INTERPRETING THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES
An Overview of the Research[1]

As with the preceding lecture on the Gospel of Luke[2] the intention of this presentation is to lay a foundation for our study of Unit Four: The Acts of the Apostles. The research on the book of Acts is extensive; thus the summary nature of this lecture. Of great value is the more abundant bibliographical tools for Acts which provide greater referencing of the research in this area.[3]

The lecture is divided into two areas: the bibliographical tools for doing research and the history of Acts research.[4]

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TOOLS FOR RESEARCH

Several efforts have been made to provide the researcher with helpful tools for probing the contents of the book of Acts. These usually fall into one of about three distinct categories.

Most basic is the simple listing of publications related to Acts studies. The most significant of these is that by A. J. and Mary Mattill, A Classified Bibliography of Literature on the Acts of the Apostles (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966). It is a listing of some 6,646 publications related to Acts studies. Arranged topically, it deals with bibliographical studies, general studies (mostly commentaries), textual studies, philological studies, literary studies, form-critical studies, historical studies (including chronology, archaeology & geography, and personalities), theological studies and exegetical studies of individual passages. This volume is a must source for tracing down what has been published on Acts from the time of the Church Fathers up through 1961.

Intended as a supplement to the work by Mattill is that by Watson E. Mills, A Bibliography of the Periodical Literature on the Acts of the Apostles: 1962-1984 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986). It is volume 58 of Supplements to Novum Testamentum and contains 991 references to journal articles related to Acts research from 1962 to 1984. Unfortunately it is not arranged topically as the earlier work by the Mattills, thus its usefulness is restricted. Some cross referencing to other articles within the volume does provide a rudimentary subject reference, but the listings are sequenced only alphabetically. Still, it is a helpful listing of the more recent work on Acts in the journals.

Of great usefulness for finding publications relating to a specific passage in Acts is the work edited by Günther Wagner, An Exegetical Bibliography of the New Testament, volume two on Luke-Acts (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985). This is an undated publication of his earlier release in 1975 in a file card packet entitled An Exegetical Bibliography on the Acts of the Apostles. As professor of New Testament at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Rüschlikon in Switzerland, Dr. Gunther has worked through the international nature of the student body there to collect a massive bibliographical collection of works on numerous books of the New Testament out of a wide range of foreign language sources. This work continues and is being periodically updated through releases from the seminary publications. While other bibliographical tools of this nature could be cited, these comprise the most helpful and important in this first category.[5]

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[1]Lecture presented by Lorin L. Cranford to Ph.D. seminar, New Testament Critical Methodology, NT 651-772. All rights reserved. ActsResearch.nb Also published in Lorin L. Cranford, *Research Updates*, vol. 2 of *Exegeting the New Testament* (Fort Worth: Scripta Publishing Inc., 1991)

[2]"Interpreting Luke's Gospel: An Overview of the Research."

[3]Compare the much more extensive listing under section I of this bibliography to the Lukan bibliography.

[4]These divisions are partially paralleled in the Annotated Bibliography at the end.

[5]Mattill, 1-5, lists some 63 references, many of which are of this first category.

Secondly, there is the category which lists numerous publications but attempts to make some kind of observation about contents as well as an occasional critique. Of great importance here are the numerous articles which have appeared periodically throughout this century in the Theologische Rundschau.[6] Well in excess of 500 pages of survey of Acts research have been published by this one journal in the last ninety years. The most important of these are the articles by Professors Gräßer and Plümacher which focus on Acts research from the fifties through the early eighties. Professor Gräßer's first article, entitled "Die Apostelgeschichte in der Forschung der Gegenwart," appeared in 1960 and surveyed the developments of the fifties. The following topics were covered: Kommentare, Monographien, Aufsätze (Zum Text und zu den Quellen; Zur Tradition und Komposition; Qumran und die Apostelgeschichte; Zur Theologie der Apostelgeschichte).

