

# FIRST PERSON NARRATIVE IN ACTS 27-28

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The voyage-narrative of Acts 27-28 is a key passage for the interpretation of the 'we-passages' in Acts. It has traditionally been a strong buttress of the view that the writer was a companion of Paul, or at the least that he used as his source the diary of such a companion. But recent historical studies of the voyage have been sparse, and mostly directed to long-standing debates on points of detail.<sup>1</sup> The focus of much recent study, here as elsewhere in Luke-Acts, has been on literary and theological interests.<sup>2</sup>

The object of this paper is not to get embroiled further in this discussion, beyond a preliminary sampling of the range of opinion and some necessary clearing of the ground. In the course of preparing a larger study of Acts I have found this passage a test-case of alternative

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1. R. M. Ogilvie, 'Phoenix', *JTS* n.s. 9 (1958) 308-314; A. Acworth, 'Where was St. Paul Shipwrecked? A Re-examination of the Evidence', *JTS* n.s. 24 (1973) 190-193; O. F. A. Meinardus, 'Melita Illyrica or Africana: An Examination of the Site of St. Paul's Shipwreck', *Ostkirchliche Studien* 23 (1974) 21-36, and 'St. Paul Shipwrecked in Dalmatia', *BA* 39 (1976) 145-147; C. J. Hemer, 'Euraquilo and Melita', *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975) 100-111, in response to Acworth. Only the last is much concerned with the interpretation of the passage in its wider context (cf. *BJRL* 60 [1977-8] 41-42). Most recently N. Heutger, '"Paulus auf Malta" im Lichte der maltesischen Topographie', *BZ* 28 (1984) 86-88 argues for a relocation in Malta.
  2. E.g., P. Pokorný, 'Die Romfahrt des Paulus und der antike Roman', *ZNW* 64 (1973) 233-244; V. K. Robbins, 'The We-Passages in Acts and Ancient Sea-Voyages', *BibRes* 20 (1975) 5-18, and 'By Land and By Sea: The We-Passages and Ancient Sea Voyages', *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. C. H. Talbert (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978) 215-242; G. B. Miles and G. Trompf, 'Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27-28 in Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution and Shipwreck', *HTR* 69 (1976) 259-267; D. Ladouceur, 'Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27-28', *HTR* 73 (1980) 435-449; Susan Marie Praeder, 'Acts 27:1-28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts', *CBQ* 46 (1984) 683-708.

approaches. I intend therefore to make some interim observations on the character of the passage, and to offer some samples of the kinds of documentation which seem to me of material weight in my plea to put the discussion on a rather different footing.

Most of the recent studies will not detain us here. P. Pokorný sets the passage against a mystery-romance background; G. B. Miles and G. Trompf, followed in part and modified by D. Ladouceur, draw on a background in the Attic orators Antiphon and Andocides to link peril at sea with divine vengeance, and to take the preservation of the accused as affording a presumption of innocence admissible as an argument of probability in a secular Athenian dicastery-court. This narrative, then, at a focal climax of Luke's work, is to be seen as a vindication of Paul before a higher court than that of Caesar. Ladouceur himself concedes (p.441) that there is no evidence that such an immunity would be taken seriously in a first-century Roman court, and his invocation of a vindicatory significance in the mention of the Dioscuri (Acts 28:11) as the figurehead designation of the new ship (discussed by him at length on pp. 443-448) does nothing to ease my difficulty. The glimpse these studies afford of ancient popular thought are themselves most interesting, but they do not provide a convincing background here. I shall offer below a very different kind of parallel for the reference in Acts 28:11.

More crucial to our study are those approaches which affect our understanding of the function of the 'we-passages'. The theological reconsideration of the voyage in its bearing on this question stems effectively from M. Dibelius, who separates it from the other 'we-passages', and treats it as a pre-existing, literary narrative into which references to Paul have been inserted.<sup>3</sup> The commentaries of H. Conzelmann and E. Haenchen pursue the trail blazed by Dibelius. In the detailed treatment by Haenchen one is particularly aware of an ambivalence between his insistence that the narrative is tailored to a glorification of Paul and his tacit acceptance of many

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3. M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greeven (London: SCM, 1956) 204-206; tr. by M. Ling from the German *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1951).

details which are hard to dissociate from an account of personal experience. I am not concerned for the present to interact in detail with these approaches, though they are much in mind in the writing of these pages.

A very specific problem is raised by V. K. Robbins, in his contention that first person plural narrative was characteristic of an ancient sea-voyage genre. While his central interest is focused, especially in his article in *Perspectives on Luke - Acts*, on literary questions and thence on the theological significance of orientating early Christianity towards the sea that leads to Rome (*Perspectives* 241), the implication is that this explanation disposes of any lingering notion that the form could indicate personal participation in the event.

Robbins' work has not been without influence,<sup>4</sup> but I find no sufficient reason for accepting the existence of this first-person voyage-genre. His examples are not necessarily representative, nor are they always taken correctly in context, nor are they subject to control, nor do they prove the conclusions he draws from them.

The first person plural is used with the same kinds of semantic variation in Greek as in English, and different usages even in the same passage are not necessarily excluded. Neither language possesses a distinction like that of Malay/Indonesian between 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' pronouns; so that if in Acts 16:17 and 21:18 the phrase 'Paul and we' separates him conceptually from the first person group, no difficulty need be found in the fact.<sup>5</sup> Again, there is the easily illustrated 'authorial' first person, whether singular (sometimes less a sign of egotism than a caution that subjective opinion is not attested fact) or plural (possibly trying to involve the

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4. Cf., e.g., Schuyler Brown, *The Origins of Christianity. A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (Oxford: OUP, 1984) 27-28.

5. In each case the phrase marks a transition ending a 'we-section', before the continuing account of Paul is narrated in the third person. The subsequent resumption of 'we' in the one case at Philippi, in the other in Palestine, is consistent with a companion's residence in those regions while Paul himself was respectively travelling and imprisoned. Cf. F. F. Bruce *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Tyndale, 1952<sup>2</sup>) 315, 391.

reader in a tacit bond of sympathy with the author). These two categories, and indeed fluctuations between them, I find constantly pervading my own unstudied speech and writing no less than Greek or other texts. There is also a very natural 'we' which reflects a writer's solidarity with his own place, time or nation. In the calculatedly detached, third-person narrative of Caesar's *Commentaries* the Romans are *nostri* (our men). 'In our time' is freely used for 'contemporary', and *Mare Nostrum* (our sea) is the Mediterranean.<sup>6</sup> The common factor in these variations is their inclusion of reference to the speaker/writer himself. If that is not the case in ancient voyage narratives, the onus surely lies on the advocate to establish his argument under rigorous controls. The first obvious instances I happened to check (Caes. BG 4 23-24, 28; 5. 8; Lucian, *Navig.* 7-9) were all in the third person, and Lucian actually puts his voyage in third person reported speech in a first person dialogue context. Of course such narratives are often first person accounts, because they recall personal experience, and plural because they recall communal experience. The same tendency is as true of colloquial English as of literary Greek (or Latin), but it is no proof of the existence of a literary style appropriate to what was not personal experience.

Apart from his many examples of first and third person narration, Robbins offers three more precise parallels with Acts. (1) *The Voyage of Hanno* 1-3.<sup>7</sup> The two opening sentences are in the third person, and the remainder of the document in the first person plural. But paragraph 1 is a formal heading, recording briefly

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6. Cf. *in nostro mari* (Caesar BG 5.1); also *nostrum litus* of the Mediterranean Coast of Syria (Plin. NH 6.30.126); Sall. Jug. 17.4; etc. So in Greek Scylax, *Periplus Maris Interni* 40, in *Geographi Graeci Minores* (GGM) ed. Carolus Mullerus (Karl Mueller) (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1855) Vol. 1, p.39: πρὸς τὴν ἐπὶ ἡμῶν θάλασσαν (74th BC); Marcianus of Heraclea, *Periplus Maris Exteri* 3: ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς αἰτὴ θάλασσα (GGM I.519) (4th-5th AD); etc. Also e.g. *apud maiores nostros* (Cic. 2 Verr. 2.47.118); for *nos* of time cf. Hor. Odes 3.6. 46-48; Tac. Agric. 2.3; etc.; *nostri anni* (Ov. Fast. 1.225).
7. See the text in K. Mueller, GGM I, pp. 1-14. It begins ἔδοξε Καρχηδονίοις Ἀννωνὰ πλεῖν ἔξω Σιτηλῶν Ἡρακλείων ... καὶ ἐπλευσε. The first sentence of the actual narrative has the verb ἐπλεύσαμεν.

