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## Introduction

My goal in this book is to compare the portrayal of the divine in the Acts of the Apostles with the portrayal of the divine in other ancient historiographical works. The latter will be treated in two main groups, one group consisting of biblical and Jewish historiographical works, and the other consisting of (non-Jewish) Greco-Roman historiographical works. Special consideration will be given to Jewish works intentionally written to engage the Greco-Roman historiographical tradition. My goal in making these comparisons is not to argue that Acts should be seen as belonging to any one of these groups over against the others, but rather to give as rich and thoughtful a description as possible as to how the understanding of the divine in history displayed in Acts fits in its ancient context. How does the author of Acts understand and thus portray divine involvement in history, and how is the Acts portrayal like and unlike that of other ancient works? Many similarities will be found between Acts and these other works, but equally important will be observing the distinctiveness of the Acts portrayal. While I

will show that the portrayal of the divine in Acts is overall closest to that of biblical and traditional Jewish historiography, the comparison with the Greco-Roman works will nonetheless help illuminate the Acts portrayal, and we will see that Acts departs from biblical and traditional Jewish historiography in significant ways, too.

There are three initial questions, I believe, that are raised merely by stating my topic as I have. First, what do I mean by “the divine”? Second, why am I comparing Acts specifically with ancient historiographical works? Third, why do I refer only to Acts in this statement, rather than to Luke-Acts? In the rest of this chapter, I will first address these three questions, the second especially meriting some depth of discussion, and then I will make a few additional comments about my goals and procedure for the rest of the book.

The first question is by far the easiest. One of the obvious differences between Acts and the Jewish works, on the one hand, and the Greco-Roman works, on the other, is the portrayal of “God” in the former and “the gods” in the latter, and of course among “the gods” the various individual constitutive deities. I use the term “the divine” to refer to these parallel but differing representations in both sets of works. It is a useful expression that enables us to avoid the constant repetition of more cumbersome expressions that would be necessary in order to be appropriate to the full range of works to be considered. In reality, however, it is not entirely accurate to describe the differences between the two groups as that of “God” versus “the gods.”

God is not the only divine figure in Acts or the Jewish works. There are also angels, the divine spirit (the Holy Spirit in Acts), and references to the gods of the non-Jews, who are believed by some in the narratives to be divine. The divine nature and relationship to God of all these must be considered. In Acts, the divine status of Jesus is also of importance. In the Greco-Roman works, besides references

to the gods we also find references to forces like fate, chance, and providence, forces with at least potentially divine status, and so these terms and the realities they are meant to express must be a part of our study, as well. The term “the divine” is used to encompass all of these figures and forces depicted in these works.

The second question requires much more explanation. To begin with, it raises the thorny issue of the genre of Acts, an issue of rigorous scholarly debate over the last few decades. It seems to me that out of this debate a consensus is emerging, or perhaps has already emerged, consisting of two points: 1) Acts is rightly described as a work of ancient historiography (as to exactly what kind, I do not believe there is any consensus);<sup>1</sup> 2) Acts also incorporates elements of non-historiographical genres. A 2006 survey of the genre debate by Thomas Phillips suggests these two points,<sup>2</sup> and commentaries released since then suggest similar conclusions when taken collectively (though the second point probably has less consensus than the first).<sup>3</sup> Richard Pervo, whose 1987 monograph *Profit With Delight* was of great importance in stirring the debate by suggesting Acts was more like an ancient novel than a historiographical work, takes a much less-defined stance in his 2008 commentary.<sup>4</sup> In the latter, while still pointing out problems with treating Acts as

1. I discuss the many specific varieties of historiography that have been used to label Acts in Scott Shauf, *Theology as History, History as Theology: Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 59–63.
2. Thomas E. Phillips, “The Genre of Acts: Moving Toward a Consensus?” *Currents in Biblical Research* 4, no. 3 (2006): 365–96.
3. Both points are especially reflected in Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1: *Introduction and 1:1–2:47* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012). See also Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008); Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes Des Apôtres (1–12)* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007). Willing to consider biographical aspects but with less interest in fictional ones (though still addressing the issue) are David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007).
4. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008); Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

historiography, he admits that there is benefit in comparing Acts with biblical historiography, and that some of the author's techniques in writing came from the biblical tradition. To the extent that he takes an actual position on the genre of Acts, he says that Acts is a "popular" work, the value of this label being that "popular writers were able to blend genres and create new ones."<sup>5</sup>

While I hold that Acts is indeed a work of ancient historiography, the validity and value of the present study is only dependent on the acknowledgement that a comparison of Acts with ancient historiographical works is a fruitful enterprise. I will refer to Acts as a historiographical work throughout this book, but I hope that even those who disagree with this label may still find worthwhile analysis and reflection in what follows.