Beginning in 1976 there appeared the first of a three part series of articles entitled "Acta-Forschung seit 1960" written by Dr. Gräßer. This massive survey covered the period 1960-1973. First there is the listing of the literature of this period under the headings: Zur Forschungslage allgemein; Kommentare; Text und Quellen. Then each of these headings is discussed at length: Zur Forschungslage allgemein, 146-49; Kommentare zur Apg., 149-62 (wissenschaftliche Kommentare, 149-61; allgemeinverständliche Kommentare, 161-62); Text und Quellen, 163-94 (Text der Apg., 163-86; Quellenfrage, 186-94). The second article under the same title continued the survey by dealing with "Die schriftstellerische Methode, der literarische Charakter und die theologische Tendenz des Lukas in der Apg." as section D with the subheadings: Zur Situation der Forschung, 269-73; Das Programm: Theologie der Heilsgeschichte, 273-90. The concluding article appeared in 1977 and deals with the following topics: Die Erzählungen, 1-34 (nine different narrative texts are treated); Die Reden der Apg., 35-51; Zur Theologie des Lukas in der Apg., 51-66; Schluß, 66-68.

In 1983 Professor Eckhard Plümacher published the first of a two-part series of articles, updating the work of Professor Gräßer, under the title "Acta-Forschung 1974-1982." After listing the literature (pp, 1-4, under the headings: Forschungs- und Literaturberichte, Kommentare, and Literatur), Professor Plümacher discusses this period under the following divisions: Zur Situation, 4-8; Kommentare, 8-30; Einleitungen, Enzyklopädieartikel, 30-35; Zu Grundkonzeption und Zweck des lukanischen Werkes, 35-56. The following year the second part appeared and continued the discussion, under the following headings: Text, 113-20 (preceded by lengthy bibliography, 105-13); Quellen, Traditionsbasis, 120-38; Literarische Gestaltung, Gattung, 138-53; Paulusbild, 153-58; Theologischer und historischer Ort, 158-69.

These articles by Professors Gräßer and Plümacher in particular thus constitute a most important **detailed** contribution surveying the current trends in Acts research. A serious treatment of specific issues in Acts studies will be made much easier after having seen their context as set forth in these articles. To be sure, these articles do represent a distinctly German perspective; the counterbalance from the English speaking side is seen in Ward W. Gasque and some shorter treatments by I. Howard Marshall[7] and F. F. Bruce[8], and to a certain degree from the French perspective in François Bovon.[9]

In the English language, the most important work here is that by the evangelical scholar Ward W. Gasque.[10] In the preface Gasque responds to a gauntlet laid down by Ernst Haechen for a detailed critical history of Acts studies.[11] Gasque picks it up and proceeds to treat Acts research beginning with the pre-critical era (chap. 1) through the old Tübingen school with its critics (chaps. 2-6) to the twentieth century defense of Luke (chaps. 7-8). An entire chapter is devoted to Dibelius (chap. 9) and

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[6]See section I in bibliography under Bauer, Boussett, Clemen, Gräßer, Kümmel, Plümacher and Windisch.

[7]"Recent Study of the Acts of the Apostles," Expository Times 80 (1968/69): 292-96.

[8]"The True Apostolic Succession. Recent Study of the Book of Acts," Interpretation 13 (1959): 131-43.

[9]"Orientations actuelles des études lucaniennes," Revue de théologie et de philosophie 26 (1976): 161-90 [transl. "Recent Trends in Lucan Studies." Theology Digest 25 (1977): 217-24.]. This is an excellent but brief survey. The earlier work from French circles is represented by Jacques Dupont, Études sur les Actes des Apôtres (Paris: Cerf, 1967).

[10]A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989). This is an update version of the earlier publication by the same name from Eerdmans in 1975.

[11]Ibid., 1-2.

the concluding two chapters (10-11) are given to the mid-twentieth century scene.[12] Gasque has his critics[13] but on the whole has filled a gap in the history of interpretation.

Thirdly, there are those publications which restrict themselves to a survey of a limited number of works either on a general treatment or else on some specific topic in Acts research. Included among such treatments from the first section of the Bibliography are those of Bieder,[14] Betz,[15] Emmelius,[16] Kremer,[17] O'Neill,[18] O'Toole,[19] Theissen,[20] and Turner.[21] Many of the listings in section two of the Bibliography which treat special topics will also contain extensive bibliography. These will facilitate greater awareness of particular issues in Acts studies. They should be checked to see if bibliography can be gleaned for your particular assignment.