the explorer's commissioning. His report begins at paragraph 2, and is all in the 'we'-form, not as a literary device for a fiction, but because he reports on the actual adventures of his party. Paragraph 1 should be printed as a prefatory paragraph, as it is by K. Mueller, not as part of a continuous undifferentiated narrative, as it is by Robbins. (2) A papyrus narration of some incidents in the Third Syrian War.<sup>8</sup> Robbins says that column I line 1 to II.11 contains third person narration, which shifts to first person plural in II.12 as a sea voyage is narrated. But there is a difficulty in assessing the context: the first half of every line in the first column is lost, and no continuous sense can be reconstructed. Yet the surviving part of line 18 contains a first plural (παρ' ἡμῶν) comparable with καθ' ἡμᾶς in II.13 (not 12), to which Robbins attaches special significance. The real transition comes in II.16, where L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken restore an emphatic ἡμεῖς δέ. The point throughout is that this is a narrative of conflict between 'us' and 'them', the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, narrated by a participant on the Ptolemaic side. Where the 'enemy' are at sea (II.2-3), their voyage is recounted in the third person, but Robbins' citation only begins at II.5, and misses the interaction of first and third persons which can be traced throughout the document, so far as columns I, III and IV are preserved, alike in land and sea episodes of the campaign. (3) *The Antiochene Acts of Ignatius*.<sup>9</sup> This is much the most difficult and elusive case. There is certainly an abrupt and unmarked shift to the first person plural in mid course. J. B. Lightfoot (pp. 383-391) is severe on the evident historical flaws of this account which seems to be composite and very late. But it is precisely the 'we-section', allied to an eyewitness profession and to its intrinsic plausibility and lack of the demonstrable blunders apparent elsewhere, which leads him to entertain the possibility that this part contains authentic tradition. In any case the document as a whole does not further

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8. First published by J. P. Mahaffy, *The Flinders Petrie Papyri* (Dublin: Academy House, 1893), Part 2, No. 45, pp. 145-149. There is an improved text in L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*, Vol. 1, Part 2 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1912), No. 1, pp. 1-7. The account deals with the events of 246 BC: the author is not identified.
  9. J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Part 2, Vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1889<sup>2</sup>) 477-495 (text and commentary), 575-579 (translation), 383-391 (critical discussion).

Robbins' thesis. As it is probably both late and composite, it is at best uncertain material for arguing literary intention. Moreover, as it stands, the preceding part of the voyage (where this document contradicts the authentic letters) is rendered in the third person, and the 'we-passage' (which has better credentials) begins at sea but is largely devoted to leave-taking in Rome. The martyr is distinguished from those ostensibly present with him.

Robbins' many other examples are open to criticism on various similar grounds. There is wide variation throughout ancient literature in the use of the first (and indeed the second)<sup>10</sup> person, but it occurs within the flexible confines of natural usage. The *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* certainly use a technique of flashback first-person narration, but this is part of the larger structure of the poems, and not confined to the limits of a voyage motif. The same is true of a more specific sample from a very different genre, the Hellenistic romance, where Achilles Tatius' hero Clitophon tells his story as a first person narration within a first person framework. In 2.31.6 and 3.1.1 'we' denotes Clitophon and Leucippe and their companions, and continues the pronoun used of the same party travelling by land in 2.31.4-5, which is not cited by Robbins. 4.9.6 is in direct speech, part of a lament in which Clitophon apostrophises his supposedly dead love and recalls their shared experiences. In ostensibly autobiographical literature, whether fact (*Jos. Vita* 3.15) or fantastic fiction (*Lucian VH* 1.5-6), the whole is structured on a first person narrative, which becomes plural not only at the outset of a voyage

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10. The second person would give no less rich a harvest of rhetorical and poetical turns, to which however I should not attach significance. In Latin poetry, for instance, especially in the extreme metrical stringency of Ovidian elegiacs, it is commonplace to work intractable words and names into the line by apostrophising a god or a goat (*Ov. Fast.* 1.354, 357, 360; etc.). A simple example may be offered from among the minor geographers from whom Robbins draws examples: the versifier Dionysius Periegetes (*GGM* 2.103-176) begins with the authorial 'I' (line 3), has a second person invocation of the Muses (62), addresses the reader (1053-4, 1080) from standpoint of authorial 'I' in 1054, and in conclusion addresses the continents and islands (1181-1183) before ending again in the first person (1184-1186).

but wherever the writer is identified with a group. The same is true of the personal narrative in Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 7.2, 10). In the former passage the writer sails with some fishermen; and 'we' reverts to 'I' when his companions leave him: in the latter the plural continues while he travels by land with a companion (ἐβαδίζουεν). The same objection applies to Petronius *Sat.* 114-115; again the full context is crucial. Some of the poetic examples are even less satisfactory. The example from Ovid's personal lament in exile (*Trist.* 1.2.31-34) depends on one first plural verb form, but ignores the commonplace of Latin verse by which 'we' stands freely for 'I' *metri gratia*. A glance at the poem shows the use of the first plural in lines 16, 38, 67 and 70, all in non-maritime contexts, whereas the nautical imagery of 75-84 happens to contain only the singular, and 17-18 mixes the numbers, but the meaning in every case is 'I'.

It will only weary the reader to pursue this kind of analysis. I have chosen here to treat mainly literary examples offered by Robbins from dates near to that of the New Testament. His extension of the argument into the unpretentious geographical compilers of varied and often very uncertain dates does not strengthen his case. The like phenomena are illustrated in them, often in a naively unliterary way. Scylax uses the 'authorial' 'I' baldly, beginning his work ἄρξομαι, and signalling the ends of digressions to describe islands with a repetitive ἐπάνειμι. He speaks of 'our sea' (40; *GGM* 1.39), but such uses are no more significant than his slipping from his impersonal catalogue into addressing the reader (ἐὰν προέλθῃς ἀπὸ θαλάττης ἀνώτερον, 100, *GGM* 1.74). We cannot attach importance to the brief lapses into the first plural in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* 20 (*GGM* 1.273), nor in *ibid.* 57 (*GGM* 1.299), where κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν is again of a familiar type followed by μέχρι καὶ νῦν immediately below. Varied trivial phenomena of this kind may be abundantly illustrated from literary and other documents which Robbins does not mention.<sup>11</sup>

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11. Thus the impersonal compilation of Agathemerus, *Geographiae Informatio* (*GGM* 2.471-487) announces a new section with a sudden lapse into authorial 'we' with reference to the islands of 'our' sea (λοιπὸν δὲ ἐροῦμεν τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς νήσων τοὺς περιμέτρους, 5, 20, p.481). So too the anonymous *Compendium of Geography* (*GGM* 2.494-511) slips into the first plural at 4.5 (p.495).

Of course, nothing I have said disposes of the fact that voyage-narratives are often couched in the 'we'-form, but I contend that this is a natural tendency dictated by the natural situation, not an artificial literary device. If the narrative is fiction anyhow (as in Lucian, Achilles Tatius or Heliodorus), the 'we' still functions naturally within the dramatic dimension of the fiction. Indeed, the examples under discussion are drawn from widely differing genres (in a more usual sense of that word), and the notion that an exclusively defined *Gattung* can be isolated by simple or composite verbal or syntactical criteria across a wide variety of prose and poetry of different types and languages seems to me inherently suspect.<sup>12</sup> The paradigm does not work, and it cannot be used to draw larger conclusions about the narrative of Acts 27-28.

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12. A notable instance is the development of the idea of the 'diatribe' in the sense developed from the doctoral thesis of Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinische Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen, 1910). Bultmann's concept of the diatribe, which differs from the understanding of the term among classical scholars, looks like a composite construct whose diagnostic characters are assembled piecemeal from a complex of stylistic parallels represented among a range of ancient writers of ostensibly different genre, Greek and Latin, prose and poetry, philosophy, satire and rhetoric. H. D. Jocelyn goes so far as to deny altogether the existence of the 'diatribe'. He claims to have traced the origin of this fashion of talking: it first surfaced in H. Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig, 1887) lxix. He concludes 'The term should disappear from scholarly discourse along with all the other bogus antiquities which the moderns use to adorn their essays on classical literature' (Jocelyn, 'Horace, Epistles I', *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 4.7 [July 1979] 145-146; cf. 'Diatribes and Sermons', *ibid.* 7.1 [Jan. 1982] 3-7). While Jocelyn may be excessively iconoclastic, he confronts us with a doubt deserving of serious exploration. 'Diatribe' certainly occurs as a title applied to the works of Bion of Borysthene and others, but the methods by which a *Gattung* bearing this name has been isolated, and then identified in New Testament epistles and elsewhere, are extremely suspect.



