# Chapter 5: The Twelve Apostles – the Praxapostolos, the Epistula Apostolorum, and the Acts of the Apostles

### The Praxapostolos as an anti-heretical collection

As discussed in earlier chapters, the Praxapostolos is one of the four sub-collections constituting the New Testament in the earliest preserved codices, along with the Gospels, the Pauline Epistles, and Revelation. It comprises the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle of James, the two Epistles of Peter, the two or three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude. As David Trobisch demonstrated, the twenty-seven books of the New Testament always show up grouped into these four sub-collections, even if the position of the Praxapostolos relative to the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles varies.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Whether the Gospels are followed by the Pauline Epistles and then the Praxapostolos, as in the *Codex Sinaiticus*, or whether, as in the *Codex Alexandrinus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*,the Gospels are followed directly by the Praxapostolos, concluding with the Pauline Epistles ­– the narrative focus shifts away from Jesus as the protagonist toward the role of the Apostles, albeit with a different emphasis in each case.

While, in the Pauline Epistles, Paul is presented as the immediate successor of Jesus, in the Praxapostolos, direct succession is accorded to the Twelve Apostles, who as the immediate witnesses of his deeds and words not only continue Jesus’ mission, but also define the framework within which Paul acts, his authority being derived from that of the Twelve. This latter portrayal clearly contradicts the emphasis on Paul’s primacy in the former collection, especially considering the collection of Pauline Epistles presented by Marcion beginning with Galatians rather than Romans, in which Paul insists on his authority as an apostle independent of earthly laws from the beginning.

What follows is, therefore, not just an analysis of documents either discussing the Twelve Apostles and Paul or attributed to them; rather, this examination centers on questions of weighting authority and power in conflict situations ­– a perspective recognized clearly already in the 19th century by Ferdinand Christian Baur.[[2]](#footnote-2) We shall focus on the interrelations between the Praxapostolos and the Pauline Epistles, and the different ways we mayconceptualize the beginnings of Christianity based on these. However, these writings are to be read in relation tothe less known *Epistula Apostolorum* and parts of Acts that are not included in the New Testament canon. Finally, in a later chapter we shall turn to the Pauline Epistles themselves, whereby we shall consider the pseudo-Pauline letters,with reference to the Ignatian letters.

The Praxapostolos has not been researched extensively so far.[[3]](#footnote-3) The only writings that have been examined more closely in their collection context are the so-called Catholic Epistles. The exception is Acts,[[4]](#footnote-4) which is regularly read in connection with Luke, though not with the Catholic Epistles.[[5]](#footnote-5) When the Catholic Epistles are grouped, usually only 1-2Peter, James, and Jude are considered in conjunction,[[6]](#footnote-6) sometimes with the addition of Hebrews and Revelation, which, however, do not belong to the Praxapostolos according to the codices examined here.[[7]](#footnote-7) Sometimes Hebrews, 1-2Peter, James, and Jude are grouped together as the “general epistles” (apart from the Pauline epistles and the Epistles of John),[[8]](#footnote-8) or combined with Revelation and referred to as “other works of the New Testament.”[[9]](#footnote-9) For example, Frances Young in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* discusses the following writings under the heading of “The Non-Pauline Epistles:” Hebrews, the Pastoral Epistles, James, Jude, and 1-2Peter;[[10]](#footnote-10) whereas Gerhard Theissen refers to 1-2Peter, James, and Jude as the “Catholic Epistles” (surprisingly excluding the Epistles of John).[[11]](#footnote-11)

David R. Nienhuis comments on this inconsistent finding as follows: “Compared to the Gospel and Pauline collections, mainstream contemporary scholarship apparently finds it difficult to think of these seven letters as much more than an amorphous grouping of ‘other’ writings with a limited sense of internal coherence.”[[12]](#footnote-12) Yet even Nienhuis, who explicitly examines collection contexts in his monograph and takes note of Trobisch’s findings, omits Acts from his consideration of the collection of the Catholic Epistles, even though Acts opens this collection in the ancient codices.

On the other hand, Actshas been extensively studied and interpreted, but as noted in the previous chapter on the Gospels, like many other New Testament writings, it has rarely been examined in the context of its collection. Thus also in this case, the text is usually either approached on its own terms or, at best, read in conjunction with the Gospel of Luke based on the connection that Irenaeus establishes between the two texts.

When reading these texts in conjunction, a retrospective approach differs from a chronologically oriented reception history. While in terms of the reception history, scholars have been focusing on describing the context of the Lukan Double Work (Luke’s Gospel and Acts), locating the supposed single author in time, and determining the place of the composition of both works,[[13]](#footnote-13) a retrospective approach brings to the fore the question of when a work first becomes historically graspable and develops an impact,[[14]](#footnote-14) i.e., when agency can be attributed to it in a specific socio-historical and church-political context.

In the case of Acts, Irenaeus (contemporaneously with Dionysius of Corinth) is the first author to use the book in his work, in any significant and memorable way, at least. This is the main reason why the following analysis treats Acts and the Praxapostolos, as well as the collection of the New Testament in general, with Irenaeus in mind. However, we shall not look at Acts in isolation, nor as separate from the Catholic Epistles, but rather examine this text as part of the New Testament, and specifically in the context of the sub-collection of the Praxapostolos.

With the exception of the Pauline Epistles, which surfaced in the decades preceding Irenaeus, Acts and some of the Catholic Epistles first appeared more or less simultaneously in Irenaeus’ work.[[15]](#footnote-15) Yet the Pauline Epistles also merit renewed attention as they are introduced into a novel context, comprising three more Gospels, the Praxapostolos, and Revelation. Moreover, they also increase in number, as new letters attributed to Paul, the so-called Pastoral Epistles and the letters to the Hebrews, are added (initially not written in the name of Paul, but soon attributed to him). Moreover, as we shall see, the older collection of Pauline writings was thoroughly reworked to make it fit this new framework.[[16]](#footnote-16)

As shown above, the great New Testament codices of the 4th and 5th centuries treat the Praxapostolos as a separate collection comprising Acts, James, 1-2Peter, 1-3John, and Jude.[[17]](#footnote-17) It is striking that most contemporary researchers consider all these writings to be pseudonymous, just like the pseudo-Paulines. Thus, apparently, Paul not only inspired other authors to emulate him in writing letters; he also provoked them to critically examine the positions expressed in his writings, and to correct and supplement them through imitation, resulting in the pseudo-Paulines (which take Pauline thinking into different, sometimes opposing directions), and similar letters attributed to the most prominent Apostles mentioned by Paul in his letters and in Acts: James, Peter, and John.

