Mimicry of Power: The subservient Paul and the Jewish-Christian Sanhedrin in Acts 21
Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo, Andrews University

Introduction

Studies in Acts on “the role of leadership in the politics of power among the nascent Jewish-Christians” are scarce. The issue of leadership has been studied in general terms under two main fronts; between the understanding of ‘charisma,’ and the primacy of the ‘office.’ The first one was based on the letters of Paul; and the latter, on its development during the second century CE, of the hierarchical institutional structure with the creation of the ‘office’ and ‘apostolic successions’—in which the bishops as disciples of the apostles lead to a monarchical episcopate. All these studies seem to be competing for an unfinished ecclesiology of power.

I would argue for a more Jewish oriented model based on the Sanhedrin and the synagogue with the institutions of Judaism. This paper focuses on the representations of the structures of power in Acts 20-24 in general and in particular to the encounter of Paul with the Jewish-Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (Acts 21). I argue that the constitution of James and the elders as a Christian Jewish Sanhedrin was an act of mimicry of the Jewish Sanhedrin. This shift was not only from the power of the traditional center of Judaism, but also as a new establishment of the Jewish-Christian Church in Jerusalem in opposition to the apostle to the Gentiles. The Jewish-Christian council of elders in an ambivalent attitude denies the rights of defense of the apostle Paul, making him submit to the establishment of the Jerusalem-temple, utterly obliterating his public ministry. In addition, the council according to its theological-political propaganda for power utilizes the Jewish Sanhedrin to get rid of Paul. I maintain that Luke represents what I call a “hybrid Paul—a Lukan Paul” though not as a rebel revolutionary against the customs of the ancestors, but as a subservient disciple, being obedient to this newest structure of power and leadership. I think, Luke ‘domesticates’ Paul into a more ‘organization man’ palatable to a Christianity that is becoming institutionalized. In this complex stance, the Jewish-Christian elite scrutinize his teaching system—seeing him as competition also among the believers. At the same time perhaps, accepting the monetary gifts for the poor of Judah, though the collection is ignored in the text. The issue escalates when there is neither intercession, nor any defense against the Jewish Sanhedrin to the hyperbolic involvement of the “whole city” and the symbolic act of “the shutting down of the temple,” thus silencing Paul.

My methodological framework is based on the one hand, on categories of Postcolonial criticism and Cultural Studies, such as mimicry, alterity, identity, difference, mockery, resistance, and hybridity; and on the other hand, on literary, comparative and intertextual exegetical methods. I will review the structures of power displayed in the encounter of the apostle Paul in front of the Jerusalem leadership—
James and all the elders as reflected in Acts 21. In the sections that follow, I will make a brief description on the historical review between the views on “charisma and office; to later explain the terms of Sanhedrin, elders- presbuteros and bishops- episkopos in their social context as foundation for a postcolonial reading of Acts 21, and a final conclusion.

“Charisma vs. Office”—a brief review

The publication of Rudolph Sohm’s charismatic thesis in 1892, challenged the Protestant position of the church as voluntary associations based on Greek models, which saw the work and leadership of the apostles, prophets, and teachers under almost democratic decisions of the community in matter of preaching, teaching and administration but later regulated by presbyters and episcopes. E. Nardoni characterizes Sohm’s thesis as “being charismatic by origin and nature, the Church is [seen as] a spiritual and supernatural entity, independent of any human, ecclesiastical organization and, therefore, free from any human law. This charismatic autonomy is valid for the universal and for the local church as well, because the latter is nothing else than the embodiment of the former.”

Sohm, a jurist by profession rather than a theologian, marked with great anti-Catholicism and moved by the Lutheran concept of the inner and invisible church, idealizes the early Christian church as led only by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Olof Linton, commenting on Sohm’s thesis, states, “Church and right are incompatible... The only alternative is either divine church right or no church right. A third possibility—a human church right—does not exist.”

The emphasis was on a “charismatic institution.” Some years later sociologist Max Weber (1922) expanded the definition of charisma as “a property attributed to great innovating personalities who disrupt traditionally and rational-legally legitimated systems of authority and who establish or


3 Nardoni, 647. Following Paul, Sohm says that the Church is the Body of Christ and Christ has only one Body. Where Christ is, there the whole Church is where two or three are gathered in Christ's name (Matt 18:20), there the Church is present (Kirchenrecht 120) [3] Rudolph Sohm, Kirchenrecht 1: Die geschichtlichen Grundlagen (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1892). On Sohn's biographical information, see S. Grundmann, “Sohn, Rudolph,” Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart 6 (1962) 116-17; T. D. Dougherty, “Sohn, Rudolph,” New Catholic Encyclopedia 13 (1967), 413.

4 Quoted by Nardoni, 647.
aspire to establish a system of authority claiming to be legitimated by the direct experience of divine grace."

Defenders of Sohmian views, especially those anti-institutionalists who either for missiological practices or as anti-Catholics, explain that the distinction between the office and the function of the one-who-is-sent—the meaning of the term *apostolos*—point out that the earliest usage of the term describes a preacher of the gospel. In addition, charismatics following Weber express issues of hierarchy between extraordinary and ordinary with a marked “non-routine activity.” There have been detractors to argue that the idealized ‘charismatic’ church order attributed to Paul by the heirs of Sohm is “a myth born of wishful exegesis of the Pauline letters.” Thus, Sohm does not seem to recognize the leadership of the Jerusalem church over the Lukan Paul. This idealistic view of early church does not reflect the discrepancies and differences of other apostles, prophets or teachers being also led by the Spirit or the charismata. I argue that the view of the Lutheran invisible church rid, of any human institution, does not correspond to the reality of Acts. This concept of autonomy reflects the desire of scholars to see the church as autonomous and democratic. Acts reflects the supremacy of the Jerusalem church in Samaria and Antioch of Syria having heard about the ‘new’ developments of the *ekklesia*. To negate the synagogue as voluntary associations reflects the biases of scholars of making any connection with Judaism as early as in the 50-60’s. Synagogues were also voluntary associations.

The need to understand this historical representation comes from all venues of Christianity. Some caution us that “a typical approach to ecclesiology among the Orthodox has been a highly triumphalist view of the Church.” Others seek for a ‘common ground’ between the relationships of members and its leaders; either pastors, presbyters, bishops, or other representatives, especially when it...


