beginning of the book to the end, the author gradually processes a critical language towards the Jews on the one hand, and a sympathetic rhetoric to pagans on the other. However, unlike this sharp dichotomy, this brother language seems to be an umbrella concept that covers both the Jews and pagans in a common word. It is certain that the author uses two different languages, one of which is togetherness in brotherhood; another is that sympathetic approach towards pagans and criticism against the Jews. Why does the author take up such completely dissimilar language? Does he contradict himself in his rhetoric? Before answering these questions, I will scrutinize the usage of the term “*adelphos*” in the book of Acts.

Examining the entire book, we can conclude that the author uses the brother language for those three groups: Apostles, Jews and pagans [gentiles]. However, we cannot assert that the author signifies the brotherhood of one group over another. I mapped out where and how the word “*adelphos*” is mentioned in the book of Acts. The very first book starts using the brother language only for the Apostles (Acts 1:14,15,16), then the Jews (Acts 2:29; 3:17,22; ... 15:7,13; ... 28:17,21), then the pagans (Acts 14:2; 15:1,3,23; 18:18,27; ... 28:14,15). It is quite traceable that the author follows a gradual pattern starting the brotherhood with the Apostles “*tois apostolois*” then developing with the Jews “*Ioudaioi*” and the pagans “*ta ethne*” and then all “*Kakeithen hoi adelphoi*” throughout his book. Also, he develops this alignment as a linear

⁴⁷ Lim, Kar Yong, *Metaphors and Social Identity Formation in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians*, 70-71.

movement from a core movement [the Apostles], to the Jerusalem Jews through gentile Jews to the pagans as a whole world and I demonstrate below in tables.

Table 1: The Word "Brother" Denoting the Apostles

Verses	Greek-English
1:14	<i>houtoi pantes ēsan ... syn gynaixin kai Mariam tē mētri tou Iēsou kai syn tois adelphois autou.</i>
	These all were ... together with [certain] women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.
1:15	<i>... Petros en mesō tōn adelphōn...</i>
	Peter among the brothers...
1:16	<i>...eipen: (16) Andres, adelphoi, ...</i>
	... [Peter] said: "Men, brothers, ..."
2:37	<i>eipon te pros ton Petron kai tous loipous apostolous, Ti poiēsōmen, andres, brithers;</i>
	They said then to Peter and the other Apostles: "Brothers, what shall we do?"
6:3	<i>Episkepsasthe de, adelphoi, andras ex hymōn...</i>
	Then, brothers, select the men out of you...
9:30 (?)	<i>...hoi adelphoi katēgagon auton eis Kaisarean...</i>
	...the brothers brought down him to Caesarea...
12:2	<i>Aneilen de Iakōbon ton adelphon Iōannou, machairē...</i>
	Then he put to death James the brother of John, with sword.
12:17	<i>... Eipen te Apangeilate Iakōbō kai tois adelphois tauta.</i>
	... He said then "Report these things to James and to the brothers."
15:22	<i>syn tō Paulō kai Barnaba, Ioudan... and Silan, ... en tois adelphois.</i>
	With Paul and Barnabas, Judas and Silas among the brothers.
15:32	<i>...Ioudas te kai Silas ... parekalesan tous adelphous...</i>
	Both Judas and Silas...exhorted the brothers
15:33	<i>...apelythēsan met' eirēnēs apo tōn adolphōn...</i>
	...they were sent away in peace from the brothers...

Table 2: The Word “Brother” Denoting Jews

Verses	Greek-English
2:29	<i>Andres adelphoi exon eipein meta parrēsias pros hymas...</i>
	Men brothers, it is permitted [me] to speak with freedom...
3:17	<i>Kai nyn adelphoi oida hoti...</i>
	And now brothers, I know that...
3:22	<i>Mōusēs men eipen hoti Prophētēn hymin anastēsei Kyrios ho Theos hymon ek tōn adelphōn hymōn</i>
	Moses indeed said “the Lord your God will raise up a prophet out from your brothers”
7:2	<i>Ho de ephē Andres adelphoi kai pateres akousete</i>
	And he replied, men brothers and fathers, listen [to me]!
9:17	<i>...eipen Saoul adelphe ho Kyrois apestalken me</i>
	He said “Saul the brother, the Lord has sent me”
11:1	<i>Ēkousan de hoi apostoloi kai oi adelphoi...</i>
	Now the apostles and brothers heard...
11:29	<i>... pempasai tois katolilousin en tē Ioudia adelphois.</i>
	... to send to the brothers living in Judea.
13:15	<i>... pros autous legontes Andres adelphoi...</i>
	Saying to them “Men brothers,”
13:26	<i>...Andres adelphoi huioi genous Abraam...</i>
	Men brothers, sons of the family of Abraham...
13:38	<i>Gnōston oun estō hymin andres adelphoi...</i>
	Let it be known to you men, brothers...

