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**Superstition, Atheism and Reasonable Faith in Acts 26:  
A Graeco-Roman perspective on Paul's defence before Festus and  
Agrippa**

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates Luke's presentation of Paul's final and climactic defence of the gospel which takes place before Festus and King Agrippa II (Ac.26). It indicates how Luke has made use of the philosophical doctrine of the mean in order to present Christianity as a reasonable and rational faith.

This investigation explores how Luke creates a literary framework within which to promote Paul as reasonable and rational through the application of the topos that true piety is the mean between the two extremes of superstition and atheism. The thesis is therefore structured around three dominant sections in which the major themes of superstition, atheism and rational faith are treated independently. Each section consists of an analysis of Luke's choice of words and his description of the behavioural patterns of each representative group so that a consistent picture progressively emerges in support of the basic framework.

At all stages of the investigation, reference is made to contemporary moral philosophers, Hellenistic Judaism and the early Christian apologists so that the language, literary settings and stereotypes used by Luke can be clearly defined. This not only clarifies the text of Acts 26 but contributes to an overall appreciation of Luke's literary technique.

In each of the three major sections: superstition, atheism and rational faith, reference is made to the historical perspectives of Luke's time. Such historical perspectives are particularly valuable for the appreciation of words such as δεζητηδικονίας (Ac.25:19), ζεοκάτος (Ac.5:39), δηάπφ (Ac.23:10), ζφ θροζύνεζ ((Ac.26:25), κκαηνόκενοζ θηι.(Ac.26:11, 24,25) and παρρεζηαδόκενοζ (Ac.26:26) which cannot be fully appreciated when considered in isolation from their historical context. This historical context is likewise important in the understanding of Festus and Agrippa's response to Paul's proclamation of the resurrection.

At all points in the development of the thesis, the relevance and centrality which the resurrection has for Luke is kept in mind. This not only acts as a backdrop in understanding Luke's depiction of the superstitious and the atheist but is crucial in grasping Luke's presentation of Christianity as a rational faith.

The thesis is brought to a close by a discussion on Luke's intended audience and the significance of his dedication to Theophilus.

## Preface

This work has been achieved with the help and support of numerous people. Although I am indebted to all, some need special mention. I thank my promoter Professor P.G.R.de Villiers for his guidance, professionalism and friendship.

I thank my wife, Lauren for the support that she has been to me and for the time that, in other circumstances, would have been devoted to family responsibilities.

I also wish to thank the members of the congregation I serve in Fort Beaufort, for without their support and permission this work would not have been possible.

A word of thanks is reserved for the HRC which provided greatly appreciated financial assistance. The Department of Religious Studies at Rhodes University is also thanked for its regular financial assistance.

A few additional words of explanation are also necessary. Some discrepancy has occurred with regard to the language used in referring to the titles of classical works. Some works are referred to with their English title while others are in Latin. Although this discrepancy is regrettable, I have been consistent in referring to a particular work in only one form of the title. In the presentation of the thesis, I have followed the guidelines set out in “A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations” by K.Turabian.

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# Chapter 1

## The Problem and the Methodology

### 1 The Problem

The defence speech of Paul before Festus and Agrippa II has been widely recognised as the climactic speech in Luke-Acts. There are, however, significant aspects of this important account which are not clearly understood and concerning which there are varied and even conflicting interpretations. The debate over the meaning of the crucial word *δειξήθῃς ἰουδαϊσμοῦ* (Ac.25:19) which forms part of the introductory comments to this speech, is symptomatic of the uncertainty that accompanies the interpretation of other key words and depicted characteristics.<sup>1</sup> If the word is translated as “religion” then it implies that Festus and especially Agrippa are generally well disposed to matters of faith and the presentation of the resurrection message. However, if the word is interpreted as “superstition” it implies that Festus does not hold a high regard for the issues over which he is called to make a ruling and that he considers Agrippa as sharing in this general disregard for the Jewish and Christian faiths.

The uncertainty concerning the way Luke intended to project Festus and Agrippa leads to uncertainty in the interpretation of subsequent sections of Paul's defence speech. The reaction of Festus to the proclamation of the resurrection message, expressed through his shout that Paul is raving (*καίν* Ac.26:24), has likewise been interpreted in conflicting ways. Some scholars understand it as an acknowledgement by Festus that Paul is divinely inspired, while others interpret it as a derogatory comment.<sup>2</sup>

A further example of the lack of clarity concerning this important speech, is the confusion over what Luke intended to convey through Agrippa's response: “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to become a Christian?” (Ac.26:28). On one hand it has been interpreted as an indication that Agrippa was impressed by Paul's presentation and was close to making a Christian commitment, while others interpret it as a retort indicating his indifference and contempt.<sup>3</sup> The lack of clarity on the interpretation of Agrippa's response, when combined with a similar uncertainty concerning Festus, robs Paul's defence speech of a clear structure and precise focus. To have such varied and even contradictory interpretations of important sections within this climactic speech of Luke-Acts, is also an indication of the problem faced by modern scholars in understanding Luke's literary style and message.

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<sup>1</sup> Some scholars understand *δειξήθῃς ἰουδαϊσμοῦ* in a good sense, and translate it as “religion.” Arrington, Munck and Harrison, Bruce and Haenchen see the word in this sense. While Krodel, Jackson and Lake and Johnson understand the word in a negative sense and translate it as “superstition.” see the discussion and explanations on this in chapter 2 part 3.1.

<sup>2</sup> See the discussion on the possible interpretations of this word in chapter 3, part 1.1.

<sup>3</sup> This issue with its various interpretations is fully discussed in chapter 3 part 6.

To the problem of this lack of clarity concerning the meaning of key words and phrases is compounded by a lack of awareness of key concepts implicit in the text. The implication of Paul's concluding statement: "that the Christ would rise from the dead and would proclaim light to his own people and the to Gentiles (Ac.26:23)," that it is not Paul but Christ himself who would be proclaiming light, has not been fully recognized.<sup>4</sup> Although the philosophical doctrine of innate awareness has been touched on previously,<sup>5</sup> its development and application in terms of Christ's self revelation and in terms of the commissioning which Paul receives directly from Christ (Ac.26:16-18) requires expansion. Finally, although the concept of opening of eyes and the proclamation of light has been noted as important,<sup>6</sup> its relationship to the centrality of resurrection, has not been fully appreciated.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to bring greater clarity to this important defence speech so that the interpretation of its constituent parts will contribute to its overall unity.

## 2 Methodology

It is widely accepted that the Lukan writings originated towards the end of the first century.<sup>7</sup> Luke indicated in the prologue to his Gospel (Lk.1:1-4) that he was aware of other writings about the history of Jesus and early Christianity. He himself decided to write down everything "in order". These remarks of Luke already indicate that his two writings are separated by several decades from the events they described. In line with these remarks it is widely accepted that Luke made use of traditions and sources about these events when he wrote his two books.

This implies that one cannot read the Lukan writings in a simple way merely as eyewitness accounts of the events. What is true of the other Gospels, where the use of sources and traditions have been widely accepted, and where a sophisticated reading of the texts is developed, is also true of these writings: They should be read on more than one level. Achtemeier gives a good description of three levels of interpretation that are useful for an analysis of a text like Luke. These levels will be kept in mind in this thesis.<sup>8</sup>

The first level of reading is done on the final form of the text, in this case Acts, and more specifically, Acts 26. This level is the one about which there is the least doubt as it reflects the finished work of the author. It is on this level that such methods as redaction criticism and literary analyses are applied. This level will be the starting point of the research. The issues discussed will be those that are raised as a result of the examination of that portion of the Lukan text. Fairly extensive reference will also be made to other passages of Luke-Acts in order to clarify the meaning of particular words and to support trends, themes and concepts identified in Acts 26. These references will therefore have a supportive and clarifying role.

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<sup>4</sup> The discussion of this particular aspect of Paul's speech is dealt with in chapter 4 section 7. Haenchen and Kilgallen are two commentators who have noted the importance of these words but who have not explained their implication.

<sup>5</sup> E.A.Germiquet, *Paul and Barnabas in Lystra, the Contextualization of the Gospel in a Graeco-Roman City; Acts 14:8-20*, (Thesis, Rhodes University, 1992), 89-91.

<sup>6</sup> This metaphor has been well introduced as far as the gospel is concerned, however its relevance to Acts needs further attention. See D.Hamm, *Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke*, *Biblica* 67 (1986).

<sup>7</sup> Leaney concludes that it must be after A.D. 70. A.R.C.Leaney, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, 2nd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966), 10. Lagrange states that: "Une opinion très répandue aujourd'hui parmi les critiques indépendants, c'est que Luc a écrit vers l'an 80." M.-J.Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc*, 3rd ed. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1927), xxi.

<sup>8</sup> P.J.Achtemeier, *Mark. Proclamation Commentaries*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 14-20.

The second level moves further back and takes into account the traditions or sources available to and used by the author. These “forms” of earlier traditions can be detected in the text especially by the method of form criticism. It focusses strongly on the oral phase of the traditions and the community in which they circulated. Source criticism is another method which determines the material used by the author to write his own text. Both these methods have been applied by scholars on Lucan writings, including Acts. In Acts 26, for example, evidence can be found of a possible number of sources used by Luke. From a form critical perspective scholars have pointed out the evidence of Jewish Hellenistic apologetic traditions in this passage,<sup>9</sup> as well as the influence of Hellenistic moral philosophy<sup>10</sup>. Of particular importance at this level will be the application of the philosophical doctrine of the mean. The explanation of this doctrine and its application to Acts 26 will be discussed in greater detail below.

The third level on which the text is read, goes behind the second level (the sources used by the author), to the actual historical events that the sources reflect. In other words, and important to note, this level is twice removed from the final text as found on the first level of reading. Concerning this level, allusions to historical events and reference to circumstances in the Roman Empire will be made in order to place allusions and even specific incidents in their historical context. Issues such as the spread of superstition and the growing trend of atheism amongst the social elite of the Roman Empire will be raised. This will be done in order to illustrate that Luke’s style reflects some of the historical realities pertinent to the Roman Empire of the first century.

## 2.1 The Doctrine of the Mean

As mentioned above, special attention is given to the philosophical doctrine of the mean. This doctrine will be demonstrated as being the framework used by Luke through which the events leading to Paul’s arrest and subsequent trial are portrayed.

The reference to the relevance of this doctrine clarifying Luke’s apologetic style has already been made by Holgate. In his research on the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk.15) he has convincingly argued that Luke makes use of this Aristotelian doctrine in terms of which virtue is presented as the mean between two forms of extreme.<sup>11</sup> He shows that the three characters; the son, the father and the elder brother represent the three qualities of 'prodigality,' 'liberality' and 'meanness' respectively. The doctrine of the mean, as postulated by Aristotle in his *Nichomachean Ethics* 7,<sup>12</sup> forms the basis for the argument that Luke also applies it in Acts 26 and the events preceding it, by showing that Paul is an outstanding example of virtue. As the Lukan narrative develops, Paul emerges as the reasonable mean between the two extremes of excess on the one hand, and of deficiency on the other.

Rusten, Cunningham and Knox indicate that the attainment of virtue by the

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<sup>9</sup> On this topic the work of J.C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting*. (London: S.P.C.K, 1970), is important as he argues that Luke was following a tradition which was already developed in Hellenistic Judaism missionary literature. Hellenistic concepts had been used and adapted to complement a proclamation of the faith.

<sup>10</sup> Malherbe has shown the importance of taking seriously the influence that moral philosophy has had on influencing the style of the New Testament writers. See for example his dealing with Acts 26:26in “Not in a Corner”: Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26:26, *The Second Century*, 5, (1986).

<sup>11</sup> D.Holgate, *Prodigality, Liberality and Meanness in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. A Greco-Roman Perspective on Luke 15:11-32*, PhD Thesis, (Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993).

<sup>12</sup>See the discussion of Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean by J.O.Urmson, “Aristotle’s Doctrine of the Mean”, ed. A.O.Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 157-170.

observance of the mean was related to popular wisdom.<sup>13</sup> The popularity of this doctrine at the time of Luke's writing, is exemplified by Horace (65 B.C. - 8 B.C.) in his Ode entitled *The Golden Mean*.<sup>14</sup> Through this Ode, Horace depicts the virtue of knowing when and how to maintain the mean. Although the whole poem is dedicated to the virtue of maintaining the mean the following section expresses it in terms of the quality of gold:

auream quisquis mediocritatem  
diligit, tutus caret obsoleti  
sordibus tecti, caret invidenta  
sobrius aula.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Theophrastus, *Characters*. ed. and trans. J.Rusten, I.C.Cunningham, A.D.Knox. (Loeb Classical Library), 12.

<sup>14</sup> Horace, *Odes* 2.10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.10.5-8.

Ferguson, in his analysis of Aristotle's influence on contemporary thought, states that the ushering in of changes under Alexander the Great, Plato and Aristotle's metaphysical worlds faded into the background. That which was emphasised was practical morality.<sup>16</sup> Ferguson indicates that Aristotle's great influence on the Christian church was to come centuries later, his school continued to the task to which he had set them.<sup>17</sup> Luke's sensitivity to the moral philosophical trends of his day is reflected in Irwin's indication that Aristotle's influence enjoyed a revival from the first century BC.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.2 The Topos

In this thesis it is argued that Luke's application of the doctrine of the mean is represented through the literary topos that true piety is the mean between the extreme of superstition on the one hand and the deficiency of atheism on the other. The perception that true piety is the mean between superstition and atheism is listed as a topos by Stobaeus (*Anthologus*, 1.2.7.25): Δ\_ζέβηραν κ\_v ο\_v ε\_ναη\_ξηνζε\_v θα\_δαηκόνφν ζεραπεσηθην, κηαξ\_ο\_ζαν\_ζέοηηος θα\_δεηζηδαηκονίας.<sup>19</sup> In the understanding of the function of the topos, I have followed Holgate's definition and application of the topos.<sup>20</sup>

Evidence of the use of this topos by Luke's contemporaries comes from examples found in Cicero, Plutarch, Josephus. It is also found in the writings of the Christian apologists Clement of Alexandria and Minucius Felix. Cicero's importance has been highlighted by Ferguson who proposes that his philosophical works written in Latin prepared the Latin language for abstract thought. This in turn prepared the way for a Latin Christian theology.<sup>21</sup> Ferguson elaborates on his importance by stating that together with Plutarch and Philo of Alexandria, he provides us with a rather full description of philosophy as it was at the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>22</sup> It is against this brief background that Cicero's reference to the doctrine of the mean is seen to be relevant. In his *De Divinatione* he refers to the difficult yet important task of steering a proper course between the neglect of religion and acceptance of superstition. Although he does not use the word "atheism" he warns against the danger of not following true religion and thus committing a crime against the gods by either neglecting religion (atheism) or becoming involved in superstition: "Nam cum omnibus in rebus temeritas in assentiendo errorque turpis est, tum in eo loco maxime in quo iudicandum est quantum auspiciis rebusque divinis religionique tribuamus; est enim periculum ne aut neglectis iis impia fraude aut susceptis anili superstitione obligemur."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> E.Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987), 270f.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>18</sup> T.H.Irwin, "Aristotle", ed. E.Craig, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 431.

<sup>19</sup> J.Stobaeus, *Anthologus*, 1.2.7.25, cf. *TLG*.

<sup>20</sup> See the discussion on the use of topoi in moral philosophy and definition of a topos: D.Holgate, *Prodigality, Liberality and Meanness in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. A Greco-Roman Perspective on Luke 15:11-32*, (PhD Thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993), 72.

<sup>21</sup> E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987), 304.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>23</sup> Cicero *De Divinitate* 1.7. Clark uses this passage as an example of the doctrine of the mean where the two extremes to be avoided are the disregard of religious observances and becoming involved in superstition. W.G.Clarke, *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*, in the series: J.Quasten, W.J.Burghardt, T.C.Lawler. *Ancient Christian Writers, The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, (New York, Newman Press, 1974), 243

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note 171.

The Neo Platonist and first century writer, Plutarch gives a commentary on the moral standards expected of people who wish to form true and worthy conceptions of God.<sup>24</sup> Ferguson confirms that his work is of great significance for the study of backgrounds to Christianity.<sup>25</sup> Ferguson summarizes Plutarch's work *On Superstition* in the following way: "With 'reverent rationalism' he plotted a middle way between atheism and superstition (see *On Superstition*)."<sup>26</sup> Plutarch himself confirms this with his direct reference to atheism and superstition: ο\_ηφ\_γ\_ρ\_νησηθεύγοντες\_η\_ν\_δεηζηδακονίαν\_κίπτησζην\_ε\_ς\_ζέσηηα\_ηραε\_αν\_θα\_νηήσπον\_περπεδήζα\_νηες\_ν\_κέζ\_θηηένεν\_η\_ν\_ε\_ζέβηαν.<sup>27</sup>

The application of this topos is also found in the apologetic works of Hellenistic Judaism. Josephus, the first century Jewish apologist, defends Judaism against the charge that the Jews are both atheists and excessively bold. Josephus first refers to the true characteristics that Judaism promotes: namely, piety and friendly relations with men: θα\_πρ\_ς\_ε\_ζέβηαν\_θα\_πρ\_ς\_θηηφξαν\_η\_ν\_κεη\_ι\_ή\_φ\_ν\_θα\_πρ\_ς\_η\_ν\_θαζόι\_ο\_σ\_θη\_ανζρ\_φ\_πίαν\_η\_η\_δ\_πρ\_ς\_δηθηηοζύνεν\_θα\_η\_ν\_ν\_ηο\_ς\_πόνος\_θαρηερίαν\_θα\_ζανάηοσ\_περηθρόνηζην\_ρ\_η\_ζ\_η\_α\_θηηένος\_τοκεν.<sup>28</sup> He then goes on to expose the accusations that Apollonius levels against the Jews which include the opposites of atheism on the one hand and reckless madness (superstition) on the other: ποη\_κ\_ν\_ς\_ζέος\_θα\_κίζανζρώποσ\_ι\_οηδορε\_ποη\_δ\_α\_δεηίαν\_κ\_ν\_νηδίδει\_θη\_ηο\_κπαι\_ην\_ζην\_ποσ\_ηόικαν\_θαηγορε\_θα\_πόνηηα.<sup>29</sup>

The expression of this topos is also found in the work of the second century Christian apologist, Clement of Alexandria who names atheism and superstition as the two forms of extreme religious stupidity from which Christians need to distance themselves. Αθηόηηες\_ρα\_καζίας\_ζέσηες\_θα\_δεηζηδακονία\_ν\_θη\_ς\_κένηηνην\_ζποδαζηέον.<sup>30</sup>

Evidence of the use of this topos is also found in the work of the third century apologist Minucius Felix. He writes about the danger of either promoting superstition or destroying all true religion (atheism): tot ac tantis viris deliberantibus, temere et audaciter in alteram partem ferenda senrentia est, ne aut anilis inducatur superstitio aut omnis religio destruat.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See the brief discussion of Plutarch in Ferguson, 309-310.

<sup>25</sup> Ferguson analyses Plutarch's work in the following manner: "This quantity plus his proximity in time to the New Testament writings make him an extremely important person for the study of Christian backgrounds" Ferguson, 309.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>27</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 171F. The editors confirm the use of the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean. Their comment on this passage reads as follows: "An application of the Aristotelian doctrine that virtue is the mean between two extremes (vices)." See page 495 note d, Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>28</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.146.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 2.148.

<sup>30</sup> Clement *The Exhortation to the Greeks* 2.21.

<sup>31</sup> Minucius Felix *Octavius* 13.5.

It is therefore on the strength of this evidence of the fairly widespread nature of this doctrine of the mean, expressed through a variety of *topoi*,<sup>32</sup> that Luke's presentation of Paul's defence (Acts 26) as the mean between superstition and atheism is considered.

The presentation will take as its basis the Lukan text which will be closely followed. The text will be divided into small units which will be examined in detail. This detailed examination will focus on key words as well as Luke's technique of characterization. The analysis of the Greek text is included as an addendum.

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<sup>32</sup> The editors of Theophrastus' work have compiled the following list: Theophrastus, *Characters*, ed. and trans. J.Rusten, I.C.Cunningham, A.D.Knox, Loeb Classical Library, 13.

- Courage** (ὑδρεία) between **coward** (δειός) and **rash** (ζραζύς)
- Temperance** (ζφθροζύνε) between **unable to feel** (ῥαίζζηος) and **intemperance** (ῥοι αζία).
- Generosity** (ῥεζερήες) between **lack of generosity** (ῥειεζε ρία) and **profligacy** (ζφήα).
- Magnificence** (κεγα οπρεπία) between **niggardliness** (κιθροπρεπία) and **vulgarity** (βανασζία).
- Magnanimity** (κεγα ουστία) between **pusillanimity** (κιθρουστία) and **vanity** (τασνότης).
- Ambitious-good** (θηιότηκος) between **unambitious** (ῥθηιότηκος) and **ambitious-bad** (θηιότηκος).
- Gentleness** (πρσότης) between **passivity** (ῥογεζία) and **irascibility** (ῥγη ότης).
- Truthfulness** (ῥήζετη) between **self-deprecation** (ε\_ρφζεία) and **boastfulness** (ῥαδονεία).
- Wit** (ε\_ηρσπειά) between **boorishness** (ῥροφία) and **buffoonery** (βφκοι οστία).
- Friendliness** (θηία) between **quarrelsomeness** (δύζερης) and **obsequious** (ῥεζθος).
- Friendliness** (θηία) between **bad-tempered** (δύζθ οι ος) and **flatterer** (θόι αζ).
- Polite** (α\_δηκφν) between **shameless** (ῥαίζτσνηος) and **bashful** (θαηπιή ζ).
- Righteous indignation** (νέκεζη) between **spitefulness** (ῥηηαρεθαθία) and **enviousness** (θζ όνος).

## Chapter 2

### The Irrational Superstition of the Antagonistic Jews

Luke, as an author that was part of a growing rationalization of religion in the Graeco-Roman world, portrayed Christianity in terms of reason.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he distanced Christianity from movements that would question its rational character. He does this in different ways and through different means. His narrative contains characters with typical forms of behaviour that he wishes to associate with Christianity or from which he wants to distance Christianity as far as possible. In the following discussion the first form of behaviour from which Luke wishes to distance Christianity, is that which is normally associated with the general term “superstition”. The focus will first be on Luke's description of Paul prior to his conversion. The analysis will use as its basis the section of Paul's testimony in Acts 26:9-11 where four basic categories are used to describe Paul's own opposition to Christianity. These characteristics reveal more about Luke's understanding of the nature of Christianity than meets the eye and at the same time provide a key to the understanding of how Luke wishes to meet possible criticism and opposition to Christianity. The focus will then move to the Jews who oppose Paul. The presentation of the characteristics of these opponents will concentrate on events that begin with the incident at the temple (Ac.21:27) and which culminate with the trial of Paul before Festus and Agrippa in Acts 26. The link that makes the transition from Paul to the Jews who oppose him possible, is Luke's presentation of Paul as having previously identified with their cause and having displayed characteristics similar to their's.

In order to develop the argument outlined above, Paul's own identification with the antagonistic Jews will first be investigated. This will be followed by an examination of the way Luke describes his raging and irrationality, both features of superstition. The chapter will draw to a close with an analysis of the word *δειζηδαιονία* as used in Acts 25:19. This word provides an insight into Luke's understanding and use of a key topic in Graeco-Roman times.

Finally, the repeated reference to the opposition against Paul as emanating from Asian Jews will be examined. This will be conducted in the light of Luke's apologetic purpose of exposing the opponents of Christianity as being corrupted by superstition.

#### 1 Paul's confession

The first section in Paul's defence speech with its focus on Paul's past, forms part of a speech that many commentators regard as the climax of Acts. The importance of the speech is clear from such matters like its place in the book as a whole, its nature, but also by small yet significant remarks about its setting. According to Luke, this speech is given before a king, a governor and many high officials. Paul speaks the language and uses rhetoric that would make him credible in such company. Among these powerful leaders, he fittingly delivers a

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<sup>1</sup> Malherbe has produced valuable information on the influence of moral philosophers in the writing of the New Testament. In his introduction to *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, Malherbe addresses this close relationship in the following way: “The Paul that emerges from these essays is one who was thoroughly familiar with the traditions used by his philosophic contemporaries. As his use of them to conduct his argument or to describe his own self-understanding as a Christian apostle shows, he knew these traditions first hand.” A.J.Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 8. In a similar vein, showing how the spread of Christianity can be better understood in the light of the moral philosophers of the day, Malherbe concludes his work on *Paul and the Thessalonians* in the following way: “The intention of this book has not been to make Paul a moral philosopher but to illuminate his practice by comparing it to that of his contemporaries who were engaged in a similar, if not identical, enterprise.”(108). One of the valuable aspects of this research is that it bring to the fore the challenge that faced early Christians of presenting Christianity in terms of a respectable and rational religion.

speech of high literary quality that accurately represents the rhetoric expected in forensic speeches of the time. Simultaneously, Paul is defending Christianity in the presence of people who are not necessarily well disposed to it. It is a seminal moment in the book, and, for that matter, in Luke's picture of the proclamation of the gospel that began in Jerusalem but will end before the emperor as the highest authority in the Graeco-Roman world.

In the buildup to his description of how he used to behave towards Christians, Paul covers several important issues in his speech before Agrippa in Acts 26:1-9. He introduces himself after a *captatio benevolentiae* by describing his youth in Jerusalem and his membership of the Pharisaic party. He portrays himself as a Pharisee who held on to the promise given to the Jews. It was for that promise and hope that he regarded himself as being accused. Luke therefore first portrays the Pharisaic past of Paul (Ac.26:4-8), relating it to the accusation against him and the resurrection message.

Having stated this, Luke then moves on to a description of Paul's pre-Damascus attitude towards the Christians. Luke is careful to point out that this section should be understood as a substantial new part of the speech. His change of focus which is intended at vs. 9 is indicated by the words κ\_v o\_v.<sup>2</sup> This is a formula which Luke often uses to indicate a transition to a new part of his narrative. By focussing so extensively on Paul's past persecution of Christians in this way, Luke is making a significant statement.<sup>3</sup> Having summarized the accusations against him as relating to the resurrection of Jesus, he now illustrates how he himself opposed the resurrected Jesus by persecuting the disciples. The part of the speech on the persecution of Christians (Acts 26:9-11) is set between Paul's account of his upbringing as a Pharisee and the account of his conversion to Christianity on the road to Damascus.

### 1.1 Paul was similar to his Jewish opponents

In this section Luke's self-portrayal of Paul reminds the reader of those who are now opposing Paul before Agrippa. As characters in the Lukan narrative, they represent a similar point of

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<sup>2</sup> Concerning κ\_v o\_v, O'Toole states that it is "a common Lukan formula for the introduction of a new section." O'Toole, *The Christological Climax of Paul's Defence*, *Analecta Biblica* 78 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 46. He follows Jackson and Lake who state that this construction is "a favourite formula of Acts in opening a new story which is nevertheless connected with what goes before. Cf. Acts i. 18; ii. 41; v. 41; viii. 25; ix.31; xi.19; xii.5; xiii.4; xv. 3, 30; xvi.5." F.Jackson, K.Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles*, (London: MacMillan, 1920-1933), 2.7. In his analysis of the prologue of Acts, Lake concludes that the first five verses of Acts refers to all that Jesus did and taught until he told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem. The real beginning of the narrative of Acts is to be found in vs. 6 with the construction o\_ κ\_v o\_v. K.Lake, *The Preface to Acts and the Composition of Acts*. in Additional Notes: F.Jackson, K.Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles*, (London: MacMillan, 1920-1933), 5.3. Cf. also E.Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. B.Noble and G.Shinn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 684. "γ\_ κ\_v o\_v introduces a new paragraph: the thought turns from the attitude of the Jews back to Paul's former conduct." Cf. also L.T.Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1992), 432.

<sup>3</sup> Luke has three reports on Paul's conversion. For Luke, the importance of the persecutions against the Christians can be seen by its presence in each account. Furthermore each account portrays a progression in the detail supplied of the persecution of the Christians. Acts 9 describes Paul's searching for followers of the Way so that he could take them to Jerusalem as prisoners (Ac.9:2). The account in Acts 9:1 places Paul's persecutions as still in the realm of intentions. The Acts 22 account increases the detail of the persecution by adding that it was to their death (Ac.22:4). In this account, the persecutions have moved from intentions to implementation. The Acts 26 account gives the greatest detail of the persecutions by stating that the search for the followers of the Way took place from one synagogue to another, that they were punished, that there were attempts to make them blaspheme and that the search was conducted even to foreign cities. In addition these details fall under the description of Paul as raging excessively (Ac.26:11).

view. This link between Paul's opponents and his own past history, will become important to interpret the speech. Both of them, Paul as well as his opponents before Agrippa, display similar features in their opposition against Christianity.

Paul begins his reference to his pre-Christian past with the words: "I too was convinced" (ἐγὼ κεν οὖν). The remark does not only represent an important new phase in the speech, but implies that Paul acknowledges the similarity between his actions of the past and the actions of the Jews who now oppose him.<sup>4</sup> Together with them, he represented the particular attitude and position of a dissident group in Jerusalem. This identification is underlined by the statement in the following verse that what Paul did was "on authority of the chief priests".<sup>5</sup> Johnson makes the point that a literal translation of verse 10 would present Paul "not as a maverick but as an agent authorized by the Council."<sup>6</sup> In terms of Luke's text as a whole, the intention is to link Paul and his Jewish opponents so that they represent a typical position. As such, Paul's actions were the typical response of a whole movement against some of its members. Paul fully identified himself with the cause of the Jews who opposed Christianity. As a strict Pharisaic Jew he was, like the powerful leaders of that time, a bitter opponent of Christians.<sup>7</sup> When they now accuse him before Agrippa, they are continuing a position that he himself shared at some stage. They all represent a typical response to the gospel of the resurrection.

Having stated the general thrust of this comparison between Paul and his Jewish opponents, Luke lists a number of telling characteristics to describe this typical response to the Christian gospel. Paul's identification with the antagonistic Jews is not only expressed in general terms. In the text Luke points out how this antagonism is expressed in physical terms and then traces it to a specific rationale.

## 1.2 The fury of Paul's ragings

The section (Acts 26:9-11) describes the way in which Paul opposed Christians. In Jerusalem (10), with the authority of the chief priests (10) and in synagogues (11), he persecuted the Jewish Christians. His hostility is clearly marked by the Greek phrase ποιοῦν ἄναηία in 26:9, marking his intense activities against his opponents. Within this context of authority and behind these actions, Paul describes himself as furiously enraged (περηζῶς ἠε κκαηνόκενος). Although these words appear towards the end of the description of Paul's aggression towards Christians, they act as a general term which colours each of the four specific aggressive acts that Paul was engaged in. The concept of Paul "raging" against the

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<sup>4</sup> H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 210 focussed on this comparison in his one brief comment on this verse: "The senselessness of the conduct of the Jews is demonstrated by the former conduct of Paul the Pharisee" (210). G. Schille *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas*, (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983), 448 says that verse 9 with its reference to Paul's hostile actions against Christians implies that what is legitimate in a Jewish context (the Jewish authorities sent him out) can be false. What is needed is that such actions should be tested and investigated. ("In 'feindlich' schlaegt die Erkenntnis durch, dass das scheinbar Legitime falsch sein kann und daher einer Ueberpruefung bedarf").

<sup>5</sup> Acts 26:10, ἐν παρῶν ῥητέρων ἔσοζαν ἰαβών. The link with the chief priest is an important one for it appears in all three accounts of Paul's conversion. Acts 9:1; Acts 22:5 and Acts 26:10.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, 434. The link between Paul and the Jewish opponents of Christianity also comes through in all three accounts by the clear reference that Paul was travelling with a group. Acts 9:7 "The men travelling with Paul stood speechless;" Acts 22:9 "My companions saw the light, but they did not hear the voice", Acts 26:14 "We all fell to the ground." In the first two accounts, even after his vision Paul is led by the hand to Damascus by his former companions.

<sup>7</sup> He can identify himself with those who stand to accuse him before Agrippa.

Christians only appears in the third of the three accounts of Paul's persecutions and subsequent conversion. As the word *καίνοκαί* or its cognates *κακηνόκενος* and *καίν\_ /καίναν* occurs four times in the third defence speech, the word *κακηνόκενος* carries important connotations concerning Paul's former treatment of Christians which need to be examined.

### 1.2.1 *Μαίβομαι* and its cognates

This word is significant in many ways. Firstly, the concept of raging is used in other significant contexts in this speech. It reappears in Acts 26:24, 25 as the general term used by Festus to describe Paul. Secondly, it is also the word that contrasts directly with *ζφθροζύνε* (Acts 26:25) which is the general term used by Paul in rejecting the charge of madness.<sup>8</sup> Thirdly, the use of the word *κακηνόκενος* in Acts 26:11 is not an isolated example. Cognates of the word appear twice in vs.24 (*καίν\_* and *καίναν*) and again in vs. 25 (*καίνοκαη*). Therefore, in the Acts 26 defence speech, the word complex appears four times.<sup>9</sup> In addition, two of these four forms of the word, vis. *κακηνόκενος* and *καίναν*, are their only occurrence in the New Testament.<sup>10</sup> This concentrated appearance of *καίνοκαί* and its cognates in a matter of a few verses indicates that Luke attaches special significance to the word in this context.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “*Mainesthai* and *mania* are used as opposites of *s\_phrosyn\_* (cf 26:25) as in Ac.26:24f.” O’Toole, *Christological Climax*, 127. As in the case of the word *κακηνόκενος* so too the word *ζφθροζύνε* comprises *ειξείας*, *ποθζέγγοκαη* and *παρρεζηδόκενος* as descriptive terms. These will be examined in the section dealing with Paul as representative of the reasonable man.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce makes the interesting point that mss. h has *insanisti, Paule, insanisti*, from which it can be inferred that δ had *καίν\_*, *Πα\_ιε*, *καίν\_* or *κέκενας*, *Πα\_ιε*, *κέκενας*. This variant reading therefore increases the occurrence of the word to five times in this speech. F.F.Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Norwich: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 448.

<sup>10</sup> Jackson and Lake as well as Bruce indicate that *καίνεζζαη* is found only in Josephus, *Antiq.* 17.6.5, and nowhere else until Epiphanius in the fourth century. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.317. Bruce, 443.

<sup>11</sup> Although in Acts 9 as well as in Acts 22 Luke describes some of the forms that Paul's persecution of Christians took, he does not use the word *καίν\_* in either of these. This would indicate that Luke has purposefully introduced this word in the final defence speech. Paul's speech delivered before an elite and educated audience could therefore be an indication of how Luke intended this word to be interpreted. An interpretation which includes philosophical nuances is in keeping with the audience as well as the high quality rhetoric used in this speech. In a slightly different context Luke also uses the word *καίν\_* in Acts 12:15, when he describes the reaction of the disciples to Rhoda when she informs them that Peter is standing outside the door and knocking. On this particular verse commentators concentrate on the reference to the belief by the disciples that Rhoda saw an angel and the significance of personal angels. Bruce, 247; “The angel is here conceived of as a man's spiritual counterpart, capable of assuming his appearance and being mistaken for him.” Conzelmann, 95; “The guardian angel is imagined as a celestial double (see *Herm. Vis.* 5.7).” Haenchen, 385; “*γγειόζ ζηηγ\_α\_ηο\_*: an expression of the belief that each man has a guardian angel, imagined as his celestial double.” The parallel between Peter's miraculous release from prison with the disciples' response that Rhoda is “raving” and Paul's testifying to the resurrection of Jesus and Festus' response that Paul is “raving”, is nevertheless an indication that Luke is using the word *καίνοκαί* in a similar context. Wall sees in Peter's arrest, imprisonment and release a Lukan parallel to the passion narrative. R.W.Wall, *Successors to 'the Twelve'* According to Acts 12:1-17, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 53 (1991): 634ff. Johnson makes the interesting observation that the response of the disciples to Rhoda is similar to the response of the eleven to the message of the women concerning the empty tomb (Luke 24:11). Johnson, 213. Johnson notes that the verb *καίνοκαί* often bears the sense of raving but that here as in Acts 26:24-25 it is used by Luke in the sense of being irrational; (Johnson, 213). Although Acts 26:24-25 centres on Festus' description of Paul, the similar word used in describing Paul's former attitudes in Acts 26:11, also carries a connotation of irrationality.

Before a more detailed discussion of the use of this word is given, a general remark needs to be made. Luke's description of Paul's self-reference is often interpreted as just another verb to describe the general persecution of Christians. There are indications that this is too superficial a

reading and that raging has a much more encompassing nature than merely a description of one of several negative, destructive actions. Some commentaries recognize that these actions emanate as a result of a deeper sense of opposition and hostility. Thomas, for example, sees the word *ἑκκατηνόμενος* in this general sense. He explains that Paul: "went to terrible extremes as persecutor, and had felt it all justified; note vigorous expressions: 'I verily thought with myself that I ought to do' (vs 9); 'which I also did ... I shut up ... I gave my vote' (vs 10, ASV); 'I punished ... compelled ... persecuted' (vs 11) - all showing the extent to which he had carried hostility to (the) new religion."<sup>12</sup> This passage suggests that the hostility against Christianity is a result of Paul's *καμία*.<sup>13</sup> What Paul does in opposition to the Name, according to Luke, is expressions of his rage. There is an all encompassing disposition to be discerned behind the actions described by Luke.

The fundamental nature of the rage is in line with its use elsewhere in the Graeco-Roman world. In his analysis of the word *καμία*, O'Toole notes its all encompassing nature. "*Mania* can describe one's whole way of life." To illustrate his point he quotes from Wisdom, "We thought that his life was madness (*manian*) and that his end was without honour."<sup>14</sup> These observations call for a deeper analysis of the word *καμία*. The term *ἑκκατηνόμενος*, will therefore be examined first and the connotations of the concept of raging excessively will follow.

## 1.2.2 *Μαίνομαι* in its wider context

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<sup>12</sup>W.H.G.Thomas, *Outline Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 475. Similarly Schille remarks that the verbs (imprisonment, voting for capital punishment, force denial, persecution) create a clear total picture. "Wenn Paulus irgendwann gefrevelt hat, dann zu diesem Zeitpunkt" If ever Paul was furious, it was during this time. G.Schille, 449.

<sup>13</sup> O'Toole has investigated the possible interpretations of this word and has covered the most likely ways of understanding it. The possible interpretations include: someone who is divinely inspired; prophetic activity; mental illness which is the result of a number of possible causes, including vast knowledge; foolishness; madness; it can be used to describe a whole way of life. O'Toole concludes that in trying to understand *καίμ\_* in this context, the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and prophecy ought to be kept in mind. However there is no unanimity on the subject. O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 125-130. Haenchen refers to *καίμ\_* as a difficult word to translate. Haenchen, 688 note 2. Some of the possible interpretations are revealed by the various explanations. Friedrich concludes that *καίνοκαμῆς* is not used for primitive Christian prophecy. Friedrich, *προθήρης*, *TDNT* 6: 851. Bruce states that the remark was not meant to be offensive. Bruce, 448.

<sup>14</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 127.

The verb *καίνοκαί* appears already in Homer who, in the *Ilias* 5,717, uses it to indicate the manner of fighting of a god or hero that evoked terror among his opponents. Homer also used it to describe the effect of intoxicating drink (Od.21,297f.).<sup>15</sup> In some cases there is a strong link with emotions. The verb is then used to describe such extreme emotions as anger (Homer, Il.8,360; cf. e.g. 4 Macc 4,4), whilst Euripides uses it to describe the “wild raging of desire”<sup>16</sup> (e.g. 4 Macc 7,5). Already at an early stage the verb is linked to a state of being mad or crazy. Sophocles used it in this way in his *Ant.* 765. Plato uses it to describe the “raging of the mind”.<sup>17</sup> In his analysis of *καίνοκαη*, Preisker finds that in philosophical thought it was the antonym to *ζῶθρονε* v.<sup>18</sup> He indicates further that this philosophical contrast between the two words is also present in religious thought.<sup>19</sup> Luck, in his analysis of the word group *ζῶθρονε*, (including *ζῶθροζύνε*) also notes the contrast between these two words. Concerning *ζῶθρονε* he writes: “It denotes ‘the rational’ in the sense of what is intellectually sound (opp. *καμία*).”<sup>20</sup> He gives the following examples Xenoph. *Mem.* I, 1, 16; Plat. *Prot.* 323b; *Phaedr.*, 244a; *Resp.*, I, 331c.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore the contrast between *καμία* and *ζῶθρονε* is highlighted by their association as a recognised oxymoron.<sup>22</sup> These numerous examples of these two words used in contrast to one another is an indication that this is a *topos*.<sup>23</sup> Luke’s use of the words *καίνοκαη* and *ζῶθρονε* v (Ac.26:25) to describe Festus and Paul’s contrasting opinions, therefore carries with it recognised philosophical terms which describe the presence or absence of rationality.

Especially noteworthy therefore is the use of the word *καίνοκαη* in a religious context. The verb indicated a state of possession and inspiration. In such cases the verb does not refer to pathological behaviour of people, an illness or the results of a wrong teaching, but it describes what happens when the gods take possession of someone and grant inspiration. This madness replaces normal behaviour and the ordinary state of mind, and is accepted as legitimate. In Homer, the god Dionysus is a *καηνόκενος*,<sup>24</sup> and that “the supreme blessing of this frenzied god is to draw his followers into the same *καίνεζζαη*.”<sup>25</sup> Plato, later on, in his *Phaedr.* 244a uses the verb in a religious context to describe the Pythia, the priests at Dodona and the divinely inspired poets, while it is also applied to Bacchic possession and inspiration.

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<sup>15</sup> Preisker, *καίνοκαη* TDNT 4: 360.

<sup>16</sup> Euripides *Phoenissae* 535; cit. ap. Preisker, *καίνοκαη* TDNT 4: 360.

<sup>17</sup> Plato *Phaedrus* 253c cit. ap. Preisker, *καίνοκαη* TDNT 4: 360.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Plato *Phaedrus* 244a. Preisker also refers to Epictetus *Diss.* I,21,4; 22,18; II, 11, 12; III, 9,5.

<sup>19</sup> Preisker, *καίνοκαη* TDNT 4: 360.

<sup>20</sup> H.Luck *ζῶθρονε* θητ., TDNT 7: 1097.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> On the oxymoron *Μαμία ζῶθρονε* cf. H.Lewy, “Sobria Ebrietas,” *Beih. z. ZNW* 9 (1929): 52.

<sup>23</sup> Luck refers to Wyss who indicates that terms like *ζῶθροζύνε* passed by way of elergy into the vocabulary of the Sophists and then into prose generally. U.Wyss, *Die Wörter auf-sύνη in ihrer histor. Entwicklung*, Diss. Zurich (1954), 60f. Cit. ap. H.Luck, *ζῶθρονε* θητ., TDNT 7: 1097 note 2.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Homer 2.6, 132.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

The religious references are significant because of the social implications of the state of raging in some cases. Raging had many negative consequences because the practice was associated with extreme forms of worship. The worshippers of Bacchus were renowned for their ecstatic ravings which appeared devoid of reason. Such raving was viewed with suspicion because it was perceived as leading people outside the bounds of expected rationality and control by the state. The Bacchic religion was viewed in this way and as a consequence the Roman Senate declared it an undesirable superstition in 186 B.C.<sup>26</sup>

The use of *καίνοκαη* as a description of religious expression devoid of reason is not only part of pagan religious thought but is also found in Hellenistic Judaism. In 4 Macc. 8:5; 10:13 the faithfulness even to death of Eleazar and his sons is interpreted as madness to Antiochus Epiphanes. Likewise this pattern is traced into Luke's work. In his analysis of Acts 26:25, Preisker reveals that he understands Luke's intended contrast on the philosophical lines of the presence or absence of reason. "What are *ἡ εὐεξία θάλασσα* *ζφ θροῦ νεῦ ἡκαη* to the believer (v.25) are *καίνεζζαη* to the unbeliever."<sup>27</sup>

### 1.2.3 *Μαίνομαι* and the raging of animals

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<sup>26</sup> Plutarch uses the word again when he quotes from a poem by Timotheus concerning the god Artemis. "Ecstatic Bacchic frantic fanatic" *ζσηῶα θοιβάδα καηγάδα ισζζάδα*, Plutarch *On Superstition* 170A. By his use of the word *καηγάδα*, Plutarch makes a clear association between this word and the excessive and well known ravings of the Bacchanalia. Bailly makes a clear association between *καηγάδα* and the behaviour that characterised the Bacchanalia. He refers to Eur. *Bacch.* 915: "bacchante dans un délire furieux." One of the more prominent features of this cult was that of maenadism, where the women danced ecstatically, handled sacred objects and ate raw meat. J.M.Dillon, *Dionysus*, ABD, Freedman, D.N. ed., (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 202. The title of "maenadism" given to this form of female behaviour is a derivative from *καηεζζαη*. The etymology of maenadism is given by A.H. Marckwardt; Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary. Freyburger and Tautil refer to the priestesses as "*dusmainai*" and describe part of their ritual as stamping their feet like fillies and making dust drift through the air: "le battement des pieds lorsque, pareilles à des pouliches, les jeunes filles le long de l'Eurotas bondissent à pas pressés, soulevant de la poussière." M-L. Freyburger-Galland, G. Freyburger, J-C. Tautil, *Sectes Religieuse en Grèce et à Rome dans L'Antiquité Païenne*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986), 46. Plutarch's description of behaviour which is infected by superstition, is closely allied to the word *καίνοκαη*.

<sup>27</sup> Preisker, *καίνοκαη TDNT* 4:361.

The use of the word “raging” in describing the reaction of animals to certain situations emphasises the association that the word has with irrationality. In his work *On Superstition*, Plutarch uses the word *θκαίνεζζαη* to describe the wild and unruly reaction of tigers to the sound of beating drums.<sup>28</sup> Normally, he explains, the sound of music produces calmness but there are certain situations, as described above, where it produces “utter madness.” In another passage Plutarch applies this kind of madness to people. He gives the following two example: “They say a cat is excited to frenzy by the odour of perfumes.”<sup>29</sup> Likewise is a woman driven, who smells the perfume of another women on her husband. The interchangeability of irrationality in its application to humans as well as animals is an indication that rationality/irrationality are key ingredients. With the superstitious person, Plutarch argues, the presence of gods which ought to have a calming effect on people, instead fills a superstitious person with an irrational fear and the result is wild and uncontrolled behaviour.<sup>30</sup>

Underlying this perspective is the conviction that the distinctive feature which separated humans from animals was the ability to reason. Aristotle already drew this distinction. “(W)e do not use the terms temperate or profligate of the lower animals, except metaphorically, ... for animal have neither the faculty of choice nor of calculation: they are aberrations from nature, like men who are insane.”<sup>31</sup> When humans behave in an irrational way, the implication is that they are comparable to animals. In all these cases the madness is seen as negative, irrational and typical of animal behaviour and therefore superstitious. This link with animals will become important when behavioural aspects of the antagonistic Jews is examined.

#### 1.2.4 Paul's raging as excessive

In Acts 26: 11, Luke qualifies the “raging” (*κκαηνόκενος*) of Paul with the adverb “excessively” (*περηζζς*). The use of the word *περηζζς* in conjunction with *κκαηνόκενος* emphasizes the extreme nature of Paul's behaviour. Bailly's Greek Lexicon provides the reading “beyond measure.”<sup>32</sup> “Excess” when understood in a philosophical light, takes on a new and important significance. Aristotle consistently uses *περβοι* to designate that which has deviated from mean and becomes a vice of excess.<sup>33</sup> In a significant passage he links the excess of fearlessness with the qualification of madness (*καηνόκενος*). Aristotle writes: *η ν δ \_περβαι ιόνηφν \_ κ ν η \_θοβί \_ νώνσκος ... ε ε δ \_ ν ηησκαηνόκενος \_*

<sup>28</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 167C: *θα ης ηγρηης δέθαζ ηπερησκαηηφοκένας θκαίνεζζαη*

<sup>29</sup> Plutarch *Advice to Bride and Groom* 144D: *Δ θαζάπερ η ν α ι οσρον ζκ κύπφν θηαράηηεζζαηθα καίνεζζαηι έγοςζην.*

<sup>30</sup> Plutarch develops this argument in *On Superstition* 167C-D. Malherbe identifies a similar theme in Plutarch's *Against Colotes* which represents Plutarch's polemic against the Epicureans. A.J.Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 84.

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 7.6.6: *δη θα η ζερία ο ηε ζώθρονα ο η θόιαζηα ιέγοκεν υ \_ θαη κηηθοπ ν ... ο γ ρ \_τεηπροαίρεζην ο δε ι οηζκόν, υ \_ ζέζηεθε ης θύζ εφς, ζπερ ο κκαηνόκενοηη ν νζρόπφν.* The concept of animal characteristics will be reappear at appropriate points in the analysis of those antagonistic to Christianity.

<sup>32</sup> “au delà de la mesure;” “à un plus haut degré.” M.Bailly, s.v. *περηζζς*, *Dictionaire Grec-Français*, 1933.

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 2.6.14: *θα δη ηα η ο ν ης κ ν θαθ \_ας \_περβοι \_ θα \_ ι ι ηηηφ, ης δ \_ ρηης \_ κέζόηες.* The opposite of *περβοι* is *ι ι εσης* (deficiency).

νάγειος, ἐκεῖν θοβόηο,<sup>34</sup>

Luke's choice of the word *περηζζοιέρφς* indicates excess which in a religious context would point to a deviation from that which is rational and respectable. In Luke's presentation of Paul, his excessive raging (*περηζζς ηε κκαηνόκειος*) is the outward expression of his religious convictions. The philosophical vice of excess is translated in religious terms as the vice of superstition.

### **1.3 The irrationality of raging**

Although the relationship between *κκαηνόκειος* and irrationality has already been referred to, the following section will explore this relationship further. This will clarify Luke's position that opposition to Christianity is irrational and as a consequence is characteristic of superstition.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 3.7.7.

Research indicates that irrationality was a generally recognised indication of superstition. According to Plutarch, false reason is at the basis of superstition. He writes, “superstition is an emotion engendered from false reason.”<sup>35</sup> “The basic error of superstition is that it extinguishes the most important light that the soul can have, i.e. a conception of god , and induces in its place an irrational fear and terror of the gods.”<sup>36</sup> At the heart of superstition lies an inherent contradiction which is the result of the irrationality of fearing the gods whose desire it is to help. Likewise Seneca refers to the irrationality of what he regards as superstitious forms of worship, like for example lighting candles to gods who do not need light. Seneca continues: “Although a man hear what limit he should observe in sacrifice, and how far he should recoil from burdensome superstitions (a molesitis superstitionibus), he will never make sufficient progress until he has conceived a right idea of God - regarding him as one who possesses all things, and allots all things, and bestows them without price. And what reason have the gods for doing deeds of kindness? It is their nature. One who thinks that they are unwilling to do harm, is wrong; they cannot do harm; for doing harm is the same category as suffering harm.”<sup>37</sup> Superstition is really an irrational matter.<sup>38</sup>

As far back as Plato the importance of a rational approach to religion can be traced. He despised excessive forms of divination and prophecy. “Let us sacrifice to the gods and pray for good, but leave prophecy alone.”<sup>39</sup> The point is that he considered the excesses of superstition as a contradiction of the rational.

### 1.3.1 The irrationality of Paul's opposition to Christianity

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<sup>35</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 165C: ὁ δὲ δεῖξιν ἰθαυκονία πάζος ἠ ἰ ὄγοσ νεσδο ἠ γγεγενεκένον.

<sup>36</sup> P.G.R.De Villiers, E.A.Germiquet, *Religio and Superstitio in Early Christianity and Graeco-Roman society. Christian perspectives on paganism, Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 9 (1998): 57.

<sup>37</sup> Seneca *On the usefulness of basic principles* Ep. Mor. 95:48.

<sup>38</sup> See the fuller discussion on this point in De Villiers, Germiquet, *Superstitio*, 57f.

<sup>39</sup> Hermann shows that Seneca uses “superstition” in similar vein, when he quotes from *De Clementia*. “Donc de même que la religion adore les dieux, tandis que la superstition les outrage.” Seneca, *De Clementia* 2,5. “Ergo quemquodmodum religio deos colit, superstitio violat.” L.Herrmann, Chrestos: Témoignages Païens et Juifs sur le Christianisme du Premier Siècle, *Latomus Revue D'Études Latines* 109 (1970): 55.

It is in the light of this inherent irrationality that Luke portrays the opposition of both Paul and certain Jews to Christianity in terms of the characteristics of superstition. Paul's initial irrational opposition to Christianity can be traced back to the statement in his defence that he is "on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers" (26:6). The Pharisees believed in the resurrection and as a Christian Paul believes in the resurrection of Jesus. The reference to Paul's past as a strict Pharisee therefore reveals that there is a logical continuity between his past as a Pharisee and his present faith as a Christian. This would appear to be a special emphasis on Luke's part for in his two previous accounts of Paul's conversion there is a discrepancy between the presence or absence of a reference to "our fathers". In the conversion account of Acts 9, which Lake describes as "Luke's Hellenizing revision"<sup>40</sup> the reference to "our fathers" does not appear while in the Acts 22, which Lake describes as the more Jewish account,<sup>41</sup> it occurs on two occasions (22:3; 14). Therefore the reference to Paul being true to "the hope of the fathers" in the Acts 26 account creates a link between Paul's Jewish roots and his faith in Jesus Christ. In his analysis of the speech, O'Toole concludes that the Acts 26 speech, in contrast to account of Paul's conversion in Acts 22, accentuates Paul's Pharisaism and his belief in the resurrection.<sup>42</sup> In order to strengthen his point, O'Toole lists the aspects that are absent in Acts 22, but introduced in Acts 26. All of these aspects touch on the resurrection.<sup>43</sup> In this way, the proclamation of Paul that the resurrected Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, is proof that Paul is a genuine Pharisee who not only accepts the theoretical possibility of the resurrection but for whom the resurrection of Christ demonstrates the authenticity of his belief. The special emphasis of the Acts 26 account on the resurrection therefore highlights the tension between Paul the Pharisee and Paul the Christian. The subsequent description of Paul as raging against Christians therefore exposes the extent to which his hostility to Christianity was irrational. Paul believed in the resurrection, yet he opposed Christians for their faith in the risen Christ. In doing many contrary things to Christians, Paul acted irrationally because he opposed people who held onto the same hopes that he had.

The narrative of Acts as a whole underlines the irony in this passage in other subtle ways when Luke reports Paul's self-description.<sup>44</sup> Weiss already observed how Luke designs an inherent accord between Christianity and the beliefs of the Pharisees. In Acts (other than in the Synoptics) the Sadducees rather than the Pharisees are the obvious opponents of Christianity. "The opposition between Jesus and the Pharisees no longer plays any part in Acts."<sup>45</sup> In Acts, the only link between the Pharisees and the Sadducees is that some of the Pharisees belong with them to the Sanhedrin. However, even in the Sanhedrin the differences between the Pharisees who believe in the resurrection and the Sadducees who do not, culminate in a violent clash over the issue of the resurrection (Ac.23:6-9). The description of this clash highlights the central role Luke attaches to the resurrection.

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<sup>40</sup> K.Lake, "The Conversion of Paul and the Events Immediately Following it." Additional notes: Jackson, Lake. *Beginnings*, 5.191.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> "The structure of the speech accentuates the importance of Paul's Pharisaism and vision which results in his belief in the resurrection of the dead for which he gives his apology." O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 34.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. O'Toole gives the following five examples: Acts 26:2-3, 6-8, 16-18, 19-20, 22-23.

<sup>44</sup> More will be said about irony in Luke below.

<sup>45</sup> Weiss,  $\theta\alpha\rho\iota\tau\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ , *TDNT* 9: 45. Carroll has argued that Luke is in fact favourably disposed towards the Pharisees. J.T.Carroll, Luke's Portrayal of the Pharisees, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 604-621.

With this background in mind, the picture of Paul as a devout Pharisee who believes in the resurrection, but is nevertheless fiercely opposed to Christians, demonstrates the irony of the situation. Harrison highlights this further, “Before he was a believer in Jesus, Paul had shared with the vast majority of his people the conviction that the dead would be raised. But just as firmly, he had refused to believe that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised.”<sup>46</sup> Bruce in his comments on verse 9, sees in the words  $\Delta\gamma\ \kappa\ \nu\ \omicron\ \nu$  a construction which highlights this aspect: “Pharisee that I was, and thus in theory a believer in the resurrection of the dead, I yet judged it incredible in this particular case, and thought it my duty to oppose such a heresy.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> E. Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 375.

<sup>47</sup> Bruce, 442.

Other parts of Acts expose the irrationality of Paul's actions against Christians further. According to Acts 15:5, some Pharisees had already become believers. As part of the Christian community they were involved in the discussions at the council of Jerusalem.<sup>48</sup> Thus Luke reiterates that nothing in the scriptures and theology stood in the way of the Pharisees believing in the risen Jesus. This is made evident when Luke writes that Paul claimed that the resurrection is totally in accordance with what the prophets and Moses said would happen, (Ac.26:22-23).<sup>49</sup> There is a close theological link between the Pharisaic and Christian positions.

Several commentators have noticed the irony present in the Lukan description of Paul's remarks. Haenchen elaborates on the incomprehensibility of Paul's opposition as he too comments on the significance of the three introductory words  $\Delta\gamma\ \kappa\ \nu\ \omicron\ \nu$ , "Up to now Paul has been showing the unity of his conduct as a devout Jew and a devout Christian, which is misunderstood only by the foolish Jews. Now he continues with his life-story. The ultimate reason for the break which seems to lie between vv. 8 and 9 is that according to Luke's presentation it is really incomprehensible why Paul, the Pharisee who believes in the resurrection, himself persecuted those who confessed the risen Jesus."<sup>50</sup> Haenchen also adds that Luke is content to mention the fact without having to explain it.<sup>51</sup>

The presentation of Paul as having been raised in the strictness of the Pharisees (Ac.26:5) is a signal to the perceptive reader that there was no scriptural or theological basis to Paul's opposition to Christianity and its belief in the resurrected Jesus. In this way Paul's opposition is exposed as irrational and his raging is a physical expression of it. Such characteristics are akin to superstition.

### **1.3.2 The irrationality of the Jews who oppose Christianity**

One of the objectives of this research is to demonstrate Luke's technique of presenting Paul's accusers in a way that is reminiscent of superstition. Therefore the characteristics of irrationality and excessive raging also acts as a backdrop to an analysis of the antagonistic Jews. Conzelmann identifies the aspect of Paul's irrationality and compares it to that of the Jews: "The senselessness of the conduct of the Jews is demonstrated by the former conduct of Paul the Pharisee."<sup>52</sup> As a consequence, the opposition of these Jews can be compared to the behaviour of people driven by superstition.

### **1.3.3 Irrationality expressed through false accusations**

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<sup>48</sup> Acts 15:5: "Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said.." Haenchen adds the note that since in Acts 26:5 the Pharisees are described as the "most exact sect" ( $\tau\ \rho\ \iota\ \beta\ \epsilon\ \zeta\ \eta\ \acute{\alpha}\ \tau\ \eta\ \varsigma\ \alpha\ \rho\ \epsilon\ \zeta\ \tau\ \eta\ \varsigma$ ) within Judaism, this detail fits the general characterization of this movement. Haenchen, 444 note 6.

<sup>49</sup> Cunningham, basing his conclusion on O'Toole states: "Paul's belief in the resurrection of Jesus comes not because he is an apostate Jew, but because he is a faithful Jew (26.4-7). To believe in the resurrection of Jesus is only to believe „what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass“ (26.22-23)." S.Cunningham, 'Through Many Tribulations' *The Theology of Persecution in Luke-Acts*, (Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 142, Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 280f.

<sup>50</sup> Haenchen, 684.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Conzelmann, 210.

Just as Paul's attacks against Christians were irrational, the Jews who oppose Paul are likewise presented by Luke as basing their whole campaign against him on false assumptions and errors of reasoning. In several passages and with a careful choice of words Luke lists the accusations against Paul and repeatedly points out that the accusations are unfounded. Acts 21:27-29 states that some Jews from the province of Asia assumed (νόκηδον) that Paul had taken Trophimus the Gentile into the temple area. The NRSV translates it as "supposed". The explanation given for the assumption is that those Jews had previously seen Trophimus the "Greek" with Paul in the city. Luke makes it clear that the claim against Paul is based on an error of judgement. Luke portrays the Jews as not only making an assumption, but adds that their assumption was false and the attack on Paul was unwarranted.<sup>53</sup> Johnson is quite emphatic about this error: "Luke makes clear that the charge is in fact false. Yes, they did see Paul „in the city“ with a man whom as Asians themselves they could recognize as a Greek compatriot, but they were wrong about Paul bringing him into the temple."<sup>54</sup> That this initial error contaminated all their subsequent attitudes is confirmed on three occasions.

Firstly, when the commander of the garrison which saved Paul from the rioting mob enquired from them what Paul had done, they could not give a clear answer. Some in the crowd shouted one thing while others shouted another. Luke indicates that the commander could not get at the truth (Ac.21:33-34).<sup>55</sup> The reader would expect the crowd to say that Paul had brought Trophimus the Gentile, into the temple. But instead the crowd's accusations are irrational and unclear. The description of the events implies that new false assumptions were being added to the initial error.<sup>56</sup> The characteristic of errors and false assumptions is therefore a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident.

Secondly, the charge brought by Tertullus is that Paul is accused of being a troublemaker who stirs up riots amongst the Jews. In his defence, Paul once again states that the charges brought against him, cannot be proved.<sup>57</sup> In support of this Cunningham states:

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<sup>53</sup> The Jewish law which forbade Gentiles from entering the temple precincts on the pain of death reads as follows: "Let no foreigner enter within the screen and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whosoever is taken so doing will be the cause that death overtaketh him." (Μεζέν α ι ι ο γεν ε ζ πορευέζζαη νη ζ ηο περ η ερ ν ηρσθάθηοσσ θα περιβόι οσ. ζ δ ν ι ε θ ζ αση α ηρς ζ ηηδη η ζαθιο σζε ν ζάναρον.) Cit.ap. Conzelmann, 183.

<sup>54</sup> Johnson, 381. Cf. also Haenchen, 61. Harrison is emphatic about the error: "Luke informs us that the assumption about violation of the temple in this case was false, based merely on observation that one of Paul's companions, whom they had seen with him in the city, was a Gentile." Harrison, 330. Quite a number of commentaries draw attention to the similarity of this passage with the accusation against Stephen in Acts 6:13: "he speaks against this holy place and the law." J.D.G.Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Narrative Commentaries, (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996), 288. Cf. G.Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte. 2*. Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1982), 312-313. According to Luke, the punishment for bringing a gentile into the temple could not be applied in Paul's case as he had not brought Trophimus into the temple area. Cunningham supports this, for he argues that the narrative (Ac.21:29) has already prepared the reader for the conclusion that the charge is false. He gives another reason: "For one thing, they sound very similar to the charges lodged against Stephen by those Luke describes as false witnesses (6.13)." Cunningham, 278.

<sup>55</sup> Dunn, 289 asks, "we can guess what one account was (Ac.21:28), but what was the other?"

<sup>56</sup> The use of the word ζθαι ζ in this verse (Ac.21:34) together with its use in a similar context where Festus is concerned (Ac.25:26) reveals the importance of this description for Luke. The use of the word ζθαι ζ occurs in the prologue to the gospel where Luke indicates that he wishes to inform his reader with reliable information. The fact that the commander is unable to obtain reliable information concerning the accusations against Paul highlights the error upon which these accusations are based.

<sup>57</sup> Acts 24:13, ο δ παραζη ζαηδύνανηαί ζοηπερ ν σνν θαηροο ζί ν κοσ.

“Paul insists that he is innocent of these charges as well (24.13). He was not the one who stirred up the city (24.12); it was the Jews themselves.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Cunningham, 279.

Thirdly, at the hearing of the case before Festus, the Jews stood around Paul and brought many serious charges against him, which once again, they could not prove (25:7).<sup>59</sup> Thus in three important instances, before the commander, before Felix and before Festus, the charges cannot be substantiated. The fact that they could not prove anything confirms that both the initial and subsequent accusations, were false.

This portrayal of these Jews has far reaching consequences. It means that at the basis of all the accusations and their excesses of violence against Paul, lies a false assumption and irrational deductions. The Jews opposed to Paul are similar to Paul prior to his conversion. Such erroneous deductions are typical of superstition.

#### **1.3.4 Irrationality expressed as superstition**

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<sup>59</sup> ο\_θ\_ζ\_τσον\_ποδε\_ξ\_αη Johnson's comment on this verse confirms the error of the Jews. "although their charges are many and serious (*barus*), the Jews still have no proof to bring (*apodeiknymi* = demonstration, as in 4 Macc 1:8)." Johnson, 421.

Two examples of contemporary reflections on superstition and its relationship to false assumptions provide a context in which to understand Luke's remarks. For Plutarch, false assumptions and errors of judgement which lead to excessive actions are key attributes of superstition. In the opening sentences of his work *On Superstition*, Plutarch refers to the problem concerning errors of judgement. He states, "Every false judgement ... is a mischievous thing."<sup>60</sup> The word κοτζερός used by Plutarch and referred to in the Loeb translation as "a mischievous thing," implies suffering and pain.<sup>61</sup> Pain and suffering therefore forms a backdrop to the general effects of false assumptions. Plutarch proceeds to lists the manifestation of false judgements in two categories. The first is false judgement "without emotions." Although it results in error, it is generally harmless. For example: "A man thinks that in the beginning the universe was created out of atoms and void. His assumption is false, but it causes no sore, no throbbing, no agitating pain."<sup>62</sup> However the problems arise in the second category, where false judgement is "with emotion."<sup>63</sup> Plutarch explains that this becomes a falsehood that contains venom. The example which he suggests has many similarities with the characteristics that Luke uses to describe Paul's motivation before his conversion as well as the behaviour of the Jews who oppose Paul. Plutarch's own example of a falsehood with emotion in this passage, refers to money. "A man assumes that wealth is the greatest good. This falsehood contains venom, it feeds upon his soul, distracts him, does not allow him to sleep, fills him with stinging desires, pushes him over precipices, chokes him, and takes from him his freedom of speech."<sup>64</sup> The excessive behaviour which

<sup>60</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 164E: παζα κ\_ο\_ν θριζιτς υεσδης, ...κοτζερόν.

<sup>61</sup> Bailly, s.v., κοτζερός, *DGF* "qui cause une souffrance, pénible, douloureux."

<sup>62</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 164F: Απόκοος ητς ο\_εηση\_θα\_θεν\_υ\_ρτ\_ς\_ε\_ναη\_η\_υ\_ι\_φν\_υεσδ\_ς\_π\_οι\_ευης, \_υ\_ \_ι\_θοο\_ο\_ποτς\_ο\_δ\_ζ\_θσγκ\_υ\_ο\_δ\_δ\_ύνεν\_ηαράηηοζζαν.

<sup>63</sup> Plutarch's statement that falsehood contains "venom" reminds one of several aspects of Luke's narrative in which he portrays the highly emotional actions of the opponents of Christianity. Note, for example, the viciousness of Paul's attack on Christians and his "excessive raging" against them (Ac.26:11). Likewise "venom" is also illustrated by the attacks of the Jews; they beat (21:32) and try to kill Paul (21:31; 23:12-21). The idea that it feeds upon their souls and distracts them, finds resonance in the Jews being "all stirred up" (21:27); "all aroused." The portrayal of superstitious people as being unable to sleep is almost similar to the oath of the Jews to "neither eat nor drink until they have killed Paul," (23:12). The Jews rush about and stir up the crowds and "drag" Paul (21:30). They "throw dust into the air." (22:23) Finally, Plutarch depicts the effects of false assumptions by superstitious people as removing from them the freedom of speech. This is paralleled in the way Luke depicts the Jews as being unable to present their case coherently. They shout out different things so that the commander is unable to know anything with certainty, (21:34). They "cry out" (θράδονης - 21:36); they "lift up their voices" (π\_ραν\_η\_υ\_φ\_υ\_α\_η\_υ\_ι\_έγονης - 22:22); they shout (θρασγαδόνηρ - 22:23); the Sanhedrin is divided amongst itself (ζ\_ηάζητς; \_ζ\_τίζζ\_ε) and ends in uproar (θρασγ\_κεγάηε); as the dispute becomes violent (Ποι\_ι\_δ\_γ\_ηγοκένεζ\_ζ\_ηάζ\_εφς - 23:7-10). Luke's description of the Jews as incoherent, shouting and abusive, has the characteristics of the excesses typical of those categorized as superstitious. In a later chapter, an analysis of Paul's boldness of speech (26:26) will reveal how his conversion has contributed to his break from such practices.