## II. THE BACKGROUND AND THE DOCUMENTS

The positive function of this article is to present some evidence for seeing a different kind of background for this passage. It is not to be a sufficient basis for larger conclusions, which need to be argued on a wider basis involving more extended exegetical study than is possible within our present limits. But there are valuable historical and documentary indications which point towards an integration of the narrative and its historical context on the assumption of authorial participation tied to the time and places of the events. It is premature to attempt to tackle on this ground the question of the Lukan portrayal of Paul. No historical source is 'pure history' in the artificial sense sometimes desired, and of course we are not indifferent to the Lukan element in the portrayal. But to recognise this does not pre-judge adversely the essential historicity of that portrayal. That question remains open, and is precisely one of the issues which must be treated on a larger canvas. But the tendency of our argument to integrate the narrative with the events and their setting may serve also as a straw in the wind pointing to the further integration of Paul's part in the narrative into that unity of situation.

A. *General Historical Setting: The Alexandrian Corn Fleet*

The ship which Paul's party boarded at Myra (Acts 27:6) and that in which they completed their journey from Malta to Puteoli (28:11) are both explicitly designated 'Alexandrian'. In the former case we have specific, if parenthetical, information that the cargo was of grain: they threw the corn overboard in their last extremity to lighten the ship (27:38). A contemporary did not need to be told this, for the Alexandrian fleet was famous. The organisation of this supply from Egypt under the Early Empire has been described as 'Rome's single greatest maritime achievement'.<sup>13</sup>

The control of Egypt as an essential source of corn-supply had been a priority of Roman rulers since the Civil

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13. L. Casson, *The Ancient Mariners. Seafarers and Sea Fighters of the Mediterranean in Ancient Times* (London: Gollancz, 1959) 239.

Wars of a century before. The *praefectus annonae* in charge of the service was a key figure on the emperor's staff, as appears from the high importance of Gaius Turranius, who held this office for more than thirty years after his appointment under Augustus (Tac. *Ann.* 1.7; 11.31, spanning A.D. 14-48). The emperor's safety against popular revolution hinged significantly on his position as provider, for famine was less a matter of world-wide harvest failure than the accumulation of local failures and difficulties which progressively priced the available supplies out of the reach of the poor before the richer were affected. There is clear evidence of the danger of popular disaffection on this score under Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* 2.87; 6.13). Two famine crises in Rome under Claudius are dated explicitly, one in A.D. 42 (Dio 60.11), the other in A.D. 51 (Tac. *Ann.* 12.43). In the latter case Claudius was personally in danger from a sudden insurrection, perhaps the same occasion as that described in Suetonius, *Claud.* 18.2. There is in fact widespread evidence for repeated and prolonged difficulties in his reign, further indicated by Acts 11:28. Famine in Egypt was consequent upon either a deficient or an excessive seasonal inundation of the Nile, and the highest on record was under Claudius (Plin. *NH* 5.10.58). The excellent study by K. S. Gapp uses the records of Egyptian prices to confirm the occurrence of famine there c.45-46, just preceding that in Syria-Palestine (Acts 11:28; Jos. *Ant.* 20.2.5 [=20.51-53]; 20.5.2 [=20.101]).<sup>14</sup>

It was also Claudius, in response to the repeated difficulties of his time, who developed the remarkable freighter-service from Alexandria to its peak of efficiency. His construction of a new harbour at Ostia was his immediate response, according to Dio, to the shortage of A.D. 42. Imports had hitherto been channelled largely through Puteoli (Pozzuoli) while Ostia was an open roadstead liable to silting. The building of 'Portus' was a huge undertaking. Two enormous curving moles lined with slipways

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14. K. S. Gapp, 'The Universal Famine under Claudius', *HTR* 28 (1935) 258-265. On the chronological implications see further C. J. Hemer, 'Observations on Pauline Chronology', *Pauline Studies. Essays Presented to Professor F. F. Bruce* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980) 3-18, esp. p.5.

enclosed 130 acres, and a concrete island bearing a Pharos or lighthouse divided the entrance into two channels.<sup>15</sup> Claudius further gave special privileges to shipbuilders and undertook to recompense storm losses (Suet. *Claud.* 18.2), all provisions which remained in force in the biographer's own day. He stationed a cohort at Ostia and another at Puteoli, ostensibly to guard against fires (Suet. *Claud.* 25.2). He also had immense ships in service, larger, it is said, than any known until seventeen centuries later.<sup>16</sup> The dimensions of one such are known: the 'Isis', which Lucian saw driven off course in Piraeus, was 120 x 30 x 29 cubits (180 x 45 x 43½ feet), from which Casson infers a figure of 1228 tons on the basis of a keel length of 114 feet. It is said to have carried enough corn to feed all Attica for a year.<sup>17</sup> The amount of grain shipped annually from Egypt is reckoned

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15. The harbour is described in Suet. *Claud.* 18.3; Dio 60. 11.4-5; cf. CIL 14.85, of A.D. 46. It is also actually portrayed in a remarkable and elaborate series of *sestertii* of Nero (H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* [London: British Museum, rev. ed., 1976-], Vol. 1, clxxvi-clxxvii, and Nos. 131-135, inscribed AVGUSTI POR. OST. S C, of A.D. 64-66. It is noted that several other variants exist which are not held in the Museum. For the use of Puteoli for cargo before the building of this harbour see now J. Crook, 'Working Notes on Some of the New Pompeian Tablets', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 29 (1978) 229-239, citing letters dated 28th June and 2nd July A.D. 37 which refer to Alexandrian wheat as stored in *horreis Bassianis publicis Puteolanorum* (235); cf. text of A.D. 40 on p.236.
16. Casson, *The Ancient Mariners* 215; cf. 236. While our actual dimensions depend on the account in Lucian, written in the 2nd cent., the size of first-century ships is attested not only by the necessities of the corn supply and the testimony of Luke and Josephus, but by the fact that Caligula shipped from Heliopolis to Rome the stone obelisk which still stands 130 feet high in front of St. Peter's (Plin. *NH* 16.76.201-202). This was the ship which was sunk by Claudius as foundation for the island and lighthouse at Portus.
17. Lucian, *Navigium* 6. The dimensions given in *Navig.* 5 are discussed by L. Casson *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1971) 171-173. He bases his value for the keel on comparisons with merchant ships of similar shape and character. Other writers have given widely dissimilar estimates of tonnage based on less rigorous criteria.

at 150,000 tons. A fleet of eighty-five vessels that size was required for the task.<sup>18</sup>

The great difficulty which faced this service was the constraint placed on travel by the winds. Though the regularity of the Mediterranean summer winds made navigation possible from earliest times, the prevalent north-westerlies of its eastern part meant that while the outward voyage to Alexandria could be made direct in ten days or less, the return involved battling all the way against adverse winds, and took 50-70 days. Ancient ships were not equipped to sail more than about seven points into the wind, and their route was dictated by climatic factors.<sup>19</sup> They ran north from Alexandria, as close as possible into the wind, to strike one of the Lycian ports, Myra or Patara, subject to the threat of being driven eastward if it blew too hard. They could make a cautious way westward under shelter of the south coast of Asia Minor, helped by a westward drift of coastal currents, before running SW to the shelter of Cape Salmone at the eastern tip of Crete, and then beat along the south coast before facing a laborious passage of tacking westward towards Sicily or Malta.

This path was marked out since Phoenician times, but attained a new importance in the imperial service. L. Casson cites most interesting evidence which makes it possible even to reconstruct a sketch of the sailing schedules.<sup>20</sup> A ship which had wintered in Ostia made

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18. Casson, *Ancient Mariners* 235-236. The fleet probably included many smaller ships, and therefore required even more of them. Casson argues that c.340 tons was the minimum size favoured for the service.
  19. See generally L. Casson, 'Speed under Sail of Ancient Ships', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 82 (1951) 136-148, and *Ships and Seamanship* 292-296. The significance of the difference in time, and indeed the greater peril, of sailing from east to west can scarcely be sufficiently stressed. It was one of the miracles of the *pax Augusta* to have overcome this problem: 'There are neither wars nor battles, neither brigandage nor piracy, and we may travel at all hours, and sail from east to west (πλεῖν ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν ἐπὶ δυσμᾶς, Arr. *Epict.* 3.13.9).
  20. L. Casson, 'The Alexandria-Rome Sailing Schedule', *Ships* 297-299 (ch. 12 Appendix). A second-century

rapid run to Egypt in spring, awaited loading and clearance in Alexandria, and beat back to Italy by midsummer. After unloading it was able to reach Alexandria with favourable winds again before the season became dangerously late. After wintering there it was reloading to sail as soon as the seas were open in spring, returning rapidly in midsummer, and then rushing to take a second load in late summer before the weather broke. That was the most dangerous part of the cycle, when the urgency of the service and the prospects of rich profit had to be set against the risks.