The comparison of Acts with Greco-Roman historiographical works has been an area of ardent research in recent years, even leaving aside those studies devoted to the genre question. Numerous studies have been produced comparing individual features or themes of Acts with the wider literary milieu, and historiographical works are often prominent in such comparisons.<sup>6</sup> The study of ancient rhetorical techniques and forms, and their application to New Testament texts, which has been such a hot topic of research in academic biblical study generally, has had its impact on the study of Acts, again with the use of rhetoric in historiographical texts being a common area of comparison.<sup>7</sup> Theological themes and motifs have

5. Pervo, *Acts*, 18.

6. A number of examples are contained in the helpful volume of Jörg Frey, Clare K. Rothschild, and Jens Schröter, eds., *Die Apostelgeschichte im Kontext antiker und frühchristlicher Historiographie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009). Other examples: Osvaldo Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Mikeal C. Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006); O. Wesley Allen, *The Death of Herod: The Narrative and Theological Function of Retribution in Luke-Acts* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997); Doron Mendels, "Pagan or Jewish? The Presentation of Paul's Mission in the Book of Acts," in *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 431–52.

been among those studied in these comparative presentations, such as J. T. Squires's fairly well-known *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*, which relates the title theme to similar motifs in Josephus, Diodorus Siculus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (all of whose works will be covered in the present study); another is O. Wesley Allen's *The Death of Herod*, which examines Herod's death in Acts 12 from the perspective of typical death-of-tyrant scenes in a variety of ancient sources; more recent is James R. McConnell's study of the *topos* of divine testimony in Luke-Acts and other ancient historiographical works.<sup>8</sup> My study is certainly a continuation of this trend and will build on the results of many of these works in various places. Mine will differ from most of them, however, in having a broader focus of study. I will not be looking only at individual motifs, themes, or passages but will look at the portrayal of the divine in Acts and other writings as broadly as possible, and a large number of authors and texts will be considered as a part of the comparative task. The goal of showing how Acts fits in its ancient context is similar to the other scholarly works mentioned; I am just interested in a bigger picture of things than is commonly the case.<sup>9</sup>

The choice of historiographical works for my focus of comparison has important implications for the process of study and the resulting conclusions. The placement of a literary work in a certain genre is

7. For a recent overview, see Keener, *Acts*, 131–47. A helpful collection of such studies is in Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003). See also Clare K. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

8. J. T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Allen, *Death of Herod*; James R. McConnell Jr., *The topos of Divine Testimony in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014).

9. I do not claim to be unique, however, in such a big-picture perspective. Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1992) certainly has a broad focus.

not just about saying it is more like one set of works than some other set, nor are the implications of the historiographical status of Acts limited to questions of historical reliability (the latter often having been the focus of debate). The genre of a work has farther-reaching implications. David E. Aune describes part of the importance of genre as follows:

Literary genres and forms are not simply neutral containers used as convenient ways to package various types of written communication. They are social conventions that provide contextual meaning for the smaller units of language and text they enclose. The original significance that a literary text had for both author and reader is tied to the genre of that text, so that the meaning of the part is dependent upon the meaning of the whole.<sup>10</sup>

Genre itself is defined by Aune as “a group of texts that exhibit a coherent and recurring configuration of literary features involving form (including structure and style), content, and function.”<sup>11</sup> Dealing with works within a genre, therefore, implies some level of consistency among them as to their form, content, and function. To put it as succinctly as possible, genre affects meaning. The relevant corollary for this study is that genre affects the portrayal of the divine.

Philosophers of history have elucidated further the way choices made by historians are constrained by the conventions of historiography in a given cultural setting. “Historiography” is really not a genre in itself, after all (Aune identifies five genres of Hellenistic historical writing, and the history genre itself as consisting of three subgenres<sup>12</sup>). Historians will generally have a number of options for how they write history, and each option will entail constraints

10. David E. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1989), 13.

11. *Ibid.*, 13.

