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You Can't Hear "Aeneas" without Thinking of Rome

MICHAEL KOCHENASH
michael.kochenash@gmail.com
Los Angeles, California

The long-standing connection between the Trojan Aeneas and Rome was advertised throughout the empire in various ways, but scholars rarely draw from this cultural capital when interpreting Acts 9:32–35, an account of Peter healing a man named Aeneas. They often assume both that Aeneas is well attested as a personal name during the first and second centuries of the Common Era (it is not) and that Luke inherited this name from a source (which is possible but insufficient). Acts 9:31 is a summary statement on the progress of the church in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Readers who recall Jesus's commission in Acts 1:8 will wonder about "the end of the earth." Given the proximity of the Aeneas pericope to Luke's summary statement and the fact that the narrative of Acts ends in Rome, I argue that the story of Aeneas can be read as a literary signpost for Rome (comparable to Luke 9:51–53 and Jerusalem). Luke's use of "Aeneas" as a structuring device works in tandem with "Joppa" in Acts 9:36–43, which signals the inclusion of gentiles by evoking the thought world of Jonah. The balance of Luke's narrative consists of negotiating and expanding the gentile mission and progressively moving toward the city of Rome. In this way, two proper nouns function as metonymic signposts to foreshadow the direction of the narrative, in both ethnic and geographic terms.

In Acts 9:32–35, Peter heals a man named Aeneas. It is unusual for recipients of healing miracles to be identified by name in Luke-Acts. In the Gospel of Luke, not a single recipient of healing is named; Luke even omits a name found in his source: "Bartimaeus" (18:35–43; cf. Mark 10:46–52).[1] The book of Acts contains only a handful of exceptions: Saul (9:17–18; 22:12–13)/Paul (28:3–6), Aeneas (9:32–35), Tabitha/Dorcas (9:36–43), and Eutychus (20:9–12). In each of these cases, the name of the healed individual is significant either because of who the

[1] Healing narratives with unnamed recipients include: Luke 4:31–37, 38–39; 5:12–13, 18–25; 6:6–10; 7:1–10, 11–17; 8:26–39, 43–48, 49–56; 9:37–42; 11:14; 13:11–13; 14:1–4; 17:11–19; 18:35–43; 22:50–51; Acts 3:1–10; 14:8–10; 16:16–18; 19:11–12; 28:8–10.

person is or what the name means. Paul is, of course, one of Luke's protagonists and was well known outside of Luke's narrative; the name Saul—regardless of whether it was used by the historical Paul—identifies him with the first king of Israel, who persecuted David (cf. Acts 13:21). Eutychus is "lucky" to survive a three-story fall (Acts 20:9–12).[2] Tabitha's name (Dorcas/"deer") must also be significant since Luke provides a Greek translation of her Aramaic name that he already transliterated.[3] Aeneas's name is likewise significant, and I will argue that its significance is due not to Aeneas's being an individual known to Luke's audience but rather to the cultural freight carried by the name in the Mediterranean world for hundreds of years before and after the composition of Luke's narrative: its association with Rome.

Scholars often assume that Aeneas is well attested as a personal name during the first and second centuries of the Common Era and/or that Luke inherited this name from a source.[4] Both assumptions are misguided. In the first case, the name Aeneas was demonstrably uncommon in the Greek-speaking Mediterranean generally and remarkably rare in the regions of Syria and Palestine specifically. The accuracy of the second assumption is less clear, but it is nevertheless unable to explain why Luke does not omit Aeneas's name as he does that of Bartimaeus. I will address both of these assumptions, first the latter, then the former.

Commentators commonly identify the Petrine healing narratives featuring Aeneas (in Lydda) and Tabitha (in Joppa) as tralatitious, asserting that Luke integrated received traditions into his narrative. According to Josephus, however, both Lydda and Joppa were burned to the ground in the Jewish War and then resettled by the Romans.[5] Thus, if the miracle stories concerning Aeneas and Tabitha were traditions incorporated by Luke, it is improbable that they were *local* traditions that

[2] See Dennis R. MacDonald, "Luke's Eutychus and Homer's Elpenor: Acts 20:7–12 and *Odyssey* 10–12," *Journal of Higher Criticism* 1 (1994): 5–24; MacDonald, *The Gospels and Homer: Imitations of Greek Epic in Mark and Luke-Acts*, New Testament and Greek Literature 1 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 223–29.

[3] An argument for a particular interpretation lies beyond the purview of this article; see Michael Kochenash, "Political Correction: Luke's Tabitha (Acts 9:36–43), Virgil's Dido, and Cleopatra," *NovT,* forthcoming. I suggest that a credible reading should make sense of both the meaning of the names Tabitha and Dorcas and also the close proximity of this narrative to one about Peter healing a man named Aeneas. For the possible relationship of "Tabitha" in Acts 9:40 to the Aramaic command in Mark 5:41, see C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994–1998), 1:485; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 254.

[4] Two exceptions merit attention here: Dennis R. MacDonald and Patrick Henry Reardon (see also n. 14 below). Reardon, in only three sentences, asserts that the name points to a Roman destination ("Homing to Rome: The *Aeneid* and the Acts of the Apostles," *OiC* 38 [2003]: 45–55). MacDonald argues that Acts 9:32–35 imitates Homer's Aeneas from *Il.* 5 (*Gospels and Homer*, 47–48).

[5] *J.W.* 2.19.1 §§513–516 (4.8.1 §444); 2.18.10 §§507–508 (3.9.2–3 §§414–427). Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 252 n. 10; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 443.

retained the names because the transmitters were familiar with them. In that case the stories would have perished along with the inhabitants of these cities.[6] Therefore, either Luke's tradition included the name—for an unclear reason—and Luke made a decision to retain it, or Luke added the name himself. In either case, more stands to be gained by attending to the rhetorical effect of the inclusion/retention of Aeneas's name, especially that which is derived from its cultural freight in the Roman Mediterranean and its position within Luke's narrative, than by speculating further about the contents of a hypothetical source.[7]

When commentators give any attention to Aeneas, they typically foreground issues surrounding his identity: whether he was a Jew or a gentile, a Christian or a non-Christian.[8] Matthew Sleeman describes this focus of modern scholarship as the "commentators' perennial concern with Aeneas' spiritual status."[9] If a decision must be made on this issue, then surely it is more credible to suppose that Aeneas is a Jew or a Jewish Christian. If Aeneas had any other spiritual status, then Luke's placement of this narrative just prior to the Cornelius episode would be nonsensical. Nevertheless, when commentators do discuss Aeneas's *name*, they generally treat it as unremarkable.[10] Richard I. Pervo, in a footnote citing Margaret H. Williams, simply says, "Names are usually secondary details. 'Aeneas' is attested for Palestinian Jews from the second century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E."[11] Although Pervo reports the range of attestation presented by Williams accurately, his phrasing is misleading. In fact, Williams is able to muster only one attestation each for the second century BCE and the first century CE, and both come from Josephus (*Ant.* 14.10.22 §248; *J.W.* 5.8.4 §§326–328).[12] The only inscriptional

[6] This observation obtains whether we date Acts to circa 85 CE, with the majority of scholars, or to circa 115 CE, with a growing contingent of Lukan specialists.