7 Campbell, 250, citing Max Weber’s phrase, activity characterized by *Ausseralltäglichkeit*. The following citation is in order here to understand the issues of supremacy an ordinariness that will motivate the hierarchical development of rank in the church: “The “extraordinariness” (*Ausseralltäglichkeit*) of these charismatic persons is not simply statistical infrequency; rather, it is the intense and concentrated form in which they possess or are thought to possess qualities which are only slightly present in routine actions. Routine actions are those which are governed mainly by motives of moderate, personal attachment, by considerations of convenience and advantage, and by anxiety to avoid failure in conforming to the immediate expectations and demands of peers and superiors. Routine actions are not simply repetitive actions; they are uninspired actions in which immediately prospective gratifications and the demands of immediate situations and of obligations to those who are close at hand play a greater part than does the link with transcendent things. If any charismatic attribution is present in the pattern of routine action, it is not dominant and certainly is not vividly perceived. From http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Charisma.aspx accessed July 10, 2013, italics my emphasis.


is leaders are perceived as the “channels or link-pin until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” between God and the parishioners.\footnote{Harakas’s phrase, 150.}

On the other hand, followers of the models from the institutions of Judaism, warn us that the reconstructions have been based on either “bearing false witness”\footnote{A-J. Levine, “Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made About Early Judaism” in The Jewish Annotated New Testament, NRSV, (Oxford/New York, Oxford, 2011), 501-504.} or not understanding the realities of idealized unhistorical documents written much later than the historical realities.\footnote{The “precise nature of leadership roles” was based on what they knew of Jewish life- Sanhedrin, elders of the city or the Roman voluntary associations. See Wayne Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul, (New Haven: Yale, 1983), 75-84. See also, Philip A. Harland, Associations, Synagogues and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.} Thus, E. P. Sanders\footnote{E. P. Sanders, Judaism: Practice & Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE, (London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Trinity Press International, 1994), 459.} and Jacob Neusner advise us not to follow the Mishnah descriptions or those of any other later documents, as the Talmud too closely since there are several layers of anachronisms and an idealization of the life in previous centuries. The same advice applies to the documents from the Church Fathers, such Ignatius or the Didache, which represent different institutionalized realities of the church.

To approach the issue in biblical terms, there are several paradigms to follow. These are based on reconstructions of sources and their use of the biblical terms. A review of the common terms will explain this problem. For example, the term charisma or charismata coined by Paul is a non-existent term in the LXX, the Gospels, Acts or the rest of the NT. Similarly when considering offices or positions of leadership, the reader is surprised to find 'disciples— mathētēs,’ applied first by the Gospels to the followers of John, Jesus and later to the early disciples in the book of Acts. However, the term is never in reference to Paul or used in any of his letters. Similarly, the title of apostle—from the root apostellō, found in the Gospels, is confounded with another group of leaders “the Twelve” or the “Seventy,” chosen by Jesus who continue their ministry in Acts. Later in the narrative of Acts, the reader encounters ‘new apostles’ which disappear quickly. The Lukan Paul functioned through the system of synagogues and also “from house to house” and “from ekklesia to ekklesia.” Synagogues are non-existent in the letters bearing the name of Paul—the canonical. In addition, the terms of presbyter-presbuteros and episcocope-episkopos are also conflictive, since presbuteroi appears in Acts as leaders in Jerusalem, Lycaonia, Ephesus and other churches, but never in the letters of Paul. The late title of episkopos appears only three times in the letters of Paul (Phil, 2 Tim, Tit), especially of those classified as ‘Pastorals’ and considered by some as non-Pauline. Only once in Acts 20 does it have an ambivalent meaning. Furthermore, the hierarchical understanding of bishops-elders-deacons is non-existent in the NT.\footnote{Acts list other titles: prophets, teachers and combinations of “apostles and elders”; “James and the elders.”}
thoughts heard from the highest authority within the person’s social hierarchy… Experts of knowledge serve to objectify thought. They present the opinions of the society’s chief authorities as objective truth, somehow inherent in the nature of the universe and therefore immutable, immediately obvious to sense perception, even if the populace never receives the opportunity to verify such perception.\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, cultural studies make clear the biased presuppositions of modern authors who read these and other documents in order to reconstruct theology and/or authorial intentions. Correspondingly, Joseph Blenkinsopp concluding his study of “Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel” recognizes that,

one of the most significant intellectual and religious achievements of ancient Israel, in contrast to the great empires, …[was] the establishment of an autonomous sphere of law, independent of the will of a ruler… [in which] the law and its interpretation rather than the will of a ruler was always the ultimate court of appeal.\textsuperscript{17}

This understanding of a corporal management of leadership functions makes more plausible the charges against Paul by the Jewish-Christian Sanhedrin. On the other hand, I argue that the Lukan Paul is subverting the markers of national identity of people and systems of privilege. Subverting to the power of the groups who are ruling upsets the social-structures of identity. Jon L. Berquist reminded us that all these religious and intellectual leaderships “existed only within an institutionalized, bureaucratic social organization”\textsuperscript{18} which was a specific social hierarchy of power. Destabilizing this structure meant an effort to usurp the identity of power of “social maintenance”\textsuperscript{19} of the nascent Christian group.

The institution of the Sanhedrin

In order to understand the role of the Sanhedrin as one of the representations of the structures of power that the Jewish-Christian sect emulates, a number of brief observations are in order regarding its composition, function, and role as a center of power both dependent on and independent of the Romans. The Gerousia–Sanhedrin have been in implementation according to Josephus, since 57 BCE, when Syria Governor—Gabinius requested it.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{18} Jon L. Berquist, 167, in the context of sages and scribes that easily can be compared to the role of the elders interprets of the civil-religious laws.

\textsuperscript{19} Berquist’s expression.

\textsuperscript{20} SANHEDRIN (): Hebrew-Aramaic term originally designating only the assembly at Jerusalem that constituted the highest political magistracy of the country. It was derived from the Greek συνέδριον. Josephus uses συνεδριον for the first time in connection with the decree of the Roman governor of Syria, Gabinius (57 B.C.), who abolished the constitution and the then existing form of government of Palestine and divided the country into five provinces, at the head of each of which a Sanhedrin was placed (“Ant.” xiv. 5, § 4). Taken from, http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13178-sanhedrin.
Forum on Public Policy

Josephus, made up the composition of three groups, First, “Elders representing various tribe and important families”; Second all “former high priests”; Third, “Scribes, experts in Mosaic law mostly drawn from the ranks of the Pharisees.” The Romans authorized five local councils located in “Jerusalem, Sepphoris (Galilee), Jericho, Gadara and Amathus on the island of Cyprus.”

After the death of Herod and Archelaus, “the authority again increased, the internal government of the country being largely in its hands. The Sanhedrin administered criminal law and had independent powers of police. Hence, it had the right to make arrests through its own officers of justice. Finally, this Sanhedrin, since it was a political authority, ceased to exist when the Jewish state perished with the destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE).”

Grabbe reviewing the different sources of leadership during the Second temple period—from the times of Yehud as a Persian province, passing through the Seleucids, the Ptolemy, the Maccabean, the Hasmoneans, to the Apocrypha, Josephus to final Christian sources—shows clearly the existence of a continuous group-institution. Though it may have different names such as sunhedrion, gerousia, boule, bouletorion, it exerted power and was recognized even by their oppressors. He finally concludes that, “these bodies seem to have similar characteristics and similar functions. The simplest hypothesis is that there was a continuing body rather than that they refer to several different bodies.”

Concerning the authority of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish encyclopedia states that, “There are no references to indicate whence the Sanhedrin derived its authority or by whom it was elected.” Likewise, its composition and membership, location of the meetings and function is not clear; however, after the Roman procurators, the Sanhedrin acquires a more secular tone, even separated from the temple, “It may have been for the same reason that the body was subsequently excluded entirely from the Temple, inasmuch as the latter and its apartments were intended for the cult and matters connected with it, while the discussions and decrees of this Sanhedrin were political and secular in nature.”