12. *Ibid.*, 84–89.

defined by its historiographical tradition. Hayden White has described a historian's situation as follows:

[H]istorical narratives are not only models of past events and processes, but also metaphorical statements which suggest a relation of similitude between such events and processes and the story types that we conventionally use to endow the events of our lives with culturally sanctioned meanings. Viewed in a purely formal way, a historical narrative is not only a reproduction of the events reported in it, it is also a complex of symbols that gives us directions for finding an icon of the structure of those events in our literary tradition. . . . [T]he historical narrative points in two directions simultaneously: toward the events described in the narrative and toward the story type or mythos that the historian has chosen to serve as the icon of the structure of the events. . . . The historical narrative thus mediates between the events reported in it and the generic plot-structures conventionally used in our culture to endow unfamiliar events and situations with meanings.<sup>13</sup>

Thus not only the choice of a historiographical genre, but also choices involving subgenre and lower-level aspects of representation are culturally constrained and significantly shape the portrayal of history, including the portrayal of the divine in history. One evident manifestation of this as we proceed will be broad differences between the portrayal of the divine in Jewish versus non-Jewish Greco-Roman historiography. A historian's choice to write in one tradition or the other shapes how the divine will be portrayed. Josephus will be a prime example of this, as he takes native Jewish traditions and expresses them in a Greco-Roman tradition of historiography (see chapter four). For most historians, this "choice" may not really be such; Polybius, for example, had options for how to write his history, but writing a work in the Jewish historiographical tradition was not one of them. Such connections between the portrayal of the divine

13. Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, eds. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 41–62, here 51–52.

and historiography will be the subject of the final chapter, but for now the point is that my choice of historiography for the genre (broadly speaking) of Acts and the use of ancient historiographical works to provide a context for interpreting Acts will shape the type of results this study will produce. Jason Davies's words are apropos: "A historiographical god in action will not necessarily resemble a poetic divinity, because genres are not simply static types of literature, but strategies in representation."<sup>14</sup>

How then does the historiographical status of the works under consideration affect the way this study will analyze and reflect upon them? Much of the answer to this question will become evident only as we proceed, but an initial answer results from a consideration of the basic nature of historiography. Historiography is a humanistic enterprise. That is, history has humankind as its focus.<sup>15</sup> This axiom will unite all the works we will consider. Non-human elements may enter the various narratives, but only when they have some impact on human life. This is true of the coverage of such issues as weather, climate, and geography—and also of the divine. The focus of my investigation in this book will therefore be on questions arising from the basic decisions made by historians on how to include the divine in their accounts of human history. For any given historiographical work, we can ask: Why is the divine brought into the story? What divine beings and forces does the historian portray? How does the historian see the divine acting? With what portion of humankind is the divine portrayed interacting, and for what purpose? What is the divine's role in historical causes and effects? How does the historian appeal to the divine for the purpose of historical explanation and elucidation? Such questions will form the backbone of our inquiry.

14. Jason P. Davies, *Rome's Religious History: Livy, Tacitus, and Ammianus on their Gods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12–13.

15. This is usually considered a part of the definition of history. See, e.g., R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946), 9–10.



This procedure will result in a very different set of results from what a different procedure might produce, such as the more traditional approach in New Testament scholarship of setting the theology of Acts or any other New Testament source in the context of the development of early Christian doctrine. We will not be directly concerned with the precise shape of beliefs about ecclesiology, Christology, the atonement, or other traditional theological topics that usually arise in such studies. Some of these will be addressed, but only because they become important as we compare the portrayal of the divine in Acts with other historiographical writings.

Having chosen historiographical works for my focus of comparison with Acts, a brief explanation for my choice of specific works is warranted. I have cast my net fairly wide in terms of what may count as historiography. It is important to remember that my goal is simply to situate Acts as well as possible in its historical context, and for this purpose it is helpful to cast a wide net. Ancient readers were not fastidious about genre distinctions. Homer was considered history by many, and some read Thucydides as romance.<sup>16</sup> Thus for my purpose, any writing that might have been considered historiography around Luke's time is worthy of consideration. The difficulty scholars have in nailing down the precise genre of Acts further implies that we need not be too fastidious ourselves in selecting what writings to compare Acts with. Thus within the range of possible works to cover, I have intentionally chosen works from across the spectrum of those that can be considered historiographical. On the Jewish side, for example, Nehemiah is certainly a different sort of work from Judges, and few today would consider Judith or 3

16. See Baruch Halpern, "Biblical Versus Greek Historiography: A Comparison," in *Das Alte Testament – Ein Geschichtsbuch? Beiträge des Symposiums „Das Alte Testament und die Kultur der Moderne“ Anlässlich des 100. Geburtstags Gerhard Von Rads (1901–1971) Heidelberg, 18.–21. Oktober 2001*, eds. Erhard Blum, William Johnstone, and Christoph Marksches (Münster: Lit, 2005), 101–27, esp. 103.

Maccabees to be historiographical in the usual sense—but, I suggest, they will all provide fruitful comparisons with Acts in their portrayal of the divine in history. On the Greco-Roman side, Plutarch’s and Arrian’s biographies are different sorts of works from that of Thucydides, but once again I suggest they may still be useful for our comparative task—Acts, after all, focuses in its second half on a single character, Paul, and biography and historiography are related and overlapping genres in the ancient world.<sup>17</sup> The proof that including such works is of value, I hope, will be in the pudding of the following chapters.

