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Socratizing Paul: The Portrait of Paul in Acts

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The Acts of the Apostles is poorly named because it is primarily the acts of only two apostles: Peter and Paul (and Paul is not actually considered to be an "apostle" by Luke, the author of Acts). Furthermore, it is Paul who emerges as the hero of the narrative, as well over half of Acts is devoted to his journeys and exploits. The portrait of Paul in Acts is striking for several reasons, not the least of which is the fact that letter writing, the activity for which Paul appears to have been known, is completely absent. In Acts Paul travels, preaches, heals, and escapes attempts on his life, but he doesn't write letters.

Acts' portrait of Paul is also interesting for occasional differences from the picture of Paul that emerges from his own letters. Throughout the letter to the Galatians, for example, Paul is adamant that Gentile converts do not have to follow traditional Jewish law. And Paul himself appears unconcerned with breaking purity regulations by associating with Gentiles (Gal 2:6). In Acts, however, Paul's Jewish identity and piety is hard to ignore. In his journeys Paul almost always goes to synagogues first, going to Gentiles only after he is rejected by his own people. Such is Paul's traditional Jewish piety that he agrees to join and pay for the purification rites of several men in Jerusalem in an attempt to mollify Jews "zealous for the Law"(21:20–26) and claims to have offered sacrifices in the Temple (24:17–18). These actions don't necessarily contradict what Paul says of himself in his own letters, but they are very difficult to reconcile. More problematic is Acts' account of Paul requiring that Timothy, whose mother was Jewish but whose father was Greek, be circumcised before joining him in a mission in order to accommodate the expectations of the Jewish community (16:1–3).

Another striking feature of Acts—and my focus in this essay—is how much of the narrative depicts Paul in some form of imprisonment: from Acts 21 on, Paul is either on trial or awaiting trial. In this, the author of Acts portrays Paul much like he does Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, where much of the narrative chronicles Jesus' slow and methodical journey to Jerusalem and his trials there. While Luke has certainly modeled his "Passion" of Paul after his Passion of Jesus, the extended portrait of Paul on trial has striking similarities to traditions about the trial and execution of the most famous martyr of the ancient world, Socrates. In my judgment, such similarities are no accident—Luke has consciously modeled his portrait of Paul on trial after last days of the famous Athenian philosopher.

This essay draws on material developed for a forthcoming volume by Dennis MacDonald and Rubén Dupertuis on the use of sources in the Acts of the Apostles.

Socrates as a Model

No other death in the ancient world was as well-known as that of Socrates. By the early Roman imperial period, Socrates had become the pre-eminent martyr, the prototype of the philosopher unjustly accused, tried, and executed. As recounted by his students—especially the fourth-century BCE accounts of Xenophon and Plato—Socrates was brought up on charges of corrupting the youth of Athens and introducing new or foreign gods. The majority of his judges—a total of 501—found him guilty and condemned him to death. In the thirty-day interval between Socrates' trial and his execution, his friends came to him in prison and offered to arrange his escape by bribing the guards. Socrates refused, however, using his time in prison as an opportunity to teach his friends and students. Finally, when the time came, Socrates said good-bye to his friends and calmly drank the hemlock. It is worth noting that both Plato and Xenophon emphasize Socrates' innocence, vilifying his accusers instead.

The reasons for the prominence of Socrates are worth exploring. He was clearly of significance for philosophers who came after him and for later philosophical schools—many of which claimed him as their founder. But even outside of specialized philosophical circles, traditions about Socrates were widespread and well-known. While there were clearly other influential philosophers, both before and after him, Socrates benefitted from being the subject of several works that became standards of the Greek educa-

tional curriculum. Socrates is the central figure in many of Plato's dialogues, and his trial and death are the subject or the backdrop of four of Plato's well known dialogues—*Crito, Euthyphro, Phaedo,* and *Apology*—and two of Xenophon's writings—*Apology* and *Memorabilia.*

Students in the Greco-Roman world would have encountered short aphorisms about Socrates in the early stages of their education. As they progressed, the writings of Plato and Xenophon would have served as literary models for more advanced students to imitate. By the early Roman period, the writings of Plato and Xenophon were on the short list of authors that any relatively well-educated person was expected to know. Put another way, if you learned to read and write at reasonably advanced levels in the Greco-Roman world, you would have learned to do so by using Plato and Xenophon as literary models at some point.