15:7	<i>... Petros eipen pros autous Andres adelphoi...</i>
	...Peter said to them, Men brothers...
15:13	<i>...apekrithē Iakōbos legōn Andres adelphoi akousate mou.</i>
	...James answered by saying “Men brothers, listen to me!”
21:17(?)	<i>... eis Hierosolyma, asmenōs apedexanto hēmas hoi adelphoi.</i>
	... at Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us gladly.
22:1	<i>Andres adelphoi kai pateres akousate mou...</i>
	Men brothers and fathers listen to me...
22:5	<i>...ho archiereus... epistolas dexamenos pros tous adelphous eis Damaskon...</i>
	...the high priest... having received letters to brothers to Damascus...
22:13(?)	<i>...eipen moi Saoul adelphe anabalepson...</i>
	...Saul brother said to me: “receive your sight!”...
23:1	<i>...Paulos tō synedriō eipen Andres adelphoi...</i>
	...Paul at the Council said to men brothers...
23:5	<i>Ephē te ho Paulos ouk ēdein adelphoi hoti...</i>
	Paul then was saying, brothers, I was not aware that...
23:6	<i>...Saddoukaiōn to de heteron Pharisaiōn ekrazen en to synedriō Andres adelphoi...</i>
	...of Sadducees but the other [were] of Pharisees, [Paul] began crying out in the Council Men brothers...
28:17	<i>...tōn Iodaiōn prōtous... andres adelphoi...</i>
	...of the Jews leaders... Men brothers...
28:21	<i>...edexametha apo tēs Iodaias... tis tōn adelpōn...</i>
	...received from Judea... any of brothers...

Table 3: The Word “Brother” Denoting Pagans

Verses	Greek-English
10:23 (?)	<i>...kai tines tōn adelhōn tōn apo Ioppēs synēlthon auto.</i>
	...and some of the brothers from Joppa went with him.
11:12 (?)	<i>... ēlthon de syn emoi kai hoi hex adelphoi houtoi...</i>
	Also, now these six brothers went with me...
14:2	<i>hoi de apeithēsantes Ioudaioi... ekakōsan tas psychas tōn ethnōn kata tōn adelphōn.</i>
	But the unbelieving Jews ... poisoned the minds of the pagans against the brothers.
15:1	<i>Kai tines katelthontes apo tēs Ioudaias edidaskon tous adelphous hoti...</i>
	And certain ones having come down from Judea were teaching the brothers that...
15:3	<i>... tēn epistrophēn tōn ethnōn... pasin tois adelphois.</i>
	... the conversion of pagans... to all the brothers.
15:23	<i>... adelphos tois ex ethnōn ...</i>
	...brothers from the pagans/gentiles
15:36	<i>...tous adelphous kata polin pasan en hais katēngeilamen ton logon tou Kyriou...</i>
	... the brothers in every city in which we have proclaimed the word of the Lord...
15:40	<i>Paulos de epilexamenos Silan exēlthen... hypo tōn adelphōn.</i>
	Paul, however, having chosen Silas set out the Brothers.
16:1-2	<i>...patros de Helēnos hos emartyreito hypo tōn en Lystrois kai Ikoniō adelphōn</i>
	... his father was Greek who was well spoken of by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium.
16:40	<i>... eisēlthon pros tēn Lydian kai idontes parekalesan tous adelphous kai exēlthan.</i>
	...they came to Lydia[’s house] and having seen them they exhorted the brothers and they departed.

17:6	<i>...esyron Iasona kai tinas adelphous...</i>
	...they dragged Jason and some brothers...
18:18	<i>Ho de Poulos eti prosmeinas hēmeras hikanas tois adelphois apotaxamenos...</i>
	Paul, however, having remained many more days, said farewell to the brothers...
18:27	<i>...hoi adelphoi egraosan tois mathētais apodexasthai authon...</i>
	... the brothers wrote to the disciples to welcome him...
21:7	<i>... kai aspasamenoι tous adelphous..</i>
	... and having greeted the brothers ...
28:13-14	<i>...ēlthomen eis Potiolous, hou heurontes adelphous...</i>
	... we came to Puteoli where we have found some brothers ...
28:14-15	<i>... tēn Rhōmēn ēlthamen, Kakeithen hoi adelphoi...</i>
	... we came out to Rome and from there the brothers...