Grabbe thinks that the account of Hecataeus of Abdera, (c.300 BCE) describes a too idealistic view of the Jewish assemblies. Hacataeus states that the Jews though they do not have a king, the authority over the people is regularly vested in whichever priest is regarded as superior to his colleagues in wisdom and virtue... it is he, we are told, who in their assemblies and other gatherings

21 Alice Camille, “Seventy angry men: Who were the 70 elders of the Sanhedrin, and how did they get to be the deciders of Jesus’s fate?, U.S. Catholic, April 2013, 44-46, 45.
announces what is ordained, and the Jews are so docile in such matters that straightway they fall to the
ground and do reverence to the high priest when he expounds the commandments to them.\footnote{28}
The NT describes the respect with the high priests was held both in the gospels and Acts. Jesus and
Paul are punished for speaking against the high priests, but not to the point of prostration.

The case of independent power has created some confusion. For example, E. Mary Smallwood
summarizes the composition and powers of the Sanhedrin as having two main functions: one political
and the other religious/legislative. She states,
The question of the composition, powers and presidency of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem is intensely
complicated… the majority opinion now appears to favor Büchler’s view that there were [two]
Sanhedrins: the Sanhedrin to which Josephus frequently refers was a political council with judicial
functions, meeting under the presidency of the Hasmonean Priest-Kings and later of the High Priests;
[the second one], the Great Sanhedrin of seventy or seventy-one members to which the Mishnah and
the Talmud frequently refer was a separate council with primarily religious and legislative functions,
though it had some rarely used judicial powers also, and unlike the other, survived the fall of the
Temple in A.D. 70. The political Sanhedrin tended to be Sadducean, while the religious Sanhedrin,
after some vicissitudes, had developed into a predominantly Pharisean body under the preserve of the
rabbis.\footnote{29}

Here, however, Smallwood discusses the Sanhedrin in the time of Hyrcanus, the exiled High Priest in
the final part of the almost independent reign of the Hasmoneans, which is quite different to what the
Sanhedrin was like during the Roman occupation of the first century.

In reality, recent studies on the Sanhedrin stress the recent debate/position of negating previous
understanding based on the readings from the Mishnah b. Sanhedrin.\footnote{30} But the Mishnah and the Talmud
are considered to be as late documents that do not reflect altogether the first century reality. However,
Sanders argues that different views of interpretation and disputes on halakah among different groups
and sects in Judaism—but especially among Pharisees, calling themselves ‘not only true Jews, or nor
only true Pharisees’— recall the standard high view of the Mishnah, regardless if this referred to a
historical situation of the year 20 or 220 CE. This means that even after endless discussions and
confrontations, those “special rules made them Pharisees and not the only people who observed the
law.” \footnote{31} Likewise, Jacob Neusner’s perspective on the tannaitic material is that “the older secondary
studies are generally quite unreliable in their use of rabbinic sources for historical purposes.”\footnote{32} David
Goodblatt argues that citing unhistorical sources as the book of Judith, with its many during a Neo-
Babylonian errors does not help to illustrate the reality of a historical situation. A similar argument is
made to the Rabbinical material of Yavneh—after the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 CE—adducing the
existence and presence of a king in Israel. Goodblatt speaks of “fragmentary nature of the documentation” concerning the sources for the constitution and functioning of the Sanhedrin. He finally speaks of “the theory of conciliar supremacy, then, is based on rabbinical idea. It is the tannaitic master who projected a dominant council back into biblical times… But for the second temple era, conciliar supremacy is a scholarly myth.” However, his criticism is based on the concept of ‘conciliar supremacy’ and does not negate the existence of the Sanhedrin as an institution.

Grabbe discussing the precise connotation of the term boulē or “council, senate” as the main ruling bodies within a Greek city quotes V. A. Tcherikover who “argued that it was not the city council of a Greek city, as one might think, but was a Jewish body that had responsibility for the nation rather than just the city of Jerusalem” He concludes, “For an institute like the Sanhedrin that existed over many centuries, a variety of terms in the sources would hardly be surprising, especially if none of the Greek terms quite fitted an originally Semitic institution.” Though Grabbe clarifies that he is not writing the article as a response to Goodblatt, he argues that the presence of the group with many names must be based on a historical representation of this leadership.

This brief review demonstrates the composition and function of an institution of power that the nascent group mimics in Acts.

Testimony of Acts

Of the twenty-two instances of the word Sanhedrin in the NT, less than half are found in Acts. Acts and the gospels do not distinguish between two Sanhedrins. Acts 4-5 views the high priesthood, rulers, elders, and scribes not only as a political-judicial and religious group enforcing public order, but also as the representatives of “authority and power” (cf. 4:7, “By what power or by what name did you do this?”)

In Acts, the Pharisee Gamaliel recognizes that previously the Sanhedrin had dealt with other cases of supposed insurrection against the existing powers and authorities. Although Acts is silent regarding whether the Council was responsible for their deaths – the text just reads: “but he was killed;” Gamaliel does advise the group: “Consider carefully what you propose to do” (5:35). Acts shows that the Sanhedrin wields a variety of power: to arrest (4:3); to flog (5:40); to forbid public speaking (although failing to enforce it, “because of the people” (4:21); to kill by stoning (7:58); to accuse/defend prisoners in front of the Roman Governor (23-24). In this manner, the institution of the Sanhedrin conflicts with the emergence of the new sect “the Way,” that “everything is spoken against it” (28:22).

This opposition has various causes. First, the apostles accuse the leaders as responsible for the death of the Jesus-Messiah (2:23). Second, the charges against Stephen and others that begin with
accusations of spreading against the temple and about profaning it, or against the Law (6:11; 25:8), finish much more broadly with speaking against the customs of our ancestors (perhaps circumcision cf. 15:6) and even against the ancestors themselves (28:17). Third, the new sect opposes the reality of the reestablishment of the kingdom of God to the physical or literal Israel of the rulers and leaders.

I argue that the mimicking establishment of a Jewish-Christian Sanhedrin as displayed in Acts 15 and 21 with power to rule the life of the new *ekklesia* and *plēthēs*—churches, assemblies in all world as the decisions and ratification of the council to rule the way of life. Indeed, the new group seeks the eschatological “times of refreshing” and the “universal restoration” (3:20). The apostles’ accusation against the rulers as killers of the national Messiah, stubbornly refusing to accept the “eschatological prophet,” fulfills the “words of the prophets” who were sent “first” to them and “second” to be the “light to all the nations”, thus announcing the end of the rulers’ leadership and hegemony.

Alon argues that the Sanhedrin was never considered to “have symbolized any kind of territorial sovereignty. This was a socio-political sort of leadership…the element of statehood was distinctly lacking.” However, they did have the position of power and control over the matter of authority. He suggests that we can learn the function of these institutions by looking at how much later practices after the destruction functioned because these derived from previous practices. He states that leadership, In the Homeland over the Jews in the Diaspora derives from the long-established hold of the Jewish authorities – the High Priest and the Sanhedrin – over the scattered Jewries abroad *before* the Destruction. That situation, which had prevailed during the Second Commonwealth, was itself a politico-legal anomaly. Jews who held Roman or Alexandrian citizenship should not, in all reason, have had the right to be judged under the Judean state.