While the position of the Praxapostolos differs across the various codices, it always comprises the same writings in the same internal order. Even though the number of contributors is small, the consistency of the content within each of the four sub-sections of the New Testament suggests that these writings have not emerged organically as a whole; rather, as David Trobisch points out, their systematic arrangement points toward the activity of an organizing mind with a particular editorial intention.[[18]](#footnote-18) It must therefore be possible to ascertain, at least in outline, how this editor intended to guide the readers’ gaze. If the position of the Pauline Epistles in the codices changed in relation to the Gospels and the Praxapostolos, what impact did this have on the reader’s perspective?

The shift in the positions of the Praxapostolos and the Pauline Epistles has been pointed out before, but it must be examined in more detail here, as it provides information about how the beginnings of Christianity were conceptualized.

In the *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Alexandrinus,* the Praxapostolos, including Acts, directly follow the Gospels and is the first to introduce the Twelve Apostles. It explicitly points out their authority and substantiates their standing in the community with the additional letters that follow Acts, which serve to endorse the individual authority of James, Jude, Peter, and John, the main protagonists of the collection. Hence, it is no surprise that each of these letters begins with a phrase reminiscent of the opening of Paul’s epistles; the Catholic Epistles open with Jas 1:1: “James, slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, greets the twelve tribes in the Diaspora,” and conclude with Jud 1:1: “Judas, slave of Jesus Christ, brother of James, to those called, beloved in God the Father and preserved for Jesus Christ.” Hence, according to Nienhuis, “one might easily conclude that the collection as a whole is delivered in the ‘embrace’ of letters from Jesus’ brothers according to the flesh.”[[19]](#footnote-19) One can only draw this conclusion, however, if one has previously read Acts and uses its narrative as a reference point, specifically the central role that James, Jesus’ brother, plays in it, despite not having authored any epistles himself.

James is the leader of the emerging movement and a leader among the apostles, their spokesperson vis-à-vis Paul (Acts 15:13; 21:18). From this perspective, the apostles, specifically the Twelve, are important authority figures in the early Church. Acts contains twenty-seven explicit mentions of the “apostles,” a title it “uses for the twelve disciples.”[[20]](#footnote-20) The fact that in a single passage (Acts 14:4.14), Paul and Barnabas are also referred to as “apostles” substantiates not only the view that Paul is “the literary hero of the second half of the book,” but also that, at this point, the title does not serve to designate apostolate in the sense of the Twelve: Paul and Barnabas are merely called “apostles” based on their function as emissaries of the Antiochian Church.[[21]](#footnote-21) These two are not primary witnesses directly chosen by the Lord; they have neither seen the Lord nor lived with him, nor are they successors of the apostles confirmed by the Holy Spirit and the disciples. Rather, according to Acts, they are sent by the community of Antioch and thus, any authority imparted to them is bestowed by this congregation alone.

This narrative logic, which clearly positions Paul and his followers as secondary to James and the Twelve, is also congruent with the arrangement of the collection of writings in the Praxapostolos and its position in the great codices of the 4th and 5th centuries (i.e., the *Vaticanus* and *Alexandrinus*). In these, Paul’s epistles follow the Praxapostolos, including Acts, and the writings of the most important apostles. In contrast, the arrangement of the *Codex Sinaiticus*, in which,as noted above, the Pauline Epistles follow the Gospels and precede the Praxapostolos, seems to present a fundamentally different view of the beginnings of Christianity. Nevertheless, this collection still contains the Pauline Epistles in the order and form we know from today’s New Testament, beginning with Romans in the version referring to the clear connection of the gospel of God with the older message of the prophets and the sacred writings (Rom 1, 2), an opening that seems to have been absent from the competing collection of Marcion’s *Apostolos*. For one, Tertullian would hardly have deprived himself of using such a connection between Paul’s letters and the Jewish scriptures as an argument in his critique of Marcion’s reading of Paul. Instead, in Marcion’s collection, Paul’s letter to the Romans seems to have begun with today’s Rom 1:1, 16:

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God… 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: to Jew[[22]](#footnote-22) and Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

Moreover, Marcion’s collection of the Pauline Epistles does not begin with the Epistle to the Romans, but with the Epistle to the Galatians, which Paul opens with the following phrase (1:1):

Paul, called to be an apostle, not by men or through any man, but through Jesus Christ and through God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

If we regard the collection of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as a response to Marcion’s New Testament (comprised of a single Gospel and a collection of ten Pauline Epistles), and if we assume that Marcion, with his preface to the *Antitheses*, in turn conceived his New Testament as a counter-collection to the four Gospels he knew (and perhaps even to the wider collection of Christian writings), we could frame the interposition of the Praxapostolos in the *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Alexandrinus* as an important anti-Marcionite move to distance the message of the Gospels from Paul’s epistles.[[23]](#footnote-23) Let us not forget that in the early 3rd century, at the time of Tertullian, Paul’s authority was still not beyond scrutiny, although his writings were being quoted by various authors.[[24]](#footnote-24) Tertullian testifies:

So then, shipmaster out of Pontus, supposing you have never accepted into your craft any smuggled or illicit merchandise, have never appropriated or adulterated any cargo, and in the things of God are even more careful and trustworthy, will you please tell us under what bill of lading you accepted Paul as apostle, who had stamped him with that mark of distinction, who commended him to you, and who put him in your charge? Only so may you with confidence disembark him: only so can he avoid being proved to belong to him who has put in evidence all the documents that attest his apostleship. He himself, says Marcion, claims to be an apostle, and that not from men nor through any man, but through Jesus Christ [cf. Gal 1:1[[25]](#footnote-25)]. Clearly any man can make claims for himself: but his claim is confirmed by another person's attestation. One person writes the document, another signs it, a third attests the signature, and a fourth enters it in the records. No man is for himself both claimant and witness.[[26]](#footnote-26)

For Tertullian, it was Marcion of Sinope who had included Paul in his “board list,” a metaphor for his New Testament collection, and accepted him as a “passenger” – an incorporated component. Tertullian accuses Marcion of having appended Paul’s letters to the Gospel – in putting together the “board list” – and questions the grounds on which Marcion confers “apostle status” and thus authority on Paul. According to Tertullian, Paul’s highly problematic self-authorization, as quoted above in Gal 1:1, serves as Marcion’s only basis for doing so.