It is not surprising, then, that the death of Socrates was among the most imitated models of how to die nobly.[1] When Plutarch recounts the death of Cato the Younger, he does so with the death of Socrates as his literary template (*Cato Minor* 66.4–60.6). Like Socrates, Cato calms his friends and refuses their efforts to save him. Plutarch also mentions that Cato read through Plato's *Phaedo* twice on the night of his death. Lucian also uses traditions of Socrates' death explicitly in his account of the Stoic philosopher Demonax. For these and other writers, including the authors of Jewish martyrologies, Socrates became the ideal model of a maligned philosopher willing to die for his beliefs.

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Paul in Athens

Interpreters of Acts have long noticed striking Socratic features in the description of Paul's visit to Athens in Acts 17:16–34. Paul arrives at the famous home of Socrates and engages a group of philosophers in the marketplace in ways that are evocative of the Athenian philosopher—he is, put simply, dressed in Socratic garb. Acts describes Paul's initial activity in Athens as follows: "So he *discussed* in the synagogue with the Jews and devout persons, and in the marketplace *every day* with those who happened to be there" (Acts 17:17). The term "to discuss" (*dialegomai*) appears only once in the New Testament outside of Acts. And in Acts it always appears in the context of Paul's trials or trial-like situations, precisely those places that are most likely directly shaped by Socratic traditions.[2] Of course, discussing with people is what Socrates was famous for and is precisely what got him in trouble. In Plato's *Apology* Socrates challenges his accusers to find someone who "ever heard me conducting *discussions*" with content that was speculative or sacrilegious (*Apology* 19d). He also advocated pursuit of virtue "*every day*, . . . about which you yourselves heard me *discuss* (*Apology* 38a).

Paul's initial activity in Athens, Socrates' hometown, is described in typically Socratic terms. It is not surprising, then, that he soon encounters some philosophers. Their reaction to him further evokes the figure of Socrates, as some asked, "What would this idle gossip say?" and others remarked, "He appears to be a promoter of *foreign deities*" (Acts 17:18). Paul is then taken to the Areopagus (the hill of the god Ares), where the philosophers say to him, "May we know what this *new thing* is, the teaching of which you speak? For you are *introducing* to our ears some strange ideas; we would like to know what these things are" (Acts 17:19–20). The charges leveled against Socrates were strikingly similar. Plato has Socrates paraphrase the charges against him as follows: "Socrates is guilty of corrupting the youth and of not honoring the gods the city honors, but other *new deities*" (*Apology* 24b). Xenophon records the charge as follows: "Socrates is guilty of not honoring the gods honored by the state and of *introducing* other *new deities*. He is also guilty of corrupting the youth" (*Mem.* 1.1.1).

While Paul is not formally on trial in Athens, the change in venue to the Areopagus does create a trial-like situation. For although the Areopagus is not the site of Socrates' trial in the literary tradition, by the early Roman Empire the association of that site with being questioned or judged was relatively common in literature. In addition, while Paul's subsequent speech is not a formal "apology" or defense, it certainly has the feel of one, given that he is responding to questions and concerns that evoke the accusations for which Socrates was brought to trial in Athens.

The speech Paul delivers to the inquisitive philosophers on the Areopagus continues the echoes of Socratic traditions. His first words, "Men of Athens," recall Socrates' manner of addressing the Athenian jury in the first lines and throughout Plato's *Apology* (17a). Paul then notes the Athenians' religiosity, which is manifest in the inscription "to an unknown god" (Acts 17:23). Paul volunteers to fill in the details of this god, whom they already have on their radar. Central to Xenophon's defense of Socrates in his *Memorabilia* is the argument that Socrates' religious practices were not foreign, outlandish, or weird, but were at their root, even if Socrates called them something else, really no different than the practices of any other devout Athenian. Similarly, although Paul may be using terms the Athenians don't recognize, he is really only speaking in greater detail about something they already accept. By placing Paul's subject under the heading of something they already acknowledge however obliquely and not without some ignorance (17:30), Paul avoids "introducing" new deities, the charge

leveled at Socrates and the concern voiced the by the philosophers whom he is addressing.

Paul concludes his speech by introducing the notion of God's judgment: "So then God overlooked the periods of ignorance, but now commands all of humankind everywhere to repent, because he established a day on which he intends to judge the world with justice by a man whom he designated, and he provides proof by his resurrection from the dead" (17:30–31). At first glance this may not sound particularly Socratic, but Socrates also spoke of a judgment after death. At the end of Plato's *Apology* Socrates sees his impending death as a good thing, for it might allow him to be judged by truly righteous judges (41a-c). And while Socrates' understanding of life after death is surely different from Paul's (or Luke's), both conclude their speeches with this subject.