We see in Acts that during the trial of Stephen confirmed this perspective. There, the Jewish leaders do not always expect Roman approval to proceed with their trials. Nonetheless, Alon demonstrates that the Jewish leadership after the destruction of Jerusalem in general continued previous practices, where the Sanhedrin, high priests, and so forth—which he calls the “establishment”—were vital and independent. He states:

Leadership … was not an entirely new phenomenon. Earlier, during the days of the Second Commonwealth, the influence of the scholar-judges, the spokesmen of the Pharisees, had been decisive in matters affecting religious life. They had participated in the Sanhedrin, and had played a role both direct and indirect in social and political life. Of course they had shared the power with the other elements in *the establishment*, namely the High Priesthood, the ordinary priesthood, and the leading families—in effect, the aristocracy.

Although the Priesthood’s central role changed after the destruction of the temple, this does not mean that “there was no role left for the priest to play… from time immemorial they had served as judges and popular leaders; age-old tradition endowed them with authority; and the people continued to look up to them.” Acts demonstrates the true antagonism of the Sanhedrin in authorizing Saul to persecute the Christians in Jerusalem, as well as in other surrounding cities including Damascus. Almost a hundred

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years later, Justin Marty, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, claims that the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem repeated the process by sending delegates and missives to the Diaspora denouncing the Christians.

Similarly, Acts attests to this process — at least with respect to the synagogue of Rome — when the elders claim that “they have not received letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken anything evil about you” (Acts 28:21). This shows at least the common practice of circulating letters and communication between the Jerusalem base and the Diaspora, although the rest of the synagogues are not mentioned. Furthermore, Acts even shows Gamaliel (Rabban Gamaliel the Elder, to Alon) “successfully defending the Apostles against the death penalty which the Sadducees and the High Priest wanted to impose,” again demonstrating the power of the religious-civic body of law.

Moreover, Acts shows that the Pharisees were defending one of their own—Paul—from the attacks of the Sadducees. Josephus in *Ant XX* also relates the Pharisees’ complaint about the death of James the brother of Jesus, mentioning that the “men of Jerusalem” — “that is the Pharisaic Sages” — considered him to be a “just man.”

**Reason for Power**

In seems that Acts has more trials and situations of structures of power than any other book in the Bible. Likewise, there is no reason to believe that the Jewish-Christian new sect—*hairasis* either the Way or the Nazarenes (cf. Acts 24) have not followed the customs of leadership associated in the stream of life of the Jewish people. Likewise, they have established local and even international jurisdiction. I argue that the study of the sources, the testimony of Acts and the Gospels merits natural tendencies to emulate the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, under the leadership of Jacob, Jesus’ brother and “all the elders.”

True, the Sanhedrin reports any decisions on the priest of the temple service as the Jewish Encyclopedia states; however, as I show in the testimony of Acts, the Sanhedrin ruling “exclusively in matters connected with legal procedure, verdicts, and decrees of a political nature” did affect the religious life of the Jewish-Christian sect as well as others as Justin Martyr reveals. Similarly, now the Jewish-Christian institution will deal with the future of Lukan Pauline Christianity.

Though Acts 15 or 21 does not seem to have any direct reference to James with the title of *nasi* or president, the manner of procedures clearly indicate that he is in charge of the decisions as final authority. Early at the beheading of James brother of John and Peter’ deliverance from jail, Acts 12:17 show that James the brother of the Lord has recognized authority when Peter remits to his counsel and
decision. Likewise, at the first Jerusalem council when discussing issues of salvation, circumcision and the impositions to the Gentiles, James is seen as nasi.\textsuperscript{44} Sanders recalls Josephus’ attempt to organize Galilee under a council of seventy, though taking the final decision by himself when he was in charge of Jerusalem. The zealots ordered seventy of the ‘leading citizens to arrange a court’ and receive a trial. Regardless of the court’s decision that acquits Zacharias, the Zealots killed him and drove the ‘seventy-judges’ from the temple. His conclusion is that “Josephus modeled his organization on another court and that the Zealots were mocking regular courts.”\textsuperscript{45} These statements confirm the issue of mimicry and mocking, but at the same time reinforce the idea of supremacy of power of the structures that they mimic in order to legitimate their views.

Another purpose for the establishment of the Christian Sanhedrin is for the ‘semblance of legality. Courts are created to give the structure of order. Sanders commenting on some trials of Herod’s relatives, states that Herod convened a \textit{synedrion} recommended by Augustus in order to give the “semblance of legality” to a decision already taken for elimination.\textsuperscript{46} In other words, the final decision seems to have already been taken by the leader. The trial is propaganda of power and legality. This seems very familiar in the case of the appearance of trial of Paul in front of James and all the elders.

In the context of the trial of James the brother of the Lord, Sanders argues that, “the immediate point is that when there was no procurator in the country, a Sadducean high priest (which Ananus was) could do what he wished, despite the supposed fact that Sadducees always had to do what the Pharisees said. The rabbis ‘laid it down’ on the Mishnah Sanhedrin but often in real life what they ‘laid down’ did not matter. Authority lay elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{47}

The Sanhedrin seems to have life or power of its own, but kings, high priests were used in order to legitimate the process. There is no power or authority nor legislative structures to impose new laws, but to re-interpret law as case studies for the life in the community. The new Christian group, perceived as led by the Spirit needs this body of ‘elders’ to legitimate, apologetically, their results, i.e., “the Spirit and we have decided” (cf. Acts 15). “Herod calls these assemblies, courts when he wished to carry executions.”\textsuperscript{48} Is the new group thinking like Herod, mimicking his strategies motivated by their old-prejudices of supremacy against the Gentiles? Or, perhaps, it is just pure jealousy?

\textbf{Word Studies}

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The gospels recognize the existence of the Sanhedrin as a place of judgment even for calling his brother *Raca* (*Mt* 5:22). The Jesus movement perceived the council with the synagogues as places of judgment and punishment (*Mt* 10:17), even compared to the *Gehenna*, perhaps, as a higher tribunal or council. Mark relates the Council–synagogues and kings as places of punishment and future persecutions. Acts presents the fulfillment of Jesus’ words in a series of three established patterns/formulas: the apostles go directly from the temple police (Acts 4) to the council; Stephen goes from the synagogue to the council (Acts 6); and Paul from the temple to the council, and later before kings.

A brief description on the different words the LXX, NT and Josephus’ use for the governing body in Judaism, as council, senate, Sanhedrin is useful here. This analysis does not pretend to be exhaustive but to shows the relation to our passage. The terminology varies according to the theological agenda of each author, without any fixation to certain patterns. However, it is assumed that this body worked together not for the creation of legislation, but in the interpretation of specific cases. There are at least three or four different words that express these purposes, all of these are in Greek with different parallel meanings in the LXX, the Greek polis and the institutions of power of the Romans, Greeks and Jews. These are: *suneidριον, gerousia, boule* and *symbolion*. There is other related one: *πληθος*—assembly.