THE HISTORY OF ACTS RESEARCH

The discussion begins with the background which leads into the current situation in Acts research. Because of time and space limitations the survey is of necessity an overview which does not do justice to each aspect of the work.

Antecedents to Current Trends

The pre-critical to the beginning of the modern era does not reflect a great deal of treatment of the book of Acts.[22]

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[12]These are focused upon the prominence of certain exegetical approaches: Tendenzkritik, Quellenkritik, Formgeschichte and Redaktionsgeschichte. Ibid., 4.

[13]E.g., Earl Richard, "Luke--Writer, Theologian, Historian: Research and Orientation of the 1970's," Biblical Theology Bulletin 13 (1983): 3: "Gasque, in an attempt to defend the historical reliability of Acts, gives an excessively polemical tone to his work since he opposes German to English scholarship and virtually ignores the French."

[14]Werner Bieder, Die Apostelgeschichte in der Historie. Ein Beitrag zur Auslegungsgeschichte des Missionsbuch der Kirche (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1960).

[15]Otto Betz, "The Kerygma of Luke," Interpretation 22 (1968): 131-46.

[16]J.-Ch. Emmelius, Tendenzkritik und Formengeschichte. Der Beitrag Franz Overbecks zur Auslegung der Apostelgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert, Vol. 27 of Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975).

[17]J. Kremer, "Einführung in die Problematik heutiger Acta-Forschung anhand von Apg 17,10-13," in Les Actes des Apôtres. Traditions, rédaction, théologie, ed. J. Kremer (Leuven: University Press, 1979), 11-20.

[18]J. C. O'Neill, "Commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles," Theology 61 (1958): 140-43.

[19]R. F. O'Toole, "Why Did Luke Write Acts (Lk-Acts)?" Biblical Theology Bulletin 7 (1977): 66-76.

[20]A. Theissen, "Catholic Bibliography of Acts, Catholic Epistles and Apocalypse," Scripture 2 (1947): 53-57.

[21]M. M. B. Turner, "The Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts. A Survey of Modern Scholarship," Trinity Journal 2 (1981): 131-58.

[22]Gasque, History, 7-8; Bieder, Historie, 4-10. Also helpful is the brief survey by Ernst Haenchen, Die Apostelgeschichte, vol. 3 of Meyer's Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 16th rev. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977), 17-29. [Eng. trans. of 14th ed.: The Acts of the Apostles. A Commentary. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971.]. (Hereafter pagination will be from English translation unless later German edition varies.)

Some nineteen authors treated in either homilies or commentaries this New Testament book.[23] The Reformation era brought new focus on studying Acts and numerous publications emerged during this time.[24] Calvin's commentaries on Acts stand among the more lasting contributions from this time. But other names should not be overlooked such as Erasmus, Hugo Grotius, John Lightfoot, J. A. Bengel, and William Paley.[25] Certain Catholic exegetes contributed much: Joachim Camerarius, Aretius, Joh. Lorinus, and Caspar Sanctius (Sanchez Gaspar).

The critical era begins with the emphasis of the F.C. Baur Tübingen school in the so-called Tendenzkritik methodology.[26] The older tendency to view Acts as a history of all the apostles for all the church began to weaken as exegetes sensed the very fragmentary nature of Luke's presentation of history which focused in reality mainly on Peter and Paul. Why did Luke write this way? This question of intentionality began to be probed and generally turned one of two directions: either Luke was **unwilling** to include more (very pivotal to the Lukan purpose issue) or he was **unable** to write more (central to the question of sources).

The Lukan selectivity prompted many to contend for various views of purpose, the identification of which was assumed as essential for correct interpretation of the text. The most influential position was the dialectical understanding advocated by F. C. Baur. The resolution (synthesis) of the Jewish (thesis)/Gentile (antithesis) Christian conflict of the apostolic era is to be found in Luke's effort to bring back together these two feuding parties in early Christianity through demonstrating the basic unity between them by his account in Acts. This position generated enough discussion and debate to last well over a century -- and still is a source of occasional debate!