[7] For a review of proposals regarding possible traditions behind Acts 9:32–43 and Luke's compositional contributions, see Pervo, *Acts*, 251–52.

[8] See Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1:477, 480; Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 444; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 197–98; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 2:125; Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 17 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 295; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–2015), 2:1706.

[9] Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, SNTSMS 146 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 219, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511635540.

[10] Some commentators are silent on the apparent incongruence of the name here, e.g., Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 337–42.

[11] Pervo, *Acts*, 253 n. 16. He cites Margaret H. Williams, "Palestinian Jewish Personal Names in Acts," in *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 79–113.

[12] In both instances, Josephus uses the more popular spelling for the first century, Αἰνείας, instead of Luke's Αἰνέας.

evidence—and, as it should happen, the only other attestation she provides—is one occurrence of the name in the fourth century CE.[13]

Perhaps commentators assume that Aeneas was a popular name in the first two centuries of the Common Era because of the overwhelming popularity of Virgil's *Aeneid*. After all, it is common to name children after popular public figures. Nevertheless, even scholars who exhibit awareness of the *Aeneid* rarely treat Aeneas's name in Acts 9:32–35 as noteworthy.[14] Ken Dowden does acknowledge the heroic nature of the name Aeneas: "It may seem curious that so elevated a name should be assigned to the cripple in Acts 9:33–34, but Greek culture … was unlikely to have taken cognizance of a Latin text such as Virgil's. It is best regarded as a solid, traditional name dignified by its bearer in Homeric epic."[15] Dowden then notes that, according to the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (*LGPN*), there are very few occurrences of the name Aeneas after the time of Christ, but he discounts this

[13] See Williams, "Palestinian Jewish Personal Names," 110.

[14] Ben Witherington III writes, "Aeneas is a familiar name, especially to anyone who knew something of Virgil's epic about those who survived the Trojan War (the *Aeneid*)" (*The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 329). Witherington applies this insight only to the question of whether Aeneas is supposed to have been a Jew or a gentile: the "commentator's perennial concern." Reardon and MacDonald (see n. 4 above) do account for the cultural significance of Aeneas's name in their interpretations. Reardon writes, "Before ever narrating the journeys of Paul, Luke sounded the Roman theme already in the ministry of St. Peter, whose baptism of the centurion Cornelius, the first official representative of Rome to become a Christian (Acts 10), was a crucial event in the whole mission of the Church and its movement to Rome. Just prior to that event, furthermore, Luke suggested its immense significance by describing Peter's healing of … Aeneas! Of the many persons healed through the ministry of Peter (3:7; 5:15–16), it is noteworthy that only Aeneas and Dorcas are named (9:32–41). In the case of Aeneas, the name already suggests a subtle connection to the Rome-ward motif of the Acts of the Apostles" ("Homing to Rome," 54-55; ellipsis original). The quoted material comprises the extent of Reardon's discussion of Aeneas in Acts 9:32–35. Reardon makes this connection by comparing Acts with Virgil's *Aeneid*; in this article, I make the same connection by drawing from a larger body of evidence: the cultural capital of "Aeneas" in the Roman Mediterranean world.

MacDonald suggests that Luke might be imitating a Homeric episode featuring Aeneas (*Gospels and Homer*, 47–48). In book 5 of the *Iliad*, Diomedes hurls a massive boulder at Aeneas, striking his hip (*Il.* 5.302–310). The bard says he would have died were it not for the assistance both of his divine mother, Aphrodite, and of Apollo, who rescued him after Aphrodite herself was injured (*Il.* 5.311–313, 445–448). Although the parallels between Acts 9:34–35 and *Il.* 5.512–515 are few and the verbal similarities are not particularly striking, the mental images evoked by each of these narratives are remarkably similar: a crippled man named Aeneas is healed through divine agency. In MacDonald's reading, Luke refers to an iconic Trojan-Roman figure in a familiar state of injury (Aeneas is similarly injured and divinely healed in the *Aeneid* [12.385–429]) and substitutes Jesus (via Peter) for the Olympian deities, the conventional healers of Aeneas. The present article builds on the insistence of Reardon and MacDonald that the Aeneas narrative needs to be interpreted within the matrix of the name's signification in the Roman Mediterranean.

[15] Ken Dowden, "Aeneas," in *DDD,* 11–12, here 11.

observation as "probably a sampling error."[16] Dowden's assessment suffers, however, from faulty logic: the heroic nature of Aeneas's name was well known among non-Latin-speaking Greeks long before Virgil's epic. Thus, Luke's readers need not have "taken cognizance of a Latin text such as Virgil's" in order to understand the freight carried by "so elevated a name." His evaluation is also disadvantaged by a lack of data; he had access to only the first volume of *LGPN* when the first edition of *DDD* was published. Six additional volumes are now available (and three more are forthcoming with data accessible through the editors).

The newer editions of *LGPN* confirm the results that Dowden attributed to a sampling error in the first volume: Aeneas was not a popular name in the first and second centuries CE in the Roman Mediterranean.[17] Although the *LGPN* volume covering Syria, Palestine, and Trans-Euphrates has yet to be published, the data collected from these regions, made available to me by the editors, suggest unequivocally that Aeneas was *never* a popular name in these regions: there exist six attestations of the name Aeneas in Palestine (one of which is Acts 9:33–35 [!]) and only one in Syria within the entire chronological purview of the *LGPN* project, from the emergence of written Greek until the sixth century CE.[18] It may be noteworthy that Luke's choice of spelling—Αἰνέας—is less common at the time of the composition of Luke-Acts than the other (less Latinized) spelling of the name, Αἰνείας. Αἰνέας was the preferred spelling in the first century BCE, coinciding with the reigns of Julius Caesar and Augustus; in the first century CE, the name Aeneas had declined in popularity overall, but the preferred spelling, by however small a margin, was Αἰνείας (see table 1).[19] There was thus no increase in the first century CE of parents naming their children after the hero of Virgil's *Aeneid* (at least not among those with Greek names).[20]

Given how rare the name Aeneas was as a personal name, there is good reason to examine the cultural freight it carried in the Roman Mediterranean world—its

[16] Ibid. See P. M. Fraser et al., eds., *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, 5 vols. in 7 (to date) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987–).