The *συνέδριον*, the high council, the Sanhedrin, is the highest indigenous governing body in Judaea composed of 70 members plus the high priest; in local councils consisted of 24.49

Mark 15:1 uses both words *symboulion* and *suneidρion*. The order in the Lukan expression τὸ πρεσβυτέριον τοῦ λαοῦ, ἀρχιερεῖς τε καὶ γραμματεῖς, … εἰς τὸ συνέδριον αὐτῶν – the elders of the people, both priests and scribes… into their council” (Lk 22:66) seems to be important. This is the only passage that mentions synedrion, the council. The question resides in the identity of the *autōn*-them which includes priests, elders and scribes or perhaps this is a reference to the *laos*—people as the depositary of the council.50

The gospel of Matthew in Jesus’ trial (27:1) uses another word, *συμβούλιον*, plan, purpose51, stressing a textual comparison to Acts 21, “brought to all the priests and all elders of the people” (ἐλαβον πάντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβυτέροι τοῦ λαοῦ). Furthermore, contrary to Acts, the author of Matthew uses the word several times to describe the priests and the elders of the people, as the Sanhedrin.

In John 11:47, the reference to Sanhedrin appears only in the event of Lazarus’ resurrection. Furthermore, the gospel does not provide any specific references to ‘where’ the Pharisees brought the blind person healed on the Sabbath (cf. John 9) – perhaps the meeting point here is just a synagogue or a room in the temple. However, the narrator concludes that the Pharisees threw him out (ἐκβάλλω, John

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9:34-35), in the context that refers the expulsion from synagogues (ἀποσυνάγωγος) to anyone who proclaims Jesus as the Messiah (9:22).

Acts refers several times to the apostles and Paul being called to testify to the Sanhedrin. In 5:21, the Sanhedrin appears in addition to the qualifier “all the senate of the sons of Israel (τὸ συνέδριον καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γερουσίαν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ).

The word gerousia—literally, senate appears 36x in the LXX and the NT. Of these, 27 instances refer to the council of presbuteroi or elders of Israel during the wilderness experience—mostly in the Torah and 1x in Joshua. 8x are references to the postexilic period in Judith and 1-2-3 Maccabees.

Acts prefers the word sunedrion and in one instance the word gerousia. However, it is interesting to note the only citation in the NT, Acts 5:21 where the author coupled the words sunedrion kai gerousia, perhaps this is an indication of two different bodies. Similarly, the text of 1 Macc 12:6 refers to the body of priests as separated from the elders.52

Josephus speaking on the context of gerousia, states that the Torah demanded, “Let there be seven men to judge in every city, and these such as have been before most zealous in the exercise of virtue and righteousness. Let every judge have two officers allotted him out of the tribe of Levi. (Ant 4:214). In a different occasion, “let the high priest, the prophet, and the sanhedrin (gerousia) determine” (Antiq. 4:218). Similarly, commenting on the book of Joshua, he associates the elders (gerousia) with the heads of the tribes, but always as a group separated from the high priest. He also uses gerousia for the senate of the Lacedemonians. However, in Wars of the Jews 7:412 (Jwr 7:412) he uses the same term referring to the Jewish Senate – council.

Interestingly Josephus in Ant. 4.218, expands and reinterprets the meaning the Deut 17:8-9, explaining that in hard cases of judicial decisions, the local judges must go the high priest, the prophet and the gerousia to judge. The important addition of ‘prophet and elders’ as the formula of Acts is impressive, perhaps a model that Acts also follows.53

There is another interesting story in Josephus, War 2.318,331, 336, where the Roman Governor Florus (66 CE), a contempory of Luke, assembled the “chief priests, the nobles and the most eminent citizens”, because some individuals had insulted him and the council—boulê, and were responsible for the civic order in Jerusalem. Clearly, it can be seen the mimicry of power that the Jewish-Christian group of elders wants to take action against the presumed insult to the identity and to the submission of power.

Grabbe shows how Herod, as a governor of Galilee and future king, is tried before Hyrcanus the High priest and in front of the elders of the gerousia. This means that not even the powerful future king escape from the power of the ‘senate’ of the people. 54 He states,

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Unfortunately, some of those discussing the idea of a Sanhedrin from a skeptical position ignore the question of structures. It is all very well to speak of ‘the elders’ or ‘and indefinite group of elders’ in some passages, but how did these elders express their will or influence in society? If the elders had a leadership function in society, as seems to be accepted, how did they exercise this? It is not enough to discount all references to the *gerousia* as not referring to an actual council or senate with established functions and a place in the power structures of Judah.\(^{55}\)

Similarly, we cannot deny the existence of Jewish-Christians structures in the institutions of the expressions: ‘James and *all* the elders’, the ‘apostles, prophets and teachers.’

In conclusion, the Sanhedrin as a center of power during the first and following centuries exerted singular power of leadership over the socio-political and religious life of Judaism that was not absent from the interactions among the Jewish members represented in Acts. Furthermore, its nature, composition and source of legitimation was mimicked by the Jewish-Christian sect as a structure of power.

**The Elders**

Another necessary word to understand the role of the Jewish-Christian Sanhedrin in Acts 21 is the phrase “James and all the elders.” The word elder-*presbuteros*\(^{56}\) is the translation from the common usage of *zaqen* in the OT, as judges in every city, and Exodus 24 recounts the appointment of 70 elders in order to assist Moses in the leadership of the people, participating even in sacramental duties.\(^{57}\)

The category and importance of *oi` presbuteroi* during the Old Testament resides in what seems unknown to us; they were part of the ‘government’ in the theocracy, as rulers in the assembly of leaders of the people fulfilling important functions alongside other rulers of the public life of Israel.\(^{58}\) Using cross-cultural and ethnographic methodologies based on thirty-six contemporary Middle Eastern and African societies, T. M. Willis argues that the local elders were a “local kinship-based institution’ allowing us “only and educated guess regarding the role of local leadership in ancient Israel”\(^{59}\) R.A. Campbell adds that the position of leadership was based on the family honor and respect in the sense of age or respect.\(^{60}\) I argue that a correct view will look on the functional term performed rather than on the position of the term. The elders/sages were an expert group, rather than an assumed natural role of wise elderly people giving counsel to the young. Similarly as Berquist points out, these groups of leadership were “experts function[ing] within hierarchies, since they are in the business of controlling

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knowledge in exchange for certain advantages.”

Unfortunately, the literature on the second temple period has not produced enough work on the elders or the existence and function of Sanhedrin.

I argue that the institution of elders follows the model of the synagogue mimicking OT judges in every city. Lawrence H. Schiffman in Texts and Traditions cites the Theodotus Inscription in Jerusalem, explaining the purposes of the synagogue at the mid-first century C.E., before the destruction of the temple. It denotes the importance of the “elders” as a group of leadership related to the synagogues. This synagogue had been built by a family of archisynagogos, a priestly family, and founded by the Elders. The inscription reads: “Theodotus, son of Vettenus, priest and achisynagogue, son of an archisynagogue, grandson of an archisynagogue, built the synagogue for the reading of the Law and the teaching of the commandments, and the guest-house and the rooms and the water supplies for the lodging of strangers in need, which his fathers founded and the Elders and Simonides.”

The term suffers the transformation from the OT understanding to the new established church from the influence of the synagogues more than the free voluntary associations of the Greek model. However, the debates continue between those who see them as “persons of respect and honour” based on the home—synagogue model—and the charismatic view receiving the imposition of hands as a new person appointed to a new position. Briefly, I would pass to describe these models on the works A.R. Campbell, B. Merkle and S. Tofană.