The word “*adelphos*” appears sometimes in the way Paul or other great Apostles address Apostles, the Jews or pagans such as Acts 1:16; 2:29 or 15:23 respectively; or sometimes in the very rhetoric of the author himself who constructs it in his narrative accordingly. In either case, the author is the very one who is responsible for Paul’s speech and the construction of the narrative. Whether he utters the usage in the mouth of an Apostle or in his construction, it is clear that the author processes this language in line with Paul’s mission starting from the Jews to[wards] the pagans and to all nations as opposed to that Paul’s missionary is simply from the Jews towards pagans not to all in the language of the author. Moreover, the author clearly represents the Jews as one who are against Paul and his friends; he depicts the pagans as deserving the good news.

The first chapter includes neither the Jews nor the pagans but only the Apostles with whom Paul takes his authority. Even the very first use of the word “*adelphos*” is in Acts 1:14 which implies Jesus’ blood brother. Then the author does not only widen the scope of the word “*adelphos*” from the family sphere to the apostle cycle which does not purport consanguinity, but he also shifts and expands the meaning from kinship toward the religious fellowship on Peter’s lip (Acts 1:15-16). That the author starts using the word “*adelphos*” with the core group of the Apostles is especially important in terms of determining the actual meaning of the word the author assigns.

What is even more striking is that while the usage of the word is limited with both the ethnicity [the Jews] and geography [Judea and adjacencies] in the half of the book, it expands the usage in conjunction with Paul’s mission and audience.⁴⁸ 14:2 and 15:23 are crucial turning points

⁴⁸ I put two question marks on 10:23 and 11:12 in Table 3 so that I could mean that these are not explicit indicator that the author denotes the pagans. They might refer to the Jews, too.

in the brother language. Acts 14:2 is the first explicit use of the word “*adelphos*” denoting and appealing to the pagans, while categorizing the Jews as unbelieving “*apeithēsantes*”. This verse is so significant that it shows that the meaning of the word has completely changed the direction and created a new brotherhood despite the fact that the author uses this word for the Apostles and the Jews in the beginning of the book. In other words, chapter 14 is the turning point in which the author reconstructs the brother language. The language turns away from the Jews towards the pagans.

Also, while Paul has been connected to Jerusalem and the Apostles until Chapter 15, the connection is broken afterward and Paul became an independent Apostle to the gentiles. Once he is an independent Apostle, he does not need to turn back. Paul gains his own authority, his own “brother language,” and a new geography where he proclaims the gospel. As I mentioned in previous sections, the author also has a geographical alteration with switching the language.

Since the author sometimes develops a discourse either including only the pagans -by excluding the Jews- or including both of them, today's scholarship has disagreement between two different opinions in general. According to F. C. Baur, the author of the book of Acts tries to explain Paul's mission towards pagans as a result of the rejection of the Jews. Paul turns towards the pagans not because of himself, rather due to the fact that the Jews did not accept the gospel. As a continuous opinion, Martin Dibelius suggests that the author “intentionally rejects the Jews in Asia Minor (Acts 13:46), Greece (18:6) and Rome (28:28)”.⁴⁹

Jacob Jervell, however, “... argues strongly that it is only when Jews accept the gospel, rather than reject it, that the mission turn to gentiles.”⁵⁰ According to Jervell, Act 2:41, 47; 4:4; and 5:14 state that the church expands with the Jewish believers. Jervell also adduces Acts 21:20

⁴⁹ Brawley, Robert L., *Luke-Acts and the Jews*, pp. 69-70. (Hans Conzelmann and Erns Haenchen also follow him).

⁵⁰ Brawley, Robert L., *Ibid*, pp.70

saying that thousands of believers there are among the Jews “*myriades eisin en tois Ioudaiois tōn pepisteukotōn*”. Now we can turn to the question of how to understand this “contradicted” discourse.

Concerning these two opposite inferences from the very same book and dichotomy of the author himself, I argue that we can comprehend the purpose of the book by understanding the rhetoric of the author. I stick to the argument Baur comes up with and Conzelmann develops that the book of Acts has a clear indication that the author draws a salient line between the Jews and the pagans. In Acts 14:2, for example, the Jews are described as those who “refused to believe” and even responsible for the stirring up and poisoning the minds of the pagans, on the one hand. Conversely, the very same verse indicates that “a great number of both Jews and pagans became believers,” and they are simply called “*the brothers*” “*kata tōn adelphōn*” (14:2). While the author highlights the new way of believing by emphasizing the sharp distinction between the Jews and pagans, he has no qualms in mentioning those who believe in the same Christ as in the same category, as *brothers*.

It might be alleged that the author explicitly refers to both the Jews and the pagans as his brothers at the end of the book (Acts 28: 17, 21 and 28:13-15 respectively). However, it should be highlighted that even though he uses “*adelphos*” for both of them, “Paul is speaking to the Jews of Rome, not to Jews everywhere”⁵¹. Even if Paul mentions the Jews and the pagans altogether, this does not mean that the author equates the Jews and the pagans. Rather, it shows that the author makes his language so universal that he does incorporate everyone into that language

⁵¹ Tannehill, Robert C., *The Rejection by Jews and Turning to Gentiles: The Pattern of Paul's Mission in Acts*, In SBL 1986 Seminar Papers, pp.139.

including the Jews. This language is the summit of the linear movement the author develops throughout the book.