<sup>64</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 164E: Τπο\_ι\_ακβάνηηητς\_η\_υ\_πιο\_η\_ον\_γ\_αζ\_υ\_ε\_ναη\_κέγλι\_η\_ον\_η\_ο\_η\_υ\_ε\_δος\_υ\_υ\_τεη\_νέκεηηηη\_υ\_υ\_στη\_υ\_ξ\_ιζ\_ηεζ\_ητς, ο\_θ\_ \_θαζεύδην, ο\_ζ\_ηρφν\_κ\_πίπ\_ι\_εζ\_ητς, ζ\_ε\_θαη\_πεηρ\_υ\_γ\_τεη\_η\_υ\_παρρεζ\_ίαν\_θαηρε\_ηηη For Luke there is a close link between a person's attitude to money and a person's attitude to God. This is especially evident in his description of Ananias and Sapphira's attempted deceit of the church concerning the money they received for their property, (Ac.5:1-11). Peter's judgement pronounced in verse 4 is an indication of the relationship. "You have not lied to men but to God." See the discussion on this point; R.F.O'Toole, "You Did Not Lie to Us (Human Beings) but to God" (Acts 5,4c), *Biblica* 76 (1995): 182-209.

characterises a mistaken perception can hardly be illustrated more dramatically.

An overview of the characteristics of superstition reveals that, “At the heart of superstition lies an inherent contradiction which is the result of irrationality. It is irrational to fear the gods whose desire it is to help.”<sup>65</sup> Plutarch, repeatedly exposes the irrationality and contradictory motives that drive superstitious people, in the following terms; “superstition is a multitude of differing feelings with an underlying notion that the good is evil. For the superstitious fear the gods, and flee to the gods for help; they flatter them and assail them with abuse, pray to them and blame them” (167E). Their contradictory behaviour and errors of judgement can be seen in the interplay between the words; good/evil, flatter/abuse, pray to/blame. These examples illustrate how superstitious people can hold contradictory opinions simultaneously. Thus their decision making process is not guided by reason but by unstable emotions which in turn produce inappropriate physical responses which include; lack of stability, lack of clear direction and meaningful purpose, abusive language and irrational, threatening behaviour and the infliction of suffering on others. Thus Plutarch's explanation that superstition is most prevalent when emotion is added to false assumption, sheds interesting light on Luke's description of Paul's pre-conversion characteristics as well as on the characteristics of the Jews who not only oppose him but are the cause of his suffering.

Plutarch is certainly not unique in his convictions. Prior to him the Roman author, Livy, offers similar insights in his discussion of the Bacchanalian cult. Pointing to the dangers of this “superstition” he underlines its irrationality by describing it as having been introduced by a nameless Greek who possessed none of the arts of learning usually associated with the Greeks. Instead he “filled minds with error”(animos errore imbueret).<sup>66</sup> Towards the end of his account Livy contrasts madness to sound minds. “Therefore each one of you should hope that all your friends have been endowed with *sound minds*. If lust, if *madness* has carried off anyone into that whirlpool” (of the cult). Optare igitur unusquisque vestrum debet ut bona mens suis omnibus fuerit. Si quem libido, si furor in illum gurgitem abripui.<sup>67</sup>

The way that Luke has presented the opposition to Christianity, whether from Paul or the antagonistic Jews, brings out the element of errors of judgment and prepares the way for their actions to be viewed as excessive and the cause of suffering.<sup>68</sup> It will be seen that this is in direct contrast to Paul who after his conversion is describes as ζφ θροζύ νε (Ac.26:25) and who is a representative of rationality which is the mean between the excesses of superstition and the deficiencies of atheism. The following section will elaborate on the irrational and excessive opposition to Christianity by focussing on the four main categories of aggression described by Paul.

## 2 The expression of Paul's raging

In this section, four categories that Luke uses to elaborate on Paul's *ἄκαηνόκενος*, will be

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<sup>65</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the characteristics of superstition see: De Villiers, Germiquet, *Superstitio*, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Livy *From the Founding of the City* 39.8.4.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.16.5.

<sup>68</sup> Reference needs to be made at this point of the work of Malina who has mapped out the first century view of the human personality and self expression. The errors of judgement discussed above therefore fall into the zone of the mind and the ability to understand and reveals these faculties as being deficient. Malina has called the areas of human expression “zones” and has argued that there were three such zones. The zone of the eyes and heart, representing understanding and thought. The zone of the mouth and ears, representing self expression. The zone of feet and hands, representing purposeful action and direction. B.Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (Atlanta: SCM Press, 1983), 60f.

investigated. This will be followed by a similar analysis of the behaviour of Paul's Jewish opponents. Both the characters of Paul (before Damascus) and of the Jewish opponents (of Christianity, and later of Paul) express similar traits.

It is telling that in this last part of the book of Acts in which the two speeches of Paul on his Damascus experience are related, his persecution of the Christians is described in more detail than in the first report of this experience in Acts 9. As noted by Krodel and Conzelmann, this heightens the role of Paul as persecutor.<sup>69</sup> In the next section this will be investigated in more detail and the function of this difference clarified.

Paul's earlier behaviour towards Christians is described in Acts 26:9-11. In these three verses Luke makes Paul characterize his own past from his own perspective. The long sentence comprising vs. 9-11, although it loses some of its Greek elegance in the English translation, is dominated by a report on Paul's activities against Christians.<sup>70</sup> Before Luke lists these activities in detail in 10-11, he begins this new section with a general remark about the many things done against the Name (Ac.26:9). The activities are given a strongly negative character with this general reference.<sup>71</sup> This general remark is then further developed with four specific actions of Paul of shutting up (θαπέθει εἰζα), approving their deaths (θαπήνευθα), forcing to blaspheme (νάγαδον βι αζθε κε υ), and pursuing (δίφθον).<sup>72</sup> These four categories of actions illustrate that which is both excessive and irrational. The way Luke has described Paul's actions against Christians does two things. Firstly, their description in the first person singular heightens Paul's responsibility. Secondly, the repetition of the verbs in the first person singular groups the four actions together. In addition the activities are introduced by the expressive phrase, "and that is what I did in Jerusalem."

## 2.1 "Shut up and bind"

The first action that Paul took against Christians was to "shut them up in prison" (γ υ θσι αθα ες θαπέθει εἰζα, Ac.26:10). The word refers in the first instance to imprisonment, or the chaining of people in prison.<sup>73</sup> The Acts 26:10 reference mentions "prison" explicitly. In the previous version of this Damascus story, however, Paul stated that his putting of Christians in prisons involved them being bound (Ac.22:4b, δεζκε εϋφον θα παραδηδο ες ες θσι αθ ες).

There is a close relationship between binding and imprisoning in Acts. In the first report on Paul's persecution, it is stated in the narrative that Paul imprisoned Christians (Ac.8:3), but in the following (Ac.9:2) he binds them only. When Ananias receives a vision commanding him to go to Paul, he responds by describing Paul as the man who had authority from the high priests "to bind all who invoke your name" (Ac.9:14). Paul's actions of imprisoning the Christians are here interpreted in terms of binding. Luke links the two so closely that they become mutually determinative.

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<sup>69</sup> G.Krodel, ed. *Acts*. Proclamation Commentaries, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 77. Conzelmann, 210.

<sup>70</sup> Johnson, 433.

<sup>71</sup> Opposition to the "Name" is a familiar theme in Acts. Jackson and Lake note that the emphasis on "the Name" plays a large part in the early chapters and that the struggle between the Sanhedrin and the apostles was centred on the use of "the Name." Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.316f.

<sup>72</sup> Scholars recognise these four distinct activities. Cf. Johnson, 433f; Haenchen, 684.

<sup>73</sup> Bailly, s.v., θαπέθει φ, *DGF* "enfermer, c. à d. lier ou enchaîner la main droite." Bauer, 411 reads it as shut up, lock up in prison.

The number of references to people being bound and imprisoned in the Lukan texts, has attracted attention in Lukan research. It is often recognized as a typical Lukan trait. Haenchen, for example, having analysed the problems in the description of Paul's arrest in the temple in Jerusalem, traces the motif of the binding with two chains to the hand of Luke (Ac.21:33). "That the almost fainting Paul is yet bound with two chains we may also in these circumstances ascribe to the author, who often utilizes the motif of chains." He then refers specifically to Acts 26:29.<sup>74</sup>

A short survey of this motif of the chaining or binding reveals that Luke uses the word *θηροθι εἶν* only in Acts 26:10 and in one other place, that is, in Luke 3:20 where it refers to the imprisonment of John the Baptist by Herod in the same manner as to the imprisonment of the Christians in Acts 26:10. Luke 3:20 does not specifically state that John was chained. Stories about imprisonments of Peter and later the two imprisonments of Paul in Acts, however, clearly state that their imprisonment included them being chained. Acts 12:6 reveals Peter's chained condition in prison, *η νσθη θειν ν Πέτρος θοηκώκενος κηαξ δύο ζηραηηφην δεδεκένοσ υύζεζην δσζίν*. Concerning Paul's imprisonment in Philippi, Acts 16:24: *ς παραγγει ίαν ηοηώηεν ιαβ ν βαι εν α ηο σ ε σ η ν ζφ ηέραν θσι αθ ν θα ηο σ πόδασ ζθ αι ίζαηο α η ν ε σ η ζύι ον*. This is followed by the remark in verse 26, *θα πάνηφν η δεζκ νέζε*.

It is, nevertheless, even more striking in the light of the fact that Luke refers explicitly to imprisonment, that he concentrates extensively on chaining as the one outstanding aspect of this imprisonment in the last chapters of Acts. Of exceptional importance is the characterization of Paul in the final chapters of Acts in terms of chains. Luke, by way of subtle insertions, portrays Paul as proclaiming the gospel among the leaders of the Roman empire whilst in chains. The first thing that the tribune and soldiers do when they arrest Paul in Jerusalem, is to bind him with two chains (Ac.21:33: *τηίάρτοσ πει άβεηο α ηο θα θεί εσζεν δεζ νση υύζεζη δσζί*). He assumes that Paul did something wrong and enquires what he had done. This contrasts with later pronouncements where the innocence of Paul is clearly spelled out (Ac.25:26-27, and esp.26:30-31). Later on, in Acts 22:29, after Paul's speech in Acts 22, the tribune is said to have been afraid because he had put Paul in chains (Ac.22:29). In this way the chains frame the Jerusalem unrest, but they also appear in the context of erroneous assumptions and accusations.

The motif of chains is taken up again and reinforced when the tribune releases Paul for his appearance before the Sanhedrin, but Paul is once again a prisoner of the Romans from Acts 23:10. There is a clear attempt to compare events in Jerusalem and in Rome as part of a greater unity and development. This happens in Acts 23:11, where a word of the Lord is reported by Luke. This word reveals that the events before the Jewish crowds and the Sanhedrin in these chapters are given coherence as Paul's testimony *in Jerusalem*. They are then compared with his testimony that is to be brought *in Rome* in a similar manner. His testimony is given in both places in chains. Once again there is a subtle interplay between prison and chains, with an emphasis on the latter. Luke reinforces the image of Paul as a prisoner when he notes in Acts 24:27 that Felix left Paul in prison, repeating exactly the same information later on with the words of Festus in Acts 25:14, where he notes that Felix left Paul a prisoner." The motif of the chains is once again reintroduced quite dramatically when Luke uses it to conclude Paul's testimony to Festus and Agrippa in Acts 26:29 (*παρεθη σ η ζ δεζκ ν ηούφν*) in a climactic manner. When Paul speaks about his imprisonment, he does so in terms of his chains.

Luke uses the same motif for the last time when Paul is in Rome. He notes that Paul referred at the end of his address to the Jews in Rome to the fact that he was chained "for the sake of the hope of Israel" (Ac.28:20, *η ν υύζην ηώηεν περιθηκαη*) Here also there is

<sup>74</sup> Haenchen, 618.

once again a link with other references to imprisonment. He started his address to them with the remark that he was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans (Ac.28:17).

With this, the chaining is given an extraordinary powerful place in the closing narrative of Acts. This motif of chains becomes even more conspicuous when one notes how the actual events of Paul's chaining in these final chapters are foretold in typical Lukan fashion in a prophecy of them before they are narrated in the following sections. During his farewell speech to the Christians in Caesarea and on his way to Jerusalem, Paul was warned by the prophet Agabus that he would be bound. The prophetic section is focussed exclusively on this symbolic action of binding. Agabus took Paul's belt and bound (δήζαζ) his own hands and feet (Ac.21:11). He then prophesied that the Jews in Jerusalem would bind (δήζοσζην) the owner of the belt and hand him over to the Gentiles (δήζαζ\_ασηο\_ηο\_ς\_θα\_η\_ς\_τε\_ρα\_ς\_ε\_πεν·\_η\_δ\_ε\_ι\_ε\_γ\_ε\_η\_η\_π\_ν\_ε\_κ\_α\_η\_η\_γ\_η\_ο\_ν\_η\_ν\_ν\_δ\_ρ\_α\_ο\_ζ\_η\_η\_ν\_δ\_ω\_ν\_ε\_α\_η\_ε\_ο\_η\_φ\_ς\_δ\_η\_ζ\_ο\_σ\_ζ\_η\_ν\_ν\_η\_ε\_ρ\_ο\_σ\_ζ\_α\_ι\_κ\_ο\_ι\_ο\_σ\_δ\_α\_ο\_η).

The presentation of the binding motif drew attention because of some difficulties in its interpretation. Jackson and Lake (268) discussed the remark of Agabus that the Jews will bind Paul and hand him to the Romans. They write, "The prophecy and the event do not fit very well, cf. xxxi.27ff., for the Jews did not bind Paul or deliver him up to the Gentiles. On the contrary the Jews tried to lynch Paul, and the Gentiles saved his life, though they arrested him. It is noteworthy that in ii.23 the crucifixion of Jesus is attributed to the Jews, and that in xxviii.17 Luke attributes to Paul himself the same mistake as he does to Agabus - „I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.“ The Romans would never have crucified Jesus or arrested Paul had it not been for the action of the Jews. Moreover there is something missing in Luke's narration of the facts. The official Jews must have brought some sort of accusation against Paul, or he would not have been held prisoner so long, and the case would not have been so obviously „the Jews v. Paul.“” The remarks of Jackson and Lake confirm that one cannot read the reference to binding literally. The strong symbolic meaning of the motif of binding requires that it be read differently than a mere historical report of who did what to Paul in these last chapters of Acts. Paul is depicting his shutting up of Christians as the result of his superstitious attitude before his Damascus experience. At the same time the Jews are delineated as still continuing with similar activities. They remain superstitious in their binding of Paul.

Luke makes it clear that after his conversion, Paul is not bound by anyone or anything but the Holy Spirit. This is confirmed by the even earlier remark of Paul, reported in Acts 20:22-23, where he talks about his journey to Jerusalem. He is a "captive to the Spirit, on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me." The expression that Paul uses (bound by the Spirit) here is ambiguous in more than one sense, as commentators indicated. It is, for example, suggested that this phrase expresses Paul's obedience to the Spirit,<sup>75</sup> or, that Paul is here under the constraint of the Spirit in contrast to his resolve in the Spirit as expressed in Acts 19:21.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> B.M.Newman, E.A.Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: UBS, 1972), 390-391 writes, "Most scholars take the phrase „bound by the spirit“ to mean either *in obedience to the Holy Spirit* or else „compelled by the Holy Spirit.“” However, it is possible, purely on the basis of the words themselves, to understand Paul as speaking of his own inner spirit." This is a good example of a reading that ignores the development of particular motifs in a text. The rest of the text of Acts in which binding is so strongly developed, places constraints on reading this phrase. The best example of a better interpretation is to be found in G.Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte. 2.* Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament. (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1982), who translates it as "bound through the Spirit," referring to the "stereotypical" use of binding in Acts 21-22.

<sup>76</sup> Conzelmann expressly rules out that Paul considers himself "shackled by the Spirit". Conzelmann, 174.

Of importance is the note of Luke that Paul is confident that events to come are in line with what the Holy Spirit wants, even though he does not know exactly what will happen to him (Ac.20:22). Conzelmann<sup>77</sup> recognized the significance of this observation of Luke when he wrote, “With this vacillation between not knowing and knowing, Luke can indicate both the divine guidance of Paul’s life and also Paul’s willingness to endure suffering.” Paul is not ignorant.

Although the undertone in the binding is that of Paul’s pending imprisonments in the last chapters of Acts, there is also now the additional perspective of the involvement of the Holy Spirit in these events and the will of the Lord. Together with the prophecy of Agabus it functions to characterize Paul’s final testimonies to the Jews and Romans amidst persecution in the closing narrative of the book in a particular manner. Luke’s own description portrays the events and the persecution of Paul as the will of God. Although the community in Caesarea (Ac.20:8) initially wanted to prevent Paul from travelling to Jerusalem, they finally succumb to the will of the Lord (Ac.20:14).

In this way, Paul, though bound by the Jews and imprisoned by the Romans, experiences miracles. Luke can portray the miraculous deliverance from the prison in Philippi (Ac.16), but this is also why later on Luke describes how the Lord appears to Paul in prison to encourage him (Ac.23:11, cf. further below). The chains of superstition, the shame of persecution and imprisonment can be borne by Paul with courage, because he is serving the Lord.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

Luke, therefore, used this motif in a symbolic way.<sup>78</sup> But there is a deeper level on which the symbolism functions. Luke is consistently delineating the persecuting actions of people as the result of superstition, fear and ignorance. They, like Paul before his Damascus experience, act excessively against Christians in binding and imprisoning them. They continue to treat Paul like Paul himself treated the Christians before. Their “shutting up” of Paul is therefore indicative of their religious ignorance. On the other hand, Paul’s courage in the face of persecution, indicates his ζφ θροζύ νε and his knowledge of what God requires of him. He represents a position of rationality and understanding. He is a captive of the Spirit, not of ignorance and superstition. In this sense, he is a Christlike figure, so that his lot represents that of Jesus in Luke’s Gospel. At the same time he is the one through whom the exalted Christ proclaims the gospel to the world.

### 2.1.1 Bound in fear

These remarks can be illuminated by investigating the use of “binding” in contemporary literature and its link with the notion of fear. In a religious context the word “to bind” can indicate the effects of superstition. According to Plutarch, one of the characteristics of superstitious people is that they are “bound up” in a variety of ways. The example that he gives concerns the Jewish people in particular. “But the Jews, because it was the Sabbath day, sat in their places immovable, while the enemy were planting ladders against the wall and capturing the defences, and they did not get up, but remained there, *fast bound in the toils of superstition* as in one great net.”(italics mine)<sup>79</sup> Plutarch compares the Jewish people’s “sitting immovable” and their “not getting up” to being caught up in “one great net.” For him, the reason behind this inability or refusal to move is that superstition has “bound them fast.” The mental disposition is given a practical expression of immovability. To describe the process of “binding up” Plutarch uses the word ζσνδεδεκένοη.<sup>80</sup> There is an interesting link between “binding” and fear. Plutarch explains in the above mentioned passage that superstitious fear is the greatest contributor to the “binding” of people. He explains that fear leads to the absence of rationality which in turn renders a person impotent, helpless and hopeless.<sup>81</sup> These characteristics have the overall effect of “binding” (ζσνδέφ) the soul.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., “It is not as if Luke consciously used this artificial device - it was part of his talent to find artlessly such features of symbolic force.”

<sup>79</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 169C: \_υ \_\_Ιοσδα\_οη ζαββάρην \_νρην \_ν \_γνάκπηρηθ θαζεδόκενοη η\_ν ποι εκίφν θί καθας προζηένρην θα\_ η\_ ηείτε θαρη ακβανόνρην, ο\_θ \_νέζηεζαν \_υ \_\_κεηων \_ζπερ \_ν ζαγήν\_ κη η\_ δεηζήθαικονί\_ ζσνδεδεκένοη

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Ac.12:6 where Peter’s binding is described. Holgate has made a similar observation in his analysis of Luke’s parable of the Prodigal Son where the excesses of the younger son result in him finding himself in the pig pen. Holgate quotes Dio Chrys. *Or.* 8.24-26: “Pleasure drives the victim into a sort of sty and *pens him up*” (italics mine). D.Holgate, *Prodigality, Liberality and Meanness in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. A Greco-Roman Perspective on Luke 15:11-32*, Ph.D.Thesis, (Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993), 135 note 114.

<sup>81</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 165D: \_πραθηον \_τεηθα \_\_πορον θα\_\_κήτανον η\_ \_ι όγηζήρην.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 165D: η ζσνδέον \_κο\_ η\_ν υστ\_ν. Plutarch gives other examples of the restrictive characteristics of superstition: A person “sitting on the ground and spending the whole day there,” 166A: θαζίζαζ \_ν η\_ γ\_ διεκέρεζον. The superstitious person “has no heart to relieve the situation or undo its effects, or to find some remedy for it or to take a strong stand against it.” 168C: \_ζεν ο\_δ\_ ηρικ\_ βοεζε\_ν ο\_δ\_ δημ\_ύειγ η\_ ζσκβεθεθ\_ζ ο\_δ\_ ζεραπεύειγ ο\_δ\_ \_νηηάηηεζζαη

The presence of fear and its possible binding effects is part of the events leading to Paul's arrest. Luke portrays Paul as refusing to fear when he answers the Christians in Caesarea who try to warn him against proceeding to Jerusalem, (Ac.21:13). Jackson and Lake explain that Paul's retort, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart?" contains the word ζσνζρύπηην which is a rare word meaning "to break up" or "to pound to bits" (ήήε\_πεθρίζε\_ Πα\_ι ος ήί ποηε\_ηεθι αίονηεζθα\_ζσνζρύπηηονήξ κοσ η\_ν θαρδίαν). It was apparently used of washerwomen pounding clothes with stones to whiten them.<sup>83</sup> They refer to Zahn who believes that the implication of this word in this context is: "to make Paul go pale from fear."<sup>84</sup> As it is a rare word, one would expect that Luke has chosen it purposefully. Understood in this way, Paul in the face of the pleas of his fellow Christians, has to resist fear, which in turn would "bind him" and render him helpless and directionless.

The context of fear and its possible effect of bringing the proclamation of the gospel to a standstill is a factor in the narrative. This is confirmed in Acts 23:11 where in contrast to fear the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." Luke's choice of ζάρζειη is important, for it is used by Aristotle in his description of the person who is of noble character.<sup>85</sup> A person with this courage has virtue, for he is able to maintain a rational course and not give in to the binding and paralysing effects of fear. Aristotle makes the significant statement that the person who lacks sensible courage should be called "mad" (καηνόκενοζ),<sup>86</sup> as Luke describes Paul prior to his conversion. Thus the concept of superstition helps tie together the apparently contradictory notions of "raging" and "being bound." Further information in Acts corroborates this: Paul has a similar vision of encouragement during the sea voyage when the rest of the people on board the ship were filled with fear and no longer able to control the situation (Ac.27:24). In contrast to Paul, the governor Felix succumbs to fear when Paul speaks to him about righteousness and judgement (Ac.24:25).

The fact that being bound represented more than simply being detained but had symbolic significance is confirmed by Rapske. He explains at considerable length that there was stigma attached to incarceration and bonds and especially being seen in public while wearing chains.<sup>87</sup> "One of the important functions of parading malefactors to prison in chains was their exposure to unrelenting public scrutiny and resultant shame."<sup>88</sup> Amongst many examples from Luke's contemporary writers, Rapske refers to Seneca who "associates chains and reproach."<sup>89</sup>

Plutarch thus operates on a metaphorical level when he expounds on the way that superstition "binds" and incarcerates people. As has been shown with the opening of eyes, Luke also operates on these two levels.<sup>90</sup> Therefore the reference by Luke that Paul attempted

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<sup>83</sup> Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.269.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 269. Bruce relying on J.A.Findlay, puts forward a similar interpretation: "bleaching my heart by pounding it like washerwomen." Bruce, 388.

<sup>85</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 3.7. 2-7.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 3.7.7.

<sup>87</sup> B.Rapske, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, (3), The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 283-309.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 289f.

<sup>89</sup> Seneca *Controversiae* 9.1.7. Cit.ap. Rapske, 291.

<sup>90</sup> Hamm argues that the concept of "opening of eyes" in Luke-Acts is to be interpreted metaphorically.

to shut up Christians in prisons can operate at a deeper level than simply a reference to a goal sentence. It also represents attempts to overwhelm and paralyse Christians with fear. The succumbing to such characteristics would be understood as giving in to superstition. As the text indicates that it was Paul who bound Christians, it is he, prior to his conversion, who displays the characteristics of someone who has become irrational and afflicted by superstition.

### **2.1.2 The binding effect of the Jews**

The discussion has been focussing mainly on examples of Paul binding others. There is another set of motifs that will clarify the use of binding further. Since Paul had compared his actions to that of the Jews, examples of how the Jews' actions have been attempts to restrict the mobility of people will be examined in order to illuminate the concept of binding further.

According to Acts 21:27 the Asian Jews “laid their hands” on Paul (θα\_ \_πέβαι\_αν\_ \_π\_α\_η\_ν\_η\_ς\_τε\_ρα\_ς). Similarly in Acts 21:30 “laying hold of Paul they dragged him outside the temple” (θα\_ \_πη\_α\_β\_ό\_κε\_νο\_η\_η\_ο\_ \_Π\_α\_ύ\_λ\_ο\_ς). As a result of the uproar caused by the Jews, the commander “bound Paul with two chains” θα\_ \_θ\_έ\_ι\_ε\_σ\_ζ\_ε\_ν\_ δ\_ε\_ζ\_ν\_α\_η\_ \_ι\_ύ\_ζ\_ε\_ζ\_η\_ δ\_ο\_ζ\_ί\_ (Ac.21:33). As Paul compares his pre-conversion activities to that of the Jews, their acts of laying hold of him and having him bound, reveals that the Jews are now attempting to impose on him the restrictive characteristics of superstition.

In addition to people being “shut up” and “bound” there is the reference to the Jews shutting the temple doors.<sup>91</sup> Although most commentators examine its practical implications<sup>92</sup> some consider that Luke intended a symbolic meaning. In his comments on this act, Johnson asks whether Luke intends a symbolic shutting of the gates.<sup>93</sup> Bruce also indicates that this may have symbolic significance. He quotes Bernard: “Believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets”, and having “committed nothing against the people or customs of [his] fathers”, he and his creed are forced from their proper home. On it as well as him the Temple doors are shut.”<sup>94</sup>

The shutting of the temple gates on Paul who was commissioned by Jesus to be his messenger is an ironic situation.<sup>95</sup> Thus as Paul was “shutting up” (θαῆσι εἶφ) the believers prior to his conversion so too the Jews who now oppose him, shut him out (θι εἶφ) of the temple. As indicated above, irrationality when expressed through acts which are self contradictory are the symptoms of superstition. In shutting the temple doors the Jews believe that they are safe-guarding its purity but in reality they are preventing Paul from making his offering (21:26) and from completing his purification rite. Both these acts were being performed by Paul in accordance with the requirements of the law (21:24).

There is another aspect to the irrationality of excluding Paul through the shutting of the temple doors. When Paul returned to Jerusalem the Christian community there was concerned about rumours implicating Paul in encouraging Jews to turn away from Moses (21:21). In order to show the error of such rumours Paul undertook the prescribed purification rites at the temple to show that he was living in obedience to the law (21:24). By shutting the temple doors the Jews were themselves preventing Paul from completing the very rites which would prove the error of their assumptions. In this way Luke is portraying how these Jews are contributing to their own spiritual blindness and how they entrench themselves in their false assumptions. Therefore although superficially the shutting of the temple gates is directed against Paul, the irony is that through this act the Jews are demonstrating how the error of their false assumptions binds them ever more tightly. As discussed above, being fast bound in error is a characteristic of superstition.

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<sup>91</sup> Acts 21:30b: θα\_ε\_ζέφς\_θιεί ζζεζα ν α\_ζύραη

<sup>92</sup> Jackson and Lake state that the closure of the temple doors was presumably by the order of the Sagan. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.275.

<sup>93</sup> Johnson, 382.

<sup>94</sup> T.D.Bernard, *The Progress of Doctrine*, 121. cit. ap. Bruce, 396.

<sup>95</sup> J.P.Heil, Reader-Response and the Irony of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in Luke 22: 66-71, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989): 278. This example of irony is not new in Luke, as has been indicated above. Heil has shown the presence of irony in the trial of Jesus. The dialogue that takes place between Jesus and the Sanhedrin (Lk.22:66-71) about whether he is the Christ and the Son of God, enables the reader to see the irony. “And so the reader is beginning to sense the tragic irony that the members of the Sanhedrin, in seeking to condemn Jesus as a false Christ, are actually condemning themselves of failure to believe in Jesus as the true Christ.” A similar situation is reported by Stephen, concerning Moses' rejection by the Jewish people. Acts 7:25: “Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.” Johnson's comments on this verse is that this account is entirely lacking from Exodus and from any of the parallel Jewish retellings of the Moses story. “It represents a distinctive Lucan contribution.” Johnson, 126.

It has been argued in the previous parts that the statement about Paul “shutting up” the believers is closely linked to the concept of being “bound.” It has been argued that this opens a whole complex of associations. In addition to silencing them physically it also represents an attempt to render them mentally powerless, hopeless and directionless. The fact that Paul had to be warned that he too was going to “be bound” identifies the Jews as having the same intentions which Paul used to have. As argued above, the shutting up of people so that they become immobile and directionless, is to impose on them characteristic similar to those experienced by people afflicted by superstition.<sup>96</sup>

## 2.2 “I cast my vote”

The second verb which Luke uses to describe Paul's pre-Christian actions is θαγήνευθα (Ac.26:10). The literal translation of this verb in the phrase, “I cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death,”<sup>97</sup> could refer to the fact that Paul was party to the Sanhedrin's decisions to impose the death sentence on Christians. The Greek expression, θαηθέρφ, means to vote against someone or for that person's condemnation (Bauer ad.loc.). Some proposals seek to change this technical expression for condemning to a more general translation, namely to give approval. In this case it then means that Paul approved decisions of the Sanhedrin against Christians. Newman and Nida wrote, “*When they were sentenced to death*” is literally “when they were put to death,” but most translators understand it in the sense followed by the TEV (see NEB “were condemned to death”). The phrase *I also voted for it* would suggest that Paul himself had been a member of the Council in Jerusalem, which alone would have passed judgments of this kind. In order to render *I also voted for it*, some languages employ “I also said, I agree” or “I showed that I also was in favor.” (473).

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<sup>96</sup> It can be seen that Plutarch in his presentation of superstition, describes it as not only having a restrictive influence on purposeful-action by inhibiting a person's ability to move, but also restricts the other zone of self expression. In the zone of eyesight and thoughts, he states that superstition causes ignorance and want of perception. Plutarch *On Superstition* 164E: Σ\_ς περ\_ ζε\_v\_ καζίας θα\_ \_γνοίας. In the zone of self-expressive speech, superstition removes the freedom/boldness of speech. 165A: η\_v παρρεζίαν\_ θαρρε\_ρηη This point will be raised below when Paul's attempts to compel Christians to blaspheme is considered.

<sup>97</sup> Johnson, 434.

The general reference of these remarks is to the legal authorities and their role in the opposition to the Christians. Some remarks about the legal profile of the Sanhedrin are necessary in order to explain the immense influence of this body and to evaluate this expression, especially since it moots the difficult issue of capital punishment. Much debate has taken place whether the Sanhedrin had the authority to administer this punishment. The Sanhedrin was the highest legal and administrative authority for the Jews in Judea. Although its authority was not recognised beyond the borders of Judea by the Romans, the decisions and opinions of the Sanhedrin carried a moral weight on all Jews. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem appears to have consisted of 70 members and the high priest who was its head, thus totalling 71. It was divided into two basic factions who were not always on good terms, namely the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducean wing consisted of the high priest; the priestly aristocracy (ῥτηρεῖ) and the elders (πρεζβύτεροι) who tended to dominate proceedings.<sup>98</sup> On the other side were the Pharisaic scribes (γρακκαηῆς) who, although dominated to some extent by the Sadducean wing, was still necessary for the Sanhedrin to make decisions.<sup>99</sup>

In theory the Sanhedrin could try capital cases and execute the sentence. Certain developments placed constraints on this power. After A.D. 6 the Procurator, who resided in Caesarea, had control over the Sanhedrin. From then on, it is widely accepted, the Sanhedrin could decide on cultic matters and could punish offenders against the Torah, as long as it did not involve the death penalty. But even here there are uncertainties. Ferguson points out that there is some ambiguity as to whether in certain circumstances the Sanhedrin was permitted “the right to punish with death a pagan - even a Roman - who went across the temple barrier and entered the sacred precincts.”<sup>100</sup> As the only possible exception to the general ban on executions was the bringing of Gentiles into the temple, Paul's attack on Christians with the intent to kill them would have been illegal, as no mention is made that the Christians were bringing Gentiles into the temple. Even where it is mentioned that Paul brought a gentile into the temple, it turns out that this cannot be proved. The Christians therefore could not have been sentenced to death on this score.

In the light of what has been said about the legal powers of the Sanhedrin, the voting of Paul in Acts 26:10 is regarded as an editorial fallacy or explained in a non-judicial manner. Jackson and Lake, for example, also discuss the implication that Paul voted for the imposition of the death sentence. Although they do not give a conclusive answer, they appear to favour the explanation that the Sanhedrin's involvement is due to the work of the editor.<sup>101</sup> Jacquier is widely known for his theory that the judicial activities of the youthful Paul appear incredible and that this verse is a metaphor for ζσνεοδοθέφ, also used in Acts 8:1 and

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<sup>98</sup> Lohse, ζσνέδριν, *TDNT* 7: 862. Concerning the πρεζβύτεροι he states: “Without exception these patricians, too, were Sadducean in persuasion.” *Ibid.*, 864.

<sup>99</sup> Ferguson gives an explanation of the basic difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 407f. The Pharisees differed from the Sadducees in that they gave divine authority to the application and interpretation of the law. They were open to developing a dynamic relationship with the law so that its observance would not become a dead ritual. They were thus open to further doctrinal developments such as the resurrection of the body, the last judgement and the reward and punishment in after life. The Sadducees, on the other hand were not.

<sup>100</sup> Lohse, ζσνέδριν, *TDNT* 7: 865.

<sup>101</sup> Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.317. They argue that the improbability of the Sanhedrin's ability to inflict the death penalty could be supported in two ways: 1) The sentence is due to the editor of the book. 2) The facts are as stated but the chronology of Paul's life has been confused by some primitive error. Bruce concludes that it cannot be proved that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin. Bruce, 443.

22:20.<sup>102</sup> In this sense it would then mean to approve, rather than to vote against.

It is clear that a firm answer to the question of the precise and actual authority of the Sanhedrin in Graeco-Roman times cannot be given at this stage. It is not possible to reconstruct a final historical setting against which Luke's remarks can be evaluated. Whatever the historical realities behind the text, it is in any case evident that this verb in Acts 26:10 simply assumes that the Jewish authorities had the authority to execute criminals. This body is therefore depicted as extremely powerful. They, according to Luke could decide on life or death.

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<sup>102</sup> Haenchen, 684 note 5. Cf. also Conzelmann, (210) who argues against this, stating that it should not be watered down to imply that Paul simply agreed to or approved the killings.

Rather than weigh Luke's remark about Paul's voting in terms of the historical situation, one understands it much better in terms of the book. For Luke the Sanhedrin had a greater significance than simply the court that was involved in the condemnation of Jesus and the Christians.<sup>103</sup> The Sanhedrin is presented in Acts as the instrument through which the attacks on the disciples and apostles are planned and channelled and find official expression.. In Acts there is unmistakable progress in the attacks of the Sanhedrin.<sup>104</sup> Firstly, Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin and are dismissed with a warning (Ac.4:5-22). Secondly, during the next trial before the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel is needed to allow them to go with a beating and a warning to be silent (Ac.5:17-42). Thirdly, the trial of Stephen before the Sanhedrin (Ac.6:12) ends in a riot and with his stoning (Ac.6:8-8:1). Finally, Paul only escapes the fate of being killed by the Sanhedrin, whether by condemnation in a trial or by ambush, because of the protection offered by the Roman forces.<sup>105</sup> The point is that Luke associates the killings and persecutions of Christians to a large extent with a group of characters who attempted to use the powers of the Sanhedrin as the instrument of their wrath.<sup>106</sup>

Luke explains carefully that Paul himself was an active partner in the initial phases of this opposition. Later on Paul becomes a victim of the same process of which he was part and parcel. This is clearest in Acts 22. The accusations formulated against Paul by the Sanhedrin, begin in Acts 22:30 when the Roman commander, while trying to find out the exact charge against Paul, "ordered the chief Priest and all the Sanhedrin to assemble." The outcome of this gathering of the Sanhedrin this time ends in discord. Paul is declared not guilty by some scribes of the Pharisaic wing. "„We find nothing wrong with this man," they said" (Ac.23:9). Thus the subsequent conspiracy to kill Paul in an ambush is evidence that certain members of the Sanhedrin were prepared to go to illegal lengths to fulfill their plans.

The Sanhedrin in this way continues with the activities of which Paul was part in his pre-Damascus time. Luke leaves little doubt that their activities were part of a wider action characterized by illegality and violence. Their behaviour is once again excessive. The characteristics that were investigated, indicate that Paul and then the Jews are prepared to exceed the bounds of legality in order to pursue their aim of destroying Christianity. When the opponents fail to obtain any conviction of Paul in the presence of the commander, for example, they form a conspiracy to kill him (Ac.23:12). It is this conspiracy that is most illuminating of the role of the Sanhedrin in the book as a whole. The original accusation against Paul was made by Asian Jews (Ac.21:27). The discussion in the council becomes

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<sup>103</sup> The word "Sanhedrin" occurs 11 times in the New Testament. It is significant that 8 of these are in Luke's work and of the 8, 7 occur in Acts. In addition, Luke varies some of his references to the Sanhedrin by using words other than Sanhedrin. Luke uses words like *ἄρχιερεῖς*, *γραμματεῖς* and *πρεζβυτέρου* which are references to the Sanhedrin. See Luke 22:4; 22:52; 23:4; 24:20. Acts 4:5; 4:8; 6:12; 22:30; 25:2; 26:12.

<sup>104</sup> Lohse, *ζ συνέδριον*, *TDNT* 7: 871.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 871.

<sup>106</sup> Luke's portrayal of the Sanhedrin is also investigated by Mainville who shows that the warning concerning the sin against the Holy Spirit (Lk.12:10-12) is ultimately perpetrated by the Sanhedrin (Ac.4:16-18) when it makes the pronouncement "What are we going to do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name." In this way the guilt of the Sanhedrin is a deliberate affair. "Ainsi, la mauvaise foi des membres du Sanhédrin dans leur rejet conscient et catégorique du témoignage et des œuvres des disciples, approuvé par l'Esprit Saint, est sans équivoque *péché contre l'Esprit Saint*." O.Mainville, *Le péché contre l'Esprit annoncé en Lc 12:10, commis en Ac 4:16-18: une illustration de l'unité de Luc et Actes*, *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 42.

violent to such an extent that the tribune fears Paul will be killed (Ac.21:10). The intention to kill Paul is then mentioned by Luke. The Jews in Jerusalem take over their vendetta and in turn try to persuade the Sanhedrin to call a meeting in order that Paul can be ambushed. The process is only stalled when the plot is discovered. The authority of the Sanhedrin is used to persuade the tribune to bring Paul to the council. Illegal activities, deep emotions and the summary killing of opponents thus merge in the Lukan picture of Paul's opponents of which the legal authorities are a firm part. At the same time these activities are also secretive and are only revealed through the intervention of Paul (Ac.23:16-20).

As the narrative in Acts unfolds, the process of negative influence from one group to another, becomes a feature of the persecutions of Christians. Johnson identifies these features with the account of Paul's actions, prior to his conversion. "Paul's own role is nowhere else described in terms of membership in the Sanhedrin or as voting, but rather he is pictured as colluding and approving of the death (perhaps with the implication that he was an *agent provocateur* (Ac.7:58; 8:1; 22:20))."<sup>107</sup> Johnson's remarks reveals the configuration of characters of which Paul is part and against which his "voting" should be viewed. At the same time it stresses the intensity of the actions of these groups, bringing out the absence of legality and the presence of corporate prejudice.

In this way the remark of Paul in Acts 26:10 that he voted for the condemnation of Christians does not portray an open and legal process. It opens up a whole complex of interrelated violent and secret manoeuvring which exceed the bounds of rationality. It also reveals that the attacks on Christianity were motivated by the process of people exerting influence on others.

The set of circumstances described above can be illuminated from contemporary literature, in which a connection is often made between superstitious behaviour and illegal activities. Once again these activities are the result of irrationality and emotional behaviour. Plutarch dwells on the emotions of those afflicted by superstition: "that by their urgings to be up and doing they press hard upon the reasoning power and strain it."<sup>108</sup> The Jewish opponents of Paul fall into this category of being carried by their overwhelming desire to kill Paul. They cannot rest until they have attained their goal, for they have decided to neither eat nor drink until they have killed him.<sup>109</sup> Plutarch describes the characters of superstitious people as being in a state of permanent agitation. "But the superstitious man enjoys no world in common with the rest of mankind; for neither when awake does he use his intelligence, nor when fallen asleep is he freed from his agitation."<sup>110</sup>

Plutarch also summarizes some of the qualities that those afflicted with superstition display in their dealings with other people. When these qualities are compared to those involved in the plot to kill Paul, the similarity is striking. In the following example Plutarch uses himself in a hypothetical example of a superstitious person. "Plutarch is an inconstant fickle person, quick-tempered, vindictive over little accidents, pained at trifles."<sup>111</sup> Αβέβητος (inconstant) refers to an unstable friendship when people allow their association to influence

<sup>107</sup> Johnson, 434.

<sup>108</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 165D: ἡθηρὰς πραθηρὰς ῥκαῖς ἰθβαῖδόμενα θαηπειγρηθαῖς σνηρῖνηη ν ι οηῖ κόν.

<sup>109</sup> Acts 23:12ff.

<sup>110</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 66C: ἡ δὲ δεῖξῖθαῖκοηθοῖνς ο δεις ἰηηθόζκος· ο ηε γ ρ ἰ γρε γορς η θρονο ἰηητρ ἡηο ηε θοηώκενος πα ι ἰηηηηηο ηαράηηοηηος,

<sup>111</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 170A: Πιο ἰηαρτός ἰηη νζρφοπος ἰβέβαηος ε κηηθβοῖος, ε τερς πρς ἰηηῖν, ἰ ηος ηστο ἰηηηκφρηηθός, κηθροῖ σπος·

each other negatively. This is an important characteristic, for Aristotle uses the same word to describe as evil, friendships where mutual negative influence is present.<sup>112</sup> Plutarch's use of *ε\_κεηόβοι ος* (fickle) as a characteristic of the superstitious is significant for it implies a person who is liable to change. This particular characteristic is also something which Aristotle distinguishes as negative. “(T)he bad are always changing their minds.”<sup>113</sup> The process of influencing others and in turn being influenced negatively, is what superstition feeds on.<sup>114</sup> The way that Luke portrays how the Sanhedrin is manipulated into plotting Paul's death, aligns the conspirators with that category of people.

In conclusion to this section, it must be noted how Schille regards the verbs of persecution in these verses as providing a picturesque summary of events that evokes such a general picture that one gets the impression they relate more to the present situation in which the church found itself than to the actual events being narrated. He is therefore convinced that historical verifications of the text are out of order and that it makes little sense to investigate whether the Sanhedrin actually had the power of *ius gladii*. More important, though, is his following remarks.

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<sup>112</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 9.12.3: θοιγφνο\_ζη\_γ\_ρ\_ θαύι\_φν ( \_βέβαρη\_ \_νρες) , θα\_ κοτζερο\_ δ\_ γίνονηηη\_ κοηρύκενοη\_ι\_ι\_ήι\_οι\_ε.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.4.10: κηηακειεί\_ας\_γ\_ρ\_ο\_θα\_ι\_οηγέκοσζην.

<sup>114</sup> In the opening sentence to his work on superstition, Plutarch reflects this aspect when he describes superstitious people as “moist and tender.” Plutarch *On Superstition* 164 E: η\_δ\_ \_ζπερ\_ \_νπερ\_ \_ν\_ \_γρο\_ς\_ ηρ\_ς\_ \_παι\_ο\_ς\_ η\_ν\_ δει\_ξ\_η\_φακονίαν\_ πεποίεθεν. By this Plutarch implies that any emotion is able to take root in them and influence their actions.

Luke, he writes, is actually illustrating the threat of the Roman empire to the church of his own time through the image of Paul. When Paul notes that he locked up and voted against the “saints,” he describes himself as a mislead persecutor (fehlgeleiteten Verfolger). In voting against them, he is acting, like the legal authorities, the Sanhedrin, against the Holy God. The attack against the church is an attack on God.<sup>115</sup> This remark would confirm that Paul is in his activities displaying the kind of behaviour that is typical of a person who is not truly religious, but involved in a religion that can only be described as superstitious.

### 2.3 “I compelled them to blaspheme”

The third activity that Paul is represented as having been involved in, is “trying to compel to blaspheme” ( \_νάγθαδον βι αζθ εκε\_ν). Some preliminary remarks about the nature of the verb are needed in order to determine the full meaning of this phrase: Jackson and Lake state that the structure of the Greek leaves it open as to whether they did blaspheme or not.<sup>116</sup> Bruce expresses doubt as to whether Paul was at all successful. “He does not say that he succeeded in making them blaspheme, as the AV implies.”<sup>117</sup> The decision depends on whether the imperfect \_νάγθαδον is taken as iterative or conative. Zerwick and Grosvenor as well as Haenchen favour the conative imperfect which implies that although Paul tried to make them blaspheme, he was unsuccessful.<sup>118</sup> This is confirmed by the translation of the NIV “I tried to force them to blaspheme.”<sup>119</sup>

Since the Christians did not blaspheme, the focus falls on Paul as the instigator of blasphemy.<sup>120</sup> Paul, prior to his conversion, the Jews with whom Paul identifies himself and the chief priests under whose authority Paul operated, are depicted as people who attempt to force others to blaspheme. This is an important characteristic for it adds another dimension to the picture that is emerging, that opposition to Christianity is without reasonable foundation.

#### 2.3.1 The concept of blasphemy

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<sup>115</sup> Schille, 449.

<sup>116</sup> “It should be noted that the English rendering inevitably suggests that the coercion was successful, but the Greek leaves this open.” Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.317.

<sup>117</sup> Bruce, 443.

<sup>118</sup> M.Zerwick, M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1974), 444. Haenchen, 685. Harrison is of the same opinion and expresses directly, “‘I tried to force them to blaspheme’ is an improvement over the wording of the KJV, for it does not carry the implication that he was successful (cf. Gal 1:13).” Harrison, 375.

<sup>119</sup> The Jerusalem Bible has a similar interpretation: “I often went round the synagogues inflicting penalties, trying in this way to force them to renounce their faith.” The Traduction Œcumenique de la Bible has a slightly more forceful interpretation but still retains the element of “trying to force.” “Je multipliais mes sérvices à leur égard, pour les forcer à blasphémer.”

<sup>120</sup> Commentators refer to Pliny's discerning true Christians by compelling all those he suspected of this superstition, to offer supplication with wine and incense to the image of the emperor and the statues of the gods. They were also required to revile Christ. Those who refused were the true Christians. For Haenchen, βι αζθε κε\_ν is *maledicere Christo* in Pliny. Haenchen, 685. Bruce refers to the same passage in greater detail: *male dicerent Christo quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt re vera Christiani*, Pliny *Ep.* X.96 cit. ap. Bruce, 443.

The Greek word βι ἀζθ εκέφ also means slander in English, but it has in its stronger form to do with defamation and mockery of the divine. It can therefore, in the words of Beyer mean, “the strongest form of personal mockery and calumny,”<sup>121</sup> but also the violating or doubting of the power of the deity.<sup>122</sup>

### 2.3.2 Blasphemy in contrast to boldness

The reference to blasphemy is part of the climactic speech of Acts, so that it has special significance in terms of portraying Paul’s character. It is part of the excessive behaviour of opponents of Christianity and clearly refers to the attempts to force them to deny their faith.<sup>123</sup> Not only do they force others to express themselves with this kind of speech, but they themselves are guilty of such speech. An interesting perspective on the meaning of this word is obtained by noting the contrast that exists between this and Paul’s speech after his Damascus experience. Luke ascribes to Paul the respected “boldness of speech” (παρρηζηαδόκενος Ac.26:26).

Both these words play a special role in Acts. They appear on their own in some seminal parts of Acts: Paul is described in Acts 9:28, immediately after his Damascus experience as speaking boldly (παρρηζηαδόκενος) in the name of Jesus.<sup>124</sup> (In this case, the actions of his opponents are expressed with other negative words: Whilst Paul is now speaking differently than before, his Jewish opponents have not changed. In Acts 9:29 it is mentioned that the response of the Hellenists to his bold testimony was to attempt to kill him. Similar descriptions are given in Acts 14:2-3 where Paul and Barnabas speak boldly about the gospel, but the unbelieving Jews influence Gentiles against them “poisoning their minds.”) A good parallel is found in Acts 18:6 where Paul proclaims the gospel to Jews in Corinth, but they also oppose him and blaspheme. In these cases blaspheming is used to portray the mainly Jewish, extreme responses to the gospel in some areas.

Luke uses the two words of blaspheming and speaking boldly in close proximity in Acts 13:45-46. On the one hand, the Jews, seeing the fruits of Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel when crowds turn up to listen to him, “insulted” him. The Jews who oppose the gospel do so by speaking with “blaspheming,” while Paul speaks with “boldness”(θα\_νηέτεγον ηο\_ς\_π\_Πα\_ι\_οσ\_ι\_αι\_οσκένοηςβι\_αζθ\_εκο\_νηεζ·παρρηζηαζά\_κενοί\_ηε\_Πα\_ι\_ος). The NRSV translates this verb with “blaspheming,” selecting a stronger translation than is suggested by, for example, the UBS translators handbook.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Beyer, βι ἀζθ εκέφ, *TDNT* 1: 621 Of interest is his reference to Wackernagel’s translation of the word βι ἀζθ εκία as a “word of evil sound.” Cf. J.Wackernagel, *Zeitschr. f. vergl. Sprachforsch* 33 (1895): 42.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Malina has argued the importance of verbal expression as one of three basic “zones” of human expression. The first is the zone of understanding and intellect represented through the eyes and heart. The second is the zone of self-expression, represented by the mouth, throat, teeth and jaws. The third is the zone of purposeful action, represented by the hands, feet, legs and the activities of these organs. The way a person expresses him or herself verbally is part of a process of self-unveiling. Understood in this light the motivation of Paul prior to his conversion, together with the Jews associated with him, is revealed by their words. Malina, *Cultural Anthropology*, 60ff.

<sup>124</sup> Luke also uses the word in Acts 4:13 where the Jewish leaders are astonished when they notice the παρρηζίαν of Peter and John, despite their being ordinary and unschooled people. Luke is particular in choosing this word to describe the speech of Christian witnesses.

<sup>125</sup> Nida and Newman, *Translators handbook*, 268, “To render *insulted him* one may simply say „they spoke bad things about Paul.””

This analysis reveals how Luke understands boldness as the opposite of, amongst others, blasphemy and ascribes highly negative verbal actions to opponents of the Gospel in Acts. With this portrayal of the apostles' proclamation of the gospel, he factually presents those opposed to Christianity as lacking in *παρρηζία* and as revealing some extreme forms of behaviour. In Luke's description of Paul's earlier behaviour, his attempts to force Christians to blaspheme confirms this. He goes from one synagogues to another, but instead of worshipping God, he attempts to force people to blaspheme.<sup>126</sup> This contrast between blasphemy and boldness of speech has a parallel between superstition and true religion in contemporary philosophy.

### 2.3.3 Superstition and the loss of boldness

In the introduction to his work *On Superstition*, Plutarch refers to a number of effects that superstition has on a person. The last effect he mentions, is the loss of freedom or boldness of speech. Superstition "takes from him his freedom of speech." (*ἡ τὴν παρρηζίαν ὑπαίρει*, *On Superstition* 165A). The word *παρρηζία* which Plutarch uses, refers to the "boldness of speech" which would be characteristic of a respected philosopher. Where boldness of speech is lacking, qualities such as the ability to reason, speaking the truth and openness to public scrutiny, go with it. Included in this boldness is the understanding of a closeness to the divine presence.<sup>127</sup> Thus the loss of *παρρηζία* signals not only lack of refinement and reason but also a separation from God.

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<sup>126</sup> As discussed above, superstition manifests itself in irrationality and the tendency of holding contradictory opinions simultaneously.

<sup>127</sup> According to Schlier, (ad loc. *TDNT* 5: 875) *παρρηζία* represents openness and truth in the Hellenistic world. It is related to *ζοθία* in the LXX. Malherbe discusses the use of the word in relation to the debate between philosophical schools. The term is used to describe the openness, truthfulness and public spirited nature of respected philosophers as opposed to those who sit in corners to discuss obscure matters. Epictetus associates with the boldness of speech the closeness to the divine presence. "Speaking of the philosopher who does not involve himself in human affairs, he insists that it cannot be said that such a man is a busybody or meddler in others' affairs, for he speaks with boldness (*παρρηζία*) of a friend and servant of the gods, always with prayer, „Lead thou me on, O Zeus and Destiny," at hand." Epictetus *Diss.* 3.22.95-6. Cit.ap. A.J.Malherbe, "Not in a Corner": Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26:26, *The Second Century* 5 (1986): 11. A discussion on the importance of "boldness / frankness" in speech, is to be found in the article: P.G.R.de Villiers, E.A.Germiquet, Paul and Paganism in Acts 17. Superstition in Early Christianity and Graeco-Roman society, *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 9 (1998): 6. In this article Paul's boldness of speech in combatting the erroneous beliefs of the Athenians is highlighted. The article links the "superstition" of the Athenians with their "ignorance" of the true God. *Παρρηζία* is therefore important in the proclamation of the truth and is fundamental to the combatting of ignorance. Ignorance in turn gives rise to responses which are irrational and based on emotion. These are the qualities in which superstition is able to take root. That this concept was important in Christian literature is evident in the letter written by the Christians of Lyon to the churches of Asia, concerning the persecutions they were subjected to. One person who was being persecuted was a certain Alexander who "was known to almost every one for his love towards God and boldness of speech (*παρρηζίαν*) for he was not without a share of the apostolic gift." Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.1.49.

Particularly clear in Plutarch's thought is that the absence of *παρρηζία* is replaced by an “abuse of God.” He describes the way superstitious people address the gods. “(T)hey flatter them and assail them with abuse.” *On Superstition* 167E, *θιοαθεύοσζη θα\_ι οηδορο\_ζην*). For the notion of “assailing with abuse” Plutarch uses the word *ι οηδορέφ* which is translated by Liddell and Scott as “to rail at, abuse, and revile” and when used against the gods “to blaspheme.”<sup>128</sup> Beyer confirms this close relationship between *ι οηδορέφ* and *βι αζθ εκέφ*. In his analysis of the word *βι αζθ εκία*, he states, “It almost amounts to the same as *ι οηδορε\_v*.”<sup>129</sup> However he goes on to add the observation that in most cases *βι αζθ εκέφ* is stronger than *ι οηδορε\_v*.<sup>130</sup> Thus if *ι οηδορε\_v*, as used by Plutarch, represents the way superstitious people address the gods, then the stronger word *βι αζθ εκέφ*, is an excess of the same error.<sup>131</sup>

A short excursus in Acts will illustrate this point further: The theme of insulting God has already been introduced when Paul is being questioned by the Sanhedrin (Ac.23:4). After Paul has compared the high priest to a white washed wall, it is pointed out to him that he has just “insulted” God’s high priest. As was pointed out previously, the word *ι οηδορέφ* used here is closely related to the concept of “blasphemy.” As soon as Paul's attention is drawn to the identity of the high priest, he immediately withdraws the statement. Thus the contrast is clarified. Before his conversion Paul was closely associated with causing people to blaspheme against God; after his conversion however, he dissociates himself from this practice, even when under difficult circumstances and instead speaks boldly concerning the gospel.

### 2.3.4 Shouting in contrast to boldness of speech

The main focus of attention so far has been Paul’s verbal abuse of Christians before his Damascus experience. Attention will now shift to that of the Jews who, like Paul before his conversion, continue to direct their verbal abuse at Christians. From the above discussion it has become clear that Luke's portrayal of the verbal expression of the Jews who oppose Paul, highlights their lack of *παρρηζία*. They express themselves in an undignified and excessive way. In line with this, Luke depicts the Jewish opponents as “shouting” or “crying out.” In the events leading up to Paul’s trial, Luke uses the word *θράδφ* or its derivative on four occasions to describe the manner in which they express themselves verbally.<sup>132</sup> In Hellenistic literature the use of this word was associated with the raucous or guttural cry of the crow or the croak of a frog.<sup>133</sup> Grundmann gives the word two related understandings. “(T)o croak or cry with a

<sup>128</sup> Liddell & Scott's, s.v., *ι οηδορέφ*, *Greek - English Lexicon*.

<sup>129</sup> Beyer, *βι αζθε κέφ*, *TDNT* 2: 621, quotes Isocrates, 10,45: *\_δε ηηγ\_ς\_ι οηδορεζαν α\_ήον, \_v η\_v\_νοην, \_ξ\_v\_βι αζθήκεζαν περ\_θείνοσ, \_ρ\_διην\_παζηθακαζε\_v..*

<sup>130</sup> Beyer, *βι αζθε κέφ*, *TDNT* 2: 621.

<sup>131</sup> Malherbe in his consideration of the shortcomings of the “Harsh Cynic” discusses their confusion of *ι οηδορέφ*, with *παρρηζία*. He quotes from Dio *Discourse* 33.6-8 “No they merely utter a phrase or two, and then after railing (*loidor\_santes*) at you rather than teaching you”. Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 40.

<sup>132</sup> Acts 21:28: *θράδονης\_νδρες\_Ιζραει\_ηηη βοεζε\_ηε*; Acts 21:36: *\_θιοι ούζεηηγ\_ρ\_η\_πι\_ζοσ ηρ\_ιαο\_θράδονης\_α\_ρε\_α\_ήον*; Acts 22:23: *θρασγαδόνηρν\_η\_α\_η\_v\_θα\_ρ\_ηηηρύνηρν\_η\_κάηη*; Acts 23:9, *\_γένηεθ\_δ\_θρασγ\_κεγά\_ε*.

<sup>133</sup> This association is explained both by Grundmann and Bailly. Grundmann, *θράδφ* *TDNT* 3: 898. Bailly, s.v., *θράδφ*, gives the example of Theophrastus who uses this word to describe the call of the crow. Theophrastus *The Signs of the times* 4.3. It is used for the frog by Aristophanes in his *Ranae* (The Frogs), 258. In its reference to the human voice it is used by the tragic poet Eschylus (525-456 BC), *Prometheus*, 765; and by

loud and raucous voice” and “to demand with cries.”<sup>134</sup> Of particular significance is Grundmann’s analysis which concludes that in the Hellenistic world, this word had the religious significance of association with the demonic. “This loud invocation of the gods of the underworld is in long, unarticulated and mysterious words.” To the Graeco-Roman society “this kind of crying was barbaric and unworthy of the gods.”<sup>135</sup>

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Aristophanes in speaking of Bacchus *Ranae* 265. The word also occurs in the LXX (Job 6:5) where it is used for the cry of the donkey. Holgate in his study of the prodigal son shows that the association of the lost son with pigs is a sign of moral degradation. D. Holgate, *Prodigality*, 135. Although the presence of the pigs themselves are the signs of degradation, the similarity of the raucous call of the crow or the croak of the frog to the grunt of the pig is close enough to suggest a parallel rather than a contrast, with the description of the shouting of the Jews. Holgate quotes from Epictetus *Diss.* 4.11.30-31, who speaks of pigs, geese, worms and spiders as “creatures furthest removed from association with human beings.” In general terms the use of words which suggest a comparison of humans to animals, serve to portray those humans in a negative light.

<sup>134</sup> Grundmann, θράδφ, *TDNT* 3: 898. He also gives the example of this word used in Isaiah 26:17 where it describes the cries during childbirth.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, See the example of Hippolytus *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* 4.28.3: κέγα θα\_ \_πετ\_ς θέθραγε θα\_π\_ζιν\_ζύνηον.

Careful analysis is needed in the study of New Testament examples in order to determine the function of the word in each context, whether, for example, it is a crying out to God or the cry related to demonic forces. Grundmann explains that in the story of Christ, “the demons which He drives out raise cries, whether unarticulated sounds and simple outcries (Mk.5:5; Lk.9:39), or the clear expression in cries of their recognition of Christ and His will.”<sup>136</sup> At the trial of Jesus the crowd is represented as “shouting” (ὑέθραγον) with one voice that Jesus must be removed and Barabbas released.<sup>137</sup> To the reader of Luke's gospel, the call for the release of Barabbas the criminal, instead of Jesus is clear evidence that irrationality and a working against God, prevails. The trial of Paul is likewise preceded by the crowd shouting for his conviction. This shouting is not meant to represent a well reasoned expression but rather an emotional and irrational outpouring of abuse. Luke's use of the word θραδφ with its raucous and croaking connotations as well as its connections with the gods of the underworld,<sup>138</sup> contributes to the overall picture that the opposition to Christianity is instigated by people who display the characteristics of superstition.

Thus a first century reader who is sensitive to the Graeco-Roman perceptions would realize that the particular description of the way these Jews express themselves is lacking in παρρεζία. In addition the shouting of the Jews has an effect on the citizens: “they were aroused and came running from all directions” (Ac.21:30). The inability of the opponents to express themselves in the accepted tradition of respected philosophers (like Paul) has an unsettling effect on people. This contrasts with Luke's portrayal of Paul (Ac.21:40f) whose address has an immediate calming effect on the society. They listen intently up to a point (Ac.22:22). The shouting and the throwing of the city into an uproar counts against the Jews and aligns them with the practices of people classed as superstitious.

Plutarch gives a number of examples of precisely this kind of behaviour on the part of superstitious people. He quotes the tragic poet Sophocles in supplying an example of how they can influence a whole city by their negative self expression.

“(T)he superstitious man, much as he desires it, is not able to rejoice or be glad:  
The city is with burning incense filled;  
Full too of laments and doleful groans  
is the soul of the superstitious man.”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Lk.23:18, ὑέθραγον δ\_ πακπιε ζε\_ ιέγονης: α\_πε ηρ\_ηρν, \_πόι σζ\_ον δ\_ \_κ\_ν η\_ν Βαραββ\_ν. In this description Luke uses the word \_ναθράδφ to describe the shouting of the Jews in the trial of Jesus. In Acts he uses the word of the same root (θραδφ) to describe the shouting of the Jews during Paul's trial.

<sup>138</sup> Acts 21:28, θράδονης; 22:23, θρασγαδόξηρν; 23:9, θρασγ\_ κεγάι ι ε.

<sup>139</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 169D: \_ δ\_ δεξ\_ηθαίκφν βούι εηηκ\_ν ο\_ δύνατηηδ\_ ταίρηνο\_δ\_ \_δεζ\_ζαη / πόι ης δ\_ \_κο\_ κ\_ν ζσκηκ\_άηρν γέκειη, / \_κο\_ δ\_ παήνφν ηε θα\_ ζηεναγκ\_άηρν / \_υστ\_ ηο\_ δεξ\_ηθαίκονος. The word παήνφν is translated in the Loeb edition as “joyful hymns.” In this context the word “lament” appears to be a more fitting translation. Since the context indicates that the superstitious man is unable to rejoice or be glad, it does not make sense that his soul can be filled with “joyful hymns.” Another problem with the Loeb translation is that “joyful hymns” is juxtaposed with “doleful groans.” The implication is that the man is singing two contradictory forms of songs simultaneously. Although the word παήν is often used for a song of victory before or after battle, it can also refer to a song which requests deliverance from oppression or a funeral song. See Bailly, s.v., παήν, *DGF*. For an example of this word representing a lament, see: Soph. *O.R.* 5, 187. It therefore appears that in this context the aspect of “lament” is what Plutarch intended. Plutarch's description of the city, which he also quotes in *Moralia* 95c, 445d and 623c, is taken from Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 4. Since Plutarch's quote is from Sophocles, it is therefore all the more probable that he intended it to mean “lament.”

Plutarch also describes the person afflicted by superstition as one who resorts to ridiculous words<sup>140</sup> and who distorts and sullies his own tongue with strange names and barbarous phrases.<sup>141</sup> This is in contrast to the respected person who is able to sing with his mouth aright and who prays to the gods with the mouth straight and aright (166B). The superstitious person's laments and doleful groans together with his inability to be glad, brings to mind Luke's description of Paul's Jewish opponents, who with shouts and irrational claims attempt to turn the whole city into a riotous mob against him.

Therefore Luke's description of Paul's attempts to force Christians to blaspheme, together with the irrational and abusive shouting of the Jews, combine to present a picture that the opponents of Christianity manifest the characteristics of inarticulate speech typical of people afflicted by superstition. Their lack of *παρρηζία* only serves to confirm this classification. This contrasts not only with Paul's *ζῶ θροζύνε* but especially his *παρρηζία* when he makes his defence before Agrippa (Ac.26:26).<sup>142</sup> Malherbe emphasises the philosophical dimension and the respectability associated with the word when he writes: "When Paul describes his speech to Agrippa as boldness *παρρηζιαδόκενος*, he uses a word which had come to be associated with the philosopher's boldness of speech."<sup>143</sup>

#### 2.3.4.1 Secrecy as opposed to boldness of speech

Just as *παρρηζία* is characterized by boldness of speech and openness to public scrutiny, so its absence is characterised by secrecy. The issue of secrecy was important to Luke for he includes this topic in Paul's final defence speech before Festus and Agrippa. Luke highlights the contrast between Paul's boldness of speech and the notion of secrecy by putting *παρρηζιαδόκενος* in close proximity to *ο\_ γάρ\_ ζηην\_ ν γφνί\_ πεπραγκένον ηο\_ ηο.* (Ac.26:26). In this way Luke distances the open and frank Christian proclamation from any negative connotations associated with secrecy.<sup>144</sup>

This negative association which surrounds secrecy occurs in other important aspects in the development of the plot against Paul.

#### 2.3.4.2 The Jews plot in secret

The plot to kill Paul in an ambush, (Ac.23:12ff) takes place in a context of secrecy.<sup>145</sup> Luke's

<sup>140</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 171A: *θαλαγγεία ζηηα ... ρήκαηα.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 166B: *η\_ ν δ\_ \_αση\_ ν δηρζ ηρέθονηας θα\_ κοι\_ ύνονηας\_ νόκαζ ηθα\_ \_ρήκαζ ηβαρβαρηθο\_ ζ.*

<sup>142</sup> Cf. later on where Paul as representing the mean and rational person will be discussed.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. A.Malherbe, "Not in a Corner," 11ff.