For Campbell, the elders and its tradition is the continuation of the synagogues, keeping the tradition of the gospel and administration legal and ecclesiastical. In contrast to the Pauline, which work under the direction and supervision of the Spirit—as charismata in the context of “Greek clubs and associations.” He argues that after the death of Paul, “the Pauline vision faded and there took place an amalgamation of the two patterns out of which Catholicism was born.” He states, “All the evidence is that the earliest churches, Palestinian no less than Gentiles, met in homes, as indeed the Pharisaic haburoth. In the Diaspora many of the synagogues must at least have started as house-meetings... By no means all religion in the ancient world went on in temples, and the Jerusalem temple would not have been a suitable place for the Christian breaking of bread.”

Thus for Campbell, it is the leadership in “the household level provided by structure itself” that is transferred to the synagogues and house-churches. E. S. Fiorenza also states, “house churches
were a decisive factor in the missionary movement insofar as they provided space, support, and actual leadership for the community.” 68 The NT describes house churches by the name of the owners. However, this cannot be proved just by the existence of home-owners, for example, Acts 12 mentions the name of the householder Mary, mother of John Mark in Jerusalem, but Peter makes it clear to explain all the details to James the brother of Jesus as leader of the group.

Campbell’s argument, though logical, does not offer enough sources for his comments: “The leadership role of the householder was not something that had to be invented from scratch. It was already well-established sanctioned by custom, and understood both by those who exercised it and those who benefited from it. The traditional Jewish household did not differ in this respect from the Graeco-Roman household.” 69

Thus, he concludes making a “reconstruction” 70 based on an artificial dichotomy between those leaders kata oikon – according/for to the houses and kata ekklesia – according-for the churches, where presbuteroi–elders belong to the first category and episkopos to the second one. He bases his conclusions first on a sociological understanding of “honour and respect” of supremacies of unequal primitive cultures, and the general displeasure of the “charismatic democracy of Protestant imagining” and the rejection of a “threefold order of the later Catholic church,” which he assumes, as I show above, to be a myth. He attests, “In such assemblies decisions are not made by majority vote but by the submission of the minority. This is made possible both by the patriarchal authority of the leaders and by the sense of collective solidarity enjoyed by the assembly as a whole. This suggests that in our search for the elders we shall need to be sensitive to the cultural assumptions of a world very different from our own.” 71

Contrary, Benjamin Merkle favors the elders as hierarchical leaders or “office holders” appointed to a new position 72. He finds in the LXX 2 Chron 32:2, the elders as officials of the court, designating office-holders. Likewise that he considers in the Qumran the elders are only hierarchically inferior to the priests. 73 He argues that since the elders are barely mentioned in the Mishnah, this may be a position-office-holder, based on voluntary associations. The novelty of Merkle is equating the office of the elder and bishop as one, where “they are used interchangeably.” His criticism against
Campbell resides in the transference of leadership from house to church, ‘kata oikon’ to ‘kata ekklesia’ has not enough textual evidence to support this construction.\textsuperscript{74} Similarly, Campbell’s refutes against the “fallacy of idealism.”\textsuperscript{75} Furthermore, what scholars seem to forget is that references in Acts and Paul are too few to elucidate plainly the role of these position holders.

Tofană, who writes from the Orthodox tradition, argues for a special separation between the regular leaders with its functional application and the ‘office’ of the elders visualizing them with a “setting apart of sacramental tone.”\textsuperscript{76} He states, “Therefore, in the Old Testament, this category of the “elders” was much different from the rest of the nation’s old men, not only on account of the Spirit’s presence in their being chosen and “set apart”, but also through the manifestation of the Spirit in their prophetic charisma.”

The argument for Tofană based on the text of Lev 4:15-16: “The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull’s head before the LORD, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the LORD. Then the anointed priest is to take some of the bull’s blood into the Tent of Meeting.” is that the elders are carrying out “some liturgical acts alongside the priests.” Similarly in Deut 31:9, “So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to the elders of the sons of Israel.” I admit that Leviticus gives them some responsibilities, but in Deuteronomy their function is more dubious. One thing is differentiating between priestly and civil matters.\textsuperscript{77}

Tofană makes the unilateral selection of this passage to argue these leaders are the backbone proof to make them “priests.” He states, “οἱ presbυ,τεροι, is also used with the meaning of leaders among the Christians, meaning ministers of the church, in short, priests.”\textsuperscript{78} I think he concludes too quickly to make them ‘in short priests.’

I argue that priest did not perform sacramental acts as Tofană says.\textsuperscript{79} The elders/zaqen were chosen for their importance among the tribes/community. Moses already was able to recognize the leadership of each one of them. Furthermore, God uses (recycles?) the Spirit which dwells in Moses to redistribute them, in order to “share/carry/bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone”. This is more interesting noting that even Eldad and Medad, two of the ‘registered’ elders also received the Holy Spirit and also prophesied. They were not associated with the

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tabernacle but functioned in the open field, demonstrating that the sacredness of the office had nothing to do with the functioning of the tabernacle. Nor Moses did not anointed them. Someone Else greater than Moses was the giver of the Spirit, the Spirit himself who gives it to whomever He wishes.\(^{80}\) This practical application must be remembered, contrary to the general belief of ‘transmission of powers’ invoked at ordinations or laying of hands services when those in charge of the service call to ‘all previously ordained’ to continue with the supposed imposition and distribution of the Spirit. \(^{81}\)

The arrival of elders in Acts coincides with the gradual disappearance of the Twelve in the leadership of Jerusalem. This occurs after the exodus of Peter (Acts 12)\(^{82}\) serving as the directional shift of the Jesus movement from Jerusalem to Antioch and thus, to the end of the world. Concerning this movement, Schnabel suggests the development of a leadership by elders at Jerusalem that “It is probable that 'eldership' was first developed in the very Jewish environment of the Jerusalem Church, based on the model of the Sanhedrin.”\(^{83}\)

It is during this period—from the death of James the apostle to the ascension of the Brother of the Lord to leadership, and finally to the destruction of the Temple (70 CE)—that the nascent group experiences new issues that will mark issues of self-identity, association with Gentiles—table fellowship and interpretations of the law.

The expression “from the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem”, υπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τῶν ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ, carries the meaning of authorities of power\(^{84}\). Scholars remind us not to equate the term apostles in this formula to the Twelve.\(^{85}\) The movement of eleven-to-twelve necessary to secure power disappears at James decapitation (Acts 12), there are no replacements. Acts and the NT expand the term apostolos to a new dimensions, Paul, Barnabas, Andronicus, Junia and unnamed others received the title.\(^{86}\) By the first council (Acts 15) they exercise authority outside Jerusalem through the diaspora, “they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe” (Acts 16:4). This is also the last instance that apostles are mentioned in Acts representing the Jerusalem church. The term is paralleled to the ‘high priest and all the elders’, ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεύς…καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρεσβυτέριον, (22:5) once more showing the power of the group.

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The above debate on how the term becomes institutionalized later in the second century as “disciples of the apostles,” though is necessary, it shows that the group of elders functioned as a structure of power and order, with the recognition and power of/from the church. Either, if they derived from the synagogue or the charismata perspective or if they were ‘appointed by ordination,’ by ‘laying on hands,’ or the ‘raising of hands.’ Some have seen the similarities between Luke-Acts and the tone of the Pastorals, in terms of ecclesiastical order and hierarchy. I think this shows the recognized leadership of elders ruling in issues of power, deciding even the religious and interpretative life of the community and individuals, perhaps to the point of betraying or excommunicating them, and giving them up to the Roman system.