I have made a few further restrictions in my choices. I have only chosen works that would have been available to readers in the Greco-Roman world around the time Acts was written. This enables us to include works written long before Acts, on the Jewish side of course including the biblical works, and on the Greco-Roman side going as far back as Herodotus and Thucydides, for these were still widely read in Luke’s day and thus contribute to his historiographical milieu. I have included a few works almost certainly written after Acts (I say “almost” due to the continuing debate over when Acts was written), viz. those by Tacitus, Arrian, and Plutarch. There are, I believe, two good reasons for doing so: first, because history exists as a trajectory—what comes after helps us to understand what came before; second, while later than Luke, they are not much later, and therefore they certainly embody historiographical perspectives present in Luke’s time. I have set a cut-off, however, of about the middle of the second century CE; as interesting as it would be to compare Eusebius or Ammianus Marcellinus with Acts, doing so would change the nature of the study a bit too much. Lastly, I have restricted our choices to works that are sufficiently extant that we can

17. See Detlev Dormeyer, *The New Testament among the Writings of Antiquity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 220–22.

get a good sense of the overall portrayal of the divine in them. Works that are too fragmentary or that we know about mainly through the descriptions of others will not be considered. For the type of literary analysis to be employed in this study, it is simply necessary to have works that can be read sufficiently to analyze how the author portrayed the divine in the work.

The restriction of our body of works to historiography does limit the conclusions we will be able to draw about Acts. While works of ancient historiography form an important part of the milieu in which Acts was written, Acts was also written in the context of other types of writing and other sources of beliefs about the divine. For interpreting certain features of the portrayal of the divine in Acts, non-historiographical works would ultimately be more useful than the historiographical ones considered in this study. As an example, none of the works we will consider are very useful for helping us understand the role of demons or Satan in Acts. To study these well, we would need to consider other kinds of writings. I believe the plan of study I follow here will illuminate many features of the portrayal of the divine in Acts, but I do not claim that it will do so for all of them.

A final point to be made about the comparative sources to be used is that we are interested in texts as they existed in the time Acts was written, not in their underlying sources or in the views of their authors considered more broadly. Our interest is in the historiographical milieu in which Acts was written, and it is these texts that form this milieu. So, for example, if Thucydides actually believed quite differently about the gods from what he expressed in his history of the Peloponnesian War, that is really no concern to us. Likewise, we will consider the Pentateuch, not the Yahwist or Priestly sources behind it.

As to the third question raised by my opening paragraph, my focus on Acts rather than Luke–Acts is mainly a matter of practicality. I am in agreement with what I believe is still a solid majority of scholars who hold that Luke’s Gospel and Acts are best seen as two volumes of a unified work.<sup>18</sup> The division between the two volumes is not arbitrary, however, as the significant differences in main characters and overall plot between them indicate. These differences and Luke’s own structural markers dividing the volumes suggest that treating each work independently is appropriate, even as the same structural markers and the clear connections between the works also suggest that one should not forget their relationship, and that especially with the second volume we must not forget that it is a sequel to the first. To borrow an expression of I. Howard Marshall, it is proper to consider Acts separately from Luke’s Gospel, but not in isolation from it.<sup>19</sup> This does not mean that it would not also be possible to do a similar study to what follows using Luke–Acts more comprehensively. From a practical standpoint, however, whether or not Luke’s Gospel is rightly classified as a Greco–Roman biography,<sup>20</sup> its heavy focus on a single character would make it less suited to compare with the works chosen here for comparison with Acts—a different set of writings would likely need to be chosen. Having said this, I will be considering Luke’s Gospel some, since the explicit references in Acts to the Gospel demand that an interpretation of Acts take the Gospel into account. The chapter on Acts will begin, in fact, with a consideration of Luke’s Gospel. The focus, however, will be on Acts.

18. I have previously explained this position, with more depth and references, in Shauf, *Theology as History*, 52–54.

19. I. Howard Marshall, “How Does One Write on the Theology of Acts?” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, eds. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 3–16, here 16.