<sup>144</sup> The question of secrecy relating to Acts 26:26 will be dealt with in greater detail in a subsequent chapter. Marguerat has produced a study of the account in Acts 5 of the Ananias and Sapphira episode. Although Marguerat does not mention it, his observations concerning the Lukan text militates against the opinion that the Christian community was secret or closed. He indicates that the way in which the narrative is constructed, the reader is brought into the very heart of the Christian community. In the Ananias episode, Marguerate indicates that for Luke the primary issue is not one of discipline but rather in terms of the Christian community's missionary or outward responsibility. "La communauté en 5.1-11 n'est donc pas considérée sous l'angle de sa gestion disciplinaire, mais dans son pouvoir d'expansion missionnaire;" This therefore confirms from a different perspective, the outward and open emphasis in Luke's work. D.Marguerat, *La Mort D'Ananias et Saphira* (Ac 5.1-11) dans la *Stratégie Narrative de Luc*, *New Testament Studies* 39 (1993): 216.

<sup>145</sup> In Acts 23:12,13,30; Luke uses three different words to describe the plot: *ζσζηροθ\_ ν, ζσφκοζίαν, \_πηβσι\_ ζ.*

use of ἡβροσῆ (Ac.23:30) reveals an aspect of secret meetings for the word carries the implication of a premeditated plot. The negative trait of secrecy intended in this passage is further brought out by Luke's description of Paul's nephew as having to supply the information about the plot with great caution. Haenchen explains that the information supplied by the nephew has to be treated confidentially by the commander: "For the Jews must not learn that their purpose has been discovered; otherwise they will devise a new murder plan."<sup>146</sup> The fact that the antagonistic Jews have consented with one another to resort to a secret plot instead of openly and frankly presenting their case categorises them as people who are guided by superstition instead of rationality.

#### **2.3.4.3 Subversion and the secrecy of foreign religions**

Secrecy was a particularly negative characteristic as it was associated with subversive activity. Foreign superstitions were particularly suspect of being secretive. Nocturnal meetings were suspect to the Roman authorities because secrecy and subversiveness were closely linked to them.

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<sup>146</sup> Haenchen, 649.

The danger posed by secrecy resulted in nocturnal meetings being forbidden in the city by the Twelve Tables.<sup>147</sup> This was especially true when it involved ritualism. The danger that secrecy posed to the state came to light dramatically with the chance uncovering of the Bacchanalia superstition. Livy records how the Senate was horrified at the extent that the Bacchanalia had been able to spread undetected.<sup>148</sup> Amongst the decrees of the Senate was the following: “aediles plebis viderent ne qua sacra in operto fierent.”<sup>149</sup> Concerning the charge of talking in corners while being silent in public, Clark states: “The charge was the sort that could be levelled against any exclusive and generally retiring sect, especially with a strict catechumenate.”<sup>150</sup> It was important

enough for philosophers to ensure that they were not open to the charge of secrecy.

Secrecy was one of the accusations that early Christian apologists had to deal with. Origen notes Celsus' accusation on this subject, “After this, Celsus proceeded to speak of the Christians as teaching and practising their favourite doctrines in secret.”<sup>151</sup> This contrast will be examined in greater detail in a subsequent section which deals with the Christian proclamation as representing the reasonable mean.

Luke's statement that Paul compelled the Christians to blaspheme, opens an array of inter-related concepts which have at their base an unreasoned and uncontrolled opposition to the divine activity. The Jews who subsequently take over the abuse of Christians, alternate between shouting in public and secret plots. Both these extremes of behaviour are characteristic of superstition.

## 2.4 “I persecuted”

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<sup>147</sup> Tab. 8 leg.26: Ne quis in urbe coetus nocturnos agitare.

<sup>148</sup> Livy *From the Founding of the City* 39.8-19.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 39.14.9: “the plebeian aediles were to see to it that no celebration of the rites should be held in secret.”

<sup>150</sup> W.G.Clarke, *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*, in J.Quasten, W.J.Burghardt, T.C.Lawler, *Ancient Christian Writers, The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, (New York, Newman Press, 1974), 209.

<sup>151</sup> Origen *Contra Celsum* 1.3. It is also an accusation about Christians echoed by Minucius Felix: Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt. M.Felix *Octavius* 9.2. Clark explains the significance of this accusation as follows: “The present charge *need* not, therefore, have any real objective evidence; it was a natural one to make against people regarded as forming a secret society.” W.G.Clarke, *Octavius*, 215. In *Octavius* 10.1, Minucius Felix echoes another common opinion about Christianity: pravae religionis obscuritas.

The fourth word that describes Paul's pre-Christian characteristics is *δίωθον* (Ac.26:11). Generally commentators say very little about this word, but there are basically two ways of interpreting it. It could mean “to persecute” or “to pursue.” Although Haenchen does not give reasons, he chooses “persecute” and translates the phrase: “I persecuted them even to the cities outside.”<sup>152</sup> The New International Version translation also conveys this understanding. “In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.”<sup>153</sup> Jackson and Lake state that *διώθω* retains something of its original meaning “to pursue” especially as it is followed by *ε\_ς* which gives it a spacial dimension.<sup>154</sup> Oepke points out that when it is without an object, *διώθω* usually refers to motion.<sup>155</sup> Some of the bible translations reflect this understanding. The Jerusalem Bible reads, “my fury against them was so extreme that I even pursued them into foreign cities.”<sup>156</sup> Whether Luke intended Paul's action against Christians to be understood as “persecution” or “pursuit” is debatable but its excessive nature is clearly emphasised by the words *ως\_θα\_ε\_ς\_η\_ς\_ξω\_πóι\_εις* Jackson and Lake point this out by indicating that “*ως\_θα\_ε\_ς* seems merely an emphatic form of *ε\_ς*.”<sup>157</sup> This understanding of the text is put across more strongly by Haenchen when he states: “This also is an intensification compared with Chapters 9.2 and 22.5, where Paul goes from Jerusalem directly to Damascus.”<sup>158</sup>

The way Luke has constructed the sentence by introducing the notion of “pursuit to the furthest cities” increases the dynamics of the persecution in a significant way. When one bears in mind that Luke-Acts is structured as a journey narrative which progresses in an orderly way under the guidance of God, Luke's description of Paul pursuing Christians to the outer cities as a result of his raging, heightens the significance of this action. Paul's pursuing the Christians contrasts particularly with Luke's portrayal of Jesus going on ahead (*πορεύετο\_κπρο\_ζζ\_εν* Lk.19:28) of his disciples and leading the way.<sup>159</sup>

As Luke's journey narrative also has strong parallels with the journey of Moses and the people of Israel,<sup>160</sup> the depiction of Paul's extreme form of pursuit of the people of God

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<sup>152</sup> Haenchen, 680.

<sup>153</sup> Harrison likewise translates it as “I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.” Harrison, 374.

<sup>154</sup> Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.318. Bailly gives many examples of the use of *διώθω* and the overwhelming majority of cases primarily involve the notion of “pursuit” rather than “persecution.” Bailly, s.v., *διώθω*, *DGF*.

<sup>155</sup> Oepke, *διώθω*, *TDNT* 2: 229.

<sup>156</sup> Traduction Œcumenique de la Bible also indicates pursuing, “je les poursuivais jusque dans les villes étrangères.” Although Johnson does not offer any supporting evidence, in his translation he also chooses pursuing. “I was pursuing them even to the outlying cities.” Johnson, 430.

<sup>157</sup> Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.317.

<sup>158</sup> Haenchen, 685.

<sup>159</sup> O'Toole basing his research on Jackson & Lake has indicated the importance of “leader” (*πρε\_γός*) in the role of the risen Christ. R.F.O'Toole, Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke-Acts, *Biblica* 62 (1981): 492. cf. F.Jackson, K.Lake, *ΥΠΙΣΣΟΣ ΑΡΧΗΓΟΣ*, *Beginnings*, 5.278.

<sup>160</sup> The idea that Luke has modelled his journey on Moses and the Exodus has been recognized in various quarters. Concerning Luke-Acts Allen writes: “Thus the narrator definitely indicates that the passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus in Luke-Acts is patterned after the exodus.” O.W.Allen, *The Death of Herod: The Narrative and Theological Function of Retribution in Luke-Acts*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997),

presents him in complete contrast to the way Moses led the Israelites. Instead of leading, Paul's act of pursuing creates a parallel with the unbelieving Pharaoh who pursues the Israelites in order to destroy them. As the actions of Pharaoh were obviously contrary to God they were symptomatic of his erroneous beliefs. Therefore Paul, like Pharaoh, by pursuing the people of God, gives expression to the extent of his erroneous beliefs. As argued above, erroneous beliefs result in superstition.

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137. Allen also refers to Jindřich Mánek, *The New Exodus in the Books of Luke*, *NovT* (2) 1958, 8-23, and to David P. Moessner, *Luke 9:1-50: Luke's Preview of the Journey of the Prophet Like Moses of Deuteronomy*, *JBL* 102 (1983): 582-600. O'Toole explores the parallels between Jesus and Moses and makes the following statement concerning Luke 9:51 which deals with the start of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem: "Jesus' 'exodus' can be expressed as being "received up" and includes this Moses-like journey to Jerusalem." R.O'Toole, *Parallels between Jesus and Moses*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990): 23.

There is a further dimension to Paul's action which needs to be investigated. Jesus' instruction and commission to His disciples (Ac.1:8) was to be His witnesses, starting in Jerusalem up to the ends of the earth (θα\_ \_φς\_ \_ζτάρηος η\_ς γ\_ς). The similarity in structure between this phrase and \_φς θα\_ ε\_ς η\_ς \_ξφ\_ πδί εης (Ac.26:11) which describes the extent of Paul's intended persecution, is significant. It is not only the structure but also the similar extended geographical scope that each represents, which heightens the contrast between them. The contrast between these two phrases presents Paul's persecution as being similar in scope but diametrically opposed to God's command and purpose.<sup>161</sup> Like Jesus' command to start in Jerusalem and then move beyond the confines of Judea and ultimately to the ends of the earth; Paul's journey of persecution begins in Jerusalem under the authority of the chief priests (Ac.26:10) and intends to reach the furthestmost cities. Haenchen, without realizing it, points out the similarity between these two sections, when he notes: "as far as outlying cities = outside Judaea."<sup>162</sup> This description of Paul's journey of persecution appears in the text as being in opposition to Jesus' command concerning the spread of the gospel message. Therefore while Paul is under the impression that he is fulfilling God's purpose in persecuting the Christians, he is in fact setting himself up in opposition to God. To work in opposition to God while under the impression that one is fulfilling God's will, is not only a sign of error but also of superstition. In order to understand the importance of this concept for Luke and the associated implication that it is a sign of irrational superstition, it is important to investigate Luke's other use of δηῶφ in the speech of Paul (Ac.26:14).

#### 2.4.1 Saul the persecutor of Christ

The description of Paul as a persecutor in Acts 26:11 is linked to verse 14, where Luke uses the same word when reporting the arresting words of Jesus: "Saul Saul, why do you *persecute* (δηῶει) me?" In this important moment, Paul's role as persecutor is highlighted further by the use of the proverb which follows immediately: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." (ζθιερόν ζοη πρ\_ς θένηρα ιαθηίδην). Although all three accounts of Paul's conversion repeat the words "Saul Saul, why do you persecute me?" this is the only one which adds a definition of Paul's role as persecutor. This is in keeping with the general observation that this account highlights Paul's role as persecutor. In the following sections it will be argued that Luke is interpreting Paul's activity as persecutor through a proverb which carries the implication that he was ζεοκάτος, (fighting against God).<sup>163</sup> Such a description was often used as a depiction of superstition.

#### 2.4.2 Paul as θεομάχος

Johnson recognises in the proverb a statement about Paul's resistance to God. He states that

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<sup>161</sup> The importance of the contrast between Paul's persecution to the furthest cities and Jesus' command to be witnesses to the ends of the earth should not be underestimated. Wall has indicated that the transition of leadership in Acts from Peter to James and then to Paul is directly related to the instruction in Acts 1:8 to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. "This shift in leadership follows the general movement of the witnessing community, already indexed by the commission of Luke's Jesus, from Jerusalem to 'the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8)." Wall, *Successors to the Twelve*, 630.

<sup>162</sup> Haenchen, 685.

<sup>163</sup> One may here make a parallel with Paul and the temporary blindness that follows his meeting with Jesus and the account of the magician and false prophet, Elymas (Ac.13:6-12), who is also temporarily blinded. Elymas' blindness is a sequel to Paul's identifying him with Satan and accusing him of being in conflict with God. The descriptions that precede both Elymas and Paul prior to their being identified as fighters against God are characteristic of those subject to superstitious inclinations. Elymas practised magic while Paul used to 'rage exceedingly' against Christians. See the discussion on this point: Allen, 203.

the proverb is “an image that suggests that Paul had been at once being pulled towards the Messianists even as he stubbornly refused to heed them.”<sup>164</sup> This comment reveals Johnson's opinion that confusion in Paul's mind and error of judgement resulted in his persecution of Christians.

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<sup>164</sup> Johnson, 441.

Rackham also sees the proverb as an indication of resistance to God. “It supplies an apt figure for resistance to God; and here it conveys an important intimation that Saul's zeal for Judaism had not been according to knowledge, but rather against the driving of the divine will.”<sup>165</sup> A wider perspective on the proverb is given by Kee who makes two telling points. Firstly: that it means moral reproof or guidance; and secondly, that it shows how deeply Acts is influenced by Hellenistic culture and traditions.<sup>166</sup> He comes to this conclusion because of the close association he sees between this proverb and Euripides' (486-406 B.C.) *Bacchae*<sup>167</sup> in which the old blind prophet Teiresias refuses to become like one of the worshippers of Dionysus. “Not at thy suasion will I war with Gods.”<sup>168</sup> The concept conveyed by the word ζεοκάτος describes the fatal opposition to the triumphal march of the god Dionysus.

Dibelius examines this proverb in its context in the *Bacchae* and notes that: “In the *Bacchae*, this persecution of the new god is constantly characterised as a struggle against God, as ζεοκατε v.”<sup>169</sup> Dibelius then applies the proverb in its context in Acts 26:14 and concludes: “It is intended to show that Paul is among those who have struggled against God in vain;”<sup>170</sup> The point is not whether Luke was inspired by the *Bacchae* but that in a Hellenistic context this saying would convey the notion of fighting against god.<sup>171</sup>

The moral significance of this proverb appears to be of particular importance to Luke, for although he had written that Jesus had addressed Paul in Aramaic (Ac.26:14) the proverb is never found in Aramaic but occurs extensively in Greek and occasionally in Latin. Haenchen notes that the use of this proverb shows that it is meant to be understood in a Hellenistic context, for that is the intended audience.<sup>172</sup>

#### 2.4.2.1 Moral philosophy and θεομάχος

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<sup>165</sup> R.B.Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5th ed. (London: Methuen, 1910), 468. Although Rackham appears to be unaware of it, when ignorance is expressed in a zealous way, it leads to the excesses which characterize superstition.

<sup>166</sup> H.C.Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven, The Acts of the Apostles*, (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 284. Dibelius also makes a literary evaluation of the effect that the proverb, with its connotations, would have on the reader. “(I)t is also intended to provide for the educated reader the pleasure he will find in this kind of literary embellishment.” M.Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*. ed. H. Greeven, (London: SCM Press, 1956), 188.

<sup>167</sup> It has been debated whether Luke was influenced by Euripides' *Bacchae*. Consensus now is that although the proverb is found in the *Bacchae*, Luke's use of it is a reflection of its widespread use. See the discussion on this debatable point by J.Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967), 242; Haenchen, 685 note 3.

<sup>168</sup> Euripides *The Bacchanals* 325: θο\_ζεοκατήζφ\_ζ\_v\_ιόγφν\_πεηζζε\_ς\_πο. Also 45: “To Pentheus, of another daughter born, who wars with heaven in me.” (Πενζε\_διδφζηζσγαν\_ς\_θεθσθόηη\_ς\_ζεοκατε\_η\_θαη\_κε).

<sup>169</sup> Dibelius, 190.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>171</sup> “The proverb often in Greek and Latin signified fighting against the will of the gods.” F.L. Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1988), 248.

<sup>172</sup> Haenchen, 685.

The discussion by Plutarch and Epictetus on the concept of ζεοκάτος is evidence of its presence in the moral philosophical debate of Luke's day. Plutarch explains that the superstitious person can be classed as ζεοκατος.<sup>173</sup> He exposes the contradictory thinking that lies in the mind of a person who is described by this term by explaining that superstitious people ascribe their sufferings in this world to “afflictions of God” and that such a person is powerless to respond in any corrective way to such sufferings “lest he seem to fight against God.”<sup>174</sup> The irrational aspect of this is that the superstitious person accepts afflictions in life as being a manifestation of God who loves him.

This aspect of irrationality in relation to ζεοκατεφ is also portrayed by the first century writer and philosopher Epictetus. The context in which he uses ζεοκατεφ shows that he also associates it with illogicality. “Otherwise I shall be *fighting against God*, I shall be setting myself in opposition to Zeus, I shall be arraying myself against Him in regard to His administration of the universe. And the wages of this *fighting against God* and this disobedience will not be paid by “children's children”, but by me myself in my own person” (italics mine)<sup>175</sup> He explains the illogicality by asking the following rhetorical questions: “How can anything bad for you happen in a place, if you are not there?”<sup>176</sup> “Or how can you wish to reach old age yourself, and at the same time not behold the death of any that you love?”<sup>177</sup>

Therefore, an important ingredient for being classed as a “fighter against God” lies in errors of judgement or false reasoning.<sup>178</sup> Plutarch in particular equates it directly with superstition. It is this type of false reasoning which Luke portrays as being present in Paul's mind when he persecutes Christians. Although in his excessive pursuing of Christians, Paul believes he is being zealous for God, Luke's narrative shows that the opposite is in fact the case. Paul is in direct conflict with the divine instruction to the disciples that they should proclaim the gospel, starting in Jerusalem and out to the ends of the earth. As interpreted by

<sup>173</sup> Plutarch *De Divinitate* 168C.

<sup>174</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 168C: ο\_δ\_ ζεραπεύειν ο\_δ' \_νηρηάηρεζζαηη κ\_ δόξ\_ ζεοκατε\_ν\_ θα\_ \_νηρηείνηηθθαι αδόκεος,

<sup>175</sup> Epictetus *The Discourses as reported by Arrian* 3.24.24: ε\_δ\_ κή, ζεοκατήζφ, \_νηηζήζφ\_ πρ\_ς\_ η\_ν\_ Γία, \_νηηηηηάζοκαηη α\_η\_ πρ\_ς\_ η\_ \_ια. θα\_ η\_πίτεηρα η\_ς\_ ζεοκατίας ηαύηες θα\_ \_πεηζάας ο\_ πα\_δες παιδφν\_θηζοσζην.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 3.24.25: ηίδ\_θαθ\_ν\_θε\_ζοηζκβ\_ναηδύναηηη\_ποσκ\_ε\_.

<sup>177</sup> Epictetus *The Discourses as reported by Arrian* 3.24.27: \_π\_ς\_κα\_κ\_ν\_γερ\_ζαηζέι\_ηης\_κα\_δ\_κεδεν\_ς\_η\_ν\_ζηηεργοκένφν\_κ\_ \_δε\_ν\_ζάναηην.

<sup>178</sup> Not every use of ζεοκατεφ is to be understood as a link to superstition. Philostratus uses it in the sense of acknowledging respect for Apollonius. See: Philostratus *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.44. The text concerns the questioning of Apollonius by Tigellinus. As a result of Apollonius' 'inspired' answers, Tigellinus concludes that he must be “careful not to fight with a god,” (θα\_ \_ζπερ ζεοκατε\_ν\_θσια ηηόκεος). Lucian uses it to convey direct opposition to God. See: Lucian, *Zeus Rants* 45, trans. A.M.Harmon, Loeb Classical Library. “Then can't you even hear Zeus when he thunders, Damis, you god-fighter?” (Ο\_δ\_ βρονη\_νρης\_ρα\_ηρ\_Γης\_θούεη, ζεοκάτε Γ\_κη). The concept of being a fighter against God is also present in the LXX. It is used in 2 Macc. as a description of, and warning delivered to Antiochus Epiphanes for his persecution of Jews. 2 Macc. 7:19 “but do not think that you yourself will go unpunished for attempting to make war on God.” There also appears to be one exception in Luke's application of it. Allen has argued that Divine retribution on Herod (Acts 12) is as a result of his setting himself up in opposition to God and not the result of faulty reasoning. “Herod fails to recognize that God was at work through the church, and thus sets himself up as ζεοκάτος.” Allen, 200.

Hellenistic moral philosophy, such action was not only the result of error but also of superstition.

The concept of fighting against God is not only applicable to Paul, but is also characteristic of the opposition meted out to Christians by the Sanhedrin.

#### **2.4.2.2 The Sanhedrin as θεομάχος**

In Luke's work the opposition that is meted out to Christians and especially to Paul often finds its expression through the Sanhedrin.<sup>179</sup> In this section, Luke's portrayal of the Sanhedrin as ζεοκός will be examined. This will indicate that it is not only Paul prior to Damascus, but also the Jews who oppose Christians who display the characteristics of superstition.

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<sup>179</sup> This topic has been discussed in section 3.2 under the topic "I cast my vote".

In Acts 5:39, Luke represents the Sanhedrin as having to be warned by Gamaliel that it is in danger of “fighting against God” (κήποηε θα\_ ζεοκάτοηε\_ρεζ\_ηε). The illogicality of the Sanhedrin's position is revealed by the unfolding events. The Sanhedrin had heard the testimony of Peter and John and their statement that they would obey God rather than men.<sup>180</sup> However they become so furious that they want to kill them.<sup>181</sup> It is at this point that Gamaliel warns the Sanhedrin that it is in danger of fighting against God. As a result, the Sanhedrin accepts his advice. This is where the faulty judgement of the Sanhedrin is exposed. In obeying Gamaliel, the Sanhedrin obeys a man in contrast to the disciples who have stated that they will obey God rather than man (Ac.5:29). Johnson sees this as intended irony by Luke, because of the comment added at the end of verse 39: “And they obeyed him” (Gamaliel). “The Sanhedrin heeds Gamaliel, which means that they obey humans rather than God. Gamaliel's superficially benign statement is in effect a self-condemnation. When they do not obey the prophets they *are* `fighting God'.”<sup>182</sup> The Sanhedrin's self condemnation is a sign to the alert reader that the Sanhedrin's opposition to the Christians is permeated with errors of judgement and irrational. This is consistent with Luke's presentation of the Jewish opposition to Christianity. It is also consistent with the characteristics of those afflicted by superstition.

However the irrational opposition meted out by the Sanhedrin also finds its expression against Paul.

### 2.4.2.3 The Sanhedrin in turmoil over Paul

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<sup>180</sup> Acts 5:29: πεηζορτε\_ν δε\_ ζε\_ κ\_ι\_ον\_ \_νζρώποηε.

<sup>181</sup> Acts 5:34: ο\_ δ\_ \_θούζα\_νηεζ\_ διπρίονηρ θα\_ \_βούι\_ονηρ\_ \_νειε\_ \_ν\_ α\_ηούζ.

<sup>182</sup> Johnson does not discuss the significance of the word, but simply notes passages in contemporary and other writings where the word ζεοκάτοηε is found. These examples have been referred to in the preceding paragraph. Johnson, 101. Haenchen and Conzelmann both refer to Euripides' *Bacchae* and make a special note of A. Vögel's conclusion that there is no literary dependence by Luke on Euripides. A. Vögel, *Lukas und Euripides*, *ThZ* 9 (1959): 415-38. Op. cit. Conzelmann, 43; Haenchen, 254.

The Sanhedrin, in its lack of clarity finds itself divided over Paul's statement that he is on trial over the question of the resurrection. This division finds its expression through the question: "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" (Ac.23:9 ε\_δ\_πνε\_κα\_ι\_α\_ε\_ζεν\_α\_η\_ \_γγει\_ος). Rackham notes that the answer to the question asked would have been similar to that which Gamaliel gave in Acts 5:39.<sup>183</sup> The parallels with Acts 5:39 are strong, for the Sanhedrin is once again given direction by the observation made by some of its members. Reflecting the strong parallels, Byzantine manuscripts have added κ\_ζεοκατ\_κεν as a paraphrase based on Acts 5:39.<sup>184</sup> However, the inability of the Sanhedrin to come to a common understanding results in violence. Dunn describes the turmoil to be the result of "a clash of factions, of minds and also, it would appear, of fists (the scene is easily visualized)."<sup>185</sup> The Sanhedrin is trying to find evidence on which Paul can be put to death for working against God. However, at the same time some of them pronounce Paul to be without fault and even have the suspicion that Paul may well be an agent of God. Thus their persecution of Paul whom they suspect could be inspired by God, would make them and not Paul, "fighters against God." That this is Luke's intended implication is confirmed by the events that immediately follow. In the following verses (Ac.23:11-12), God's assurance lies with Paul who receives the confirmation that he still has to bear witness in Jerusalem and in Rome. Through this message from God, the reader is informed that Paul and not the Sanhedrin, is God's chosen agent. In contrast to this, the response of the Jews is to form a secret conspiracy in order to kill Paul. It is clear to the reader that their plan is in direct opposition to God. As in Acts 5:39, despite being warned against unwittingly fighting against God; that is precisely what they do. Thus the error of judgement by members of the Sanhedrin is typical of people plagued by superstition.

An reader of the first century who is conscious of the moral philosophical concepts, would recognise the connotations of ζεοκάτος both in Paul's persecution of the Christians as well as in the persecution meted out by Paul's Jewish opponents. Therefore that which undergirds the persecution of Christians is revealed as being similar to that which motivates superstitious people.

### 2.4.3 Paul's actions in terms of animal behaviour

An examination of the proverb "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" from the perspective of the important role of such concise sayings, as well as its reference to animal behaviour provides important insight.<sup>186</sup>

Robbins has investigated chreia as an important rhetorical device and its use in the New Testament.<sup>187</sup> He defines a chreia as "a saying or act that is well-aimed or apt, expressed

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<sup>183</sup> Bauernfeind, ζεοκάτος, ζεοκατέφ, *TDNT* 4: 528. Haenchen and Johnson note that the principle clause is omitted but supplied by the addition of κ\_ζεοκατ\_κεν. Haenchen, 639. Johnson, 399. Rackham also notes that Luke makes use of a similar aposiopesis in Lk.13:9. Rackham, 434.

<sup>184</sup> "The apodosis is suppressed; byz supplied it with κ\_ζεοκατ\_κεν." Bruce, 412.

<sup>185</sup> Dunn, 305.

<sup>186</sup> Malherbe, in his work showing the importance of popular moral philosophy in the understanding of the New Testament, devotes a chapter to the reference in I Corinthians 15:32 that Paul had fought with beasts at Ephesus. He examines this phrase in terms of the negative philosophical implication that an association with beasts carried. Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 79-89.

<sup>187</sup> V.K.Robbins, "The Chreia": D.Aune, ed. *Graeco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 1-23.

concisely, attributed to a person, and regarded as useful for living .”<sup>188</sup> Robbins builds on the work of Wartensleben who concentrated on the chreia in Greek philosophical writing<sup>189</sup> and identified the following three characteristics in their use: *vigorous, attributable to a definite person* and *useful*.<sup>190</sup> Robbins explains further that the use of chreia was essential in the writing and presentation of speeches and that the saying could point at a person's philosophical or religious principle which could otherwise be highly elusive.<sup>191</sup> In the light of this chreia research, Luke's use of the proverb which describes Paul's reaction to the spread of Christianity in terms of oxen kicking against a goad is significant. It conveys to the reader through a recognised rhetorical technique, an assessment of Paul's character at that point in his life. Malherbe provides useful research in relating the behaviour and assessment of people (especially one's opponents) in terms of animals. “The Cynic's struggle was not conceived of as only an inward one. Men who live shameful lives, especially those who dishonor philosophy by their lives, are shameless beasts (*anaischynta th\_ria*), and Heracles was supposed to have been sent to exterminate them.”<sup>192</sup> Malherbe adds further that as a philosophical group the Cynics were themselves compared with animals, and that this comparison was considered apt because of their viciousness and harshness.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>189</sup> G.von Wartensleben, *Begriff der griechen Chreia und Beiträge ihrer Form*, (Heidelberg: Winter, 1901), 27-125.

<sup>190</sup> Robbins, “The Chreia”, 3.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 3,17.

<sup>192</sup> Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 84.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 84, note 37.

Luke's use of a proverb is not only significant in its own right, but the allusion that it makes to the behaviour of animals is also judged by Cadbury as enlightening.<sup>194</sup> Cadbury concludes that most of Luke's references to animals can be taken literally. He nevertheless makes the following critical observation: "There are a few passages that are plainly figurative. They are the cases where men are described as in animal terms."<sup>195</sup> As an example he refers to the incident peculiar only to Luke, where Jesus, in response to being told that Herod wished to kill him, associates Herod (Antipas) directly with an animal: "Go tell that fox" (Lk.13:32). Although Cadbury does not refer to the proverb in Acts 26:14, Luke's association of a persecutor with the behaviour of animals is a theme which recurs.<sup>196</sup> From the perspective of animal behaviour, Paul's "extreme raging" (Ac.26:11 *περηζῆς ἡ ἐκκαηνόκενος*), is typical of it. In Hellenistic moral philosophy, the one key quality which sets humans apart from animals is the ability to reason.<sup>197</sup> Therefore the contrast created by Paul being described as "true and reasonable" (Ac.26:25 *ἰεζείας θαζφθροζύνεζ*) after his conversion, emphasises his previous behaviour as being comparable to an animal.

Such a contrast is used by Aristotle to illustrate the difference between humans and animals in terms of those who have the ability to reason and those who lack it. Aristotle writes: "hence we do not use the terms temperate or profligate of the lower animals, except metaphorically." (*δη θα η ζερία ο ηε ζώθρονα ο η θόι αζηα ιέγοκεν υ θαι κεηθορ υ*).<sup>198</sup> Of particular interest is his comparison of the animals' inability to reason to "men who are insane" (*ζπερ ο καηνόκενοη υ υζρόπων*).<sup>199</sup> Luke's description of Paul's irrational and excessive raging (Ac.26:11 *ἐκκαηνόκενος*) therefore fits into the general pattern which repeatedly characterises animals. The use of the proverb which is linked to the behaviour of animals elaborates on a pattern that is already present in the text. Luke's use of the verb *δηώθφ* next to the concept of excessive raging in Acts 26:11 and the use of *δηώθφ* next to the proverb in Acts 26:14 helps to link Paul's raging with his description in terms of an animal. Therefore the relationship that Luke makes between the opponents of Christianity and the behaviour of animals, appears to be quite deliberate and needs further development.

The proverb that Luke uses in Acts 26:14 has already been examined in relation to Paul's "fighting against God" which has in turn been applied to the Sanhedrin in Acts 23:9. In the following verse (Ac.23:10) Luke describes the physical expression of the superstitious characteristic of "fighting against God" through the verb *δηζπάφ*. Luke's use of *δηζπάφ* to

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<sup>194</sup> H.Cadbury, "Animals and Symbolism in Luke", D.Aune, ed. *Studies in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1972), 3-15.

<sup>195</sup> H.Cadbury, *Animals*, 9.

<sup>196</sup> The imagery of this proverb as representing a cattle prod is attested by many commentators. For example Johnson explains that the goad was used to prod reluctant oxen. In response to the prods, the kicks of the oxen are futile. Johnson, 435. The allusions to the behaviour of animals has already been made under the context of the verbal expression of the Jews.

<sup>197</sup> The links with animals that have preceded this proverb include: the irrational basis to the accusations is comparable to animals that cannot think, the use of the word *καίνοκαη* which has connotations with the behaviour of wild beasts, the act of throwing dust into the air, threatening to tear a person into pieces and to shout in such a way that it resembles the cry of animals.

<sup>198</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 7.6.6.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. Page, Capps and Rouse (Loeb 410 note *a*) make the following illuminating editorial comment: "The writer here seems to regard all animals as unnatural, in the sense of imperfectly developed, because irrational."

describe the Sanhedrin's imminent act of tearing Paul to pieces links the behaviour of the Sanhedrin both to that of animals as well as to superstition.

#### 2.4.4 Animals and the tearing of flesh

The tearing at flesh appears to be used as a stock derogatory portrait. Aristotle links this bestial characteristics with the madman (κανίαν) who eats his fellow slave's liver.<sup>200</sup> He makes a similar link with the one who is said “to rip up pregnant females and devour their offspring.”<sup>201</sup>

The practice of tearing a body to pieces is repeatedly linked to the cult of Dionysus which was classed as a superstition. Lucian uses the verb δηζπάφ to describe the practice of the women followers of Dionysus. He describes how these women turn onto flocks of sheep: “The flocks have already been harried by the women, and the animal *torn limb from limb* while still alive; for they are eaters of raw meat.”(italics mine).<sup>202</sup> The cult of Dionysus was the Asian equivalent of the Bacchanalian in the West, which was notorious for such frenzied characteristics and classified as a superstition. The practice of dismembering a body also has links with the worship of Osiris. Soury, who has made a study of Plutarch's work on Egyptian mythology, explains that there is a connection between the Bacchanalia and Osiris. The similarity is that the nocturnal celebrations of the Bacchanalia are in accordance with what is said concerning the dismemberment of Osiris which is followed by the reconstitution of his body and a new birth. In Plutarch's words: ηο\_ς ιεγοκένοης\_Οζίρηδος δηζπαζκο\_ς θα\_ ηο\_ς \_ναβηζζεζη θα\_ πα ηγγενεζζίης<sup>203</sup>

The tearing of limbs does not only involve animals and mythology, but the fear of it being done by humans to humans is also recorded. The text which describes the uncovering of the Bacchanalian superstition describes how the young lady, Hispala, who had revealed the secret existence of the Bacchanalia, feared being *torn to pieces* by the very hands of those who were implicated, as a reprisal for her revelations.<sup>204</sup> Thus the notion of “tearing flesh apart” was not only linked to animal behaviour but was closely linked to the excessive behaviour of people afflicted by superstition.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 7.5.3: θα\_ δη κανίαν\_νίος, ... θα\_ θαγών, θα\_ ηο\_ ζσνδοού ος η\_ παρ.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.5.2: ιέγφ δ\_ η\_ς ζερήδεη, ο\_ον η\_ν\_ν\_ζρφπον\_ν ιέγοσζη η\_ς θσούζας\_ναζτίδοσαν η\_ παηζία θαηεζζίην.

<sup>202</sup> Lucian *Dionysus* 2: η\_ς δ\_ ο\_ν ποίκνας διεπάζζαη\_δε\_π\_ η\_ν γσναθ\_ν θα\_ διεζπάζζαη\_ηηδ\_νηα η\_ ζρέκκαηα: \_κοθάγοσς γάρ ηηγας α\_η\_ς ε\_ναη

<sup>203</sup> G.Soury, *La Démonologie de Plutarque, Essai sur les Idées Religieuse et les Mythes d'un Platocien Éclectique*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1942), 92.

<sup>204</sup> The text written approximately 100 years after the event by Livy reads as follows: Livy *From the Founding of the City* 39.13.5: magnum sibi metum deorum, quorum occulta initia enuntiaret, maiorem multo dixit hominum esse, qui se indicem manibus suis discerpturi essent.

<sup>205</sup> Holgate, in his analysis of the parable of the prodigal son, points out that deviant human behaviour of deficiency can also be compared the behaviour of animals. D.Holgate, *Prodigality*, 142. Holgate also sees the use by Luke of the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean situated between two extremes. In this case the attitude to meat is used to describe the lack of generosity (\_νειεσζερία). Holgate refers to Plutarch *Mor.* 525f: “The eclectic follower of the Academy, Plutarch, likens the avarice of the mean and illiberal to the avarice of a beast of prey which kills and destroys, without using what it destroys.” He then uses an example from Philo who argues that the Jews' craving for meat in the desert exposes their greed. Philo *Spec. Leg.* 4. 129-131: “With both hands they pulled in the creatures and filled their laps with them, then put them away in their tents, and, since excessive avidity knows no bounds went out to catch others, and after dressing them in any way they could

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devoured them greedily, doomed in their senselessness to be destroyed by the surfeit.”

The words *ὑπερστροφία*, *θηρία* and “superstition” are closely linked by Plutarch when he makes a comparison between the effects of superstition on people and the behaviour of tigers who reach a state of frenzy through the beating of drums. In his explanation of the characteristics of superstitious people, Plutarch compares such people to tigers that have gone “utterly mad” (*ἄθροισμα*) and who “tear themselves to pieces” (*θηρία*).<sup>206</sup> In his thought, “raging” and “tearing flesh to pieces” is characteristic of the excesses of superstition. In light of this, Luke's description of the Sanhedrin's irrational and excessive violence which places Paul in danger of being “torn to pieces” (Ac.23:10: *Ποιῖς δὲ γινομένους ζηάζεσθαι θοβεῖς τῆς τῆς ἀρτοῦ κῆρας*) takes on a distinctive significance. Through his choice of the word *θηρία*, Luke not only links the behaviour of the Sanhedrin to that of animals but also to the excesses of superstition.

The link that Luke makes between humans and the behaviour of animals, receives confirmation from Cunningham who makes the following observation concerning Paul's persecution of the church as described in Acts 8:3. “Saul's persecution is described as ‘ravaging’ the church, *ἰσκαίνω* being a highly descriptive word used in the Septuagint of wild animals tearing raw flesh.”<sup>207</sup> Malherbe in his discussion of Paul's reference in I Corinthians 15:32, that he had fought with beasts, makes the point that Paul could have been dependent on Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>208</sup> Luke's use of the word *θηρία* to classify the excessive behaviour of the Sanhedrin as characteristic of superstition, therefore makes use of a highly descriptive concept which was not only present in moral philosophy but also reflected in Hellenistic Judaism.

This concludes the examination of Luke's description of Paul's persecution of the Christian church, which focussed primarily on the four verbs *θηρία*, *θηρία*, *ἰσκαίνω* and *ἰσκαίνω* which fell under the umbrella of *ὑπερστροφία*. It was argued that Paul's pre-Damascus characteristics, together with those of the antagonistic Jews, were comparable to people motivated by superstition. The use of the concept of “superstition” to describe unacceptable religious beliefs and behaviour is not being imposed on the Lukan text. Luke himself introduces the notion of superstition (*ὑπερστροφία*) in the introductory remarks to Paul's speech of Acts 26. The meaning and context in which Luke uses this word will form the basis of the following section where Luke's use of the word *ὑπερστροφία* will be investigated.

### 3 Superstitious Jews

In the previous sections different perspectives were offered on parts of Acts in which the words, actions and behaviour of the opponents of Christianity are portrayed by Luke as representative of superstition. At the same time it was argued that Luke depicts Christianity as a religion which should not be classed as a superstition. In all the above examples, Luke does not expressly refer to “superstition”. In order to support the wider contention that Luke is portraying his characters in terms of superstitious or non-superstitious religion, it is necessary to examine a seminal passage in which Luke confirms explicitly to his readers the two seminal concepts of superstition and religion in the Graeco-Roman world of his time. Luke uses the word *ὑπερστροφία* (Ac.25:19) where Festus, presenting Paul's case to King

<sup>206</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 167C.

<sup>207</sup> He gives as examples in the LXX Isa. 65:25; Sir. 28:13; Ps. 79:13. Cunningham, *Persecution*, 215.

<sup>208</sup> Malherbe, *Popular Philosophers*, 87. He refers to Philo who describes the pleasures as serpents as well as the serpent of Eve which is the symbol of pleasure that attacks the reasoning faculty (*logismos*) in us, and its enjoyment leads to the ruin of understanding. Malherbe also refers to the passage in Wisdom 2:6 which is reminiscent of Isaiah 22:13 in which the description of pleasure is in terms of animal behaviour.

Agrippa, observes that the accusers of Paul could not list any crimes, but mentioned only certain points of disagreement with him about their own “superstition” (δειζιδαιμονία). The word occurs towards the end of a long description of the behaviour which has characterised the Jews from the time of Paul's arrest (Ac.21), to the opening stages of his trial in Acts 26. It therefore forms an introductory remark to the trial that is about to take place. It also represents Festus' impressions of the background to the case and of what had transpired before him. Jervell noted that the remarks of Festus contain no references to earlier accusations about the temple and emperor (Ac.25:8), but now becomes a religious matter (585). As the narrative moves on, the real underlying concerns are being distilled and come to the fore.

The interpretation of the word δειζιδαιμονία is not easy, since it is understood in different ways in modern research. In the following section this word will be investigated in terms of readings that have been proposed and in terms of contemporary material. For this purpose its dual use in Acts 25 as well as 17 will be investigated.

### 3.1 Δειζιδαιμονία: religion or superstition?

Scholars are divided between two possible interpretations of δειζιδαιμονία in Acts 25:19. Some argue that Luke intended the word to carry a neutral meaning while others argue that the word is meant in a negative sense. The uncertainty is illustrated by the translation of the New International Version, (Study Bible) which uses the neutral word “religion” in its text, although it indicates in a footnote that the word “superstition” is also possible.<sup>209</sup> This neutral rendering implies that Festus is simply stating that there is some issue between Paul and the Jews over their religion, without judging it in a negative light.

Some scholars, for example Arrington, Munck and Harrison choose the word “religion” and simply indicate their choice through their translation without giving any further explanation.<sup>210</sup> Other commentators who choose the word “religion” argue that Festus would not use a derogatory term like “superstition” to describe the Jewish religion in the presence of Agrippa. Bruce indicates that there are two possible translations but chooses “religion” because “the more complimentary sense is required here, as Festus was addressing the ‘secular head of the Jewish church’.”<sup>211</sup> Haenchen also chooses the word “religion” with the added comment that “Festus speaks about questions over which he admittedly shakes his head, but does not speak disrespectfully.”<sup>212</sup> He argues that “the governor is not so impolite as to describe the Jewish religion before the Jewish king as superstition.”<sup>213</sup>

A number of commentators interpret δειζιδαιμονία with the negative word “superstition”. Krodell simply refers to the Jewish “superstition” without justifying his choice.<sup>214</sup> Jackson and Lake also opt for the more derogatory term when they state: “δειζιδαιμονία is possibly but improbably ‘religion’”.<sup>215</sup> Johnson gives a more elaborate

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<sup>209</sup> The Contemporary English Version of the Bible gives the interesting translation: “they argued about some of their beliefs”.

<sup>210</sup> Arrington, 240. Munck, 237. Harrison, 369.

<sup>211</sup> Bruce, 436.

<sup>212</sup> Haenchen, 673.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 762 note 4.

<sup>214</sup> Krodell, 75.

<sup>215</sup> Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.311.

explanation for his choice of “superstition.” “The translation here chooses the negative meaning “superstition” rather than “religion”, primarily because Festus is obviously treating Agrippa as if he were as much an outsider to these disputes as himself.”<sup>216</sup> Johnson hints that Agrippa, although an expert in Jewish affairs, was not himself wholly committed to the Jewish faith. Ferguson, in his analysis of the pagan attitudes towards Christianity, makes reference to the general derogatory term “superstition” and refers specifically to Acts 25:19 as an example.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Johnson, 426.

<sup>217</sup> Ferguson, 472.

One of the stronger arguments raised for a negative interpretation is that the neutral rendering “religion” is anachronistic. Hodgson, has done a historical analysis of the word and argues that the more positive use reflects an earlier understanding which was no longer valid at the time of Luke's writing.<sup>218</sup> Hodgson, who reads both instances of the word in Acts 17:22 and 25:19 in a negative way, adds “In their turn, Christian theologians and lawmakers called pagan and Jewish religion superstition (Ac.17:22 and 25:19).”<sup>219</sup>

Apart from the anachronistic aspect of “religion” the deciding factor hinges on the link that Agrippa still had with the Jewish religion. If Agrippa was committed to the Jewish faith then, it is argued, Festus would not speak to his Jewish guest in a derogatory fashion about the Jewish religion. In order to understand Luke's use of *δηζηδαηκω* it is important to investigate how he intended the reader to view Agrippa's beliefs as well as the friendship between Festus and Agrippa.

### 3.2 Paul's trial as parallel to that of Jesus

An indication that Luke intended to portray Festus as being free to share his opinion with Agrippa, that the Jewish religion was a superstition, is to be found in the parallel that exists between the trial of Jesus and that of Paul (Lk.23 / Ac.25). O'Toole is one of a number of scholars who argued that Luke intended to draw an extended parallel between Jesus' passion and that of Paul.<sup>220</sup> Two figures judge both Jesus and Paul in their respective trials towards the end of the two narratives of the Gospel and Acts. In Jesus' trial the statement is made that Pilate and Herod became friends (Lk.23:12).<sup>221</sup> Although they do not convict Jesus and thus reveal his innocence, Luke does not regard them in a positive light. This negative assessment of the friendship between Pilate and Herod is clarified in the prayer of the believers (Ac.4:23-30) where Pilate and Herod are grouped together with the Gentiles and peoples of Israel as having been joined against Jesus.<sup>222</sup> When Luke presents the trial of Paul as a parallel to the trial of Jesus, he is patterning the characters of Festus and Agrippa after Pilate and Herod. They are, in fact, like Pilate and Herod, enemies of Jesus and his followers.

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<sup>218</sup> R.Hodgson, *Superstition, ABD* ad loc. Wardle has made a brief analysis of the word *superstitio* as used by the first century writer Valerius Maximus and comes to the following conclusion: “During the third century a pejorative sense came in, and in the Classical period its meaning is „erroneous or extreme religious activity” usually caused by ignorance of philosophical truths about nature. In its pejorative sense it was applied to non-Roman beliefs and practices, as in this chapter by V(alerius).” D.Wardle, trans. *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 144.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 152.

<sup>221</sup> The view that Luke intended Paul's trial to be an echo of Jesus' trial is supported by many scholars. The appearance of Jesus before Herod (Lk.23:6-12), is an event which is only referred to by Luke. Leaney explains, “The clue to the passage may therefore lie in the desire of Luke to show that the Lord was acquitted by both the king ... and the Roman governor. The same motive underlies Acts xxv.13ff (cf. especially verses 15, 16, 22 and for an echo of Luke xxiii. 4-5 see Acts xxv. 25; cf. also the words of Agrippa, playing a part in the „trial” of Paul like that of Herod's on the Passion of the Lord, at Acts xxvi. 31).” A.R.C.Leaney, *The Gospel According to St Luke*, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958 reprint 1976), 280. This interpretation is too limited, as is clear from Acts 4, where Herod and Pilate is clearly described as enemies of Jesus. In addition, the acquittal of Jesus by the two figures does not lead to his release.

<sup>222</sup> This is an extremely negative description. It classes them as people who “fight against God” (*ζεοκατεφ*).

Closely linked to the discussion on the understanding of the word *δειζηδακονία* (Ac.25:19) is a further parallel between Agrippa II and Herod which helps clarify Luke's portrayal of Agrippa. When Festus requests Agrippa's assistance in formulating the charges against Paul, Agrippa replies: "I would like to hear this man myself." (Ac.25:22). The parallel that this creates with Herod's statement that he had been wanting to see Jesus (Lk.23:8) is significant. Munck notes the parallel: "Just as in his time his great uncle Herod Antipas had long desired to see Jesus (Luke xxiii 8), so here Agrippa II testified that he had wished for a long time to hear Paul."<sup>223</sup> This helps to support the contention that the imperfect tense of *ἔβουλόκεν* should be translated "I had wished..." indicating that Agrippa had already heard about Paul, just as Herod the tetrarch had previously heard about Jesus. The parallel between Luke's portrayal of Herod in the Gospel and Agrippa in Acts guides the reader in terms of the Lukan text, to interpret Agrippa II in terms of the dynasty to which he belongs.<sup>224</sup> Agrippa II is not in the first instance merely a Jew that is treated as such by the other characters in the trial, but he is in the eyes of Luke part of the configuration of characters that are in opposition to the gospel and the apostles.<sup>225</sup> The reference to Agrippa wanting to meet Paul is not only in close proximity textually to *δειζηδακονία* but also rhetorically forms part of the same discussion in which Festus uses the word. The parallel in the text between Agrippa and Herod therefore guides the reader in interpreting *δειζηδακονία* as an unfavourable comment.

### 3.3 "Their own superstition"

There is a further textual indicator which supports Luke as representing Agrippa being distinct from the Jews. This is found in the comment by Festus that the dispute was about "their own" (superstition).<sup>226</sup> This remark offers a point of view from which the character of Festus approaches the opponents of Paul in the narrative. The reference to "their own" makes

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<sup>223</sup> Munck, 238. Commentators are divided over the precise translation of *ἔβουλόκεν*. The translation: "I was wishing" would create a strong parallel between Herod and Agrippa by supporting the view that Agrippa, like Herod, had already heard about Christianity. The other possible translation "I should like", indicating an interest that has just been aroused, would lessen the parallel. Haenchen does not comment on the two possible translations but merely notes that Overbeck points out the correspondence with the passion story. Haenchen, 673. Rackham considers the two possible translations and concludes that "was wishing" is correct. He bases his decision on the absence of a clear textual structure which would indicate that the wish was incapable of present fulfilment. He cites Rom. 9:3 as such an example. Rackham, 461 note 1. Krodel also supports the translation that Agrippa had been wanting to meet Paul. G.Krodel, ed. *Acts, Proclamation Commentaries*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 75. Jackson and Lake also discuss the two possible translations and favour the understanding that Agrippa had wished for some time to hear Paul. They state: "Agrippa had doubtless heard the story in Jerusalem, or possibly from his sister Drusilla. Moreover was not Luke conscious of the parallelism with another Herod who had wished to see Jesus, as only his gospel narrates (cf. ix. 9, xxiii. 8)." They discuss the possibility of translating *ἔβουλόκεν* "I should like" as suggested by Blass. This would make it equivalent to *ἔβουλόκεν*. However this is not what is in the text. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.312.

<sup>224</sup> A very clear example is the final words of Stephen as he is being put to death "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" Acts 7:60 which is a parallel to the similar words uttered by Jesus at the moment of his death and which are found only in Luke's gospel: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34). Weinert brings out some parallels between Stephen and Jesus in his discussion of Stephen's speech in which Jesus' comments about the temple are examined. F.D.Weinert, Luke, Stephen and the Temple in Luke-Acts, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987): 88-90.

<sup>225</sup> "Luke does not view the Herodian princes as Jews and evaluates each of them in terms of how he treats Christ or the Christians." O'Toole, *Luke's Treatment of Jews*, 551.

<sup>226</sup> Acts 25:19: *ἡ δὲ ἑξ ἑαυτῶν δειζηδακονία*. Bruce points out that it may mean either "their own religion" or "their own superstition". Bruce, 436.

Agrippa just as much an outsider to these disputes as Festus.<sup>227</sup> Dunn also notes the importance of the reference to “their own” but for a slightly different reason. He sees in this verse an echo of Acts 18:14-15 and 23:29 where the Roman officials, Gallio and Claudius Lysias, took no personal interest in the controversies of the Jews.<sup>228</sup> Therefore Festus has no need to use polite terminology in referring to the Jewish faith for fear of offending Agrippa. The implication here is that through the comment “their own” Luke is portraying Festus as joining himself to Agrippa in distancing themselves from beliefs which they do not share. Under such circumstances Festus is quite at liberty to refer to Judaism as a superstition in the presence of Agrippa.

#### **4 Agrippa II and his forebears**

In addition to the textual evidence indicating that Agrippa would not be offended by Festus' allusion to Judaism as a superstition. There are also external records which would support Luke's portrayal of Agrippa in this way.

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<sup>227</sup> Johnson, 426.

<sup>228</sup> Dunn, 322.

Josephus' general assessment of the Herods' attitude to matters of faith clearly represent Agrippa II as a man belonging to a dynasty that would not have been in the least bothered about Festus' remark that the Jewish faith is a superstition. Josephus was a contemporary of Agrippa's and knew him well for he had had extensive correspondence with him.<sup>229</sup> Josephus makes the following assessment of the Herod dynasty: "I desire therefore to speak at some length about Herod and his family ... because it provides a proof of Divine providence. It shows that without reverence for deity neither numbers nor any other form of superiority in the things aimed at by men are of any advantage, since it came to pass that within a course of a hundred years the descendants of Herod (and there were many) were, except for a few, destroyed."<sup>230</sup> Thus Josephus' comments show that the dynasty of the Herods had a reputation of scant reverence for the things of God.

#### **4.1 Agrippa as a friend of the Romans**

Luke's portrayal of the friendship between Festus and Agrippa also carries external support. Agrippa's association with the Jewish nation was primarily of political importance to him, while his personal commitment lay with the Roman state and society. Rackham describes him as "like all the Herods and their partisans the Herodians, thoroughly Roman in tastes and sympathies."<sup>231</sup> The fact that Agrippa wished to be publicly known as a friend of the Romans can be deduced from the following inscriptions he had on his coins; "PHILOCAESAR" and "PHILOROMAIOS."<sup>232</sup> The close identification of Agrippa II to Roman society is also seen in his bearing the Roman name "Marcus Julius Agrippa".<sup>233</sup> This would be in keeping with his upbringing for he had been raised in Rome in the court of the emperor Claudius.<sup>234</sup> The combination of his friendly disposition towards the Romans and his bearing a Roman name, therefore paints a picture of Agrippa II as a man who identified himself with the Roman customs and way of life.

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<sup>229</sup> It is reputed that Agrippa testified in 62 letters that what Josephus had written in *The Jewish War*, was true. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.487.

<sup>230</sup> Josephus *Antiq.* 18.5.3, cit. ap. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.487, note 1.

<sup>231</sup> Rackham, 456.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> H.Cadbury, "The Family Tree of the Herods", Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 5.487. Cadbury notes that complications can arise when trying to trace the genealogy of the Herod dynasty because many of them also had regular Roman names. This practice began when Julius Caesar gave Roman citizenship to Antipater, the father of Herod the Great who passed the privilege down to his children. Cadbury states: "Agrippa II (King Agrippa of Acts xxvi), is named on coins and inscriptions Marcus Julius Agrippa."

<sup>234</sup> Kee, 278.

Not only is Agrippa known to have close ties with the Roman Empire, but he also experienced intense antagonism from Jewish groups closely associated with the temple. Rackham explains that an open quarrel had ensued between Agrippa and the high priests. At his palace, Agrippa had built a tower which overlooked the temple courts. In retaliation and in order to block off his view, the high priests had built a counter-wall.<sup>235</sup> As a result of these differences Agrippa manipulated the Sanhedrin for political ends. Saldarini states, “It is easy to discern that the priestly aristocracy was controlled by the Roman governor, because Herod appointed high priests who would enhance his power or at least would not be a threat to it.”<sup>236</sup>

The antagonism also has a historical background in the tension between the house of Herod and Jewish groups. When Herod became king he could not be high priest because he was not of priestly descent. Lohse describes Herod's subsequent actions in the following terms: “He packed the Sanhedrin with supporters and let it carry on. But in fact he dispensed justice without bothering in the least about the priesthood or the High Council, *Ant.*, 14, 167; 15, 273f.; 16, 1-5.”<sup>237</sup> In his footnote he goes on to say: “The same applies to Herod's successors. Herod Antipas had John executed without asking the Sanhedrin. *Jos. Ant.*, 18, 116-119; Mk.6:17-29 par. Herod Agrippa, the father of Agrippa II, condemned James the son of Zebedee to death, Acts 12:2.”<sup>238</sup> It is therefore safe to conclude that Agrippa II adopted the same attitude of tokenism and contempt towards the Jews as his forbears did.

However, the antagonism ran deeper than differences between personalities on religious leadership. There was also a clear political dimension. Rackham's final assessment of Agrippa is significant for it is based on his role in the rebellion of the Jews that broke out against Rome in the late 60's: “But when the war actually broke out, Herod sided with the Romans and remained loyal to them to the end.”<sup>239</sup> On this particular issue Josephus reveals that Agrippa II had attempted to persuade the Jews not to revolt, by arguing that the revolt was misguided. His efforts were obviously not well received for the revolutionaries drove him out of Jerusalem.<sup>240</sup> Thus Agrippa not only identified with the Romans socially but was also openly at odds with the Jewish religious elite as well as with the nationalistic movement of the Jews.

Harrison confirms this general assessment of Agrippa II, for he states that the Herods had always been valuable to the Romans: “because they remained fundamentally loyal to Rome, even if it meant turning against their Jewish subjects in a crisis.”<sup>241</sup> Thus Luke's portrayal of Agrippa as being indifferent to matters of faith was in keeping with the well known and well documented characteristics of the Herods.

As the character of the Herods in general as well as the particular individuals clearly indicate that the leanings Agrippa II had towards Rome were a matter of public knowledge then it is quite in keeping for Luke to portray Festus as referring to the Jews and their religious beliefs with the negative term of “superstition”.

From the above it is clear that the interpretation of the word *δελζηδακονία* hinges

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<sup>235</sup> Rackham, 456.

<sup>236</sup> Op. cit. E.van Eck, The Baptism of Jesus in Mark, *Neotestamentica* 30 (1996): 206.

<sup>237</sup> Lohse, ζσνέδριν, *TDNT* 7: 865.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Rackham, 456.

<sup>240</sup> Josephus *Wars* 2.344-407. Op. cit. Kee, 279.

<sup>241</sup> Harrison, 369.

primarily on an assessment of where Agrippa's true allegiance lay. The character of Agrippa as portrayed in Acts and the historical figure of Agrippa are identified. If Agrippa was committed to the Jewish faith, then the use of the word “superstition” would be an offense to him. It would imply that he himself is a believer in superstition. However, if his primary allegiance was to the Roman society and hierarchy, a derogatory comment about the Jewish faith would be of no consequence to him. In this case he himself is, as Johnson argues, an outsider who is not offended by a description of a religion to which he is only remotely connected. Under such circumstances he would have viewed the use of the word “superstition” as an acceptable way of describing the Jewish religion.

## 5 Judaism and Christianity viewed as superstitions

It was a common phenomenon in Graeco-Roman times to describe foreign cults as superstitions.

The description in Acts 25:19 of the Jewish religion as a “superstition” is not unique to Luke. Secular authors and Roman officials of that period are on record as having described the Jews and later Christians in exactly those terms. Stern in his work on the attitudes of the Greeks and Romans towards the Jews, draws attention to the general description of both Judaism and Christianity as superstitions. He examines the writings of the first century author, Plutarch, who in his work *On Superstition* refers on two occasions to the Jews as a superstition because of their observance of the Sabbath.<sup>242</sup> Plutarch uses the Jews as an example of people who are affected by superstition, because they allow an enemy to attack them without defending themselves, simply because it is the Sabbath.<sup>243</sup> For him this irrational behaviour of the Jews is the result of their superstition.

Strabo (64 B.C.-A.D.21) in his account of the Jewish religion, explains that their religion was highly regarded, but was later spoiled by such “superstitious practices” like food taboos and circumcision.<sup>244</sup> Stern notes that for Apuleius the Jews are the “*superstitiosi* par excellence.”<sup>245</sup> Quintilian (A.D.35-100) in his hostile description of Judaism,<sup>246</sup> and Tacitus, in his *Historiae* 5.13 both describe Judaism as a superstition.<sup>247</sup> In Asia Minor Judaism was explicitly associated with the Bacchanalia, a cult widely perceived as a superstition.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> M.Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism (1)*, (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academy Press, 1974), 547. The first reference that Stern identifies in Plutarch is: *On Superstition* 166 A, that the practice of observing the Sabbath was one of the superstitious barbarian customs adopted by the Greeks. \_ βάρβαρ\_ \_ξερόντες\_ \_Δι ι ενες\_ θαθά η\_ δειξ\_ ἱθακονία, πει\_ ὤζεις, θηαβορβορώζεις, ζαββαηξ\_ κούς. It needs to be noted that there is a textual variation on the word ζαββαηξ\_ κούς. The text in the Loeb translation has βαπηξ\_ κούς. This variant weakens the identification of the superstition as being a direct reference to the observance of the Sabbath. The second reference is quite clear, (169C): \_υ\_ \_Ιοσδα\_ οηζαββάηηρ\_ \_νηρ\_ \_ν\_ \_γνάκηηηξ\_η\_ θαζεδόκηνη\_η\_ also indicates that the Jews are bound in the net of superstition because of their refusal to actively defend their city when it was being attacked, because it was the Sabbath.

<sup>243</sup> A.N.Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 169.

<sup>244</sup> L.Herrmann, *Chrestos*, 88.

<sup>245</sup> M.Stern, 547.

<sup>246</sup> Quintilian *Instr. Or.* 3.7.21: et est conditoribus urbium infame contraxisse ubiquam perniciosam ceteris gentem, qualis est primus iudicae superstitionis auctor.

<sup>247</sup> Tacitus, with the words: Gens superstitioni obnoxia. According to Stern: “Tacitus uses ‘*superstitio*’ to designate barbarian religion in general.” *Germania* 39.43; *Agricola* 11; Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.10.3. Cf. Stern, 7.

<sup>248</sup> Stern, 546.

Moiragenes regarded both the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles and the Sabbath as Dionysian. “Even now many people call the Bacchi „Sabboi“ and call out that word when they perform the orgies of Bacchus,” he argued.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 546. Stern also discusses the perception in some quarters of the contemporary society, that the Jews either worshipped or abstained from the swine because of its connection with the myth that Adonis, who is identified with Dionysus, was killed by a boar.

Later, Christianity were also regarded as a superstition. Quintilius' attack on the Jews for being superstitious, is also directed at Christians, lest he be judged to be favourably inclined towards them.<sup>250</sup> Tacitus writes disparagingly about the Christians because they were known to be an offshoot of Judaism whose adherents had the reputation of being “haters of mankind.”<sup>251</sup> Benko sees in the wording of Tacitus' report concerning the involvement of Christians in the great fire of Rome of A.D.64, a similarity with Livy's description of the Bacchanalia and the events which led to their suppression in 186 B.C. Benko's explanation is as follows: “Livy, in his chapter looked back at the Bacchanalia and passed judgement on them much the same way as Tacitus did with respect to Christianity.”<sup>252</sup> Benko goes on to add that if Tacitus knew as much about Christianity as Pliny found out while in Bythnia, then he could have seen the similarities between them. These similarities are, “(T)he Christians too met secretly, at daybreak, they had meals together, both sexes joined in the services, the origin of the movement was outside of Rome and Italy and its rites alien to Roman customs.”<sup>253</sup> Other factors promoted an atmosphere in which Christianity could have been regarded as a dangerous superstition very much like the Bacchanalian cult in 186 B.C. Tacitus noted that Christianity spread amongst the higher ranking people, so that it began to be noticed. As in 186 B.C. so too in A.D.64, there was a great fire in Rome, while in both cases a large group of people were involved (an *ingens multitudo*). Christianity was more dangerous than the Bacchanalian cult because it was associated with the already suspect Jewish faith.<sup>254</sup> Tacitus' remarks therefore illustrate that in the first century there were influential circles in the society which were associating both Christianity and Judaism with superstition.<sup>255</sup>

Pliny, in his famous letter to Trajan (A.D.112), writes about Christianity as an absurd and extravagant superstition. As a superstitious disease it invaded not only the cities but also the outskirts and countryside.<sup>256</sup> Tacitus in writing about the great fire of Rome on the 19th July 64, offers the now well known explanation that Nero, looking for a scape-goat, turned on

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<sup>250</sup> Quintilius *Instr. Or.* 3.1.22: velut quadam superstitione imbutus.

<sup>251</sup> S.Benko, *Pagan Criticism of Christianity During the First Two Centuries A.D.*, H.Temporini and W.Haase, eds. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt.* II.23.2. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), 1068.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 1067.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.* Freyburger-Galland confirm the association between Christianity and these other cults from a different perspective. They argue that the close analogies between Christianity and the doctrines of Dionysus, Zagreus, Sabazius and others, were such that these religions prepared the ground for the acceptance of Christianity. Freyburger-Galland, Freyburger, Tautil, *Sectes Religieuses*, 85. “Les analogies avec la doctrine chrétienne sont tout à fait nettes et l'on comprend mieux comment le Christianisme a pu s'installer dans un paganisme déjà préparé par de nombreuses sectes.”

<sup>255</sup> Much later the link between Christianity and the Bacchanalia were made in other contexts. The letter written by the Christian Churches of Lyon and Vienna to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia informs them that amongst other things they are being accused of participating in Thyestic feasts which consisted of eating human flesh and had close links with the worship of Dionysus. One of the characteristics of maenadism was the eating of raw flesh “Ils nous calomnièrent, nous accusants faussement de festins de Thyeste” A. Hamman, *L'Empire et la Croix*, (Paris: Littérature Chrétienne, 1957), 183. Hamman indicates that the accusations may have been based on a false understanding of the communion..

<sup>256</sup> P.De Labriolle, *La Réaction Païenne: Étude sur la Polémique Antichrétienne du 1er au 4e Siècle*, (Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1934), 38.

the Christians and pinned the blame of the fire on them, because Christianity is a “repugnant superstition”. Suetonius refers to the same incident in these words, “Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and wicked superstition.”<sup>257</sup> Throughout Minucius Felix's *Octavius* the understanding of superstition is highlighted by its being contrasted to true religion. Caecilius, the pagan who reflects popular opinions about Christianity, wants to show that Christianity is a superstition, while Roman religion is true.<sup>258</sup>

All these examples indicate that at the time of Luke's writing and after, superstition was used to designate the Jewish and Christian faiths. Therefore the reference that Festus makes in terms of the Jewish religion being a superstition (Ac.25:19) is consistent with the opinion expressed by some members of the ruling elite and philosophers of the time.

### **5.1 Superstition in Athens**

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<sup>257</sup> Suetonius *Life of Nero* 16.2: genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae.

<sup>258</sup> An example of this interplay is found in *Octavius* 1.5: “he converted Caecilius, who was still immersed in superstitious vanities, to true religion.”

Reference has been made above to the other example in Acts where Luke describes Paul's address to the Athenian philosophers and uses the term "superstition" (Ac.17:22). De Villiers and Germiquet have examined the various interpretations that scholars give to the word *δειζηδαιμονεζήροσς*<sup>259</sup> and concluded that for Luke, "It refers to be superstitious, „religiously off the mark“, „gullible“, or „unenlightened about religious matters,“ but certainly not „religious“."<sup>260</sup> This research therefore confirms that in this passage (Ac.17:22), as in Acts 25:19, Luke's use of the concept *δειζηδαιμονία* is best understood as referring to superstition rather than religion. This consistency in Luke's use of words helps to bring cohesion to the interpretation of the various allusions and metaphors surrounding Luke's subsequent description of Paul's persecution of Christians as well as the ensuing attacks of the Jews directed against him. It confirms that the reference by Festus to Agrippa concerning the superstition of the Jews (Ac.25:19) forms an introductory backdrop against which the subsequent description of the attacks on Christianity can be interpreted.

## **6 Asian Jews are the real problem**

Luke's consistency does not only relate to his use of words but also to his description of specific characters and personalities.<sup>261</sup> This consistency was seen in his presentation of Agrippa and the Herodian dynasty, but is not limited to them. There is a similar consistency in the presentation of those Jews who are the most vicious in their attacks against Paul and Christians.

In the narrative of Luke, he often refers in a striking manner to the fact that the Jewish opposition to Paul originates with Asian Jews. Luke names or identifies the Asian Jews seven times as being the instigators of the riotous resistance to Christianity. In Acts 6:9 those who opposed Stephen came from various regions, with Asia being named as one of them. Acts 13:50: The Jews of Pisidian Antioch stirred up the people against Barnabas and Paul. Acts 14:19: The Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium stirred up the crowd and stoned Paul. These cities were close to the province of Asia. Acts 19:9-10 refers to Paul's stay in Ephesus where some of the Jews from the province of Asia maligned the Way. Acts 20:18-19 refers to Paul being severely tested by the plots of the Asian Jews. In Acts 21:27, the events which resulted with the arrest of Paul, began when the Jews from Asia shouted that Paul had brought Trophimus into the temple. Finally, in the defence speech, Paul specifically names the Asian Jews as being responsible for the attacks on him (Ac.24:19). "But there are some Jews from the province of Asia who ought to be here before you if they have any charges against me." Although it should not be assumed that the Asian Jews are the only ones who oppose Christianity, Luke's repeated reference to them does indicate a special concern of his.