The Episcopate

In order to complete the brief study of terms in order to understand the role of the leadership positions in the narrative of James and elders, I will pass to describe briefly the term ἐπίσκοπος and its relationship to presbuteros. The term ἐπίσκοπος, overseer, guardian, supervisor appears only five times in the whole NT, but has created a lot of exegetical and ecclesiastical diversions for the understanding of the structures of powers. Basically, it is understood as bishop, and furthermore as the foundation for a monarchical episcopate. Though it is not related to my particular passage of Acts 21-23, I think its importance shows that perhaps it may serve as an incipient monarchic power in the leadership of James as the head of “all the elders”. For this reason some useful comments are pertinent here.

Acts mentioned the term in the context of ‘apostasia’ apostasy, either future from the days of the historical incident of Paul’s Farewell discourse at Miletus (20:28), or as a reality among the churches. No book of the NT uses the term in the context of the elders. Paul in Phil 1:1 attaches it to diakonoi.

The NT does not offer more explanations on the jurisdiction, interchangeability and specific function of either presbuteros or episkopos. Neither does the NT reflect on the authority of these leaders either as local or regional officials. Arguments from silence do not help. The instances in Acts were Paul recommends Apollo to Corinth aka Timothy, Titus in the Pastorals; perhaps it may explain the usage of a recognized regional authority, but none of them are referred as episcopos or elder, but only as teacher of the community or Paul’s representative.

Similarly, the Didache 14:1 containing the pattern of episcopos and diakonoi, perhaps emulating Paul to the Philippians, but also mentioning the original or former designations of “prophets and teachers.” In addition the Didache uses the same term for the appointing of elders χειροτονήσατε—vote by raising the hands—that appears in Acts 14:23 for the election of elders, (referred to the word presbuteroi). Definitely, we have textual connections.

It is strange that Luke-the author, will not include more references to the episcopos at a time when leadership is not at all settled among the churches. Luke poses it, immediately before the meeting
of Paul with the Jewish-Christian Sanhedrin, showing the early precedence of the institutional representation of formulas of ecclesiastical authority as James and the elders, and not *episcopos*. The solution perhaps resides in the fact that the word in Acts 20:28 does not describe a position of leadership but a work-function that the elders are performing.

In the ecclesiastical list of levels or orders of 1 Cor 12:28, perhaps is found the first indication of any hierarchical order in the Pauline church, the terms which is absent as well. I have not been able to check if anyone has made the connection of the supremacy of James *the bishop* functioning in the category of first elder among “all the elders,” but it seems plausible. In addition, there are no titles assigned to him as *apostolos*. At least, some in the Eastern Orthodox traditions make Timothy the first bishop of Ephesus. 89

The churches of Asia and in Judea (Gal 1:13) have their own set of multiple apostles, elders, prophets, *diakonoi*, preachers, teachers and evangelists, (cf. 1 Tim 5:18; James 5:13). All of them are in the plural. The singularity of James as a figure is simply astonishing. When the NT mentions a particular church the leadership is always in the plural never in the singular. It is true that Acts 21 mentions James first with its ambivalent language of “them” vs. “us” in contrast to his stunning decision “I have decided” διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω (15:19).

In addition to the proofs Merkle shows for rejecting Campbell’s idealized reconstruction of “a reasonable guess”90 from the structures of power in the movement from *kata oikon* to *kata ekklesian*, 91 the plural terminology makes the understanding of the term *episkopos* more functional. I do not see the interchangeability proved so easily, especially when we are dealings with a limited number of intertextual texts. I think the lack of scriptural base for supporting the argument makes the characterization of ‘one office’ challenging, especially with the understanding of a monarchical order, unless we consider the mimic representation of James as the head.

**The Structures of Power in Acts 21**

Τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ εἰσῄει ὁ Παῦλος σὺν ἡμῖν πρὸς Ἰάκωβον, πάντες τε παρεγένοντο οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. 
*And the next day Paul entered with us into the presence of James when all the elders arrived (Act 21:18).* 92

The gradual disappearance of the leadership role of the apostles from Jerusalem to other places resulted in that “the responsibility of spiritual leadership was transferred into the hands of the elders.” 93 The remaining issue is the role of James. Perhaps, the answer resides in Acts 15:22 which states “it seems good to us—the apostles and elders “together with the whole church” in taking the control. I
argue that this arbitrary decision mimics the Jewish Sanhedrin with the emblematic leadership of an office at the level of a ‘pseudo-high priest’ or as a super apostle. In addition, the enigmatic statement “I judge” which later is quickly transformed to the repetitive process of “thinking-seem good” and “pleasing the Holy Spirit and us”, recalls the ambivalent identification of who-is-who in the events of Acts 21. Furthermore, the question persists: how much power does the Jerusalem church have—either ‘the apostles and all the elders’ or James-super apostle and the elders—over the churches outside Jerusalem. Commenting on this meeting, Barrett quotes Easton (75, 130) and A. Ehrhardt stating they represent the meeting as “entering into the High priest with elders, in the Sanhedrin.”

He cites some classic writers explaining that the verb to enter, eiseimi with pros Iakobon “conveys a hint of entering the presence of a great person… or coming into a law court.” Furthermore, interpreters of Acts using language of power with expressions such as: “the great mother church” or the “Lord’s own Apostles,” prompt to think why James and the elders cannot aggrandize themselves for more power.

I think both councils differ in the nature of their ‘accommodation on the Other. At the first (15), the leaders seem eager to find a solution that allows the Gentiles into the fold. Quite to the contrary at the second encounter (21) they do not seem to care for Paul’s safety, but safeguard the purity of the group. At least for Paul, James is presented as the newer apostle, a pillar (cf. Gal 1:19: 2:9), and perhaps even included in the list of super apostles of 2 Cor 12:11. He definitely does not have all the apostleship qualification of being a follower since the beginning (Acts 1:21). This seems to be a strange exception since he was an unbeliever during those days, making him unqualified. On any case, this role and position of leadership is clearly recognized.

καὶ ἀσπασάμενος αὐτούς ἐξηγεῖτο καθ᾽ ἓν ἕκαστον, ὧν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι διὰ τῆς διακονίας αὐτοῦ. “And after he had saluted them; he interpreted accordingly-one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles/nations through his service/ministry.” (Act 21:19)

The ‘we’ section abruptly ceased to prepare the audience to the trial of Paul in front of James and all the elders. The group of disciples who have traveled from Caesarea to Jerusalem to the house of Mnason the Cypriot—an early disciple “who welcomed us warmly” is ignored. The text states that the next day “Paul with us” went to James and the elders, but it seems the group of disciples or Luke is absent. Luke’s emphasis to mention Mnason as an important early disciple looks like a desperate effort to show some continuity with the past. The uncertain future seems to be disassociated from the early days. To “have all things in common, with prayer and fasting” is lacking in the narrative. The text suddenly changes again to a third-personal singular, Paul alone reports-interprets, explaining the details of the mission. This meeting-trial is almost in secret, perhaps even illegal. Furthermore, there is no common praise to God from the whole community. Comparing it to the first meeting of Acts 15, there is no public and open debate with representation of different views (15:7). Likewise there is no appeal...
to Scripture or to the inclusive statement “with the consent of the whole church” (15:22). During the first council, after much discussion, the “multitude became silent” (15:12), now in the absence of any inclusion, the whole congregation has been muted. The generous offering from the sisterhood of churches is ignored. Hence, the list of contrasts is astonishing; Paul and Barnabas had been a team commissioned by the Antiochene church. Now, though he came with a group and some supporters, he speaks and stands alone. This is a private meeting, a work session, a mimic trial in front of the Jewish Christian Sanhedrin. Indeed, an appalling presage to the climax of the story. Paul does not retort at all in his defense, quite the opposite to the situation later in front of the Jewish Sanhedrin, where the pseudo accusers are silent and the accused takes the initiative.\footnote{100}