20. The view most associated with Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Besides these issues raised in my opening paragraph, there is one more preliminary issue to address, an issue raised by the recent emphasis on the importance of rhetoric in ancient literature, including in ancient historiography. Do the rhetorical forms and settings in which language about the divine is expressed in ancient historiography detract from the seriousness with which author and readers would or should have taken such language? In the extreme sense, should rhetoric about the divine be seen as *mere* rhetoric, used to accomplish a purpose having little to do with understandings of the divine? Such a view, or one close to it, has been put forward by Clare Rothschild, in what is overall a fine work on rhetoric in Luke-Acts. As she writes,

[E]lements valued as evidence of the author's theology operate at a more fundamental literary level. These elements reflect, first and foremost, the author's craft of writing history *as opposed to* any beliefs about the divine. These theological elements, in conjunction with other narrative techniques, are employed as proofs in an argument for a certain version of the events over competing versions. . . . By artificially amplifying the "truth" of a given historical report, theological elements function as history's rhetoric.<sup>21</sup>

A specific example of how her view plays out can be seen in her discussion of fate:

[I]nvestigations of fate or fate language as the theological "theme" of an ancient historical work falter on the arbitrary distinction between history and theology. Indeed Diodorus Siculus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus do employ fate language in their works of history, but these occurrences reveal little of these historians' own theological beliefs—least of all, belief in the divine guidance of history. The divine guidance of history was a principle ancient historians would neither argue for, nor argue without. It was taken for granted because it was imperative to persuasive claims to truth.<sup>22</sup>

21. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History*, 14.

If Rothschild is correct, and language of the divine in these works serves merely to amplify the historians' claims to be giving accurate accounts, then the value of the present study is greatly diminished.

I do not think, however, that such a construal of the significance of language of the divine in these works is at all supported by careful reading and study of the works and the language of the divine in them. There are two main problems with maintaining such a position. First, it does not take into account the tremendous variety of portrayals of the divine, even when considering only the Greco-Roman works. The claim that "divine guidance of history was a principle ancient historians would neither argue for, nor argue without" simply does not fit the evidence. Thucydides will give us a historiographical work displaying no real sense of the divine guidance of history, and historians like Xenophon and Herodotus will have important differences between them as to how the divine guides history. Why do such major differences exist, if such language is not in itself meaningful? Second, many of these historians—but not all—will include in their works digressions on theological topics. Such digressions cannot be considered an essential feature of ancient historiography, as is evidenced by their absence in many other historians, and hence cannot be explained as mere rhetoric. The views expressed in these digressions are then generally played out in the narratives, so that there is a fit between the role ascribed to the divine in the narrative and the views expressed in the digressions. This would make little sense if the narrative expressions were meant only as rhetorical bolstering of claims of truthfulness. The historians themselves give us reason to take their assertions of divine activity in history with seriousness. I agree with Rothschild that rhetoric is important. Rhetoric is in part an aspect of genre; different genres have their own rhetorical conventions. I also agree that one cannot

22. *Ibid.*, 149.

leap from what an individual text says to conclusions about the “historians’ own theological beliefs.” As I have argued, the choice of genre, and thus the use of rhetorical conventions specific to genre, affects the presentation of the divine. But that does not mean that the presentations themselves are not meant to be taken seriously. I believe that the chapters to follow will demonstrate that the portrayals of the divine in these works are best seen as resulting from genuine reflection on the role of the divine in history.

As to the procedure this study will take, then: Chapter two will cover the portrayal of the divine in Greco-Roman historiography. Chapter three will cover the portrayal of the divine in biblical and Jewish historiography. I believe this order is appropriate, because from the perspective of Luke’s time period, Jews, as a minority group, defined themselves in the context of the broader Greco-Roman world. Jews were much more likely to read their historiographical works as being set over against the Greco-Roman works than vice versa—it is unlikely that the Greco-Roman historians were much concerned with Jewish historiography. Starting with the Greco-Roman works and then moving to the Jewish ones allows us to see the distinctiveness of the latter more clearly. Chapter four then covers Hellenistic Jewish historiography, historiography written by Jews intentionally trying to engage Greco-Roman perspectives. In these writers, we will see combinations of elements from the two preceding chapters. Chapter five then covers the divine in Acts. Early Christians had to define themselves in the context of both Judaism and the Greco-Roman world, and it thus makes sense to discuss Acts after having investigated the historiographical contexts covered in the three preceding chapters. It will be observed that my procedure is the reverse of the way biblical texts are most often studied. Rather than reading Acts and then finding parallels to various features in other texts, we will begin with the texts that were a part of the

milieu in which Acts was produced—the historiographical part of that milieu—and allow them to raise the questions and establish the topics that will then form our inquiry into Acts. This is, I believe, the best way to situate Acts in its ancient context. As a part of this, however, we will discuss features of Acts that are distinctive in its context; Acts gets its own voice, too. The final chapter will offer some reflections on the relationship between the portrayal of the divine and the nature of historiography itself; while still focused on Acts, the discussion will be of a more theoretical bent.