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<sup>259</sup> De Villiers, Germiquet, *Paul and Paganism*, 36-51.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>261</sup> Gowler has illustrated how true this is for New Testament research through his study on Luke's Gospel. His research leads him to conclude that for Luke most of the characterization takes place through indirect presentation, which may take the form of speech, action external appearance or environment. He identifies actions as being particularly helpful in defining characters. D.B.Gowler, *Characterization in Luke: A Socio-Narratological Approach*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 19 (1989): 56.

The distinctive feature is that Luke does not portray all Jews as opposing Christianity. Many Jews become integrated into the Christian community.<sup>262</sup> Luke specifically states that the Jews of Judea had nothing bad to say about Christianity (Ac.28:21). Therefore Luke's repeated reference to Asia as the place of origin for the disruptions caused by Jews could be a signal to his reader that the opposition to Christianity, which was irrational and excessive, was the result of outside influence. Apart from simply noting the disruptive nature of the Asian Jews, commentators do not investigate the character associated with these people from Asia. The closest comment on this issue is by Johnson who states that the repetition of the references to the plots of the Jews presents them as dishonourable.<sup>263</sup> O'Toole has investigated the issue of Luke's attitude towards the Jews and concludes that Luke only holds *some* Jews responsible.<sup>264</sup>

Although some research has been conducted on Luke's repeated reference to the disruptions caused by the Asian Jews, more detailed investigations are required.<sup>265</sup> That this is a worthwhile area of research is confirmed by Sanders who, in his analysis of the interplay between Gentile and Jew in Acts, has concluded that the solution to this complex problem could be found in understanding the role of the Asian Jews. He writes: "That explanation will doubtless lie in the complexion of Judaism and Christianity in the Roman province of Asia around the year 100 C.E."<sup>266</sup> The fact that Luke repeatedly refers to the opposition as originating from Asia is significant for two reasons. Firstly, the citizens and especially the Jews of Asia appeared to have had a reputation for disruptive and disorderly conduct. Secondly, it was a matter of common knowledge that the superstitions which had been disruptive in the empire originated from that area. A significant observation originally made

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<sup>262</sup> Acts 2:41, 47; 14:1.

<sup>263</sup> Johnson, 355. Bruce in his analysis of Acts 6:9, where Asian Jews are mentioned in conjunction with Jews from other areas, has an extensive discussion of the possible presence of a number of synagogues in Jerusalem for the diaspora Jews. Bruce, 156. Concerning Acts 21: 27, a number of commentators mention that Jews were probably in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. C.S.C.Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, (London: A. and C. Black, 1957), 241. Haenchen, 615 note 1.

<sup>264</sup> O'Toole, *Luke's Treatment of Jews*, 529-555. Passages which O'Toole indicates as evidence that only some Jews were guilty of Jesus' death are: Lk.22:66-71; 23:13-25; 24:20; Ac.2:36; 3:13-15,17; 4:10-12, 25-27; 5:28,30; 7:52; 10:39; 13:27-29. O'Toole does not notice Luke's particular emphasis on the direct or indirect role of the Asian Jews.

<sup>265</sup> Moessner has noted Luke's repeated reference to the persecutions against Paul as being caused by the Asian Jews. He states: "And then somewhat later Paul himself will be sent out from Antioch on a mission to Israel and the Gentiles in which Jews from Asia will emerge as his chief opponents (13:1-3; 14:27-28; 19:23-20:1,16; 21:27; 24:18)." D.Moessner, 'The Christ must suffer': New Light on the Jesus - Peter, Stephen, Paul Parallels in Luke-Acts, *Novum Testamentum* 28 (1986): 228. Moessner repeatedly links Asia with the persecution of Christians and highlights Luke's reference to that province. Paul was "strangely forbidden to preach in *Asia* (16:6)"; "Now on his return to Jerusalem Paul does stop at Asia where he argues with Jews in Ephesus". "The *whole period in Asia* has been a patient endurance of *persecutions* by 'plots of the Jews'". He points out that Luke even states that the church will face internal tensions because in Asia "men" from the "flock" will arise and propound "twisted/perverted things (διτρεχόμενα, 20:30; cf. Luke 9:41!)". Moessner, 250f. Finally Moessner also identifies the proponents of persecution against Christianity as themselves twisted. "Paul joins his own persecution and death to his arrival in Jerusalem on account of the 'twisted folk' of 'the Jews' in rejecting his mission." (251). As it has been argued, being twisted in thought, speech and action as opposed to straight and rational is a sign of superstition.

<sup>266</sup> J.T.Sanders, Who is a Jew and who is a Gentile in the Book of Acts, *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 455.

by Johnson and repeated by O'Toole is that in comparison to contemporary Jewish polemic, the New Testament's negative statements about fellow-Jews are mild and were probably the rhetoric associated with Hellenistic philosophical schools. In the end the polemic simply signifies that these are opponents and so one speaks about them in this way.<sup>267</sup> With this backdrop in mind, a brief enquiry into the characteristics associated with Asian Jews in particular and religious expression in Asia in general is informative.

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<sup>267</sup> O'Toole, *Luke's Treatment of Jews*, 531 cites L.T.Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemics" *JBL* 108 (1989): 441.

Of particular relevance is the account referred to by Freyburger-Galland of a Jewish sect which was expelled from Rome in 133 B.C. by the praetor Cornelius Hispalus, and ordered to return to their homes in Phrygia and Lydia. Valerius Maximus writes: “idem Iudaeos, qui Sabaziouis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erant, repetere domos suas coegit.”<sup>268</sup> Freyburger explains that this sect of dissident Jews had allowed themselves to become strongly Hellenised during the second century B.C. and had developed a Judeo-pagan form of worship based on Jupiter-Sabazius. The characteristics that probably caused this sect to be expelled from Rome are attested to by a mural discovered in a “synagogue” of Mysia in Asia Minor which was constituted a few years after their expulsion from Rome. On the mural is depicted the naked figures of a man and woman lying on a big couch attended to by a flute player and a slave scooping wine. On the near by tomb of a priest are inscribed the words “eat, drink and be merry”.<sup>269</sup> The unacceptability of this Jewish sect is reflected by Valerius in his linking of his reference to them with the expulsion of other unwanted dissident groups, such as astrologers, and his classification of them as superstitions.<sup>270</sup> Freyburger concludes that the severity of the Roman reaction against this Jewish sect can be explained partly by the good relations that existed at the time between official Judaism and the Roman authorities.<sup>271</sup> Wardle, in his commentary on this text, investigates the connection between this Jewish sect and Asia Minor: “From the appearance of Sabazius it has been suggested (E.Bickermann, *RIDA* 5 (1958), 137f., 148-50; Stern, 2,9) that the Jews came from Asia Minor, particularly Pergamum.”<sup>272</sup> There are however some aspects of this association that are not altogether clear. Wardle explains further: “While Sabazius, a deity from Asia Minor regularly identified with Dionysus, was linked officially with Jupiter (Zeus) in Pergamene state cult (Lane, 38), the further step of an identification with Yahweh is hypothetical (cf. Stern,6).”<sup>273</sup> Wardle notes three explanations which are preferable to an assumption of syncretism between Yahweh and Sabazius. Firstly, a confusion of either Saboath or Sabbath; secondly, the use by Jews of the Jupiter Sabazius link to explain their beliefs in a pagan context; thirdly, a subsequent creation of the link by pagans.<sup>274</sup>

Although the historical issues are not altogether clear, there is nevertheless evidence that Luke's description of the irrational and excessive reaction against Paul as emanating from Asian Jews, has behind it the witness from independent sources that some Jews from Asia

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<sup>268</sup> Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 1.3.3. M.L.Freyburger-Galland, G.Freyburger, J-C.Tautil. *Sectes Religieuses en Grèce et à Rome dans L'Antiquité Païenne*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986), 234. The expulsion order is to be found in Valerius Maximus 1.3.3 and not 1.3.2 as referred to by Freyburger-Galland.

<sup>269</sup> M.L.Freyburger-Galland, 234.

<sup>270</sup> The whole quote from Valerius 1.3.3 reads as follows: Cornelius Hispalus praetor peregrinus M. Popilio Laenate L. Calpurnio coss. edicto Chaldaeos citra decimum diem abire ex urbe atque Italia iussit, leuibus et ineptis ingeniis fallaci siderum interpretatione quaestuosam mendaciis suis caliginem incientes. idem Iudaeos, qui Sabaziouis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati erant, repetere domos suas coegit. It can be seen that for Valerius, writing between A.D. 27-31(Wardle, 2), this particular group of Asian Jews is perceived in the same light as other disruptive superstitions.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> D.Wardle, *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 150f.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 151.

were perceived as a disruptive sect described in terms of a superstition.<sup>275</sup>

## **6.1 Superstitions originate from Asia**

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<sup>275</sup> Luke indicates his awareness of such expulsions, for he refers to Aquila and Priscilla (Ac.18:2) who had arrived in Corinth as a result of Claudius' expulsion of all Jews from Rome. Bruce (342) indicates that this expulsion is usually connected to an edict referred to by Suetonius, (*Claud.* 25.4) and Dio Cassius (60.6) which took place in A.D. 49-50, but that it conflicts with the pro-Jewish edicts of the time, referred to by Josephus (*Ant.* 19.5.2f.). Bruce concludes: "There is good evidence for several such anti-Jewish moves, none of which had more than partial and temporary effect." (Bruce, 343). The issue of the Asian Jews their background is an area for further research.

Although the specific case of the Asian Jews has been considered above, there appears to have been a general suspicion of religions from Asia, for other cults which originated there were also viewed as dangerous superstitions. Freyburger-Galland discuss the origins of the various cults that found their way into Rome. Of particular interest is their discussion of the origins of the Dionysian cult which probably originated in Phrygia of northern Asia Minor. However the province of Lydia in central Asia Minor also has strong connections with its origin.<sup>276</sup> In their discussion they further mention that Dionysus is never referred to as a foreign deity and was accepted without hesitation in Pergamum where it was syncretised with Sabazios, the god of vegetation.<sup>277</sup>

Livy, in his exposition of the Bacchanalia superstition that shook Rome in 186 BC, states that it was brought to Rome by a nameless Greek from Etruria.<sup>278</sup> Etruria was a province of Italy whose inhabitants were believed by Livy, to have originated from Lydia in Asia Minor.<sup>279</sup> This link with Asia appears to be important to Livy in discrediting the founder of the Roman Bacchanalia. The identification of Asia as the place where superstitions originated, is also referred to in the analysis of an inscription about Dionysus, found in Tuscany. Ferguson records that the origins of this inscription can be traced to the proconsulship of Agripinilla's husband in Asia in 165.<sup>280</sup>

Cerfaux and Tondriau in their analysis of the interplay that existed between Christians and the practice of emperor worship, state that once Christianity became perceived as a distinct religion from Judaism, it ceased to benefit from the privilege of being a *religio licita*. From then on it was nothing else than an oriental superstition, together with all the suspicion it entailed.<sup>281</sup>

These references indicate that there was a general negative reputation that already existed in the empire concerning disruptive superstitions which emanated from Asia. Therefore, Luke's description of the disturbances caused by the Asian Jews, which culminate with Festus indicating to Agrippa that what he has observed appears to be the manifestation of superstition (Ac.25:19), indicates that Luke is trying to portray the opposition to Christianity as superstitious in character. Christians themselves, are respectable and honourable citizens.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Freyburger-Galland, Freyburger, Tautil, *Sectes Religieuse*, 39f. Concerning the origins of Dionysus they state: "La Lydie, au centre de l'Asie Mineure, revendique également d'être sa patrie d'origine."

<sup>277</sup> Ibid. The popular confusion between Sabazios and the Jewish Saboath had already been discussed above.

<sup>278</sup> Livy 39.9.1: Huius mali labes ex Etruria Romam veluti contagione morbi penetravit.

<sup>279</sup> The belief that the inhabitants of Etruria originated from Lydia in Asia Minor is first reported by Herodotus and supported by Livy as well as Polybius the Greek historian, and also the Roman poets Publius Papinius Statius and Tiberius Catius Silius Italicus. Modern archaeological discoveries have confirmed that they were Oriental or Middle Eastern people. However, Dionysus of Halicarnassus held the view that they were an indigenous Italian race. *s.v. Etruria*, Microsoft Encarta' 95, [CD-Rom]. The importance of the issue is that Livy held this view and his opinion represents a widely held belief at the time.

<sup>280</sup> Ferguson, 207.

<sup>281</sup> "Dès là qu'ils se distinguèrent des Juifs, ils perdirent le privilège de religio licita qui était lié à la nationalité juive; leur religion ne fut plus juridiquement qu'une superstition orientale, suspecte, et sans défense devant l'État;". L.Cerfaux, J.Tondriau, *Le Culte des Souverains dans la Civilisation Gréco-Romaine*, (Paris: Tournai Desclée, 1957), 386.

<sup>282</sup> The presentation of Christianity as the reasonable mean will be the subject of a later chapter.

## 6.2 Eusebius' view on the Asian Jews

The ongoing disruptive nature of the Asia Jews is still referred to by the third century church historian Eusebius, who not only refers to the citizens of Asia, but in particular to the Jews of Asia as being antagonistic towards Christianity and generally unruly. In his reference to the work of Justin Martyr being dedicated to the emperor, Eusebius states that his work too, was similarly dedicated. Eusebius writes: “The same Emperor was entreated by other Asiatic Christians who had suffered all manner of injury from the local population and he thought fit to send the following decree to the Council of Asia”<sup>283</sup>

The way Eusebius describes the martyrdom of Polycarp which occurred in A.D.155 or 156, express the view that religious disturbances in Asia were apparently a frequent phenomenon. “At this time Polycarp was consecrated by martyrdom when great persecutions again disturbed Asia.”<sup>284</sup> The reference that persecutions “again” disturbed Asia, leads one to believe that this had been experienced on a number of previous occasions.

Eusebius also makes a remark about the general characteristics of the inhabitants of Smyrna, the leading city of Asia<sup>285</sup> and the city where Polycarp was ultimately burned at the stake. He describes the action of the Jews of that city as follows: “When this had been said by the herald, all the multitude of heathen and Jews living in Smyrna cried out with uncontrollable wrath and a loud shout: ‘This is the teacher of Asia.’”<sup>286</sup> With reference to Polycarp's burning, Eusebius describes the involvement of the Jews in the following way, “the Jews were extremely zealous, as is their custom, in assisting at this.”<sup>287</sup> The description of the disposal of Polycarp's body likewise reveals the “love of strife”(θηιονεθία) shown by the Jews of Smyrna: “When therefore the centurion saw the contentiousness caused by the Jews, he put the body in their midst, as was their custom, and burned it.”<sup>288</sup> Finally, Eusebius describes Justin's book which is composed as a dialogue with Trypho, the most distinguished Jew of the day. The interesting aspect pointed out by Eusebius is that Justin describes the plots against Jesus by the Jews as being fermented in the Asian city of Ephesus.<sup>289</sup> Luke's

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<sup>283</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 4.12.1: ‘Ανηρεστίζε δὲ θὰ ἄρφον ἀης βαζιηεσ πης Ἀζίας δειθ ἡ πανηρίατ βρεζην πρς ην πητφρφν δήκφν θαηραπονοσκένφν, ηηηήηες ζίφζεν η θοιη ης Ἀζίας δηηράζεφς. The Council of Asia was responsible for the religious life of the province and answerable to the Emperor. It met originally at Pergamon but later at Ephesus, Smyrna, Laodicaea, Philadelphia, Sardis and Cyzicus. Cf. brief discussion on the Council of Asia in a footnote in the Loeb Classical Library edition of Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.12.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 4.15.1: ἡ ηρύη δὲ Ποιύθαπος κελίζην ην Ἀζίαν ἡαζορσβεζάνην δηηγκ ἡ κληρηί ηηηηο ηηη.

<sup>285</sup> This was the inscription on some of its coins. A. Westphal, s.v., Smyrne, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la Bible*, (Paris: Je Sers, 1932).

<sup>286</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 4.15.26, ηρύηησ ιετζένηος πη ηο θήησθος, η πη ζος ζν ηε θα Ἰοσδαίφν ην ην Σκύρναν θαηηηφούνηην ἡαηαζτέη ζσκ θα κελίη θφν ἡ βόα ο ηός ζην ης Ἀζίας δηηράζθαι ος, .

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 4.15.29, κεί ηε Ἰοσδαίφν προζύκφς, σ ζος α ηος, ες ηη ηη ποσρηούνηην.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 4.15.43, δ ἡ ο ἡ θαηηηήηηες ην ην Ἰοσδαίφν ηενοκένεν θηηονεθίην, ζε σ α ην ἡ κέζ, σ ζος α ηος, ἡασζεν,

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 4.18.6-7. Eusebius explains that in his book, Justin expounds on how the Jews plotted against Christ.

account of the antagonistic reaction to Paul has its origins in the recognition that Trophimus was an Ephesian (Ac.21:29).<sup>290</sup> This recognition was apparently only possible because those who recognised Trophimus were themselves Ephesians.

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<sup>290</sup> On the reference Αζιμνο δ Σστιφ ς θα Σρόθηκος(Ac.20:4), Bruce indicates that the δ text, more explicitly calls them Δθέζρη Bruce, 371.

A different perspective on the religious intolerance that characterised the people of Asia is given by Sherwin-White who describes some of the treatment meted out to the Jews who lived in the Greek cities of that province.<sup>291</sup> Sherwin-White relies heavily on the testimony of Josephus who documents the barbaric treatment that the Jews had to endure in Asia. “The documents in Josephus all concern the Roman province of Asia. No fewer than eight came under Roman pressure for their anti-Semitic activities, some of them more than once. There was a general Roman edict of toleration issued collectively to all the cities of Asia.”<sup>292</sup> Sherwin-White explains further: “Thus in the late Republic period the Greek cities of Asia showed their dislike of the Jewish settlements by persistent and effective official persecution. This was checked by Roman intervention, but without complete success.”<sup>293</sup> This anti-Semitism in Asia is evidence that there was a general and even open dislike of the Jews from that province.

Therefore, Luke's repeated allusions to the Asian Jews as being at the root of the riots against Paul alludes to characteristics of these people that were generally viewed as antisocial and in some instances, directly linked to superstition.

## 7 Conclusion

The presentation of Paul prior to his conversion together with the Jews who oppose Christianity as depicting the characteristics of superstition is supported by the text in a variety of ways. Luke's choice of words have both direct and subtle links to various forms of behaviour associated with the expression of superstition. Luke's description of the irrationality that forms the basis of opposition together with the undignified verbal expression point to characteristics similar to those of people driven by superstition. Added to this, the aggressive and even frenzied violence exhibited on a number of occasions by the antagonistic Jews presents an overall picture consistent with the characteristics of superstition. The use of words, metaphors and a proverb which are reminiscent of the behaviour of animals is symptomatic of unthinking people and is once again typical of people driven by superstition. In addition, Luke's use of the words *δεηζήδαιονεζήροσς* (Ac.17:22) and *δεηζήδαιονίας* (Ac.25:19) confirms that he intended to deal with the topic of people beset by superstition.

Finally, the fact that the disturbances were initiated by Jews from Asia adds a confirmatory note of historical reality for such forms of excessive religious expression from that area, were well documented.

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<sup>291</sup> A.N.Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 88ff.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 89. This description is found in Josephus *Antiquities* 14-16.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.



## Chapter 3

### “Those in high places”: The Indifference and Atheism of the Elite

In the previous chapter it was argued that Luke presented both Paul, prior to his conversion, as well as the antagonistic Jews as superstitious characters. The present chapter will focus on the shortcomings of those on the opposite pole, represented primarily by members of the social elite such as Felix, Festus and Agrippa. In this way, Luke not only distances Christianity from movements which exhibit excessive negative behavioural patterns, but likewise distances Christianity from any association with the deficiencies of atheism.

At this stage it is necessary to recall briefly how carefully Luke described the context of the hearing: In Acts 25:23 Agrippa and Bernice are both at the hearing - in itself already a significant piece of information. Husband and wife are both wanting to hear what is happening. In this sense, the beginning of the narrative implies a curiosity of the characters: In Acts 25:22 Agrippa remarks that he would like “to hear the man himself,” followed with the remark that he brought his wife with him the following day.<sup>1</sup>

Agrippa and Bernice came with “great pomp” (Ac.25:23). The scene is impressive: they display their powerful position. The reader of Acts will be aware that important people are present at this event. Expounding on κει\_ποι\_ς\_θανηαζιας, Haenchen, finding support from Bauer and Radermacher is of the opinion that this is not simply a reference to “royal robes and Berenice’s finery (Zahn 793 ‘princely finery and festive attire’), but also of the accompanying court.”<sup>2</sup>

Through a third description the elitist, powerful and special nature of these characters at the hearing is delineated. Agrippa and Bernice enter the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. The importance of the event is further enhanced in the Western text by the addition of a reference to the nobles of the entire province being present.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This recalls the curiosity of Herod at the trial of Jesus (Lk. 23:8) “When Herod saw Jesus he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him.” Also the desire of Sergius Paulus the proconsul who sent for Paul and Barnabas because he wanted to hear the word of God (Ac.13:7).

<sup>2</sup> Haenchen, 676.

<sup>3</sup> sy<sup>hmg</sup> has: qui descendissent de provincia. Jackson, *Luke Beginnings* 3. 233.

Of special interest is the characterization of Agrippa. In Acts 26:3 he is specifically depicted, in the words of Paul himself, as an expert who is “familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews.” This impression of Agrippa as an expert is confirmed by Acts 25:26 where Festus actually says that he brought Paul before all, but *especially* before Agrippa. The reference to the learnedness of Agrippa is even stronger in Acts 26:26 where Luke uses the word *πίζηση* to describe Agrippa. This word plays a special role in Acts, for of its fourteen uses in the New Testament, nine are in Acts.<sup>4</sup> In Luke’s uses of *πίζηση*, its context indicates that it is generally used to signify an understanding of the implication that the presence of God has brought about. Bruce comments on such a use of *πίζηση* in Acts 22:19: “We may paraphrase his (Paul’s) argument: ‘They know how whole-heartedly I opposed the Christians; they remember the part I played at Stephen’s martyrdom; they must realize therefore that there must be overwhelming cogent reasons for my change of attitude.’”<sup>5</sup> Louw and Nida confirm this assessment by their semantic analysis that *πίζηση* falls in the domain relating to intellectual activity and more specifically in the subdomain of understanding, whereby a correct comprehension can be achieved.<sup>6</sup> Luke’s use of *πίζηση* concerning Agrippa (Ac.26:26) not only indicates that Paul is hopeful that Agrippa has the intellectual capacity to grasp the significance of what Paul is proclaiming, but also creates a contrast in this regard between Festus and Agrippa. This seems to be the reason why Agrippa is the main addressee of Paul’s speech (Ac.26:1-2).<sup>7</sup>

Jervell (589) argued against Conzelmann (147) that this passage about the entrance to the audience hall is an indication that Paul, and thus Christianity, is here appearing in public. The point is, however, not the public appearance, rather than the powerful groups that are assembled here. Agrippa as the wise, educated and informed king (Ac.26:3) is part and parcel of a context that represents power, insight and influence. This is indicated when Luke writes that Festus notes (Ac.25:26) that Paul is brought before them *all*. The trial, though dominated by the figure of Agrippa, essentially takes place before an audience of people that represent the powerful, that is, those in high places. That Luke thinks of the expert Agrippa as part of a wider group of people with influence and power, is confirmed by his parallel characterization of Felix in Acts 24:2 and 10, where both the accusers and Paul depict Felix as someone with foresight and as an experienced judge.<sup>8</sup> Felix is not merely a flat character, but has all the features of a powerful figure. His desire for wealth and money is clear from Acts 24:26 and his awareness of his power is evident in his connivance, when he leaves Paul in prison as a favour to the Jews. In these last chapters of Acts Paul is indeed among those who may be described as the elite of society, those who are in high places, who are experienced in the ways of politics and power games, who represent the haves.

Haenchen confirms this view when he depicts Luke’s literary style as demanding an

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<sup>4</sup> Acts 10:28; 15:7; 18:25; 19:15,25; 20:18; 22:19; 24:10; 26:26.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce, 404.

<sup>6</sup> J.Louw, E.Nida *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 380.

<sup>7</sup> This is noted by Jervell 589. Of special importance is how the order of Festus to bring Paul in (Ac.25:23) is linked with Ac.9:15 which foretells the appearance of Paul before Gentiles and “kings”. Krodel concludes that this is one of the significant aspects of the Acts 26 speech: “This speech to Agrippa fulfills 9:15 which promised that Paul would witness not only to Jews and Gentiles, but also before kings, and that his witness would include suffering for Christ’s sake.” G.Krodel, ed. *Acts*, (Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 78.

<sup>8</sup> Kirsopp Lake, 4.314 noted this link.

audience composed of high society in order to enhance the importance of the Christian gospel. “What is significant for world history demanded as its framework high society, the world of the high and mighty (mass scenes could be substitute for it, but are also combined with it) - and Luke was convinced that Christianity is of decisive significance for the whole world.”<sup>9</sup> Haenchen goes on to add that in order to emphasise this point, Luke again and again makes Paul converse on friendly terms with statesmen and princes (even Caesar Ac.27:24) and the Asiarchs. Bruce sees the appearance of Paul before Agrippa as a fulfilment of the prophecy through Ananias that he would carry the name of Jesus before the Gentiles and their kings as well as to the people of Israel (Ac.9:15).<sup>10</sup>

## **1 The unexpected response of Festus**

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<sup>9</sup> Haenchen, 679.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce, 202.

The argument in this chapter relates especially to the two characters of Festus and Agrippa who are depicted at the end of Acts 26 in the section that contains the defence of Paul. The character of Festus is noteworthy because of the way in which he interrupts Paul's defence. The Greek text leaves no doubt that Paul is still speaking, when the response of Festus is being made. Σα\_ηα δ\_ α\_ηο\_ \_ποι ογοσκένοσ \_ Φ\_ζηος κεγάι \_ η\_ θφ v\_ θεζην· reveals Luke's use of a genitive absolute idiomatic construction which is an indication that something takes place at this point.<sup>11</sup> Therefore from a grammatical perspective, Festus' remark introduces an interruption.

However, the nature of this interruption is also clearly evident from the context. Its suddenness is indicated in several ways: Luke notes that Paul is still making his defence (26:24) when the interruption takes place. Up to then, Paul's speech, from the outset to the climactic topic of the resurrection (vs.2-23), was being given and proceeded without any break. All the attendant dignitaries referred to at the introductory stages of the trial have remained silent. Festus' exclamation is the first spoken contribution from a member of the audience. Festus' response thus stands in contrast with what preceded and highlights the break that occurs in the text at this point.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Luke uses a similar grammatical construction in Luke 3:1 and 12:36 where two particles are used with no noun.

<sup>12</sup> A further remark is required by another amplification of this interruption in the Greek text. Luke writes that the interruption was shouted ( \_ Φ\_ζηος κεγάι \_ η\_ θφ v\_ θεζην·). This contrasts with the image of dignity created by the description of the pomp and ceremony prior to the speech. The shout also stands in clear contradiction with the dignified style in which Luke has portrayed Paul's defence speech. That speech had begun with Paul's outstretched hand ( \_ θηείνας η\_ v\_ τε\_ρα.), reminiscent of an orator's posture (Ac.26:1). His request to (he begged) his audience to listen "patiently" to him (Ac.26:3), seems to have been heeded. It is tempting to reconstruct an implied silence that reigned in the auditorium. Luke's description of Paul's raised hand as he begins his defence before King Agrippa, bears a striking parallel to his defence delivered on the steps of the barracks while under the protection of the commander. In that particular defence, Luke emphasised the quietness of the crowd on two occasions (Ac.21:40; 22:2), once after Paul had "beckoned with his hand" (θαπξ\_εζ\_εηζεν ηή τεπ\_, Ac.21:40). The opposite is also true, that is, that Luke indicates when audiences become unruly. Implicitly then, Paul's speech before Agrippa is portrayed as taking place before an audience which is quiet and attentive. Festus' outburst is therefore all the more arresting, because it is the first and only "unruly" response to what Paul is proclaiming.

Dibelius observed that this interruption represents a literary technique, special to Luke: "In order to let the speech end at this important point and so to emphasise the meaning of the final words, the author again employs a literary device, that of an intentional interruption of the speaker by the hearers,"<sup>13</sup> Dibelius gives the following similar examples Acts 22:22, Acts 4:1; 23:7 and 26: 24. "The fact that these interruptions each occur at a significant point suggests literary technique; the speech is always allowed to reach just that point which is important to the author."<sup>14</sup> We should certainly miss the author's intention were we to suppose that each of these speeches did in fact lack a concluding section."<sup>15</sup> The insight of Dibelius is confirmed by the sum of Paul's speech. Paul, after describing his pre-Damascus life during which he raved against Christians, related his vision of Jesus in which he received his commission. It is when he explains his commission in terms of the Messiah and his resurrection (Ac.26:22-23), that the speech is brought to an end. There is therefore in the proclamation of the resurrection not only a logical end to his defence (cf. Ac.26:21), but the focus on the resurrection forms the climax of Paul's speech.<sup>16</sup> Paul has finished with his speech about his own life and the Christ events, but it is a speech that essentially proclaims the resurrected Christ.

The interruption therefore represents a literary technique to point out to the reader the seminal moment in Paul's defence speech. There is, however, more to it. Not only the interruption is significant here, but also the fact that the interruption is caused by Festus. In addition to the change in topic and style of the speech, there is a shift in focus on the personalities involved. Up to this point Paul has been addressing his defence to Agrippa who has been personally referred to four times, (Ac.26:2,7,13,19). Therefore the interruption caused by Festus in vs.24 not only changes the content of the topic but also causes a break by the clear shift of focus away from Agrippa to Festus.<sup>17</sup> *Festus* responds to what Paul is saying. How unusual this interruption is, is clear from the fact that later on Agrippa will also respond (Ac.26:28), but only after being questioned by Paul. The remarks by Festus, furthermore, form a unit on its own - in the sense that the narrative would not lose its coherence should it be removed from it. The response of Festus is, therefore, indeed remarkable, being highlighted both in terms of the characterization in and in terms of the structure of the narrative.

Why is this so significant? One must not overlook the implied message in this characterization and report of the interjection of Festus. This becomes clear once one takes

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<sup>13</sup> Dibelius, 160.

<sup>14</sup> Haenchen and Conzelmann, for example, follows this reading when they refer to Festus' outburst as an "artistic device of interruption." Haenchen, 688; Conzelmann, 212.

<sup>15</sup> In Acts 26:22-23 Luke presents Paul stating both his belief in the resurrection and its accord with the prophets and Moses. This focus on the resurrection not only forms the climax of Paul's speech but also brings the formal section of the defence to an end. Paul has finished with his speech about his own life and the Christ events. The interruption that is reported in Ac.26:24 underlines the proclamation of the resurrection.

<sup>16</sup> It is not unexpected for Luke to place the resurrection at climactic moments in the text and to use it to bring a section to a close. See the climax to Paul's speech in Athens: Acts 17:31; Paul's address to the Sanhedrin comes to an abrupt end when it erupts into a violent dispute at the point where the resurrection is referred to: Acts 23:6ff. Likewise, the reference to the resurrection in Acts 26:23 brings the formal part of the speech to an end.

<sup>17</sup> Commentators generally agree that vs.24 marks the beginning of a new section. Johnson notes the change in the following way: "The Roman Governor 'interrupts' Paul's defence ... but not before Luke has had him to say all that he wanted," Johnson, 438.

into consideration how the interruption continues some suggestions of Luke at the beginning of the speech. The role of Festus is to stress the “corporate” nature of the hearing. Although Agrippa plays a pivotal role, ultimately the defence relates to a group of educated people, to “all” (Ac.25:24) who are present in the audience and who, in the mind of Luke, represent a whole segment of society with a particular attitude towards the proclamation of the gospel. Festus as the one representative of this group, reveals a first negative response. The interruption shifts the focus of attention to Festus in order to reveal to the reader a typical yet different reaction to the gospel.<sup>18</sup> Haenchen, who builds on an observation made by Overbeck, states: “Luke does not mean to draw an individual portrait of Festus here, but to show that the Roman official and the Roman state which he represents are not capable of dealing with these theological questions.”<sup>19</sup> Haenchen hereby illustrates that the historical narrative clearly serves a theological function. O’Toole, in his analysis of this incident, gives greater clarity to the characterization that Haenchen referred to: “What is made to look like Festus’ reaction is not only typical of a Roman but of anyone who would not accept Jesus as raised from the dead.”<sup>20</sup> Taken in this sense, the “typical” reader that is represented by Festus, refers to more than merely the Roman elite group.

This verse with the strong emphasis on the interruption of Paul’s speech, yields, however, even more information about the important role of verse 24 as another typical form of response to the proclamation of the Gospel. This investigation will begin by highlighting two aspects related to Festus’ interruption. Firstly, the content and manner in which the interruption is made will be investigated. Secondly, the reasons that Festus gives for interrupting Paul.

## 1.1 Attentive but unmoved

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<sup>18</sup> There are other examples in Luke’s work, of interruptions after an important statement has been made. The speech in Athens comes to an abrupt end after Paul mentions the resurrection, (Ac.17:32). The crowd listens to Paul until he mentions God’s call to go to the Gentiles. At that point they begin shouting, (Ac.22:22). The proceedings of the Sanhedrin degenerate into violence once Paul has stated that he believes in the resurrection, (Ac.23:7).

<sup>19</sup> Haenchen, 688.

<sup>20</sup> O’Toole, *Christological Climax*, 128.

The impact of Festus' loud exclamation is heightened by its content. In Festus' view, Paul "has gone out of his mind" (καίν\_). The exact translation of the word "καίν\_" has been extensively investigated but not resolved.<sup>21</sup> In the previous section the importance of the word \_κκαηνόενοϛ was evaluated, especially as it grouped under its umbrella the four words which described Paul's resistance to Christianity. The word seems to echo Paul's self description as \_κκαηνόενοϛ in Acts 26:11. In this new section Festus who has just heard Paul's account of his radical conversion which involved him turning away from his previous ways, still uses the concept of καίν\_ to categorize Paul. This link is noted and identified by Johnson as pertinent. "Paul's „raging“ against the Christians is after his conversion changed to „truth and sanity“ (26:25), but that is now regarded by the outsider Festus as „raving“ (*mainomai*) and „madness“ (*mania*).”<sup>22</sup> Luke has therefore created a literary relationship between Paul's self description prior to Damascus (Ac.26:11) and Festus' reaction to the proclamation of the gospel by Paul after his Damascus experience (Ac.26:24).

The striking aspect of this exclamation is that Festus describes Paul in the same way that Paul referred to himself as a Jew who persecuted Christians. He sees the "changed" Paul in no different light, despite Paul's radical experience on the way to Damascus, and despite Paul's conviction, expressed later on, that he speaks in truth and with self-control (Ac.26:25).

Through Festus' outburst, the reader realizes that Festus acknowledges no change in Paul's basic mind set. Since the reader knows that Paul's conversion is a significant event,<sup>23</sup> Festus' reference to Paul with the similar term that was appropriate for him before his conversion, presents Festus as attentive but unmoved by the whole defence speech.

The lack of a positive response to the proclamation of the gospel by Festus can be better understood in the light of the way in which Luke describes other reactions to the proclamation of the apostles in his narrative. Of these responses, the crowds who listened to Peter on Pentecost day, provides the most illuminating example. They, listening to the speech of Peter and its culmination in the message of the resurrection (2:32-36), were touched in their hearts by it (2:37). This stands in clear contrast to the perplexity and sneering, narrated in the reaction after the tongues (2:5-13). Similarly, after Paul's speech in Acts 17, the responses were also positive (17:34), but others were negative in their sneering and lack of commitment (17:32). The similar response of Festus should be read in this context, but as representing that of another institution in the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. As the conversion of Paul is such an important and dominant theme in Acts, being discussed three times in Acts, Luke's portrayal of Festus' inability to grasp its real significance categorises him as belonging to a group of people who remain aloof and for whom issues which are of religious importance for others, are negligible.

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<sup>21</sup> See the analysis of this word in note 13 of the previous section.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, 434.

<sup>23</sup> The conversion account is repeated three times: Acts 9; 22; 26. Luke's technique of repeating events with slight variations heightens their importance.

Festus' continuing aloofness also comes into focus when the content of his outburst is compared with his stated views prior to Paul's defence. There is an interesting link between Festus' remark in Acts 26:24 and 25:19-20 about the disagreements between Paul and his opponents. In Acts 25:19, Festus, having observed the behaviour of the antagonistic Jews and having listened to their arguments, described them as superstitious. The relationship between Acts 25:19 and 26:24 has been noted by some commentators. In his comments on Acts 26:24 Conzelmann states: "(T)he Roman's incomprehension (Acts 25:19) is this time actually demonstrated."<sup>24</sup> Once again, in the light of the proclamation of the resurrection, Festus writes off the significance of Paul's proclamation. He is unable and unwilling to appreciate what really is at stake here. According to Luke, Festus finds that Paul is not accused of serious offences (Ac.25:18). Inner-Jewish controversies are being disputed before him. Later on in Acts 26:24, his outburst confirms this view: He ascribes Paul's position to fanaticism.<sup>25</sup>

Through Festus' outburst, which is dominated by his reference to Paul as *καὶν*, Luke shows that Festus has maintained the same opinion of the issues before him as he held prior to Paul's speech. This presents Festus as a representative of people who remain unmoved by Paul's conversion account.

Festus' sudden and loud exclamation, moreover, has been placed by Luke at the point where Paul has just completed the presentation of the soundness of his beliefs. Paul's account of his conversion and how he has followed in the well established and recognised footsteps of the prophets and especially Moses, point to the legitimacy of his beliefs. He has stated that what he believes in, is nothing beyond that which has already been accepted in the ancient and recognised traditions of the Jews. Luke presents this description of Paul as following the events in the temple where he had been observing the prescribed purification rites (Ac.26:21). Paul's proclamation, therefore, as was widely accepted in Graeco-Roman rhetoric and argumentation,<sup>26</sup> rests on a well argued case with the necessary evidence. Festus, in his exclamation, brushes this aside in an open, challenging way, using in his description of Paul as crazy an emotive expression that in his times indicated derision and rejection. He does so, despite the way in which Paul argued his case in a convincing manner in line with acceptable logic of his time.

It is, though, possible, to move to a deeper level and to see this response of aloofness as characteristic of a deeper attitude and mind set. It will be argued later on that not only the interruption but also its content, reveals an indifference on their part which is characteristic of a typical group of people that Luke wants to contrast with those who are superstitious.

## 1.2 Festus' loud voice

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<sup>24</sup> Conzelmann, 212.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas, (477) makes a similar observation when he states that in Festus' eyes Paul appeared to be a "religious fanatic."

<sup>26</sup> The emphasis in Paul's defence of the ancient traditions on which his beliefs are based as opposed to recent innovations, is an important rhetorical technique. Clarke (14f) discusses the importance of referring to the ancient roots of a religion. "Characteristically, the Emperor Augustus is reported (Suet. *Aug.* 93) as having treated 'with great respect such foreign rites as were ancient and well established, but held the rest in contempt.'" Clarke further indicates how important the concept of antiquity was to Christian apologists. "This deficiency in the authority and the appeal of antiquity explains why the Christian apologists go to such extraordinarily desperate, and unconvincing, lengths to establish the antiquity of their religious beliefs. Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, all Greek Christian apologists of the second century, are quite preoccupied with this task."

Luke has specifically indicated that Festus' interruption was “with a loud voice.” Not only does Festus remain unimpressed with Paul’s proclamation of the resurrection, but he openly and distinctly distances himself from Paul. It seems as if the phrase marks an important moment in the narrative. It draws attention to something special that is happening. In this case it points to a clear and unequivocal positioning: Festus indicates his dissent about this issue openly. However, the one aspect of Festus’ loud outburst which needs noting is that it involves no change of perception on his part. Festus makes his comment and remains unchanged. This is notable for Luke’s description of other reactions being expressed “in a loud voice” involves either demons being expelled or people being filled with an awareness of the presence of God and responding in praise or a command being given which results in a decisive response.<sup>27</sup> In this, the final reference in Luke’s work to a response being “in a loud voice”, in contrast to the reader’s expectations, Festus remains essentially unchanged and furthermore recedes into the background as Paul directs his address once again to Agrippa (Ac.26:26). The striking aspect of this is that the reader has become accustomed that “a loud voice” indicates a significant change. In the case of Festus although the loud voice superficially indicates a vigorous response, the reality is that it accentuates his indifference.

In the previous chapter it was discussed how superstitious behaviour expressed itself in physical terms, as illustrated in the activities of Paul against the Christians. There are indications that certain physical activities were also associated with a group of people who were indifferent to religion. In a brief section where he praises people who observe and enjoy prescribed festal days and religious rites<sup>28</sup> Plutarch notes that there are two forms of erroneous response. The one is through the excesses of superstition while the other is through the deficiency or indifference of the atheist. Plutarch does this in order to make a comparison between the two and to show that superstition is more dangerous than atheism.<sup>29</sup> Although Plutarch focusses more on the evils of superstition, his brief description of the typical atheistic response provides a context for what Luke intended to convey through Festus’ loud exclamation that Paul was mad. An analysis of this particular style of response reveals that atheists had the reputation of responding to true religion with loud derisive exclamations. Plutarch describes how atheists react to discussions about true religion with “insane and sardonic laughter” ( \_νηα\_ζα\_ηοίνσν\_ζθ\_όπεηη\_ν\_ζ\_εον\_γει\_νηα\_κ\_ν\_κανηθ\_ν\_θα\_ζα\_ρδάνηον\_γει\_φηα\_ηο\_ς\_ποηοσ\_ένοης).<sup>30</sup> In another passage, Plutarch again refers to the characteristics of

<sup>27</sup> Luke’s use of *κεγάλη θφν* (Ac.26:24) in describing the response of Festus to Paul, bears similarities in other aspects to Luke’s uses of this phrase. For example it is used when evil spirits are in the process of being driven out by the power of God: Luke 4:33 *νέθραξεν θφν\_κεγάλη*; 8:28 (Gerasene demoniac) *θφν\_κεγάλη\_ε\_πεν*; Acts 8:7 *βο\_νηα\_θφν\_κεγάλη*. The significance of the death of Jesus also contains such a reference (Lk.23:46 *θα\_θφ\_νήζας\_θφ\_ν\_κεγάλη\_ε\_ζο\_ς\_ε\_πεν*), and likewise the death of Stephen (Ac.7:60 *θραξεν\_θφ\_ν\_κεγάλη*). It marks the important response of Elizabeth when she is filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk.1:42), and the one leper who returned to give thanks to God (Lk.17:15). The decisiveness of the moment is also indicated by Paul’s command to the cripple to stand up (Ac.14:10) and the call to the gaoler that he need not take his life (Ac.16:28). Finally, the importance of Festus’ response at Paul’s trial (Ac.26:24 *κεγάλη\_η\_θφ\_ν*) is enhanced by its similarity with the response of the crowds at the trial of Jesus (Lk.23:23 *θφ\_να\_ς\_κεγάλη\_αη*). With the exception of Festus’ response, all these examples are linked to some decisive action.

<sup>28</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 169D: *δι\_ηρα\_δ\_ηο\_ς\_νζ\_ρώποη\_ορη\_θα\_ε\_ι\_απίναη\_πρ\_ς\_ερο\_ς\_θα\_κσ\_ήζ\_ης\_θα\_ο\_ρηζ\_κο\_θα\_θα\_ρστα\_ζε\_ν\_θα\_προζ\_θσ\_νήζ\_ης*.

<sup>29</sup> This has already been dealt with under section 1.3.3.2 “Plutarch and false assumptions”. There Plutarch argues that false reason results in two forms of error. The one is without venom (atheism) and the other is with venom (superstition). Plutarch *On Superstition* 164F.

<sup>30</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 169D.

cynicism and boldness typical of the atheist response when he contrasts the superstitious and the atheist as two forms of erroneous religious reactions. “There is engendered a dangerous belief, which plunges the weak and innocent into sheer superstition (ἡλν δεηζηδοικονίν), and in the case of the more cynical (δρηκσηέρον) and bold (ζραζσηέρον), goes off into atheistic and brutish (ζε ρηδση) reasoning.”<sup>31</sup>

Further support for the understanding of Festus’ outburst is found in Epictetus’ use of καηνόκενος as an example of how the arrogant belittling their opponents. Epictetus asks the question of one wishing to be acclaimed as a great philosopher: “Why, then, do you walk around in our presence as though you has swallowed a spit?”<sup>32</sup> In exposing the hollowness of such arrogance, Epictetus asks of the arrogant concerning those who are the object of their disparaging comments: “Are they not these about whom you are in the habit of saying that they are mad? (καίνονη). What then? Do you wish to be admired by the mad? (ἡλν καηνοκένφν).”<sup>33</sup>

Festus’ sudden and vocal reaction, *together with* his claim that Paul is καίν\_, takes on a new significance against this context. Festus’ response is that of a typical opponent of religion and an atheist.

However, the indication that Festus represents an atheistic position is not based solely on the style of his response, but also its content. Before this will be discussed in detail, more attention is needed for the interesting fact that Festus uses the same word to describe Paul’s proclamation of the gospel that Paul used to describe his own state before his Damascus experience.

## 2 The extremes distort the mean

As one follows the narrative of Acts, and particularly the characterization of Festus, it cannot go unnoticed that Festus remains unconvinced by Paul’s defence of his religious position, as has already been noticed above. Having listened how Paul explained that he is no longer raging as in his pre-Damascus days, Festus continues describing Paul in exactly those terms. Festus has not changed his mind at all. Paul’s argument of reasonableness failed to impress him. There is interesting information that this failure on the side of Festus, can be understood to confirm further his skew position regarding the gospel. It is not merely a misunderstanding of Paul’s proclamation on the side of Festus, as is sometimes suggested by commentaries that have been quoted above. To reject Paul’s claim that he had been changed by the resurrection message in this way, Festus is in fact revealing how prevailing his own ingrained intolerance is.

### 2.1 Distorted perception and the philosophers

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<sup>31</sup> Plutarch *Isis and Osiris* 379E.

<sup>32</sup> Epictetus *Discourses* 1.21.2: ἡ ο\_ν\_κ\_ν\_βει ἰζθον θαρητη\_ν περιπατη\_ς; The editors add the following explanatory note to this phrase: “Of one with a stiff and self-imposing bearing. Our equivalent phrase is ‘to swallow a ramrod.’” Epictetus *Arrian’s Discourses of Epictetus* Loeb Classical Library, 142 note 1.

<sup>33</sup> Epictetus *Discourses* 1.21.4: ο\_τ ο\_ρηί ε\_ζη περ\_ν ε\_φζας ιέγειν\_ηη καίνονηη ἡ ο\_ν; \_π\_ η\_ν καηνοκένφν ζασκάδεζζαηζέι\_ηης;

In order to understand Festus' response to Paul, it is helpful to refer to observations made by philosophers about exposing the deficiencies of their opponents. Aristotle explains how a person's *own position* can distort his perspective of other positions. In his consideration of the three positions of excess, deficiency and the mean, Aristotle discusses how the view of the reasonable mean is distorted when viewed from the extremes of either excess or deficiency.<sup>34</sup> He explains that each of the three are in a certain way opposed to the other two. The mean state is opposed to the excess on one side, and the defective on the other. He also explains that the two extreme states of excess and defect are not only opposed to each other but also to the mean state. In Aristotle's words: ὑπερ γὰρ ἡ ὑσον πρὸς κενὴν ἰατρὴν κενὸν πρὸς δὲ ἡ κενὸν ἰατρὴν, οἷος ἀκέζα ἡ ἕξις πρὸς κενὴν ἡ δὲ ἰεῖς ἡ ὑπερβαῖ ἰοσζή πρὸς δὲ ἡ δὲ ὑπερβοῖς ἡ ἰεῖοςζήν ἡ ἡε ἡος πάζεζή θα ἡας πράζεζήν.<sup>35</sup> Aristotle explains the process at work in the following way: θα θαι οζή ην ἕδρεον κεν δεις ζραζεν δ ζραζς δεις ζραζεν δ ζραζς δειών, θα π ην ἰιφν νά ογον.<sup>36</sup>

Explained in terms of the classifications of superstition, atheism and reasonableness; this process implies that an atheist would classify reasonableness in the same category as superstition. Likewise the superstitious person classifies reasonableness together with atheism. The application of this process to Acts 26:24, therefore illuminates Festus' response. From his defective standpoint, Festus perceives reasonableness, as expressed in the defence of Paul, as excess.

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<sup>34</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 2.8.1-3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.8.2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.8.3.

The awareness of how perception can be distorted in this way is not restricted to Aristotle alone. The influence of this argument can be illustrated by many other examples.<sup>37</sup> Democritus by Kypke shows that the opinion concerning a person is influenced by the perspective from which he is perceived: “Democritus' own opinion as to why the citizens of Abdera think him mad is that intemperance can lead to such a situation that men think wisdom to be madness (θα\_ κανίεν η\_ν ζοθ\_ιεν νοκίδοσζην).”<sup>38</sup> This principle of a distorted perception is also seen to be present in a letter of Dionysius Hippocrates: “As far as I am concerned, I do not think it sickness but an excess of learning (ο\_δέ νο\_ζον α\_ηήν ε\_ναη\_ \_u \_ \_κεηρίεν παηδείεζ) not an excess in reality but in the mind of the people. The excess of a virtue is never an evil. But such excess is taken for sickness by the ignorant who form an opinion about it. Everyone concludes that what he himself lacks and abounds in another is excessive.”<sup>39</sup>

The same principle is also referred to in Plutarch's explanation of how the atheist is confirmed in his atheism when he observes the behaviour of people afflicted by superstition. He explains that the irrational, wild and outlandish behaviour of the superstitious leads the atheist to conclude that it would be better that there be no gods at all than to have gods who accept such worthless worship.<sup>40</sup> The atheist, from his deficient perspective, combines true religion with the excesses of superstition and is unable to distinguish between them. As a result of this erroneous association, the atheist rejects true religion in the same way that he rejects superstition. This inability to see correctly is referred to by Plutarch as typical of the atheist, for it affects his perception of God: \_u \_ \_ κ\_ν \_γνοηαται επ\_ θα\_ η\_ παρορ\_ν θα\_ ησθι\_ώηηηνπερ\_ ηει ηθα\_ηα ζσκθορ\_ κεγάι ε υστ\_ζ, \_ζπερ\_ κκάηφν ποι ι\_ν η\_ θανόηηον θα\_ θσρηώηηον\_πεζβεζ\_ κένεζ η\_ν ηο\_ ζεο\_ νόεζην.<sup>41</sup>

However, the application of this principle was not restricted to the comments of pagan philosophers“ concerning each other“s schools. This principle was also applied to Christians and by Christians.

## 2.2 Distorted perception in Celsus

The use of the concept of how a person's view can be distorted depending on that person's perspective, can also be seen in the attacks of Celsus on Christianity. Celsus' use of this form of argument is known because of Origen's style of repeating Celsus' verbal attacks before refuting them. Origen writes concerning Celsus in the following way: “And he produces a second illustration to our disadvantage, saying that „our teacher acts like a drunken man, who, entering a company of drunkards, should accuse those who are sober of being drunk.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> O'Toole's very indirectly cites examples of this process being referred to by other philosophical writers. He does not appear to fully appreciate the full relevance of the passages he quotes. His examples are chosen because of their similarity to Acts 26:24, but the concept that one's perception of the mean is distorted when viewed from either excess or deficiency is overlooked. When this concept is added to O'Toole's examples, they confirm in a striking way Luke's portrayal of Festus making an erroneous assessment.

<sup>38</sup> D.Kypke, *Observtiones Sacrae in Novi Foederis Libros*, J.J. Korn, Wratlslaviae 2 (1755), 132: cit ap. O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 126.

<sup>39</sup> E.Littré, ed. *Oeuvres Complètes D'Hippocrate* 9.334; cit.ap. R.O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 126.

<sup>40</sup> Plutarch explains this in *On Superstition* 170F-171B.

<sup>41</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 167B.

<sup>42</sup> Origen *Contra Celsum* 3.76. *The Writings of Origen*, trans. F.Crombie, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1872), 155.

Origen gives another, yet similar example of an attack by Celsus. This example uses the analogy of sight: “such an one amongst a company of those who are afflicted with ophthalmia, accuses those who are sharp-sighted of being blind.”<sup>43</sup> From these two quotes it can be seen that the argument employed implies that a person's particular standpoint influences his perception of others. Origen is therefore showing that Celsus is trying to denigrate Christians by arguing that their beliefs distort their perception of others. These examples therefore serve to illustrate that the technique of identifying an opponent’s particular perspective in order to expose his assessment as erroneous, was understood in Christian circles.

### **2.3 Distorted perception in Luke 15:30**

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<sup>43</sup> Origen *Contra Celsum* 3.77.

The use of this principle by Luke in Acts 26:24 is not an isolated example in his work. It also plays a vital role in Luke's key parable of the Prodigal Son, where the concepts of excess, the mean and deficiency are represented by the qualities of prodigality, liberality and meanness.<sup>44</sup> Aristotle uses the concepts of prodigality, liberality and meanness in order to explain how perceptions are distorted.  $\delta$   $\epsilon$   $\sigma$   $\xi$   $\rho$   $\eta$   $\varsigma$   $\pi$   $\rho$   $\varsigma$   $\kappa$   $\nu$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\nu$   $\epsilon$   $\iota$   $\epsilon$   $\acute{\upsilon}$   $\zeta$   $\epsilon$   $\rho$   $\nu$   $\zeta$   $\phi$   $\eta$   $\sigma$   $\varsigma$ ,  $\pi$   $\rho$   $\varsigma$   $\delta$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\zeta$   $\phi$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\nu$   $\epsilon$   $\acute{\upsilon}$   $\zeta$   $\epsilon$   $\rho$   $\sigma$ .<sup>45</sup> This therefore sheds light on the characters in the parable where the anger of the older brother becomes understandable for his perception of his father has been distorted. The older brother's anger is founded on the perception that the liberal father is wasting the family's resources. "But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fatted calf for him!" (Lk.15:30). From his deficient position of meanness, the older brother perceives the reasonable liberality of his father in the same light as the excessive prodigality of his younger brother. Therefore the older brother, by equating the father's liberality with the younger brother's prodigality, reacts angrily and thereby confirms his own meanness.<sup>46</sup>

These examples illustrate that the principle expounded by Aristotle operated in a wider context and confirms that the excess which Festus sees in Paul, can be interpreted as due to the deficiency of his own perspective. The application of this principle to Festus' perception of Paul therefore enlightens the reader about Festus' own religious conviction rather than making a statement about Paul, for the reader already knows that Paul is the representative of true religion. The reader discovers in Festus another type of opponent of the gospel: over against the fanaticism of the Jewish opponents stand the indifference and derision of the educated, informed groups. In his portrayal of Festus, Luke therefore reflects a concept that was prevalent at the time. Through the rhetorical style of the speech together with the use of classical and philosophical words, Luke has led the reader to understand that Paul is a man under God's guidance and reasonable. As the reader knows that Paul is reasonable, Festus' derogatory exclamation about Paul reveals that Festus is making his assessment from a deficient perspective. In the light of contemporary philosophical debate, such deficiency was akin to that of atheists.

Festus' opinion that Paul is a representative of superstition, acts as a confirmation to the reader that his distorted view of Paul is the result of his own position of indifference. This erroneous opinion of Festus which comes towards the end of the speech is balanced by a similar yet contrasting erroneous opinion at the initial stages. On Paul's arrival in Jerusalem he is informed that there are people who believe that he is advocating a form of religious indifference by teaching Jews to turn away from Moses, not to circumcise their children and not to live according to their custom (Ac.21:21). This accusation of indifference towards the vital tenets of religion is akin to a charge of atheism. The group bringing this charge against Paul turns out to be the Asian Jews whose own perspective is distorted by their excesses which are comparable to superstition. In the light of the doctrine that the extremes distort the mean, the reader is able to grasp that the Asia Jews who themselves err on the side of superstition, would naturally see the reasonableness of Paul as deficient and erring on the side of indifference akin to atheism. Therefore Paul's being accused of indifference on the one

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<sup>44</sup> This has been clearly demonstrated by D. Holgate, *Prodigality, Liberality and Meanness in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. A Greco-Roman Perspective on Luke 15:11-32*, PhD Thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993.

<sup>45</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 2.8.2.

<sup>46</sup> Aristotle gives other examples: *Nic. Eth.* 2.8.2:  $\gamma$   $\rho$   $\nu$   $\delta$   $\rho$   $\epsilon$   $\sigma$   $\pi$   $\rho$   $\varsigma$   $\kappa$   $\nu$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\delta$   $\epsilon$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\zeta$   $\rho$   $\alpha$   $\zeta$   $\varsigma$   $\theta$   $\alpha$   $\iota$   $\nu$   $\epsilon$   $\eta$   $\sigma$   $\pi$   $\rho$   $\varsigma$   $\delta$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\zeta$   $\rho$   $\alpha$   $\zeta$   $\nu$   $\delta$   $\epsilon$   $\eta$   $\sigma$   $\varsigma$ :  $\kappa$   $\omicron$   $\iota$   $\phi$   $\varsigma$   $\delta$   $\theta$   $\alpha$   $\zeta$   $\omega$   $\theta$   $\rho$   $\phi$   $\nu$   $\pi$   $\rho$   $\varsigma$   $\kappa$   $\nu$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\nu$   $\alpha$   $\iota$   $\zeta$   $\zeta$   $\epsilon$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\theta$   $\delta$   $\iota$   $\alpha$   $\zeta$   $\eta$   $\rho$   $\varsigma$ ,  $\pi$   $\rho$   $\varsigma$   $\delta$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\theta$   $\delta$   $\iota$   $\alpha$   $\zeta$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\nu$   $\alpha$   $\iota$   $\zeta$   $\zeta$   $\epsilon$   $\eta$   $\nu$   $\sigma$ .

hand, by the Asian Jews who are themselves representatives of superstition, while on the other hand the atheistic Festus accuses him of excessive raving, highlights Paul's position as a representative of the rational mean.

Neyrey has made an interesting study of the role of the Epicureans in the Areopagus speech (Ac.17) and its comparison with the defence of Paul before the Sadducees in the Sanhedrin (Ac.23). Concerning the description of these groupings Neyrey draws the following conclusion: "In fact, to be mocked by the Epicureans and then to be dismissed by the Sadducees plays into this strategy. If mockery and dismissal come from groups who can be shown to be wrong, that in itself is further confirmation of the correctness of what they mock and dismiss."<sup>47</sup> In the light of Neyrey's identification of stereotypes and their impact on the interpretation of Luke's text, the description of the contrasting attitudes of the Asian Jews and of Festus towards Paul not only exposes their respective errors but also helps Paul to emerge as reasonable and as a representative of the mean.

### 3 The great learning of Paul

In addition to the principle of erroneous perception which comes out in Luke's portrayal of Festus' reaction to Paul, the additional comment about Paul's great learning also needs to be investigated, for that too associates Festus with the predispositions of an atheist.

Festus' comment ἡ ποιία ζε γράκκαηα (Ac.26:24) is understood by many scholars as a veiled complement, which acknowledges Paul's great learning.<sup>48</sup> Although acknowledged as a common phrase,<sup>49</sup> Festus' comment is not universally accepted as an acknowledgement of learning or inspiration. Haenchen is particularly emphatic that Festus was not acknowledging Paul's erudition. This would "misunderstand Festus' words, which do not marvel at a great erudition but assume much study as the reason for Paul's insanity."<sup>50</sup> Arrington also advocates that the comment is to be understood negatively, for he points out that Paul immediately denies the charge of insanity, by saying that he speaks the truth and words of good sense (ἡ εζείας θα ζφ θροζύ νεν, Ac.26:25).<sup>51</sup> Arrington therefore sees in the negation of the comment, a textual indication that Luke intended the comment to be understood negatively.

There are indications that Luke used the phrase in a sardonic manner, thereby continuing with the portrayal of Festus' negative attitude to religion. Thomas, in his comment on this phrase, captures the mood intended by Luke in a perceptive way when he sums up Festus' as a "cynical Gentile" and "Roman cynic and sceptic."<sup>52</sup> This observation is in line with stereotypical behaviour associated with the character of the atheist in some Graeco-Roman texts. Plutarch described how atheists respond to true religion in a sardonic

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<sup>47</sup> J.H.Neyrey, "Acts 17, Epicureans and Theodicy: A Study in Stereotypes." L.Balch., E.Ferguson, W.Meeks. eds. *Greeks, Romans and Christians: Essays in Honour of A.J.Malherbe*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 134.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Lucian *The Disowned* 30: εζ κανίαν περιήρηεν. Bruce, 448. Conzelmann gives the following examples of this being a charge; *Sib.Or.* 1.171-72; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.4. Conzelmann, 212. Johnson, 439, notes: *Letters of Aristeeas* 121 and Plato, *Apology* 26D. as similar phrases which indicate higher learning.

<sup>49</sup> According to Conzelmann, 212, the expression εζ κανίαν περιήρηηη was common. He refers to Lucian, *Abdic.* 30.

<sup>50</sup> Haenchen, 688.

<sup>51</sup> F.Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1988), 250.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas, 477f.

way. This is the attitude of a person who is arrogant (ρηύθφνηση). In Plutarch's words, after the atheist has burst out laughing, he then θα\_ ποσ παραθζεγγόκενον \_ρέκα πρ\_ς ηο\_ς ζσνήζεης\_ηη ηεθφ νηση θα\_ δαηκον\_ζην ο\_ ζεο\_ς ηα\_ηα δρ\_ζζαη νοκίδονηεζ.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 169D.

Plutarch describes how atheists laugh at the manifestation of true religion (κανηθὺν θαρδάνηον γέιφθα),<sup>54</sup> because in their mind it is equivalent to superstition. This description of laughter carries a very negative connotation. Plutarch's word for laughter "γέιφθα" implies a loud and sustained laugh.<sup>55</sup> Demothenes links the laughter of an atheist with the notion of derision.<sup>56</sup> The response of the atheist also includes "insane laughter" (κανηθός) which according to Plato's *De Republ.* 577d, is used in a similar way to καίνοκαη.<sup>57</sup> Insane laughter also implies loud laughter. The word sardonic (ζαρδάνηος) implies a mocking and derisive laugh which is conveyed by a distortion of the face.<sup>58</sup> Bailly explains that the word ηεήθφνηση refers particularly "to being blinded by the mists of arrogance" and "to be rendered mad."<sup>59</sup> Plutarch's explanation therefore indicates that the atheist's loud derisive laugh is directed at the person whom he perceives as being arrogant for thinking that his understanding and expression of religion is correct. This description of the atheist portrays him as having a cynical attitude towards such people. The description of the atheist as bold and cynical also appears in Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*, ηοςδδρηκσηέρονθθαζραζσηέρονθσεζέοσςκπίπηοσζα.<sup>60</sup> Plutarch's use of δρηκσηέρονθς interpreted by Bailly as a pejorative word implying cunning or guile: "un esprit de ruse".<sup>61</sup>

When Plutarch's description of the atheist's reaction to true religion is used as a backdrop to Festus' comment about Paul's great learning, its meaning moves away from ambiguity. Rather than complementing Paul's learning, the reference becomes a sarcastic comment aimed at what is perceived by Festus, to be Paul's vanity in thinking that he can explain to him, issues of eternal significance. This is in agreement with Haenchen's general observation that Paul is not being complimented for his erudition.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Bailly, s.v., γέιφθα, *DGF*.

<sup>56</sup> Demothenes 151. 19. cit. ap. Bailly, s.v., γέιφθα, *DGF*.

<sup>57</sup> Bailly, s.v., κανηθός, *DGF*.

<sup>58</sup> The word ζαρδάνηος is derived from a bitter plant in Sardinia which distorts the face of the eater. The sardonic laugh implies that the laugh is such that the face is distorted. Liddell & Scott, s.v., ζαρδάνηος, *Greek - English Lexicon*.

<sup>59</sup> A. Bailly, s.v., ηεήθφ, *DGF*, "aveugler des fumées de l'orgueil", "rendre fou". It is used in this way by Herodius of Alexandria 6,5.

<sup>60</sup> Plutarch *Isis and Osiris* 379E.

<sup>61</sup> Bailly, s.v., δρηκσηέρονθς, *DGF*.

<sup>62</sup> Haenchen, 688 note 3, considers the scholars Bauernfeind, Wendt, Knopf, Jacquier and Beyer who hold that the reference to Paul's great learning implies that Festus was impressed by Paul's erudition. The use of the word "grammarian" in a sarcastic manner is seen in Josephus' writing concerning Apion. Apion was the erudite rhetorician who led the Alexandrian anti-Jewish deputation to the Emperor Caligula. Josephus' sarcasm comes through on three occasions where he describes Apion as the γρακκαθηθὺν whose allegations are βφοκοι στία, and ζενπενζρόπος ζσγθεικένα θαθαύοσ. (Josephus *Contra Apion* 2.2,3). He also refers to Apion's statements as: ηρηύηε κέν ηηεζασκαζηηοςγρακκαθηθουθράζη, Ibid. 2.12. Finally: δπερηεννοκαζίαν ηεζαββάρηο δειηενκαζίαν Ibid. 2.26. The use by Josephus of this superficially complimentary term in order to convey sarcasm indicates that Luke's portrayal of Festus's comment about Paul's ποιίαζε γρακκαθηθου falls within known uses of the term.

This interpretation of Festus' comment is also acknowledged by Malherbe<sup>63</sup> who points out that Luke did not so much wish to have Festus acknowledge Paul's great learning. The phrase must be understood against the context of a stock reference used by the moral philosophers of Luke's day to denigrate other schools. Malherbe explains that "Cynics were frequently regarded as mad because of their rigorous, ascetic life, or their unconventional or vulgar behaviour."<sup>64</sup> Malherbe gives the example of the moderate philosopher and contemporary of Luke, Dio Chrysostom, who had to come to terms with the charge of being thought mad: "he introduces himself by referring to his teaching throughout the world, and claims that he is not goaded by „madness or desperation to do these things, but (trusts) in a greater power and source of aid, that which proceeds from the gods, though most men deem it useless."<sup>65</sup> Malherbe's identification of the similarity between Dio's need to defend himself against the charge of madness<sup>66</sup> and Luke's portrayal of Paul having to do likewise, leads him to conclude that Festus' comment is not an acknowledgement of Paul's divine inspiration but rather a comment of contempt against which Paul defends himself.

The interpretation of Festus' reference to Paul's learning as a derogatory remark, gives Luke's text greater coherence. To have Festus claiming in one passage that the religious issues pertaining to Paul are about superstition and a little further on, for him to compliment Paul for being divinely inspired, would be contradictory. This interpretation also ties in with Luke's prior depiction of Festus' contemptuous remark that the controversy surrounding Paul was for him a controversy about superstition (Ac.25:19).

### 3.1 Festus' view of the resurrection

Yet another dimension of the text needs further explanation. The outburst of Festus is carefully linked to the specific moment that Paul proclaims the resurrection. Festus' reaction is linked at least twice to the resurrection. He described the religious issues about Paul and his opponents as points of debate about a "superstition"(Ac.25:19) concerning a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. Festus' outburst in Acts 26:24 that Paul is raving (καίν\_) and that his great learning has turned him mad (κανίαν), follows Paul's declaration concerning the resurrection. The character of Festus gains in consistency through this link: the concept of the resurrection elicits the negative judgement of being superstitious at *the beginning* of the speech, as is indicated so clearly in Acts 25:9, whilst the reference to the resurrection at the *end* of the speech likewise elicits a negative response.<sup>67</sup> Through this ring composition, the focus is strongly on the resurrection as a key issue in the defence of Paul.