The rival position focused on the question of sources as the way to account for the selectivity in Acts: it was predicated on the incompleteness of his sources. Numerous names surface here in regard to a variety of postulations about the extent and the trustworthiness of the Lukan sources: B. L. Königsmann, J. G. Eichhorn, Friedrich Schleiermacher, E. Schwanbeck [first phase]; Bernhard Weiss, Paul Feine, Friedrich Spitta [high point]; C. Clemen, Adolf Hilgenfeld. Friedrich Blass' later revision in Rome thesis, thus creating a later 'Eastern text' found adherents in Theodor Zahn and Eberhard Nestle with modifications. But the final major source critical effort before Dibelius in the twentieth century was that of Harnack.[27]

British conservative reaction to these early critical approaches includes such names as Henry Alford, W. J. Conybeare, Samuel Davidson, J. B. Lightfoot, F. W. Farrar, Sir John Hawkins, Richard J. Knowling (EGT volume on Acts) and Sir William Ramsay. Of all these individuals Lightfoot ranks as the major critic and influence on British scholarship, though Ramsay's mark was deep and pervasive.[28]

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed numerous directions and influences in Acts research.[29] Critical approaches generally come under the Formgeschichte method refined primarily by Martin Dibelius in regard to Acts.[30] He begin

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[23]Gasque, History, 7.

[24]Gasque, History, 8, counts 187 listings from Mattills' Bibliography. Bieder, Historie, 11-17, discusses many of the major works during the Reformationszeit including both Protestant and Catholic.

[25]Gasque, History, 8-20, surveys the Protestant side mainly. Bieder, Historie, 11-17, corrects this imbalance by calling attention to the Catholic contribution, as well as that coming from the circles of Zwingli.

[26]Gasque, History, 21-135; Haenchen, Acts, 14-24; Bieder, Historie, 27-37.

[27]Adolf von Harnack, The Acts of the Apostles, trans. J. R. Wilkinson (New York: Putnam, 1909); and The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels, trans. J. R. Wilkinson (New York: Putnam, 1911). For a helpful summary and critique of Harnack, see Gerhard Schneider, Die Apostelgeschichte, vol. 5.1 of Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 85-89.

[28]Gasque, History, 107-35.

[29]Gasque, History, 136-250; Bieder, Historie, 38-47; Haenchen, Acts, 34-39.

publishing individual articles related to Acts in 1923, after his epoch making work on the Synoptic Gospels begun in 1919. These articles were collected and first published together in 1953 after his untimely death in 1947.[31] Dibelius found in Acts only a large "Itinerar"[32] comprising Acts 13.1-14.28; 15.35-21.16 as a single source from which Luke drew. Most of Acts is made up of "in sich geschlossener Einzelgeschichten" which he frequently labeled "Legenden" in association with the same label for the gospel material he earlier had isolated.[33] The pure Lukan insertions into the narrative are the so-called summaries, Lukan reworkings and expansions of some Legenden, Lukan links of various kinds between the sources and the speeches which Luke himself composed.

The issue of historicity which had preoccupied the earlier source critical concerns now had to be determined source by source, rather than by fiat. For him the Itinerar came out much more favorably than did the numerous smaller units. The Lukan composition of the speeches--assumed to have Stoic philosophical presuppositions--became the basis for detecting the theological/historical aim of the author. This was the demonstration of the repeated proclamation of the Kerygma in the early church as the basis of its life and spiritual existence. Luke, in Acts especially, became the Evangelist, much more than just a historian.[34] Thus Dibelius' work set the agenda for much of critical scholarship on Acts from the fifties on. It remained for Ernst Haenchen to implement fully Dibelius' methodology in a systematic treatment of the text of Acts in 1959.