In the opening of Galatians, Paul presents himself as a real “Apostle” – contrary to his qualification as only an “emissary” of the congregation of Antioch in Acts. Paul points out that he has not become an Apostle by virtue of somebody else’s summons, not even on that of a congregation, but directly through Jesus Christ and God himself.

However, Tertullian counters this self-assertion by arguing that in this case, just like in business, a person’s testimony is only valid if authenticated by others. When one person writes a document, it requires another to sign it, and a third party to authenticate it; indeed, a fourth then enters it in the registers. A mere self-inscription, or even an inscription backed by a single witness, is consequently invalid. Thus, Tertullian concludes that Paul, in asserting himself to be an “Apostle,” cannot simultaneously play the role of both “scribe and witness.” Likewise, Paul’s testimony cannot be ratified with Marcion as his only witness.

Tertullian’s argument, which was certainly plausible at his time (and perhaps remains so today), justifies the necessity of Acts as a third-party testimony to Paul’s authority. It is also a criticism of Marcion, given Tertullian’s allegation that Marcion had rejected Acts and cut it out of the New Testament. Tertullian himself attests that one of the central functions of Acts is the authentication of Paul’s authority. Carefully and briefly, Tertullian states, “On the basis of Acts, I may even trust Paul.”[[27]](#footnote-27) The following text by Irenaeus, authored a few years earlier, shows that Tertullian was not exaggerating, but rather showing awareness of the role attributed to Acts by this author:

It is necessary to... examine the opinion of Paul, and expound the apostle, and to explain whatsoever [passages] have received other interpretations from the heretics, who have altogether misunderstood what Paul has spoken, and to point out the folly of their mad opinions; and to demonstrate from that same Paul, from whose [writings] they press questions upon us, that they are indeed utterers of falsehood, but that the apostle was a preacher of the truth, and that he taught all things agreeable to the preaching of the truth.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Even if Irenaeus wants to hold on to Paul as a “preacher of the truth,” he still sees a need to “examine” his views, as Paul’s letters apparently carry too much weight with those who have challenged Irenaeus. Although Irenaeus refers to their use of Paul as a misguided “interpretation,” he places Paul under critical scrutiny, since the “heretics” have similarly expressly accused Irenaeus and his followers of “misinterpreting” Paul.

Acts is not the only text that functioned as a bridge between the Gospels and Paul, as documented in the New Testament codices of the 4th and 5th centuries. From reading Tertullian and Irenaeus, it emerges that this function was bestowed on the entirety of the Praxapostolos already in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. While Acts serves as the introduction to the collection, it is followed by the “letters of the Apostles,” which numerous manuscripts refer to as the “Catholic letters.” [[29]](#footnote-29) These present the writings of the “three pillars” which Paul mentions in Gal 2:9. And it is in the exact same order in which the Apostles are named in this passage that the letters attributed to them follow in the Praxapostolos: “Therefore James, Cephas (i.e., Peter), and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.”[[30]](#footnote-30)

The fact that the Epistle of Jude was also included in this collection is probably due to the fact that its writer explicitly identifies himself as the “brother of James.” Even if today it remains uncertain to which “James” Gal 2:9 refers — the one mentioned in Matt 13:55 and Mk 6:3 as one of the brothers of Jesus, or the one who in Acts 1:13 and Luke 6:16 figures as the father of “Jude” in the list of apostles[[31]](#footnote-31)— it is again Acts which, as shown above, assigns a distinguished position to James, the Lord’s brother, mentioning him even before Peter, and crucially before Paul. In fact, the Epistle of Jude is accompanied by a letter by another apostle who, already, in the prescript refers back to the first letter of the collection, i.e., to the Epistle of James. These two letters, like Gal 2:9, frame the collection as oriented toward James, thus supporting the narrative presented in Acts.

In any case, in combination with Acts, the Catholic letters constitute a dossier initially supportingthe authority of the Twelve Apostles, first and foremost that of the “three pillars,” headed by James. The collection of the Praxapostolos seems to be supported by Paul’s letter to the Galatians, which either supplies both Acts and the Catholic letters with a preface (in the codices in which Paul’s letters precede the Praxapostolos), or complements the Praxapostolos (in which Paul’s letters are only mentioned once in 1 Peter 3,15).

The silencing of Paul’s voice in Acts is in line with the book’s considerably different view of him, manifest in the description of his activities, reactions, and, above all, in the speeches ascribed to him. To give just one example, we may refer to Paul’s sermon and its effect on the audience as described in Acts20. The New Testament scholar Adolf Deissmann (1866–1937), among others, sees Paul depicted as a charismatic figure in this representation.[[32]](#footnote-32) He surmises that Eutychus, who is reported to have fallen asleep and out of a window during Paul’s lengthy sermon, must have probably the only person who had ever managed to be bored by one of Paul’s “live” addresses, in contrast to those, Deissmann argues, who have had to read the many theological studies written about him. However, in making this comparison, Deissmann did not take into account that Eutychus had not heard the Paul of the Pauline letters, but rather Paul as a character portrayed in Acts. Even though Paul’s letters have continued to engage people to this day, the figure of Paul in Acts seems rather “tame,” lacking incisiveness and acuity, and indeed, as implied by the episode with Eutychus, even soporific.[[33]](#footnote-33)