### 3.2 Philosophical perspectives on the resurrection

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<sup>63</sup> A.J.Malherbe, "Not in a Corner": Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26:26, *The Second Century* 5 (1986): 13-15.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>65</sup> Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 45.1; cit.ap. Ibid., 15.

<sup>66</sup> "In *Or.* 34 he Dio begins by saying that Cynics are thought not to be of sober mind (ζφθρονζτη) but crazy (καηοκένοσζ)." Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 15. The parallel with Acts 26:24-25 is striking.

<sup>67</sup> F.Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1988), 250 therefore concludes that all this is beyond Festus and that the teaching of the resurrection, in his eyes, could not be supported by a mentally balanced person.

The proclamation of the resurrection, according to the narrative, causes the response of Festus. In responding thus, Festus is once again a representative of those in high places, since the resurrection could well elicit a negative response from those educated groups who reflected on the resurrection from a philosophical perspective. A guiding principle in this reflection was the assumption that the gods were considered to be eternal and therefore immutable. The claims of Christians that Jesus Christ was God made the proclamation of his death and resurrection unacceptable, because it contradicted divine immutability. To speculate about such things served no purpose. The uselessness of discussing such matters is explained by Aristotle who expounds on how impossible it is to discuss issues of “eternal significance.” One reason is to be found in the fact that such issues do not require a choice on a person's behalf. The sensible person, furthermore, is able to distinguish what can be deliberated upon, while those who are unable to make such a distinction, proceed to deliberate about them. The person who chooses to deliberate about such matters, Aristotle identifies as the fool (ἄφρων) or the madman (καηνόκενος): ἰεθῆον δὲ ζφς βοσι εσην ο τ π ρ ο βοσι εζαηη ν ηης ἰζης κηνόκενος, ἡ π ρ ν νο ν τφν.<sup>68</sup> “Things eternal” is the primary example that Aristotle gives concerning that which a “fool” or a “madman” deliberates upon. περ δ η ν χδίων ο δε ζ βοσι εσηη.<sup>69</sup> In an explanatory note Capps, Rouse and Post indicate that for Aristotle “things eternal” includes the notion of immutability.<sup>70</sup>

Xenophon makes a similar comment when he ridicules people who discuss “the nature of the universe” by also comparing them to mad people (ἡ ἡς κηνόκενος κοίφς θεε ζζαη πρ ζ ἡ ἡ ος).<sup>71</sup> In similar vein, Epictetus indicates that a philosophical discussion on the qualities of God can elicit an indignant response from members of the educated elite. This comes through in his *Discourses* where he expounds on Zeus as Saviour, Rain-bringer and Fruit-giver<sup>72</sup> and imagines how he (Epictetus) would be ridiculed by “some white-haired old man with many a gold ring on his fingers” who would burst with indignation and call him mad.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Aristotle *Nic.Eth.* 3.3.2.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.3.3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.3.3 note “a”. Aristotle also explains this point in *Nic.Eth.* 6.3.2: “An object of Scientific Knowledge, therefore, exists of necessity. It is therefore eternal, for everything existing of absolute necessity is eternal (αἰδης); and what is eternal does not come into existence or perish.” Paul's reference to the resurrection may therefore be interpreted as a futile attempt to deliberate about things that are eternal. Therefore within that context Festus' use of the word καηνόκενος concerning Paul's views on the resurrection is understandable.

<sup>71</sup> Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.1.13.

<sup>72</sup> Epictetus *Discourses* 1.22.16.

<sup>73</sup> Epictetus *Discourses* 1.22.17-21: Having expounded on the qualities of Zeus, Epictetus continues with the imaginary response: “What then, shall we do? - This is a subject of enquiry for the man who truly philosophizes and is in travail of thought. Says such a man to himself, „I do not see what is the good and what is the evil; am I not mad?“ (καίνοκα) Yes but suppose I set the good somewhere here, among the things that the will controls, all men will laugh at me. Some white-haired old man with many a gold ring on his fingers will come along, and then he will shake his head and say, „Listen to me my son; one ought of course to philosophize, but one ought also to keep one's head; this is all nonsense. You learn a syllogism from the philosopher, but you know better than the philosophers what you ought to do.“ Man, why, then do you censure me, if I know? What shall I say to this slave? If I hold my peace, the fellow will burst with indignation (ν ζηπ, ἡγνστηη θε νς). So I must say, „Forgive me as you would lovers; I am not my own master; I am mad“ (ο θ ε κ κστη, καίνοκα).”

These examples indicate that Luke is being consistent when he represents Festus as responding to the concept of the resurrection as superstition in one passage and describing its proponent as mad in another. These two responses of Festus to the topic of the resurrection are closely related to each other.

The outburst by Festus that Paul is *καίῃ* represents more than Festus' personal opinion. It reflects a widely held view that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection was an intellectual stumbling block. Luke is already keenly aware of the problem that the doctrine of the resurrection created. This understanding enlarges upon O'Toole's view that it was only a person like Festus who did not know the Scriptures or the Jewish religion who could call Paul "mad."<sup>74</sup> It represents a fundamental philosophical problem with the central issue of the Christian faith: namely the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ contradicted the immutability of God.

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<sup>74</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 128.

An indication of Luke's awareness of this problem, is the number of references that he makes in his work to the reaction of disbelief in or of being perplexed by the proclamation of the resurrection. In Luke 24:11, for example, he describes the reaction of the disciples to the message of the women that the tomb was empty. They concluded that the women were speaking nonsense: θα\_ θάνεζαν\_ νόπιον α\_η\_ν\_ ζε\_ ι\_ρος η\_ ρήκαηα ηα\_ηα, θα\_ πίζηοσν α\_ηα\_ ✎. It is evident that this issue is of particular concern to Luke, for neither Matthew nor Mark have a parallel to this passage. The parallel between Peter's miraculous release from prison with the disciples' response that Rhoda is “raving” and Paul's testifying to the resurrection of Jesus and Festus' response that Paul is καίν\_, is nevertheless an indication that Luke is using the word καίνοκαί in a similar context. Johnson observes that the response of the disciples to Rhoda is similar to the response of the eleven to the message of the women concerning the empty tomb (Luke 24:11).<sup>75</sup> In Acts 4:2, the Sadducees react to the announcement of the resurrection, by being greatly troubled (δηαονούκενη). Luke's depiction of Paul's discussion with the philosophers of Athens is particularly significant. In Acts 17:18 the philosophers respond to the message of the resurrection by asking in a derogatory way: “What is this babbler (ζπερκοιόγος) trying to say?” and also equating Paul with the promotion of “foreign gods” (ξένων δαηκονίον). This too was a term which indicated censure. At the end of Paul's speech (Ac.17:32), Luke once again portrays many of the philosophers as responding to the message of the resurrection with derision; \_θούζα νηεζ δ\_ \_νάζηαζην νεθη\_ν, ο\_ κ\_ν\_ τι εύαδον. In Acts 25:19f, which is closely related to the text under consideration, Festus indicates to Agrippa that the issue of the resurrection is causing him to be perplexed: περί ηηνοζ “εζο\_ ηεζνεθόηοζ, \_ν\_ \_θαζθ εν\_ Πα\_ι οζ δ\_ν. \_πορούκενοζ δ\_.

There are other indications that Luke was also aware of a divide between powerful groups who reacted negatively to the gospel and groups who were lowly in the eyes of the status quo. The difference in response to the gospel is evident in the account of the sequel to the healing of the temple cripple (Ac.4:1-13). On the one hand there were many who heard and believed the message of Peter and John (Ac.4:4: ποι ι ο\_ δ\_ η\_ν\_ \_θοοζά νηηον η\_ν ιόγον\_ πίζηεοζα ν) while on the other hand those in powerful positions are presented as having a negative reaction to the gospel. The negativity of the high priest Annas, together with his entourage of influential people (Ac.4:6) is expressed by their astonishment that such boldness of speech (παρρεζία ν) could emanate from as unlettered laymen as Peter and John (Ac.4:13; \_γράκκαηοί and \_δη ηση). Louw and Nida place both these words in the semantic domain of the uninformed and uneducated.<sup>76</sup> MacMullen includes the word γρακκαηηθζ in his *Lexicon of Snobbery* of words indicating the prejudice felt by the literate upper class for the lower.<sup>77</sup> Thus if the upper class describe themselves as γρακκαηηθζ in comparison to the lower class, the reversal of terms indicates the same prejudice when \_γράκκαηοζ is applied to the lower class by the upper class.

As the resurrection is central to Luke's presentation of the Christian message, Festus' outburst highlights the point where the Christian doctrine is at odds with the philosophical world. The ability of being able to accept the resurrection despite the philosophical problems

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<sup>75</sup> Johnson, 213.

<sup>76</sup> Louw & Nida, 329: “\_γράκκαηοζ, ον: pertaining to one who has not acquired a formal education (referring primarily to formal training) - uneducated, unlearned.; \_δηήεζ, οσ: a person who has not acquired systematic information or expertise in some field of knowledge or activity - `layman, ordinary person, amateur”.

<sup>77</sup> R.MacMullen, “Lexicon of Snobbery” *Roman Social Relations: 50 B.C.- A.D.284*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 139. MacMullen gives the example of this use of the word in Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 7.114.

associated with it, is the crucial issue that Luke is dealing with.<sup>78</sup>

#### **4 The Christian response to the charge of madness**

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<sup>78</sup> The problem of the resurrection continued to preoccupy the early Christian apologists. Athenagoras of Athens devoted a book to this subject entitled *On the Resurrection of the Dead*.

The configuration of motifs that has been outlined in the previous section, is confirmed by information from the period following the New Testament. Part of the Christian response to the charge of madness for belief in the resurrection was to label such accusers as atheists. Justin Martyr reveals that he is familiar with the label of *καμίαν* that has been given to Christians because of their belief in the passion of Jesus Christ. He indicates that this accusation is linked to the immutability of God. *...νηα\_ζα\_γ\_ρ\_καμίαν\_κ\_ν\_θαθαθαίνονηα, δεσηέραν\_τώραν\_κεη\_η\_ν\_ηρεπιον\_θα\_ε\_νηα\_ζε\_ν\_θα\_γεννήηορα\_η\_ν\_πάνηφν\_νζρώπ\_ζηασφζ\_ένηηδηδόνα\_κ\_ς\_ι\_έγονηες.*<sup>79</sup> From his remarks it is clear that the pagans' association of the immutability (*ηρεπιον*) of God with the mutability inherent in the cross is at the basis of their designation of Christians as "mad."<sup>80</sup> Equally striking is that Justin's refutation of their claim that Christians are mad is closely linked to the charge of atheism rather than with superstition. His opening words of the paragraph concerned reads: "What sober-minded man, then, will not acknowledge that we are not atheists."<sup>81</sup> The close link between the accusation of atheism and madness in Justin's work is a confirmation that these motifs form a topos and that these terms were regarded as derogatory designations.<sup>82</sup>

Evidence of this response is also found in Ignatius' letter *Ad Trallianos* in which Ignatius categorises atheists as those people who do not accept the reality of the resurrection, but claim that Christ only suffered in appearance. *Δ\_δ\_,\_ζπερ\_ηηνς\_ζεση\_νηες, ηοσηέζηηη\_πηζηοηη\_έγοςζην\_η\_δοθε\_ν\_πεπονζέναη\_α\_η\_ν.*<sup>83</sup> Ignatius is able to make use of this term because it was a suitable derogatory label to attach to one's opponents.<sup>84</sup> Ignatius' bold identification of atheists as those who reject the resurrection continues and develops what was already present in Luke's text. Such a rejection of true religion is represented as coming from an atheist. In the light of this, Luke's presentation of the atheistic reaction of Festus to Paul's proclamation of the resurrection, is quite in keeping with the philosophical and religious climate of the time.

In summary, Luke's account of Festus' interruption corresponds in three ways to Plutarch's description of how the atheist responds to true religion. Festus' sudden interruption and exclamation after hearing an exposition of true religion is typical of an atheist. The way

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<sup>79</sup> Justin Martyr *First Apology* 13.4.

<sup>80</sup> The fact that Minucius Felix is still having to address the issue of the resurrection is an indication that it was a deep seated philosophical problem. He first repeats a collection of philosophical commonplaces on the topic: *Ergo nec de mortuis dii, quoniam deus mori non potest, nec de natis, quoniam moritur omne quod nascitur: divinum autem id est, quod nec ortum habet nec occasum.* Later he uses examples from nature to show that the concept of the resurrection is not foreign to the world: *Vide adeo, quam in solacium nostri resurrectionem futuram omnis natura meditetur.* Minucius Felix *Octavius* 34.11.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.1.

<sup>82</sup> The term atheist is pertinent in early Christianity's contact with the pagan society. In the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, the term "atheist" is used by pagans for Christians, as well as by Christians for pagans. A clear example of this is found in *Mart.Polyc.* 3, where the cry of the pagan crowd seeking Polycarp's martyrdom is: "Α\_ρε\_η\_ς\_ζεοςς! δεηείζζφ\_Ποι\_ύθαρος." while in *Mart.Polyc.* 9, Polycarp himself looks at the pagan crowd and says: "Α\_ρε\_η\_ς\_ζεοςς." This interchangeability indicates how the term is used polemically to describe one's religious opponents.

<sup>83</sup> Ignatius *Ad Trallianos* 10.

<sup>84</sup> As Ignatius was martyred in Rome before A.D.117, his writings reflect the thought present in early Christianity, not too distant from Luke's own time of writing. H.Chadwick, *The Early Church*, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1967), 30.

Festus remains indifferent is also typical of atheists. The perception by Festus that Paul's proclamation of the resurrection is equated with the arrogance of explaining issues of eternal significance, is likewise characteristic of an atheist.

In this analysis of Festus' outburst it has been argued that he represents an atheistic position. It is important to note that Luke's portrayal of the atheistic elite denigrating the proclamation of true religion, is a realistic representation of the situation current in the Empire at that time. This point will be expanded in the following section.

#### **4.1 The growth of atheism in the empire**

The depiction of Festus as an atheist is in keeping with a trend of increasing disillusionment with official religions of the empire and the growth of unofficial atheism. Cumont examines the causes and effects of the spread of eastern religions into the Roman Empire and concludes that the oriental religions gained inroads because of the growing sense of disillusionment with the ineffective official religions of the empire.<sup>85</sup> He explains that the official religions were not able to provide answers which satisfied the inner needs of the people. The only guidance people received was the repeated instruction to adhere to the rites and beliefs which were practised by their ancestors and which had been handed down from unfathomable antiquity. The following of exact procedures even though they were unintelligible, was given as the guarantee of their efficacy. "L'attachement constant des générations passées à des croyances et à des rites d'une antiquité infinie semblait garantir leur exactitude et leur efficacité."<sup>86</sup> He explains that religious expression both in Greece and in Rome had been reduced to a collection of unintelligible rites repeated scrupulously and mechanically, without any omission or addition from that handed down to them from distant ancestors.<sup>87</sup> Cumont summarises the effect it had in the following way: "On désapprenait toutes les disciplines: le monde ne savait plus que se répéter et frappé de stérilité, il avait le sentiment poignant de sa déchéance et de son impuissance."<sup>88</sup> Cerfaux and Tondriau explain that Emperors developed and encouraged Emperor Worship during the first and second centuries, in order to add an element of supernatural to their power. This also contributed to the spread of atheism amongst the intellectuals because they could see through these aspirations for divinity.<sup>89</sup> Cumont's final analysis of the official religions is striking: "Jamais peuple d'une culture aussi avancée n'eut religion plus enfantine."<sup>90</sup>

One can therefore understand that the official form of religious expression did not satisfy the intellect of thinking people, which in turn also became a major contributory factor to the growth of oriental religions in the empire.<sup>91</sup> Cerfaux and Tondriau explain that for the elite the lack of intellectual satisfaction contributed greatly to the growth of atheism. "Désabusée, l'élite, elle, essaie de maintenir les rites archaïques ou se tourne vers la

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<sup>85</sup> F.Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1906), 42f.

<sup>86</sup> Cumont, 43.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 39f.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> L.Cerfaux, J.Tondriau, *Le Culte des Souverains dans la Civilisation Gréco-Romaine* (Paris: Tournai Desclée, 1957), 402.

<sup>90</sup> Cumont, 40.

<sup>91</sup> Cumont explains that as opposed to the official religions, the oriental religions were able to satisfy three areas. The emotions, the intellect and the conscience. Ibid., 36.

philosophie et l'athéisme.”<sup>92</sup> For those who chose atheism, it could never be a comfortable public atheism but had to remain a personal disposition, for the observance of the appropriate public rites was an important aspect of a person's responsibility to the state. The casting of doubts on the efficacy of official religions was equivalent to subversion. The security of the state was perceived to have divine protection as long as the prescribed rites were correctly observed. Although questions were being asked about the relevance of the official religions, these could not be voiced in public. Cumont points out that this was precisely the playground for the intellectual elite. “Mais seuls, les intellectuels peuvent se complaire au doute ou s'y résigner, les foules veulent des certitudes.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Cerfaux, Tondriau, 401.

<sup>93</sup> Cumont, 43.

De Labriolle, in his assessment of the growth of Christianity and the apparent inability of the official religions to resist, identifies as a major factor the widespread scepticism which could not be expressed openly but which remained present as an undercurrent. “Enfin, ce qui paralysa à demi dans ces luttes contre une foi totale et conquérante, ce fut leur scepticisme religieux, qu'ils ne se reconnaissent pas le droit d'avouer, et qui ne laissait intact chez eux qu'un fond vaguement superstitieux.”<sup>94</sup> The opinion that atheism could also be the playground of the intellectual elite, is reflected in Cicero's rebuke of Cotta, which reveals that some leading citizens enjoyed the rhetorical exercise of pretending to argue for atheism.<sup>95</sup> Cicero therefore rebukes Cotta, a leading citizen and pontiff (*principem civem et pontificem*) with the following words: “*Mala enim et impia consuetudo est contra deos disputandi, sive ex animo id fit sive simulate.*”<sup>96</sup> Cicero's use of “simulate” is interpreted by Chatelain as referring to “a mind game.”<sup>97</sup>

Luke's portrayal of the response of Festus and Agrippa, members of the educated elite, therefore corresponds to the cynicism of those who could go through the motions of that which was officially required, while maintaining personal doubt. This light hearted approach to the subject of religion by the members of the elite class, together with a disposition towards atheism, is important in understanding Luke's portrayal of both Festus and Agrippa. The sarcastic and cynical remarks about Paul's testimony are an expression of the form of atheism that characterised many of them.

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<sup>94</sup> P.De Labriolle, *La Réaction Païenne: Étude sur la Polémique Antichrétienne du 1er au 4e Siècle*, (Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1934), 12.

<sup>95</sup> Cicero *De Natura Deorum* 2.168.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> “un jeu d'esprit”, E.Chatelain, s.v., *simulate*, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français*, (Paris: Librairie Hachette, no date).

This religious scepticism also found its expression in the first century through the loss of enthusiasm for the performance of sacrifices. Behm explains that tensions existed concerning the observance of sacrifices during later Judaic and Hellenistic times. “As regards the attitude of Hellenism to sacrifice, it is worth noting that it inherits from the classical Greek world, not the ancient concept of sacrifice, nor even a religious and ethical development of the concept, but the hostile mood of the later period in which the original religious awareness was shattered.”<sup>98</sup> Behm explains further that the philosophical schools were mainly responsible for this scepticism concerning the official rituals. “(T)he philosophical criticism of sacrifice ... continues in Hellenism alongside an unreflecting sacrificial practice at the official level.”<sup>99</sup> One such example of a philosophical school were the Epicureans whose ethic was that of seeking virtue as the real source of tranquillity (ἡσυχία). “For it is not the continued drinking and revels...that make life pleasant, but sober contemplations”(Diog. Laert.10,129; 131-132).<sup>100</sup> In similar vein the Stoic philosopher Seneca, (first century A.D.), emphasised personal responsibility for the attainment of virtue as opposed to the performance of rituals. “Satis natura dedit roboris si illo utamur.”<sup>101</sup> Apollonius, the first century wandering magician / philosopher set himself high and rigid Pythagorean rules as opposed to the observance of sacrifice. He refused to eat meat of any kind and especially denounced the sacrifice of animals to the gods.<sup>102</sup> Eusebius plays down the importance of sacrifice by emphasising the philosophical principle that God needs nothing from men, except that which comes from the highest faculty; the intelligence.<sup>103</sup>

Tensions brought on by the scepticism towards the observance of prescribed sacrifices also found an echo in the Judaism of the Hellenistic period. On the one hand there was the view that the observance of the sacrifice was an act commanded by God. It therefore had to be performed without question. “That day by day they should constantly offer the sin offering for Israel as a remembrance which is pleasing to God, and that He should accept it day by day for ever, as is commanded” (Jub.50:11).<sup>104</sup> However there were also other voices saying that the

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<sup>98</sup> J.Behm, ζύφ, *TDNT* 3: 186-188.

<sup>99</sup> J.Behm, ζύφ, *TDNT* 3: 188: e.g., Ps-Plat.Alc.,11,149e.

<sup>100</sup> F.Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Vol 1 Greece and Rome, Part 2*, (Garden City, New York: Image Book, 1962), 152. Diogenes Laertius who lived during the 3rd Century A.D., wrote about the history of Greek philosophy.

<sup>101</sup> Seneca *Ep.* 116,7: Cit.ap. F.Copleston, 174.

<sup>102</sup> Philostratus *Apollonius of Tyana*, (Introduction IX) Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>103</sup> Eusebius *On the Preparation of the Gospel* 4.13. Cit.ap. Philostratus: *Apollonius of Tyana*, (Introduction XIV) Loeb Classical Library: “In no other manner, I believe, can one exhibit a fitting respect for the divine being, beyond any other men make sure of being singled out as an object of his favour and good-will, than by refusing to offer to God whom we termed First, who is One and separate from all, as subordinate to whom we must recognise all the rest, any victim at all; to Him we must not kindle fire or make promise unto him of any sensible object whatsoever. For He needs nothing even from beings higher than ourselves. Nor is there any plant or animal which earth sends up or nourishes, to which some pollution is not incident. We should make use in relation to him solely of the higher speech, I mean of that which issues not by the lips; and from the noblest of beings we must ask for blessings by the noblest faculty we possess, and that faculty is intelligence which needs no organ. On these principles then we ought not on any account to sacrifice victims to the mighty and supreme God.”

<sup>104</sup> 1 & 2 Macc. also gives examples of the need to refuse any violation of the ritual of sacrifice, for they are commanded by God. Cf. 1 Macc.1:45; 2:68; 2 Macc.1:19ff; 3:1ff.

sacrificial demands were fulfilled by the obedience to the Law in other respects (e.g. Sir.34:18-35:13). To keep the commandments, to shun evil, to exercise benevolence, is just as good a proof of fidelity to the Law as sacrifice.”<sup>105</sup>

One therefore finds in the Hellenistic period a definite moving away from the ritual observance of the sacrifice in favour of an emphasis on morals. Although people may no longer have believed in the efficacy of sacrifice, most were still quite prepared to go along with the practice. Young explains the motivation as being political: “(F)or political reasons, in order to maintain social stability, all philosophers of this period were prepared to practice the traditional rites, and even endorse sacrifice to the divine emperor.”<sup>106</sup>

The questioning of traditional religious observances was therefore a fairly widespread phenomenon during Luke’s time. This scepticism was particularly characteristic of the educated class and was given expression in a personal mostly unofficial form of atheism. It is this somewhat light hearted and sceptical attitude towards the fervent observance of religion that is depicted in Luke's portrayal of Festus' reaction to Paul.

## **4.2 Indifference as a manifestation of atheism**

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<sup>105</sup> Cit.op., Behm, 186. Hosea 6:6 “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and an acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.”

<sup>106</sup> F.M.Young, *Sacrifice and The Death of Christ*, (London: S.P.C.K., 1975), 39.

Luke's description of how the sceptical and cynical Festus remains unmoved and indifferent to Paul's testimony needs further investigation in terms of similar descriptions in the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>107</sup> Plutarch describes the atheist with the terms “indifference” (ὑναίτις) <sup>108</sup> and “insensible” (ἄσκητος) on two occasions.<sup>109</sup> He also uses the terms “unmoved” (ἄκίνητος),<sup>110</sup> “hard” (σκληρός) and stubborn (ὑψηλός).<sup>111</sup> These five characteristics combine to give a picture of the atheist as being disinterested and uncaring about the beliefs of others. In addition to these qualities, the following general description given by Plutarch summarises some of the major characteristics and associated emotions of atheists. Plutarch writes: “But they (atheists) hold in contempt (θαυρονοοῦντες) philosophers and statesmen, who try to prove that the majesty of God is associated with goodness, magnanimity, kindness, and solicitude. So the atheists have more than enough of indifference (ὑναίτις) and distrust (ἄπιστος) of the Beings who can help them.”<sup>112</sup> The three words θαυρονοοῦντες, ὑναίτις and ἄπιστος in this sentence carry some emotive overtones which also depict the typical atheist as indifferent and unmoved about religious matters. Festus’ outburst at Paul’s proclamation of the resurrection, together with his derogatory comment about his learning is the result of such indifference.

It has been argued above that Luke has depicted Festus as reacting to Paul’s presentation with a mixture of indifference and cynicism.<sup>113</sup> Luke’s depiction of Festus is not the only example of this kind.

### 4.3 Favours to the Jews

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<sup>107</sup> The study of emotion as a previously neglected area has received attention in recent times. The public orator, Theophrastus emphasized the importance of entertainment as an important facet of his public lectures in order to evoke and guide the emotions of the public. An example of this is Theophrastus' work *Characters*, where the giving of information, moral instruction and entertainment intersect. For a discussion on this point see: Theophrastus *Characters*, ed. and trans. J.Rusten, I.C. Cunningham, A.D.Knox. Loeb Classical Library, 23.

<sup>108</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 167C. In his list of opposites, Aristotle uses this word to indicate deficiency as opposed to the excess of ὑπερβολή (Nic.Eth. 2.8.2: κοίφως δὲ θαυρονοοῦντες καὶ ὑψηλοῦς ὑναίτις).

<sup>109</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 165B; 167E.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 165C.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 164E.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 167E.

<sup>113</sup> The discussion on Festus’ use of the word καὶ ἐκείνους indicated that Luke wish to portray him as unmoved by Paul’s presentation, while his loud shout is typical of the sceptics response to true religion.

In the stages leading up to Paul's trial Luke has already portrayed the indifference of Festus in wanting to send Paul to Jerusalem, in order to do a favour for the Jews (Ac.25:9). In his analysis of Festus, Conzelmann remarks on the negative image that this evokes: "We have here the most severe judgement on a Roman official in the entire book. Festus alone(!) is to blame for the continuation of Paul's trial."<sup>114</sup> The same remark was made of Felix, who according to Acts 24:27, also wanted to do a favour for the Jews. Johnson pointed out how negatively Felix as another character among those in high places, was portrayed by Luke: "Paul no longer sees any safety in Jerusalem, especially since his imprisonment to this point has been the result of another „favor“ to the Jews by Felix (24:27)."<sup>115</sup> Johnson describes Felix's action as evidence of his lack of a steady moral compass.<sup>116</sup> Felix's indifference is also highlighted by the issue of money, for he was prepared to allow Paul to languish in prison for two years because he saw an opportunity for financial gain by manipulating the situation to his advantage. Apart from the technical aspect of Felix's illegal action,<sup>117</sup> his disregard for Paul's plight in prison while hoping he could get a bribe, highlights Felix' indifference towards Paul (Ac.24:26). On this particular passage, Spencer notes that the handling of Paul by the Roman officials gives rise to mixed interpretations. "While, on the one hand, the governors accord Paul a measure of respect due a Roman citizen, on the other hand, they toy with him to advance their own positions."<sup>118</sup> Spencer's final comment on Felix's attitude towards Paul is that "such dealings reflect standard elite conduct."<sup>119</sup>

Once again some examples from the Graeco-Roman context of Luke may illuminate this particular characteristic applied by Luke to his characters. Plutarch points out that atheists, when they find themselves in disrepute with the masses, tend to win back their favour. They then go out of their way to please them. In doing so, they differ from the superstitious person. The atheist looks to find the reason in himself when he has encountered disrepute with the masses, while the superstitious blames God. Concerning the atheist he writes: *ἡ περὶ ἀθεῖαν ἀποδοξία ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐδοξίας ἐκείνης ἧς οὐκ ἔστι θεὸς ἀλλὰ τὸ κοινόν.*<sup>120</sup> It is thus typical of the indifferent and atheistic person to seek favour with the common people. When it comes to matters of true religion, they are not significant at all to the atheist. Instead, the atheist is preoccupied with own interest and self advantage.

Not only do Festus and Felix lack any compassion for Paul or an interest in his personal plight and matters of justice, but they actively seek to promote their self interest. This indifference to the plight of Paul, who is portrayed in Acts as a representative of true religion, highlights the characters of Festus and Felix's in a special manner. Instead of being interested

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<sup>114</sup> Conzelmann, 203.

<sup>115</sup> Johnson, 421. Johnson explains that after Felix was replaced as governor, he was immediately charged by a delegation of Jews to the Emperor with various injustices to the Jews (Josephus *Antiquities* 20:182). This gesture on his part therefore appears as a final but futile attempt to ingratiate himself with the Jews and to forestall his own downfall.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

<sup>117</sup> Bruce and Haenchen indicate that this was forbidden by the Lex Julia. Bruce, 427f; Haenchen, 661.

<sup>118</sup> F.C.Spencer, Paul's Odyssey in Acts: Status Struggles and Island Adventures, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 28 (1998): 156.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 168B.

in the issues of true religion they are preoccupied in pleasing the Jews in order to derive an advantage for themselves.

#### 4.4 Gallio's indifference

Once again evidence from the rest of Acts suggests that Luke's portrayal of Festus and Felix, especially as representatives of those in high places, have typical features and displays stereotypical characteristics. The issue of indifference by the educated elite is not confined to Felix and Festus. In Acts 18 there is a report of a trial of Paul before Gallio in Corinth. There are some striking parallels between this trial and the later ones before Felix and Festus. It is obvious that Gallio is someone in a high place, a figure of authority within the Roman legal system. He occupies an office comparable to those of Festus and Felix. The importance of Gallio is explained by Jackson and Lake who indicate that Gallio was proconsul in Achaia in A.D. 51 and his brother was the famous philosopher and dramatist Seneca, who was also for a time Nero's tutor.<sup>121</sup> It appears that Gallio was also consul at some unknown date, for Pliny says that he took a sea voyage after his consulate because he was threatened with consumption.<sup>122</sup>

Here also Paul is persecuted by his Jewish opponents, brought to trial, and accused before a pagan official on matters of religion. Once again the pagan official finds that no serious crimes are involved and explicitly says so. Gallio, like Festus in Acts 26:19, regards the matter as a dispute about Jewish beliefs (18:15). He then refuses explicitly to be a judge on those issues and chases them from the court room (18:15-16). More telling, though, is his response to the violent incident after the case is ended. According to Acts 18:17, Gallio is described as remaining indifferent (θα\_δ\_ν ηούηον η\_ Γαι\_ίφνη\_κει\_εν) while Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue who was sympathetic to the Christian cause was being attacked by the people of Corinth.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 31.33. Cit. ap. Jackson and Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.226.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Jervell assumes in his commentary (462) that the Jewish accusers, with their leader Sosthenes, are being attacked by the people. According to him the purpose of Luke with this episode is not clear. Jervell's reading illustrates the openness of the narrative. For an explanation of the grammar of this verse with the alternative readings it allows, cf. Jackson Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.228.

The tantalizing remark about Gallio's indifference has attracted attention of early readers of the text quite often. The difficulty of interpreting it has resulted in the appearance of variant readings. Some texts have ο\_ \_Ιουδα\_οη added to πάνηες<sup>124</sup> making the Jews responsible for beating Sosthenes, while the Western Texts supply ο\_ \_Διιενες<sup>125</sup> which makes the Greeks responsible. Johnson describes this variant reading as an "inspired guess," for it makes Gallio appear to support anti-semitic behaviour. The question Johnson asks of this verse reveals his unease with this suggestion: "But why would Gallio not care about such a flagrant flouting of his authority before his *b\_ma*?"<sup>126</sup> The difficulty that scholars have in understanding Gallio's indifference is illustrated by Johnson's conclusion to this whole scene that "it remains obscure" except for the fact that in accordance with his vision (18:10) Paul comes to no harm.<sup>127</sup> The spectrum of varying interpretations of this verse is also illustrated by Thomas' comment on it: "Attitude may appear to have been one of contempt, but Ramsay regards decision of Gallio as „charter of Christian freedom.“<sup>128</sup> O'Toole, in his article on Luke's treatment of the Jews, focusses briefly on the Gallio incident where he notes his indifference: "This brief story of the appearance before Gallio allows Luke to establish the principle that the Romans are not interested in settling Jewish disputes about terminology, titles or „the law.“<sup>129</sup> Haenchen emphasises Gallio's indifference even more strongly: "Luke gives no indication that he condemns the beating, since this feature reveals especially clearly the disinterestedness of the Roman authorities."<sup>130</sup> Conzelmann is also emphatic about Gallio's indifference: "This verse demonstrates the disinterest of the authorities in Christianity, an attitude which, in Luke's opinion, is appropriate for them."<sup>131</sup>

Jackson and Lake (*Beginnings* 4.228-229), remarked that this episode illustrated the neutrality of Gallio. He refused to become "an agent of Jewish animosity against Paul." They add that he "allowed an anti-Semitic reaction take its own course." They stress that Luke was not condemning Gallio here.

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<sup>124</sup> Manuscripts 307 and 431.

<sup>125</sup> D, E, P, Φ etc.

<sup>126</sup> Johnson, 329.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> W.H.G.Thomas, *Outline Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 368. Scholars are notably divided over the interpretation of this scene. L'Éplattienier sees reason to compliment Gallio for his aloofness. "Si pareille sagesse avait plus souvent eu cours dans l'histoire, on eût évité bien des conflits sanglants." C.L'Éplattienier, *Le Livre des Actes*, (Paris: Éditions du Centurion, 1994), 195. In a similar vein, Jackson and Lake, *Beginnings*, 228f., reject any implication that Luke may be condemning Gallio. They state: "He is, on the contrary, showing how Gallio - a learned judge - was so neutral in the controversy that he refused to become an agent of Jewish animosity against Paul." In his assessment of Gallio, Bruce (348), writes, "(H)e is being commended for his impartiality, not blamed for his indifference to spiritual matters."

<sup>129</sup> O'Toole, *Luke's Treatment of Jews*, 543.

<sup>130</sup> Haenchen, 537.

<sup>131</sup> Conzelmann, 154.

Whatever the various explanations of Acts 18:17, fact is that Luke here explicitly notes the indifference of a character in high places to Paul, and, by implication, to the Christian proclamation. The explanation that Sosthenes, as someone sympathetic to the Christians, is attacked by “all” the accusers of Paul, and that Gallio was indifferent to this episode, would indeed portray him in the same negative light as the later characters of Festus and Felix. There can be little doubt that Luke’s portrayal of Gallio’s indifference towards issues of faith, forms the background to and is consistent with the attitude with which Luke portrays Felix and Festus later on in Acts.<sup>132</sup> They reflect stereotypical behaviour.

The understanding of Festus' outburst as indicative of the atheist’s cynical indifference is therefore corroborated by Luke in portraying other members of the intellectual elite in a similar way.

## 5 Atheism and ignorance

In the previous chapter, the ignorance of the superstitious was seen to have been a contributory factor to their wild excesses. Ignorance is, however, not only linked to superstition, but also to its contrasting position. Luke makes it clear that ignorance and confusion is present in both Festus and Felix. Festus is unable to understand the issues that he is required to deal with and his ignorance and confusion is expressed on a number of occasions. It is expressed when Festus tells Agrippa that he is surprised because the Jews did not accuse Paul of any of the crimes he had expected, (Ac.25:18). It is expressed when Festus states that he was “perplexed” (ἄπορούμενος) as to how he should investigate the matters, (Ac.25:20). Festus also confesses that he has nothing definite to write to the Emperor concerning Paul's case (Ac.25:26). Finally Festus reveals his ignorance by stating to Agrippa that he hopes that as a result of the investigation conducted in the presence of Agrippa, he may have something to write, (Ac.25:26).

In addition to Festus revealing his ignorance before the hearing, it also comes through during Paul's defence. Festus' sudden interruption of Paul reveals a certain illogicality. O'Toole exposes this illogicality by arguing that Festus had called on Agrippa's help precisely because of his inability to understand the resurrection. “But instead of letting Paul develop this point so that Agrippa II can get the clearest possible understanding, Festus interrupts.”<sup>133</sup> Thus Festus' interruption hinders the very process that he has set in motion and his anguish in not having something definite to write to the Emperor, is exacerbated. The confusion that Festus creates for himself is further shown by the irony of Agrippa's final comment to Festus: “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar” (Ac.26:32). Paul had appealed to Caesar (Ac.25:9-11) in order to protect himself from Festus' desire to grant the Jews a favour by sending him up to Jerusalem where he knew that he would be handed over to the Jews. In the light of the reason why Paul had appealed to Caesar, Agrippa's concluding statement on the hearing exposes the web of confusion that Festus has got himself into.

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<sup>132</sup> A lack of fear for the gods is a further dimension to the atheist’s indifference. It was argued in the section on the superstition of the Jews that excessive fear played a role in determining their attitudes and actions. The contrary is true of the atheist whose fear of the gods is deficient. Plutarch explains that this is the logical consequence of the atheist standpoint. Their disbelief in the divinity results in their indifference which is expressed in total lack of fear. θα\_ρῆτιο\_ς\_ζῆτιν\_α\_η\_ηο\_κ\_νοκίδηνηζεο\_ς\_η\_κ\_θοβε\_ζζαη This deficiency in fear for the gods explains Festus' ability to refer to the issues concerning the resurrection as a “superstition” (Ac.25:19) and to exclaim sardonically when Paul gives the testimony of his conversion. As the reader of Acts knows from Paul's testimony that Luke is showing how God has been at work in his life, Festus' outburst indicates a complete lack of respectful fear of the gods. There is an exception to this in Acts 24:25, where Felix becomes afraid when Paul talks concerning self-control and the judgement. The motif of fear is strongly relativized, though, by the greed mentioned immediately afterwards (Ac.24:26).

<sup>133</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 123.

Although Conzelmann and Haenchen do not recognise the characteristics of atheism they do notice the confusion that these high officials find themselves in. Conzelmann links the ignorance and illogicality that comes out in the course of Paul's defence with other significant occasions of the presentation of the gospel in Acts.<sup>134</sup> In his comments on Acts 25:18 where Festus explains to Agrippa that the charges against Paul took him by surprise, Conzelmann writes: "Luke described the Greeks' inability to understand the resurrection faith. Now the same is said about the Romans, and in this way preparation is made for 26:24."<sup>135</sup> Likewise on Acts 25:18, Haenchen makes the following observation: "It is not a question of the contrast between political and religious offenses, but of that between real offenses and theological differences which for the Romans are incomprehensible and pointless."<sup>136</sup> In this case, however, the incomprehension of "the Romans" need to be qualified as referring to "those in high places" and reflecting a deeper attitude of atheism.

According to Plutarch, ignorance is just as basic a problem that afflicts the atheist as it is for the superstitious. However in contrast to the superstitious who express their ignorance in an emotional and uncontrolled fashion, the atheist expresses his ignorance through hardness, stubbornness, indifference and scorn towards God and those who believe in him. The importance of this point to Plutarch comes through in the opening sentence of his work *On Superstition*, where he describes the atheist's ignorance: Σ\_ς περ\_ ζε\_ν\_ καζίας θα\_ \_γνοίας ε\_ζ\_ς\_ξ\_ ρτ\_ς δίτα\_ σείζεις η\_ κ\_ν\_ ζπερ\_ ν\_ τωρίως ζθι\_ερο\_ς ηο\_ς\_ νηηηύποης ζέζη η\_ν\_ ζέόηεια η\_ δ\_ ζπερ\_ ν\_ γρο\_ς ηο\_ς\_ παι ο\_ς η\_ν\_ δεηζηδακονίαν πεποίεθεν.<sup>137</sup> Plutarch uses a variety of words to describes the ignorance of the atheist. "Ignorance" (γνοηθ),<sup>138</sup> ignorance with the added characteristic of "blindness" (καζηα)<sup>139</sup> or "distressing ignorance" (γνοηαται επ\_).<sup>140</sup> Plutarch also adds that the atheist concludes that life in general is not directed by any divine providence but that all events are the result of Fortune and Chance. The atheist therefore regards life as "confusion" (ζσγθετσκέμφς), "disordered" (θρίμφς) and "topsy-turvy" (ηαράηηηηα). In Plutarch's words: \_υ\_ \_ πάνηα ζσγθετσκέμφς θα\_ \_θρίμφς θέρεηηα θα\_ ηαράηηηηα η\_ η\_ν\_ νζρώπων.<sup>141</sup>

The ignorance, illogicality and confusion that is evidenced by Festus therefore corresponds to what Plutarch describes as characteristic of atheists and contributes to his failure to respond to Paul in a manner which is appropriate for true religion.

## 6 Agrippa: intrigued but sceptical

Yet another character needs to be discussed in order to determine the basic attitude of those in

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<sup>134</sup> He links the illogicality and ignorance evident in Festus' outburst with the ignorance of the Athenians. See the discussion on the ignorance of the Athenian philosophers: P.G.R. de Villiers, E.A. Germiquet, Paul and the Athenians in Acts 17. *Superstition in Early Christianity and Graeco-Roman society, Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 9 (1998): 38-40.

<sup>135</sup> Conzelmann, 206.

<sup>136</sup> Haenchen, 672.

<sup>137</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 164E.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 164E.

<sup>139</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 164E.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 167A.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 168A.



become what I am, except for these chains.”(Ac.26:29).<sup>148</sup> Therefore Malherbe’s indication that the understanding of Agrippa’s comment is to be found in the philosophical issue of instantaneous conversions, brings clarity to what has remained a perplexing comment by Agrippa. Paul’s account of his instantaneous conversion on the road to Damascus and his subsequent linking of this to the proclamation of the resurrection, would have the protreptic effect on Agrippa that Paul had reached a stage not yet attained by Agrippa. Seen in this light, Agrippa’s response is a contemptuous rejection by him of any desire to aspire to Paul’s apparent advanced stage.

That Luke intended Agrippa’s comment as sarcastic and as an indication to the reader that Agrippa remained aloof from Paul’s appeal is also supported by Justin’s explanation that it is not easy for a soul enchained by ignorance to change quickly ( ο π ε γ ν φ ρ ί δ ο κ ε ν ο ν γ ν ο ί θ α η τ ο κ έ ν ε ν υ σ τ ν ζ σ ν ή ό κ φ ς κ ε η β ά ι ε η ν, *First Apology* 12.11). The relevance of Justin’s explanation for Agrippa’s rejection of Paul’s proclamation is enhanced further by Justin linking it to the rejection of the charge of atheism. In the very next sentence Justin refutes the charge of atheism levelled against Christians by expounding on the qualities of God the Creator. Α ζ ε σ η κ ν ο ν ς ο θ ς κ ν, η ν δ ε κ η σ φ γ ν η ο δ ε η σ π α ν η ς ζ ε β ό κ ε ν ο η (*First Apology* 13.1). By linking the charge of atheism to the concept of instantaneous conversion, Justin therefore argues that the Christian’s ability to change is a sign that he is not an atheist. By reversing Justin’s argument, the conclusion is therefore drawn that one of the reasons for Agrippa resisting change is his atheistic tendency.

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

The importance of this concept in early Christian apologetics is further illustrated by Irenaeus' use of it in order to expose the weaknesses of those who oppose Christianity. Irenaeus shows that he understands it in a negative light for he links the slowness of change to the presence of error. "For, though it is not an easy thing for a soul under the influence of error to repent, yet, on the other hand, it is not altogether impossible to escape from error when the truth is brought alongside it."<sup>149</sup>

Unlike the ambiguous results achieved through grammatical analysis, Agrippa's sarcastic retort to Paul, when interpreted in the light of moral philosophy, is an indication that Luke intended Agrippa's retort "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" as a rejection of any desire to change and as a sign of his own atheistic leanings.

## 7 The friendship between Festus and Agrippa

In the attempts to understand the meaning of Agrippa's comment, the importance of the implied friendship between Festus and Agrippa has not been sufficiently recognised. Although the question of friendship between a Roman official and the representative of the Herod's has already been investigated in the chapter on superstition,<sup>150</sup> some further points are nevertheless relevant.<sup>151</sup>

At the trial of Jesus, Luke specifically refers to the friendship that was cemented between Herod and Pilate (Lk.23:12). What is all the more significant is that prior to Luke's reference to the friendship, Herod ridiculed and mocked Jesus (ἔσοσζενήζαζ δ\_ α\_ η\_ ν\_ \_ Ηρ\_ δεζ ζ\_ ν\_ ηο\_ ζ ζηραηεύκαζην α\_ ηο\_ θα\_ κπαίξαζ, Lk.23:11). From the way Luke describes the friendship, it appears that the ridiculing and mocking of Jesus by Herod was the catalyst for it. Johnson's comments on this verse is illuminating for he states that Luke appears to be particularly conversant with the conventions of friendship in the Hellenistic world.<sup>152</sup> He refers to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.4.5; to indicate that one of the axioms of friendship in the Hellenistic world was that it be between equals.<sup>153</sup> He explains that this equality was implicit in the relationship between Pilate and Herod because Pilate recognises Herod's authority by sending Jesus to him (Lk.23:7). Johnson explains that in the Hellenistic mind, recognising a person's authority: "signifies a recognition of him as an „equal“ and therefore capable of being a „friend“."<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Cf. *The Writings of Irenaeus*, trans. A.Roberts, W.Rambaut, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1868), 260. Irenaeus, 3.2.3. Malherbe also adds that the notion of sudden conversion finds its counterpart in Christian literature in the conversion account of Augustine. (August., *Conf.* 6.7.11-2.) Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 17 note 80.

<sup>150</sup> See chap. 2 section 4.1.

<sup>151</sup> That parallels and the repeating of themes that exist within and between the Gospel of Luke and Acts is a well documented literary technique of Luke's. One aspect of the parallel between the two Herods has already been investigated in the section 3.2 in the previous chapter, when Herod Antipas had been hoping to see Jesus (Luke 23:8) helps to explain that Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:22) had been waiting to see Paul.

<sup>152</sup> Johnson, 366.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 366.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

Luke's use of parallels between situations and personalities makes it possible for the model of Pilate's friendship with Herod to guide the interpretation of the relationship and the friendship between Festus and Agrippa. Johnson, basing himself on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, explains some further implications of friendship which are relevant to the understanding of Festus and Agrippa. He writes: "For those powerfully placed in Hellenistic society, „friends“ were often political allies or associates.”<sup>155</sup> A further relevant aspect concerning the friendship between Festus and Agrippa is that in the “ancient world friendship meant spiritual sharing of the most profound kind.”<sup>156</sup> Festus’ call on Agrippa to help him formulate a written report, which he needed to send to the Emperor, indicates that Festus recognised and respected Agrippa's opinion. The recognition of Agrippa's opinion by Festus implies friendship between them. Festus call on Agrippa to assist him in assessing religious issues, is a further indication that their friendship also included the sharing of spiritual values. Therefore a picture of friendship between Festus and Agrippa emerges, in which political and spiritual values are shared.

The issue of the friendship between Festus and Agrippa also sheds light on their portrayal as sharing their atheistic tendencies. The aspect of friendship is also referred to by Plutarch in the passage cited earlier, where he notes that sardonic exclamations are typical of atheists when they hear expositions on true worship. The aspect that also needs to be taken into consideration is Plutarch's added comment that such outbursts against true religion are made by a person when in the company of friends and for the benefit of the ears of his friends. Plutarch explains the circumstances under which such remarks are made: θα\_ ποσ παραθ\_εγγόκενον \_ρέκα πρ\_ς ηο\_ς ζσνήζεης<sup>157</sup> As Bailly explains, the word ζσνήζεης used by Plutarch, indicates an intimate friendship.<sup>158</sup> Thus Plutarch portrays the atheist as making these kinds of comments *while in the company of his friends*.<sup>159</sup>

Thus the parallel between Pilate and Herod’s friendship and that of Festus and Agrippa acts as a backdrop against which the retort of Agrippa can be evaluated. According to Plutarch’s explanations, the reactions and comments of both Festus and Agrippa, are those that are typical of atheistic friends in which they share political and spiritual values.

### 7.1 Agrippa’s judgement

A final point from the text is the relevance of Agrippa’s other comment that Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar. O’Toole has argued that Agrippa’s final positive judgement concerning Paul is an indication by Luke that Agrippa seriously contemplated a commitment when he asked if Paul thought that he could make him a Christian in such a short time. O’Toole writes: “His statement is infinitely important for Luke's apology of Paul and is the supposition on which „This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment (26:31)“ and „This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar (26:32)“ are based.”<sup>160</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>156</sup> Johnson refers to Aristotle *Nic. Eth.*, 9: Ibid., 124.

<sup>157</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 169D.

<sup>158</sup> “lié avec, qui a des relations d'amitié” Bailly, s.v., ζσνήζεης, *DGF*.

<sup>159</sup> This is understandable as such derogatory remarks, when they are made about the official state religions, are not to be uttered in public but must remain within the circle of intimate friends. The fact the Festus is able to make his outburst and derogatory remarks while in the audience hall with many city officials present is because his remarks are not directed against the official religions of the empire but against Paul's presentation of Christianity.

<sup>160</sup> O’Toole, *Christological Climax*, 142.

By this O'Toole means that Agrippa had found Paul to be free of the accusations and worthy of being set free, and had accordingly been impressed by him.

However, Luke's parallel description of the events at the trial of Jesus proves the exact opposite to be true. At the trial of Jesus (Lk.23:11), Luke specifically states that Herod and his soldiers "ridiculed" (ξοσζενήζαζ) and "mocked" (κπαίζαζ) Jesus. However, despite having been mocked by Herod, Pilate states that both he and Herod could not find any basis for the charges against Jesus (Lk.23:14f). The following similarity in the choice of words between Pilate's pronouncement concerning Jesus and Agrippa's pronouncement concerning Paul, indicates Luke's intended parallel. Luke 23:15b: θα\_ \_δο\_ ο\_δ\_ν\_ ξηον ζανάηοσ\_ζη\_ν\_ πεπραγκένον α\_η\_ and Acts 26:31b: \_ηηο\_δ\_ν\_ ζανάηοσ\_δεζκ\_ν\_ ξηονπράζζ\_εη\_ \_νζροφοσ\_ο\_ηοσ\_.

Some scholars have pointed out Luke's intended parallel between these two pronouncements. Johnson describes it in the following way, "Like Jesus, who was declared innocent three times by the Roman authority Pontius Pilate (Lk.23:4, 14, 22) with the agreement of the Tetrarch Herod (23:5), so is Paul three times declared innocent of the charges against him by Roman authorities with the agreement of a representative of the Herodian family."<sup>161</sup> Likewise L'Éplatténier comments on Acts 26:31, "Il y a là un parallèle évident avec les trois déclarations de Pilate à propos de Jésus, que les juifs voulaient voir condamner à mort (cf. Lc 23, 4.14.15.22)."<sup>162</sup> He shows the intended close literary relationship between Herod and Agrippa by stating: "L'avis d'Agrippa fait pendant à celui d'Hérode."<sup>163</sup> In this way, the attitude of Herod at the trial of Jesus, of mocking and ridiculing Jesus, together with the friendship between Pilate and Herod, acts as a pointer to how Luke intended Agrippa's comment to be understood. Spencer, in his brief assessment of Agrippa's statement, draws on the relationship it has with Festus' comment in order to interpret Agrippa's statement. "The famous „almost persuaded“ comment of King Agrippa (26:28) may just as easily be interpreted as a derisive dismissal of Paul's audacious rhetoric („Do you really dare so quickly - and naively - to persuade *me* to become a Christian?“) as a sympathetic confession of sincere interest in Paul's gospel. The former reading pairs more readily with Festus' judgement that Paul had pushed his newfangled ideas to the brink of good sense, even sanity (26:24)!"<sup>164</sup>

That Luke intends the reader to interpret Agrippa's retort to Paul as sarcasm, is confirmed in two ways. Firstly through the internal evidence of the Lukan text, which depicts Paul's trial as a parallel to that of Jesus. Secondly, through external evidence such as Plutarch, who indicates that these types of derogatory comments and retorts takes place between atheistic friends. The picture that Luke creates concerning Agrippa's retort, is that it consistently points to Agrippa sharing the same atheistic disposition as Festus.

## 8 The accusation of atheism and the Christian response

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<sup>161</sup> Johnson, 440.

<sup>162</sup> L'Éplatténier, 258.

<sup>163</sup> L'Éplatténier, 258.

<sup>164</sup> Spencer, 156.

The issue of atheism being pertinent to Luke and his depiction of it as forming a significant style of response to the Christian proclamation, is an issue that was highly relevant in the early church. The charge of atheism was a standard accusation to level at people who were perceived as badly integrated with the life of the Graeco-Roman society. This was particularly true with respect to the religious beliefs that were held and perceived to be different from the accepted religious standards of the society. One such group that was classed as atheist by Strabo (64 B.C. - A.D. 21) was the Gallaeci of Spain. Sherwin-White explains the significance of this, “This context suggests that by ἀθεοί he meant what was intended a century later when the Christians were called ἄθεοι - that the religious ideology of the Callaeci bore no relation to that of the rest of the world at the time.”<sup>165</sup> The accusation of atheism was one that people tried to avoid because of the negative and serious implications of being seen as antisocial. Often linked to the charge of atheism was that of being “haters of humanity” because of the perceived negative implication of not worshipping the gods who are protectors of the society. Tacitus records that as a consequence of the assassination of Pudentinus Secundus, all his slaves were executed, that amongst them were people “without religion” (quibus diversi ritus, externa sacra aut nulla sunt).<sup>166</sup> Herrman explains that these people without religion were most probably Christians. “(D)es chrétiens que les païens croyaient athées.”<sup>167</sup> As these events were taking place in A.D. 57, the accusation was already a problem to Christians at the time of Luke's writing. One sees in the writings of Arnobius, the Christian apologist, evidence that the accusation of atheism was an ongoing problem. He writes that Christians are called atheists “on the ground that we pay very little respect to the gods”<sup>168</sup> The accusation was not restricted to rhetoric but spilled over into active antagonism against Christians. The writer of the letter describing the persecution of the Christians in Lyon in A.D. 177, refutes the accusations that Christians were atheists and ungodly (ἀθεοὶ καὶ ἀσεβεῖς ἀνόμοιοι).<sup>169</sup>

Therefore Luke is already seen to be dealing with issues that would turn out to be a serious problems for the Christian church before and after his time. By portraying Paul as being mocked by Festus and Agrippa in a way typical of atheists, he is not only portraying them as representatives of atheism but also showing in a clear way that Paul, as the representative of Christianity is dissociated from such people.

## 9 The lack of references to Atheism in the text

Although this chapter has focussed on the reaction of Festus and Agrippa as being typical of atheists, it needs to be noted that the word “atheist” does not appear in the Lukan text. This is striking for it contrasts with the discussion on superstition which was supported by the appearance in the text of θεοφοβία (Ac.25:19) and θεοφοβία (Ac.17:22). In attempting to understand this apparent anomaly, a number of factors which mitigate for the absence of ἀθεός in the text, need to be considered.

In the discussion on the growth of atheism in the empire<sup>170</sup> it was stressed that atheism was unofficial and needed to be maintained as a strictly private opinion. Atheism itself was not

<sup>165</sup> A.N.Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 10.

<sup>166</sup> Tacitus *Annales* 14.44.

<sup>167</sup> L.Herrman, Chrestos: Témoignages Païens et Juifs sur le Christianisme du Premier Siècle, *Latomus Revue D'Études Latines* 109 (1970): 56.

<sup>168</sup> Arnobius *Adversus Gentes* 6.27.

<sup>169</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.1.9.

<sup>170</sup> Section 1.6.

punishable, but those who had a disposition towards it found themselves in a precarious position as it could easily be linked to a failure of giving due honour to the official gods. Young explains the problem: “Religion, embedded in ethnic cultures, was a matter not of belief but of loyalty.”<sup>171</sup> Thus the dividing line between atheism and disloyalty to the state was often blurred. The problems that this perception could cause can be seen by the way Dio Chrysostom had to defend himself. Dio himself explains: “But my bill of indictment was longer and, one might say, nobler, a sort of occult bill apparently: *‘Dio is guilty, first, of not honouring the gods either with sacrifices or with hymns, by abolishing the festivals of our fathers;’*” (italics mine, Ἀδηθεῖ Γίφν, ηο\_ς κ\_ν ζεο\_ς κ\_ ηηκ\_ν κήη\_ \_ν ζςζίας κήη\_ \_ν \_κνοης θαηα ύφν η\_ς παηρίοσ\_ ορηάς).<sup>172</sup> In discussing this issue, MacMullen indicates that behind the charge of not honouring the gods and of failing to sacrifice, was the belief that Dio was an atheist.<sup>173</sup> Concerning atheism, MacMullen notes further: “It was probably a matter of public scandal but not actually a crime.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> F.Young, “Greek Apologists of the Second Century”, M.Edwards, M.Goodman, S.Price, eds. *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 101.

<sup>172</sup> Dio Chrysostom *Discourse* 43.11. MacMullen refers to a similar situation recorded by Dio, however the reference is rather obscure. *Discourse* 75.5: “But so great is the power it possesses, that it is the law which assists even the gods. For example, the sacriligious and those who violate the reverence due to the gods it punishes. Moreover, the law itself no one has the power to injure. For everyone who transgresses the law harms, not the law, but himself.”

<sup>173</sup> MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 176 note 2.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

Luke's awareness of this problem is confirmed by his highlighting of it in his presentation of the Areopagus speech where he specifically refers to comments by the Athenian philosophers that Paul was advocating foreign gods (Ac.17:18: ξένων δαηιονίφν). Commentators generally view this as an allusion to the accusations of atheism against Socrates. Jackson and Lake comment as follows: "The similarity with the accusation against Socrates almost exactly 450 years before ...can scarcely have been overlooked by the author."<sup>175</sup> In a similar vein, Haenchen writes: "The ξένα δαηιόνηα remind the educated reader of the accusation against Socrates."<sup>176</sup> Ferguson elaborates further on the significance of the charge: "Socrates seemed to be one of those ripping apart the fabric of public life, and among his pupils and friends were critics of the democracy. He was accused of *not worshipping the gods* but introducing a new *daim\_n* and of corrupting the youth (*italics mine*)."<sup>177</sup> The probability that Luke was making a direct reference to the issue of atheism, by highlighting the case of Socrates, finds support in a similar comparison made by Justin, little more than half a century later. Young writes: "The charge of atheism which is the main issue that Justin addresses recalls the charge against Socrates, whom Justin is anxious to claim as a proto-Christian,"<sup>178</sup>

By this allusion to Socrates, Luke indicates his awareness of the serious repercussions that the charge of atheism could have. It is in this light that Luke's caution in making direct references to high officials like Festus, Agrippa, Felix and Gallio being atheists, needs to be appreciated. The atheism of high officials was probably more of an open secret which was referred to in the form of allusions rather than through direct indictments. The need for prudence in laying charges of atheism is discussed by Clarke in his observations concerning Minucius Felix's reference to the atheists Theodorus of Cyrene and Diagoras of Melos (*Octavius* 8.2). Clarke comments as follows: "It is worth noting that Caecilius does not lay any *formal* general charge against the Christians partly because, characteristically of the pragmatic Romans, there was no specific Roman statute against believing the gods to be nonexistent; hence Tert. *Apol.* 46.4ff., Orig. *C.Cels.* 8.38 can plead for treatment equal to that of the other philosophical 'atheists.'" There were only legal regulations against specific rites, acts of impiety, or sacrilege."<sup>179</sup> Not only are no formal charges of atheism laid, but there is also no direct refutation of it. Clarke elaborates further on this apparent deliberate avoidance of making direct allusions to atheism. "In his reply Octavius does not face directly this charge of 'atheism,'" partly because it had (deliberately? ) not been posed openly, but partly, too, because if it meant 'not

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<sup>175</sup> Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.212.

<sup>176</sup> Haenchen, 518. O'Neill indicates how relevant the issue of Socrates was to Luke and subsequent apologists: "In fact, the argument that Paul could reveal to them the Unknown God contained an implicit claim that a greater than Socrates was here. As I pointed out in Chapter One, Luke was able to assume (like Justin Martyr, Appendix to the Apology 10.6) that Socrates had taught the Athenians to seek full knowledge of the God who was unknown to them. The Epicureans and Stoics, both of whom, especially the Stoics, revered Socrates, are confronted by a man who knows the secret that Socrates could not, or would not, divulge. It is ironic that these Epicureans and Stoic call Paul a ζπερκοιόγος, in the same manner as Aristophanes in the *Clouds* had ridiculed Socratic philosophy, and that they wonder whether he has not been trying to introduce strange divinities, the charge upon which Socrates was condemned to death (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, i.1; Plato, *Apology*, 24B)." J.C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting*, (London: S.P.C.K., 1970), 164

<sup>177</sup> Ferguson, 259.

<sup>178</sup> Young, 83. The reference to Socrates is found in: Justin Martyr *Second Apology* 10.

<sup>179</sup> W.G.Clarke, *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*. in the series: Quasten, J., W.J.Burghardt, T.C.Lawler. *Ancient Christian Writers, The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, (New York, Newman Press, 1974), 204 note 101.

worshipping the national gods“ it was formally irrefutable.”<sup>180</sup> It is in this domain of preferably making allusions to atheists rather than direct allegations, that useful insights are obtained.

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 205.

Further clarity on the importance of using allusions is found in Neyrey's explanation that in Luke's world people described themselves and others in terms of stereotypes.<sup>181</sup> He goes further and points out concerning Paul's speech in Athens: "Like other ancient writers, Luke portrays groups and parties in terms of stereotypes. Luke knows of and presents a stereotypical description of theodicy, a topos on it (Acts 17; 23; 24). Luke is not ignorant of the stereotypical perception of Epicureans and Stoics and he has told the story in Acts 17:16-34 in such a way that these two parties react in contrasting fashion to Paul, both at the beginning of the speech and at its end. The stereotypical perception of Epicureans and Stoics is based on contrasting assessments of theodicy."<sup>182</sup> The important aspect of these comments is not simply that Luke makes use of stereotypes, but specifically his reference to the Epicureans who were the stereotypes of atheism. In his commentary on Acts 17:18, Haenchen has already identified that in referring to the Epicureans Luke is thinking of their atheism. "θαί ηηνες Luke will be thinking of the Epicureans with their materialism and practical atheism;"<sup>183</sup> Young focusses specifically on the significance of the Epicureans as atheists and the consequent general dislike which accompanied it. Young writes: "Examples of other texts that provide evidence of this dislike include Cicero's *Against Piso*, where Piso's Epicurean associations provide a stick for mockery; Plutarch's two works against Epicureans preserved among the *Moralia*, *The Impossibility of a Pleasant Life on Epicurean Principles* and *Against Colotes*; Lucian's satire *Alexander the False Prophet*, in which atheist, Epicureans and Christians are linked more than once, and 'Epicurean' is taken to be a term of abuse (25, 38, 46-7); and Plotinus' *Enneads*, 2.9.15."<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> J.Neyrey, *A Study in Stereotypes*, 129. Neyrey gives the following examples of stereotypes: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12), and "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4:9). Towns also were stereotyped: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)." Neyrey also deals with the Saducees and the Pharisees as stereotypes. Neyrey bases his statements on Malina's work: B.Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (Atlanta: SCM Press, 1983), 53-59.

<sup>182</sup> Neyrey, 133.

<sup>183</sup> Haenchen, 517.

<sup>184</sup> F.Young, "Greek Apologists of the Second Century", M.Edwards, M.Goodman, S.Price, eds. *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 100 note 34.

It is within this general climate of the Epicureans not only being recognized as atheists but even disliked because of it that Luke's reference to them needs to be considered. Neyrey identifies in the Epicureans of Acts 17, the group behind the mocking of Paul and the reference to him as a "babbler" (ζηρηκοιόγος). "Luke has conditioned the reader to expect the same pattern of 'division' among the crowds on the Areopagus during the subsequent climactic episode at Athens. Some show favor to Paul (Stoics), whereas others mock him (Epicureans)."<sup>185</sup> Neyrey further indicates that new hypotheses need to be applied to the Areopagus speech in order to refine and sharpen its understanding. An important hypothesis which he advocates is: "Epicureans were popularly known in terms of stereotypes, in particular their atheism, their denial of providence, and their rejection of theodicy. Luke understands the Epicureans in Acts 17 precisely in terms of a stereotype, namely their denial of theodicy."<sup>186</sup> Neyrey indicates further that Luke's portrayal of the reaction of the Epicureans was both predictable and desired by Luke.<sup>187</sup> In support of his argument that Luke used the Epicureans as stereotypes for atheism, Neyrey refers to the similar technique used by Plutarch to show that true religion lies between superstition and atheism. "Plutarch also criticizes the atheism of the Epicureans as doing away not only with the harmful superstitions about divine wrath and punishment in the afterlife but also the confidence of divine approval in prosperity and recourse in adversity ('Dialog on Love' 1092A-C, 1101A-F)."<sup>188</sup>

The view that the Epicureans represented atheism does not rest solely on Neyrey's work. Although it is not clear whether Epicureanism actually grew or declined during the second century<sup>189</sup> the fact that they were perceived as atheists appears uncontested. Sedley concludes his article on Epicureanism in the following way: "Its stances were dismissed by many as Philistine, especially its official rejection of all cultural and intellectual activities not geared to the Epicurean good life. It was also increasingly viewed as atheistic, and its ascetic hedonism misrepresented as crude sensualism (hence the modern use of 'epicure')."<sup>190</sup> Although Malherbe, in his article *Self-Definition among Epicureans and Cynics* does not analyse the reference to Epicureans in Acts 17, his comments not only confirm that they were perceived as atheists, but that despite some similarities between Christians and Epicureans, the attitude of Christians towards them was polemical. "Lucian of Samosata mentions Christians and Epicureans together as opponents of Alexander the false prophet (*Alex.* 25.38). It is not difficult to see why their critics could make the association. Both groups were charged with atheism, misanthropy, social irresponsibility, and sexual immorality."<sup>191</sup> Malherbe's comments are an

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 141f.

<sup>189</sup> Chilton quotes the work of De Witt who has indicated that Epicurean communities grew during the first century and continued with increased vigour during the second century. C.W.Chilton, trans. *Diogenes of Oenoanda*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), xxiv. However this evidence appears to be contested by Drachman who finds that "an essentially anti-religious school like that of the Epicureans actually dies out at this time." R.MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 176 note 1.

<sup>190</sup> D.Sedley, s.v., Epicureanism, *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 349.

<sup>191</sup> A.J.Malherbe, "Self-Definition among Epicureans and Cynics", F.Meyer, E.Sanders, eds. *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 47. On the polemical attitude of Christians towards Epicureans, Malherbe supplies the following additional references: W.Schmid, 'Epikur', *RAC* V, 1962, cols. 780-803; H.Steckel, 'Epikuros', *PW*, Suppl. XI, 1968, cols. 647f.; R.Jungkuntz, *Epicureanism and the*

indication that Luke's reference to the Epicureans could well contain a polemical slant and that Luke refers to them in a negative light so as to prevent any confusion between Christians and Epicureans.