Scholars have long acknowledged the appropriately Socratic colors of Paul's visit to Athens. But the influence of Socratic traditions in Acts is far more extensive.

The Socratic Paradigm and Acts' Portrait of Paul

The British scholar Loveday Alexander has recently made a compelling case for seeing the entire portrait of Paul in Acts as shaped by what she calls the "Socratic paradigm," which she understands as a widespread, culturally pervasive, if mostly unacknowledged use of Socrates as a model.[3] She notes a number of points of similarity between Acts' portrait of Paul and traditions about Socrates:

1. Both Paul and Socrates begin their missions as a result of an encounter with the divine. Paul's famous "call" on the way to Damascus in Acts 9—repeated two more times later in the narrative by Paul himself in Acts 22 and 26—serves to authorize him as a legitimate Christian missionary. Socrates' mission begins after hearing an oracle from Delphi (Plato, *Apology* 20e–22a). The oracle had proclaimed Socrates as the wisest of all, so he set out to understand what that could possibly mean. Later in the *Apology* Socrates indentifies that divine calling as authorizing his subsequent mission (Plato, *Apology* 28e).
2. Both Paul and Socrates have divine guidance throughout their missions. In addition to Paul's initial call, he is selected for his mission by the Holy Spirit (13:2,4), and throughout receives guidance from the Holy Spirit (16:6–7), by means of visions (16:9–10), from angels (27:23–24) and from Christ (18:8–10; 23:11; 22:17–21). Socrates claimed divine guidance in the form of his own divine being—a *daimonion*—that indicated appropriate action by means of a sign (Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.1.2–5).
3. The missions of both Paul and Socrates involve significant opposition and tribulation. In Plato's *Apology* Socrates refers to these tribulations as "herculean" labors. Later traditions expanded the list of his labors to include shipwrecks, poverty, and military struggles (Seneca, *Epistle* 104.27–28). In Acts Paul encounters opposition everywhere he goes, including beatings, plots against his life, trials, imprisonments, and a shipwreck.
4. For both Paul and Socrates carrying out the divine call leads to opposition and persecution from their own people. In traditions of Socrates' trial, it is his fellow Athenians who oppose and bring charges against him. As Alexander notes, the connection between the call and hostility is more explicit in Acts as Paul's call is in part a call to endure persecution (9:16, 22:18, 26:17). And throughout Acts the opposition to Paul is typically Jewish. As is the case with Socrates, Paul's opposition comes from his own people.
5. The careers of both culminate in trials that make up a disproportionate amount of the tradition surrounding each figure. Socrates' trial and subsequent death are really the focus of much of the extant tradition about him. In later tradition Socrates became the prototype of the persecuted philosopher. The third-century biographer Diogenes Laertius characterizes Socrates as "the first philosopher who was condemned to death and executed" (DL 2.20). After Paul enters the Christian fold in Acts 9, he disappears for a few chapters, but reappears in Acts 12 and remains the central character in the narrative until the end of the book, fourteen chapters later. And about half of the narrative devoted to Paul—the better part of chapters 21–28, has him in prison, being shuttled to a different prison, or standing trial in chains to determine his innocence.
6. Both Paul and Socrates end their careers in prison, teaching their associates and friends until the very end. Socrates' last days are the setting for two of Plato's most well-known dialogues, the *Crito* and *Phaedo*. Acts ends in a kind of cliff-hanger, with Paul awaiting trial while imprisoned in Rome.
7. Finally, both Paul and Socrates are put to death for their teaching. Socrates' death is the subject of Plato's *Phaedo*, recounting the philosopher's unwillingness to escape and his calmly drinking the hemlock. The death of Paul is, of course, not narrated in Acts, but it is assumed and practically predicted in a number of passages throughout the trials. Paul's requests for a trial before Caesar (25:11–12, 26:32) and divine assurance given to Paul that he will, indeed, stand trial before

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Caesar (22:11, 27:23–24), give readers a glimpse of the eventual outcome, but the narrative stops short of describing the events.

Socrates looms large in Acts' telling of the story of Paul, both as a general and perhaps indirect pattern that was in the cultural air, and as a literary model for specific passages and episodes, as appears to be the case in the presentation of Paul in Athens in Acts 17.