 Unfortunately, it can no longer be determined with certainty whether the Praxapostolos was already available to Irenaeus in its entirety. As shown above, however, Irenaeus seems to have known most of the writings in the collection of the New Testament as we know it today (perhaps still with the inclusion of the so-called “Shepherd of Hermas”). Irenaeus not only makes explicit and extensive use of Acts, it is also not a far cry to “assert the acquaintance of Irenaeus with the Epistle of James,”[[34]](#footnote-34) and he mentions the “Epistle of Peter” several times.[[35]](#footnote-35) Let us not that the term “Epistle” in the singular may refer to several letters authored by the same apostle, as these were not counted individually in antiquity. This is evidenced by Irenaeus’ treatment of the Epistles of John, of which he knew at least the first two, but continued to refer to them in the singular.[[36]](#footnote-36) Even if Irenaeus does not speak explicitly of the Epistle of Jude and the “passages possibly originating in Jude... are too vague to be identified with certainty,” the “Epistle of Jude... is strangely well... attested” in early Christianity, especially starting in the early 3rd century, as we can see, for example, in Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. Therefore it might well have been known to Irenaeus.[[37]](#footnote-37)

There is hence good reason to believe that Irenaeus was familiar with Acts in the context of the collection of the Praxapostolos. At the same time, however, he strikingly does not link Acts directly with the Catholic Epistles,[[38]](#footnote-38) instead explicitly establishing its close connection to the Gospel of Luke. This connection initially relates more to content than to form.

As shown by Chrissie Howe, Irenaeus sees three central elements as underpinning the continuity of salvation history, locating them in what he sees as a double work by a single author (Luke-Acts): “(1) the Law and the Prophets, (2) the time of Jesus, (3) the place and role of the Church.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

Nevertheless, she notes that despite his insistence that Luke was the author of Acts, Irenaeus uses the proem of Luke but not that of Acts, even though both are addressed to the same person (Theophilus), thus further supporting the internal relationship of Acts with Luke. Since Acts 1:1-2 reads: “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven,” it remains a mystery why Irenaeus did not draw on this prologue. A possible reason is that, having placed Acts with its formerly unknown prologue in his collection, he only had to rectify the prologue of Luke, a text which, as we can see from Marcion’s Gospel had been known without the accompanying prologue.

Irenaeus refers to Acts as “Lucae de apostolis testificatio,”[[40]](#footnote-40) while Tertullian calls the writing “commentarius Lucae,”[[41]](#footnote-41) and the *Codex Sinaiticus* “has πράξεις by a second hand in the *inscriptio*... while other manuscripts usually add (τῶν) ἀποστόλων.”[[42]](#footnote-42) “The term πράξεις designates the literary genre; ἀποστόλων, however, does not follow the pattern of the Gospel titles, which refer to the authorial source, but rather designates the central characters of the narrative,” even though “both elements... are problematic” because Acts “does not conform very well to the ancient literary genre described as πράξεις” and “the term apostle... is used twenty-seven times (in Acts) in reference to the twelve disciples of Jesus, and in only one story— though whether this is deliberate or not is a matter of debate— the term is used twice for Paul and Barnabas” (Acts 14:4.14).[[43]](#footnote-43)

Martin Dibelius (1883–1947) points out the following:

[T]he Acts of the Apostles... has no parallel in the New Testament, nor in any great ancient literature. It differs from the New Testament and other early Christian writings in terms of its literary attitude, and from the historians in terms of its objective, which can be called theological. The uniqueness of the book lies in its content: before, alongside, or after the composition of the canonical Acts of the Apostles, as far as we know, no one had undertaken to tell the story of the first Christian community and the decisive spread of the Christian faith to the West in context. For that is not what the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles seek to do either.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Hence, it is all the more astounding that “during the first two-thirds of the second century, the Acts of the Apostles is not among the church readings. As far as we can see, it is not quoted in church literature at that time.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

Expanding on Dibelius’ points, we must note that not only is Acts not mentioned before Irenaeus, it is neither commonly referenced nor widely read even in the decades following him. Although a fragment of Origen’s homilies on Acts survives, and there is evidence of commentary on the book toward the end of the 3rd and in the 4th century,[[46]](#footnote-46) we recall Chrysostom’s sermon mentioned in Chapter 3, according to which this New Testament text was apparently completely unknown to his audience.[[47]](#footnote-47) This is also in line with the observation that the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles rarely borrow from the canonical Acts; instead their narratives developed independently, so that the canonical text cannot be regarded as a *Vorlage* of the apocryphal writings.[[48]](#footnote-48)

 The historical location and interpretation of Acts is further complicated by the fact that its text, as the *Codex Bezae* shows, “was changed in those early days and that no trace of the original has survived in any manuscript.”[[49]](#footnote-49) As noted in reference to the Gospels, we must consequently reckon with considerable editorial revisions in this case as well.

This complexity, however, does not prevent us from at least highlighting the broad framework that Acts lays down for Irenaeus, its first known reader, and those that followed him. No doubt Lüke is correct in stating the following: “The Gospel of Luke as well as the Acts of the Apostles are read by Irenaeus against the background of the Corpus Paulinum.”[[50]](#footnote-50) But reading through Irenaeus, Adv. haer. III-V, it becomes clear that the converse statement also holds true: Irenaeus evidently perceives the Pauline Epistles through the lens of the Praxapostolos, and especially through that of Acts. Moreover, being guided by the Praxapostolos, he reads Paul beginning with the Pastoral Epistles, and then the Deuteropaulines of the Colossians and Ephesians, before becoming aware of what contemporary scholarship would regard as the “authentic” Paul, i.e., the figure emerging from the letters that are attributed to Paul by modern scholarship and in the version known to us in the *textus receptus* ofthe New Testament.

However, even while approaching Paul and early Christianity through their portrayals in the Praxapostolos and in Acts, Irenaeus is only minimally interested in drawing historical information from these writings. Rather than seeing Acts in particular as historical testimony providing further insights—beyond what was available to him in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke—into the biographies of Jesus of Nazareth and various figures central to the early Church, Irenaeus reads the Praxapostolos as a collection of apologetic, anti-heretical reference writings safeguarding orthodoxy.