Therefore in addition to the allusion to Socrates, Luke's direct reference to the Epicureans, who were publicly known as atheists, is strong indication that the characteristic of atheism is intentionally introduced in the text. Other indications that this was a pertinent issue for Luke comes from MacMullen who indicates that Christians could even be mistaken as an atheistic Epicurean sect: "It is convenient to look first at the group just mentioned, Epicureans, who represented the furthest extreme of disbelief. But aside from their name's being attached in obloquy to anyone who doubted a local oracle - 'Atheist or Christian or Epicurean' - they hardly appear in the sources of our period. It is rather their company that calls for comment: they are close to Christians, and that, in mid-second century Pontus, was not good. They are close to atheists, and that was a great deal worse."<sup>192</sup> There is therefore good reason for Luke to introduce the topic of atheism and to show that Christians are not to be associated with them. However, rather than making direct and negative references to people in high places, Luke makes allusions which could be well understood by the reader of the first century.

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*Church Fathers*, PhD Diss, University of Wisconsin, Ann Arbor, Mich. 1961 and "Fathers, Heretics and Epicureans", *JEH* 17, 1966, 3-10.

<sup>192</sup> MacMullen, 62.

On the use of allusions by Luke, Neyrey assesses that the stereotypical perception of characters in Acts is so important that he pursues his application of stereotypes further. He argues that Stoics / Epicureans are not the only stereotypes, but sees a similar process in Luke's presentation of the Pharisees / Sadducees in Acts 23.<sup>193</sup> The intriguing aspect in the application of these stereotypes to Luke's work, is the identification of a similar process in Hellenistic Judaism. Concerning Josephus' work, Neyrey adds: "Josephus provides a remarkable description of the Sadducees and the Pharisees that likens them to Epicureans and Stoics, respectively, and this precisely in terms of their stereotypical stand on theodicy."<sup>194</sup> Neyrey therefore sees a parallel presentation between Acts 17 (Epicureans/Stoics) and Acts 23 (Sadducees/Pharisees). Neyrey concludes: "Josephus is Luke's contemporary. He is proof positive of the stereotypical presentation of Pharisees = Stoics and Sadducees = Epicureans, and he groups both precisely in terms of the stereotype of theodicy. This is the type of understanding that Luke can assume, even if the reader did not follow the parallels between Acts 17 and 23."<sup>195</sup>

This examination therefore exposes a reference to atheists which is implicit in the Lukan text; represented by the Epicurean philosophers who mock Paul (Ac.17), and in the opposition of the Sadducees, who reject the resurrection (Ac.23). As Luke makes implicit references to atheists in the "trial" setting of both the Areopagus speech as well as in his appearance before the Sanhedrin, the identification of atheistic allusions in the final great "trial", therefore extends to Acts 26 a concept which is already present in Acts 17 and 23. Just as an explicit reference to superstition in the trial before Festus (Ac.25:19), is preceded by an explicit reference to superstition before the Areopagus speech (Ac.17:22); so the implicit allusion to atheism in Acts 26 is preceded by a comparable allusion in Acts 17. These two accounts therefore share the literary tension and interest created by the presentation of Christianity in a context where the extremes of superstition and the deficiencies of atheism need to be reckoned with.

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<sup>193</sup> Neyrey, *Study in Stereotypes*, 130.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.* The passage is from Josephus *Vita* 12.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

Luke's reference to the Epicureans in a polemical way is echoed in the writings of a later Christian apologist. In order to denigrate Celsus, Origen compares him to an Epicurean on a number of occasions. Origen writes: "The following is the view of Celsus and the Epicureans: 'Moses having learned the doctrine which is to be found existing among wise nations and eloquent men, obtained the reputation of divinity'."<sup>196</sup> In another passage Origen again associates Celsus with Epicureanism in a negative way: "And it becomes us rather than Celsus to say this, especially if it can be shown that he is an Epicurean."<sup>197</sup> Origen also reproaches Celsus of not being open about his Epicurean tendencies: "For from other treatises of his it is ascertained that he was an Epicurean; but here, because he thought that he could assail Christianity with better effect by not professing the opinions of Epicurus, he pretends that there is something better in man than the earthly part of his nature, which is akin to God, ..." <sup>198</sup> Of particular interest is De Labriolle's explanation that it was Celsus' sarcasm, mockery and verbal outbursts towards Christians, together with his harbouring of devious motives and accusing Christians of addressing women on street corners, which led Origen to write of him as a closet Epicurean. De Labriolle explains Origen's reaction thus: "Mais ce qui l'irrite surtout, c'est le ton sarcastique de Celse, ses persiflages, ses violences de langage. Il le traite de vil bouffon<sup>199</sup>, il le déclare indigne du nom de philosophe<sup>200</sup> pour ses mensonges calculés<sup>201</sup>, pour ses injures de femmes du peuple s'invectivant dans les carrefours.<sup>202</sup> Il voudrait bien faire croire que Celse est un épicurien camouflé, un épicurien qui n'avoue pas, qui déguise ses principes, mais se trahit par échappées."<sup>203</sup> De Labriolle also notes that the Epicureans were well known for their indifference towards public matters.<sup>204</sup> Origen's technique of stereotyping Celsus in a negative way by referring to him as an Epicurean who is sarcastic, indifferent and devious is recognisable in Luke's depiction of Festus' verbal outburst containing sardonic mockery (Ac.26:24); of doing things in a corner (Ac.26:26); of harbouring devious plans (Ac.25:9) and of a general indifference.

The representative value that Luke attaches to people and to groups has already been referred to in the introductory remarks of this chapter where Luke represents Festus as introducing Paul to Agrippa and *all* the people present with them (Ac.25:24; πάντες ο\_ ζσκαρόνηες) and explaining that Paul stands accused by *all the multitude of the Jews* (περ\_ ο\_ παν η\_ πι\_ ζος η\_ ν\_ Ισδαίφν\_ νέησόν\_ κη).<sup>205</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Origen *Contra Celsum* 1.21.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.49.

<sup>198</sup> Origen *Contra Celsum* 1.8. Other references to Epicureanism made by Origen can be found in 1.21; 1.43; 2.13; 3.75; 4.14.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.22; 4.30; 6.10, 74.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.41.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.11.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.52.

<sup>203</sup> De Labriolle, 135.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 136: "Au surplus, le souci que manifestait Celse au sujet des lois de l'État, des destinées de l'Empire, ses exhortations patriotiques à l'adresse des chrétiens, tout cela formait contraste avec l'indifférence bien connue des épicuriens pour la chose publique."

<sup>205</sup> Chap. 3.1.

A final note on the literary style that respectable authors adopted, also helps to explain Luke's avoidance of directly naming high officials as atheists. Clarke, in the introduction to his commentary on Minucius Felix's *Octavius* gives an explanation on the literary style expected from good authors of that period. His observation concerning the use of allusions rather than direct references, is illuminating. "As for the content, too, the reader was happy if it reflected past reading and not necessarily contemporary reality; he preferred the material to be familiar, traditional; great enjoyment was derived from the literary game of recognizing allusions, echoes, cross references, arguments deftly rephrased from classical authorities of the past, or from their Greek predecessors."<sup>206</sup> This explanation confirms that it was quite possible and even desirable for Luke to guide his reader in the recognition of certain personalities and their character traits without having to name them directly. Luke's allusions to the characteristics of the atheistic elite without the use of the word *ἄθεος* can be understood in terms of such a literary technique.

The absence of *ἄθεος* from the Lukan text is therefore understandable on three levels. It is understandable in Luke not wishing to make direct and serious allegations against high officials; it is understandable in terms of the literary technique of using stereotypes, and finally it is understandable as a literary quality which gives the reader the pleasure of recognizing certain characters from the description of their attributes without them having to be explicitly named.

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<sup>206</sup> Clarke, *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*, 12f.

## Chapter 4

### Paul and Christianity as Representatives of the Reasonable Mean

This section will focus on the presentation of Christianity as the reasonable mean which lies between the excesses of superstition and the deficiency of atheism. This presentation is therefore the logical sequence to the two previous sections which dealt with both these extremes.

This investigation will look at the brief but significant passage in Acts 26:25, 26, where Paul responds to Festus' derogatory outburst by stating his credentials for his faith in the resurrected Christ and will focus on the four key words: ζῶθροζύνε, ἰεζείας, ποθζέγγοκαη, and παρρεζηαδόκενοζ. The presentation of Paul as a rational and respectable representative of Christianity will be linked to the connotations which these words carry, together with the particular contrast that they create with Paul's pre-Damascus characteristics. The research will then be broadened to include other passages in Luke's work as well as contemporary literature.

#### 1 Paul's ζῶθροζύνε

Paul's declaration that he does not rave but that what he says is true and reasonable (Ac.26:25,26), has generally not received sufficient attention by commentators. The declaration of his credentials is frequently seen as part of his closing statement which includes his refutation of Festus' allegation of his madness.<sup>1</sup> This opinion is based on the view that Paul's climactic statement concerning the resurrection (Ac.26:23), has brought the speech to a close. The general lack of appreciation for what follows is illustrated by Harrison's comment on these verses: "Suddenly the address was interrupted by an outburst from Festus, which actually served to terminate the discourse, although it is likely that Paul had said most of what he had in mind."<sup>2</sup> Indicating a similar lack of appreciation for Paul's subsequent declaration, Krodel combines vs 24 to 32 and describes them as a "brief dialogue" between Festus and Agrippa and their verdict.<sup>3</sup> Krodel's reference to the dialogue being between Festus and Agrippa without reference to Paul, confirms the lack of appreciation for the significance of Paul's statement concerning his credentials.<sup>4</sup> In the odd case, Rackham indicated by his comments that there is more to be read in the statement of Paul when he writes: "But of his sanity the apostle's courteous and ready response gave decisive proof."<sup>5</sup> The response of Paul, in fact, contains some significant remarks that illuminate the broader structure of the Lukan text decisively.

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<sup>1</sup> E.Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 372; classifies vs. 24-29 as Paul's verbal exchanges with Festus and Agrippa.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, 380. Conzelmann comments on vs. 24 with the words: "Again we have the interruption as an artistic device." Conzelmann, 212.

<sup>3</sup> Krodel, 75. The way he sees the structure of the speech indicates that for him Paul's declaration of his credentials belongs to the brief closing comments.

<sup>4</sup> One facet of Paul's reply that has been commented upon is Luke's use of the word ζῶθροζύνε. The obvious importance of this word which Haenchen calls a "Greek virtue" is illustrated by Luck's indication that the depth of Greek thought it represents is difficult to grasp through any single translated word: "It should be noted that transl. of this group which is so characteristic of Gr. thought is almost impossible. Lexicographically one can only describe its meaning by certain catchwords." Haenchen, 688; H.Luck, ζῶθρον θη., *TDNT* 7: 1097.

<sup>5</sup> Rackham, 473.

According to Luke, Paul's credentials are described by himself with the four words ζφθροζύνε, \_ιεζείας, \_ποθζέγγοκαη, and παρρεζηαδόκενο. They form the basis of Paul's statement and have important connotations which represent standards of respectability in Graeco-Roman moral philosophy.

### 1.1 The ζφθροζύνε of Paul within the structure of the speech

Before an analysis of the contribution that each of the four words make to the presentation of Paul, the unity of the speech as a whole needs to be considered. Paul's declaration of his credentials is not part of an addendum, but provides an essential clue to the structure of the speech.

The section of the speech containing Paul's positive characteristics is integrated in the rest of the speech by its standing in contrast to the earlier declaration by Paul of his attacks on Christians. The two sections in the speech where Paul refers to his own characteristics are therefore part of two important but contrasting sections which highlight the transformation that has taken place in Paul. These two contrasting sections (Ac.26:11 and 26:25) have their importance signalled to the reader by each being made part of a clearly defined subsection of the speech. The earlier description of Paul's excessive raging is introduced by the text marker κ\_v ο\_v,<sup>6</sup> while the latter description of Paul's rationality belongs to the section which is introduced by Festus' disruptive outburst.<sup>7</sup> It is Paul's response to Festus' outburst and his appeal to be considered ζφθροζύνε which forms the crux of this section.

In addition to the contrast that the structure of the speech reveals, an examination of the words used in Paul's self description reveals that the dominant words in each section, (pre-Damascus-καίνια and post-Damascus-ζφθροζύνε) stand in opposition to each other. Furthermore, each of these two dominant words are in turn linked to a group of words which as a whole stand in contrast with each other and which reflect the fundamental difference between superstition and rationality. The claim by Paul that his Christian beliefs are rational, truthful and expressed in a frank and bold manner (\_ιεζεία, ζφθροζύνε, \_ποθζέγγοκαη and παρρεζηαδόκενο, Ac.26:25f) stand in marked contrast to his previously stated practice of beating and persecuting Christians through excessive and irrational raging (θαηθιείφ, θαήνεγθα, \_νάγθαδον, \_δίφθον and περηζζ\_ς ηε \_κκαηνόκενο, Ac.26:9-11). The positive description of Paul after his conversion is therefore not simply a negation of Festus' outburst but is an integral and important component in the overall presentation of Paul's defence, describing the radical and positive change that has accompanied his conversion to Christianity. Within the speech, these two sections therefore stand in opposition to each other. The one, near the beginning of the speech, describes Paul's ravings, while the other, appearing at towards the end of the speech, affirms Paul's rationality. Thus because of the contrast created with Paul's previous characteristics, his positive credentials as a Christian take on special importance. Rather than seeing the response of Paul being limited to countering Festus' outburst, it is integrated into the defence speech as a whole as a necessary contrast to earlier parts.

Since the words ζφθροζύνε and καίν\_ play a significant role in the composition of the speech, an examination of their significance will illuminate their importance.

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<sup>6</sup> Munk, 240f. and Bruce, 440 confirm the classification of the section Acts 26:9-11 as a distinct section in the speech which focusses on Paul's persecution of the church. This textual division has been discussed in detail in the chapter entitled "superstition".

<sup>7</sup> Luke's technique of using an interruption to mark the conclusion of an important section has been noted by scholars. According to O'Toole, "The interruption of a speech is a Lukan literary device (cf. Ac.10:44; 17:32; 22:22 perhaps 5:33; 7:54)." O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 123.



This contrast is not only a creation of Luke's but its wider application is indicated by Luck who refers to a similar contrast which is found in various philosophical works.<sup>13</sup> Luck indicates that in Plato's *Republic*, a person who had been in his right mind is described as having gone mad. ε\_ ηῦ\_ ι\_ άβση παρ\_ θί\_ ι\_ σ\_ \_νδρ\_ ζ\_ φ\_ θρονο\_ νηος\_ π\_ ι\_ α, ε\_ κανε\_ ζ\_ \_παηηο\_.<sup>14</sup> In *Phaedrus*, Plato again uses the two words in contrast to each other: δηόηηδ\_ \_κ\_ \_ν\_ καίνεση, \_ δ\_ \_ζ\_ φ\_ θρονε\_.<sup>15</sup> A similar contrast is found in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*: ηῖ\_ ζ\_ φ\_ θροζύ\_ νε, ηῖ\_ κανία.<sup>16</sup> Jackson and Lake also indicate that the contrast around which Paul's response to Festus' outburst is structured, can be compared to an interview that takes place between the Roman Emperor (probably Commodus) and a certain Appianus (P. Oxy 33).<sup>17</sup> The latter, having been condemned to punishment, reviled the Emperor abusively, contrasting his character with that of his father: Α\_ η\_ θράηφρ. \_ Αππηαέ, (ε)\_ ώ\_ ζ\_ α\_ κεν\_ θα\_ \_κε\_ ζ\_ καηνοκένοσζ\_ θα\_ \_πονενοεκένοσζ\_ ζ\_ φ\_ θρονίδην·

This same contrast also emerges in the work of early Christian apologists. Luck draws attention to Justin Martyr who differentiates the reasonable worship of Christians from the madness that opponents try to associate with Christianity.<sup>18</sup> "(W)e reasonably worship Him" (ηῖς\_ ζ\_ φ\_ θρον\_ ν\_ \_κοι\_ ογή\_ ζ\_ εη;) which he uses to negate "for they proclaim our madness to consist in this" (\_ νηα\_ ζ\_ α\_ γ\_ ρ\_ κανίαν\_ \_κ\_ \_ν\_ θαηθαίνονηηη).<sup>19</sup>

Apart from Christian apologists, the use of ζ\_ φ\_ θροζύ\_ νε as a contrast (in a wider sense) to unenviable characteristics is also found in Hellenistic Jewish literature. Philo, using the metaphor of moving to a new home describes repentance as a process of leaving covetousness and injustice and returning to soberness and justice: "[Repentance] has been suddenly possessed with an ardent yearning for betterment, eager to leave its inbred covetousness and injustice and come over to soberness and justice (ζ\_ φ\_ θροζύ\_ νε\_ ν\_ θα\_ δη\_ θαη\_ οζύ\_ νε\_ ν) and other virtues."<sup>20</sup> The ongoing use of the word ζ\_ φ\_ θροζύ\_ νε\_ ν by both Jewish and Christian apologists to create a contrast with erroneous perceptions of their faith, is evidence of its usefulness and importance in projecting one's beliefs as rational.

Therefore, Luke's juxtaposition of ζ\_ φ\_ θροζύ\_ νε to καίνοκαη in Acts 26:25 is a clear and powerful portrayal of Paul, and with him of Christianity, as a movement of people who stand in contrast to the excessive and irrational ravings of antagonistic Jews (including the

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<sup>13</sup> Luck, ζ\_ ώ\_ θρο\_ φ\_ ν\_ θηι., *TDNT* 7: 1097.

<sup>14</sup> Plato *The Republic* 331C.

<sup>15</sup> Plato *Phaedrus* 244A.

<sup>16</sup> Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.1.16, cit. ap. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 322. In his work on the parable of the prodigal son (Lk.15) Holgate examines a similar use of words by Luke and gives the examples of Ps-Diogenes who uses ζ\_ φ\_ θρονηνασ a counter to varied forms of unacceptable behaviour. "See Ps-Diog. *Ep.* 28 (120,19-21; 122,10-13, 21-22; 122,30-124,3): They are unable even to enjoy a wedding day, because they are spoiled and hard to please. At festivals or games they eat, drink, get drunk, have intercourse and act effeminately. They suffer illness through intemperance. If they have any sense and wish to be saved they must learn self-control (ζ\_ φ\_ θρονηνκ\_ ά\_ ζ\_ εηηε)." Holgate, *Prodigality, Liberality and Meanness*, 157 note 59.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 322.

<sup>18</sup> Luck indicates concerning the use of ζ\_ φ\_ θροζύ\_ νε\_ ζ\_ in Acts 26:25 that it "is not to the virtue of discretion but simply to „being rational, in one's right mind"." Luck, ζ\_ ώ\_ θρο\_ φ\_ ν, *TDNT* 7: 1102.

<sup>19</sup> Justin Martyr *First Apology* 13.2: 13.4.:

<sup>20</sup> Philo *Praem. Poen.* 15.

“earlier” Paul). The contrast created in the text by the use of the word ζφθροζύνε in Acts 26, is therefore not a cursory one, but its appearance in the works of later apologists is an indication of its ongoing importance.

### 1.3 Σωθροζύνε and καίν\_ in the Lukan text

In light of the forgoing discussion, Luke’s grouping of Paul’s characteristics around the word ζφθροζύνε in refuting the charge of καίν\_, reveals its importance and is an indication of the need for further investigation.

As discussed above, the meaning of ζφθροζύνε is understood more clearly by considering it in its opposition to κανία.<sup>21</sup> The relationship between these two words is reflected in the text by their close proximity to each other. Essentially, ζφθροζύνε is separated from καίνοκαη only by the interpolation θράνηζηεΦ\_ζηε and \_ιεζείας. The textual closeness which heightens the contrast between ζφθροζύνε and καίνοκαη (Ac.26:25) has been recognised by some scholars. O’Toole writes: “Of the words in our section which stand in opposition to „madness“, *sōphrosyn\_s* does so most obviously.”<sup>22</sup> Haenchen is likewise emphatic about the contrast: “The κανία is the opposite of the Greek ζφθροζύνε, which Paul possesses.”<sup>23</sup> The contrast between ζφθροζύνε and καίν\_ is further intensified by the use of \_κκαηνόενος in Acts 26:11. The word \_κκαηνόενος reflects the qualities from which Paul had turned, while ζφθροζύνε reveals the qualities to which he has turned.<sup>24</sup> The contrast is captured by Preisker in a concise way: “What are \_ιεζείας θα\_ ζφθροζύνε ρήκαηα to the believer (v.25) are καίνεζζαηη to the unbeliever.”<sup>25</sup> A similar observation is found in Luck who, in referring to the work of Lewy, identifies the antithesis between the two words as an oxymoron.<sup>26</sup>

An indication that Luke used ζφθροζύνε to describe Paul (Ac.26:25) with the intention of highlighting the contrast from his previous lifestyle, is revealed by a similar use of ζφθροζύνε by Luke in his Gospel account of the healing of the demoniac (Lk.8:26-37). Concerning this passage, Lagrange points out how Luke’s use of ζφθροζύνε highlights the contrast with the demoniac’s previous condition. “Il était assis, lui emporté aux déserts; vêtu, lui qui n’avait pas d’habits (et Lc. avait insisté sur ces circonstances); dans son bon sens, lui véritable fou furieux.”<sup>27</sup> The contrast is seen to be important to Luke for he has accentuated it by inserting specific details which are absent in Mark. He has done this by

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. footnote 9. Luck, ζώθροφνθη., *TDNT* 7: 1097.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce, 448, followed by R.F.O’Toole, *Christological Climax*, 135.

<sup>23</sup> Haenchen, 688. Johnson, 439 also notes the contrast between these two words.

<sup>24</sup> Not all scholars understand κανία as a contrast to ζφθροζύνες. Johnson indicates its various possible meanings; divine inspiration (Herodotus *Persian Wars* 4: 79) or infatuation (Lucian *The Ignorant Book Collector* 22) or it can mean simply “to be crazy” (Dio Chrysostom *Oration* 12;8). Johnson, 439. Rackham points out “in the ancient world madness was closely associated with inspiration: a madman was supposed to be possessed by some supernatural power and was looked upon with awe.” R.B.Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5th ed. (London: Methuen, 1910), 473.

<sup>25</sup> H.Preisker, καίνοκαη *TDNT* 4: 361.

<sup>26</sup> H.Lewy, *Sobria Ebrietas*, *ZNW*, 9, 1929, 52. Cit. ap. U.Luck, ζώθροφνθη., *TDNT* 7: 1101 note 3.

<sup>27</sup> M.J.Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc*, (Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 250. Jackson and Lake also affirm this antithesis when they point out the similarity with the gospel passage: “ζφθρονε\_v is antithetical to demonic possession in Luke viii. 38”. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 322.

stating that the demoniac was naked (Lk.8:27: For a long time this man had not worn clothes; contrast Mk.5:1-20). This is a telling addition, for the absence of clothes symbolized public shame. Rapske touches on this subject: “Briefly, forced public nakedness was employed to shame individuals, whether it was a single action or formed part of a more extended status degradation ritual. Stripping prisoners-of-war was employed by Gelo the tyrant of Syracuse and by others as a strategy to humiliate them and excite contempt for them.”<sup>28</sup> Although Mark does state that after his healing the man was seated and clothed (Mk.5:15), the additional description by Luke that he had originally been naked, creates a starker contrast and intensifies the force of ζφθ ρονο\_νηα(Lk.8:35).

Lagrange further points out that the reference to the man being “at the feet of Jesus” (Lk.8:35, παρ\_ ηο\_ς πόδας ηο\_ \_Ιεζο\_) is another significant addition by Luke<sup>29</sup> for it links the restoration of the demoniac to his preparation for discipleship. He comes to this conclusion by comparing it to the description made of Paul during the second conversion account where his training as a Pharisee is said to have taken place “at the feet of Gamaliel” (Ac.22:3: παρ\_ ηο\_ς πόδας Γακαι ηι).<sup>30</sup> Luke’s modification of the Markan account in small but significant ways emphasises the impact of the word ζφθροζύνε in terms of the restoration of honour and the intellectual discipline of being a Christian disciple. For Luke, the word ζφθ ροζύνε gives a rational and intellectual component to Christian conversion.

#### 1.4 Philosophical importance of ζωθροζύνε

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<sup>28</sup> B.Rapske, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, (3), The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 297. Rapske gives the following references: Plutarch, *Ages* 9.5; Suetonius, *Vit.* 7.17.1; *Dig.*48.20.2.

<sup>29</sup> Lagrange, *Luc*, 250.

<sup>30</sup> M.J.Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc*, (Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 250. “Luc ajoute «aux pieds de Jésus », comme Paul aux pieds de Gamaliel (Act. xxii, 3), ce qui prépare sa demande d’être disciple.” Lagrange does note however that the phrase “at the feet of” is used by Luke on other occasions: Luke 7:38; 10:39. Schneider does not attach any other significance to the description of the demoniac as seated (Mk. 5:15 and the parallel Lk. 8:35) other than for practical reasons. C.Schneider, s.v., θάζεκ αηTDNT 3: 443.

The word ζφθροζύνε which Luke uses to describe Paul's self designation in Acts 26:25, is not only important because of the clear contrast that it creates with Festus' assessment of Paul, but also as a concept with strong philosophical connotations. This aspect of the word is summed up in a succinct way by Johnson: "It would be difficult to find a term more descriptive of the Greek philosophical ideal."<sup>31</sup> A short digression is, therefore, needed at this point to discuss the philosophical nature of the concept. Although it is a much discussed concept that has been the object of important publications, only a few observations can be made here.

The primary implication that the word carries is that of sound judgement. Louw and Nida expand on this in the following way: "to have understanding about practical matters and thus to be able to act sensibly"<sup>32</sup> Semantically linked to these meanings is that of moderation. Louw and Nida also place ζφθροζύνε semantically in the sub-domain of sensible behaviour as opposed to senseless behaviour: "to behave in a sensible manner, with the implication of thoughtful awareness of what is best - „moderation, sensibility“."<sup>33</sup> The practical implication of being able to make sensible decisions manifests itself in the ability to choose and maintain the mean.<sup>34</sup>

#### 1.4.1 Σφθροζύνε in Plato and Aristotle

The philosophical importance of ζφθροζύνε is illustrated by Plato's linking it to wisdom and seeing in it an important feature of virtue. In *Protagoras* Plato writes: θενον υέγερον ηερων εναη ζφθροζύνες ζοθία, κόρηον δθάηερων ρηης.<sup>35</sup> The importance of ζφθροζύνε is further enhanced by its connotation of self-control. Plato brings this out in his *Republic*: ζφθροζύνε ζηθαδον ηηνθαπηζαην γθράηηα<sup>36</sup> where he divides it into the two categories of knowing when to allow oneself to be controlled and of knowing how to control what is under ones responsibility: Σφθροζύνες δς πήζηηο ηηηηδε κέγηζηα ρτόνηφν κυ πεθόοσς εναη, αηος δ ρτονηας ηυ περ πόηοσ θαθροδίζηα θα περ δφδς δονυ;<sup>37</sup> That this was not an isolated interpretation of ζφθροζύνε is shown by the similar application attributed to it by Aristotle. He also argues that it is manifested when self-control is applied in areas such as food and sex.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Johnson, 439.

<sup>32</sup> Louw, & Nida, s.v., ζφθρονέφθη., 384.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 753.

<sup>34</sup> "Both Plato and Aristotle insist on the salutary truism that, by our actions, we form our characters and shape our lives." W.F.R.Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 160.

<sup>35</sup> Plato *Protagoras* 333A. In this passage Plato is arguing from the negative and proving that is not unlike wisdom and that both are a part of virtue.

<sup>36</sup> Plato *The Republic* 430E.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 389D.

<sup>38</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 7.4.2: υέγη δ ηηηηα, ηά ηε περ ηυ ηροθυθα ηυ ηυ θροδίηφν τρέιαν, θα ηηηηα ηυ ζφκαηθυ περ ηυ θοι αζίαν ζεκεν θα ηυ ζφθροζύνευ.

Of particular importance is Aristotle's use of ζφθροζύνε in his doctrine of the mean, to describe how a rational person is able to attain the balanced mid point. Aristotle can therefore write, κέζόμενος κ\_ν ζφθροζύνε,<sup>39</sup> In a subsequent discussion, Aristotle explains that all people, like animals, are subject to certain senses.<sup>40</sup> However the difference is that animals respond in excessive ways, while ζφθροζύνε offers people the possibility of self-control. He gives the example of profligacy and states: \_ηηο\_τ\_ \_ξζροφοί\_ζκεν\_ \_πάρτη, \_υ\_ \_δ\_α. η\_δ\_ ηοηοήοηζταίρεηνθα\_ κάηηζηα\_γαπ\_ν ζερη\_δες.<sup>41</sup> As Aristotle develops his argument, he contrasts the excesses of the profligate with the self control of the temperate person: \_δ\_ ζώθροφν κέζφς περ\_ηα\_η\_τεη<sup>42</sup> According to Luck ζφθροζύνε means primarily: “the rational, in the sense of what is intellectually sound.”<sup>43</sup> Understood in this light, Paul's description of himself as ζφθροζύνεζ (Ac.26:25) presents him as a rational person who is able to distinguish between the excesses of superstition, and deficiency of indifference and thereby maintain the mean.

#### 1.4.2 Σωθροζύνε in Jewish Hellenistic thought

The use of the philosophical concept of ζφθροζύνε in the Judeo-Christian tradition is not particular to Luke alone. Its use is also found in the apocryphal books of the Old Testament. The author of 4 Maccabees sets out to demonstrate the philosophical proposition that religious reasoning is absolute master of the passions. He writes in terms that are reminiscent of Plato and Aristotle: Δ\_ \_ρα η\_ν ζφθροζύνεζ θφιοηηθ\_ν παζ\_ν\_ \_ιογηζκ\_ς θαίνεηαη\_ \_πηθραηε\_ν, γαζηρηκαργίαζ ηεθα\_ \_πηζκαίαζ (4 Macc.1:3).<sup>44</sup> He also uses the characteristics of ζφθροζύνε as a counter to derision: Σφθροζύνεν ηε γ\_ρ\_ κ\_ς \_θηδαῖθ\_εη, \_ζηε παζ\_ν\_ η\_ν\_ δον\_ν θα\_ \_πηζκαη\_ν θραηε\_ν.<sup>45</sup>

Ferguson notes that although Platonic philosophy was not dominant in the Hellenistic Age, it came to that position in the early centuries of the Christian era and influenced some of the Jewish authors, notably Philo.<sup>46</sup> In his *Allegorical Interpretation*, Philo makes repeated use of the concept of self-mastery (ζφθροζύνε) as the supreme quality to which a person should aspire. He compares ζφθροζύνε to the serpent of Moses as the medium through which healing will be achieved. “How then is a healing of their suffering brought about? By the making of another serpent, opposite in kind to that of Eve, namely the principle of self-mastery (ζφθροζύνεζ ιόγος). For self-mastery (ζφθροζύνε) runs counter to pleasure.”<sup>47</sup> He goes on to identify ζφθροζύνε as a special blessing bestowed by God on those whom He loves: \_να γν\_ς, \_ηηο\_ πανηόζ\_ζηηηη\_κα ζφθροζύνε, \_υ\_ \_κόνοζ ηο\_ ζεοθηο\_ς.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 2.7.3.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 3.10-11.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 3.10.11.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 3.11. 8.

<sup>43</sup> Luck, ζώθροφν θη., *TDNT* 7: 1097.

<sup>44</sup> Similarly 4 Macc.1:31: Σφθροζύνε δ\_ ηρίοσν\_ζη\_ν\_ \_πηθράηεηαη\_ν\_ \_πηζκαη\_ν. See also 4 Macc.3: 17.

<sup>45</sup> 4 Macc. 5:23.

<sup>46</sup> E.Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987), 264.

<sup>47</sup> Philo *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.79.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. Other examples of Philo's use of ζφθροζύνε; *Allegorical Interpretation* 1.69-70; 2.81,83.

These references are an indication that the word ζφθροζύνε was, at the time of Luke's writing, used to convey qualities which were regarded as commendable in the sight of God. Therefore Luke's use of ζφθροζύνε in Acts 26:25, in order to counter Festus' charge that Paul is raving, places him squarely in the qualities that were widely accepted in his times as commendable. One of those commendable qualities of ζφθροζύνε, is that of obedience to higher authority.

## 1.5 Σωθροζύνες and obedience to authority

The wider connotations of ζφθροζύνε are further examined by Luck who highlights the important philosophical role of ζφθροζύνε in the Hellenistic world by describing its link to a person's relationship with the deity. "The ζώθρον is friendly with deity, for he is like deity."<sup>49</sup> With this backdrop in mind, Luke's portrayal of Paul as someone who submits to higher authority, is seen to be of particular importance. Before discussing this in greater detail, some information about the relationship of ζφθροζύνε with obedience is needed.

### 1.5.1 Graeco-Roman perceptions about ζωθροζύνε and obedience

The link between obedience to rulers and closeness to God is a theme reflected by the moral philosophers of the day. Plutarch writes: ο\_ γ\_ρ\_ τ\_ρόν\_ δ\_φ\_ς\_ ζ\_ε\_ς\_ ε\_ δ\_αί\_κ\_φ\_ν\_ \_u\_ \_η\_ς\_ \_ρ\_ε\_η\_ς\_ η\_ \_ρ\_τ\_ον\_η\_η\_·η\_ο\_ η\_ο\_ γ\_ρ\_ ζ\_ε\_·όν\_ ζ\_η\_η\_·θ\_αι\_ \_v\_ δ\_ \_α\_·η\_ς\_ θ\_α\_ η\_ \_ρ\_τό\_κ\_ε\_ν\_ον.<sup>50</sup> In another passage he explains that people ought to be obedient to those in authority because the ruler is God's representative in this world: ο\_ον\_ δ\_ \_ι\_η\_ον\_ \_v\_ ο\_·ρ\_αν\_ \_π\_ε\_ρ\_η\_θ\_αι\_ \_ς\_ ε\_δ\_φ\_ι\_ ο\_ν\_ \_α\_σ\_η\_ο\_·θ\_α\_ ζ\_ει\_ ή\_νε\_ν\_ \_ζ\_ε\_·ς\_ \_v\_ί\_δ\_ρ\_σ\_ζ\_ε\_· η\_ο\_η\_ο\_η\_ον\_ \_v\_ π\_οί\_ ε\_ζ\_η\_κί\_κ\_ε\_κ\_α\_ θ\_α\_ θ\_έ\_γ\_γ\_ος\_ \_ρ\_τ\_φ\_ν\_ - ζ\_η\_ε\_ ζ\_ε\_ο\_σ\_δ\_·ς\_ - ε\_·δ\_η\_θ\_α\_ς\_ \_v\_έ\_τ\_·ζ\_η\_· η\_ο\_σ\_η\_έ\_ζ\_η\_η\_ ζ\_ε\_ο\_·ι\_ό\_γ\_ον\_ \_τ\_φ\_ν\_·, δ\_η\_άν\_ο\_η\_α.<sup>51</sup>

The link between ζφθροζύνε and obedience is also present in Hellenistic Judaism. In his analysis of Philo's work, Luck writes, "The one who is obedient to God is also the seed of virtue. But the virtues, esp. ζφθροζύνε, are not man's attitude; they are strictly God's gift,"<sup>52</sup>

Lack of obedience was a recurring accusation against Christians and was one which they had to refute repeatedly. In short, Christians were often perceived as subversive. Obedience to rulers and to God is therefore an important topic, for it opens a complex of related issues which go to the root of serious accusations against the Christians of Luke's day. Luke's awareness of this problem is revealed by its inclusion amongst the accusations brought against Paul. Rumour had it that he taught all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses and not to circumcise their children or live according to their customs (Ac.21:21). He describes Paul, on his arrival in Jerusalem, being urged to perform some purification rites in order to counter the growing perception that he was encouraging people to disregard the law of Moses. Luke represents how widespread this rumour was for even the commander asks of Paul: "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt (·vα\_ζ\_η\_η\_ά\_ώ\_ζ\_α\_ς) and led four thousand terrorists (·vδ\_ρ\_α\_ς\_ η\_·v\_ ζ\_η\_θ\_α\_ρ\_ί\_φ\_ν) into the desert some time ago?" (Ac.21:38).

Evidence that this opinion of Christians was indeed a problem even before the time of Luke's writing is exposed in Herrmann's analysis of the Emperor Tiberius (A.D.14-37) whose opinion it was that Christians were subversive because of their belief that the imminent return of Christ would bring on the demise of the Roman empire. Herrmann writes: "à cause de son caractère subversif et clandestin de croyance à la proche fin de l'empire

<sup>49</sup> Luck, ζώθρον θηι., *TDNT* 7: 1099.

<sup>50</sup> Plutarch *To an Uneducated Ruler* 781A.

<sup>51</sup> Plutarch *To an Uneducated Ruler* 780F.

<sup>52</sup> Philo *Leg.All.* 1.63-73. Luck, ζώθρον θηι., *TDNT* 7: 1102.

romain lors du retour du Christ.”<sup>53</sup> Confirmation of this being a problem is given particular significance by Herrmann's identification in the writings of Seneca (A.D.1-65), what could be the earliest reference to Jesus' crucifixion, by a pagan writer. Of particular relevance is the connection that Seneca makes between the crucifixion of Jesus and the perception that he flouted Roman authority. Seneca writes: *alium in cruces membra diffindere. ... tamquam aut curam nostram deserentibus aut auctoritatem contemnentibus.*<sup>54</sup> Thus even before Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts, serious doubts were apparently being voiced concerning the obedience of Christians to the Roman authorities.

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<sup>53</sup> L.Herrmann, Chrestos: Témoignages Païens et Juifs sur le Christianisme du Premier Siècle, *Latomus Revue D'Études Latines*, 109, (1970): 20.

<sup>54</sup> Seneca *De Ira*. I.I.2.

The perception that Christians were subversive continued to be an issue which Christian apologists needed to address. Tertullian identifies sacrilege and treason as the primary accusations against Christians. He writes: Itaque sacrilegii et maiestatis rei convenimur. Summa haec causa, immo tota est.<sup>55</sup> In response, Tertullian reassuringly affirms that Christians pray for the Emperors, ministers and all in authority. Oramus etiam pro imperatoribus, pro ministris eorum et potestatibus, pro statu saeculi.<sup>56</sup>

A century later, Minucius Felix still lists similar accusations against Christians: homines, inquam, deploratae, illicitae ac desperatae factionis grassari in deos non ingemescendum est?<sup>57</sup> Clarke's comment on this particular charge again highlights the importance of obedience to rulers: "Common epithets of abuse, the most important being *illicitae* (the charge of disloyalty and illegality lay at the core of Celsus' attack, and Origen significantly made his first rejoinder to that charge, *C.Cels.* 1.1.)"<sup>58</sup> The importance of this accusation can be seen by the prominent place Origen gives to its refutation. He opens his defence by writing: "The first point which Celsus brings forward, in his desire to throw discredit upon Christianity, is, that the Christians entered into secret associations with each other contrary to law, saying, that „of associations some are public, and that these are in accordance with the law; others, again, secret, and maintained in violation of the laws."<sup>59</sup> Although related themes such as secrecy are also present, Origen sees disobedience to the state as one of the most serious allegations.

### 1.5.2 Obedience and ζῶθροζύνε in Luke

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<sup>55</sup> Tertullian *Apologeticus* 10.1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Minucius Felix *Octavius* 8.3.

<sup>58</sup> G.W. Clarke, *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*, in the series: Quasten, J., W.J.Burghardt, T.C.Lawler. *Ancient Christian Writers, The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, (New York, Newman Press, 1974), 205, note 104.

<sup>59</sup> Origen *Contra Celsus* 1.1.

The aspect of obedience goes to the heart of the formal charge of sedition brought against Paul by Tertullus. Winter writes: “According to the rhetorical handbooks, agitation or sedition, ζηάζης was the right charge to bring against an opponent in criminal proceedings.”<sup>60</sup> This charge was, according to Luke, in fact the formal version of the rumours being circulated against Paul by the antagonistic Jews and which are recorded in Acts 21:21: that Paul is teaching Gentiles to turn away from Moses and not to live according to their custom. The indictment formulated by Tertullus places Paul in the dangerous position of not accepting the authority of the Roman state. “We have found this man to be a troublemaker (ισηκν), stirring up riots (ζηάζης) among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.”(Ac.24:5).<sup>61</sup> Winter clearly spells out the likely implications of such a charge. “If proved, it invited serious punishment, viz the summary execution which the Jews has attempted, cf. Acts 23:27 and 24:7 as well as imperial wrath with which Claudius had threatened the Alexandrian Jews.”<sup>62</sup> Given the widespread sensitivity to the concept of obedience shown to rulers, the theme of Paul's obedience to higher authority is a recurring one in Acts and is an indication of Luke's particular concern for this issue. Although the understanding that ζφθροζύνε conveys a close relationship with God has been referred to above, the relevance of this principle in terms of obedience becomes evident in the description Luke gives of Paul's response to the heavenly vision.

The conversion of Paul is of such importance to Luke that he has recorded it three times, with minor variations. That which emerges from the accounts, particularly in Acts 26, is the centrality of the theme of obedience. This is highlighted when Paul declares to Agrippa: ο\_θ\_ γενόκεν\_ πεηζς η\_ ο\_ρανί\_\_πηαζί\_, (Ac.26:19). Kilgallen, in analysing Luke's presentation and without drawing on the Graeco-Roman philosophical concept, has identified obedience as an important dimension of Paul's ministry. Kilgallen writes: “The very formulation of the obedience Paul exercised intends to show that that is all Paul did by his preaching and teaching: he obeyed.”<sup>63</sup> On the same passage Conzelmann concludes: “The mission of Paul was a matter of obedience to God.”<sup>64</sup> Johnson makes the point that the narrative fulfilment of prophecy plays such an important role in Acts that it is a continual reaffirmation that the events are directed by God.<sup>65</sup> The theme of obedience is important to

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<sup>60</sup> B.Winter, “Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches in Acts 24-26”, B.A.Winter, A.Clarke, eds. *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, (1), The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1993), 320.

<sup>61</sup> Winter explains concerning the accusation of being an agitator throughout the world as well as a ring-leader of the Nazarene sect: “The linking of the two together implied that membership of it constituted a known breach of the law.” B.Winter, “Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches in Acts 24-26.” B.Winter, A.Clarke, eds. *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, (1), The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1993), 320. Neyrey also discusses the charges brought against Paul. The importance of the charge of sedition can be seen by the attempts to link it to his preaching of the resurrection. “His preaching of the resurrection is portrayed by the prosecution as an act of agitation or sedition, a point fully in accord with instructions for plaintiffs in rhetorical handbooks.” cf. *Ad Herennium* 2.3.3-3.4, Cicero, *De invetione* 2.5.16-8.28. J.Neyrey, “The Forensic Defence Speech and Paul's Trial Speeches in Acts 22-26: Form and Function” Talbert, C.H. ed. *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 215.

<sup>62</sup> Winter, “Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches in Acts 24-26,” 320.

<sup>63</sup> J.J.Kilgallen, Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26:2-23): Some Considerations, *Biblica* 69 (1988): 192.

<sup>64</sup> Conzelmann, 211. He also gives the comparable motif from Epictetus, where it is said of Heracles: \_Δθειν\_ ηρῖσιν πεηζάκενος περη\_ηη θάζαίρφν\_ \_διθίαν\_ θα\_ \_vοκίαν. Epictetus, 2.16.44.

<sup>65</sup> Johnson, 12.

Luke for his hand can be seen in the statement that Paul was: “not disobedient to the heavenly vision” (Ac.26:19), for it is a litotes typical of his style.<sup>66</sup>

The theme of Paul's obedience does not only surface in certain key verses in Luke-Acts, but it is woven into the fabric of Luke's whole work. The ongoing obedience of Paul is illustrated by his being an instrument in the hands of Christ. For example in Acts 26:23 the role of Christ is defined in terms of His being able to co-operate fully with Paul. It is Christ: “who would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.” Concerning this statement O'Toole writes: “So, the resurrected Christ cannot only be said to be in heaven; he is with and in Paul proclaiming the light.”<sup>67</sup> O'Toole, in his analysis of the way Luke has paralleled the trial of Paul to that of Jesus, builds on the work of MacRae when he concludes: “The detailed similarity of the structure and content of these hearings of Jesus and Paul does not merely demonstrate that Paul is somehow like Christ. Rather, we have a real link between Christ and Paul (MacRae, 163-165).”<sup>68</sup> The implication of this close identification is that it confirms Paul's obedience to the heavenly vision and confirms that Paul's work is intimately linked to the fulfilment of God's purpose.

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<sup>66</sup> Johnson refers to it as : “Another example of Lukan *litotes*,”. Johnson, 437. The aspect of Paul's obedience which this verse conveys in an emphatic way, is also noted by Haenchen. Haenchen, 687.

<sup>67</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 119.

<sup>68</sup> R.F.O'Toole, Luke's Notion of “Be Imitators of Me as I am of Christ” Acts 25-26, *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 8, (1978): 157.

The depiction of Paul's obedience emerges in other sections of Acts. Paul's obedience even in the case of extreme provocation, reflects the extent of Paul's self-control (ζφορζσν). An incident which has proved difficult to understand but which may shed light on the issue of obedience is that of Paul standing before the Sanhedrin in order to defend himself (Ac.23:2-5). As Paul begins his defence the High Priest orders him to be struck on the mouth. This draws the stinging comment from Paul: "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!" When it is pointed out to Paul that he is speaking to the High Priest, he withdraws his comment, stating that he had not realized it was the High Priest. Commentators have generally found this incident confusing because of the difficulty in explaining Paul's apparent failure to recognise the High Priest. Conzelmann describes as "comic" the explanation given by some that Paul was near-sighted.<sup>69</sup> For him "The entire scene is inconceivable: How could Paul not have known who was presiding?"<sup>70</sup> Bruce, Dunn, Haenchen and Harrison repeat explanations such as weak eye sight or a recent change of High Priests.<sup>71</sup> There is thus a general lack of consensus as to Luke's intention in portraying Paul as not recognising the High Priest. However the opinion that Luke intended this incident to emphasise Paul's obedience to the law, has also been put forward. Some commentators have noticed that there is a connection with the theme of obedience. Johnson states that the best way to explain Paul's otherwise "disingenuous statement" is that Luke wanted to present Paul as continuing to be devoted to the law.<sup>72</sup> Dunn makes a similar statement: "Paul is more law abiding than the High Priest."<sup>73</sup> Likewise Haenchen citing Overbeck, states: "Luke takes the opportunity „to set up Paul as the pattern of obedience to the law”".<sup>74</sup> The description of Paul as ζφορζσν in Acts 26:25 is therefore preceded by specific examples of Paul's self-control and obedience.

However there is also a rhetorical perspective from which the scene with the High Priest can be viewed. Aristotle explains that in the art of rhetoric, an acceptance of error and even a self rebuke enhances the credibility of the speaker, for it portrays him as prudent in what he says and able to exercise self-control. Aristotle states that the effect this has on the audience is to present the speaker as someone who is reasonable. It also presents the speaker as someone for whom the truth over-rides personal ambition. In Aristotle's words: *θος δ\_ π\_ πάζ\_ περβοι\_ η\_ ζρσι ούκενον· δε\_ γ\_ ρ\_ α\_ η\_ ν\_ α\_ η\_ προεπηπ\_ ήητην· δοθε\_ γ\_ ρ\_ ι\_ εζ\_ ε\_ ναη, πε\_ ο\_ ι\_ ανζάνεηγε\_ ποηε\_ η\_ ν\_ ι\_ έγονηα.*<sup>75</sup> This background enables Paul's actions in the presence of the High Priest to be interpreted in a positive light. It promotes his submission to authority as evidence of his reasonableness and his ability to focus on that which is reasonable even in the face of provocation.

In the events leading to the trial before Festus and Agrippa, the respect that Paul

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<sup>69</sup> Conzelmann, 192.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Bruce, 410; Dunn, 304. Reasons given are: Weak eyesight which prevented him recognising the High Priest; a recent change of High Priest; irony (I did not think that a man who spoke like that could be a High Priest), sarcasm. Haenchen refers to Wendt (315) who sees here the poor working over of a secondary source. Haenchen, 638. Harrison's conclusion is that Paul had probably got out of touch with the Sanhedrin as he had not had contact for about 20 years. He refers to the statement that Paul did not recognise the High Priest as a "difficulty." Harrison, 345.

<sup>72</sup> Johnson, 396.

<sup>73</sup> Dunn, 304.

<sup>74</sup> Haenchen, 638.

<sup>75</sup> Aristotle *The Art of Rhetoric* 3.7.9.

shows towards those in authority, is a recurring theme. When Paul wishes to address the chiliarch, he shows that he respects authority by asking whether it is lawful (ἔξεζητέον) for him to speak (Ac.21:37). Immediately thereafter Paul asks for permission to speak to the crowd (Ac.21:39). This submission to authority contrasts with the shouting and the interruptions of the antagonistic Jews.

Another illustration that Paul is not antinomian is the repeated stress on his careful observation of the prescribed religious requirements. In the second conversion account it is stated that he was trained under Gamaliel in the exactness of the ancient law (Ac.22:3). This aspect is reiterated when he receives his commissioning at the hands of Ananias who is himself described as a devout observer of the law (Ac.22:12). In the third conversion account, a similar emphasis is made when Paul says to Agrippa: “I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen”(Ac.26:22).

Obedience and respect for authority are also conveyed in less direct ways. In his defence before the Sanhedrin Paul states that he has lived in all good conscience before God (Ac.23:1). The use of the word *πεποιήσεως* contributes to the general picture of Paul's having been a law abiding citizen. Although commentators have interpreted the word *πεποιήσεως* in various ways,<sup>76</sup> they do not question the fact that it is intended as a positive term. Although Haenchen asks the question of how Paul's good conscience could square with his alleged participation in the killing of Stephen and other Christians,<sup>77</sup> it does point to the hand of Luke in emphasising Paul's good character before God. L'Éplatténier brings this to the fore when he states concerning *πεποιήσεως*: “le verbe employé porte une nuance de comportement responsable, celui d'un „citoyen de Dieu”!”<sup>78</sup> Despite the lack of clarity on Luke's use of *πεποιήσεως* it nevertheless contributes to the overall picture of Paul as operating in harmony and obedience to God. Such closeness to God emphasises the applicability of ζῶν ὁρθῶς to Paul.

### 1.5.3 Paul's appeal to Caesar as an act of obedience and ζῶν ὁρθῶς

Although other examples of Paul as a law respecting citizen can be added,<sup>79</sup> his appeal to Caesar (Ac.25:11) needs to be highlighted as it plays a significant role in portraying Paul as submissive to authority and therefore worthy of being ζῶν ὁρθῶς.

Generally commentators do not recognise any rhetorical technique for the inclusion of the appeal but resort to various explanations concerning the practicalities of the appeal.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> In his analysis of this word, Strathmann points to the differing shades of meaning between the Hebrew and Hellenistic nuances. The Hebrew being more in the realm of “social ethics and religion” while the Hellenistic connotations having a more “political and legal colouring.” Strathmann favours the usage of Hellenistic Judaism which refers to a “walk” shaped by religion and which has its expression as a member of the society which is governed by Jewish law. Strathmann refers to E.Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, (1934), 79f., 81, n. 1. concerning the use of this word found on inscriptions at synagogues: “This expression seems ... to have been favoured among Jewish writers for designating Jewish life according to the Jewish Law.” Cit. ap. Strathmann, *πὸ τῆς Θη.*, *TDNT* 6: 527, n. 65. The adoption of the Hellenistic Jewish meaning is understandable if the Sanhedrin was the intended audience. However, there is evidence which indicates that Luke's intended audience is a wider reading public which would then necessitate the more wide-spread Hellenistic understanding of a law abiding citizen. See the discussion by O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 19.

<sup>77</sup> Haenchen, 637.

<sup>78</sup> L'Éplatténier, 238.

<sup>79</sup> Acts 24:14.

<sup>80</sup> Conzelmann, 203, commenting on Paul's appeal to Caesar (Ac.25:11), deals only with the aspect of the verse where Paul is stating that if he has been involved in wrong doing, he asks for no mercy. He does not refer

Haenchen, noting that the appeal to Caesar “raises many problems,” observes that it has other literary values. For Luke “the details of the juristic procedure are completely irrelevant.”<sup>81</sup>

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to any rhetorical implications of the appeal to Caesar. Johnson, 422, for his part, deals with the historical background and circumstances of appeals and sees in Paul's appeal a desperate manoeuvre to counter Festus' desire to grant a favour to the Jews. Bruce, 432, Harrison 367, and Dunn, 320 do no more than discuss the various categories under which people could enjoy the right of appeal to the Emperor. Harrison, 367 also discusses the practical aspect of the situation and concludes that Paul appealed to the Emperor because the lesser courts had failed to give justice. His conclusion is that had Festus cleared Paul and set him free he would have been in danger from the Jews. Therefore Paul's appeal and transfer to Rome was fortunate. For Dunn, 320, Paul's appeal is about the enactment of a right enjoyed by Roman citizens. Kee, 277, in his discussion of the appeal to the Emperor, focuses on the relative unimportance of Paul's social status as opposed to the greater motivating factor, namely the inability of Festus to formulate or understand the charges.

<sup>81</sup> Haenchen, 670.

A question which has not yet been adequately addressed, is why the appeal, which was so important and significant an issue in Acts 25 and Acts 26 and brought up again in Acts 28:19, never materializes. In addition, since it was the appeal to Caesar which initiated the journey by ship to Rome, described in such detail in Acts 27, it is intriguing that Paul's appearance before the Emperor is never narrated, nor that a reason is ever given for the trial not taking place.<sup>82</sup> Thus the lack of information from Luke's text, as to the outcome of Paul's trial before Caesar is an indication that the historical event is not the key issue, but that the appeal has a different function. The appeal to Caesar is a rhetorical technique used by Luke to create a picture of Paul as a person who places himself squarely under the authority of the Roman government, thereby indicating his obedience and acceptance of authority.

O'Toole indirectly supports this when he argues convincingly that Luke's intended audience is neither Agrippa nor Festus, but is in fact the reader.<sup>83</sup> This strengthens the argument that Luke used literary techniques in order to present Paul as a person who accepts authority and who is not subversive. Elsewhere O'Toole draws some conclusions as to Luke's main aim: "Acts does defend Paul and claim certain things during his defence which can only apply to him."<sup>84</sup> He adds further: "Clearly, Lk-Acts portrays the realization of God's plan and envisions a delay of the Parousia." This realization of God's plan could not have included Paul if he had not also been portrayed as obedient to authority in general and especially to the authority of God.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Allen deals with this question by stating that the open ended nature of Acts calls on the readers to draw their own conclusions. This can be done by projecting onto the end of the account the continuation of the plot and the characterization patterns learned by the reader in the course of the narrative. O.W.Allen, *The Death of Herod: The Narrative and Theological Function of Retribution in Luke-Acts*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 204. Allen (n1) also notes the work of G.W.Tromf, "On Why Luke Declined to Recount the Death of Paul: Acts 27-28 and Beyond" in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, (ed.C.H.Talbert; New York, Crossroads, 1984), 225-239. Tromf's argument is based on the view that to end Acts with the account of Paul's death at the hands of the Emperor would challenge the traditional retributive logic; that the righteous are rewarded and that the evil are punished.

<sup>83</sup> O'Toole highlights a number of "inconsistencies" which indicate that Agrippa II and Festus are not intended as the true audience: 1. Paul's claim that the true issue is "our hope in the resurrection of the dead" (23:6; 24:21; 25:19; 26:6-8, 22, 23). The inconsistency is that the Jews were not accusing Paul of belief in the resurrection of the dead. Many of them shared that belief. 2. In Acts 26:2, Paul states that he is making his defence against "all the accusations of the Jews." As Agrippa II is never told what all these accusations are the reference to all the charges is therefore meant for the readers who already know what the charges are. 3. *θαυνη* *ζαην* Acts 26:7, appears to be used in the Christian sense of reaching one's goal set by God. 4. In Acts 26:8, the question is asked: "why is it thought incredible by any of you" the plural form *κ\_v* is used when Paul is addressing only Agrippa. This inconsistency points to a wider audience. 5. Acts 26:10, has the Christian expression "many of the saints" which would be unclear to Agrippa. 6. Acts 26:11, refers to the attempt by Paul to force the Christians to blaspheme. "Blaspheme" is used in a Christian sense. 7. The explanation in Acts 26:14, that the voice which addressed Paul with the words: "Saul Saul, why do you persecute me?" was speaking Aramaic, would not have been necessary for Agrippa, as he was a Jew. 8. In Acts 26:15, the Christian title *θύρις* is used of Jesus. 9. Acts 26:18, "those who are *sanctified* by faith in me" appears to be a Christian expression, similar to "saints." 10. The description of the audience in Acts 25:23 is one comprised of great and important people. However the statement by Paul in Acts 26:22, that he now stands before both "great and small" looks to an audience which is beyond the one in front of him. 11. Acts 26:28; the reference by Agrippa that he already knows the sect by the name "Christian" does not fit well as Agrippa has come to learn about this sect. 12. When Paul says, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but all who hear me this day might become such as I am - except for these chains," (Acts 26:29) he speaks to a wider audience than the one in front of him. O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 19f.

<sup>84</sup> O'Toole, *Why did Luke write Acts?*, 74.

<sup>85</sup> Moehring has examined the census under Quirinius (mentioned only in Luke's gospel) and concluded

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that an attempt to see it as a historical event is to misunderstand its purpose. The link of the birth of Jesus with a Roman census prepares the reader for the end of Acts where Paul will be preaching in Rome. Moehring sees in this a clear apologetic purpose that Christianity never constituted a danger to the security of the Roman Empire because of the undisputed obedience of Christians. His conclusion concerning the census is that: "This allows him to show the obedience of Joseph who, in contrast to the nationalist fanatics, obeys this order. Joseph's obedience is not merely passive: he subjects himself and Mary to great hardship in order to fulfil his civic duty." H.R.Moehring, "The Census in Luke as an Apologetic Device" in D.Aune, ed. *Studies in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1972), 159.

Through his portrayal of Paul as someone who is obedient to God in general and in specific to the law and the prophets, as well as to the local and national authorities, Luke not only develop the implications of ζφθροζύνε but goes to the heart of the accusation of sedition and exposes it as unfounded. Contrary to the claims of the antagonistic Jews, Paul is reasonable and rational and his comportment indicates that he is capable of choosing and maintaining the mean.

## 2 Αιξσηα

The contribution that the word αιξσηα makes to the view of Paul as a representative of the reasonable mean is seen firstly by the close link that it has to ζφθροζύνε which is connected to sensible behaviour.<sup>86</sup> In the text the two words are linked by θα ( αι αιξσηας θα ζφθροζύνε ρήκαηα ποθζέγγοκαη, Ac.26:25) therefore combining to form a strong bond with that which is respectable and honourable. Louw and Nida describe the word as having the following characteristics: “ αιξσηα, ας f: the content of that which is true and thus in accordance with what actually happened - „truth“.”<sup>87</sup> It refers to reality, and as such is in line with rationality in the sense of relating to reality.

The qualities associated with the word αιξσηα adds to the contrast of Paul prior and after his conversion. The irrationality that was linked to Paul previously (in κκαηνόκενοϑ, Ac.26:11) contrasts with Paul who now speaks that which is truth. O'Toole confirms this when he states: “The words which Paul has spoken in Ac.26:2-23 are true; *al theias*, too, stands in opposition to *Mainei* (*manian*, *mainomai*) because a madman does not speak the truth but nonsense.”<sup>88</sup> The contrast is accentuated even more by Bultmann's observation that in general Hellenistic thought the word αιξσηα conveys an understanding of that which is eternal or divine.<sup>89</sup> The present description of Paul as having the characteristic of truth, contrasts with the that of the antagonistic Jews who are in danger of fighting against God (ζεοκάτση).

Kittel's analysis of this passage is that the Gospel message which is the ιόγοϑ ηο ζεο renders it αιξσηα.<sup>90</sup> Luke uses this understanding of αιξσηα, for the presence of God is continually in the background of Paul's ministry and is a strong indication of the respectability and reasonableness of the Christian message. Αιξσηα therefore contrasts with the characteristics of Paul prior to his conversion as well as the antagonistic Jews who are controlled by the irrational and that which is disconnected from reality.

In the defence speech of Acts 26, one of the primary ways in which Luke relates Paul's message to the truth of God is through his frequent references to the authority of the prophets.<sup>91</sup> Paul does not speak on his own authority but his confidence in the truth that he speaks comes from his knowledge that what he says carries the authority of the prophets.

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<sup>86</sup> Louw & Nida, s.v., ζφθροζύνεϑ, 753.

<sup>87</sup> Louw & Nida, s.v., αιξσηα, 673.

<sup>88</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 134.

<sup>89</sup> R.Bultmann, αιξσηα, *TDNT* 1: 240.

<sup>90</sup> G.Kittel, ιέγοϑ, *TDNT* 4: 117.

<sup>91</sup> O'Toole gives the following as a few examples to illustrate the point. “Acts 7:42 as it is written in the book of the prophets; Acts 7: 48 as the prophet says; Acts 10:43 ...to this one all the prophets bear witness; Acts 15:15 and with this correspond the words of the prophets, as it is written.” O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 134.

O'Toole also makes the point that Luke links truth to the words of the prophets and the Holy Scriptures and that these are contrary to the concepts of secrecy, darkness and chaos. O'Toole points out the similarity with a passage from the prophet Isaiah to show that the proclamation of the truth does not take place in secret and in dark places,<sup>92</sup> e.g., Isaiah 45:19 Ο\_θ\_ \_ν\_ θρσθ\_ \_ι\_ε\_ι\_ά\_ι\_ε\_θ\_α\_ , ο\_δ\_ \_ \_ν\_ ηόπ\_ \_γ\_ \_ς\_ ζθ\_ο\_η\_η\_ν\_· ο\_θ\_ ε\_ \_πα\_ η\_ \_ζ\_π\_έρ\_κα\_η\_η\_ Ι\_α\_θ\_ \_β\_ , κ\_ά\_η\_α\_η\_ο\_ν\_ δ\_ε\_η\_ί\_ζ\_α\_η\_ε\_· \_γ\_ώ\_ ε\_ \_κ\_η\_Κ\_ύ\_ρ\_η\_ο\_ς\_ \_ι\_α\_ι\_ \_ν\_ δ\_η\_θ\_η\_ο\_ζ\_ύ\_ν\_ε\_ν\_ , θ\_α\_ \_ \_ν\_α\_γ\_γ\_έ\_ι\_φ\_ν\_ \_ι\_ή\_ζ\_ε\_η\_α\_ν\_ . Hence Luke's portrayal of Paul's proclamation as being faithful to the prophets also bring with it the confirmation of his ministry in terms of turning people to the truth.

The truth as combatting the darkness of ignorance also characterised some of the thinking in Hellenistic Judaism. O'Toole refers to Philo who sees truth as a divine virtue.<sup>93</sup> Philo comments on Genesis 24:48 and asks "What is the way of truth" ( \_ς\_ ε\_ \_ό\_δ\_φ\_ζ\_έ\_ν\_ κ\_ο\_η\_ \_ν\_ \_δ\_ \_ \_ι\_ε\_ζ\_εί\_α\_ς\_ ) and then provides his answer: "(This means) that truth is a wonderful and divine virtue" (ζ\_α\_σ\_κ\_α\_ζ\_ία\_ θ\_α\_ \_ζ\_εί\_α\_ \_ρ\_ε\_η\_ή\_).<sup>94</sup>

From the perspective of Hellenistic Judaism the quality of truth carries the connotation of a divine attribute. The use of this word therefore contrasts strongly with Festus' description of Paul as raving and, like ζ\_φ\_θ\_ρ\_ο\_ζ\_ύ\_ν\_ε\_ , it promotes Paul as rational and a worthy representative of the mean.

### 3 Αποθζέγγοκαη

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<sup>92</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 134.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>94</sup> Philo *Questions on Genesis* 4.125.

Another word also closely attached to ζφθροζύνε is ποθζέγγοκαη. It too contributes to the overall picture of Paul's respectability by emphasising his ability to communicate clearly and coherently. Louw and Nida, in their semantic analysis of ποθζέγγοκαη describe its meaning as follows: "to speak, with the focus upon verbal sound rather than on content."<sup>95</sup> Zerhusen, in his examination of the gift of speech (Ac.2:4) likewise concludes that it refers primarily to the manner of speaking: "*Apophtheggomai* refers, not to the content of the speech, but to *the manner of speaking*. In each instance, the person's speech is bold, authoritative, and inspired."<sup>96</sup> This word appears to have special significance for Luke, for Zerhusen has indicated that ποθζέγγοκαη appears three times in Acts and nowhere else in the New Testament (Ac.2:4,14; 26:25).<sup>97</sup> He refers in particular to the Acts 26:25 passage and concludes: "The emphasis is on Paul's manner of speaking."<sup>98</sup> Αποθζέγγοκαη is therefore a word which Luke uses with particular reference to the style of speech. Although the use of ποθζέγγοκαη in the LXX appears to have a negative connotation,<sup>99</sup> Luke's use of the word follows more closely the positive meaning of secular Hellenistic writers such as Lucian and Plato.<sup>100</sup> The meaning conveyed in this context is "to speak one's opinion plainly".<sup>101</sup>

The significance of this word is further evident from the way Luke has depicted Paul's style of defence. He described Paul as beginning his defence with his hand raised, thus giving the air of a well seasoned rhetorician. Commentators have also identified that in this speech alone there are 13 words that are unique to the New Testament.<sup>102</sup> Paul's manner of speaking was of a high quality.

Furthermore, Luke's use of ποθζέγγοκαη in describing Paul's manner of speaking creates a contrast with the shouting of the antagonistic Jews. Their accusations are based on erroneous assumptions which culminate in their behaviour being similar to that of animals. That Luke intends to use ποθζέγγοκαη in a contrasting and corrective capacity is confirmed by its other uses. Luke's use of this word in the description of the events of the day of Pentecost is important because it conveys the presence of God. This is done in two ways: firstly, its close association with the Holy Spirit which gives the disciples this ability. Acts 2:4 makes a clear connection between the reception of the Holy Spirit and the ability to speak out plainly (ποθζέγγεζζαη). This is emphasised by Zerhusen who points out a common error which interprets Acts 2:4 as implying that the Holy Spirit gave the speakers other tongues in

<sup>95</sup> Louw & Nida, s.v., ποθζέγγοκαη 398.

<sup>96</sup> B. Zerhusen, An Overlooked Judean Diglossia in Acts 2?, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 25 (1995): 126.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ezek.3:9, 19; Zach.10:2 it is linked in all three examples to κάηαη. While in Micah 5:12 it refers to "soothsayers" in a pejorative sense. The only occurrence of the word in a favourable context in the LXX. I Chron.25:1: "And king David and the captains of the host appointed to their services sons of Asaph, and of Aeman, and of Idithun, prophesiers (ποθζεγγοκένος) with harps and lutes."

<sup>100</sup> O'Toole refers to Lucian *Alex.* 25, where the context shows that its meaning is related to the speaking forth of an oracle, which in turn implies "to speak one's opinion plainly". O'Toole also refers to Plato's use of the word which carries the connotation of the divine proclamation coming through the speaker. O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 131.

<sup>101</sup> "To speak out loudly and clearly"; "to speak with emphasis." J.Behm, άποθζεγγοκαη *TDNT* 1: 447.