One of Alexander's points of similarity—that for both Socrates and Paul a disproportionate amount of the tradition focuses on their trials—is worth a closer look. Certainly the influence of the Socratic paradigm on a general level can be seen in the accounts of Paul's trials, but a more direct influence is probably at work as well.

The Trial of Socrates and the Trials of Paul

Most of the last seven chapters of Acts have Paul on trial or awaiting trial in some form or another. From chapters 21–26, in particular, Acts presents Paul in five different trial settings. Before taking a look at them, we should review the events that get Paul in trouble in the first place, setting up Paul's climb up the Roman judicial ladder in the final chapters of the narrative.

After Paul's stop in Athens he continues on his preaching tour of the Mediterranean, including stops in Corinth and Ephesus in Acts 18–19 that elicit opposition but that do not result in a trial or a defense. Eventually he makes his way to Jerusalem. Like Jesus' fateful journey to the same city, this is a slow, ominous trip filled with farewells and predictions of Paul's impending suffering. Soon after his arrival Paul meets with James and the elders. After hearing about Paul's activity among the Gentiles, James tells Paul of the problem that his presence in Jerusalem and his reputation for telling people not to observe Jewish customs will cause with the many believers among the Jews who are "zealous of the Law" (21:20). The solution James proposes is that Paul pay the costs for four men to undertake a seven-day ritual of purification and that Paul participate in the ritual along with them, essentially as way of offering proof of his Jewish piety. Paul does so, going with the four men to the Temple the next day to begin the purification rites. As the seven-day rite is nearing its end, someone sees Paul in the Temple and accuses him of teaching against the Law and of defiling the Temple by brining a Greek man into it. The city becomes frenzied and before long some attempt to kill Paul. A Roman tribune arrives just in time to intervene, carrying Paul away to the safety of the barracks (21:27–36)

The remaining chapters of Acts are set off by these events. Paul has been accused of not observing Jewish practices and will have to go through a series of trials (Acts 22:1—26:32), some more formal than others, in an attempt to establish his innocence. Paul's remarkable display of Jewish piety in Jerusalem (Acts 21) has made clear to the reader that, whatever the accusations against Paul, they are unfounded. The trials that follow don't so much make a case for Paul's innocence as much as they reinforce it. The trials also allow for Paul's own voice in the form of several formal defense speeches or apologies. The author of Acts uses the term *apologia* only seven times in the narrative. With the exception of Acts 19:33, where a character named Alexander unsuccessfully tries to offer a defense on Paul's behalf, the term always appears in trial situations.[1] The use of this essentially technical term for a legal defense is unsurprising in the context of trials more generally, but the overall shape of the trial accounts and even some of the details appear to owe more to the influence of Socratic traditions—central to which was the Athenian philosopher's own, very famous *apologia*—than to any historical sources the author may have had.

The overall shape of the accounts of Paul's trial appear to owe more to the influence of Socratic traditions than to any historical sources.

Three points of similarity are worth highlighting: the nature of the accusations, the defense strategy, and the claim to divine guidance. Regarding the nature of the accusations, both Socrates and Paul are accused of impiety. In Paul's case, the first two "trials," the informal affair in front of the barracks (21:40–22:24) and the meeting with the council (22:30–23:11), clearly have the tumult of the prior day in view. The third trial, this time before the governor Felix (24:1–27), makes the accusations more formal through an orator named Tertullus, but they are largely the same: Paul is a political agitator and has profaned the Temple. Trials four, in which Paul stands before Felix's successor, Festus (25:6–12), and five, the audience before King Agrippa and Queen Bernice (25:23–26:32), assume these accusations. At their core, the two basic accusations against Paul in all of these trials—teaching against the law as a form of impiety and social/political disruption—are reminiscent of the accusations against Socrates, whom both Plato and Xenophon identify as having been accused of not believing in the traditional gods and religious practices and of corrupting the youth.