[17] The only exception is, unsurprisingly, coastal Asia Minor. In the published *LGPN* volumes, there are 202 attestations of Aeneas (both spellings: Αἰνείας and Αἰνέας); ninety of them are located in the coastal regions of Asia Minor. In these regions, Luke's spelling (Αἰνέας) is preferred (49:41) but only due to the name's popularity in the second century BCE, where twenty of the attestations of Αἰνέας occur.

[18] I obtained data from the forthcoming *LGPN* part 2 in response to an e-mail request to the *LGPN* staff. Richard Catling, assistant editor for *LGPN*, reported this data on 5 September 2012.

[19] It should be noted, however, that three of the five (non-Acts) attestations of Aeneas in Palestine are Αἰνέας, not Αἰνείας. Nevertheless, from a literary perspective it is not clear whether there is any significance in Luke's choice of spelling. Whether the name was spelled Αἰνέας or Αἰνείας, the audience would have heard "Aeneas."

[20] Interestingly, there *is* a dramatic spike in the popularity of the name Aeneas in the second century BCE, after it had been associated with Romans in interstate discourse for about a century.

Table 1. Attestations of the Name Aeneas by Century according to the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*

The numbers listed represent the total number of attestations of the name Aeneas (spelled Αἰνέας or Αἰνείας) with the attestations of Luke's spelling (Αἰνέας) in parentheses.

	2nd BCE	2nd/1st BCE	1st BCE	1st BCE/ 1st CE	1st CE	1st/2nd CE	2nd CE +
The Aegean Islands, Cyprus, and Cyrenaica (*LGPN* 1)	4 (4)	1 (1)	9 (7)	2 (1)	2 (–)	–	5 (2)
Attica (*LGPN* 2)	4 (2)	1 (1)	5 (–)	–	1 (–)	–	2 (–)
The Peloponnese, Western Greece, Sicily, and Magna Graecia (*LGPN* 3A)	2 (2)	1 (1)	3 (3)	–	1 (1)	–	1 (1)
Central Greece: from Megarid to Thessaly (*LGPN* 3B)	7 (7)	–	1 (1)	–	2 (2)	–	2 (2)
Macedonia, Thrace, and the northern shores of the Black Sea (*LGPN* 4)	–	1 (–)	2 (–)	1 (1)	–	–	–
Coastal Asia Minor: Pontos to Ionia (*LGPN* 5A)	3 (2)	2 (–)	–	2 (1)	1 (–)	1 (1)	10 (4)
Coastal Asia Minor: Caria to Cilicia (*LGPN* 5B)	19 (18)	6 (6)	4 (1)	3 (3)	4 (1)	2 (1)	25 (4)

association with Rome—and to consider whether such capital might account for Luke's inclusion or retention of the name in Acts. The antiquity of Aeneas's connection to Italy can be demonstrated by a survey of his role in Homeric literature and by noting interstate relations during the Roman Republic. In order to establish the ubiquity of this association, I will cite a number of examples from the first centuries BCE and CE that testify to it.

The Trojan hero named Aeneas appears in Homer's *Iliad*;[21] his escape from the Greek destruction of Troy was apparently narrated by Arctinus in the now lost

[21] In the *Iliad*, Homer almost always spells Aeneas's name with an extra *iota*: Αἰνείας. There is one exception: *Il.* 13.541. In this scene, the Trojans and the Greeks are sparring over the bodies of fallen comrades. Amid the chaos, Aeneas (spelled Αἰνέας as in Acts) is said to slay the Greek Aphareus, who had been turned toward him at the time. It is a short but graphic account of Aphareus's death. This spelling anomaly is insignificant when it comes to interpreting Acts 9, however: there are no shared distinctives that would suggest an intertextual connection aside from the spelling of Aeneas's name.

Iliupersis. In the *Iliad*, Aeneas "is uninteresting and unmemorable, [but] not unimportant."[22] He is saved from death by the gods twice: once by Aphrodite and Apollo (*Il.* 5) and once by Poseidon (*Il.* 20). According to the bard, Aeneas was saved by the gods because of his future, prophesied by Poseidon, as the king of the Trojans (20.307–308).[23]

The Roman connection with Aeneas was most commonly invoked, beginning in the third century BCE, in the political context of the Roman Republic's relations with Greek cities. According to Jan N. Bremmer and Nicholas M. Horsfall, in 281 BCE with the attack of Pyrrhus, "Rome's Trojan origins were born … in a national sense."[24] In the Pyrrhic War, Pyrrhus, the ruler of Epirus, appropriated the legacy of Achilles, identifying the Romans as Homer's Trojans by default. Of course, by 275 BCE, these new "Trojans" had prevailed. Few if any classics scholars, however, believe that the Trojan identity of Rome originated with Pyrrus.[25] Paramount in this discussion is the witness of the Greek historian Timaeus, who, in the aftermath of the Pyrrhic War, writes as if Roman identification with ancient Troy was already well established.[26] Later, in the First Punic War (264–241 BCE), the city of Segesta created an alliance with Rome on the basis of their common claim of descent from Aeneas.[27] In 238 BCE, not long after Rome's first war against Carthage, "the Acarnanians applied for a tax exemption from Rome … on the grounds that they had not participated in the Trojan War as had the rest of Greece (Justin, *Hist. Philippicae* 28.6)."[28] Neither this appeal nor Segesta's alliance makes sense apart from the legend of Aeneas's travel to Italy.

Jane DeRose Evans observes that Romans in general began to identify

[22] Jan N. Bremmer and Nicholas M. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography*, Bulletin Supplement 52 (London: University of London Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 12.

[23] Cf. Homeric Hymn 5, to Aphrodite. Erich Gruen notes that these ancient passages initially inhibited the association of Aeneas with the Romans among Greeks: Homer says Aeneas will rule over *Trojans* (implying that this will happen in *Troy*). Gruen writes, "When the link between Aeneas and the origins of Rome had been forged, the Homeric lines became an embarrassment" (*Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome*, CSCP 52 [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992], 12).

[24] Bremmer and Horsfall, *Roman Myth*, 21; see also Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 44.

[25] Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 27. He subsequently writes, "The Greeks hoped to capitalize on the legend; the Romans merely engaged in response and reaction" (46), which suggests that the evidence indicates, at least in the fourth and third centuries BCE, that the Aeneas–Trojan connection to Rome was emphasized not by the Romans but by the Greeks.

[26] See Gruen's extensive discussion in *Culture and National Identity*, 6–51. For Timaeus's witness, see the works cited by Gruen on 27 n. 97. According to Gruen, Timaeus's "researches aimed at confirmation and demonstration of accepted tenets" (27).

[27] Ibid., 45. See also the primary texts cited there.