The significance of this imperial enterprise is interestingly attested in the literature and documents, especially those of the periods of Claudius and Nero. There is a graphic account of the crowds lining the docks at Puteoli to greet the Alexandrian fleet, heralded by the sighting of an advance vessel identified by its unique privilege of keeping its topsail aloft. The writer is the brother of Paul's Gallio and tutor of Nero (Sen. Ep. 77.1). The imperial coinage gives the clearest picture of the place of the food-supply in imperial policy. Under Claudius the types are restrained, though their message is clear and persistent. A recurring series of *dupondii*

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papyrus letter from Puteoli to Oxyrhynchus announces safe arrival in Italy, written immediately on stepping ashore on 4th Pauni (= 29th May) after a slow, but not a bad, passage (with the unique *βραδυπλοία*, cf. *βραδυπλοεῖν* in Acts 27:7), evidently on the spring sailing from Alexandria (POxy 2191). Another, written after A.D. 222, expresses the frustration of awaiting clearance to sail and of hoping to go on the 15th of an unnamed month: οὐπω μέχρι σήμερον τὰ πλοῖα τῆς ἀνώνυμης ἐξῆλθεν ἵνα δυνηθῶμεν ἐξελθεῖν, καὶ τοὶ ἐμοῦ μηδὲν ἔχοντος πρᾶξαι ἐνθάδε. λέγουσι δὲ ὅτι μέχρι τοῦ θέλομεν ἐξελθεῖν συνθεῖν (POxy 1763). Here is an indication of the sailing of the fleet together when all are released. Among other references note Philo, *In Flaccum* 5.26; 13.110. Another papyrus letter (A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, in Loeb *Select Papyri* 1.113) records reaching land on 6th Epeiph (27th June), unloading on 18th (9th July) and going up to Rome on 25th (16th July). At the time of writing (9th Mesore = 30th July) discharge is awaited daily, but so far none of the corn ships have been released. (καθ' ἡμέραν προσδεχόμεθα διμυσιωρίαν ὥστε ἕως σήμερον μηδέναν [*sic*] ἀπολελύσθαι τῶν μετὰ σίτου ; 2nd or 3rd A.D.). This ship evidently belongs to the summer sailing, awaiting clearance to return to winter in Egypt.

shows Ceres seated on an ornamental throne holding corn-ears and a long torch, and inscribed CERES AVGVSTA.<sup>21</sup> On the *quadrans*, the lowest denomination, the common type is the *modius* (corn-measure) set on a tripod.<sup>22</sup> Both series are found from the year of the emperor's accession (A.D. 41). Under Nero several elaborate artistic compositions are found, especially on the *sestertii*. One shows the goddess Annona ('corn-supply' personified) standing and holding cornucopiae, facing Ceres seated as above across a garlanded altar with a *modius* and corn-ears protruding, and the garlanded stern of a ship in the background, and inscribed ANNONA AVGVSTI CERES.<sup>23</sup> Another type commemorates a (second) free distribution of food (*congiarium*), depicting Nero seated on a platform, attended by the *praefectus annonae*, holding out a free food voucher to a citizen, with the legend CONG II DAT(um) POP(ulo).<sup>24</sup> A third is the remarkable portrayal of the new harbour at Portus (see n.15 above), showing the curving moles and attached slipways, entrance island and lighthouse, and recumbent Neptune, with varying numbers of ships in the basin. All may be placed in the period A.D. 64-66, perhaps in an increasingly anxious bid for popular support.<sup>25</sup> Nothing was more dangerous to Nero than ill-feeling caused by the suspicion that he had abused the service or destroyed supplies (Suet. Nero 38.1; 45.1; cf. Tac. Ann. 15:18). The inscriptions, especially those of the crucial ports of Puteoli and Ostia/Portus, are remarkably rich in their testimony to the

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21. Mattingly, *Coins* 1. clvi and Claudius, Nos. 136-139 (undated, but assigned to A.D. 41 for lack of 'p(ater)p(atriciae)' in titulature; Nos. 197-198 (42 onwards, including 'p.p').
  22. *Ibid.* 1. clvii and Nos. 173, 179-180 (A.D. 41); 182-184 (A.D. 42).
  23. *Ibid.* 1. clxxvi and Nero, Nos. 127-130 (A.D. 64-66).
  24. *Ibid.* 1. clxxvii and Nos. 139-141 (A.D. 64-66).
  25. Several other types of Nero may be noticed in passing. Ceres is several times depicted on *aurei* (No. 25, of A.D. 60-61; No. 31, of A.D. 61-62; No. 39, of A.D. 62-63) and on *denarii* (No. 26, of A.D. 60-61; No. 32, of A.D. 61-62). An ornate building depicted on several *dupondii* is accompanied by the legend MAC.AVG.S.C., taken to be 'mac(ellum)', as referring to a provision market, ἀγορὰ τῶν ὀψων, τὸ μάκελλον ὀνομασμένον in Dio 62(61).18.5, dedicated by Nero about A.D. 59 (Nos. 191-197, of A.D. 64-66). All these types are from the mint of Rome itself, though most of them are known also from Lugdunum (Lyon).

organisation of this service and its ancillary amenities.<sup>26</sup> The Alexandrian fleet provided incidentally a very important passenger service to the East, and on the return passengers usually disembarked at Puteoli while the freight was taken on to Portus.<sup>27</sup>

At this stage I shall refrain from drawing conclusions about the implications of this study for the narrative of Acts beyond the most general note of its illustrative value and the suggestion that several motifs highlighted by it are unobtrusively implicit in Acts. The centurion Julius, well aware of these circumstances, could calculate on finding a ship of the late sailing at

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26. Thus an inscription of Claudius commemorates the digging of the channel from the Tiber as part of the construction work at Portus (CIL 14.85, dated A.D.46). Many officials and official bodies or agencies are named: *statio frumentiariorum* (CIL 14.125.5); *negotiatores* (14.153); *proc(urator) annonae Aug. Ostis*. and variants (CIL 14.154, 160, 161, etc.); *corpus mercatorum frumentariorum* (161); *procurator annonae Ostiensis* who is also *procurator pugillationis et ad naves vagas* (registrar of cargoes responsible for missing/off-course ships, 2045), all of Ostia. There are also innumerable dedications in thanksgiving for the safe return of emperors and others. One such is dedicated on behalf of the salvation and return of (Septimius) Severus, Antoninus (Caracalla) and Julia and for the prosperous voyage of all the fleet (ὕπερ εὐπλοῦς παντὸς τοῦ στόλου) by its commander (ὁ ἐπιμελητὴς παντὸς τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείνου στόλου), naming the *praefectus annonae* (ἐπαρχος εὐθνεσίας; CIL 6.1603, of A.D. 201). Likewise at Puteoli we have reference to a *disp(ensator) a fruminto [sic] Puteolis et Ostis*. (ILS 344, of 2nd A.D.). Puteoli and other cities of Campania have numerous dedications and tombstones of seamen of many categories, as well as evidence of important expatriate communities from maritime centres of the East (e.g., IG 14.830).
27. Josephus, too, disembarked at Puteoli (Gk. Δικαιάρχεια) from his similar and almost exactly contemporary voyage (Vita 3.16; c.A.D.61). Seneca describes the crowds welcoming the arrival of the fleet there, and its bringing overseas mail (Ep. 77.1). While such passenger services persisted, the building of Portus cost Puteoli much of its trade (contrast n.15 above). The Tyrians in A.D.174 lament their impoverishment there because the revenues from the ναύκληροι and ἔμποροι came not to Puteoli, but to the imperial city (IG 14.830.16-17. Cf. also, Statius *Silvae* 3.2.21 ff.).