If the accusations are reminiscent of those against Socrates, so is Paul's defense strategy. Xenophon begins his defense of Socrates against the charge that he did not honor the gods of Athens with an appeal to Socrates' history of exemplary piety (1.1.1–10). The evidence Xenophon marshals includes publicly offering sacrifices and his belief in divination, which is how Xenophon interprets Socrates' claim to have been guided by a *daimonion*. Despite the fact that the philosopher lived his life openly, always out in public in some way or another, Xenophon notes that "no

one beheld Socrates to be impious or irreligious in either deed or word" (1.1.11). Throughout his trials Paul repeatedly appeals to his own biography as a witness against the charges of impiety, including references to his Jewish heritage and pharisaic training (Acts 22:3–5, 26:4). Like Xenophon, Paul challenges anyone to come up with evidence of impiety, going on to claim that the reason for which he is on trial—the resurrection—is a hope firmly rooted in the Judaism of the ancestors (26:4–5). And of course, like Socrates, he repeatedly denies any wrongdoing (23:1, 24:11–12, 25:8) and mentions that he had returned to Jerusalem for the purpose of offering alms and sacrifices, being found by his accusers in a state of purity in the Temple (24:17–18).

Divine guidance is also front and center in both the trial of Socrates and the trials of Paul in Acts. Throughout Plato's *Apology* Socrates attributes his mission to Apollo's oracle designating him the wisest of all. His lifelong pursuit to understand this "riddle" is precisely what got him in trouble and is the reason for which he stands trial (*Apology* 20d-21e). When told to stop his activity, Socrates repeatedly refuses because the god had commanded him to his post (*Apology* 28d-30b). In the end Socrates sees even his trial and death sentence as divinely mandated (*Apology* 40a-b). Paul's mission is also the result of a divine commission. This is emphasized in the trials, in which Paul retells the story of his conversion twice in his defense speeches, and in both accounts his subsequent mission to the Gentiles—precisely that activity that gets him in trouble with Jewish leaders in Jerusalem—is understood as a direct command by the Lord (22:17–21; 26:17–21). That the events throughout the trials and the final confrontation with the emperor are also part of God's plan is made clear by Christ's brief visit and encouragement in Acts 23:11 and by an angel repeating the message in Acts 27:23–24.

The general outlines of all of the trials of Paul in Acts are shaped by the Socratic paradigm. But just as the account of Paul's visit to Athens appears to contain more direct and specific allusions to the traditions of Socrates' trial and death, some of the trials also go beyond a general evocation of Socrates, recalling specific details of the Socratic tradition. The trial in Acts 24:1–27 can serve as an example. Seminar Fellow Dennis MacDonald has recently made the argument that this trial is modeled on traditions of Socrates' trial in Plato and Xenophon.[5] The central points of his argument are worth repeating here. The lawyer Tertullus accuses Paul of being a pest, inciting riots, and profaning the Temple. While the charges against Paul in Acts 17:18–20 might echo specific language in the accusations against Socrates more directly, the charges against Paul in Acts 24:5–6 also correspond to the two-pronged charge against Socrates. That Paul is a pest who destabilizes the society with riots corresponds to the charge that Socrates corrupts the youth; and the charge that Paul profanes the Temple is similar to the accusation that Socrates did not honor the gods of Athens.

Paul's defense in response to Tertullus' accusations is also reminiscent of Socrates. After denying the accuracy of the charges—something Socrates does repeatedly in Plato's *Apology*—Paul offers a confession of sorts in which he admits to belonging to the Way, but stresses that this is not a new thing: "I worship the ancestral God, believing in all things according to the law and in everything written in the prophets, holding hope in God that these people also hold—that there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust" (24:14–15). As MacDonald notes, Paul appears to respond not to Tertullus' charges, but to the accusation that was leveled against Socrates: introducing new gods. Paul goes on to explain: "To this end I train [*askō*] to obtain a consistently blameless conscience before God and mortals" (24:16). The verb *askō*—"to train" or "exercise"— occurs only here in the New Testament. Xenophon's defense of Socrates has a lengthy section on the importance of "training" in virtue in which this verb is used repeatedly (*Mem.* 1.2.19, 20 and 23). Furthermore, Xenophon makes clear in his *Apology* that throughout his defense Socrates sought only to avoid impiety before God and the semblance of acting unjustly before mortals (22).

Paul next explains why he had returned to Jerusalem: "after many years I arrived to give alms to my nation and offer sacrifices, and it was while offering sacrifices that they found me in the temple in a purified state, with no crowd or disturbance" (24:17–18). Acts' portrayal of Paul's proper observance of Jewish worship with its emphasis on sacrifice is similar to Xenophon's claim that Socrates' piety should have been unquestioned as he "offered sacrifices often at home and often at the public altars of the city" (*Mem.* 1.1.2; see *Apology* 10–11).