[28] Jane DeRose Evans, *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 37. See also Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 45.

themselves as corporate descendants of Aeneas as early as the second century BCE.[29] Among the evidence she cites is a bold statement made by Rome toward the end of the Hannibalic War (218–201 BCE). With victory all but assured, the Romans moved the cult of Magna Mater, "a protective deity of the Trojans," from Mount Ida, "the birthplace of Aeneas, his refuge, and a place of assemblage before his departure," to the Palatine in Rome.[30] This transfer occurred in 205 BCE. According to Erich Gruen, "Allusions to Troy and the [Aeneas] legend in interstate relations cease abruptly after the early second century. They reappear only at the end of the Republic in very different circumstances."[31] These "different circumstances" involved a shift from national to individual identification with Aeneas.

The appropriation of Aeneas's legacy and of Trojan identity reappeared during the reign of Julius Caesar. Caesar is said to have so emphasized his descent from Venus, Aeneas's mother, that "even Caesar's enemies substituted 'the descendant of Venus' for Caesar's personal name."[32] By 48 BCE, after Caesar's decisive victory in the Battle of Pharsalus to end the civil war and the so-called First Triumvirate, "Caesar combined this propaganda [of descent from Venus] with a claim of descent from Aeneas, heretofore only implied in the Julian propaganda."[33] Evans notes the apparent non sequitur in this claim: "We still must answer how he managed to transform Aeneas from a generalized founder of the Roman people (as in Flamininus's inscription) to the founder of a specific family." She suggests, "The most attractive answers are Caesar's force of personality, the insistence of his claim, and the readiness of the Roman people to accept this personalized version of their national foundation story."[34]

With the formation of the Second Triumvirate, ending the Roman Republic, the Roman state was governed by Octavian, Mark Antony, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. Although Octavian associated himself with Apollo, he also began advertising his descent from Aeneas during this period.[35] As Augustus, he not only expanded this propaganda to include public monuments in Rome, but he also promoted his genealogy throughout the empire in at least two other ways: (1) by depicting Aeneas carrying Anchises out of Troy on the reverse of coins that featured his own likeness on the obverse; and (2) by commissioning several court poets to disseminate his descent from Aeneas.[36] Two literary figures who were active during Augustus's reign merit special attention in this context: Virgil, for composing the

[29] Evans, *Art of Persuasion*, 37.
[30] Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 47.
[31] Ibid., 50.
[32] Evans, *Art of Persuasion*, 40. Cf. Cicero, *Fam.* 8.15; Suetonius, *Jul.* 6.1.
[33] Evans, *Art of Persuasion*, 40.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 41–42.
[36] Ibid., 41–44. The poets Augustus commissioned included Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Varro.

iconic and authoritative version of Aeneas's establishment of the Trojan people in Italy, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for his inability to deny it.

In the *Aeneid*, Latin's answer to Greek's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil narrates the sea voyages of Aeneas and a remnant of Trojans across the Mediterranean and their war with the Latins in Italy. The bard explicitly identifies Augustus as the descendant of Aeneas and as the heir to the promise of an eternal empire (6.792–793; cf. 1.278–279). Virgil's epic poem enjoyed immense popularity soon after it was published in 19 BCE following the poet's premature death. "The *Aeneid* made Aeneas a national hero at Rome in a way far beyond the reach of the diplomacy and propaganda of earlier generations."[37] Outside the Roman royal court, Greek historian and rhetorician Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote about the history of Rome; his intention, as a Greek, was to present Rome as the *Greek* city he believed it to be.[38] As such, he narrates the Hellenic origins of several Latin peoples, including some established by Heracles himself (*Ant. rom.* 1.41–44).[39] Clearly, Dionysius would have omitted any role played by Aeneas, a Trojan, in the foundation of Rome if he thought doing so would be credible. Yet "the Trojan leader's role in Rome's beginnings was too well entrenched to be discarded or ignored"—an unpalatable situation for Dionysius, indeed.[40] According to Virgil's account, Dardanus, Aeneas's ancestor who gave rise to the Trojan people, was from Etruria (central Italy).[41] Dionysius turns this scenario upside down: he claims that Dardanus was in fact from the Peloponnesus (southern Greek peninsula) and only migrated to the Troad after his homeland was flooded (*Ant. rom.* 1.60–61).[42] The case of Dionysius demonstrates that, by the end of the first century BCE, the association of Aeneas with Rome had become culturally indisputable.[43]

Greek speakers in the provinces of the Roman Empire also attest to the ubiquity of Aeneas's association with Rome. Book 11 of the Jewish collection of Sibylline

[37] Bremmer and Horsfall, *Roman Myth*, 24.

[38] For a robust treatment of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, see Nicolas Wiater, *The Ideology of Classicism: Language, History, and Identity in Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, UALG 105 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).

[39] See ibid., 165.

[40] Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 7.

[41] See *Aen.* 1.378–380; 3.94–96, 167–168; 7.206–207, 240; and Gruen, *Culture and National Identity*, 7.

[42] Varro concurs with Dionysius (see Servius, *Ad Aen.* 3.167). See Yasmin Syed, *Vergil's* Aeneid *and the Roman Self: Subject and Nation in Literary Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 211–14.

[43] During this period, the Latin historian Sallust made the remarkable claim that Aeneas himself founded Rome (*Bell. Cat.* 6.1), despite a nearly four-hundred–year gap between the Trojan War and Rome's founding. Toward the end of the first century CE, in his *Trojan Oration,* Dio Chrysostom also identified Aeneas as the founder of Rome in his argument that the Trojans defeated the Greeks in the Trojan War (*Troj.* 138).

Oracles, possibly written sometime early in the first century CE, not only demonstrates an awareness of Aeneas's escape from Troy and the tradition that he established Rome but also praises the bard "by whose noble mind the whole world will be educated" (i.e., Virgil; see Sib. Or. 11:163–171).[44] After describing the fall of Troy at the hands of a "wooden deceit" (11:135) and the death of Agamemnon "at the hand of a deceitful woman" (11:143), the Sibyl describes Aeneas:

> A famous child of heroes from the race and blood
> of Assaracus will rule, a mighty and brave man.
> He will come from Troy when it has been destroyed by a great fire,
> fleeing from his fatherland on account of the turmoil of Ares.
> Carrying on his shoulders his elderly father,
> holding his only son by the hand, he will perform
> a pious deed, glancing around, he who split the onslaught
> of the fire of blazing Troy, and pressing on through the throng.
> In fear he will cross the land and frightful sea.
> He will have a name of three syllables; for the first letter
> is not insignificant but reveals the supreme man.
> Then he will set up the mighty city of the Latins.
> In the fifteenth year on the depths of brine
> perishing on the waters he will meet the end of death.
> But even when he dies the nations of men will not forget him.
> For the race of this man will later rule over all
> as far as the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, in the midst
> of the land of the Assyrians, where the Parthian tarried.
> It will come to pass in future generations when all these things happen.
> (Sib. Or. 11:144–162)