Even though the opening of Acts could have served him to substantiate the continuity between this text and Luke, in Adv. haer. III 12 Irenaeus begins immediately with Acts1, 16-17:

The Apostle Peter, therefore, after the resurrection of the Lord, and His assumption into the heavens, being desirous of filling up the number of the twelve apostles, and in electing into the place of Judas any substitute who should be chosen by God, thus addressed those who were present: Men [and] brethren, this Scripture must have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was made guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us:[[51]](#footnote-51)... Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein;[[52]](#footnote-52) and, His bishoprick let another take;[[53]](#footnote-53) thus leading to the completion of the apostles, according to the words spoken by David.[[54]](#footnote-54)

Although Irenaeus is,[[55]](#footnote-55) after Marcion and before Tertullian, the author most intensely engaged in the Pauline letters that we know of in the first two centuries, still being guided by the Gospels and Acts, he begins his reflections on the time following Jesus’ death and resurrection not with Paul but with Peter. Even if we concede that “Paul... for Irenaeus is an apostle among others,” or even that he “occupies a special position among the apostles” and “together with Peter represents the apostles as a whole,” Peter is prioritized in all instances in which Irenaeus mentions him along with Paul. This also applies to the Gospels attributed to these two apostles:[[56]](#footnote-56)

For, only after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the gospel of God. Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Irenaeus seems to have regarded the Gospel of Matthew as the oldest one, assuming that it was written in Hebrew. Next, however, comes Mark’s Gospel, which Irenaeus associates with Peter, followed by the Gospel of Luke, which he associates with Paul. While these two Gospels are mentioned in the same breath, and both placed after the death of Peter and Paul in Rome, here, too, the text associated with Peter text takes priority over that of Pauline origin. Finally he names the Gospel of John, seemingly assuming that it was written last. This prioritization of Peter over Paul is all the more striking when we consider that in the order in which Irenaeus approaches the writings in Adv. haer. III, as shown above, the Gospel of Luke is read before that of Mark.

Irenaeus is an attentive reader of his sources. He quotes Acts 1:16-17 verbatim but omits the entire passage recounting Judas’s terrible end, instead bringing into focus the positive statement that Judas was to be replaced “by another chosen by God.” Irenaeus sees this as a fulfillment of the scriptures, which is why he cites the Psalm verses quoted in Acts. What is important to Irenaeus is the fact that the number of apostles (twelve) is complete again, and that this replacement of Judas fulfills David’s prophecy in the Psalms. Interestingly, however, Irenaeus not only skips the proem of Acts, as mentioned above; he also omits the disciples’ question to the Lord found in Acts 1:6: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” In Acts, Jesus does not answer the question at this point, even though, as we will see in Peter’s sermon, it would soon be answered by the leader of the apostles. Irenaeus also omits the names of the remaining eleven apostles and the women present, mentioned in Acts 1:13-14. Instead his gaze is fixed on Peter as the apostles’ spokesman, also introduced as their defender when they are accused of being drunk at the descent of the Spirit.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The extent to which Irenaeus initially reads Acts as the story of Peter is also demonstrated in the following passages from Adv. haer. III 12, which speak exclusively of Peter, citing his words as a preacher. After first addressing the disciples, Peter then speaks to the “men of Israel” in III 12, 2.[[59]](#footnote-59) For Irenaeus, however, the speech is not so much a rebuke of the Jews for the murder of Jesus, but a confirmation of Peter’s anti-gnostic position. Peter is viewed as the mouthpiece of the apostles as a whole, because “the apostles did not preach another God, or another Pleroma…nor, that the Christ who suffered and rose again was one, while he who flew off on high was another.”[[60]](#footnote-60)

In the next section, Peter is again the central actor as he performs a miracle by commanding a man born lame to walk.[[61]](#footnote-61) Once more, Peter’s address, this time delivered explicitly with John at his side, is quoted at length:

Peter, together with John, preached to them this plain message of glad tidings, that the promise which God made to the fathers had been fulfilled by Jesus.

This is yet another instance in which Irenaeus is not scolding the Jews, but rather rebuking Marcion:

Peter in this sermon is “not certainly proclaiming another god, but the Son of God, who also was made man, and suffered; thus leading Israel into knowledge, and through Jesus preaching the resurrection of the dead, and showing, that whatever the prophets had proclaimed as to the suffering of Christ, these had God fulfilled.”[[62]](#footnote-62)

In this message, Irenaeus also answers the apostles’ unanswered question to Jesus in Acts: Jesus has not come to “restore the kingdom to Israel,” but rather to “[lead] Israel into knowledge.” Addressing readers who know that the political restoration of the kingdom of Israel was for Marcion a defining characteristic of the Creator’s Messiah,[[63]](#footnote-63) Irenaeus portrays Peter as accepting Marcion’s view that Jesus’ coming was not about a political goal, yet rejecting his conclusion that, therefore, Jesus’ God is not the Creator, but a God different from the God of Israel—a novel God who brings knowledge unknown to the earlier prophets. Rather, Peter insists that Jesus’ suffering and resurrection is the fulfillment of what the Jewish prophets proclaimed.

Irenaeus skips all unrelated passages in Acts in order to follow Peter’s preaching activity. He quotes Peter’s speech before the High Council,[[64]](#footnote-64) aimed to rebut the view that Jesus’ God is not identical with that of Israel, as suggested by Marcion and other Gnostics.[[65]](#footnote-65) Instead, he states that the “Messiah” is the very same “Jesus, who was crucified,” and that God is the very same God who “sent the prophets” in order to save humanity.[[66]](#footnote-66) Irenaeus adds as the Church’s commentary that the opposition to Jesus was led by “the kings of the earth and its princes,” by “Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,” but that these actions were pre-ordained by God.[[67]](#footnote-67)

We note that Irenaeus’ emphasis on Peter’s authority and on the predestination of all events is part of his anti-Valentinian and anti-Marcionite orientation:

These [are the] voices of the Church from which every Church had its origin; these are the voices of the metropolis of the citizens of the new covenant; these are the voices of the apostles; these are voices of the disciples of the Lord, the truly perfect, who, after the assumption of the Lord, were perfected by the Spirit, and called upon the God who made heaven, and earth, and the sea—who was announced by the prophets—and Jesus Christ His Son, whom God anointed, and who knew no other [God]. For at that time and place there was neither Valentinus, nor Marcion, nor the rest of these subverters [of the truth], and their adherents.[[68]](#footnote-68)

Even without going through the entire text of Acts as read by Irenaeus, it seems clear at this point that he uses Acts as a key testimony to support his anti-heretical position based on Peter. This can be seen, too, when he quotes Peter again in the following section, then introduces Philip, and finally Paul. Again, in his reading Irenaeus is not guided by any historical interest, but rather by his anti-heretical orientation, which he sees endorsed by Acts, as it parallels his own preference of Peter over Paul.