Myra, the more easterly and first attained of the two regular Lycian ports. From there the ships, probably already delayed and separated by stronger than average northwesterlies, were under constant pressure and frustration in their anxiety to progress and if possible reach Italy with their lucrative cargo before the seas were closed to them. From Crete to Malta they suffered the constant fear of the loaded ship breaking up under the violence of the waves far from land before it could reach a safe harbour, and yet made sacrifice of the cargo only in the last extremity. There, too, the surprising influence of the centurion upon the authority of the professionals (Acts 27:11, 43) is explicable as reflecting his position as an officer in the imperial service on board a ship which, though no doubt privately owned and hopeful of rich profit, was pledged to the emperor, and perhaps subject to the final decision of his representative, however careful that representative might be to consult and conciliate nautical opinion and commercial interest of his informal *consilium* at Fair Havens. The last leg too, which set Paul's party ashore at Puteoli, was evidently undertaken in the earliest possible spring weather, in the hope of a rapid unloading and clearance at Ostia to catch up with the spring sailing schedule back to Alexandria.

## B. *Specific Documents*

It is remarkable that many specific documentary attestations of details illustrating Paul's voyage have been overlooked in the commentaries. Independently attested words have been treated as *hapax legomena*. The range of contextual evidence for the criticism of the passage has not been exploited. Again, I want to insist on a due caution in the use of these materials while stressing the importance of taking them into account. I shall therefore confine myself in this section to citing some illustrative texts with brief general comment on their provenance or significance, and reserve further assessment for my concluding observations. These are provisional examples drawn from the vastly fuller documentation of my larger intended work.

(1) *Horrea imp. Caesaris divi Traiani Parthici f. divi Nervae nepotis Traiani Hadriani Augusti cos III.* CIL 3.6738 = ILS 5908, of Andriace, the harbour district/emporium of Myra. A parallel inscription, the wording



identical so far as preserved, but lacking the ending from 'Nervae' onwards, has been found at Patara (CIL 3. 12129 = TAM 2.297). Although both are later than our text (A.D. 119 or later), they testify to imperial initiative in storing grain specifically in the transit ports mentioned in Acts (cf. Acts 27:5, and 21:1 for Patara).

(2) ἐν Γόρτυνι Ἀρχέμαχος Ε [.....]

ἐν Λεβήνι Ἰππαίθος Καρ [.....]

ἐν Λασσοῦνι Κύλλων Ναυ [.....]

ἐν Φαιστῶνι Μόσχος Χορ [.....]

A. Plassart, 'Les inscriptions de Delphes. La liste des théorodokes', BCH 45 (1921) 1-85, col. IV, lines 7-10, of early 2nd B.C. This is excerpted from a lengthy list of θεωροδόχοι (representatives of the oracle in relations with cities throughout the Greek world). The cities (here of Crete) are arranged geographically, in clockwise order in the angle SW from Gortyna. The literary sources render names in bewilderingly varied and corrupt forms which have given rise to the impression that the Lasaea of Acts 27:8 was unknown to ancient writers, at least under that name.<sup>28</sup> The form in Acts, subject to some itacistic variants in spelling, is closer to the formal epigraphical version than any other.<sup>29</sup>

(3) A twelve-sided stone base, found in Rome, gives the wind-directions on a 12-point scheme, with names in Latin and Greek. I reproduce here only the segment reading anticlockwise from N round the western side:

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28. 'Halae' (*Stadiasmus* 322-323 = GGM 1.507); 'Lasos', and the different corruptions 'Lappa' and 'Laspha' (Plin. NH 4.12.59; see critical apparatus in the Teubner ed. of C. Mayhoff), if indeed this is intended for the same place, as Pliny places it inland and may have confused it with any of several Cretan cities with more or less similar names and overlapping variants. The *Tabula Peutingeriana* gives it as 'Lisia', and places it clearly, 16 miles from 'Cortina' (Gortyna).
29. λασαῖα LPS TR λασσαῖα λασαῖα B 81 λαῖσσα NC  
αλασσα A 181 460 sy<sup>hm</sup> anchis h t(h)alassa lat plerique.  
The first three are virtually identical in itacistic pronunciation, and with the epigraphic λασσοῦα;  
anchis is thought to have arisen from ἄγχι for ἐγγύς.

<i>Septentrio</i>	Ἀπαρκ(τ)ίας	<i>Septentrio</i>
	Θρακίας	<i>Circius</i>
	Ἰάπυξ	<i>Chorus</i>
<i>Occidens</i>	Ζέφυρος	<i>Favonius</i>
	Λίψ	<i>Africus</i>
		etc. (IGRR 1.177 d-h)

There are many duplicate and variant names for the winds, both in Greek and Latin, and in confusing hybrids and transliterations between the languages, differently worked into eight- and twelve-point schemes.<sup>30</sup> The *hapax* χῶρος (Acts 27:12) is usually explained as a corrupt rendering of Latin *caurus* or *corus*. This stone however parallels in Latin the initial *chi*. The point is slight, but may in both cases reflect the sailors' actual pronunciation in a mixed Latin *patois*. λίψ is common in the position 30<sup>0</sup> S of W. For interpretation of the whole phrase κατὰ λίβα καὶ κατὰ χῶρον and the topography of Phoenix, see the excellent study of R. M. Ogilvie, 'Phoenix', *JTS* n.s. 9 (1958) 308-314.<sup>31</sup>

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30. See my discussion in *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975) esp. 102-104, and sources cited there. The note by K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, 'The Winds', *BC* 5.338-344, is based on a narrow range of literary sources and gives a misleadingly simplified picture.
31. R. M. Ogilvie shows convincingly that the harbour primarily in view was that on the west side of the promontory, in the bay still called Phinika, which formerly had sheltered inlets facing SW and NW as here described, now marked by raised beaches and a lack of ancient occupation. In ancient conditions, before subsequent seismic uplift, this bay provided better shelter than the eastern bay now occupied by the village of Lutro. Forbidding as the neighbourhood now appears, it offered the only secure shelter on this part of the Cretan coast and access to an upper city (Anopolis). For the phonetic peculiarity of 'ch' for 'c', cf. such common anomalies as 'Trachum' for 'Thracum' (Thracians, *ILS* 1341, of Malaca [Malaga], Spain) and fluctuations between Χαλκηδών and Καλχηδών, Κόλχος (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup> 9050, 2nd B.C.) and Χολκίς (fem. *IG* 2<sup>2</sup> 9049, 1st B.C., both of Athens), and the like, cases doubtless affected by the operation of Grassmann's Law, which forbids aspirated consonants in successive syllables, and accounts for such regular alternations as ἄρξ/τριχός, ἔχω/ἔξω, θάπτω/τάφος.

(4) *Iovi Soli optimo maximo/ Serapidi et omnibus diis et/ imperatori Caesari Nervae/ Traiano Aug. Germanico Dacico/ Epictetus libertus tabularius/ curam agente operis Dionysio/ Sostrati filio Alexandrino gubernatore/ navis parasemo Isopharia T. Cl. Theonis.* James Smith, *Voyage of St. Paul* 261; *CIL* 3.3; *ILS* 4395; M. Guarducci *Inscriptiones Creticae* 2 (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1939) pp. 228-229, sect. 20, No. 7, dated by emperor's titulature A.D. 104-114, from Lutro, Crete.

This text is of exceptional illustrative interest, and it is extraordinary that it is not noted in the commentaries. W. M. Ramsay did not use it, and it is not noted by A. Wikenhauser or F. F. Bruce, incomparably the best of the later writers in their employment of original documents. It appears otherwise only in a strangely erroneous entry appended to the new (1979) edition of *BAGD* (see on παράσημος).