The Sibyl cryptically avoids Aeneas's name; nevertheless, there is no doubt that Aeneas is the subject of these hexameters. Most telling is the reference to carrying his elderly father on his shoulders as he leaves Troy—Aeneas's iconic pose in paintings, coinage, and sculptures. The Sibyl also tells a riddle about his name (11:153–154): "Aeneas" is three syllables long and shares the first letter of his name with Adam ("the supreme man").[45] This passage is significant for the present discussion of Luke-Acts in two ways: (1) the Sibyl not only associates Aeneas with Rome but explicitly claims that Aeneas himself founded Rome, "the mighty city of the Latins"

[44] For this proposed date of the Sibylline Oracles, see John J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles (Second Century B.C.–Seventh Century A.D.), *OTP* 1:317–472, here 430–32. All translations of the Sibylline Oracles are from Collins (here 437–38).

[45] There are still other clues that Aeneas is the referent: the adjective "pious" (11:150) was Virgil's favorite epithet for Aeneas; in addition to Anchises, Aeneas also (importantly) delivered his son from Troy's destruction; finally, Aeneas, in traversing from Troy to Lavinium/Rome, had to cross land and sea (a Virgilian imitation of Odysseus's adventures from Troy to Ithaca in the *Odyssey*).

(11:155);[46] (2) though the oracle is written in Greek, the writer demonstrates an acquaintance with the *Aeneid* by describing Virgil immediately following the section on Aeneas and by relating Aeneas to the Roman emperors (11:158–162).[47]

The Sibyl's knowledge of Virgil's account also raises an important issue: the need to distinguish between knowledge of the Aeneas–Rome association and knowledge of Virgil's account of the connection. According to Johannes Irmscher, the Roman Empire was bilingual early on, and the most important works, whether originally composed in Latin or Greek, were made available for those in the upper class.[48] According to Seneca, Polybius, an imperial slave, was given the task (around the year 50 CE) of translating Homer into Latin and Virgil into Greek so that they might be disseminated among monolingual individuals (*Polyb.* 8.2; 11.5–6).[49] Other textual witnesses suggest that Virgil's *Aeneid* was more well known in the Greek East than scholars generally acknowledge: a papyrus found in the ruins of Masada (ca. 73–74 CE) contains a Latin quotation of *Aen.* 4.9, and among the papyri found in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, the *Aeneid* is either cited or referred to nine times, including a Greek paraphrase of 4.661–705 and 5.1–6.[50] Of course, the general populace did not need access to either Latin or Greek versions of the *Aeneid* in order for the *content* of Virgil's epic to enter into the cultural consciousness of the Mediterranean world. Irmscher's contribution is important in that it explains *one* of the ways that the *Aeneid* was disseminated in the Greek-speaking parts of the Roman Empire. Arguably more important (and effective) were visual representations and performances. Ultimately, my argument here does not depend on whether the story of the *Aeneid* was known by those who could not understand Latin. Although Loveday Alexander does not address the issue of interpreting the Aeneas account in Acts 9, her statement is relevant here:

> The connection between Aeneas and Rome is nowhere made in Homer, but it was not Vergil's invention: Hellenistic and Roman traditions had completed the loop by the third century BCE, bringing Aeneas and the Trojan remnant to Italy and combining the post-Homeric story with Latin and Roman foundation myths. The story, the myth, in other words, could be known independently of the epic poem which became its most famous and successful carrier. To put it another way, the cultural hypotext may not be a text (in the obvious literary sense) at all.[51]

[46] Interestingly, cf. Ovid, *Ars* 3.337.

[47] Of course, knowledge of Julian descent from Aeneas need not be derived from Virgil.

[48] Johannes Irmscher, "Vergil in der griechischen Antike," *Klio* 67 (1985): 281–85, here 281–82.

[49] See Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 24–25.

[50] Jan M. Ziolkowski and Michael C. J. Putnam, eds., *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 44.

[51] Loveday Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*, LNTS 298 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 170–71.

If anything certain can be drawn from this long review of Aeneas's association with Rome, it is that inhabitants of the ancient Mediterranean world did not need to know Virgil's *Aeneid* in order to be aware of Aeneas's association with Rome.

Roman claims of descent from Aeneas did not cease along with the Julian dynasty. For instance, Statius, a court poet for Domitian writing toward the end of the first century CE, attempted Virgil's strategy, portraying Domitian as a direct descendant of Aeneas and as the true heir of Aeneas's eternal empire (*Silv.* 4.3.128–133). Unlike earlier Flavian propagandists, Statius does not present Domitian as the fulfillment of Augustan ideals; Augustus goes unmentioned.[52] Hadrian similarly identified Trajan as "the descendant of Aeneas" (Anth. Pal. 6.332). In this literary and political context, I conclude that it would have been impossible for ancient readers to hear the name Aeneas and not think of Rome (similar to how Americans in the twenty-first century cannot hear the name Michael Jordan without thinking of basketball).

Accounting for the cultural freight carried by the name Aeneas and its strategic placement within Luke's narrative can influence how readers understand the macro-structure of Acts and its relation to the Gospel of Luke. The structural considerations that follow reveal how reading "Aeneas" as a literary signpost for Rome coheres with the macro-structure of Acts.[53] Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts share remarkably similar macro-structures.[54] After Luke's prologue to "Theophilus" (1:1–4), the birth narratives (1:5–2:52), an account of John the Baptist's ministry (3:1–20), and Jesus's baptism (3:21–22) and genealogy (3:23–38), there are three main sections in the gospel. The first section (4:1–9:50) focuses on Jesus's ministry in and around Galilee. Luke marks the transition to the gospel's second section, Jesus's journey to Jerusalem (9:51–19:27), in a conspicuous manner. In Luke 9:51, the narrator explains, "But when the days drew near for him to be taken up, he himself set his face to go to Jerusalem." He then reiterates his point: the Samaritans did not receive him "because his face was going to Jerusalem" (9:53b). Luke's identification of Jerusalem as the "city of destiny" is made all the more clear when Luke's account is compared to that of antecedent gospels: Jerusalem "is here explicitly mentioned (9:51), in contradistinction to Mark 10:1 or Matt 19:1."[55] This purposeful gesture sets the tone for all of Luke's second section: although he does

[52] See Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 69–74.

[53] To be sure, the analysis that follows does not represent the only credible way to delineate the macro-structures of Luke or Acts.

[54] On the macro-structures of Luke and Acts, see Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, SBLMS 20 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974); Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Reading the New Testament (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Keener, *Acts*, 1:550–81; Pervo, *Acts*, 20–21. This article's contribution to this discussion is addressed below, namely, the structuring role played by Acts 9:32–43.