Paul concludes his defense by arguing that his accusers are not present to make the charges, nor are those in attendance able to produce evidence against him (24:19–20). Plato's Socrates also made the point that his accusers failed to introduce testimony that he had corrupted the youth (*Apology* 33c-d). Despite the lack of evidence, Felix does not acquit Paul, deferring a verdict and charging the centurion to "guard him, but to give him some freedom, and not to hinder [*kōluein*] his friends from looking after him" (24:22–23). After his sentencing, Plato's Socrates tells his friends, "for nothing hinders [*kōluei*] our talking with each other for as long as possible." Plato's *Crito* and *Phaedo* are set in this period of incarceration during which Socrates received his friends. In Acts the encounter with Felix concludes with the governor, now in the company of his wife, summoning Paul for an audience in the course of which Paul "discussed justice and self-control and the coming judgment" (24:24–25). MacDonald notes that Socrates was remembered by

Xenophon for discussions in which he preferred ethics over speculations concerning the nature of the universe: "He always discussed [*dielegeto*, the same Greek verb as in Acts 25:25] human things: what is godly, what is ungodly, what is good, what is dishonest, what is just, what is unjust, what is self-restraint, what is madness" (*Mem.* 1.1.11–16). According to Plato, some of the topics addressed by Socrates while in prison include justice, self-control, the nature of the soul, and its judgment after death (*Phaedo* 63b–c, 68c–69e, 82b–c, 107c–108c, and 113d–114c). Finally, Paul is left in prison because Felix "was hoping that Paul would give him money [*chrōmata*]," something that, the text implies, did not happen (24:26–27). In Plato's *Crito* his friends offer to bribe the authorities to release Socrates—the term used is *chrōmata* (44, 45a–b)—but he refuses.

A Final Trial?

The section of the trials concludes with Paul being put on a ship and sent to Rome. But Acts will give us one more glimpse of Paul in Socratic garb. From the moment Paul reveals his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25–28), he has put in play the possibility that he would stand trial before the highest authority in the land, the Roman emperor. That possibility is soon confirmed both by Christ's appearance to Paul, reassuring him that he would indeed stand trial before the emperor (23:11) and by Paul's appeal to the emperor (25:11). However, the expected trial never materializes. After an eventful trip to Rome, Paul meets twice with Roman Jewish leaders. Then the narrative concludes with Paul in prison, entertaining all comers and proclaiming the gospel (28:30–31).

From beginning to end, the Socratic paradigm shapes the overall narrative arc of Acts' story of Paul.

The expected formal trial before the emperor is missing, but something like a trial, or at least judgments and verdicts are not far off. That Paul has survived both a shipwreck (Acts 27:1–44) and a snake bite on the island of Malta (28:3–6) function in the narrative as a declaration by nature of Paul's innocence. The encounters with the Jewish Roman leaders also have a trial-like function, but the roles are reversed: Paul appears as judge and the Jewish leaders (and by extension the Jewish community) stand as the accused. But even here in this displaced trial the author of Acts modeled his account on the trial of Socrates.

After being sentenced to death by the Athenian jury, Plato's Socrates addresses two groups, those who voted for his execution and the large minority that voted to acquit him. He first addresses those who condemned him, prophesying their punishment in the form of numerous followers of Socrates who would continue to push them toward self-examination (39 c–d). The second group consists of his friends, with whom he asks to speak "while the authorities are occupied and before I go to the place where I must die.

***Apology* 39e**	**Acts 28:30–31**
Men, wait [*parameínate*] with me for this much time,	He resided [*enemeinen*] for two years in his own rented house and received everyone who came to him,
for nothing hinders [*kōluei*] our talking with each other as long as possible"	preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness—unhindered [*akōlutōs*].

Men, wait with me for this much time, for nothing hinders our talking with each other as long as possible" (*Apology* 39e). Paul also addresses two groups in the final section of Acts. First he addresses the Roman Jewish leaders who, like the Socrates' Athenian jury, were split in their response to Paul. He quotes Isaiah 6:9–10 as an oracle predicting their doom. Then, like Socrates, he turns to his friends, spending his final two years in the company of those who came to him. The final two enigmatic verses of Acts are similar to Socrates' request to speak with his friends after his sentencing:

Conclusion

Readers of Acts have long noticed philosophical imagery in Acts. However, scholars who recognize that the author of Acts intentionally portrayed Paul in Socratic guise typically do not go beyond noting the Socratic features of Paul's visit to Athens in Acts 17. I have argued that Acts' presentation of Paul as a kind of Christian Socrates is far more extensive. From beginning to end, the Socratic paradigm shapes the overall narrative arc of Acts' story of Paul, from his divine call to teaching his friends and disciples the divine truth while awaiting certain death. Furthermore, many of the particulars of Acts' account, of Paul both in Athens and in the many trials that make up the last third of Acts, are modeled on those accounts of Socrates that were typical targets of literary imitation thanks to their significance in the Greek educational system.