The Latin dedication to Jupiter and other gods and to Trajan is evidently the work of the personnel of a wintering ship, the work being supervised by a *gubernator* (κυβερνήτης) from Alexandria, and the owner (or master) is also named, though the term *nauclerus/navicularius* is not used: his names 'T' (for Ti[berius]) 'Cl(audius)' imply enfranchisement of his ancestor by Claudius, perhaps according to privileges granted in connection with the organisation of the Alexandrian corn-fleet (Suet. *Claud.* 19). Yet the principal here is evidently the *tabellarius*, probably an 'imperial courier' rather than an 'accountant', presumably an imperial freedman representing the emperor's interest on board. The ship bears the name-device 'Isopharia' (of Isis Pharia, an epithet from the Pharos or lighthouse at Alexandria; cf. Lucian's 'Isis'). The rare phrase is closely paralleled in παράσημῳ Διοσκούροισι (Acts 28:12), and both clearly refer to ships of the same fleet named after protective deities.<sup>32</sup> Most

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32. The point is unaffected by the harsh elliptical syntax of the two datives, which is almost paralleled in the inscription. In response to Ladouceur's hypothesis, cited above, I need only stress that 'Dioscuri' was the actual name of the ship, perhaps a 'clipper' famous in its time and meriting special mention. Haenchen (*The Acts of the Apostles* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1971] 717 n.) points out that the cult of

interesting of all is the provenance of this inscription. It is from the site identified with Phoenix, precisely the place where the seamen on Paul's voyage wanted to winter (Acts 27:12). Today that looks a bleakly inhospitable promontory of a precipitous coast, but its ancient importance is evident in its providing the only shelter on that stretch of coast, its very name reflecting an older Phoenician interest.<sup>33</sup>

(5) A twelve-point wind-rose, unfortunately undatable, incised on a pavement at Thugga in proconsular Africa, bears the wind names in Latin only. Beginning from N and reading clockwise round the eastern segment, we have: *Septentrio aquilo euroaquilo [vul]turnus eurus leuconotus* etc. *CTL* 8.26652; see G. Kaibel, 'Antike Windrosen', *Hermes* 20 (1885) 579-624; C. J. Hemer, 'Euraquilo and Melita', *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975) 100-111.

The discussion of the textual problem of the forms *εὐρακύλων/εὐροκλύδων* has often proceeded on the assumption that *εὐρακύλων* is a *hapax*, and perhaps therefore a false reading. The original Latin form is here duly placed 30° N of E, between its components *eurus* and *aquilo*, though *vulturnus*, often elsewhere the Latin counterpart of *εὐρος/eurus*, is here interpolated between them at the cardinal E. See full discussion in *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975) 101-104. This term looks like another case of hybridized Latin nautical jargon.

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the Twins was especially widespread in Egypt. They were also characteristically protective deities at sea (e.g., *IG* 14.2461, Massilia; *IGRR* 3.155, Ancyra, 2nd A.D.; 728, Limyra in Lycia). *Cf.* Lucian, *Navig.* 9. The name-device is very appropriate to an Alexandrian vessel, and further speculation is unwarranted.

33. I have seen recent photographs taken by Mr. J. P. Stunt from the roadless and precipitous approach. Yet two ancient settlements, Aradena and Anopolis, both represented today by places bearing the ancient names, lie immediately behind the coastal heights, the latter a mere mile behind Lutro, and constituting the 'upper city' with relation to Phoenix. Of the seven inscriptions recorded from Phoenix (I. Cret. 2.20.1-7) this is the only one of any length. I have mentioned one of the other fragments under heading (10) below. A few scraps are also preserved from Aradena and from Anopolis. I have set out the ancient evidence for the site more fully in my larger projected work.

(6) The name of the island variously given as Καῦδα or Κλαῦδα in the MSS of Acts 27:16,<sup>34</sup> and in comparable variants in the few literary allusions,<sup>35</sup> is also attested in documentary sources of earlier date. A fragment from the island preserves only two substantially complete words, Δι Καυδίου (I. Cret. 2.7.1, p.92, of c.3rd B.C.), of a dedication 'to Caudian Zeus', and a remarkable treaty-document from Gortyna allows a measure of self-government to Cauda as a dependency subordinate to that city (I. Cret.4.184, of early 2nd B.C.). The island is several times named in the text, which is expressed in a Cretan dialect with some unique forms: τοὺς τᾶν Κα[ῦ]δον Φοικίονσι (lines 4-5), etc. τὸν|έν Καυδοῦ Φοικιόντανς (lines 8-9); etc.

It is notable that the narrative of Acts precisely suits the actual location of Cauda, whereas the literary geographers have variously erred.<sup>36</sup>

(7) The many rare nautical terms of Acts 27 are not easily paralleled in the documents, but it may be worth drawing attention afresh to the remarkable wealth of scholarship contained in a work so old as J. J. Wetstein, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Amsterdam, 1752). On βολύξω, for instance, he gives five references to Eustathius's commentaries on Homer, which, while themselves late, carry the implication that this was a regular term in older Greek, though, being a specialised word, it happens not to survive elsewhere in works preserved to us. Thus in discussing βόλος, Eustathius wrote ὅθεν καὶ ῥῆμα σπουδαῖον ἐν χρήσει τὸ βολύζειν, ἥγουσι βάθος θαλάσσης μετρεῖν μολιβοδύνη καθεύτω ἢ τοῦδε τινὸς (ad Il. 5.396 = Vol. 2, p.40 in the Leipzig edition [Weigel; 1825-1830]).<sup>37</sup>

34. καῦδα B-K corr vg sy<sup>p</sup> κλαῦδα κ(A) 81 vg<sup>codd</sup> sy<sup>h</sup> sah boh κλαυδην LPS TR.

35. Κλαῦδος (Ptol. *Geog.* 3.17.1); Gaudos (Plin *NH* 4.12.62); Caudos (Pomponius Mela, *Chorogr.* 2.7.114); Καῦδος (attributed to Strabo 17.3.22 = 838, but a dubious reading); Καυδῶ (Suidas). It is easy to suppose that an original 'Caud-' became corrupted or deliberately changed to the imperial 'Claud-'.

36. Pliny puts his 'Gaudos' off Hierapytna, some 90 miles too far E; Ptolemy distorts its position to the NW, too near the western end of Crete.

37. See Casson (*Ships* 390) for the rendering 'heave the lead'. A number of ancient sounding leads have been

Other illuminating word-studies are possible in this passage. Thus σκάφη (27:16), itself a good Greek word, is probably used as reflecting the technical sense of its Latin borrowing *scapha* (a ship's lifeboat towed in good weather) as in Caes. BG 4.26.4, etc., where Later Greek usage preferred ἐπολικύς or ἐπόλικιον (Strabo, Plutarch, Philostratus, etc.). (See Casson, *Ships* 248, n.93; 399). Again there is indication of Luke's Greek transliteration of a Latin usage.

(8) A well-known and often cited inscription attests πρῶτος as the title of the chief local magistrate in Malta (IGRR 1.512 = IG 14.601, of A.D. 14-37; cf. Mommsen in CIL 10, p.773): Λ. Κα[στρί]κλος Κυρ(εύν)α Προύδης ἱππεύς Ῥωμ(αίων), πρῶτος Μελιταίων | καὶ πατρων, ἄρξας καὶ ἀμφιπολεύσας θεῶν Αὐγούστῃ | --- (fragments only of 3rd line).

A little further discussion is justified here in the light of other texts. The Latin text sometimes cited as a counterpart to this seems to me quite indecisive:

..... *municipi Mel. primus omni[um]* .....

*lit item aedem marmo[ribus] exornavit et in ea statuam? Apo[llinis] consacravit item p[ro] ..... etc.* (CIL 10.7495.1-3).

The first line is commonly taken out of its (mutilated) context, the length of the lines being quite uncertain at both ends and the restorations inevitably conjectural.<sup>38</sup> It is very likely in the light of parallel formulations (e.g. μόνος καὶ πρῶτος, IG 14.737.5, Naples, 2nd A.D.; IGRR 4.1252, Thyatira, early 3rd A.D.) that *primus* here means 'first' to perform benefactions of the kinds listed. The evidence for magistracies on Malta and Gozo may however be extended. A text from Gaulos (Gozo), if rightly restored, refers to an official as *patronus municipii, flamen divi Hadriani*, titles parallel with the Greek text above, but lacking πρῶτος, which was presumably reserved for the chief magistrate of the principal island (CIL 10.7507.1-2, 2nd A.D.). The two islands were under a Roman procurator (*proc. insularum Melit. et Gaul.*, CIL 10.7494.1-2).

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recovered. They had a hollow in the underside, which was filled with tallow or grease to bring up adhering samples of the sea-bottom (*ibid.* 246 n.). In Herodotus 2.5.2 a 'sounding lead' is καταπειρατηρή. 38. Lake and Cadbury (BC 4.342), Bruce (Acts 472) and Haenchen (714 n.) all cite the Latin inscription in confirmation of Luke's correctness here, without raising the question of its restoration or context.