[55] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 2 vols., AB 28, 28A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981–1985), 1:824 (cf. 827).

not travel directly to Jerusalem, his circuitous meanderings never lose sight of this goal. The audience is reminded of it by the narrator twice (13:22; 17:11) and by Jesus's own speech once (18:31). The third section of Luke's Gospel (19:28–24:53) opens in this way: "And after saying these things, he went on ahead, going up into Jerusalem" (19:28). This final section narrates Jesus's Jerusalem activity, namely, his teachings in the temple, trial, passion, resurrection, and ascension.[56]

Commentators have well documented the progressively expansive nature of the plot of Acts.[57] The primary impetus for such a reading is the commission of the resurrected Jesus to his disciples in Acts 1:8, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The first three referents are straightforward enough; the final one is ambiguous. Concerning this final phrase, Pervo writes,

> As a geographical expression, the location of this limit depends on the extent of geographical knowledge and the orientation of the speaker or narrator. The latter contributes to the metaphorical sense of "far, far away." The range of geographical options is wide. The two locations most applicable to Acts are Ethiopia and Rome, the former because of the symbolism of 8:26–39, the latter because it is the geographical destination of the book. It is unlikely that Luke means the phrase in a particularly literal sense.[58]

Pervo argues that the phrase carries a sense of "missions" in Acts—in particular, the gentile mission—since the phrase was also used to describe the exploits of Heracles and Alexander the Great.[59] The final element of Jesus's commission, then, appears to have two primary meanings: first, it refers literally to the broad horizon of the known world and its inhabitants (e.g., as symbolized by Ethiopia); and, second, it refers to Rome, the center of the Mediterranean world and perhaps a symbol of the world's entirety.[60] Both meanings convey a sense of mission. The narrative that follows the proemium of Acts thus exhibits the following structure, related both to geography and to ethnic and religious identities. As in Luke's Gospel, the text can be divided into three sections. In the first section (Acts 1:15–9:31), the narrative is concerned primarily with the mission to Jews. Geographically, the narrative begins where Luke's Gospel left off: in Jerusalem (1:1–8:1a). The mission extends to Jews in the rest of Judea and in Samaria (8:1b–25), even to those *from* the ends of the earth (2:5–13; 8:26–39). Luke closes this first section in 9:31, "Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built

[56] Cf. François Bovon, *Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 3 vols., Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002–2013), 1:2–4; Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 138.

[57] E.g., Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1:49; Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 119.

[58] Pervo, *Acts*, 44.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Bonz identifies Rome as the "proleptic symbol for the ends of the earth" (*Past as Legacy,* 173; cf. 138). See also Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 206–7; Pss. Sol. 8:15.

up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers."

The second section (9:32–21:16) involves the opening and progressive expansion of the gentile mission as well as the realization of Rome as the "city of destiny" in Acts. On the one hand, the gentile mission explicitly begins with Luke's account of Peter and Cornelius (10:1–11:18); this episode is prefaced by a pair of miracle narratives (9:32–35 and 36–43). The subsequent progressive realization of the inclusion of gentiles is highlighted by the Jerusalem Council (15:1–35) and the evolving emphasis in Paul's mission, with his experience of opposition from some Jews and the redirection of his mission toward gentiles. In the assessment of Marianne Palmer Bonz, the mission to the Jews effectively ends as early as Acts 19.[61] On the other hand, the geographic *telos* of the book of Acts becomes explicit in this second section: Paul "must see Rome" (19:21).[62]

The third and final section of Acts (21:17–28:31), bearing some resemblance to the final section of Luke's Gospel, recounts Paul's trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea and his sea voyage to Rome, including a shipwreck at Malta. Although the narrative foregrounds these activities, the two trajectories that began with the Petrine narratives in Acts 9:32–11:18 continue. For instance, Paul concludes his *apologia* before a crowd in Jerusalem by relating the words spoken to him by the risen Jesus, "Go, for I will send you far away to the gentiles" (22:21).[63] Paul's speech to the Jews in Rome is a fitting capstone to Luke's foundation narrative: "Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles; they will listen" (28:28). Luke thus concludes the book of Acts with Paul in Rome having decided to take the gospel (exclusively?) to gentiles.[64]

Acts 9:32–43 thus occupies a critical place in the narrative of Acts, not to mention in the whole of Luke's *Doppelwerk*. It functions as the narrative's gateway to the gentile mission and to Rome itself. Many commentators, however, locate the significance of Acts 9:32–43 exclusively in its explanation of how Peter came to be

[61] Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 166. Cf. Acts 19:9; 22:17–21.

[62] Even before Rome is explicitly mentioned, Bonz argues that Acts 16–19 "is clearly structured to illuminate this new direction as the ultimate intention of the divine plan. With the exception of chapter 17 … Paul's missionary efforts are concentrated on three provincial cities: Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus. In the narrative's time, as well as in Luke's own time, Corinth and Philippi each had the status of Roman colonies, and Ephesus was the seat of the Roman governor for the wealthy and important senatorial province of Asia" (*Past as Legacy*, 167).

[63] Note the twofold emphasis again: geographic ("far away") and religious/ethnic ("to the gentiles").

[64] For the argument that Paul's post-Acts mission is oriented exclusively toward gentiles, see Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), 62–64; Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 296–99; Pervo, *Acts*, 681. For the argument that Paul's post-Acts mission includes Jews, see Robert C. Tannehill, *The Shape of Luke's Story: Essays on Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005), 105–65; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:344–57.

near Caesarea for his encounter with Cornelius. For example, Pervo writes, "The two acts of Peter in 9:32–43 bring him into proximity to Caesarea."[65] But if the purpose of Acts 9:32–43 was merely to situate Peter in proximity to Caesarea, Luke could have instead skipped these narratives and begun 10:1 the way he begins 9:32: "Now as Peter went here and there among all of them, he came down also to Caesarea. In Caesarea there was a man…." As it is, the narratives of Peter healing Aeneas in Lydda and raising Tabitha in Joppa bridge the gap between Luke's summary statement in Acts 9:31 and the Cornelius narrative in which a Roman soldier becomes the first gentile to gain inclusion in the kingdom of God in Luke-Acts. I propose that this bridge is constructed using two metonyms: "Aeneas" and "Joppa."