Concerning Paul, Irenaeus quotes his sermon on the Areopagus at length[[69]](#footnote-69) in order to emphasize that Paul also supports the anti-heretical position. Paul preaches “not only God as the Creator of the world,” but at the same time substantiates the universal aspect of creation, as God made a human race to dwell all over the earth. If Marcion is being contradicted by the emphasis on God’s being the Creator, the universality of God, for Irenaeus, speaks against the position of Valentinus.

 Irenaeus again seems to indicate that he is following a collection of writings, as shown above, when he writes, after citing Paul’s sermon: “All his Epistles are consonant with these declarations, I shall, when expounding upon the apostle, show from the Epistles themselves, in the appropriate place.”[[70]](#footnote-70) Irenaeus consequently understands Acts, as demonstrated from Adv. haer. III 12 onwards, as textual evidence against his main opponents, in that it constitutes further proof of the correct interpretation of Jesus in the four Gospels, before reading the Epistles of Paul in Adv. haer. III 15.

When he discusses 1-2 John and 1 Peter in Adv. haer. III 16, there is much to suggest that these writings were also present in his collection, and bound together with Acts as a sub-collection of the Praxapostolos. While the different order in which they are mentioned here could be used as a counter-argument to this conclusion, it might also be based on Irenaeus’ specific argumentative interest. The latter possibility is supported by the fact that in the report on “the letter of the apostles... to the Gentiles” (Acts 15), Irenaeus explicitly quotes the speeches of Peter and James, thus already referring to the authoritative voices that later have their say in his collection with their own epistles. Once again, these voices are cited to reject Marcion’s claim that these apostles represented the belief in a God different from the God of Israel and his Messiah.[[71]](#footnote-71)

 Irenaeus substantiates his anti-heretical position by quoting further speeches. Moving back to earlier sections of Acts, he cites Stephen.[[72]](#footnote-72) It is striking that Irenaeus reads 1 Tim 6:4 in particular as referring to the Marcionites,[[73]](#footnote-73) when he sees the position of his opponents as characterized by the fact that they regard the Mosaic legislation as dissimilar and even opposed to the teaching of the Gospel, but do not even inquire into the reasons for this difference between the two Testaments.[[74]](#footnote-74) Thus, it is not only the recent scholarship on the Pastoral Epistles that perceives them as anti-Marcionite writings—Irenaeus himself already interprets them as such.[[75]](#footnote-75) Interestingly, Irenaeus does not deny the difference between the two Testaments that Marcion emphasizes in his “Antitheses,” but rather disputes the latter’s presentation as exaggerated and radicalized, himself underlining the “unity and agreement” of the two Testaments.[[76]](#footnote-76)

 From these remarks I gather that Irenaeus, as the first reader of Acts and the Pastoral Epistles known to us, aims to propose an alternative reading of Paul’s epistles through these writings, which is clearly distinct from that of Marcion and his followers, as well as from that of the Valentinians. He reads and uses Acts within the context of the Praxapostolos and the larger collection of Christian writings not in order to develop a history of the beginnings of Christianity, but rather to derive from it an orthodox, anti-heretical understanding of both the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles.

We may now ask whether Irenaeus saw this as being the essential function of Acts, or perhaps even the very intention with which this work has been produced. This idea is challenged by the fact that he quotes this text, as well as the other writings of the Christian collection, only very selectively, and uses them pointedly. Why would an author design a work as rich in narratives as Acts with the single purpose of warding off a Marcionite or Valentinian understanding of Paul and the Gospels? And why would this work be included in a collection with writings so diverse in terms of literary genre and content, and so rich in ambiguity and contradiction?[[77]](#footnote-77) If we, therefore, assume that Acts was not primarily composed as an anti-heretical and apologetic work to defy Marcion and Valentinus, but was rather intended as “a textbook with historiographical pretensions,”[[78]](#footnote-78) one must explain why Irenaeus as its first reader so thoroughly misses this intention. As shown above, Irenaeus does not perceive this work as a piece of historiography in its own right, but reads it as closely interwoven with the pseudo-Pauline writings and the rest of scriptures, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation (including Hermas), as an apologetic defense against his main opponents.

The surplus of content alone must make us question the role and function of Acts within the Praxapostolos, and within the collection of the twenty-seven other Christian writings of this Bible. Lüke attempts to define the role of Acts more closely with regard to Paul’s letters. In doing so, he asserts the following:

[T]he author of the Acts of the Apostles drafted a text coherent with the collection of the ten epistles (Gal, 1-2 Cor, Rm, 1-2 Thess, Laod [= Eph], Col, Phil, Phlm) ascribed to Marcion in the pre-New Testament. One intention of the Acts of the Apostles, written in the middle of the 2nd century, is to channel the reading of Paul’s letters in an anti-Marcionite direction. On the diachronic, intertextual level of the study, it becomes clear that Acts exerts a reception-controlling function in that it not only tells a coherent story to complement the epistles, but inscribes itself as part of an overall text in the narrative world of the collection of these ten epistles. In doing so, it stands in a ‘concealed’ intertextual dependence on the collection of ten epistles. As an author, Luke is thus made into as a temporary Pauline companion.[[79]](#footnote-79)

As we have seen, part of this evaluation is reflected in Irenaeus’ reading of Acts, who perceived the text as anti-Marcionite, as well as anti-Valentinian, and positioned it as a premise for an anti-heretical understanding of the Pauline Epistles. Certainly, Irenaeus also understood Acts as part of a broader collection context and thus of a larger text that goes far beyond Pauline Epistles, and even the Praxapostolos or the New Testament, to encompass the entire Christian Bible from Genesis onwards.