(9) The occurrence of Semitic inscriptions of a Punic dialect on Malta has often been observed, and need not delay us.<sup>39</sup> The most interesting is the Punic-Greek bilingual which gives examples of alternative names in a Tyrian family, Abdosir = Dionysius, and Osirshamar = Sarapion, in a dedication to Melkart, the Baal of Tyre, otherwise Heracles Archegetes (CIG 5753; IG 14.600; CIS 1.122; Cooke No. 36 pp. 102-103; etc., of 2nd B.C.). To these I add the note that the early coinage of Malta, immediately following the Roman occupation in 218 B.C., bears a Punic legend 𐤓𐤍 ('nn), with a variety of types which show a strongly Egyptian character.<sup>40</sup>

The reference to the villagers of Malta as βάρβαροι is probably to be taken in a linguistic sense, reflecting the initial frustration of Paul's party in their unexpected failure to communicate in the cosmopolitan languages of the Empire. In view of the surviving prevalence of Semitic texts it seems entirely probable that the local people were ignorant of Latin and Greek. Modern Maltese is akin to Arabic, but was evidently imposed on a continuous substratum of Semitic speech.

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39. The texts have been published in G. A. Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903) 102-107; H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften I* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962) 14, 76-79; *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* 1.122-132; A. M. Honeyman, 'Two Semitic Inscriptions from Malta', *PEQ* 93 (1961) 151-153, of which the latter is Hebrew, a language unparalleled on Malta. Most of these texts, where datable at all, are earlier than our period.
40. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, new and enlarged ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911) 883. A characteristic obverse type is the mummy of Osiris with flail and sceptre, lying between Isis and Nephthys, each with wings crossed in front and wearing a solar disc and horns. Later types exhibit both Greek and Latin legends, including the rendering of the name of the people or island as ΜΕΛΙΤΑΙΩΝ and ΜΕΛΙΤΑΣ [sic]. On the coins of Gozo the characteristic type is of Astarte, but all are bronze of the 1st B.C., inscribed ΓΑΥΛΙΤΩΝ, and without Semitic legends preserved. The island of Cossura (Pantellaria), 120 m WNW, like Malta, combines Semitic legends with Egyptian character in its early issues (Head, *Historia* 882-883). The meanings of these inscriptions are unclear. They might presumably be in either case the names of local dynasts or magistrates.

(10) Other unnoticed texts more marginally illustrative of many details of this narrative might easily be cited: road improvements by Claudius on the southern coast of Crete (*I. Cret.* 3.3.25-29, Hierapytna); rare personal names signifying 'fair voyage' or the like from the districts of the route ('Euplous', *I. Cret.* 3.9.1, of uncertain location in eastern Crete; 'Kataplous', *I. Cret.* 2.12.34, of Eleutherna; 3.3.39, Hierapytna; 'Euplea', 2.20.3, Phoenix); a dedication of thanksgiving to Isis (*I. Cret.* 1.15.2) and a greeting to 'those who pass by' (1.15.4, being two of the five fragments recorded from Lasaea); a miracle cure at a temple of Asclepius involving a  $\mu\upsilon\beta\epsilon\rho\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha\varsigma$  (*I. Cret.* 1.17.10, from neighbouring Lebena; context mutilated); persons connected with the service or with places on its route who were enfranchised by Claudius (*I. Cret.* 3.3.30, Hierapytna; *ILS* 1533, mentioning the procurator of the port of Ostia; 1535, Rome; etc.); the opulent tomb, with statue and verse epitaph, of a grain merchant (*ILS*, 3696, esp. lines 7-11, Praeneste); a dedication by the *plebs urbana, quae frumentum publicum accipit*, and by the 35 tribes, to the emperor Titus (*CIL* 6.943 = *ILS* 6045, Rome); the references to a 'guild of Adriatic navigators' at Ostia (*ILS* 6146, 7277). The list might be extended indefinitely.<sup>41</sup>

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41. The last item here is of particular interest in its possible bearing on another point of controversy in this narrative. There has been debate over the significance of Ἀδρίας (Acts 27:27). Despite some variations and inconsistencies of usage, especially in earlier writers, the term 'Adria' (or 'Adriatic Sea') is commonly used of the section of the Mediterranean bounded by Sicily, the foot of Italy, Crete and the Peloponnese, and not of what we call the Adriatic, which is sometimes distinguished from this sea as the 'Adriatic Gulf'. The limits of these areas are stated with great precision by Ptolemy (*Geog.* 3 *passim*). See my full discussion in *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975) 106-107. It is a point to stress that Paul's ship, like that of Josephus at almost exactly the same date (*Vita* 3.15), was in peril on the open sea which had Malta at its limit, not in the enclosed gulf. The attempts by Acworth and Meinardus to connect the shipwreck with the other Melita (Mljet, off the Dalmatian coast) involve a false assumption on this point. In this context the *navicularii maris Hadriatici* provide an epigraphical illustration of the term. They were evidently a guild of those who sailed the open seas on the supply route leading to Ostia, not the skippers of coasters in the landlocked Adriatic focused on a port like Ravenna.



## III. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The preceding texts are offered as examples of the kind of documentation which may need to be considered in treating the context of our narrative. Almost all of them are drawn, as it happens, from old, and yet accessible, publications. It is the more disturbing that most of them have not figured previously, so far as I am aware, in the discussion of Acts 27-28. Collectively, they and their like illustrate the text at a number of places.

It remains only to assess the bearing of such contextual materials upon the criticism of our passage. The naming and placing of such rather obscure places as Lasaea and Cauda ought to be verified against contemporary epigraphical documents of those places rather than only against literary sources which may be inaccurate, or corrupted in transmission. I have offered documentary attestations of both, which, if not *in situ* (apart perhaps from the one fragment to Caudian Zeus), concern the external relations of both places, and evidently preserve the local, perhaps dialectal, forms. The sequence of Luke's narrative places both accurately. Cauda for instance is precisely where a ship driven helpless before an ENE wind from beyond the shelter of Cape Matala might gain brief respite for necessary manoeuvres and to set a more northward line of drift on the starboard tack.<sup>42</sup> As the implications of such details are further explored, it becomes increasingly difficult to believe that they could have been derived from any kind of contemporary reference work. In the places where we can compare, Luke fares much better than the encyclopaedist Pliny, who might be regarded as the foremost first-century example of such a source. Pliny places Cauda (Gaudos) opposite Hierapytna, some 90 miles too far east (NH 4.12.61). Even Ptolemy, who offers a reckoning of latitude and longitude, makes a serious dislocation to the NW, putting Cauda too near the western end of Crete, in a position which would not suit the

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42. See J. Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1866<sup>3</sup>), chap. 3, esp. 106, 109, 111-113. Smith's work remains indispensable to the study of the whole scene, and many of his insights are foundational for a fuller reconstruction of the events than is possible or relevant within our present limits.

unstudied narrative of our text (Ptol. *Geog.* 3.17.11). The concurrence of epigraphic testimony to identified places with the topographical requirements of the incidental events of Acts is a bond not easily broken. Theological intention will not explain these details. As the accumulation and compounding of similar indications make alternative explanations progressively more difficult, it becomes exceedingly hard not to believe at least that Luke had travelled this way himself.

I think we can go a little further. Some of our indications reflect, in the same unobtrusive and unstudied way, the pressures, perils and climatic conditions of the end of the sailing season. The interim observations about the general organisation of the corn-supply service are in point here no less than the specifics of winds and harbours on which our documents throw new light. The idea that the journey was a literary structure based on conventional themes and adapted to the theological glorification of Paul, or the idea that Luke had reproduced a secondary voyage-source as a framework for an interpolated portrait of Paul - such notions become harder to hold in the face of the phenomena which suggest at least Lukan participation in such a voyage. The incidentals are too integrated to have suffered a shift of context, a double *Sitz-im-Leben*. We should have expected either a more self-conscious correctness or an unconscious shift into vagueness, distortion or error. In fact those who make much of faults in this narrative do so on the grounds of what they consider to be inherent improbabilities, not upon specific and verifiable errors in a passage which lays itself peculiarly open to verification on a number of relatively obscure details. I repeat that Haenchen transmits tacitly the acceptance of enough documented detail to suggest a different interpretation from that which his more theoretical scepticism leads him to impose.<sup>43</sup> It is part of my case that that kind of