The first major section of the book of Acts concludes with the notice that "the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up" (9:31). Of all the so-called success summaries in the book of Acts, 9:31 is remarkable for the way in which it evokes Jesus's commission in Acts 1:8: the disciples are to be Jesus's witnesses "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."[66] For the reader who recalls Jesus's commission, the summary of Acts 9:31 raises a question: what about "the end of the earth"? The audience resumes Luke's narrative and immediately encounters Peter healing an eight-year paralytic named Aeneas. The narrative thus answers the reader's question: in the book of Acts, as far as the movement of Jesus's followers is concerned, Rome will represent "the end of the earth."[67] That the narrative does in fact end in Rome confirms the credibility of reading Aeneas's name as a metonym for the imperial capital, all the more so considering its proximity to the summary in Acts 9:31. The inclusion of Cornelius, a Roman soldier from Italy, in Acts 10:1–11:18 reinforces the Aeneas–Rome trajectory. This forms a piece of the narrative arc extending from Acts 9:32–35 through Paul's travels to Roman cities (Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus) all the way to his arrival in Rome.

[65] Pervo, *Acts*, 251–52. He adds, however, that these narratives "are dense with references to the stories of Elijah/Elisha (1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:32–37 [Acts 9:36–42]), Jesus (Luke 5:18–26; [7:11–17]; 8:40–56), and Paul (14:8–12; 20:7–13)" (252). See also Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1:478: "We know that the story of Cornelius was of great importance to [Luke]; he regarded it as the beginning of the Gentile mission (15.7). Here he is preparing for it"; Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 443: "Luke's account of Peter's tour of ministry in Lydda and Joppa is intended as a buildup to his coming missionary activity in the conversion of Cornelius and his household"; and Daniel Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres*, 2 vols., CNT 5 (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007–2015), 1:348. Moreover, Pervo argues that 9:32–11:18 constitutes a single literary unit (*Acts*, 251–52); so also Josef Zmijewski, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, RNT (Regensburg: Pustet, 1994), 395–96. See also Wilfried Eckey, *Die Apostelgeschichte: Der Weg des Evangeliums von Jerusalem nach Rom*, 2 vols. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), 1:226–27; Etienne Trocmé, *Le "Livre des Actes" et l'histoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), 169.

[66] Other "summaries of success" include Acts 6:7, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20, 28:31.

[67] This use of "Aeneas" can perhaps be read as a less explicit equivalent of Luke 9:51–53 for the book of Acts.

The narrative of Peter raising Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:36–43) can be read as initiating a second literary trajectory, that of gentile inclusion, via the repeated mention of Joppa. It may also reinforce the earlier Aeneas–Rome trajectory. Luke repeats the name Joppa four times in Acts 9:36–43 (162 words) and six more times in the Cornelius account (10:1–11:18).[68] Even accounting for the need to reestablish the setting in a narrative that moves to and fro, "Joppa" is repeated with an uncommonly high frequency compared to other city names in Luke-Acts. More typically, Luke names a city when his protagonists arrive and leave. For example, although Aeneas's town, Lydda, is mentioned with a higher frequency in Acts 9:32–35 (62 words) than Joppa in 9:36–43, there are only two iterations: Peter comes down to Lydda (9:32), and, after Aeneas is healed, Luke notes that the residents of Lydda turned to the Lord (9:35). Similarly, after Paul arrives in Athens (17:15), Luke names Athens—obviously a name carrying cultural freight—only twice more: to indicate that Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy to meet him there (17:16) and to indicate that Paul left (18:1).[69] So why does Luke call the readers' attention to Joppa with such uncharacteristic frequency? According to one rhetorical handbook, "reiteration of the same word makes a deep impression upon the hearer and inflicts a major wound upon the opposition—as if a weapon should repeatedly pierce the same part of the body" (Rhet. her. 4.28 [Caplan, LCL]). The "wound" inflicted by the narrative can be identified by attending to the cultural and literary freight carried by the name Joppa. I suggest that the repetition evokes the Jonah narrative, preparing the audience for Luke's characterization of Peter in Acts 10:1–11:18 and for the inclusion of gentiles more generally.[70]

Two themes of Jonah's mission are particularly relevant to Acts 9:36–11:18: Jonah's commission to preach to gentiles and his reluctance to actually do it. Joppa was the port city to which Jonah fled in order to avoid preaching to the Ninevites (Jonah 1:3). In Acts 9:36–43, Luke inflicts, so some rhetorical handbooks might say,

[68] Acts 9:36, 38, 42, 43; 10:5, 8, 23, 32; 11:5, 13.

[69] Luke also mentions Athenians in Acts 17:21, 22. There are 405 words in Acts 17:15–18:1.

[70] See Robert W. Wall, "Peter, 'Son' of Jonah: The Conversion of Cornelius in the Context of Canon," *JSNT* 29 (1987): 79–90, https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064x8700902904. According to Wall, some scholars have interpreted the Cornelius episode as an imitation—or, in Wall's terminology, "theo-logic" parallelism or "comparative midrash" (82)—of Jonah's gentile mission. Wall outlines six sequential parallels between the book of Jonah and Acts 10–11: (1) the location of Joppa (Jonah 1:3; Acts 9:43); (2) the symbolic use of three that ends the reluctance of the prophets (Jonah 2:1; Acts 10:16); (3) God's command to "arise and go" (Jonah 3:2; Acts 10:20); (4) the belief of the gentiles (Jonah 3:5; Acts 10:43); (5) the hostile response to gentile conversions (Jonah 4:1; Acts 11:2 [10:14]); and (6) God's rebuke of the hostile response (Jonah 4:2–11; Acts 11:17–18 [15:13–21]) (80). Distinctive elements among these parallels include the city of Joppa and verbal parallels.

Based on Matt 12:39–41 and Luke 11:29–32, we can infer that early Christians, including Luke's implied audience, were familiar with Jonah and associated him particularly with sitting in the belly of a fish for three days and with a reluctant ministry to gentiles.

a Joppa-shaped wound on his auditors, situating Peter in Joppa and evoking the thought world of Jonah. It is no surprise, then, that Peter is characterized as a *reluctant* missionary to gentiles in Acts 10. Peter is still in Joppa when Cornelius sends for him (10:8). Before the arrival of Cornelius's emissaries, Peter has a vision about clean and unclean animals in which he refuses to eat the unclean animals three times (10:10–16, 11:5–10), a metaphor for gentile inclusion (10:28, 34–35, 47; 11:18). The Lukan Peter is remarkably more obedient than Jonah, however. Whereas Jonah left Joppa on a ship to avoid preaching to gentiles, after his vision Peter abandons his reluctance in Joppa and initiates a gentile mission. The Tabitha narrative thus commences a second literary arc—that of gentile inclusion—which stretches all the way to the end of Acts.

By evoking the thought world of the Jonah narrative, Acts 9:36–43 can also be read as reinforcing the narrative arc established in the preceding passage: the destination of Rome. The entire Jonah story revolves around the so-called prophet's mission to preach to gentiles in the city of Nineveh (Jonah 1:2). Nineveh, of course, was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, during whose rule Jonah's story is set. In addition to the idea of ministry to gentiles, therefore, a reference to Jonah can evoke the narrative's imperial logic: movement to the capital of the empire to preach to gentiles. If Luke's characters play the role of Jonah, the reader can expect that the mission of the kingdom of God will take at least one of them to the capital of the current empire: Rome.