Recognizing the degree to which its portrait of Paul is shaped by the model of Socrates helps us to make sense of a couple of interesting features of Acts. One of these features is the disproportionate amount of the narrative of Acts that is devoted to Paul's legal troubles and imprisonment. Such intense interest in this one aspect of Paul's story no longer seems peculiar when we understand that Socrates' trial and death are the focal points of traditions about the Athenian philosopher. Another puzzling feature of Acts is its emphasis on Paul as a pious, Torah-observing Jew who repeatedly demonstrates his piety by participation in traditional Jewish religious practices (Acts 26), paying for others

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She is an avid reader, knitter, and gardener. She maintains a natural garden filled with native Northwestern plants that attracts a host of birds, bees, and butterflies.

Carol will work mornings for Westar. Along with he will be responsible for interfacing with members and sponsors of Jesus Seminars on the Road. In the afternoons she is employed as Parish Administrator at a local Episcopal church in Salem.

Also joining the Westar staff is April Kinney. A recent graduate of Western Oregon University with a B.S. in accounting, April

is taking over the management of Accounts Receivable, a post previously held by Jennifer Julander. April grew up in Brookings on the Oregon coast just north of the California border. A movie afficionada, in her spare time she is a singer and entertainer. Like Carol, she is also an avid reader. April currently commutes from Lincoln City but hopes to relocate to Salem as soon as possible.

Hers is the voice you will hear when you call in the afternoon. 4R

April Kinney

When did the Gospel stop being news?

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the electronic beast to keep a nation groggily content. The function of news is the constant critical search for and communication of the events that touch and affect our lives. In short, real news declares what is significant for people. News, then, cannot be a shilling for the establishment or an advertisement for the status quo. Rather, in the best tradition of the Enlightenment, it provides that perspective, that moment of critical lucidity, which enables and empowers a people.

And so I ask again; do your knees grow weak when you enter your gathering of worship? Does your community promote the quest and detection of meaning? And if not, then has anything really changed? 4R

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to do so (Acts 21), and even agreeing to the circumcision of the half-Greek Timothy in order to avoid potential Jewish opposition in the area (Acts 16:1–5). This portrait of Paul is hard to square with Paul's own letters, especially Galatians 2, in which Paul strongly opposes any and all who require circumcision of Gentile believers. But arguing for innocence by appeal to a life full of public acts of piety is precisely what the author of Acts found in his model. Both Plato and, especially, Xenophon render ridiculous the charges of Socrates' impiety by appealing to his very public acts of worship, sacrifice, and support for traditional Athenian religion.

By the second century CE the figure of Socrates had become a widespread and easily interpreted symbol of the importance of obeying the divine command, of speaking truth to power, and of doing so even at the cost of one's life. This was not lost on the author of Acts. 4R

Notes

1. See the fine discussion of the noble death tradition in Gregory Sterling, "*Mors philosophi*: The Death of Jesus in Luke," *Harvard Theological Review* 94:4 (2001): 383–402.

2. In addition to the instance of *dialegomai* in Acts 17:17, the verb appears at Acts 19:8, 9; 20:9; 24:12; 24:25. Outside of Acts, the term appears in the New Testament only in Hebrews 12:5.

3. Loveday Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," in Bruce W. Winter and A.D. Clarke, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (*BIFCS* 1; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 31–63.

4. In addition to Acts 19:33, instances of the noun *apologia* or the verb *apologeomai* ("to present an apology") appear at 22:1, 24:10, 25:8, 25:16, 26:2, and 26:24.

5. Dennis R. MacDonald, "A Categorization of Antetextuality in the Gospels and Acts: A Case for Luke's Imitation of Plato and Xenophon to Depict Paul as a Christian Socrates," in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas L. Brodie, Dennis R. MacDonald, and Stanley E. Porter (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 211–225.

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