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43. I am impressed with the fact that his debt both to W. M. Ramsay and to A. Wikenhauser appears much greater than he acknowledges, and that he owes his documentary material largely to them. Yet he transmits much factual material from them without comment, and usually mentions them only where disagreeing, a custom not unprecedented in the ancient historians. If the thrust of some of his factual material is taken apart from his interpretations, it could be used to support a more favourable view of the

detail needs to be greatly reworked, extended, and re-applied. Further, I think Luke's experience was not that of expert nautical knowledge. The documents confirm the impression of a careful observer recording what happened, describing in layman's terms the measures taken by the crew for the ship's safety, without necessarily understanding the rationale of their actions, except as he made it his business to ask for information. He appreciated their obsessive fear of the Syrtes, the obvious peril of being driven on a rocky lee-shore. He is not explicit about the peril of the ship breaking up at sea before they could reach the neighbourhood of land at all, but this fear is evident in the undergirding at the earliest possibility at Cauda and I think implicit in the unspecified desperation of Acts 27:20, when their ignorance of their position combined with the realization that the ship was at the point of breaking and foundering at sea. They were probably well enough able to estimate their likely speed of drift, to conclude that they had already missed their only likely salvation in a land-fall on Sicily. But matters like these are not stressed interpretatively by Luke. They are implicit in his account of the scene, and yet also fruitful in the light they throw on the explanation of other details. In a similar way, the cumulative indications of the use of Latin or hybrid nautical terms corroborate the likelihood, at first unexpected in a ship of Greek Alexandria,

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historicity of Luke's work. To do that uncritically might be to discount the factor of Lukan redaction. But there is also a factor of Haenchen's redaction. It is well known that the lurid portraits of Tiberius or Nero stamped indelibly on the consciousness of later ages are due to the redactional brilliance of Tacitus. If Tacitus' basic facts are taken apart from his interpretations and imputed motivations, they might be used to support a more favourable view than that of Tacitus. It is precisely the historian's task to evaluate evidence which in Tacitus' case is brilliantly tendentious. But we cannot afford to dispense with our best source because of the difficulties his use presents, and we have to wrestle more fundamentally with the ostensible facts than the redaction, unless we are to confess Julio-Claudian history largely unknowable. It is also true in the case of Luke that we must explore and assess the ostensible events in context more thoroughly than I think Haenchen does before we are justified in being confident in judgements of theoretical probability or of Lukan motivations.

that the seamen's speech was mainly Latin, and that Luke had a Latin-speaking informant or informants. Yet this in turn is the more easily explicable in a ship of the imperial service which may have numbered many Italians, and some Romans on official business, among its ship's company. The actual soundings, too, of the course of a ship approaching St. Paul's Bay in Malta from the east suit the precise locations where, according to Smith, they must first have become aware of the coastal surf and then of rocks ahead.<sup>44</sup>

Even considerations of that kind cannot take us formally beyond the belief that the writer had himself experienced just such a voyage as he describes. May not Paul's part in it still be extraneous? I think there are indications to help in taking our integration of the context yet further. The 'Fast' of Acts 27:9 was the Day of Atonement on 10th Tishri.<sup>45</sup> It must be presumed that this occasion is marked because Paul, a Jew, rather than Luke himself, traditionally a Gentile, celebrated it at Fair Havens. Its date depended on the lunar calendar, and the reference gathers added force from the implication that it fell late that year. Apart from the fact that this again indicates the more forcefully the perilous lateness of the voyage, it eases the chronology of the winter following. For even on a late dating of the Fast, they presumably sailed before the Feast of Tabernacles

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44. The location on Malta has of course been debated, but Smith's arguments for the traditional site are again most impressive (*Voyage*, chap. 4), and this placing is tacitly accepted by Haenchen (*Acts* 707-708). The island was richly supplied with harbours. Diodorus writes of it and its neighbours (Gaulus and Cercina): τούτων ἐκάστη πόλιν ἔχει καὶ λιμένας δυναμένους τοῖς χειμαζομένοις σκάφεσι παρέχεσθαι τὴν ἀσφάλειαν (5.12.1). The Phoenicians καταφυγὴν εἶχον ταύτην [Μελίτην], εὐλίμενον οὖσαν καὶ κειμένην πελαγίαν (5.12.3). Cf. J. Busuttil, 'Maltese Harbours in Antiquity', *Melita Historica* 5 (1968-71) 305-307, which does not discuss sites, but presents interesting toponymic and other evidence.
45. The chronological point discussed in this paragraph comes essentially from W. P. Workman, 'A New Date-Indication in Acts', *Expt* 11 (1899-1900) 316-318, and is often mentioned in later writers (Bruce, *Acts* 455-456; Haenchen, *Acts* 700; etc.). His argument is essentially convincing, though I have slightly modified its presentation.

five days later, which is not mentioned, and they could scarcely have reached Malta later than the end of October. Even if we allow three days with Publius on Malta and some days to settle there outside the reckoning of three full months on the island, it is difficult to place the departure on board the 'Dioscuri' later than the beginning of February, a time when Pliny says the west winds mark the beginning of spring (NH 2.47.122), but still perilously early for men under less pressure of duty or profit (cf. Plin. NH 2.47.126). In fact the ostensible chronology requires a very early spring departure. It is indeed probable that they left as early as they dared, but unless the Fast had been very late that preceding autumn, we should have to place their sailing in January, earlier than they are likely to have dared or needed to go. The implication of chronological feasibility is that the writer's experience of storm and shipwreck happened in a year with a particularly late Fast. A convergence of independent lines of evidence now combines to suggest that the ostensible year of Paul's journey was A.D. 59. In that year the Fast fell on or about 5th October, much later than in any neighbouring year. In fact, chronological data point to the further integration of the first person narrative with the requirements of ostensible Pauline chronology.

Formal proof is of course not possible with such an approach as the present. But, conversely, when there are so many progressive indications of the need to integrate the narrative with its ostensible historical situation and to link Luke with Paul at the times and places of the events, it may be claimed that the onus lies rather on the doubter to establish his case for breaking this integration.<sup>46</sup> I submit that the literary analysis by

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46. Cf. the characteristically fresh and provocative criticism of Conzelmann by R. P. C. Hanson in his study 'The Journey of Paul and the Journey of Nikias. An Experiment in Comparative Historiography', *Studia Evangelica* 4 (1968) 315-318. Hanson shows that Conzelmann's methods, if applied to Thucydides 6.1-61, could on precisely similar grounds dismiss as improbable, tendentious and legendary a sea-voyage narrative 'which every historian of the ancient world admits to be reliable, not only in substance but in detail' (318). In particular, 'it is perfectly possible to detach all the incidents in which Nikias figures and still to leave the account of the expedition quite intact' (317).

Robbins is flawed, and fails to establish a *prima facie* case, and that historical scepticism has relied on theoretical notions of improbability, without attempting a sufficient specificity in the study of a context which can illumine the story.

The character of the 'we-passages' is in its turn a focal issue in discrimination between alternative approaches to Acts as a whole. Opinion on Luke-Acts generally has become polarized, and where interest has come to focus on Lukan theology it has sometimes been fashionable to dismiss the ostensibly historical component of the double work. But we cannot commend this polarization. The important study of Lukan theology must be fairly balanced by an adequate study of Lukan history. Indeed, I should want to argue that Luke's history is an inseparable element within his theology, where his testimony to what actually happened is a necessary preliminary to his understanding of a gospel whose claim to truth is established thereby. If the 'we-passages' reflect personal participation, they take us nearer to the historical Paul and affect profoundly our formulation of the questions appropriate to ask about the character of Acts. This is one of several intertwined strands which bear crucially upon the prospects of accepting the testimony of Acts in favour of an ostensible, rather than a radically reinterpreted, reconstruction of Christian origins.

There is no need to play down the fact that the narrative has its literary antecedents and parallels, whether in the Odyssey or the book of Jonah. But I see an important factor in the criticism of the passage as

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How could any mention of Paul have been made without such mention being detachable? He was a passenger, 'and passengers are by definition detachable' (318). Hanson recognises that it is not open to a critic to prove the sceptic incorrect; it is almost impossible to prove negations from history. Yet the story of Nikias' voyage does not give 'as vivid and authentic an impression of historical truth' as that of Paul. See most recently also F. F. Bruce, 'The Acts of the Apostles: Historical Record or Theological Reconstruction?' *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.25.3 (1985) 2569-2603.

residing in what I term its 'immediacy'. It is rich in the kind of detail which, far from being moulded by theological motifs, is precise but inconsequential, and it is this kind of detail which is often amenable to illustration from documents of the kinds we have cited. It is also the kind of detail which is less likely to have been reproduced even by an eyewitness if he wrote reflectively at some distance from the events, when hindsight had imposed more considered criteria of significance, and the vividly inconsequential impact of immediate experience might have been smoothed. The result might have been more like other sections of Acts where a more distant or indirect category of material was in use. The use of different types of material is not inconsistent with Luke's keeping of a careful and accurate record, but those other passages lack the 'immediacy' apparent here. I suggest that the 'immediacy' of authorial experience in this passage is a significant factor with larger ramifications for the wider criticism of Acts.