<sup>102</sup> γνώζηεν, καθροζύκφς, βίφζίν, δφδεθάθςιο ν, θηνεία, κκαηόκενος, πηηποπ\_ς, ιακπρόηηα, ιαθηίδηη πηθσρίας, παζεηη\_ς, κανίαν, περηηπέηη. See the list in Rackham, 462.

which to speak. He corrects it to mean: “They began to speak in other tongues as the Holy Spirit *was giving (eididou) utterance (apophtheggesthai)* to them.”<sup>103</sup> He makes the point that *ἰδίδωσ* is in the imperfect, signifying an ongoing continuing action in the past, while *ἰποθζέγγεζζαη* is in the infinitive. Thus *ἰποθζέγγεζζαη* refers to the enabling work of the Holy Spirit which is separate from the gift of other tongues. Secondly, the words of those who speak plainly are linked to the words of the prophets. In Peter's Pentecost speech, Acts 2:14ff the words of the prophet Joel are the result of Peter's inspired articulate speech (*ἰπεθζέγγαηο*). The words of the prophet Joel declare that the Holy Spirit will manifest himself through the prophecy of people. O'Toole points to the particular emphasis that Luke makes in connecting the work of the Holy Spirit with the ability to prophesy. The second reference to prophesy in Acts 2:18 is a Lukan addition which does not appear in the Joel 2:29 passage.<sup>104</sup> Peter's speech therefore points to something supernatural that is taking place. As the whole speech in Acts 2:14-36 is the object of *ἰποθζέγγεζζαη*, God's activity is seen to be behind the proclamation of the message.<sup>105</sup> This is an indication that Luke intends *ἰποθζέγγοκαη* to convey the style and character of delivery of the message. Zerhusen draws a similar conclusion when he states: “It refers to the kind of authoritative, weighty, important speech characteristic of a prophet or similarly inspired person.”<sup>106</sup> The references in Paul's defence speech, that his message is identifiable with that of the prophets (Ac.26:22,27) confirms that it is not only the content of Paul's message which is *ἰήζηα* and *ζφθροζύνεζ* but also the manner in which it is conveyed. *Ἀποθζέγγοκαη* is therefore not only close to *ἰήζηα* and *ζφθροζύνεζ* by being part of the phrase *ἰεζηαθαζζφθροζύνεζ ἰρήκαηα ἰποθζέγγοκαη* but also by its function in describing the style of Paul's speech. Thus the meaning of the word together with its style as well as its position in the text combine to give Paul's speech a close link with divine authority and respectability.

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<sup>103</sup> Zerhusen, 126.

<sup>104</sup> Joel 2: 29 states only that God's spirit will be poured out on servants and on handmaids, while Acts 2: 18 adds to the quote: “θα ἰπροθε ἰεζζἰη”. See O'Toole, *Christological Climax* 132.

<sup>105</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 132.

<sup>106</sup> Zerhusen, 126.

The authoritative element in the word is seen to convey a corrective emphasis, for in Acts 2:14, Peter's plain speech (πεθζέγγαση) corrects the erroneous perception that the disciples are drunk. Similarly in Acts 26:25, ποθζέγγοκαη is used to correct Festus' wrong perception that he is καίν\_.<sup>107</sup> O'Toole argues this point in the following way: "To see *al\_theias* and *sōphrosyn\_s* as the sole opposites of „madness' deprives *apophthengesthai* of any content."<sup>108</sup> In contrast to the speech of people who are drunk or mad, ποθζέγγοκαη conveys "articulate speech which can be understood."<sup>109</sup> That which is plain, intelligible and open has already been found to be important to Luke's portrayal of Christianity as representing the rational mean between the extremes of superstition and indifference. The corrective aspect of this word also applies in Acts 26 for Paul's use of this word corresponds to his correction of the erroneous perception by Festus that he is raving. The speaking forth also builds on the contrasts with his previous raging against Christians as well as the animal like shouting of the antagonistic Jews. Luke's use of the verb ποθζέγγοκαη adds further confirmation that Paul is a person who is God's representative and as a result is able to determine and maintain the reasonable mean.

#### 4 Παρρεζηαδόκενος

Παρρεζηαδόκενος is the last of the four words qualifying Paul's post-Damascus characteristics. Its connection with the three other key words has been recognised by commentators. O'Toole refers to this close relationship in the following way: "Another connection of 26:26 with 26:25 is *parr\_siazomenos\_lalō* which goes with *al\_theias\_kai\_sōphrosyn\_s\_rh\_mata\_apophthengomai*."<sup>110</sup> Apart from it being linked to the words ιεζεία, αποθζέγγοκαη and ζφθροζύνε, παρρεζηαδόκενος carries important and honourable connotations of its own. Louw and Nida classify this word as falling in the domain of speech with the added emphasis that it is essentially courageous and public in nature. They describe its meaning as "to speak openly about something and with complete confidence - to speak boldly, to speak openly"<sup>111</sup> and add that the boldness implied in παρρεζηαδόκαη is semantically linked to the concept of courage in the face of danger.<sup>112</sup> The other significant association which Louw and Nida link to the word παρρεζία is its implication of being essentially public in nature. To the word παρρεζία they link the idiom \_ν παρρεζί\_ with the explanation: "(an idiom, literally „in boldness“) in an evident or publicly known manner - „publicly, in an evident manner, well known."<sup>113</sup> Παρρεζί\_ therefore differs from

<sup>107</sup> Jackson and Lake point out the similar context: "It is noteworthy that the verb is used here following the charge of drunkenness, so it recurs in xxvi. 25 following the charge of madness:" Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.21.

<sup>108</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 131.

<sup>109</sup> This observation is made by Jackson and Lake's and is also confirmed by O'Toole. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.21; O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 331.

<sup>110</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 137.

<sup>111</sup> Louw & Nida, s.v., παρρεζίαδόκαη 399.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 307. Louw & Nida also classify παρρεζίαδόκαη as linked to the important words ζαρρέφ/ζαρζέφ. In this context παρρεζίαδόκαη means: "to have courage or boldness in the face of danger or opposition - to be bold, to have courage."

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., s.v., \_ν παρρεζί\_, 338. They quote the example in John 7:4; "no one does anything in secret but seeks to be well known." The openness and frankness of speech that the word παρρεζηαδόκενος portrays is confirmed by Bailly's translation as "parler en toute liberté" or "parler franchement de qqe ch." A.Bailly, s.v., παρρεζηαδόκαη *DGF*.

ποθζέγγοκαη in that it is not so much concerned with the linguistic style but more with the character of the person who speaks.

Bondi reflects on the significance of Luke's use of the word *παρρεζία*, and its relevance to Paul's ministry. He relies on the work of van Unnik who also identifies in the word *παρρεζία* the important dimension of its public nature. Bondi writes: "Following this, there is a whole series of times when Luke uses a word translated variously as speaking „freely“ or „fearlessly“ or „boldly“ (van Unnik). Here it is important to note that speaking out „boldly“ was always done in public."<sup>114</sup> Bondi adds the significant remark that the description of Paul's preaching being public and bold was in fact an invitation to his audience for a contest in honour, for he adds: "such speech is very, very honorable."<sup>115</sup>

Malherbe develops the connotations of *παρρεζία* even further by indicating that it was particularly associated with the philosopher's boldness of speech.<sup>116</sup> As a rhetorical technique amongst the philosophical schools, *παρρεζία* was particularly characteristic of the Cynics as they spoke boldly in public to correct the errors of the society.<sup>117</sup> Schlier, confirms this by explaining that in Hellenistic society, *παρρεζία* is important in the three spheres of; politics, private life and morality. In the political sphere the presence of full freedom of speech is symptomatic of a true democracy.<sup>118</sup>

The word *παρρεζιαδόκενος* is not unique to Acts 26:26, for of the nine occurrences of this word in the New Testament, seven of them occur in Acts.<sup>119</sup> In the uses of this word by Luke, the public nature of the Christian message is seen to be closely linked to the boldness of speech with which it is proclaimed. Bondi makes a brief survey of Luke's uses of *παρρεζιαδόκενος* and refers in particular to Acts 26:26: "In 26:26, as part of his refutation of the contention of Festus, Paul states that he „speaks freely“ to the king, who knows all about the topics Paul has addressed."<sup>120</sup>

The emphasis on Paul's preaching having been open and public in nature, comes through strongly in Acts 26:26 with Paul's appeal to the King that he can indeed speak boldly to him for two reasons: firstly: because "these things have not been hidden from him" (ι ανζάνεηνγ\_ρ\_α\_η\_ν\_ηούηφν\_ο\_) and secondly: because "nothing was done in a corner." (ο\_γάρ\_ζηην\_ν\_γφνί\_πεπραγκένον\_ηο\_ηο). These two references to the openness and public nature of the Christian message in one verse, alerts the sensitive reader that these are aspects of *παρρεζιαδόκενος*. The fact that the same verse also contains the word *παρρεζιαδόκενος* which itself implies a public and bold proclamation of the gospel, affirms that the public nature of Christianity is an important theme in this verse. It therefore affirms that Christianity is not to be associated with secret religious groups which often bore the characteristics of superstition.

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<sup>114</sup> R.A.Bondi, Such as I Am: Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 27 (1997): 170. He relies on the work of W.C.van Unnik, The Christian's Freedom of Speech in the New Testament, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 44: 466-488.

<sup>115</sup> Bondi, 170.

<sup>116</sup> Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 16.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> H.Schlier, *παρρεζία*, *TDNT* 5: 871ff.

<sup>119</sup> Acts 9:29; 9:28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26. The two non Lukan uses of it occur in Ephesians 6:20 and I Thessalonians 2:2.

<sup>120</sup> Bondi, 170.

#### 4.1 “Not in a Corner”

Closely linked to the word *παρρησιαδόκενος* is Luke's portrayal of Paul refuting that his Christian activity has been taking place in a corner. Malherbe has shown that to accuse people of doing things in a corner was standard polemic of criticism.<sup>121</sup> This phrase is significant for it captures in idiomatic form Luke's concern that Christianity be seen as honourable through its growth having taken place in the public eye and not in secret. Confirmation that the words “not in a corner” are important and that they put in idiomatic form a theme running through Acts comes from Haenchen's observation: “These words light up Luke's presentation in Acts from beginning to end: ... The whole history of Christianity - it is no secret society! - is enacted publicly and before high and exalted personages.”<sup>122</sup> Haenchen refers to a number of key events which elaborates on this theme: thousands were gathered at Pentecost (2: 41), the apostles performed miracles before all the people (3:9; 5:15; 19:11f), they spoke to thousands of listeners (4:4), Paul appeared before high ranking officials; Proconsul Sergius Paulus, Proconsul Gallio, Paul has an audience in the Areopagus and according to Acts 27: 24 Paul even spoke to Caesar.<sup>123</sup>

Malherbe, in his explanation of the contemporary significance of the phrase “not in a corner,” begins by stating that Haenchen's assessment should be taken further. Luke is not simply reflecting a universal view of Christianity, but is responding to a dangerous charge that Christianity was obscure.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, he indicates that to accuse people of doing things in a corner was standard polemic of criticism.<sup>125</sup> Malherbe traces the use of this idiom and shows that “(f)or at least seven hundred years, therefore „to speak in a corner“ was used pejoratively, especially by orators or philosophers of rhetorical bent, of people, particularly philosophers, who did not engage in public life.”<sup>126</sup> Malherbe also adds that in Luke's reference to Paul not conducting his business “in a corner,” he is presenting Paul as “speaking in the manner of a philosopher, and that this presentation is part of his apologetic program.”<sup>127</sup>

The relevance of the idiom in Luke's day is reflected in its use by some of his contemporaries. Plutarch, for example, chastises those who withdraw from public life in the cities in order to quibble in a quiet corner. *ἡ ἡσυχία καὶ ἡ κέζα ἡν ποιεῖν ποδηδράθη βουκόκενος, ἡ γωνία ἡν θαζέζτιαν ἡν ὑφὸν ζυιογηζκοθαι περηίθφν θη οζόθφν.*<sup>128</sup> In Dio Chrysostome's portrayal of the ideal philosopher, Malherbe details the same emphasis on the importance of a public life.<sup>129</sup> Dio Chrysostome's portrayal (Oration 32.8-11) first refers to the resident philosophers (32.8) who do not appear in public

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<sup>121</sup> Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 9.

<sup>122</sup> Haenchen, 691f. Confirmation of the importance of this observation is the repetition of his observation by Conzelmann., 212; and by Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 7.

<sup>123</sup> Haenchen, 691f.

<sup>124</sup> A.J.Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 9.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. Malherbe gives a number of examples of its use by contemporary pagan writers.

<sup>128</sup> Plutarch *That a Philosopher ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power* 777B.

<sup>129</sup> A.J.Malherbe, *Rise and Decline of the Roman World*, W.Haase, H.Temporini. eds. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 295f.

at all (32.11f): “But to find a man who with purity and without guile speaks with a philosopher’s boldness (παρρηζαδόκενον) not for the sake of glory, not for making false pretensions for the sake of gain who stands ready out of good will and concern for his fellow man, if need be, to submit to ridicule and the uproar of the mob.”<sup>130</sup> This description given by Dio of the ideal philosopher being open to public scrutiny and also being prepared to face public ridicule carries similarities with Luke’s portrayal of Paul and the events that precede his appearance before Festus and Agrippa.

Therefore, Luke’s use of the phrase “not in a corner” which is linked to the word παρρηζαδόκενος in the description of Paul’s post-Damascus characteristics, presents Paul, the representative of Christianity, as respectable and rational because of his bold manner of public speaking.

#### **4.2 Apologists refute corner meetings**

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 279. Later Malherbe makes the general statement: “To withdraw from public affairs and mind one’s own business was, in Paul’s day, a political ideal for some, but it was also widely criticized by others as socially irresponsible.” Ibid., 322.

The need to counter the perception that Christians were secretive was not only felt by Luke but also by early Christian apologists who continued to refute the charge of speaking in corners. Minucius Felix refutes such allegations against Christians: *latebrosa et lucifuga natio, in publicum muta, in angulis garrula.*<sup>131</sup> He again counters these allegations which imply that Christians meet in corners because they are afraid of an open hearing: *nec in angulis garruli, si audire nos publice aut erubescitis aut timetis.*<sup>132</sup> Later, Origen had to deal with Celsus' derogatory comments about Christians meeting in corners. Celsus compares Christians: "to a flight of bats or to a swarm of ants issuing out of their nest, or to frogs holding council in a marsh, or to worms crawling together in the corner of a dunghill."<sup>133</sup> The negative connotations that Celsus attributes to the corner is accentuated by his associating it with worms; regarded by many as a repulsive form of life.<sup>134</sup>

Later, the Spanish priest Orosius, taking up these motifs and writing at the request of Augustine could say: *quia de temporibus christianis rari et hoc in angulis murmurent.*<sup>135</sup> These quotes indicate that the accusation of speaking or whispering in a corner implied secrecy. Christians were affected by it. Therefore the statement by Paul that his ministry has not been conducted in a corner, is an indication that Luke was already responding to such negative perceptions by portraying Paul, and Christians in general, as people who spoke openly and in public. This further implies that Christianity could not be classed as a superstition, with which obscurity and secrecy was associated, but as a set of beliefs for reasonable people worthy of respect and who could adhere to the mean.

### 4.3 Luke's portrayal of the public nature of Paul's speech

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<sup>131</sup> Minucius Felix *Octavius* 8.4.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.6.

<sup>133</sup> Origen *Contra Celsum* 4.23.

<sup>134</sup> Epictetus *Diss.* 4.11.30-31 speaks of "pigs, geese, worms and spiders as creatures furthest removed from association with human beings." Cit. ap. D. Holgate, *Prodigality, Liberality and Meanness in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. A Greco-Roman Perspective on Luke 15:11-32* PhD Thesis, (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 1993), 135 note 114.

<sup>135</sup> Orosius *Historiarum libri* 1.63.

It is not only by the idiom “not in a corner” that the openness and public orientation of Christianity is addressed by Luke. Luke’s concern for this issue can be seen to permeate other aspects of the speech. The presentation of Paul as a person who has always been public about his life and ministry is a particular emphasis of the third conversion account. The setting of the third defence is itself a powerful witness to the public nature of the Gospel. Although Paul’s defence in Acts 22 is before a crowd, Paul defence in Acts 26 is an event of great public importance, for it is set before the Governor Festus, King Agrippa and Berenice, as well as a great number of civic and military officials which included Chiliarchs<sup>136</sup> and the leading men of the city (Ac.25:23). The value to Luke in using the public court setting to convey respectability on Paul and Christianity, is concisely summed up in Malina’s words: “Publicity and witnesses are crucial for the acquisition and bestowal of honour. Representatives of public opinion must be present since honour is all about the tribunal or court of public opinion and the reputation that the court bestows.”<sup>137</sup> This overview of the positive impact of a court setting, is an indication of how to interpret Luke’s detailed description of Paul’s audience. It also reveals Luke’s intention of portraying the propagation of Christianity by Paul as having taken place in a public manner. This in turn portrays the characteristics of an honourable person who uses all opportunities of operating publicly because he is not propagating a superstition but a respectable faith.

Conzelmann comes to a similar conclusion when he identifies in the description of all the display of pomp (Ac.25:23-27), a literary creation on the part of Luke. He too identifies Luke’s real purpose as the emphasis on the public nature of Christianity. “The display of ostentation is Luke’s creation and is without a historical core. One ought not ask whether a legal procedure is present here. Does Luke mean it to be such? Yes! Compare vs.26. But the meaning is to be inferred exclusively from the literary purpose: Paul, and with him Christianity, steps into the great public arena.”<sup>138</sup> The recognition that the open and public proclamation of the Gospel before a tribunal is a concept that is important to Luke can be seen by his having prepared the reader to view it in a positive light and as a fulfilment of the divine plan. In his assessment of this judicial setting, Johnson points to the relevance of Jesus’ words to his disciples when He prophesied: “you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. This will result in your being witnesses to them”(Lk..21:12-13).<sup>139</sup> The fact that this prophecy is repeated in Acts 9:15 is an indication to the reader that Paul’s trial, is to be understood as an opportunity provided by God for him to be a witness in the great public arena.

Another special emphasis on the public character of Paul which is absent from the Acts 22 account but which plays a significant role in Acts 26 is the description of how Paul’s life had always been a matter of public knowledge. The defence of Paul proper begins with the emphasis that even as a persecutor, his life and beliefs had always been public

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<sup>136</sup> Chiliarchs were military commanders responsible over a thousand men. Jackson and Lake state that there were 5 cohorts in Caesarea. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 4.312. However it should not be assumed that all five were present for *τημίρτοι* appears without the article. Haenchen, 676.

<sup>137</sup> Malina, *Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 36.

<sup>138</sup> Conzelmann, 207. Conzelmann refers to God’s directive to Ananias to go to Paul, with the words: “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.” as a pointer to the literary concerns that Paul has in Acts 26. Bondi has made a similar observation when he notes the pattern with which Luke has repeatedly portrayed Paul as speaking in public. Bondi refers to Paul’s public lectures in the hall of Tyrannus, for two years (Ac.19:9-10) and his speaking at the Areopagus in Athens (Ac.17:19-34). Bondi’s closing comment on this is: “In Acts, Paul has gone to sites of religious, intellectual, and political significance. He presented himself in these locations, moreover, in strength, in boldness, and thus with honor.” R.Bondi, *Such as I am*, 171.

<sup>139</sup> Johnson, 429.

knowledge. Acts 26:4-5 indicates the extent in time of this public knowledge by referring to Paul's origins through three temporal qualifiers: *ἄθρονον χρόνον*, *ἀπὸ παιδείας* and *ἄρτι* which emphasize that even before his conversion, Paul's life had been lived openly.<sup>140</sup> Confirmation of its importance to Luke is Conzelmann's identification of Luke's hand in this description. He refers to these expressions as being unimpressive and piled up and concludes that „from (my) youth, from the beginning, for a long time,“ results from the use of fixed elements of biographical style with an apologetic intent.”<sup>141</sup>

Attached to *ἄρτι* is the word *προσηγορευτός* (Ac.26:5) which accentuates the notion that previous knowledge about Paul has not been hidden. The combination of these two words emphasise in a clear way the open and public nature of Paul's life. This is even more so when this statement is taken in conjunction with the pronouncement at the beginning of Paul's defence that: “all the Jews know” (*ὅτι πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* Ac.26:4) about his lifestyle (*βίωσίν*). These statements emphasise Paul's public lifestyle and indicate in a subtle way that Christianity is not to be thought of in terms of a secret superstition, but of an honourable and open faith.

#### **4.4 Paul's exchange with Agrippa**

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<sup>140</sup> Johnson supports the view that the repetitive nature of this statement indicates the importance of the public nature of Paul's life. Johnson, 432.

<sup>141</sup> Conzelmann, 210.

A further emphasis on the implied public nature of Christianity is conveyed through the rhetorical technique of statements implying public knowledge. Immediately after Paul's statement that he has not been conducting his ministry in a corner, Paul asks Agrippa: "King Agrippa do you believe the prophets? I know you do." (Ac.26:27). These words to Agrippa are more than what Johnson calls, a "tricky question."<sup>142</sup> One can discern in them the use of a rhetorical technique which emphasises the public nature of Christianity. Such a rhetorical method is advocated by Aristotle in his guidelines on rhetorical techniques for persuasive speaking.

Aristotle advocates that the credibility of a speech can be enhanced through the use of phrases which elicit the public nature of the evidence. He recommends phrases such as: "Who does not know?" and "Everybody knows" since such phrases cause the hearer to agree with the speaker: "because he is ashamed to appear not to share what is a matter of common knowledge."<sup>143</sup> In the light of these guidelines, Luke's portrayal of Paul's attempts to persuade King Agrippa to agree with him indicates that what Paul is talking about is public knowledge: "The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that nothing has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."<sup>144</sup> It can be seen from a literal translation of this phrase that the implication that Paul's ministry has been conducted in the open is intended as a powerful means of persuasion. The element of persuasion can be seen by the two instances of the word *πειζοκαη:ο\_πειζοκαη\_ο\_ζέν* (Ac.26:26) and *\_v\_ \_ί\_ κε\_ πείζει; Χρηζηηη\_ v* (Ac.26:27). Paul's interaction with Agrippa therefore stresses from a rhetorical perspective the public nature of the Gospel.

#### 4.5 Large cities and the public nature of the Gospel

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<sup>142</sup> Johnson states that for Luke the prophets include Moses, whose career is taken as a paradigmatic for the sending and rejection of the prophets. The question is tricky as it requires not only a commitment to the prophetic text in scripture but also to the prophetic principle. Johnson, 439.

<sup>143</sup> Aristotle *The Art of Rhetoric* 3.7.4. trans. J.H.Freese, Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>144</sup> A somewhat similar emphasis on the public nature of Jesus' ministry and life is created when the risen Christ joins the two men walking to Emmaus. When Jesus enquires from them what they are talking about, Cleopas answers: "Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who does not know what things have happened there in these days?" (Lk.24:18). The implication of this question is that „everybody knows“! O'Toole recognises that this question is similar to Acts 26:26 and adds that this comes from Luke's hand. R.F.O'Toole, *Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke-Acts*, *Biblica* 62 (1981): 483. Commentators do not generally recognize the rhetorical technique employed here, but some do notice the link to the public nature of the Christian message. For example Haenchen quotes Jacquier who expounds on the public nature of this section by saying: "tout s'était passé publiquement: la prédication, la mort et la résurrection de Jésus la prédication apostolique, le fait de Pentecôte ... en un mot, la naissance du christianisme." Haenchen, 689.

Luke's emphasises on the open and public nature of the propagation of Christianity is such that it pervades his Gospel and Acts from beginning to end.<sup>145</sup> A pointer to Luke's intention of portraying the public nature of the Christian faith through the overall structure of his work, is his presentation of Paul's missionary activity as largely a journey from one important city to another.<sup>146</sup> Bondi has identified this as a deliberate plan on the part of Luke. Bondi writes: "It goes without saying that within Acts Paul visits a very large number of cities (which were always honorable places in comparison, say, to villages and farms) on his various journeys."<sup>147</sup> It is worthwhile to contrast this Lukan emphasis with the letter of Pliny who notes with alarm that the superstition (Christianity) has chosen villages and rural areas in which to also spread. "Ce ne sont pas seulement les villes, ce sont les bourgs et les campagnes que la contagion de cette superstition a envahies."<sup>148</sup> It would appear that Christianity had been spreading for some time for he complains that the temples were empty and that the sacrifices were no longer being performed. Luke's description of the expansion of Christianity with his focus on the cities, especially the cities of Asia Minor, is somewhat different than Pliny's observation. This difference is noteworthy for Pliny was writing in A.D.112 while the date of Luke's writing the gospel is generally fixed at A.D.85 and Acts possible shortly after. This therefore brings the time of writing of Acts fairly close to the time Pliny was making his observations. The criterion that appears to account for this, is the consistent trend in Luke-Acts of representing the expansion of Christianity as taking place in the open and before the authorities. Rural areas, on the other hand, represent an expansion which is away from the knowledge of the authorities and out of the public eye. Meeks confirms that there did exist a degree of tension between city dwellers and rural inhabitants. He describes the city as a place of change, mobility and interaction as opposed to the depressed rural areas.<sup>149</sup> He explains further that although the city and the rural area were economically dependent on each other, the relationship between their respective citizens was one of suspicion and even hostility. MacMullen elaborates in greater detail on the tensions between city and rural communities: "The peasant was felt to be an unmannered, ignorant being, in bondage to sordid and wretched labor, and so uncivilized that he could not be called on for the full duties of a citizen."<sup>150</sup> To this division MacMullen adds the important role that language played in identifying the social status of city dweller as opposed to that of a rural inhabitant: "They did not speak the same language - not in the metaphorical sense of the phrase, though that would be true enough, but often literally. Once away from his homeland in Greece or Italy, the Greek or Roman found himself among `people divided from us by

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<sup>145</sup> Malherbe makes this point in his assessment of Acts 26:26. "A closer investigation, however, will reveal that much more than a geographical expansion is in view in Acts 26:26." Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 9.

<sup>146</sup> Note the discussion of the social levels of early Christians. A.J.Malherbe, *The Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

<sup>147</sup> Bondi, *Such as I am*, 171. Bondi, relying on the work of M.Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), notes that Paul's career seems to follow the trajectory of provincial capitals. Bondi gives the following examples: Jerusalem, the great holy city; Antioch, the third largest city in the Empire; Ephesus, one of the largest cities of the ancient world and the capital of the province of Asia; Corinth, the capital of Achaia; Athens, the intellectual capital of the world; Damascus, the capital of Syria; Thessalonica, an important trade centre; Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia; finally Rome, the capital of the empire.

<sup>148</sup> De Labriolle, 34.

<sup>149</sup> W.Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 14f.

<sup>150</sup> R.MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations; 50 B.C.- A.D.284*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 32.

language“ (as John Chrysostom calls them), conquered by his forefathers and subjected to another civilization without easily becoming a part of it. In cities and in the pieces of cities broken off - rich rural villas - he would be understood. Once outside, however, a thickening accent gradually gave way, mile by mile, to a total ignorance of the master tongues. In their stead, Aramaic, Phrygian, Arabic, Punic, Berber, Thracian.”<sup>151</sup> Under such circumstances it would be difficult for Luke to portray Paul and with him Christianity as representing a religion which reflects the reasonable mean.

#### **4.6 The moral implications of openness**

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 45f. In the four gospels, the description of Peter being recognised as a disciple of Jesus because he was a Galilean, is unique to Luke (Lk.22:59). Building on the same social classification, Luke represents the members of the Sanhedrin as astonished by the *παρρηζία* of Peter and John because they knew them as *ἡρώδης* and *δυναμῶν*(Ac.4:13). Luke’s sensitivity to the social stratification identifiable by language appears to be confirmed by his description of the citizens of Lystra as not being able to speak Greek but only Lycaonian (Ac.14:11) and as a consequence misunderstand Paul and Barnabas.

The apologetic benefit derived from the emphasis on the public nature of Christian proclamation can be seen in the importance of such concepts to Luke's contemporaries. Malherbe has made a survey of the various philosophical schools and their concern to avoid the accusation of secrecy.<sup>152</sup> He begins with Plato and brings his study through to the Christian era. Amongst others, he gives the example of Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, who felt the need to hide his desire to lead a contemplative life, in order to avoid being criticised for withdrawing from public life.<sup>153</sup> Epictetus had a similar concern, and therefore conducted a school of philosophy which prepared young men for participation in public life.<sup>154</sup> The negative perception of people not willing to be open is reflected in the language used to describe them. MacMullen, in an appendix entitled *The Lexicon of Snobbery*, indicates that people who were not involved in public duties and who neglected their work could be identified by a derogatory phrase such as: *otiosa plebs et deses*.<sup>155</sup>

The positive connotations of *παρρηζία* is not only its focus on an outward and public disposition. The word also conveys a deeper moral approval. Aristotle describes it as a characteristic of the "great-souled man" (*κεγαλοσύτης*).<sup>156</sup> He makes the connections between *κεγαλοσύτης* and *παρρηζία* as the great-souled man's ability to be outspoken and frank because he seeks the truth and he wishes to be open. In the following quote from Aristotle it can be seen that the characteristics of truth, openness and boldness of speech are closely linked to the respected characteristics of the great-souled man. *θα\_ κείην ης\_ \_ιεξείας κ\_ι\_ον\_ ης\_ δόξες, θα\_ \_ιέγεινθα\_ \_πράτητηνθανερ\_ς (παρρηζιης\_ς γ\_ρ δη η\_ θαηθρονεηηθς ε\_ναη, θα\_ \_ιεξεσηηθς, πι\_ν\_ζα κ\_ δη ε\_ρφνείαν· δ\_ πρ\_ς ηο\_ς ποι\_ι\_ούς).*<sup>157</sup>

The moral correctness that *παρρηζία* conveys also comes through in Plutarch's contrast of it to superstition. In his work *On Superstition*, Plutarch gives examples of the derangements of the soul that are symptomatic of superstition and which remove boldness of speech (*η\_ν παρρηζία ν\_ \_θαηρε\_ηη*): sleeplessness and stinging desires which push a person over a precipice and which choke a person.<sup>158</sup> Betz, in his analysis of Plutarch's work and its comparison with the New Testament, explains that the use of *παρρηζία* does not come from the Old Testament, which only has a few examples of it, but that it is to be understood as a term of approval which has been taken over by Christians from pagan society. In so doing

<sup>152</sup> A.J. Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 9ff.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>155</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus: 28.4.28. cit. ap. R. MacMullen *Roman Social Relations; 50 B.C.- A.D.284*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 141.

<sup>156</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 4.3.26-29.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.3. 28. Aristotle makes the interesting comment that the "great-souled man" is haughty towards men of position and fortune. *θα\_ πρ\_ς κ\_ν ηρ\_ς\_ν\_ \_ξήκαηηθα\_ ε\_ ης\_τία κέγαν ε\_ναη* (*Nic. Eth.* 4.3.26) This characteristic puts an interesting perspective on the incident recorded in Acts 23:3, where Paul accuses the high priest of being a "white washed wall". When Paul's remark is read in the light of Aristotle's description of the great-souled man, it implies Paul is a man worthy of respect for he is not intimidated by people of power and that he is quickly able to have the measure their stature. This positive assessment of Acts 23:3 reinforces to the explanation made above, that Paul's ability and willingness to accept correction is a rhetorical device to portrays him as a man who is both reasonable and obedient to the authorities. The links that the word *παρρηζία* has with various aspects of respectability and reasonableness and stature is not restricted to Paul's defence speech but is also present in other parts of Luke-Acts.

<sup>158</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 165A.

Christians laid claim to virtues of pagan society.<sup>159</sup> Betz's assessment of Luke's use of *παρρηζία* supports Malherbe's research which indicates that such words cannot be fully understood without the perspective of moral philosophy. The favourable qualities of reasonableness and rationality projected by the word *παρρηζιαδόκενος*, therefore contrasts clearly with the previous raging of Paul and the confused and irrational shouting of the antagonistic Jews.

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<sup>159</sup> H.D.Betz, *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature (I)*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 14.

The interplay between the qualities of truth, openness and boldness of speech in Acts 26:25-26 is evidence that Luke chose these words in order to portray Paul as reasonable and rational. In so doing, Paul's reference to his own *παρρηζία* is not a vain boast, but as Betz observes in *De Laude Ipsius*: "Plutarch remarks that in a defence speech self-praise may be allowed as part of *παρρηζία* ." <sup>160</sup> Through his choice of words, Luke is portraying Christianity as a worthy and respectable religion and by portraying Paul as a particular example deserving such respect.

The ongoing importance of *παρρηζία* in subsequent centuries is recognised by Schlier who indicates that it could not simply fade from the early Christian scene. <sup>161</sup> Its positive contribution as a specific gift given by God to Christian leaders is found in Eusebius' account of the martyrs of Lyon. Eusebius describes the God fearing man, Alexander in a way that is reminiscent of Acts 4:29-31. He states that in addition to his love of God, Alexander was also known for his apostolic gift of bold speech (*παρρηζία*). Eusebius writes: *θα\_ γνφζη\_ς ζτεδ\_ν π\_ζην δη\_ η\_ν πρ\_ς ζε\_ν\_ γάπεν θα\_ παρρηζία ν ηο\_ ιόγος ( \_ν γ\_ρ θα\_ ο\_θ\_ \_κοηρος \_ποζηοι ηθ\_ ταρίζκαηος).* <sup>162</sup>

Linked together, the qualities of *ιεζείας*, *ζφθροζύνε*, *ποθζεγγοκαη* and *παρρηζαδόκενος* form a complex of positive and respected characteristics. These stand in opposition to the negative perception of Paul and Christianity as secretive and reinforce the portrayal of Paul as being a respectable representative of the mean.

## 5 Intelligence and Reasonableness

Up to this point it has been argued that the qualities of Paul and together with him those of Christians, represent the reasonable mean which falls between the extremes of irrational superstition and the deficiency of atheistic indifference. The presentation of Paul as the

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<sup>160</sup> H.D.Betz, *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature (2)*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 389.

<sup>161</sup> H.Schlier, *παρρηζία*, *TDNT* 5: 884.

<sup>162</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.1.49. Hellenistic Judaism has taken the positive aspect of the word *παρρηζία* but interpreted its qualities more closely into the realm of a person's relationship with God. The understanding of *παρρηζία* in Hellenistic Judaism is slightly different from the purely Hellenistic meaning of speaking boldly to people, in that it is seen as a boldness which enables one to stand before God without fear. Cf. Job 27:9; 22:23-27; Wisdom 5:1. This closer relationship with God in the use of the word *παρρηζία* is also reflected in the Johannine corpus in 1 Jn. 3:21; 5:14. The disciple or believer, because he/she has faith, can stand before God boldly. The passage in Acts 4:29 which is part of the prayer is that they be granted boldness to speak, has the interesting juxtaposition of *δοῦλος* and *παρρηζία*. In Hellenistic society servants do not have boldness or the right to speak publicly. Cf. e.g. Euripides of Salamis, the tragic dramatist (480-406 B.C.) who writes in ION 673H, *ξένος θ\_ν ηρ\_ς ιόγοιζην\_ζη\_ς\_ ηρ\_ ζήκα δο\_ιον πέπαρη θο\_θ\_ γεη παρρηζίαν*. H.Schlier, *παρρηζία*, *TDNT* 5: 872. In Acts 4:29 they possess *παρρηζία* although they see themselves as *δοῦλοι* Luke's use of the word *παρρηζία* in this context, indicates that the boldness they were given was not linked to an increase in their personal status, but a boldness which allowed them to serve God more effectively. The presentation of the apostles as having "boldness" (*παρρηζία*) would be understood by a purely Hellenistic society as an indication of superior qualities. Thus the apostles would not be ordinary men but people who have a special ability to speak publicly (with political overtones). It was the mark of a philosopher. Cf. e.g. Marcus Aurelius *Antonius* 11.6. Cf. Schlier, *παρρηζία*, *TDNT* 5: 875. Luke's use of *περέης* (Ac. 26:16) rather than *δοῦλος* in describing Jesus' appointment of Paul, is an indication that Luke is also sensitive to the Hellenistic concepts and the nuances of how they can be used. Rengstorff makes the interesting observation that "Epictetus described the true Cynic, with his concern to help men paternally and fraternally for their own sakes, in terms of the category of divine *περέης*, and this with an express ref. to the fatherhood of Zeus:" Rengstorff, *περέης* θηι., *TDNT* 8: 531. The parallel with Paul's appointment by Jesus together with Paul's ability to speak boldly is a sign to the reader that Paul needs to be taken seriously and that his message is important. (For the rule of Epictetus for the philosopher as Zeus' *περέης* see: Epict. *Diss.* 3.7.36.

representative of this reasonable mean has been achieved not only through the negative presentation of the extremes, but primarily through the presentation of the positive qualities associated with the words: ζῶθροζύνε, ἔξερα, ποθζέγγοκαη and παρρεζηαδόκενος which carry a complex of beneficial characteristics which contribute to the overall positive presentation of Paul as someone who can maintain the mean.

The connotations of these words also convey a unified picture of rationality and intelligence. The concept of intelligence in the Christian faith has already been touched on through the discussion of the word ζῶθροζύνε which is not only the opposite to κανία but, in Greek thought refers primarily to “the rational in the sense of what is intellectually sound”<sup>163</sup> Louw and Nida analyse this word by stating that it refers to “the capacity to understand - to have understanding about practical matters.”<sup>164</sup> Although the concept of intelligence in Acts has been noticed by a number of scholars, its significance needs to be amplified upon so that its contribution may be more fully appreciated.<sup>165</sup>

The problem that early Christians faced was that they felt constrained to explain their faith to an audience which was often critical of religions perceived to be new. They therefore made use of such concepts as reason and intelligence in order to deal with these erroneous perceptions. MacMullen has identified the pressures experienced by Christian apologists and indicates how they responded by emphasising the rationality and intellectual content of the Christian faith. “To be pious in any sense, to be respectable and decent, required the perpetuation of cult, even if one’s judges themselves worshipped quite other gods. So the Jews could be excused because they were at least loyal to their own inherited error, as one of them can declare to a pagan audience. He declares, of course, only a reason that he is sure will be acceptable. It duly appears unprompted in the mouths of pagans. Entangled in exactly the same presuppositions, Christians were continually on the defensive as deserters from what was seen to be their true spiritual home, namely Judaism. They replied by appealing to considerations that might weigh against ancestral piety, for example, „philosophy’ and „reason’ against „superstition’ and *ta patria*.”<sup>166</sup>

Malherbe confirms this by showing that Christianity did not develop in a moral vacuum but that Christian ethical language was often coloured by the moral philosophers of the day. “The moral teaching of early Christianity in many ways resembled that of their pagan neighbors.”<sup>167</sup> One of the ways in which Christianity was affected was through the emphasis on reason. “During the Hellenistic period, it was the conviction that reason was the basis for

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<sup>163</sup> H.Luck, ζῶθροζύνε, *TDNT* 7: 1097.

<sup>164</sup> Louw & Nida, 384.

<sup>165</sup> Dibelius has argued that in the Areopagus speech the process of knowing God is not in terms of the Old Testament, where it is a matter of the will and of subjection to what God commands. In contrast “the search for God in the Areopagus speech is a matter of thinking.” M.Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H.Greeven (London: SCM Press, 1956), 32. See also the discussion that the phrase “God has not left Himself without witness” (Ac.14:17) implies that a reasoning process has to take place. E.Germiquet, *Paul and Barnabas in Lystra, the Contextualization of the Gospel in a Graeco-Roman City, (Acts 14:8-20)*, (Unpublished Thesis, Rhodes University, 1992), 94. Bondi has shown that Luke portrays Paul’s prominence by associating him with people who command respect. “But most especially, it is with civic and political leadership of the day that Luke clearly draw out the prominence and significance of Paul. In 13:7 Paul is summoned to the proconsul Sergius Paulus, „a man of intelligence” whom Paul converts to the faith after having defeated Elymas the magician.” R.Bondi, Such as I Am: Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 27 (1997): 172.

<sup>166</sup> R.MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 2.

<sup>167</sup> A.Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 11.

moral life, and the philosophers increasingly turned their attention to ethics.”<sup>168</sup> A particular example of this is given by Malherbe whose assessment of the Cynics leads him to make the following assessment concerning their emphasis on intelligence: “The Cynics must therefore begin with himself, expelling all desires and passions and undertakings to live by intelligence and reason alone.”<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 11f.

<sup>169</sup> A.Malherbe, “Self-Definition among Epicureans and Cynics” F.Meyer, E.Sanders, eds. *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 54.

The influence that the perceived presence or absence of intelligence in a religious group could make on public opinion is illustrated by Livy's description of the Bacchanalia scare in 186 B.C. In his introduction Livy identifies the absence of learning and the presence of minds filled with error, as a prominent feature of this superstition. Accordingly Livy describes the man who first introduced the Bacchanalia to Rome, as lacking in intellectual qualities: *quas multas ad animorum corporumque cultum nobis eruditissima omnium gens invexit.*<sup>170</sup> and further reference concerning the same person: *animos errore imbueret.*<sup>171</sup> The absence of intellectual sophistication is also noted by Strabo in his assessment of the Celts of northern Gaul. He noted that in addition to their lack of reasoned behaviour they also have a great deal of uncivilized wildness.<sup>172</sup>

De Villiers in his investigation of pagan criticism of oracles and prophecies, shows that during the first century the uncertainty displayed towards such practices was caused by the absence of a tangible intellectual content. He quotes Dodds' observation: "Certainly it is in this age that the Greek pride in human reason attains its most confident expression. We should reject, says Aristotle, the old rule of life that counselled humility, bidding man think in mortal terms; for man has within him a divine thing, the intellect, and so far as he can live on that level of experience, he can live as though he were not mortal. The founder of Stoicism went further still: for Zeno, man's intellect was not merely akin to God, it was God, a portion of the divine substance in its pure or active state."<sup>173</sup>

An interesting parallel on the need for an intelligent approach to religious matters is given by Luke's contemporary Plutarch, who discusses the importance of intelligence as the reasonable balance between the two extremes of superstition and atheism. Plutarch writes: "Thus men make use of consecrated symbols, some employing symbols that are obscure, but others those that are clearer, in guiding the intelligence (*ἡνὲν νόεζην δέγο νηες*) toward things divine, though not without a certain hazard. For some go completely astray and become engulfed in superstition; and others, while they fly from superstition (*δελζῆθηιονίαν*) as from a quagmire, on the other hand unwittingly fall, as it were, over a precipice into atheism (*ζέόηηη*)." <sup>174</sup> This brief introduction serves to indicate that the need to explore and expose the rational and intellectual content in Luke's work is not only appropriate but essential. Such exposure will reveal that a fundamental feature of Luke's presentation of the Christian faith is that it has a rational and intelligent dimension to it.

Malherbe hints at this preoccupation on the part of Luke for he states that in order to counter the prevalent perception that Christians were uneducated and socially insignificant, Luke has specifically stressed the relatively high social status of converts. He mentions priests (Ac.6:7), a royal treasurer (8:26ff), a centurion (10:1ff), a proconsul (13:6ff), and a ruler of the synagogue (18:8).<sup>175</sup> Malherbe makes the point even more clearly in his discussion of Paul's

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<sup>170</sup> Livy *From the Founding of the City* 39.8.3.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.8.4.

<sup>172</sup> Sherwyn-White, *Racial Prejudice*, 9.

<sup>173</sup> E.R.Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, (Berkeley: California Press, 1951), 238. Cit.ap. P.G.R.De Villiers, *Interpreting the New Testament in the light of pagan criticism of oracles and prophecies in Greco-Roman times*, *Neotestamentica* 33 (1999): 49f.

<sup>174</sup> Plutarch *Isis and Osiris* 378A. In discussing the importance of reason, Freyburger-Galland refer to Plutarch's criticism of Pythagoreans in the following way: "Pour paraître pieux et supérieurs aux autres, ils préférèrent écouter les inspirations que leur donnent les visions et les songes, au lieu de suivre la voie que leur indique la raison." M-L.Freyburger-Galland, G.Freyburger, J-C.Tautail. *Sectes Religieuse en Grèce et à Rome dans L'Antiquité Païenne*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986), 232f.

<sup>175</sup> Malherbe, *Not in a Corner*, 3.

visit to Athens (Ac.17). “Having had Paul receive such abuse, Luke then removes him from the market place to precisely such a „gathering of intelligent men.“ As has often been noted, to underscore the philosophical setting in which Paul here operates, Luke describes the scene with allusions to Socrates.”<sup>176</sup>

Therefore in addition to Luke’s use of specific words such as ζφ θροζύ νε, \_ι εζηα, \_ποθζέγγοκαη and παρρεζηαδόκενοζ which convey an intellectual content and within this general overview of the presentation of Christianity as an intellectually sound religion, Luke’s use of the imagery of opening eyes and proclaiming light, needs to be considered.

### **5.1 The opening of eyes and proclamation of light**

The imagery of opening eyes and proclaiming light plays a crucial role in the Acts 26 account of Paul’s conversion. Luke’s use of this imagery is the climax of a theme that has been progressively developed in the three versions of his conversion. An investigation of the imagery reveals that in the Acts 9 description of Paul’s conversion, Paul was the only person in the party who saw the shining light. Luke specifically states that Paul’s companions heard the sound but they did not see anyone (Ac.9:7). In addition, Paul’s commissioning by Ananias is simply in terms of carrying the name of Jesus before the Gentiles and their kings and the people of Israel (Ac.9:15).

The second account increases the imagery of light by stating that Paul’s companions saw the light which blinded Paul, (Ac.22:9) although none of them appear to have been affected by it. In this account, Paul’s vision is integrated into Ananias’ words of commissioning. “The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to *see* (\_δε\_ν) the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have *seen* (\_ώραθαζ) and heard.”(Ac.22:14f, italics mine). This commissioning therefore stresses that what Paul himself has seen, needs to be conveyed to others.

However, in the third account, the imagery of light and the opening of eyes takes on a far more central position. Firstly, unlike the two previous accounts, the light that appeared on the road overwhelmed everyone in the party and *all* (πάνηφν) fell to the ground (Ac.26:14). Secondly, the opening of eyes and the concept of light is central to Paul’s commissioning: “I am sending you to *open their eyes* (\_νο\_ζηη\_θαη\_κο\_ζ) and to turn them from *darkness to light* (\_π\_ζθόηοαζ\_ε\_ζ\_θ\_ζ)”(Ac.26:18). In terms of this commissioning Paul is not simply to speak about what he has seen, so that the audience receives it second hand as in Acts 22, but now his audience is to have their own eyes opened.

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 5.

The concept of light also reappears at the climactic end of the speech, where it is closely linked to the proclamation of the resurrection. “The Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim *light* (θ\_ς) to his own people and to the Gentiles”(Ac.26:23). In this concluding phrase, the significance of the proclamation of light is enhanced even further, because Paul’s commissioning is linked to Jesus’ own ministry of proclaiming light.<sup>177</sup> The appearance of these words at the conclusion of this climactic speech is not the only reason that renders these words important. An indication of the importance that Luke attaches to the imagery of light and of opening eyes is that the commissioning at the end of the speech, is an echo of both Simeon’s prophecy concerning Jesus and of Jesus’ inaugural message (Lk.4:18).

Simeon’s words spoken in the temple at the dedication, are that Jesus is going to be “a light for the revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory to your people Israel.”(Lk.2:32). Johnson refers to Simeon’s words as “programmatically prophecy” when he writes: “We can recognize in Paul’s statement an echo of Simeon’s ,programmatically prophecy” in Luke 2:32.”<sup>178</sup> An indication of the parallel intended by Luke is the use of the three key words θ\_ς as the central concept, with \_ςνος as the designation for the Gentiles and ι\_ός for the Jews, who are to be the recipients of the light in each account.<sup>179</sup> Hamm likewise notes the importance of Simeon’s words: “Luke has the old man see in the child an identity which will not become evident until the unfolding of volume two of the story.” The passages which he identifies in volume two refer to Paul and Barnabas’ sermon in Pisidian Antioch, where speaking boldly (παρρηζή\_ά\_κων)they repeat the Lord’s command to them: “I have made you a light (θ\_ς) for the Gentiles.”(Ac.13:47). He also identifies this with the passage under discussion: namely Acts 26:18,23.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Acts 26:23 states clearly that it is Christ who is going to proclaim light.

<sup>178</sup> Johnson, 438.

<sup>179</sup> Simeon’s words of praise also include the fact that his *eyes* (\_θ\_αι\_κοι) have *seen* (ε\_δον) the salvation of God.

<sup>180</sup> Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 461.

Jesus' inaugural message also focusses on the giving of sight to those who cannot see. Scholars have identified in this seminal passage, based on the quote from Isaiah 61:1-2, a chiasmic structure with the announcement of the recovery of sight to the blind, as its focus.<sup>181</sup> The importance that the concept of the restoration of sight has for Luke, is revealed by the way he has adjusted the LXX quote from Isaiah to enable the reference to the recovery of sight for the blind, to be placed at the centre of the passage. In this way Luke makes the central point of Jesus' first sermon, a focus on the giving of sight to those who cannot see. Hamm explains that the reference to the "setting at liberty those who are oppressed" (Lk.4:18c) does not form part of Isaiah 61:1-2, but has been imported from Isaiah 58:6. The reason that Luke does this is to balance the chiasmic structure so that the reference to the "recovery of sight to the blind" is balanced on either side by a reference to setting captives free. In this way the concept of opening eyes is intensified.<sup>182</sup> Jesus' first sermon therefore confirms the significance of Simeon's song of praise and anticipates the commission to Paul as reported in his final defence where both images of opening eyes and proclaiming light are used.

The concept of opening eyes and of light which is present in Acts 26 does not therefore represent a new theme introduced by Luke in order embellish Paul's commissioning with imagery. Rather, it represents the use of an important theme which Luke has been developing from the early stages of his Gospel. Scholars have noted Luke's use of this imagery. Rackham describes the significance of Paul's commissioning as symbolic of the experience he has had. For Paul, having his sight restored to his blinded eyes, was a turning point which marked his transition from the authority of the high-priest to that of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>183</sup> O'Toole, in his introductory remarks concerning the divisions of the speech, writes: "Finally, the concept „light,“ enjoys an important role in the second half of the speech."<sup>184</sup> Elaborating on O'Toole's work, Kilgallen indicates in a more concise way the central role played by the concept of light and of opening eyes: "Paul had earlier described, through the words of the heavenly vision, a labor of a lifetime to open eyes," to „tum people from darkness to light.“ The Messiah of God, Isaiah had predicted, would open the eyes of the blind (Isa.42:7), and so Paul's obedience to the vision of Jesus is nothing less than the fulfilment of that expectation whereby the Messiah would announce light to all the world."<sup>185</sup>

The opening of eyes is not simply important because of its central position in the description of Jesus' ministry, but its importance is enhanced by the implication that it refers to an intellectual awakening.

## 5.2 Opening eyes and light as symbolic of the intellect

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<sup>181</sup> This chiasmic structure has been explained by R.Meynet, *Initiation à la rhétorique biblique*, (Paris: 1982), 33; who in turn built on the work of N.Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, (Chapel Hill: 1942) 236-238. op. cit. D. Hamm, Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke, *Biblica* 67 (1986): 458f.

<sup>182</sup> See the detailed explanation: D.Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 459. Heil has shown that the trial of Jesus was depicted by Luke as a symbolic tension between the "power of darkness" and the "light of day." J.Heil, Reader-Response and the Irony of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in Luke 22: 66-71, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989): 276.

<sup>183</sup> Rackham, 469.

<sup>184</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 13.

<sup>185</sup> J.Kilgallen, Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26:2-23): Some Considerations, *Biblica* 69 (1988): 187.

The linking of the imagery of the opening of eyes with an intellectual awakening and a new awareness is not particular to Luke, but forms part of a widespread use of such or similar terminology. A confirmation of the importance that was attached to the ability of seeing with intelligent perception, is the power that eyes could have over audiences. In his examination of gestures and nonverbal communication, Botha states: “In the whole process the eyes are considered extremely important and the eyebrows can also signal anger by contraction (*ira enim contractis*, Quintm79). One who can control the audience by a mere glance or gesture, even before speaking, is for Quintilian the epitome of a successful Roman orator,”<sup>186</sup> Michaelis, touches on some of the deeper aspects related to the eyes: “In a very special way the Greeks were „a people of the eye“.”<sup>187</sup> He expounds further on Plato's use of “seeing” to indicate perception: “That verbs of seeing underwent an early transition from sensual to intellectual perception shows that at this early stage the close relation between the two forms of perception was not contested.”<sup>188</sup> Malina, in his analysis of the first-century personality confirms the relationship between the eyes and intelligence by allocating to the eyes the activities of understanding and thinking as well as the qualities of intelligence, wisdom, thought and mind and he shows how important these are to the understanding of the New Testament.<sup>189</sup>

Luke’s use of the concept of opening eyes and of proclaiming light is not simply for the sake of using a literary metaphor, but as in Greek thought, the deeper significance of light is that it represents reason, while its absence, darkness, represents ignorance. Rackham draws attention to this when he comments on Acts 26:23: “Here the primary thought is that of mental light and darkness, or of knowledge and ignorance.”<sup>190</sup> This use of the word “see” with the implication of an intellectual process is illustrated in the quote from Isaiah which forms the closing passage of Acts. The quote confirms that Luke intends the function of *seeing* and *perceiving* to be understood as an intellectual process for it is closely linked to the function of the heart which represents understanding.<sup>191</sup>  $\theta\alpha\beta\iota\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\nu\eta\epsilon\varsigma\beta\iota\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\eta\epsilon\theta\alpha\omicron\kappa\delta\epsilon\eta\epsilon\cdot\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\upsilon}\nu\zeta\epsilon\gamma\rho\theta\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\eta\omicron\iota\alpha\omicron\eta\omicron\upsilon\eta\omicron\sigma$  (Ac.28:26f). Hamm comes to the same conclusion when he writes concerning the opening of eyes at Emmaus (Lk.24:31): “This restraining of eyes in v.16 and the opening of eyes in v.31 is clearly a metaphor for understanding.”<sup>192</sup> Louw and Nida confirm this in their semantic analysis of New Testament words, for they include  $\theta\zeta\alpha\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$  under the domain of “understanding” describing it as the “capacity to understand as the result of perception.”<sup>193</sup> For Luke, the concepts of *opening eyes*, of *proclaiming light* and of *sight*, form a composite picture of that which is not only respectable but essentially reasonable and intelligent.

<sup>186</sup> J.Botha, Exploring Gesture and Nonverbal Communication in the Bible and the Ancient World: Some Initial Observations, *Neotestamentica* 30 (1996): 8.

<sup>187</sup> W.Michaelis,  $\rho\acute{\alpha}\phi$ , *TDNT* 5: 317.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>189</sup> B.Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (Atlanta: SCM Press, 1983), 61.

<sup>190</sup> Rackham, 469.

<sup>191</sup> Louw & Nida give an extensive list of various combinations referring to aspects of the intellectual process, which includes the use of  $\theta\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ :  $\nu\alpha\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\nu\phi\pi\theta\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$  begin to think;  $\delta\eta\mu\nu\omicron\iota\gamma\phi\eta\lambda\nu\theta\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$ , cause to be open minded etc. Louw & Nida, sv.  $\theta\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$  *GEL*, (2).

<sup>192</sup> D.Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 474.

<sup>193</sup> Louw & Nida, 383.

Behind Luke's use of this imagery stands a long tradition of such interpretation. Aristotle uses the metaphor of the eye being the door through which light can penetrate into a person.<sup>194</sup> He compares the intellect (νοῦς) to a light that God has kindled in the soul. θαυρητην νοῦν ζεῖσθαι εν υστέρησιν κεραι δειοτη.<sup>195</sup> Aristotle makes use of the same metaphor when he speaks of the elderly and the prudent people's ability to perceive: δηγρη τεινθης κπειρω κκαρζην ρζς.<sup>196</sup> Plutarch uses the same imagery in reverse when he writes about the darkness of superstition and its ability to blind the power of reason: υδην ηης δεζηδακωνιας ζθθος κπεζην υζρωπος ζσγτεση θαησθι ζαη ιογηζκ υπράγκαζη και ηζηαι ογηζκο δεοκένοι.<sup>197</sup>

When the concept of light and opening eyes as representing the presence of reason and intelligence is linked to the words ζφοροζύνε, ιεζεηα, ποθζέγγοκαηη and παρρεζηαδόκενος, a composite picture emerges which conveys a consistent message of Paul as a person who is reasonable and intelligent. The importance of this imagery in Christian apologetic literature is not only reflected in Luke's work, but its ongoing importance can be traced in the works of later apologists.

### 5.3 Apologists and the imagery of light

As indicated above, the imagery of opening eyes and of light which is used to convey the presence of an intellectual content to the Christian message is not restricted to Luke but its usefulness continued to be appreciated by later apologists.

Clement of Alexandria, writing a century after Luke, reflects this linking of the imagery of light with the intellect: εθν κγρη "ηο ζεο" ιόγος αηο (θασς ηο νογνήζηος ζεος ιόγος, θφης ρτέησπον θς), εθν δηο ιόγοο υζρφπος (<) ιεζηνός νος υζρωπ.<sup>198</sup>

The imagery is also used in the early third century by Minucius Felix when he equates vulgar ignorance (imperitiae vulgaris caecitate) to thick darkness (blindness).<sup>199</sup> Although in this particular passage Minucius uses the reverse imagery to light and intelligence, Clarke confirms that the same association is at play and reveals the apologetic value of this type of language: "Their exploitation helps to underline the assertion that the Christians, so far from being ill-educated boors ... are the possessors of the right knowledge, of the true philosophy."<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Elliott, in his discussion on the power of the evil eye, explains that the eye was perceived as a window to the heart (the place of one's innermost dispositions and desires) and that the eye not only received light but could also emit evil rays. J.H.Elliott, Matthew 20:1-15: A Parable of Invidious Comparison and Evil Eye Accusation, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 22 (1992): 53. The power of the eyes to send out rays is also seen in Siker's examination of magical papyri. Part of a magical formula emphasises the need to place a barrier against evil eyes: "Blind the eyes of all who oppose me." J.Siker, Abraham in Graeco-Roman Paganism, *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 17 (1987): 203f.

<sup>195</sup> Aristotle *Rhetoric* 3.10.7.

<sup>196</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 6.11.6.

<sup>197</sup> Plutarch *On Superstition* 169B.

<sup>198</sup> Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 10.79.

<sup>199</sup> Minucius Felix *Octavius* 3.1.

<sup>200</sup> G.W.Clarke, *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*, in the series: Quasten, J., W.J.Burghardt, T.C.Lawler. *Ancient Christian Writers, The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, (New York, Newman Press, 1974), 176, note 22.

The link between sight and the ability to have an intelligent perception of God's greatness, was also a useful tool in Origen's apology. He uses this imagery when he poses the question: "Who, then, would we ask, O Greeks, are they who in our judgment do not see, save those who are unable to look up from the exceeding greatness of the world and its contents, ...and reverence Him alone who made these things."<sup>201</sup> Using the reverse of the same metaphor, Origen then compares those who are ignorant of God to being blinded in their minds: "We do not then say that those who are sharp-sighted are suffering from ophthalmia or blindness; but we assert that those who, in ignorance of God, ... are blinded in their minds."<sup>202</sup> That darkness and obscurity continued to be meant as a derogatory term associated with ignorance and a lack of intelligence, is illustrated in Origen's quote of Celsus' comments on the book of Genesis, when he refers to Moses and the origins of the Jewish faith in the following way: "(T)he Jews accordingly endeavour to derive their origin from the first race of jugglers and deceivers, appealing to the testimony of dark and ambiguous words, whose meaning was veiled in obscurity, and which they misrepresented to the unlearned and ignorant."<sup>203</sup>

These examples from later apologists illustrates that the imagery of opening eyes and of turning people from darkness to light as an indication of the presence of intelligence, continued to be used in a similar way to that of Luke in the defence speech of Paul (Ac.26:18). However, this imagery is not used by Luke in any restrictive or exclusive way. For Luke, the intellect plays an essential role in apprehending and understanding the resurrection.

Hamm, although he has restricted his examination of the theme of opening eyes to the gospel, recognises that its significance continues into Acts. In the concluding sentence to his article, he writes: "In Acts (26,18) that mission will be described as a matter of opening eyes and turning from darkness to light."<sup>204</sup> However he does not appear to realize the full significance of his statement as he fails to trace the way this theme continues in Acts. In addition, although he hints at the connection that the opening of eyes has with the resurrection he does not develop the decisive role that the opening of eyes plays in grasping the significance of the resurrection.<sup>205</sup> The following section will therefore examine the vital link that exists between the process of opening eyes and the recognition of the resurrected Christ.

#### 5.4 Opening of eyes linked to the resurrection

Although the three accounts of Paul's conversion have been looked at from various angles, the one central and dominant feature that appears in all three is the link between the light that overwhelms Paul and his meeting of the resurrected Christ. The wording of the account in Acts 9 and 22 is very similar; Acts 9:3 περιήζηρω εν θ\_ς\_θ\_ηο\_ο\_ρανο\_ and Acts 22:6\_ξαιθνες\_θ\_ηο\_ο\_ρανο\_περηαζηρω\_αηθ\_ς\_. The description in Acts 26:13 is also similar except that in keeping with raised literary styles, the words used by Luke are more picturesque. Bruce gives the examples of ο\_ρανόζεν (Ac.26:13) as a literary form of\_θ\_ηο\_ο\_ρανο\_ (Ac.9:3 and 22:6) and\_π\_ρ\_η\_ν\_ι\_ακπρόηηηα\_ηο\_ι\_ίος (Ac.26:13) is a picturesque

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<sup>201</sup> Origen *Contra Celsus* 3.1.27.

<sup>202</sup> Origen *Contra Celsus* 3.77.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.33.

<sup>204</sup> D.Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 477.

<sup>205</sup> Hamm hints at the connection with the resurrection in his concluding remarks: "He would finally be seen most fully in the context of the breaking of the bread and the opening of Scriptures - an understanding which embraces the Messiah's death, his resurrection, and the church's mission to preach repentance for the remission of sins to all nations (24,46-47)." Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 476f.

phrase equivalent to *θάνον* (Ac.22:6).<sup>206</sup> Confirmation that the light represents the resurrected Christ, come from the words spoken by Jesus that follow immediately. O'Toole concentrates on Luke's portrayal of the resurrected Christ and describes the Acts 26:13-18 scene as follows: "The risen Lord appears to Paul, identifies himself, and gives him a task. In Acts 26 (cf. 9,15; 22,14-15) the risen Lord personally designates Paul as his servant and witness."<sup>207</sup> However, the importance for Luke of linking the imagery of light to the resurrected Christ can be seen by its reappearance in other parts of the speech.

The climactic declaration in the Acts 26 speech: "The Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim *light* to his own people and to the Gentiles." (Ac.26:23) links Paul's commissioning to open eyes and proclaim light with the resurrection event in a very intimate way. The close relationship is firstly indicated by the word order, where the reference to the resurrection is followed immediately by the reference to light: *ξ\_ναζήάζεφ ς νεθρ\_ν θ\_ς ...* (Ac.26:23).

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<sup>206</sup> Bruce, 443.

<sup>207</sup> O'Toole, Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke-Acts, *Biblica* 62 (1981): 467.

The close relationship is emphasised further through the clear intimation that it is the risen Christ himself who will proclaim the light. On this point Krodel is emphatic: "It is the resurrected Christ who proclaims light, not Paul."<sup>208</sup> O'Toole expounds on the implications of this relationship: "That the risen Jesus acts among Christians is an essential feature of Luke's portrayal of him. Luke can write of Jesus as the risen Lord who is present in his Church and in his word."<sup>209</sup>

This intimate relationship identified in the Acts 26 speech, between the concepts of opening eyes and the proclamation of light on the one hand and the resurrection of Jesus on the other, is a theme that can be traced through the length of Luke-Acts. The singular importance of this relationship is explicitly revealed by the union of the imagery of opening eyes and the resurrection event which takes place at the heart of Luke's literary work. In the events that take place in Jerusalem (the literary mid point of the chiasmic structure of the journey motif) the resurrected Jesus is only recognised when the eyes of the two disciples are opened (Lk.24:31). On the centrality of the recognition of Jesus at Emmaus, Hamm writes: "Luke's references to „seeing“ Jesus in his final chapter are central to the narrative and highly nuanced."<sup>210</sup>

The special role that Luke attaches to the process of opening eyes is revealed by the unique way in which he has reported the resurrection event. Luke's account of the resurrection differs from the other gospel writers in that both Matthew and John have the women and/or disciples meeting the resurrected Jesus in the garden.<sup>211</sup> However, Luke's presentation of the risen Lord differs in that Jesus is not met in the garden, but only makes his first appearance on the road to Emmaus. The climactic moment in Luke's gospel is when the resurrected Jesus is recognised for the first time, and this only happens when the eyes of the disciples are opened (Lk.24:31).<sup>212</sup>

The two disciples do not merely see Jesus, but in the process of their eyes being opened there is an intellectual perception that takes place of recognising him and of realizing the significance of the resurrection event. Luke conveys to the reader that there is an intellectual perception involved with the opening of eyes, by contrasting two forms of seeing in a single episode. Although Jesus joined the two men on the road, ο\_δ\_ \_θζαι\_κο\_α\_η\_ν\_ \_θραηο\_νηο\_ηο\_κ\_ \_πηγν\_ νηη\_α\_ηόν. (Lk.24:16). The similarity with the event that takes place a few verses on is evident, except for the special use of δηνοίτζεζα\_ν. α\_η\_ν\_δ\_

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<sup>208</sup> Krodel, 78. O'Toole makes the same observation in a more detailed way: "(I)n 26:23 the resurrected Christ is to proclaim himself to the people and to the Gentiles." O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 119.

<sup>209</sup> O'Toole, *Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke - Acts*, 497.

<sup>210</sup> Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 474f. Although from a different perspective, Garrett has also identified the link that Luke makes between the imagery of light and the resurrection. In her examination of the Exodus theme she writes: "Certainly the early interpretation of baptism as participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; cf. Luke 12:50) would be consonant with this story's imagery of sleep in bondage and darkness, followed by light and 'rising'." S.Garrett, Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 673.

<sup>211</sup> Mark's reference to Jesus meeting two men in the country (chap. 16) is generally agreed to be a later addition.

<sup>212</sup> The imagery of light and eyes in relation to the resurrection in Luke's work in general has been noticed by other scholars. Garrett, in her comparison of the Exodus theme contained in the Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24 writes concerning the Acts 12 account: "the „sleeping“ one is told arise, and is (or will be) bathed in light (cf. Acts 12:7)." Garrett explains further: "Certainly the early interpretation of baptism as participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; cf. Luke 12:50) would be consonant with this story's imagery of sleep in bondage and darkness, followed by light and 'rising'." S.Garrett, Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 673.

δηνοίτζεζα ν ο\_ \_θζ αι κοί, θα\_ \_πέγνφζα ν α\_ηόν· (Lk.24:31). The deeper significance of intellectual comprehension that Luke attaches to the opening of eyes in grasping the reality of the resurrection is shown by his use of the word δηνοίγφ.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Liddell & Scott translate the word as “to open” with the connotation “to explain, expound”. *GEL*.

Of the nine occurrences of *δηαοίγφ* in the New Testament, seven of them occur in Luke's work with six directly related to the opening of eyes, heart, mind or scriptures. Even more specifically, Luke uses *δηαοίγφ* on four occasions, for the opening of eyes, of the heart and of the mind (*vo\_ς*) as well as the opening of scripture in relation to the resurrection. Luke 24:31 refers to the eyes of the two disciples being opened (*δηενοίτζεζα ν*) to recognise the resurrected Jesus. Luke 24:45f. (*δηίγονηξεν*) refers to the minds of the disciples being opened up to understand the scriptures which spoke of His dying and rising. In Acts 7:56 Stephen's vision of the heavens being opened up (*δηενοηκένοςς*), revealed the risen Lord standing at the right hand of God. Acts 17:3 (*δηαοίγφν*), refers to Paul opening up the scripture for the Thessalonians and proving that the Christ must die and rise again.<sup>214</sup>

The repeated use of *δηαοίγφ* reveals that Luke attaches a specific function to it. Where it is linked to the opening of the heart, it confirms the intellectual dimension, for in Greek thought, the heart was seen as the seat of moral and intellectual life.<sup>215</sup> Hamm concurs with this interpretation for he explains that the seeing being referred to is an "inner kind of seeing called recognition."<sup>216</sup> He explains further: "This restraining of eyes in v.16 and the opening of eyes in v.31 is clearly a metaphor for understanding."<sup>217</sup> For Luke, the realization of the reality of the resurrection is a process of recognition and understanding which involves an intellectual process. This is in agreement with Hamm's conclusion about Luke's intentions in using the concept of the opening of eyes. "The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that when Luke presents Jesus either as enabler or as object of physical seeing, he does so in a way that symbolizes the deeper seeing which is the faith that perceives Jesus' true identity and acts upon it."<sup>218</sup> Hamm again makes the same point but in more direct terms: "Throughout the Third gospel - and Acts as well (see Acts 4:21; 11:18; 21:31) - people who glorify God for what they have seen are responding to nothing less than the inbreaking of the reign of God."<sup>219</sup> Hamm has therefore identified that through the process of seeing and having eyes opened, Luke implies a form of perception which culminates in understanding.