During the same era as Dibelius, an entirely different stream of Acts research and writing was taking place in Great Britain and in America.[35] The fountain head of this direction in America was established in the five volume treatment of Acts by F. J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake which first began to appear in 1920.[36] Growing out of his work in this series were the subsequent contributions of H. J. Cadbury, The Making of Luke-Acts (1927) and The Book of Acts in History (1955). Interestingly, Haenchen observes concerning Cadbury's later work: "The connections of Acts with all the elements of its time have probably never been so illuminatingly and convincingly presented as here, through the medium of Cadbury's sovereign command of the primary and secondary literature involved."[37] Also significant to this era was the work of B. S. Easton, The Purpose of Acts (1936). Easton "argues for a dual purpose for Acts, corresponding to two types of readers which the author has in mind. Luke was concerned to edify his fellow Christians, on the one hand, and to offer a defense of Christianity to Theophilus, 'a Roman official of some standing' who was 'not a Christian', and hence (presumably) to other cultured non-Christians."[38] The purely British stream[39] continued to flow in the historically oriented stream as pioneered by Lightfoot and

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[30]For an essentially positive assessment of Dibelius see Haenchen, Acts, 34-37; for a highly critical one, Gasque, History, 201-250. The term Formgeschichte is a bit misleading, although a commonly applied label to Dibelius' work. His own term was Stilkritik.

[31]Martin Dibelius, Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte, rev. ed., ed. Heinrich Greeven (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957). [Eng. trans.: Studies in the Acts of the Apostles. New York: Scribners, 1956.]

[32]'travel-journal'

[33]Dibelius, Aufsätze, 17-28.

[34]For critique of Dibelius and his successors at this point see Otto Betz, "The Kerygma of Luke," Interpretation 22 (1968): 131-46.

[35]Gasque, History, 164-200; Haenchen, Acts, 37-38; F. F. Bruce, "The True Apostolic Succession. Recent Study of the Book of Acts," Interpretation 13 (1959): 131-34.

[36]F. J. Foakes Jackson, and K. Lake, eds., The Beginnings of Christianity, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1920-23). Vols. 1 & 2 are background issues such as authorship etc. which gather up the full gammet of scholarly opinion prior to 1920. Vol. 3 is a treatment of textual critical concerns; Vol. 4 the commentary proper on the text; and Vol. 5 contains a series of excurses relating to exegetical issues raised in the commentary. Numerous scholars in America, Great Britain and on the European Continent contributed articles.

[37]Haenchen, Acts, 43-44.

[38]Gasque, History, 194.

Ramsay.[40] One particularly vigorous writer in this British tradition was W. L. Knox of Cambrige between 1925 and 1948.[41]

Current Trends

The period from the fifties to the present is intended by this designation. The comment of François Bovon suggests the reason for marking off the fifties as the beginning of a new era: "The early 1950s marked a turning point in Lucan research, beginning with the works of J. Dupont and P. Vielhauer, followed closely by the first redactional study of a gospel, that of H. Conzelmann (1954), and by E. Haenchen's commentary on the Acts of the Apostles."[42] The goal is to survey that new direction in regard to research on Acts.

The central work which has generated extensive response was the commentary by Haenchen in the Meyer's series, although the earlier work of Philipp Vielhauer sparked a lot of reaction.[43] Vielhauer contended that the Lukan picture of Paul in Acts stands at odds with the Pauline primary sources at almost every major point. Hans Conzelmann picked up on this as a part of his work on the Gospel in Die Mitte der Zeit. Haenchen, however, moderates this more extreme position:[44]

> "No, the real subject of Acts is the οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ and its growth. It is certainly proclaimed by men and authenticated by God through signs and miracles. This theology is no steep tumble from the Pauline heights--for on those heights Luke never stood. His teaching is one of the many variants of Gentile Christian theology which--more or less independent of the great Apostle to the gentiles--grew up alongside and after the theology of Paul."

In the application of Dibelius' methods to Acts, Haenchen differed from him in several points. For example, Haenchen found "extraordinarily little evidence that Luke used sources for his work; he exercised his creative genius upon minimal historical materials."[45] Such brought an objection from Rudolf Bultmann[46] which in turn generated a response from Haenchen.[47] For Haenchen Acts is an Ergauungsbuch, a writing for the edification of the church of the author's day. The theological perception of Acts is similar to that of Conzelmann.

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[39]The above listed men often were of British birth, although their writings appeared while teaching in American schools.

[40]Ibid., 250-66; Haechen, Acts, 37-38, 41-44.