As such, Acts serves as the bridge not only to the Gospels, but, as Irenaeus would have it, even further back, to the prophets, King David, and—as might also be shown— to Moses and the Creator God. On the other hand, looking ahead, it is the introduction to the correct understanding of the God of the Twelve Apostles, especially the “three pillars”—James, Peter, and John, and thus to the entire collection of the Praxapostolos, which also encompasses these three protagonists’ epistles. It thus serves as a preparation for the reading of the Pauline Epistles and finally also the Revelation and the Shepherd of Hermas.

Although Irenaeus was certainly interested in a historical presentation, as attested to by his citations from the Gospels, he nevertheless presents Acts primarily as an anti-heretical work. It was important for him to portray Peter as the key witness and superior in status to Paul in order to counter the Marcionite and Valentinian portrayal of the latter; the voices of James and the other apostles also serve this purpose. If the research to which I have contributed, which understands Luke’s Gospel as a deliberate anti-Marcionite redaction of Marcion’s Gospel, should come closer to the historical truth than the view, prevalent since Irenaeus, that Marcion abridged Luke’s Gospel, then the expansion of Marcion’s Gospel into the double work of Luke-Acts would be similar to the editing and augmentation of the collection of the initial ten into the fourteen Epistles of Paul. The nature of such a redaction can be deduced from the parallel case of the broadening and reworking of the collection of the three Epistles of Ignatius first into a collection of seven, then thirteen, and finally seventeen epistles.[[80]](#footnote-80) The hypothesis of the expansion and redaction of the Gospel of Mark in order to align it with Luke-Acts would fit with Irenaeus’ anti-Marcionite reading of these texts.

It seems, therefore, that the anonymous author of Acts did not compose the work exclusively to rebut Marcion and Valentinus, but that such an intention was not completely absent, either. It was, however, the main feature that attracted Irenaeus to the text and motivated him to read it as part of the Praxapostolos.

 Since many of the anti-Marcionite elements of Acts, which go far beyond those singled out by Irenaeus, have already been highlighted by previous research, there is no need to go into them further here. Instead, accepting that Acts was not written exclusively as an anti-Marcionite and anti-Valentinian work, as not all its material can be reduced to this anti-heretical function, I would like to focus more closely on some of its passages by asking what idea of the beginnings of Christianity this text intends to give us.