The final two chapters of Acts bring the narrative arcs initiated in Acts 9:32–43 to a close. Although some scholars have puzzled over the inclusion of Paul's perilous voyage and shipwreck in Acts 27, this chapter can be read as yet another instantiation of both literary arcs.[71] Scholars have long noted the parallels that Acts 27 shares with other ancient narratives, particularly the book of Jonah and Homer's *Odyssey*.[72] In Acts 9, the gratuitous repetition of Joppa evokes the thought world of Jonah; Peter soon thereafter plays the role of the eponymous prophet, resisting but then initiating a ministry to gentiles. In Acts 27, Paul plays the role of Jonah, getting caught in a dramatic storm while voyaging across the Mediterranean. Whereas Jonah embarked on a Mediterranean ship in order to avoid preaching to gentiles

[71] See Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 51. Pervo suggests that, if Acts is a history or biography, the attention given to this account might have been better served elsewhere. Pervo, of course, reads the Acts narrative alongside ancient novels, where accounts of shipwrecks are a dime a dozen.

[72] For Acts 27:1–28:10 and the *Odyssey*, see Dennis R. MacDonald, "The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul," *NTS* 45 (1999): 88–107, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688598000885; Susan Marie Praeder, "Acts 27:1–28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 683–706; Alexander, *Literary Context*, 175. For Acts 27:1–28:10 and Jonah, see Reinhard Kratz, *Rettungswunder: Motiv-, traditions-, und formkritische Aufarbeitung einer biblischen Gattung*, EHS 23.123 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1979), 320–50; Pervo, *Acts*, 645, 652, 659, 666–67; Alexander, *Literary Context*, 84–85; James M. Beresford, "The Significance of the Fast in Acts 27:9," *NovT* 58 (2016): 155–66, https://doi.org/10.1163/15685365-12341519.

in the capital of the Assyrian Empire, Paul—in Roman custody—sails across the sea precisely in order to preach to gentiles in the capital of the Roman Empire (cf. Acts 23:11).

The parallels with the Jonah narrative notwithstanding, the presence of Homeric vocabulary is nigh undeniable.[73] According to Dennis R. MacDonald, the stories of Paul and Odysseus "share nautical images and vocabulary, the appearance of a goddess or angel assuring safety, the riding of planks, the arrival of the hero on an island among hospitable strangers, the mistaking of the hero as a god, and the sending of him on his way."[74] Nevertheless, Paul's sea voyages in Acts, beginning in Troas (16:11) and ending in Rome, recall another cultural figure: Aeneas.[75] Read in this way, Paul's journey to Rome becomes a fitting end to Luke's narrative, pregnant with potential for God's kingdom.[76] Aeneas traveled from Troy to Italy in order to establish the foundations of the Roman Empire; Paul travels from Troas to Rome with a mission to proclaim the kingdom of God as a witness to Jesus.

In Acts 28:14, Paul arrives in Rome. Although under house arrest, Paul is able to meet with the local Jewish leaders. After the Roman Jews offer a predictably mixed reception of Paul's message, Paul proclaims, "Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles; they will listen" (28:28).[77] Then the book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome welcoming "all who came to him" (28:30), underscoring the permanence of the inclusion of gentiles within his ministry. Thus conclude both literary arcs initiated in Acts 9:32–43.

Luke's tandem of healing miracles about Aeneas and Tabitha signals the

[73] Cf. F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 498.

[74] MacDonald, "Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul," 88.

[75] Virgil's version of Aeneas's sea voyages and shipwreck imitates those of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. See Dennis R. MacDonald, *Luke and Vergil: Imitations of Classical Greek Literature*, New Testament and Greek Literature 2 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 153–55. Of course, Virgil did not invent the story of Aeneas's movement from Troy to the Italian site of Rome. On the identification of Troas with Troy, see Suetonius, *Iul*. 1.79. See also Andrew Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome: Local Tradition and Imperial Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Bart J. Koet, "Im Schatten des Aeneas: Paulus in Troas (Apg. 16,8–10)," in *Luke and His Readers: Festschrift A. Denaux*, ed. R. Bieringer, G. Van Belle, and J. Verheyden, BETL 187 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 432–36; Koet, "It Started with a Dream: Paul's Dream (Acts 16,9–10) and Aeneas as a Biblical Example of Dreams as Intercultural Legitimation Strategy," *Dreaming* 18 (2008): 267–79, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014084.

[76] On the ending of Acts, see Pervo, *Acts*, 688–90; Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles,'* SNTSMS 121 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 205–30, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511488061.011; Hermann J. Hauser, *Strukturen der Abschlußerzählung der Apostelgeschichte (Apg 28,16–41)*, AnBib 86 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1979); Charles B. Puskas, *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts: The Significance of Acts 28:16–31* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009). Pervo judges the ending a disappointment, both from a literary perspective and as a work of history/biography (*Acts*, 688).

[77] See Joseph B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 174–78.

agenda for the remaining narrative in Acts. After providing a satisfying closure in Acts 9:31 to the Jewish mission in Judea and Samaria, Luke narrates the healing of a man named Aeneas and the resuscitation of a woman in Joppa. The story of Aeneas in Acts 9:32–35 suggests that the narrative will find its ultimate goal in the city of Rome; the story of Tabitha in 9:36–43, situated in Joppa, suggests that the mission will continue by expanding—even if the missionary is at first reluctant—to include gentiles, while also recalling the idea of ministry in the imperial capital.[78] These narrative threads reappear throughout the remainder of Acts: the mission to the gentiles is inaugurated with the extended narrative about Peter and (the Roman) Cornelius (Acts 10–11); Paul arrives in Rome in Acts 28 and proclaims that "this salvation of God has been sent to the gentiles" (28:28). Perhaps it is suggestive that a more coherent reading of Acts can be achieved by attending to the cultural freight carried by certain names, particularly in the case of Aeneas. Observing how a freighted Roman name is used to structure Luke's narrative opens a new line of inquiry into the dialectical relationship between Luke and the Roman Empire: exploring the ways that Luke constructed his narrative about the kingdom of God by reference to the language and imagery of Roman self-representation, in addition to the Septuagint. Such a literary strategy might even seem intuitive, communicating about the kingdom of God in a way that was readily comprehensible to a broad Mediterranean audience.

[78] To be sure, reading "Aeneas" and "Joppa" as structural metonyms does not preclude additional interpretations of these narratives. Intertextual and intratextual comparisons are particularly important in these passages. Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 252.