[41]St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem (1925); St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles (1939); Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity (1944); The Acts of the Apostles (1948).

[42]François Bovon, "Recent trends in Lucan studies," Theology Digest 25 (1977): 217.

[43]Philipp Vielhauer, "Zum 'Paulinismus' der Apostelgeschichte," Evangelische Theologie 10 (1950/51): 1-15. See Haenchen, Acts, 48, fn. 1, for catalogue of Vielhauer's contributions. For critique see Joachim Rohde, Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists, trans. by Dorothea M. Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 190-94.

[44]Haenchen, Acts, 49.

[45]Marshall, "Recent Study," 293. For more detailed critique see Erich Gräßer, "Die Apostelgeschichte in der Forschung der Gegenwart," Theologische Rundschau 26 (1960): 102-07. For assessment of changes in the first three revisions see Erich Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung seit 1960," Theologische Rundschau 41 (1976): 149-54; Rohde, Rediscovering, 194-202.

[46]"Zur Frage nach den Quellen der Apostelgeschichte," in New Testament Essays in Memory of T. W. Manson, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (n.p.: n.p., 1959), 68-80.

[47]"Quellenanalyse und Kompositionsanalyse in Act 15," in Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias, ed. W. Eltester (n.p.: n.p., 1960), 153-64.

Closely connected to Haenchen's work was the commentary on Acts first released in 1963 by Hans Conzelmann.[48] Marshall characterizes it as follows:[49]

> The commentary is terse and factual, strong on philological details and **religionsgeschichtliche** parallels, and it does little to bring out the theological message of Acts. The author's radical historical skepticism often appears highly arbitrary, since he had not space to present evidence for his conclusion."

Conzelmann's presuppositions in the earlier work are carried out in Acts: "Sein eigentliches Profil gewinnt dieser Kommentar jedoch durch die klar herausgearbeitete **Theologie des Lukas**."[50]

More conservative reactions to both these works may be found in a variety of circles. In Germany the 1963 work on Acts by G. Stählin in the Das Neue Testament Deutsch series presupposes a much higher level of historical reliability.[51] Pre-dating these and in dialogue with Dibelius, but still affirming the more conservative position is the work of F. F. Bruce in the New International Commentary on Acts.[52] A revised, updated edition of this commentary appeared in 1988 whereby Prof. Bruce attempts to interact with the scholarly production subsequent to his first release. Also in the same vein is the work of J. Dupont[53] and the work of Etienne Trocmé.[54] The commentary by R. P. C. Hanson in The New Clarendon Bible in 1967 also adopts a more conservative stance about the historical value of Acts, as did the earlier work by C. S. C. Williams in Black's New Testament Commentaries in 1957.[55]

The situation with commentary level work on Acts from the late 70's into the early 80's is largely focused in Germany on the works of Schneider,[56] Weiser,[57] Roloff,[58] and Schmithals.[59] Additionally, the earlier works of Haenchen and Conzel-

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[48]Die Apostelgeschichte erklärt, 2nd rev. ed., in Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1972).

[49]Marshall, "Recent Study," 293.

[50]Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung," 41:155.

[51]For critique see Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung," 41:157-59.

[52]The Book of Acts. The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954).

[53]See bibliographical listing for him in section 2 of bibliography for several publications. For summation of his work see Gasque, History, 297-98.

[54]Le 'Livre des Actes' et l'historie (Paris: Gabalda, 1957); "The Beginnings of Christian Historiography and the History of Early Christianity," Australian Biblical Review 31 (October 1983): 1-13.

[55]Haenchen's pointed critique about Williams' work is "Since Williams simply fails to see many of the historical and literary problems, they do not disturb him and he has no occasion to avail himself of Dibelius' ideas" [Acts, 43]. For survey of additional commentaries on Acts post Haenchen see Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung," 41:159-62.

[56]Gerhard Schneider, Die Apostelgeschichte, vols. 5.1 & 5.2 of Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1980, 1982).

[57]Alfons Weiser, Die Apostelgeschichte, 2 vols. in Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentare zum Neuen Testament (Göttingen: Gütersloher, 1981, 1985).