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1. The titles of the sub-collections and abbreviations are from the editors of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, cf. NTG27, 40\*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. F.C. Baur, Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi. Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre; ein Beitrag zu einer kritischen Geschichte des Urchristenthums (1845); M. Bauspieß, C. Landmesser and D. Lincicum, Ferdinand Christian Baur und die Geschichte des frühen Christentums (2014); C. Landmesser, Ferdinand Christian Baur als Paulusinterpret. Die Geschichte, das Absolute und die Freiheit (2014), 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. T. Bokedal, The Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon. A Study in Text, Ritual and Interpretation (2014), 150-153. Attempts have been made in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. D.R. Nienhuis, Not by Paul Alone. The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon (2007), 4. Cf. for instance the overview of some examples I include above in ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A.F. Gregory, The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus (2003); J. Verheyden, The Unity of Luke-Acts: One Work, One Author, One Purpose? (2012); K. Shuve, The Patristic Reception of Luke and Acts: Scholarship, Theology, and Moral Exhortation in the Homilies of Origen and Chrysostom (2012); J.B. Tyson, Marcion and Luke-Acts. A Defining Struggle (2006); T. Keene, Luke-Acts and "Early Catholicism": Eschatological and Ecclesiological Trajectories in the Early Church (2012); F. Dicken, The Author and Date of Luke-Acts: Exploring the Options (2012). Cf. for example A.F. Gregory, The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus (2003); J. Verheyden, The Unity of Luke-Acts: One Work, One Author, One Purpose? (2012); K. Shuve, The Patristic Reception of Luke and Acts: Scholarship, Theology, and Moral Exhortation in the Homilies of Origen and Chrysostom (2012); J.B. Tyson, Marcion and Luke-Acts. A Defining Struggle (2006); T. Keene, Luke-Acts and "Early Catholicism": Eschatological and Ecclesiological Trajectories in the Early Church (2012); F. Dicken, The Author and Date of Luke-Acts: Exploring the Options (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A. Chester and R.P. Martin, The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude (1996); P. Perkins, First and Second Peter, James, and Jude (1995); B. Reicke, The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude Apostulus. Introduction, Translation, and Notes (1973). Cf. A. Chester and R.P. Martin, The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude (1996); P. Perkins, First and Second Peter, James, and Jude (1995); B. Reicke, The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude Apostulus. Introduction, Translation, and Notes (1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. C.M. Laymon and W.A. Quanbeck, Revelation and the General Epistles: A Commentary on Hebrews, James, I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude, Revelation (1983); L.R. Donelson, From Hebrews to Revelation: A Theological Introduction (2001); G. Krodel, The General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, 1-2-3 John (1995). Thus C.M. Laymon and W.A. Quanbeck, Revelation and the General Epistles: A Commentary on Hebrews, James, I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude, Revelation (1983); L.R. Donelson, From Hebrews to Revelation: A Theological Introduction (2001); G. Krodel, The General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, Jude, 1-2-3 John (1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. L.T. Johnson, The Writings of the New Testament. An Interpretation (2005). Thus ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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12. D.R. Nienhuis, Not by Paul Alone. The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. P. Vielhauer, Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur. Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter (1975), 377-409; G. Schneider, Die Apostelgeschichte. I. Teil (1980), 76-121. See the focus on these questions by J. Hoh, Die Lehre des hl. Irenäus über das Neue Testament (gekrönte Preisschrift) (1919), 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See the PhD by C. Howe, Establishing Orthodoxy: Irenaeus’ Use of Apostolic Kerygma and the Acts of the Apostles in *Adversus haereses* ((forthcoming)). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See J.-N. Pérès, Das lebendige Wort. Zu einem Agraphon in der *Epistula apostolorum* (2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. J.P. Mathur and M. Vinzent, Pre-canonical Paul. His Views Towards Sexual Immorality (2018). See ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Cf. above xxx on Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, Codex EphraemiRescriptus. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. D. Trobisch, The First Edition of the New Testament (2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. D.R. Nienhuis, Not by Paul Alone. The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon (2007), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. D. Trobisch, The First Edition of the New Testament (2000), 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Note that in Tertullian's quotation of this passage the "first" (τε πρῶτον) favouring or prioritising the Jews is missing. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Conveniently, the Praxapostolos also serves as a narrative bridge to support the coherence of the New Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Cf. for example the Acta Scillitana, also the anonymous inscription from the Phrygian Hierapolis (better known as the "Avercius Inscription"), cf. on the latter M. Vinzent, Writing the history of early Christianity: From reception to retrospection (2019). Cf. also M.F. Bird, Paul and the Second Century (2011), xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The translation of Scripture quotations here and in the following follows the standard translation, from which there are deviations in individual cases. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Tert., Adv. Marc. V 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Iren., Adv. haer. IV 41, 4 (trans ANF, at times slightly altered). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. D. Trobisch, The First Edition of the New Testament (2000), 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See D.R. Nienhuis, Not by Paul Alone. The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon (2007); D. Lührmann, "Gal 2,9 und die katholischen Briefe" (1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See K.H. Schelkle, Die Petrusbriefe, der Judasbrief (1976), 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. G.A. Deissmann, Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History (1926), 6-7. Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. N. Richardson, Paul for Today: New Perspectives on a Controversial Apostle (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. J. Hoh, Die Lehre des hl. Irenäus über das Neue Testament (gekrönte Preisschrift) (1919), 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Iren., Adv. haer. IV 9,2; 16,5; V 7,2; cf. Ibid. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Iren., Adv. haer. III 16,5.8 to 1Joh; I 16,3; III 16,5.8 to 2Joh; cf. Ibid. 54-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Cf. Ibid. 55; ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. There are formal references, as have been shown above. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See C. Howe, Establishing Orthodoxy: Irenaeus’ Use of Apostolic Kerygma and the Acts of the Apostles in *Adversus haereses* ((forthcoming)). See also E. Franklin, Luke Interpreter of Paul, Critic of Matthew (1994), 11-32; N.S. Fujita, Introducing the Bible (1981), 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Iren., Adv. haer. III 13,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Tert., De iei. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. D. Trobisch, The First Edition of the New Testament (2000), 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid. 39 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. M. Dibelius and H. Greeven, Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte (1953), 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid. 80 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. For this, above xxx the details. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ioh. Chrys., Hom. in Luc. 1 (PG 60, 11); see above xxx. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. J. Snyder, Relationships between the Acts of the Apostles and Other Apostle Narratives ((forthcoming)). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. M. Dibelius and H. Greeven, Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte (1953), 81. On various differences in the text of Acts see J. Neville Birdsall, The Georgian versions of the Acts of the Apostles (1988); G. Bouwman, Der Anfang der Apostelgeschichte und der 'westliche' Text (1988); A.F.J. Klijn, A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts (1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. J.N. Lüke, Über die narrative Kohärenz zwischen Apostelgeschichte und Paulusbriefen. Diss. (2017), 43. I am grateful to J.N. Lüke for providing me with a copy of his forthcoming publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Acts 1:16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ps 68:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ps 108:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. R. Noormann, Irenäus als Paulusinterpret. Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenäus von Lyon (1994). Cf. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. "Peter, Paul and the rest of the apostles", Iren., Adv. haer. I 25,2; IV 35,2; "Peter and Paul", III 1,1; III 3,2; cf. also III 13,1. In a place where the apostles appear in a critical light, Paul precedes Peter, so I 13,6. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Iren., Adv. haer. III 1,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Acts 2:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,2. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,3; Acts 3:6ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Cf. Tert., Adv. Marc. IV 6,3: ‘Constituit Marcion alium esse Christum qui Tiberianis temporibus a deo quondam ignoto revelatus sit in salutem omnium gentium, *alium qui a deo creatore in restitutionem Iudaici status sit destinatus* quandoque venturus. Inter hos magnam et omnem differentiam scindit, quantam inter iustum et bonum, quantam inter legem et evangelium, quantam inter Iudaismum et Christianismum.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Acts 4:8ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,4. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,4. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,5. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,5. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Acts 17:24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,9. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,14. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,11; Acts 7:2ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,11-12: ‘But if any one, “doting about questions,” do imagine that what the apostles have declared about God should be allegorized, let him consider my previous statements, in which I set forth one God as the Founder and Maker of all things, and destroyed and laid bare their allegations; and he shah find them agreeable to the doctrine of the apostles, and so to maintain what they used to teach, and were persuaded of, that there is one God, the Maker of all things. And when he shall have divested his mind of such error, and of that blasphemy against God which it implies, he will of himself find reason to acknowledge that both the Mosaic law and the grace of the new covenant, as both fitted for the times [at which they were given], were bestowed by one and the same God for the benefit of the human race. For all those who are of a perverse mind, having been set against the Mosaic legislation, judging it to be dissimilar and contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel, have not applied themselves to investigate the causes of the difference of each covenant. Since, therefore, they have been deserted by the paternal love, and puffed up by Satan, being brought over to the doctrine of Simon Magus, they have apostatized in their opinions from Him who is God, and imagined that they have themselves discovered more than the apostles, by finding out another god; and [maintained] that the apostles preached the Gospel still somewhat under the influence of Jewish opinions, but that they themselves are purer [in doctrine], and more intelligent, than the apostles. Wherefore also Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and, curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, they assert that these are alone authentic, which they have themselves thus shortened. In another work, however, I shall, God granting [me strength], refute them out of these which they still retain.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,12. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. H.O. Maier, "Marcion the Circumsizer" (2019). Cf. Ibid. with older literature ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Iren., Adv. haer. III 12,12. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. We only need to compare the description of the events by Paul in Gal 2 and by Acts 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. J.N. Lüke, Über die narrative Kohärenz zwischen Apostelgeschichte und Paulusbriefen. Diss. (2017), 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Ibid. 295-296. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. M. Vinzent, Writing the history of early Christianity: From reception to retrospection (2019). See ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)