The words *ζφ θροζύνε, \_ι εζεηα, \_ποθζέγγοκαη* and *παρρεζηαδόκενος* are not simply the negation of Festus' derogatory remark. A fuller significance is perceived when the words are seen as the affirmation of the issue which triggered Festus' outburst. This issue relates to the resurrection of Jesus (Ac.26:23). It is therefore necessary to analyse the process of intellectual perception more closely. In the following section the intellectual process involved in the opening of eyes will be examined in the light of Aristotle's doctrine of the intuitive grasp.

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<sup>214</sup> Although the other two references do not mention the resurrection directly, they do state that it was the scriptures that were being opened. Luke 24:32 refers to the hearts of the disciples burning as He opened up the scriptures. Acts 16:14 refers to Lydia whose heart was opened to pay attention to Paul's message. The fact that she became a believer and was baptised implies that Paul's message focussed on the risen Jesus.

<sup>215</sup> J.Behm, *θαρδία*, *TDNT* 3: 608. Behm also notes: "In Stoicism the heart is in some sense the central organ of intellectual life, the seat of reason, from which feeling, willing and thinking proceed." *Ibid.*, 608f. See also the discussion by Malina on how in the first century, the make up of a person closely linked the eye to the heart, with the capacity to think, and how this is repeatedly reflected in the Scriptures. Malina, *Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 61-65.

<sup>216</sup> Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor* 474.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.

<sup>219</sup> Hamm, What the Samaritan Leper Sees: The Narrative Christology of Luke 17:11-19, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56 (1994): 283.

## 5.5 The resurrection and intelligence

Luke's portrayal that the grasping of the reality of the resurrection requires an intellectual process is implied by the reference Paul makes to Agrippa, that he is able "to understand these things." Louw and Nida indicate that *πίζηακαη* falls in the domain relating to intellectual activity and more specifically in the subdomain of understanding, whereby a correct comprehension can be achieved.<sup>220</sup> The implication of Paul's words to Agrippa is that in contrast to Festus, Agrippa is expected to grasp intellectually what Paul has been speaking about. O'Toole has shown that Luke only uses *πίζηακαη* in Acts and that it is frequently at the beginning of a speech or statement implying that what follows will be understood.<sup>221</sup> However he indicates that Acts 26:26 is different in that the statement precedes the use of *πίζηακαη*.<sup>222</sup> Paul's statement that he speaks words that are true and reasonable (Ac.26:25), which precedes the use of *πίζηακαη*, relates to the proclamation of the resurrection. This is an indication that for Luke the understanding of the resurrection is a process that requires the use of the intellect.

Luke's portrayal that the grasping of the reality of the resurrection is an intellectual process, does not rest simply on a deduction made from his use of the imagery of opening eyes and light and their association with the resurrection. Luke makes a direct reference that an intellectual process is necessary in grasping the reality of the resurrection. In the climactic passage relating the meeting of the resurrected Christ with His disciples (Lk.24:45), Luke explains that the *vo\_ς* of the disciples was opened, so that they could understand the significance of the scriptures which predicted the resurrection. Luke's use of *vo\_ς* at this climactic position in the gospel, indicates the importance of the word for him. The fact that the opening-up of the *vo\_ς* is the work of the resurrected Christ who explains the scriptures relating to the resurrection (Lk.28:46), creates a close link between *vo\_ς* and the resurrection.

Louw and Nida give the semantic implications of *vo\_ς* as: "the psychological faculty of understanding, reasoning, thinking, and deciding - „mind“."<sup>223</sup> Commenting on this passage, Lagrange relates the opening of eyes to an intellectual process by linking Luke 24:45 to the imagery of the resurrection recognised through the opening of eyes in Luke 24:31. He writes: "On emploie volontier de l'intelligence, au sens métaphorique, ce qui se dit de la vue au sens propre."<sup>224</sup>

Luke's general attention to the intelligence of those who respond to the gospel, has not gone un-noticed. Johnson, in his introduction to Luke-Acts writes: "Even the unconverted show intelligence and kindness (see Ac.28:2-10). The perception that outsiders are enlightened corresponds to the portrayal of Jesus and his successors as self-controlled, courageous, just, law-abiding, reasonable - furthest from fanatics."<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> J.Louw, E.Nida *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 380.

<sup>221</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 136.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Louw & Nida, 325.

<sup>224</sup> M.J.Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc*, (Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 614.

<sup>225</sup> Johnson, 22.

The argument that the grasping of the significance and reality of the resurrection requires the intellect, continued to be used by some later apologists. In particular, the philosopher turned Christian, Athenagoras uses it in his apology *On the Resurrection of the Dead*. He gives a number of comparisons from nature and then adds: “(M)uch more does reason, tracing out the truth from the natural sequence, afford ground for believing in the resurrection, since it is safer and stronger than experience for establishing the truth.”<sup>226</sup> Clement of Alexandria, although not referring directly to the resurrection, emphasises the intellectual dimension of Christianity by creating a contrast between the perception of statues which requires only the use of senses, and the perception of the true God which is done by the mind. ζῆλην γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ γαίαν καὶ νεθρῶν ἐπιτήσοσ τε ἡ κεκορηθῆκεν· κὲν δὲ οὐ τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰσθητόν, νοεῖν δὲ ἡ γαίαν καὶ ζῆλην νοεῖόν, οὐθὲν αἰσθητόν ζῆλη [ἡ γαίαν] ζῆδος, κόνος νηφός ζῆδος.<sup>227</sup>

It has been argued that Luke links the grasping of the reality of the resurrection through the faculty of intelligence, and that he describes the process through the imagery of opening eyes and the proclamation of light. That which still needs to be examined is Luke’s understanding of the how the intellect is able to assimilate the reality of the resurrection. The following section will examine Luke’s presentation of the resurrection as an event which needs to be grasped and the role of the intellect in the doctrine of innate awareness.

## 6 Luke and the doctrine of the intuitive grasp

Luke’s depiction of how the resurrected Christ is known, is important for it opens the way to seeing the relevance of the doctrine of innate awareness. The event which Luke has represented as dominating Paul’s life is his conversion on the road to Damascus. The importance of this event for Luke is evidenced by his incorporation of three separate accounts interspersed within his narrative. Bondi elaborates on the significance of Paul’s conversion. “But Paul was not only the doer of great deeds; he was also the recipient on at least a couple of occasions of supernatural visions. Certainly, the primary vision is his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, resulting in his conversion (see chapters 9, 22, 26).”<sup>228</sup> Although some variations between these accounts have already been discussed, there is a significant variation in the third account which has not yet been addressed. In the Acts 26 account the role of Ananias in conveying to Paul the terms of his commissioning by Jesus is totally absent. Commentators notice that Paul’s commissioning is different in this account but offer various explanations. Arrington simply states: “Through the personal intervention of Jesus, the former persecutor was appointed an apostle to the Gentiles.”<sup>229</sup> Haenchen likewise notices this feature but comments on the implication of a direct revelation: “Ananias has to be omitted: only if the heavenly command comes directly to Paul himself is it evident that he „was not disobedient to the heavenly vision“ (v.19).”<sup>230</sup> Conzelmann hints at a Hellenistic setting, by explaining that the inclusion of the devout Jewish Ananias was necessary in the Acts 22 account which was before a Jewish audience, but that the Acts 26 account

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<sup>226</sup> Athenagoras *On the Resurrection of the Dead* 17: A.Roberts, J.Donaldson eds. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of The Writings of The Fathers down to A.D. 325. Justin Martyr and Athenagoras*, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867), 446.

<sup>227</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 4.45.

<sup>228</sup> Bondi, *Such as I Am*, 174.

<sup>229</sup> F.Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1988), 249.

<sup>230</sup> Haenchen, 691. Haenchen also indicates that the absence of Ananias makes this account fit in with Galatians 1:1 where Paul establishes his credentials by claiming that he did not receiving his calling through any man but directly from Christ (690).

emphasises God's irresistible power.<sup>231</sup> Lake also comments on the absence of Ananias and explains it by stating that the inclusion of Ananias was not necessary before Herod. He however adds the perceptive comment that this renders the account more Hellenistic.<sup>232</sup> It is in the light of the Hellenistic dimension recognised in this account that the absence of an intermediary in Paul's apprehending of a divine command, needs to be considered.

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<sup>231</sup> Conzelmann, 211.

<sup>232</sup> F.Jackson, K.Lake, *Beginnings* 5.191.

In order to do so, attention is needed for what Aristotle termed “rational intuition” or “intuitive grasp.”<sup>233</sup> He develops the doctrine that self-evident facts are able to be grasped by the intellect. This enables a person to come to important realizations without the intervention of other human beings. This is an important point, for information which has had to be passed on, is second hand and open to wrong interpretation.<sup>234</sup> Self-evident facts which require intelligence but no intermediaries can stand on their own. Aristotle uses the triangle which he calls “the ultimate figure in mathematics,” to illustrate his point.<sup>235</sup> On this point, Page, Capps, and Rouse elaborate on Aristotle’s explanation: “A triangle is the last form into which a rectilinear figure can be divided: in other words two straight lines cannot enclose a space.”<sup>236</sup> Although this is a self-evident fact, it nevertheless requires the presence of intelligence to grasp it. On this theory of the first principles, Broadie indicates the importance of Aristotle’s explanation in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1140b31- 1141a8) in which Aristotle explains that the νο\_ς is the quality that enables people to apprehend first principles.<sup>237</sup> ε\_δ\_ο\_ς\_ι\_εζεύοκεν\_θα\_κεδέποηε\_δηω\_εσδόκεζα\_περ\_η\_κ\_νδετόκενα\_θα\_νδετόκενα\_ι\_ι\_φς\_τεην\_πζηήκηθα\_θρόνεζις\_ζηηθα\_ζοθία\_θα\_νο\_ς\_ηούηφν\_δ\_η\_ν\_ηρην\_κεζ\_ν\_νδετέηηηε\_ναη(ι\_έγφ\_δ\_ηρία\_θρόνεζην\_πζηήκηεν\_ζοθίαν),\_ι\_είπεηηηηνο\_ν\_ε\_ναηη\_ν\_ρ\_τ\_ν. Concerning this passage; Page, Capps and Rouse explain: “νο\_ς now receives its special sense of a particular virtue of the intellect, viz. that faculty of rational intuition whereby it correctly apprehends (by process of induction, viz. see c.iii.3) undemonstrable first principles.”<sup>238</sup> Thus Aristotle describes the intellect as possessing the ability of apprehending first principles. In the following lengthy quote, Aristotle expounds on this valuable aspect of the intellect: “Also intelligence apprehends the ultimates in both aspects - since ultimates as well as primary definitions are grasped by Intelligence and not reached by reasoning: in demonstrations Intelligence apprehends the immutable and primary definitions, in practical inferences it apprehends the ultimate and contingent fact, and the minor premise, since these

<sup>233</sup> Dodds calls it “intuitive insight” E.R.Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, (Berkeley: California Press, 1951) 216. The details of this doctrine have not been understood entirely. Aristotle appears to use some words with varying meaning in different contexts. On the passage in *Nic.Eth.* 6.11.4, Capps, Page and Rouse add the explanatory note: “Here the intuitive element in Prudence, as well as in Wisdom is termed Intelligence: at c.viii.9 it was called merely Prudence, in contrast with Intelligence, which was limited to intuition of the first principles of science. Here then νο\_ς approximates to its popular sense.” Aristotle, *Nic.Eth.* Loeb Classical Library, 362 note a. Commenting on the same passage Broadie writes: “This interpretation seems to be supported by 1143b 3, where Aristotle relates practical *nous* to ‘the second (or other) proposition’”. This is usually taken to refer to that premiss in a practical argument that states the circumstances from which deliberation starts. Thus prima facie he seems to suggest that intelligence apprehends these circumstances as they present themselves in *advance of deliberation*. But it is odd, to say the least, to dignify this initial cognition by the word ‘intelligence’ in a situation where the heavy demands on intelligence are still to be made.” S.Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 245.

<sup>234</sup> Dio, the Cynic philosopher of the first century, gives an explanation that the nature and conception of the gods, especially the highest one, is innate in all mankind. He does this in *Discourse* 12.39 where he begins a classification of notions about god and he places a person’s innate notions of god as primary in importance, ι\_έγοκεν\_η\_ν\_κθσην\_παζην\_νζρώποτε\_πίοην. He goes on in section 40 to speak of the secondary notions which are in a subordinate position because they are acquired through other means than direct. He gives the examples of narrative accounts, myths and customs; ι\_όγοτε\_η\_θα\_κύζοτε\_θα\_ζεζη

<sup>235</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 6.8.9.

<sup>236</sup> See Page’s editorial note to Aristotle’s *Nic. Eth.* Loeb Classical Library, 350 note g.

<sup>237</sup> S.Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 244f.

<sup>238</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* eds. T.Page, E.Capps, W.Rouse, L.Post and E.Warmington, Loeb Classical Library, 340 note f.

are the first principles from which the end is inferred, as general rules are based on particular cases; hence we must have perception of particulars, and this immediate perception is Intelligence.”<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 6.11.4: θα\_ \_ νο\_ς η\_ν\_ \_ζ\_τάηων\_ \_π'\_ \_κθόηρα. θα\_ \_ γ\_ρ\_ η\_ν\_ πρώτων\_ \_ρ\_φ\_ν\_ θα\_ \_ η\_ν\_ \_ζ\_τάηων\_ νο\_ς\_ \_ζ\_η\_ θα\_ \_ ο\_ \_ ι\_όγος. θα\_ \_ \_ κ\_ν\_ θαη\_ η\_ς\_ \_ποδείξεης\_ η\_ν\_ \_θηγήτων\_ \_ρ\_φ\_ν\_ θα\_ \_ πρώτων\_ , \_δ'\_ \_ν\_ η\_ς\_ \_πραθη\_θα\_ς\_ η\_ρ\_ \_ζ\_τάηος\_ θα\_ \_ \_νδετοκένοσ\_ θα\_ \_ η\_ς\_ \_ήρας\_ προή\_ζ\_εφς. \_ρ\_τα\_ \_ γ\_ρ\_ η\_ρ\_ ο\_ \_ \_νεθα\_ α\_ \_η\_η\_ \_θ\_ η\_ν\_ θα\_ζ'\_ \_θα\_ζ\_η\_α\_ γ\_ρ\_ η\_ \_θα\_ζ\_ί\_ο\_σ\_. η\_ρ\_ύηων\_ ο\_ \_ν\_ \_τεη\_ν\_ δε\_ \_α\_ζ\_ζ\_εζ\_ην\_ , α\_ \_η\_ε\_ δ'\_ \_ζ\_η\_ νο\_ς. Page, Capps and Rouse elaborate on the slightly variable understanding of 'intuition' by pointing out that in 5 & 6 the intuitive element in *Prudence* as well as in *Wisdom* is termed Intelligence. Whereas at 8.9 it was called merely Prudence, in contrast with Intelligence, which was limited to intuition of the first principles of science. Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 6.11.4, Loeb Classical Library, 362 note a. Also worthy of noting is that Aristotle's use of the word α\_ζ\_ζ\_εζ\_ης (which describes perception) carries the explanation in Liddell & Scott (s.v., α\_ζ\_ζ\_εζ\_ης) which specifically includes perception by the eye: "perception by the senses, esp. by feeling, but also by seeing, hearing, etc."

Thus, for Aristotle, the ability of being able to choose and maintain the mean between excess and deficiency, is the culmination of a process of making the right choices through the use of intelligence. According to Aristotle, the first principles which cannot be learned but which have to be grasped by an act of intelligence is the source of all subsequent decisions. This is what sets humans apart from animals. Humans have the ability to grasp original ideas which lead to the ability to make decisions, while animals only respond to the particular images and memories.<sup>240</sup> Thus for Aristotle there is an important link between intelligence and the ability to grasp in an intuitive way, new facts. This is what initiates the process which culminates in the ability to intelligently choose the reasonable mean.

Luke's depiction of how the reality of the resurrected Christ is grasped is couched in terms which imply the necessity of such an intuitive grasp. In particular, the resurrection being apprehended through a process of opening of eyes (Lk. 24:31) and that the scriptures concerning the resurrection are only grasped once the *vo\_ς* has been opened (Lk.24:45), implies a process whereby apprehending the reality of the resurrection is initiated by an intellectual grasp.

Although commentators have not made a direct association with the doctrine of the intuitive grasp, many have nevertheless noticed that Luke's way of portraying the resurrection implies the need for such a moment of "recognition". Tannehill comes very close to making a link with the doctrine of the intuitive grasp when he describes Peter's speech as leading its hearers to understand something new about their situation. Tannehill also acknowledges Luke's deliberate use of such a technique: "Because of this, it is helpful to speak of the Pentecost episode as a „recognition scene“. Aristotle wrote of the importance of „recognitions“ or „discoveries“ (*\_ναγνφρίζεις*) in tragic plots.<sup>241</sup> People who have acted blindly against their own best interest may at a later time discover the truth in a recognition scene. Peter is the messenger who discloses the uncomfortable truth. The narrator of Acts seems to recognize the dramatic value of a recognition scene within the plot and constructs the narrative accordingly."<sup>242</sup> Lagrange makes a similar observation in his commentary on the resurrection event when he indicates the "self-evident" nature of the resurrection and its relevance to scripture. Commenting on Luke 24:46 he writes: "Jésus apparaissant ressuscité, sa résurrection est évidente par elle-même, et n'a pas besoin d'être prouvée par l'Écriture."<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 7.3.11.

<sup>241</sup> Tannehill gives the example of Aristotle's *Poetics* 1450a. R.Tannehill, The Function of Peter's Mission Speeches in the Narrative of Acts, *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 403 note13.

<sup>242</sup> Tannehill, *Peter's Mission Speeches*, 403f.

<sup>243</sup> Lagrange, *Luc*, 614.

Indications that Luke intended the resurrection to be grasped by an intelligent intuitive insight is supported by other examples from his work. The climax to Paul's defence speech before Festus and Agrippa, contains the concluding repetition of his commission in terms of the proclamation of the risen Christ in accordance with the prophets and Moses (Ac.26:22f). There is an important detail which also renders this account different from the two other accounts of his conversion, namely; the risen Christ will do His own proclamation. The Greek is clear that the subject of κείι εηθηαγγέιι εννις \_ τρηζός, not Paul. Not enough attention has been paid to the implication of these words. Some scholars barely refers to the fact that Luke is implying that the proclamation will be done by Christ Himself. Haenchen for example mentions in passing that "hitherto the resurrection was only a matter of hope and faith."<sup>244</sup> Kilgallen places the statement in a footnote and remarks: "Christ is with and in Paul proclaiming light."<sup>245</sup> O'Toole however clearly grasps the meaning of the text although he indicates some uncertainty about Luke's intended implications.<sup>246</sup> He not only indicates that Christ is the subject of the proclamation, but also points out that as κείι εηθηαγγέιι εννις in the present tense, the activity of Christ is ongoing. O'Toole also does an in depth analysis of θηαγγέιι ενν and concludes, "The object of *katangellein* is always one or other aspect of Jesus. The word is post-resurrectional, so the emphasis falls on the resurrected Christ. Consequently, in 26:23 the resurrected Christ is to proclaim himself to the people and to the Gentiles."<sup>247</sup> O'Toole understands this as Jesus identifying himself in Paul's ministry. "So, the resurrected Christ cannot only be said to be in heaven; he is with and in Paul proclaiming the light."<sup>248</sup>

However, in terms of the doctrine of the intuitive insight the implication of these words take on an additional dimension. Every recipient of such proclamation from Christ will not need an intermediary to relate second hand information which is inferior. Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and like Paul on the road to Damascus, the opening of eyes and the seeing of light, can be understood as an intellectual grasping of the reality of the resurrection.

This passage is not the only example where Luke uses the concept of intuitive perception. In two other important speeches that Paul delivers before a Gentile audience, its presence can be detected. The first address to the Gentile audience in Lystra also implies that an intuitive grasp is needed. Part of the Acts 14:15-17 speech states that "God has not left himself unwitnessed". As in Acts 26:23; Acts 14:17a implies that it is not Paul who is revealing God to them, but that his role is simply to point out how God is revealing Himself. The Greek is quite clear; ο\_θ\_ κάρησπον α\_η\_ν\_θ\_θεν implies that God is doing his own witnessing. The analysis of this verse and the implication that innate perception is required, has already been examined in detail.<sup>249</sup>

This concept is also echoed in the great address of Paul to the Athenian philosophers.

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<sup>244</sup> Haenchen, 688.

<sup>245</sup> J.Kilgallen, Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26:2-23): Some Considerations. *Biblica* 69 (1988): 186 note 19.

<sup>246</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 118-120.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> See the detailed explanation of this passage together with supporting examples from Greek literature, Hellenistic Judaism and Christian apologists, which indicate that God's presence and benevolence is something that is appropriated through a process of innate perception. E.A.Germiquet, *Paul and Barnabas in Lystra, the Contextualization of the Gospel in a Graeco-Roman City, (Acts 14:8-20)*, (Unpublished Thesis, Rhodes University, 1992), 89-95.

In his address Paul states: “God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him.”(Ac.17:27). Dibelius has argued that in the Areopagus speech the process of knowing God is the result of reasoned thinking. In his examination of that speech he concludes that the search for God is not according to that of the Old Testament, where it is a matter of the will and of obedience to God's command. Dibelius comes to the conclusion that “the search for God in the Areopagus speech is a matter of thinking.”<sup>250</sup> God has given manifestations of life so that men who observe them, can conclude that He exists. The supreme manifestation that God has given of himself is the resurrection of Jesus which is referred to as a guarantee or proof (Ac.17:31). Although Dibelius does not link his observations to the doctrine of the intuitive grasp, his assessment of what Luke implies, points in that direction. Dibelius makes a careful examination of the word  $\delta\epsilon\eta\epsilon\upsilon$  and says; “ $\delta\epsilon\eta\epsilon\upsilon$  is the word used by the Greeks for the seeking out and examining of what is true and so, also, of what is divine.”<sup>251</sup>

## 6.1 Apologists and the intuitive grasp

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<sup>250</sup> Dibelius, 32.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid. In this respect another facet should be taken into consideration. The question of “ignorance” which is raised in both the Lystra and Areopagus speech is the consequence of a faulty reasoning process. It is raised in Acts 14 and 17 and also in the fourth epistle of Heraclitus. Ignorance of God does not imply that He does not exist. Rather it is the fault of people who have not reasoned clearly. The Greeks are portrayed by Luke as being in ignorance about the true God. This ignorance comes out clearly in the speech at Athens where it is referred to on three occasions (Ac.17:23 - twice - and Ac.17:30).



Since Paul is a person who has the respected intellectual and moral capacity to not only grasp the significance of the resurrection but to proclaim it boldly, he therefore has the capacity to maintain the mean between the extremes of irrational superstition on the one side and the deficiency of indifference on the other.

## 6.2 The reader and the intuitive grasp

Indications are that Luke did not intend to limit the intellectual capacity to grasp the central tenets of Christianity to characters in his narrative. Scholars have noted that Luke's intended audience is the reader<sup>258</sup> and as a consequence Luke also challenges his reader, through his narrative, to make an intuitive grasp and thus to understand Jesus' ministry and to accept the reality of the resurrection. The implication of this is that the reader who is capable of such an intelligent intuitive grasp would not see in Christianity a faith which is excessive superstition but one which is reasonable and rational.

Heil, in his analysis of the trial of Jesus in Luke 22, repeatedly shows how Luke develops his narrative in such a way that the reader is brought to the point of grasping the significance of the situation. "Ironically for the reader, Jesus as the Son of Man exalted to the right hand of God will ultimately be the judge of those who are now judging him. This irony thus causes the reader to experience the mysterious paradox of Jesus' becoming the exalted and triumphant Son of Man not only despite but in and through the attempt of the Jewish leaders to condemn him to death."<sup>259</sup> Further on, Heil once again states: "Since the reader knows that the Sanhedrin „will surely not believe“ (22:67), the experience of this irony invites the reader to supply the faith that the Sanhedrin lack."<sup>260</sup> By quoting from Luke, Heil shows how the narrative is carefully presented to the reader: "By his emphatically and valiantly uttered reply, „You say that I am!“ or „As you say, I am!“, Jesus not only courageously admits that he is the Son of God but also challenges the Sanhedrin to make this same admission. This brings the reader to a more intense experience of the tragic irony that the Sanhedrin, in what they are saying in order to condemn Jesus, are unknowingly saying what they need to believe in him. Through this irony, then, the reader tastes the tragedy of the Sanhedrin's rejecting the one who is truly their Christ, the exalted Son of Man and Son of God."<sup>261</sup> Although Heil gives other examples, the final sentence of his article clearly portrays his conclusion that the reader is challenged to make the same kind of intellectual intuitive grasp implied by the imagery of eyes being opened. Heil sums up Luke's account of Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, with these words, "By moving through the experience of this dramatic irony of Luke 22:66-71, then, the reader is enabled to realize and come to the more profound belief that the condemned Jesus, not only *despite* but precisely *because* of his self-condemnation before the Jewish Sanhedrin, truly reigns triumphant over them and the „power of darkness“ as the exalted messianic Son of Man and Son of God, „seated at the right hand of the power of God“ (22:69)."<sup>262</sup>

Recent research continues to point to the importance of considering the reader as the intended audience. Alexander, in evaluating the apologetic character of Acts, focusses on the closing exchange between Festus, Paul and Agrippa (Ac.26:24-29) as its clearest example:

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<sup>258</sup> O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 19f. O'Toole has researched this issue in detail and has summarised them in concisely. His reasons appear in this chapter under footnote 83.

<sup>259</sup> J.Heil, Reader-Response and the Irony of Jesus before the Sanhedrin in Luke 22: 66-71, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989): 281.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 281f.

<sup>262</sup> Heil, *Reader Response*, 284.

“This is an appeal addressed specifically and very directly to a leading, highly placed patron of the Diaspora Judaism, and its object is not to exonerate Paul but to bring the hearer - any hearer- to share his religious world-view. It is perhaps not too fanciful to suggest that this may be the point at which the dramatic audience of the speech approaches most closely the real-life audience of the book.”<sup>263</sup>

It is in the light of this ongoing research which points to the importance of taking the reader seriously, that the name “Theophilus” to whom Luke dedicates his work, should be considered. If it is borne in mind that the central issue dominating Luke-Acts is the resurrection of Jesus and that Luke depicts it as being grasped through a process of intellectual perception, then the name Theophilus takes on fresh significance.

## 7 “Theophilus” and the Intellect

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<sup>263</sup> L.Alexander, “The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text”, M.Edwards, M.Goodman, S.Price, eds. *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 38. Heil’s observation that in Luke’s portrayal of Jesus’ trial the reader is challenged to supply the faith which the Sanhedrin is incapable of doing, appears to be applicable to Paul’s trial as well. With Agrippa’s non-committal reply the reader is challenged to supply the faith which he is incapable of. Another example of the challenge in understanding the significance of Jesus’ ministry being set before the reader is to be found in Luke’s account of John the Baptists’ disciples enquiring of Jesus if he is the Messiah. Confirmation that the concept of opening eyes is intended by Luke to encapsulate the significance of Jesus’ ministry is to be seen in the request conveyed by John the Baptist, for Jesus to confirm His Messiahship (Lk.7:18-23). Luke constructs the episode in such a way that Jesus does not answer the question directly but gives some clues by listing the activities that Jesus has been engaged in. The last activity described as being part of Jesus’ ministry, is the restoration of sight to the blind, (Lk 7:21). However, the reply that Jesus entrusts to John's disciples’ begins with the reference to the restoration of sight (Lk.7:22). Through this literary technique of ending the one list and beginning the next with the identical reference, the reader is led to focus on the reception of sight as the key to understanding Jesus’ ministry. Hamm describes the importance of this scene as follows: “Among the clues, the healing of blindness has, at least in the presentation of Luke, pride of place. Such healing was named last in the summary of v.21, and it is immediately repeated as first in the cluster of v.22.” Hamm, *Vision as Metaphor*, 460f. This response does not give the reader a direct answer to the issue of Jesus’ Messiahship, but a clue is given to the reader so that with the application of intelligence and insight an understanding of Jesus’ ministry will be perceived.

There is a long debate as to the historicity of Theophilus. Arguments both for and against Theophilus as a real person have been put forward.<sup>264</sup> Despite extensive research, scholars have been unsuccessful in identifying any individual as the Theophilus to whom Luke is writing.<sup>265</sup> Lagrange states that the Theophilus referred to in Luke 1: 3, could not have been a Christian, as members of the Christian community did not address each other with such solemn titles as *θρόνηζος*.<sup>266</sup> He also draws the inference that since in Acts 1:1 Theophilus is referred to without the title, it implies that in the interim, between the reading of the gospel and prior to his reading of Acts, he had become a Christian.<sup>267</sup> There are scholars who indicate that the name Theophilus is symbolic.<sup>268</sup> However this too is part of the debate, as evident from Lagrange's statement: "On peut dire seulement que si Théophile (ami de Dieu) avait été un personnage imaginaire comme la Philothée de saint François de Sales, Luc ne l'eût pas traité avec cette cérémonie."<sup>269</sup> It is clear that the debate concerning Theophilus' identity is far from resolved. Within this uncertainty, there is room to add to the debate the consideration that Luke used the name "Theophilus" for apologetic reasons.

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<sup>264</sup> On Theophilus as a real person and not a pseudonym for a „typical“ Christian, see L.Alexander (1995) 188-190, cit. ap. A.Brent, Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult in Asia Minor, *Journal of Theological Studies* 48 (1997): 422.

<sup>265</sup> See the discussions by Haenchen, 136 note 4 and Jackson and Lake on the names of possible candidates or of patrons, that have been put forward. Jackson, Lake, *Beginnings*, 2.507.

<sup>266</sup> M.J.Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Luc*, (Paris: Gabalda, 1927), 7.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> H.C.Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven, The Acts of the Apostles*, (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 31.

<sup>269</sup> Lagrange, 7.

In order to consider the name Theophilus in a new light, it is necessary to see the link that this name has with the attribute of intellectual excellence. That such an attribute is highly relevant for Luke in the grasping of the resurrection has been discussed above.<sup>270</sup> The association of intellectual excellence as being pleasing to God is already found in Aristotle when he explains that a person who aspires to the cultivation of his intellect and who, as a consequence is able to act nobly and rationally, is worthy of being Θεοφιλέζητος. In the following quote Aristotle expounds on the qualities that characterise “Theophilus.” “And it seems likely that the man who pursues intellectual activity (θαλ\_ νο\_ν\_ νεργ\_ν), and who cultivates his intellect and keeps that in the best condition, is also the man most beloved of the gods (ζεοφιλέζητος). For if, as is generally believed, the gods exercise some super-intendence over human affairs, then it will be reasonable to suppose that they take pleasure in that part of man which is best and most akin to themselves, namely the intellect (\_ νο\_ς), and that they recompense with their favours those men who esteem and honour this most, because these care for the things dear to themselves, and act rightly and nobly. Now it is clear that all these attributes belong most of all to the wise man (ηλ\_ ζοθ\_). He therefore is most beloved of the gods (ζεοφιλέζητος).”<sup>271</sup> Put briefly, the person who aspires to the cultivation of his intellect in order to pursue honourable qualities is ζεοφιλέζητος. This explanation of the qualities associated with the designation “Theophilus” raises the interesting possibility that in Luke’s thought, there is a link between intellectual excellence and the name Theophilus. Such a link would enhance the significance of Luke’s gospel being dedicated to Theophilus and climaxing (Lk.24:45) with the disciples having their minds (νο\_ς) opened to perceive(ζσνίεκη).<sup>272</sup> In order to pursue this possibility some additional investigation is appropriate.

In the passage quoted, Aristotle sums up the good qualities of ζεοφιλέζητος as being \_ ζοθ\_ός. This is an interesting connection for amongst the gospel writers, Luke is the evangelist who uses it most frequently. Matthew uses the word on three occasions,<sup>273</sup> Mark once,<sup>274</sup> John not at all, but Luke uses it ten times.<sup>275</sup> Luke reveals his affinity for the word when he interprets the saying of Jesus from Mark 13:11, “Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry before hand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking but the Holy Spirit.” In his parallel passage, Luke adds in the quality of *wisdom*. Luke 21:15: “For I will give you words *and wisdom* (ζοθία) that none of your adversaries will be able to resist.” In their analysis of ζοθία, Wilkens and Fohrer have emphasised that Aristotle viewed it as: “the most complete form of knowledge.”<sup>276</sup> Aristotle’s reason for this elevated position of ζοθία is “The wise man therefore must not only know the conclusions that follow from his first principles, but also have a true conception of those principles themselves.”<sup>277</sup> Thus the apprehending of the first principles or the “intuitive

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<sup>270</sup> See section 5.5 above.

<sup>271</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 10.8.13.

<sup>272</sup> Σσνίεκη can be used to convey perception when used in a metaphorical sense. Liddel & Scott, s.v., ζσνίεκη

<sup>273</sup> Mtt.11:19; 12:42; 13:54.

<sup>274</sup> Mk.6:2.

<sup>275</sup> Lk.2:40, 52; 7:35; 11:31, 49; 21:15; Ac.6:3, 10; 7:10, 22.

<sup>276</sup> U.Wilkens, G.Fohrer, ζοθία θηι., *TDNT* 7: 472.

<sup>277</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 6.7.3.

grasp” appears to be a key element in Aristotle's definition of he who can be designated ζεοθηέζηαηος.

It is worth noting that Louw and Nida place the word ζοθία in the same semantic domain as ζφθροζύνε for both words represent the capacity to understand and as a result to act sensibly.<sup>278</sup> Since the word ζφθροζύνε is specifically designated a characteristic of Paul (Ac.26:25) it also shares a close relationship with ζεοθηέζηαηος. The way in which Luke portrays Christians and Paul in particular, as people who are able to grasp the reality of the resurrection and order their lives accordingly, possess wisdom and are therefore worthy of being ζεοθηέζηαηος.

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<sup>278</sup> Louw & Nida, 384.

In considering the way Luke has carefully created a picture of Paul as first grasping the reality of the resurrection on the road to Damascus, and then being described as possessing outstanding qualities ζφθροζύνε, \_ιεξεηα, \_ποθζέγγοκαη and παρρεζηαδόκενοϑ and generally of being able to find and maintain the reasonable mean between irrational superstition and deficient indifference, Paul becomes for him an example of a person who is ζεοθ ηιέζηηαηοϑ. Such an association is indeed echoed roughly a century later by Clement of Alexandria who not only contrasts reason with madness, but refers to \_ιεξεηα and ζφθρονο\_νηαϑ as constituents elements of ζεοθ ηι\_ϑ. ο\_δ\_ο\_ν\_κθηβαί\_ι\_εηηα\_ρε\_ \_ι\_όγοϑ, \_πόηερον\_α\_ηο\_ν\_κεηηον, ζφθρονε\_ν\_κεκενέηαη\_τοκενοϑϑ\_δ\_πρ\_ξ\_η\_ϑ\_ι\_εζέιαϑ\_πανη\_ζζέηεηη\_πεζζαη\_τρ\_η\_ζε\_ζφθρονο\_νηαϑ\_θα\_πάηηα\_α\_ηο\_νοκίδεηην,... ε\_δ\_“θοηη\_η\_θί\_φν,” ζεοθ ηι\_ϑ\_δ\_ \_νζρο\_ποϑ.<sup>279</sup>

However, one does not need to look only at external evidence to support the contention that someone like Paul is an example of ζεοθ ηιέζηηαηοϑ. Luke’s description of the event that took place on the Island of Malta has been interpreted in a similar way. The incident of the snake biting Paul without leaving any harmful effects on him, leads the islanders to conclude that Paul is a god (Ac.28:6), κηηβαί\_όκενηη\_ι\_εγον\_α\_η\_ν\_ε\_ναηζέον. In their examination of this account, Jackson and Lake refer to the example from Plutarch’s *Cleomenes* 39, that because Cleomenes was protected by a snake, some said that he was ζεοθ ηιο\_ϑ.<sup>280</sup> Haenchen indicates that this interpretation has merit because of the awkwardness of having Paul being called a god. Haenchen concludes: “a more natural expression would be that he was *a favourite of the gods*.”<sup>281</sup> Support for this interpretation, that ζεοθ ηιο\_ϑ would be more appropriate than a direct identification of Paul as a god, comes from the incident in Lystra (Ac.14:11-16), where Paul and Barnabas vigorously resist being identified with gods.

An interesting aspect concerning this passage in *Cleomenes* is the contrast between the superstitious fear of the king who gives permission for the body of Cleomenes to be taken care of, because he recognised Cleomenes’ superior nature and that he was “beloved of the gods” (\_θ\_δ\_ηούηοϑδεηζηηδακιοηία\_προζέπεζε\_η\_βαζηηε\_θα\_θόβοϑ, \_ι\_ι\_φν\_θαζαρκ\_ν\_ηα\_ϑ\_γϑαηξ\_ν\_ρ\_τ\_ν\_παραζτόν, \_ϑ\_νδρ\_ϑ\_ν\_ρεκένοϑ\_ζεοθ ηιο\_ϑ\_θα\_θρείηηηονοϑ\_η\_ν\_θύζηην).<sup>282</sup> The attribute of being ζεοθ ηιο\_ϑ is therefore used by Plutarch with a moral connotation of approval which stands in contrast to the inferior superstitious fear of the king. One therefore recognizes that in addition to the comparable circumstances in Luke’s description of Paul on Malta, a similar contrast also exists between Luke’s description of the superstition of the antagonistic Jews and the superior qualities of Paul and Christians in general. This evidence indicates that Luke’s dedication of his work to Theophilus calls for a sensitivity to the moral significance that it conveys.

Support for identifying as ζεοθ ηιοϑ someone who has honourable characteristics is also found in Hellenistic Judaism. Philo in his *Allegorical Interpretation*, makes an extensive contrast between the biting of the snake of pleasure (represented by Eve) and the looking to the snake of self-mastery (ζφθροζύνε) represented by Moses<sup>283</sup> In two passages Philo identifies ζφθροζύνε as being the dominant characteristic of ζεοθ ηιοϑ: \_να\_γν\_ϑ\_ηηο\_πανηόϑ\_ζηηηη\_κα\_ζφθροζύνε, \_υ\_ \_κόνοϑ ηο\_ζεοθ ηιο\_ϑ (Philo *Allegorical Interpretation*

<sup>279</sup> Clement *Exhortation to the Greeks* 12.94.

<sup>280</sup> Jackson and Lake, 823.

<sup>281</sup> Haenchen, 714.

<sup>282</sup> Plutarch *Cleomenes* 39.2.

<sup>283</sup> Philo *Allegorical Interpretation* 2.79-93. The association that Philo makes between the snake and Moses needs to be explored further in the interpretation of the incident on Malta concerning the viper (Ac.28:1-6).



in the Judeo-Christian tradition this value was put to use with an apologetic function.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> The apologetic value of intellectual excellence is reflected in Acts 4:13 where the religious leaders are surprised by the *παρρηζία* of Peter and John because they were perceived to be *γράφκαροι* and *δληται*

Objection to the consideration of Theophilus being a symbolic person has also been voiced on the grounds that the title θράηζη would not have been included.<sup>289</sup> While that is a point to consider, there is the example of Aristotle referring to “Justice” as the θραήζηε of virtues because its observance is the mean between two extremes. Aristotle begins his discussion on Justice by asking the question: θα\_ ποία κεζόηεζ\_ ζη\_ν\_ δηθηηοζύνε, θα\_ η\_ δίθηηηηνήνν κέζον·<sup>290</sup> Having indicated that justice is the mean he goes on to designate it as the *chief* of the virtues: θα\_ δη\_ ηο\_ ηο\_ ποι\_ ι\_ άθηζ\_ θραήζηε η\_ν\_ ρε\_ν\_ ε\_ναη\_ δοθε\_ δηθηηηοζύνε.<sup>291</sup> Philo makes a similar use of θραήζηε when he promotes prudence (θρόνεζηζ) as the most approved virtue. He compares prudence to gold as the most excellent (θραήζηε) and most approved (δοθηκηήηε) virtue of the soul.<sup>292</sup> If Aristotle can use θραήζηε to highlight the value of Justice because it is the mean, and Philo likewise in the promotion of Prudence, the inference is that Luke can use it to highlight the intellectual excellence implied by ζεόθηηοζ.

In the light of these examples, the linking of θραήζηε with ζεόθηηοζ does not distract from its moral significance, but actually enhances it. This interpretation therefore puts a philosophical slant to the dedication of Luke-Acts and gives it a double meaning. Understood in this way Luke’s work is dedicated to the reader who aspires to knowing God in an intelligent way. In the light of Festus’s exclamation that Paul’s expounding on the resurrection is a sign of his\_ κατν\_, this interpretation ties in with the word ζφθροζύνε which dominates Paul’s rejection of his faith being anything but intelligible and rational.

## 8 Conclusion

Cadbury, in his examination of Luke’s preface, makes the following interesting observation: “The early Christian Fathers, who were used to the word-play on personal names from the Old Testament, with their own delight in allegory, found in this name an irresistible temptation to draw a moral instead of acknowledging their ignorance about the identity of Theophilus. But their example is not one for modern students to follow.”<sup>293</sup> It appears that this opinion is in need of re-evaluation.<sup>294</sup> Although Cadbury dismisses as evidence of

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<sup>289</sup> Brent indicates that θράηζηε was appropriate to a Roman of some rank. According to L. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel. Literary convention and social context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTS monograph series 78 (1993), 133, “θράηζηηηοζ was applied properly to people of equestrian rank. But it is now accepted that it is found with wider application ... and so its use does not prove that Theophilus was a Roman official.” It appears that Alexander means that Theophilus was an official but not necessarily Roman, for an article on Theophilus as a real person and not a pseudonym for a “typical” Christian appears under Alexander (1995), 188-99ff. In his discussion on the title Brent indicates that there is only one other use of it, namely Acts 23:25. This is however incorrect as Luke uses it also in Acts 26:25. Brent’s conclusion is that: “Clearly Luke understands this term as that of a high ranking official and therefore in a sense consistent with *IGIS* 614, 4-5 (Governor of Arabia); 629,168 (Corbulo); 667,4 (prefect of Egypt); Josephus, *Antiqu.* 20.12 (Governor of Syria). A. Brent, Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult in Asia Minor, *Journal of Theological Studies* 48 (1997): 422 note 29.

<sup>290</sup> Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 5.1.1.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.1.15.

<sup>292</sup> Philo *Allegorical Interpretation* 1.66.

<sup>293</sup> H. Cadbury, “Commentary on the Preface of Luke”, Jackson, *Lake Beginnings*, 2.489.

<sup>294</sup> Dawsey has acknowledged that Cadbury’s observations concerning the names of characters in Luke-Acts need to be developed. Dawsey writes: “One element of Luke’s genius noticed by Cadbury was the way that the gospel writer filled out his characters. Often, even minor characters come alive in Luke. But Cadbury only opened the door at this point.” Dawsey remarks further: “One of these techniques\_ discovered but not pursued by Cadbury concerns the way Luke differentiated his characters by their use or disuse of certain names for Jesus

ignorance, the early Fathers' delight in finding word-plays with the names of biblical characters, modern scholars have independently come to see a deeper significance to the characters in Luke's narrative. The word play on Theophilus, when understood with its moral connotation of the one beloved of God because of his intellectual perception, is not a distraction from the meaning of Luke's text but quite to the contrary, focusses on an intellectual capacity needed to discern the importance of the resurrection.

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(Cadbury 1968: 227-28)." J.M.Dawsey, What's in a Name? Characterization in Luke, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 16 (1986): 143.

Various scholars have noted the representative element of characters in Luke-Acts. For example O'Toole, in his consideration of Luke's portrayal of the recognition of the resurrected Jesus by the two disciples of Emmaus, can write: "(A)lthough Luke gives Cleopas" name, these two disciples can evidently stand for all Christians."<sup>295</sup> Spencer likewise discusses the conversion of the intelligent Roman Official Sergius Paulus (Ac.13:7) and comments as follows: "The coincidence of the missionary's new name - Saulus *Paulus* - matching the magistrate's - Sergius *Paulus* - may offer subtle confirmation that Paul is a worthy retainer, if not equal, of a Roman nobleman."<sup>296</sup> Spencer extends his observation in a more general way: "Names seem to be suggestive in this story: while Bar-Jesus is patently shown to be no true „son of Jesus," but rather a „son of the devil," by contrast, Paulus the preacher, whose name means „little," proves in fact to enjoy no little honour as the admired advisor of Paulus the proconsul."<sup>297</sup> If Spencer sees Luke's hand in the careful choice of names so that they carry moral or symbolic value, then it is quite feasible that Luke's dedication of the work to Theophilus should represent a name carefully chosen by Luke for its moral significance.

In his discussion on the preface of Luke's gospel, Cadbury made the comment that Luke appeared to be fond of constructions with double meanings.<sup>298</sup> Marguerat picks up on this comment and considers that its perceptiveness has been overlooked in modern scholarship.<sup>299</sup> Marguerat therefore examines Luke-Acts in this light and indicates that many of the personalities in Luke's work have representative value. Barnabas comes from the diaspora with his origins in Cyprus; Stephen is a Hellenistic Jew, while the Ethiopian is an eunuch and a pilgrim in Jerusalem. He indicates that this transitional representation is even more marked in the case of Timothy who is the son of a converted Jewess and of a Greek.<sup>300</sup>

Although Strange sees Theophilus as a historical person, he also identifies in Luke's style the use of personalities as representative and comments as follows, "Theophilus might well recognise people like himself in the portraits of high-status, devout sympathisers, partially informed about „the things fulfilled among us" (Luke 1:1), and whose influence might be vital not only for Jews but also for the followers of Jesus."<sup>301</sup> In a similar vein Barr writes: "Theophilus - the one who loves God - would be entirely appropriate for one of the Gentiles - who appear so often in the story."<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> O'Toole, *Activity of the Risen Jesus in Luke-Acts*, 483.

<sup>296</sup> Spencer, Paul's Odyssey in Acts: Status Struggles and Island Adventures, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 28 (1998): 154.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Cadbury, *Preface of Luke*, 504.

<sup>299</sup> D.Marguerat, Luc-Actes entre Jérusalem et Rome. Un Procédé Lucanien de Double Signification, *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 73. "Henry Cadbury fait une remarque qui, à ma connaissance, n'a pas été exploitée dans la recherche. Cadbury observait que la syntaxe de Luc présente parfois des ambiguïtés, autorisant deux interprétations possibles, et il s'est demandé si ces ambiguïtés ne relevaient pas d'un procédé delangage consciemment utilisé par Luc."

<sup>300</sup> D.Marguerat, *Luc-Actes entre Jérusalem et Rome*, 72f.

<sup>301</sup> W.Strange, The Jesus Tradition in Acts, *New Testament Studies* 46 (2000): 68.

<sup>302</sup> D.Barr, *New Testament Story, An Introduction*, Second edition, (Belmont California: Wadsworth, 1995), 329.

The practice of character sketching appears to have been a well recognised rhetorical technique. Rusten, Cunningham and Knox introduce Theophrastus' work *Characters* with the following helpful information: "Character sketching could be an important weapon in court: Aristotle's account of the moral traits in the *Ethics* is complemented by a rhetorical discussion of the contrasting traits of the old and young in *Rhetoric* 2.12-14. Just as La Bruyère saw that fictitious characters could be mixed with the literary portraits of a real individual, so the ancient rhetorical tradition demanded exercises in character drawing as practice for historical portraits from life."<sup>303</sup> The editors also indicate that in the pursuit of his argument that virtue is a mean, Aristotle could illustrate his work with specific examples from spheres like the reaction that people exhibit to danger, or their behaviour with money or their treatment of other individuals.<sup>304</sup> It is with this historical setting in mind that Luke's depiction of characters and their significance can be considered and understood with greater appreciation.

The importance of the representative value of characters in the Lukan narrative has recently been reiterated by Loveday Alexander who concludes that the apologetic purpose of Luke-Acts is imbedded in the text as dramatic scenes. Alexander explains the crucial role of characters in the Lukan narrative in the following way: "Generally speaking, this means that it is the characters, not the narrator, who make these apologetic speeches, and that the narrator never intervenes in his own person to drive home the point to the text's inscribed audience. But this is one reason why the proposed apologetic scenarios all carry some degree of conviction. They are all represented dramatically within the narrative; and this is the obvious place to begin to explore its apologetic agenda."<sup>305</sup>

It is with this application in mind that Luke's dedication of his work to Theophilus (friend of God), needs to be considered. Luke has consistently developed the theme that Christianity is a faith which is not to be classed as a superstition or which is in any way secretive or obscure. He has shown that its cornerstone, the doctrine of the resurrection, is not a notion conjured up by people who are κείν. Rather, that the understanding of the significance of the resurrection requires an intellectual grasp, which is the supreme intellectual quality that humans possess. The process that this intellectual enlightenment entails has been depicted as an "opening of eyes" and the proclamation of "light". The effect of this enlightenment is such that the Christian is able to steer a mean course between excesses of superstition and deficiencies of atheism. As the reader is ultimately Luke's intended audience,<sup>306</sup> Luke's use of characters is the extension on the individual level the technique which has been discussed concerning Luke's stereotyping of representative groups and the enjoyment derived by the reader in recognizing the allusions made.<sup>307</sup>

Therefore Luke's portrayal of Paul as ζφθροζύνε, \_ιεζιηα, \_ποθζέγγοκαη and παρρεζηαδόκενοζ is far more than a simple negation of Festus' outburst. These four words refer back to the central issue of the resurrection which triggered Festus' derogatory exclamation and show that both Paul and the Christian faith which he represents, are worthy

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<sup>303</sup> Theophrastus *Herodias - Mimes, Cercidas and the Choliambic Poets*, eds & trans. J.Rusten, I.Cunningham, A.Knox, (Harvard University Press, 1993), 17-18.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>305</sup> L.Alexander, "The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text", M.Edwards, M.Goodman, S.Price, eds. *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28.

<sup>306</sup> See the extensive discussion on this point in O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, 19f.

<sup>307</sup> See the discussion (chap.3.9 above) on Luke's use of the Epicureans as a stereotype for atheists and the explanation by Clarke on the literary value of allowing the reader to recognize characters that are alluded to.

representatives of a reasonable and rational mean between the extremes of superstition and atheism. The respectable characteristics depicted in Paul can therefore inspire the perceptive reader who recognizes in the dedication to Theophilus a personal challenge to rise to the intellectual challenge and grasp the central issue of Christianity; the resurrection.

Cadbury's reference to the Church Fathers seeing a *moral* in the name is therefore a confirmation that the linking of the intellect as a moral quality of spiritual discernment to the name Theophilus, is not the imposition of an inappropriate interpretation. Such an appreciation enables the modern reader, rather than belittling the early Church Fathers as ignorant, to learn from their insights and to share in their delight.

## Chapter 5

### Summary

This thesis examines Luke's presentation of Christianity as a faith which is both reasonable and rational. In doing this, the examination focusses on the climactic defence speech of Paul in Acts 26. The analysis of this speech reveals that Paul's defence can be understood in terms of the philosophical doctrine that virtue is the mean between two extremes. Furthermore, in applying this doctrine, Luke makes use of the topos that rational faith lies between the extremes of superstition and atheism.

The thesis therefore explores Luke's literary technique of exposing in both subtle and explicit ways the characteristics of the three representative groups of this topos. Through his choice of words, his portrayal of behavioural patterns and through his depiction of their responses in specific situations, Luke has painted a consistent, although at times complex, picture of the individuals and groups who represent superstition, atheism and true faith.

For the sake of clarity, the thesis has three dominant sections, each dealing with one of the representative groups of the topos. The section dealing with superstition, exposed the motivation and consequences of Paul's excessive and irrational raging (περηζζ\_ς ηε\_κκαηνόερος) and by a careful examination of the words θαρέθι εηζα, θαηήνεγθα, \_νάγθαδον, βι\_αζθ\_εκε\_v and \_δίφθον exposed the complex and far reaching implications of superstition. In each case the corresponding behavioural pattern applicable to the antagonistic Jews is indicated. Through their irrational thoughts and erroneous assumptions, the actions of these Jews against the Christians culminate in their being ζεοκάτος. The verbal expression of this antagonistic group is found to be uncontrolled and shouted abuse. The nature of their excesses is also manifested by their physical violence which climaxes in Paul not only being in danger of death but even of being torn to pieces (δη\_ζ\_π\_άφ). The cumulative effect of these details confirm that Luke portrays the opposition meted out to Paul as unjustified and irrational and therefore typical of superstition. In the light of this context, Luke's use of the word δεηζηδαηκο\_ίς (Ac.25:19) finds its full significance when understood as "superstition."

This section is brought to a close by an investigation into Luke's repeated pointing to the Asian Jews as the group responsible for the instigation of the unwarranted attacks on Paul and for the rioting in Jerusalem. This investigation has identified a Jewish sect whose worship of Jupiter Sabazius proved to be so disruptive that its members were expelled from Rome. This Jewish sect, classed as an undesirable superstition, had its adherents repatriated to Asia Minor. Although more research needs to be done on this topic, the identification of this deviant sect of Jews beset by superstition, as the instigators of the disturbances associated with Paul, has helped to substantiate on a historical level Luke's apologetic purpose of distancing Christians from such groups and exposing Christianity as a rational faith.

The analysis of Paul's trial in Acts 26 exposes the reaction of Festus and Agrippa as typical of atheists. It is argued that the sudden, loud and sarcastic outburst of Festus to Paul's presentation of the resurrection message is also a typical response which the proclamation of

true faith elicits from the atheistic indifference of the social elite. The subtlety with which Luke depicts Festus as an atheist is also evident by the choice of the word *καὶν* in describing Festus' assessment of the proclamation of the resurrected Christ. The obvious exaggeration that this word connotes draws attention to the distorted perspective which propagates such an opinion. Like Festus, Agrippa's response to the challenges of the resurrection message, is found to convey a comparable contemptuous indifference typical of atheists, which prevents any true commitment to a rational faith.

This section is drawn to a close by a brief but enlightening investigation into Luke's omission of the word "atheist." Unlike the section on superstition, where the word *δεισιδαιμονίας* appears in the text; this exposé on atheism has been conducted in spite of the textual absence of the word *ἄθεος*. Although this may initially appear to weaken the argument, it in fact redirects the attention to Luke's use of group stereotypes which in turn revealed that the motif of atheism is implicit in the Lukan text. The comparable defence of the gospel in Athens (Ac.17) where Paul is mocked by the Epicurean philosophers, reveals that this group was the recognised stereotype of atheism. This therefore highlights a Lukan parallel between the two major presentations of the Gospel before a predominantly Gentile audience. Both in Acts 17 and in 26, an explicit reference is made to superstition (Ac.17:22 and 25:19) and in both cases an implicit one is made to atheism (Epicureans and the indifferent elite). Such a parallel strengthens the argument that atheism is an important feature in Acts 26.

In the final section, it is argued that Luke's presentation of Paul as the reasonable and rational man reaches its climax with the use of the four words (*ζφθροζύνεζ*, *ειζείαζ*, *ποθζέγγοκαη*, and *παρρεζηαδόκενοζ*) which have positive connotations in moral philosophy. It is argued that the significance of these words is enhanced by their standing in opposition to the words used of Paul prior to his conversion (Ac.26:10-11). Of particular significance, the textual and philosophical contrast that exists between the two key words *ζφθροζύνεζ* and *καὶνοκαί* is highlighted. The contrast between the intellectual aspect of *ζφθροζύνεζ* and the irrational ravings of *καὶνοκαί* is seen to cut to the core of the key issue in Paul's defence, namely: the belief in the resurrection. It is therefore argued that Luke's apologetic purpose is served by his revealing that in grasping the reality of the resurrection, Christians are not irrational but exercise the highest quality of the intellect. It is in the light of this required intellectual quality that Luke's dedication of his work to Theophilus is found to be highly relevant, for the designation of Theophilus draws attention to the intellectual quality which is pleasing to God.

This analysis of Paul's defence, presented on the backdrop of the philosophical doctrine of the mean and expressed in terms of the *topos* that rational faith lies between superstition and atheism; exposes a Graeco-Roman perspective which has hitherto largely gone unnoticed but which enhances the coherence and focus of this climactic speech.



- θα ποιούσ ηε η ν γίφν γ ν θσι αθα ς **θαηθιηζα** η ν παρ η ν ρτηρέφν  
ξοσζίαν  
 ιαβών, νηροκένφν ηε α η ν **θαηήνεγθα** υ θον,  
 11. θα θαη πάζα ς η ς ζσναγφ ς ποι ι άθηζηηφρ ν α ηο ς **νάγθαδον**  
**βιαζ θεκε ν, περηζ ς ηε κκαηνόκενο ς α ηο ς**  
δίωθον φ ς θα ε ς η ς ξφ πόι ηη ς  
 12. Δν ο ς πορεσόκενο ς ε ς η ν Γακαζθ ν **κεη ξοσζία ς θα πηηφπ ς** η ς η ν  
 ρτηρέφν, 13. κέρα ς κέζε ς θαη η ν δ ν ε δον, βαζηε, ο ρανόζεν π ρ η ν  
 ι ακρόηεηα ηο ι ίο ς περηιάκν αν κε θ ς θα ηο ς ζ ν κο πορεσοκένο ς·  
 14. πάνηφν ηε θαηαπεζόνηφν κ ν ε ς η ν γ ν θοοζα θφ ν ν ι έγοζζα ν πρό ς κε η  
 Δβρα δ η δηαέθ η·  
 Σαο ι Σαού ι, ηί κε δηώθηη ς  
 ζθ ι ερόν ζοη πρ ς θένηρα ι αθηίδηην.  
 15. γ δ ε πα·  
 Τί ς ε, θύρ ηε;  
 δ θύρ ηο ς ε π εν;  
 Δγώ ε κ η Ιεζο ς ν ζ δηώθηη ς  
 16. υ νάζ ηε ζ η  
 θα ζ η ζ η π ηο ς πόδα ς ζο ς·  
 ε ς ηο ηο γ ρ θ ζ εν ζοη,  
 προτεηρζα ζζαί ζε περέηεν θα κάρ ηοφα  
 ν ηε ε δέ ς (κε) ν ηε θ ζ ή ζοκ αί ζοη  
 17. ζαηρούκένο ς ζε θ ηο ι αο θα θ η ν ζ ν ν,  
 ε ς ο ς γ ποζ ηέ ι φ ζ ε,  
 18. νο ζαη θ ζ αι κο ς α η ν,  
 ηο π η ζ η ρ έ ν α η  
 π ζ θ ό ηο ς ς ε ς θ ς  
 θα η ς ξοσζία ς ηο Σαηαν π η ν ζ έ ο ν,  
 ηο ι αβε ν α ηο ς  
 θεζ η ν κ α ρ η η ν  
 θα θ ι ρ ο ν ν ηο ς γ η ά κ έ ν ο η ς π ί ζ η η η ε ς  
 κέ.  
 19. Ο ζ εν, βαζ η ι ε Αγρίππα, ο θ γε νό κε ν πε η ζ ς η ο ρ ανί π η α ζί,  
 20. υ ηο ς ν Γακαζθ π ρ η ό ν ηε θα Ιεροζοιούκ ο η ς  
 π ζ ά ν ηε η ν τώ ρ αν η ς Ιο ς δ α ί α ς  
 θα ηο ς ζ ν ε ζ η ν  
 π ή γ γ ε ι ο ν  
 κε η αν ο ε ν θα  
 π η ζ η ρ έ θ η η ν π η ν ζ έ ο ν,  
 ζ η α η ς κε η αν ο ί α ς ρ γ α π ρ ά ζ ζ ο ν η α ς.  
 21. νεθα ηού ηφν κε Ιο ς δ α ο η ζ σ ι ι α β ό κε ν ο η ( ν η α) ν η ε ρ π η η ρ ν η ο  
 δηαε η ρ ζ α ζ ζ α η.  
 -----  
 22. π η θ ο ς ρ ί α ς ο ν η σ τ ν η ς π ηο ζ ε ο τ ρ η η ς κ έ ρ α ς η ά η ε ς ζ η ε θ α  
 κ α ρ η φ ό κε ν ο ς κ η θ η ε θ α κ ε γ ά ι, ο δ ν θ η ς ι έ γ φ ν ν η ε ο π ρ ο θ η α η ι ά ι ε ζ α ν  
 κ ε ι ι ό ν η φ ν γ ί ν ε ζ ζ α η α Μ φ ύ ς ς.  
 23. ε πα ζ η η ς Χ ρ η ζ η ό ς ε π ρ η ο ς ξ ν α ζ η ά ζ ε φ ς ν ε θ ρ ν θ ς κ έ ι ι η η  
 θα η α γ γ έ ι η η η ε ι α θα ηο ς ζ ν ε ζ η ν.  
 -----  
 24. Τα η α δ α ηο ποι ο γο ς κ έ ν ο ς Φ ζ η ο ς κ ε γ ά ι η θ φ ν θ ε ζ η ν·  
 κ α ί ν, Πα ι ε·

- η\_ ποι\_ι\_ά\_ζε\_γρά\_κκα\_η\_ε\_ς\_ καν\_ί\_αν\_ περ\_η\_η\_ρέ\_πη\_.
25. \_δ\_ Πα\_ι\_ος·  
 ο\_ κα\_ί\_νο\_κα\_η\_ θε\_ζ\_ί\_ν\_ , θ\_ρά\_η\_η\_ζ\_η\_ε\_ Φ\_ζ\_η\_ε\_ ,  
 ο\_ι\_ \_ε\_ξ\_ε\_ί\_α\_ ς\_ θ\_α\_ ζ\_ω\_θ\_ρ\_ο\_ζ\_ύ\_ν\_ε\_ς\_ \_ή\_κα\_η\_α\_ \_πο\_θ\_ζ\_έ\_γ\_γ\_ο\_κα\_η\_
26. \_πί\_ζ\_η\_η\_η\_η\_ γ\_ρ\_ περ\_ η\_ού\_η\_φ\_ν\_ \_βα\_ζ\_η\_ι\_εύ\_ς\_ , πρ\_ς\_ \_ν\_  
 θ\_α\_ \_παρ\_ρ\_ε\_ζ\_η\_α\_δ\_ό\_κ\_ε\_ν\_ο\_ς\_ ι\_αι\_·  
 ι\_α\_ν\_ζ\_ά\_ν\_η\_η\_ν\_ γ\_ρ\_ α\_η\_ν\_ (η\_) η\_ού\_η\_φ\_ν\_ ο\_ \_π\_ε\_ί\_ζ\_ο\_κα\_η\_ ο\_ζ\_έ\_ν\_·  
 ο\_ \_γ\_ά\_ρ\_ \_ζ\_η\_η\_ν\_ \_ν\_ γ\_φ\_ν\_ί\_ \_π\_ε\_π\_ρ\_α\_γ\_κ\_έ\_ν\_ο\_ν\_ η\_ο\_η\_ο\_.
27. π\_η\_ζ\_η\_ε\_ί\_ε\_η\_ς\_ β\_α\_ζ\_η\_ι\_ε\_ \_Α\_γ\_ρί\_π\_π\_α\_ , η\_ο\_ς\_ πρ\_ο\_θ\_ή\_η\_η\_η\_ς\_  
 ο\_ \_δ\_α\_ \_η\_η\_ π\_η\_ζ\_η\_ε\_ί\_ε\_η\_ς\_
28. \_δ\_ \_Α\_γ\_ρί\_π\_π\_α\_ς\_ πρ\_ς\_ η\_ν\_ Πα\_ι\_ο\_ν\_·  
 \_ν\_ \_ι\_ί\_γ\_ \_κ\_ε\_ π\_ε\_ί\_ζ\_ε\_η\_ς\_ Χρ\_η\_ζ\_η\_η\_α\_ \_ν\_ π\_ο\_η\_ζ\_α\_η\_.
29. \_δ\_ Πα\_ι\_ος·  
 ε\_ξ\_α\_ί\_κ\_ε\_ν\_ \_ν\_ η\_ \_ζ\_ε\_ \_θ\_α\_ \_ν\_ \_ι\_ί\_γ\_ \_θ\_α\_ \_ν\_ κ\_ε\_γ\_ά\_ι\_ \_ο\_ \_κ\_ό\_ν\_ο\_ν\_ ζ\_ \_ι\_ \_θ\_α\_ \_π\_ά\_ν\_η\_η\_ς\_ η\_ο\_ς\_  
 \_θ\_ο\_ύ\_ο\_ν\_η\_ή\_ς\_ κ\_ο\_ς\_ ζ\_ή\_κ\_ε\_ρ\_ο\_ν\_ γ\_ε\_ν\_έ\_ζ\_ζ\_α\_η\_ η\_ο\_η\_ο\_ή\_η\_ο\_ς\_ \_πο\_ \_ο\_ς\_ θ\_α\_ \_γ\_ώ\_ ε\_κ\_η\_ , π\_α\_ρ\_ε\_θ\_η\_ς\_ η\_ν\_  
 δ\_ε\_ζ\_κ\_ \_ν\_ η\_ο\_ύ\_η\_φ\_ν\_.
30. \_Α\_ν\_έ\_ζ\_η\_ε\_ η\_ε\_ \_β\_α\_ζ\_η\_ι\_ε\_ς\_ θ\_α\_ \_ \_γ\_ε\_κ\_ \_ν\_ \_η\_ε\_ Β\_ε\_ρ\_ν\_ί\_θ\_ε\_ θ\_α\_ \_ο\_ \_ζ\_σ\_γ\_θ\_α\_ζ\_ή\_κ\_ε\_ν\_ο\_η\_α\_ \_η\_ο\_ς\_ ,
31. θ\_α\_ \_ \_ν\_α\_τ\_φ\_ρ\_ή\_ζ\_α\_ν\_η\_ε\_ς\_ \_ι\_ά\_ι\_ο\_ς\_ν\_ πρ\_ς\_ \_ι\_ι\_ή\_ι\_ο\_ς\_ς\_ ι\_έ\_γ\_ο\_ν\_η\_ε\_ς\_ \_η\_η\_  
 ο\_ \_δ\_ \_ν\_ ζ\_α\_ν\_ά\_η\_ο\_ς\_ \_δ\_ε\_ζ\_κ\_ \_ν\_ \_ξ\_η\_ο\_ν\_ (η) π\_ρ\_ά\_ζ\_ζ\_ε\_η\_ \_ \_ν\_ζ\_ρ\_φ\_π\_ο\_ς\_ ο\_η\_ο\_ς\_.
32. \_Α\_γ\_ρί\_π\_π\_α\_ς\_ δ\_ \_η\_ Φ\_ή\_ζ\_η\_ \_θ\_ε\_·  
 \_π\_ο\_ι\_ε\_ι\_ύ\_ζ\_ζ\_α\_η\_ \_δ\_ύ\_ν\_α\_η\_ο\_ \_ \_ν\_ζ\_ρ\_φ\_π\_ο\_ς\_ ο\_η\_ο\_ς\_ ε\_κ\_ \_π\_ε\_θ\_έ\_θ\_ι\_ε\_η\_ο\_ Κ\_α\_ί\_ζ\_α\_ρ\_α\_ .

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