[58]Jürgen Roloff, Die Apostelgeschichte, vol. 5 of Das Neue Testament Deutsch, 17th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981).

mann have undergone successive revisions.[60] Of the new works the massive two volume treatment by Gerhard Schneider representing a more conservative German Catholic perspective is the most significant: "Ein Werk von beinahe monumentalem Ausmaß stellt Schneiders Kommentar dar."[61] In American evangelical circles one commentary conversant with critical scholarship is that in 1981 by Richard Longenecker in the Expositor's Bible Commentary series. Of lesser value because of the non-technical orientation of the series is the 1985 release on Acts in the Harper's Good News Commentary series by David J. Williams.

Most of the recent work on Acts--and there has been "der immer breiter fließende Strom" to use Plümacher's term--has been in the form of articles either in journals or Festschrifts dealing with individual topics. These usually fall into the following categories: questions about the text of Acts, especially the Western text[62]; the sources used by Luke in writing Acts[63]; the literary composition of Acts, especially the speeches[64]; and Acts as history and theology.[65]

The summation of the matter is unfortunately well put by Smith:[66]

> "Most work on Acts appears to fall into one of two schools of thought: one of these, which may be called conservative, emphasizes Luke's reliability as an historian, and the other, following form and redaction critical approaches is less tied to questions of historical accuracy. In each case, there is a tendency for scholars to trace the inheritance of their ideas through a particular line of research, frequently associated with the professors under whom they studied."

More than ever there needs to come about some crossing of the bridges so as to facilitate more dialogue. To be sure this has increasingly become the case in the last decade or so, but there is yet great need for more of it to take place. From the evangelical side, the highly polemical tone characterizing Gasque's work is out of place and a barrier to this needed dialogue. The work of Longenecker and others in the British and American scenes represents a much more positive, fruitful approach. More awareness of the German scholars of the alternative views is encouraging also.

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[59]Walter Schmithals, Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas. vol. 3.2 of Zürcher Bibelkommentare (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1982.)

[60]For survey of these revisions and the newly published commentaries see Eckhard Plümacher, "Acta-Forschung 1974-1982," Theologische Rundschau 48 (1983): 8-24.

[61]Plümacher, "Acta-Forschung," 48:10.

[62]For surveys of this issue see Mattill, Bibliography, 95-121 (listings 1,182-1,560), Marshall, "Recent Studies," 293-94; A. F. J. Klijn, "A Survey of Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts (1949-59)," Novum Testamentum 3 (1959): 1-27; also, A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts (Part Two, 1949-69) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969); Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung," 41:163-86; Plümacher, "Acta-Forschung," 49:113-20.

[63]For surveys of this see Mattill, Bibliography, 157-65 (listings 2,097-2,219); Marshall, "Recent Studies," 294; Gräßer, "Apg," 26:123-30; Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung," 41:186-94; Plümacher, "Acta-Forschung," 120-38; Schneider, HTKNT, 1:82-89; J. Dupont, The Sources of Acts, trans. K. Pond (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964); Marion E. Smith, The Acts of the Apostles: A Review of Recent Research (Roehampton: Roehampton Institute of Higher Education, 1979), 30-40.

[64]For surveys see Mattill, Bibliography, 165-73 (listings 2,230-2,338); Gräßer, "Apg," 26:131-59; Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung," 41:273-90; Plümacher, "Acta-Forschung," 49:138-53; Rohde, Rediscovering, 202-27; Smith, Review, 41-48.

[65]For surveys see Mattill, Bibliography, 181-321 (listings 2,430-4,530); Marshall, "Recent Studies," 295-96; I. Howard Marshall, Luke: Historian and Theologian (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1970), 69-76; Gräßer, "Apg," 26:162-67; Gräßer, "Acta-Forschung," 273-90; Plümacher, "Acta-Forschung," 49:158-69; Smith, Review, 3-14; Bovon, "Recent Trends," 217-24.

[66]Smith, Review, 64. For detailed summation see 64-71.

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[67]Only a very select listing is given here. For full listing see Mattill, A Classified Bibliography of Literature on the Acts of the Apostles, Section II: "General Studies" containing mostly commentaries (reference listings 64-1181).

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