5. CONCLUSIONS

I have tried to show how the author of the book of Acts narrates the process of early Christians from the East [Jerusalem] to the West [Athens, then Rome]⁵² with two main figures: the Jews and pagans, in Acts chapters 14-17. The author puts Paul as a main character of the narrative and the apostle to the Gentiles with the aid of the Holy Spirit right before a new and exciting development. While Paul is constructed as an authoritative figure, the authority is shown to be taken with companionship with great apostles such as Peter and Barnabas. While the friendship between Paul and the other apostles does not always end with a consensus, the Holy Spirit never gives up helping Paul. The author implies that the Holy Spirit supports Paul.

While the author constructs his narrative, he consistently extrapolates the same outcome at the end of the passages. Paul starts preaching in a synagogue to the Jews in Asia Minor, but Jews reject Paul's sermon. Jews are depicted critically by either stoning Paul or throwing the city into an uproar. Pagans are, on the other hand, portrayed sympathetically. They are the ones who embrace Paul's message, take him to their houses, set a meal for them and become the part of Paul's community. That the author puts Jews as opposed to Paul and Gentiles in a way helping Paul probably aims readers to take the side of Gentiles rather than Jews. The narrative is not fully fleshed out. He skips some unimportant points for the sake of the narrative, trivializes and de-emphasizes the intermediate incidents, and focuses on the message that he wants his readers to

⁵² Jerusalem [the East] and Athens [the West] also implies that the author indicates a geographical component. On the one hand, Jerusalem implies a place where the Jews live and Paul leaves. On the other hand, Athens and Rome is a new place where Paul starts preaching and finds a new audience. Directly related to that, the author implies that synagogue-based mission gives a place to a news mission at large. It can be inferred that this implies the new movement will have a new temple distinct from synagogue.

read. When we read the passages carefully from today, we can see that in fact, the author leaves a number of questions between the lines. Acts 16: 37 and 38 for example claim that Paul and Silas are Roman citizens. Interestingly the author does not state Paul's citizenship until he comes out of prison. Paul in this chapter suffer pains, is imprisoned, then he says that he is a Roman citizen. In that case, for example, why does Paul wait? Why did Paul and Silas not raise this point earlier, as the punishments they have endured were illegal in the case of Roman citizens?

Further to that, the author makes narratives plausible by cutting and adding some parts of them. The author mainly focuses on an ultimate aim he emphasizes, which is the Jewish and pagan dichotomy. Although it seems that the chapters consisted of a unity, the author does not follow the full story. Rather, he just puts forward the main stories turning around the three figures, which are Paul, the Jews and, pagans, for the sake of narrative. This is demonstrated by an incident that happens in pursuit of another "unrelated" and contrarious one. Paul is being released from prison and then the jailer, who was his enemy, becomes one of his strict followers (Acts 16: 23-36). While the author tries to take attention to the conversion of the jailer, who is a pagan; he misses to answer one basic question: how could someone who was so hostile towards Paul that locks him up in prison as a follower of Paul himself? It seems that the author just emphasizes the miraculous faith of the pagans by implying that the Jews cause Paul's imprisonment.

The author juxtaposes two contrasts and shows one of them is worthy of praise, other is reproachable. The two main groups are Jews and Gentiles. At the end this gives a clear message: the Jews do not deserve the Messianic faith, so the author applies to another group of people who are pagans. All in all, the author strikes an apologetic attitude toward Paul and puts him as an apostle to the Gentiles in these particular chapters. Overall, the Jews are depicted critically whereas pagans are portrayed sympathetically in order to facilitate pagans to accept the new

faith. I should reemphasize that categories “Jew” and “Gentile” do exist at that time. A third category “Christian” is being developed. Where will this “Christian” fit? The author pushes “Christian” to the “Gentile” category, despite the fact that the earliest Christians were Jews. Indeed, author does not simply reject the Jews, nor does he accept wholly the pagans. What the author rhetorically does is universalizing the mission through which he constructs the Jews critically, the pagans sympathetically.

Some might allege that actually the book of Acts does not differentiate between the Jews and the gentiles by adducing some verses such as 14:2, 17:2, and 21:20. However, I have shown throughout the thesis that the author carefully and skillfully constructs a progression that aims at a general conclusion, namely, the Jews have rejected the mission, despite the fact that Paul has gone first to synagogue. The author thereupon develops a new language appealing the Gentiles. Therefore, the rhetoric does not only criticize the Jews, nor does it embrace the Gentiles, but also this rhetoric creates his own historical reality.

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