For the second time, Paul is in front of the Jerusalem council in order to ‘interpret – explain’ in legal terms everything again “one by one.” An explanation on the verb ἐξηγέομαι, exēgeomai, is useful here. Definitely, this is a Lukan word used by him five times of the six instances in the entire NT. All of these instances are related to the process of explanation; however some factors draw attention. First, it is the repeated usage of the word of explanations in front of groups of people. Paul and Simon Peter have explained and interpreted in front of the same group: James and the council of ‘apostles and elders’ during the first council (Acts 15:12, 14).\footnote{101} The disciples of Emmaus had to explain to the Jerusalem group of apostles (Lc 24:35). Second, four of those instances are explanations related to the associations and work among the Gentiles—the other instance is in the Cornelius’ narrative (Acts 10:8). In addition, the last instance of the word is in the Torah, which is related to legislative regulations how “to know/teach when are unclean and when are clean” (Lev 14:57). This seems to suggest that this process of ‘explanation’ or ‘interpretation’ is more than a simple narrative of what is happening among the Gentiles, but it contains elements of a trial for associations with Gentiles, as Acts 15 points out with the double qualifier of “great-no little rebellion-dissention debate. στάσεως καὶ ζητήσεως οὐκ ὀλίγης (Act 15:2).”

Luke makes a clear contrasts between the verb ἐξηγέομαι, exēgeomai and διηγέομαι, diēgeomai to relate fully, to describe. Definitely the same word with different prefixes but I believe, it shows how Luke was highly selective in choosing them. First, the latter is used frequently in narratives in the LXX, but never concerning legislation in Leviticus. Second, from the eight instances in the NT, the word occurs five times in Luke-Acts describing general events (Lk 8:39; 9:10; Ac 8:33; 9:27; 12:17).

Darrell Bock and Barrett consider this particular reporting of Acts 21:19 as part of a repeated pattern Paul’s need to give general explanations in 14:27, 15:3-4 and 15:12.\footnote{102} I disagree with this view, due to the fact that in these verses there is a change in the verb, therefore making a different distinction. In 14:27, Luke uses the verb ἀναγγέλλω, anangellō, to announce, even to preach. Similarly, in Paul later reporting at the first Jerusalem council (15:4) Luke repeats the same verb. Likewise, Luke uses a different verb when Paul and Barnabas travel from Antioch to Jerusalem. The churches in Samaria and Phoenicia received gladly the report. In this case, Luke uses ἐκδηγέομαι, to describe fully. Initially
when they arrived to Jerusalem, the verb again is *anangellō*, but when a council is formally ‘set up’, then “all the assembly (*plēthos*) kept in silence” (15:12) to hear the matter in legal terms. Perhaps this is similar to modern court settings when the court announces the judges’ arrival and the court is in session. Immediately, after this break in the narrative, Luke changes the verb again to *ἐξηγέομαι* *exēgeomai*, with the legal connotations of “clean and unclean.” In so doing, the court is ready to discuss the legal prerequisites for the unclean-Gentiles, at least as viewed by some in the council, to participate fully as part of the clean-Jews “in order to be saved” (15:2).

Barrett does compare the verbs *exēgeomai* to *diēgeomai* since the D-Codex Bezae lists the second term, but without making any connection to the elements of clean and unclean or making the legal differences between the words for a more formal setting of a court. However, he states twice the emphasis of the word: “*Exēgeisthai* is a word of wider meaning than *diēgeisthai*, but it is impossible here to make a clear distinction between them, since in its context each may—and must—mean to relate, to describe in detail (though *exēgeisthai* may do more to suggest an interpretative comment).”

In addition, the word *exēgeomai* seems to be in contrast to the word *ἀνατίθημι*, *anatithemi*—submitting, setting forward; used by Paul in Galatians with reference to the same occasion (cf. Gal 2:2). Finally, the word seems to be connected with issues of leadership.

Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν εἶπόν τε αὐτῷ· Θεωρεῖς, ἀδελφέ, πόσαι μυριάδες εἰσίν ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τῶν πεπιστευκότων καὶ πάντες ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου ὑπάρχουσιν, “After/when having heard, they glorified God. But, they said to him. Brother, you should observe/look/see how many of ‘ten thousands’ are among the believing *Ioudaioi*—Judeans and all of them are zealous of the law” (Act 21:20)

I prefer the paraphrased translation “Brother! You should look or pay attention” in relationship to the vocative *adelphe*, as a call of attention, in so doing, explaining the context better. The technical word *Ioudaioi* that has been used in the negative sense, to those unbelievers who are pleased at the death of James the apostle (cf. Acts 12:2, 11) now it refers to the establishment in Jerusalem. Acts 15 expresses that in 49 CE – fourteen years after Paul’s call/conversion and during the previous years, the Jerusalem church has been ‘exceedingly’ accepting ‘many priests’ and Pharisees (6:7; 15:5). There are no reasons to believe that perhaps some of them are now part of the new leadership even among the elders, if they were already respected as such. The presence of myriads of believing Jews does not deny that Hellenist-diaspora Jews are also part of the community. True, 8:1 exaggerates that
all except the apostles remain, but most likely the presence Mnasen a Cypriot proves that some were returning.

Likewise, this is contrary to the nineteen and early twenty century Lukan scholarship consensus that “Christianity severs itself from Judaism once and for all” in the context of Jewish rejection.\(^{109}\) Today, they are more open to accept and understand that the Jewish mission continues in Acts. After all, it is not ridiculous to state that Jesus, Paul and diverse representations of early Christians remain Jewish as a Jewish movement. They are not in opposition to Judaism but run parallel as a different Jewish sect. As Robert C. Tannehill states “The point of the lengthy defense scenes is not to prepare for a final rejection of Judaism but to defend Paul against the view that he has betrayed Judaism and to provide through him an example of how a resourceful missionary might appeal to Jews, in spite of growing antagonism.”\(^{110}\)

The deposition of the apostle continues; both groups glorify God, but with different orientations. On the one hand, Paul rejoices for his report-response and the Jerusalem church for the myriads of Jews, as part of the prophetic fulfillment of “lights to the nations”. This means that the ones among the nations-Gentiles are still faithful Jews and it is not necessarily Paul working alone.\(^{111}\)

κατηχήθησαν δὲ περὶ σοῦ ὅτι ἀποστασίαν διδάσκεις ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως τοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη πάντας Ἰουδαίους λέγων μὴ περιτείμνειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τέκνα μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθεσιν περιπατεῖν. They have been told about you that you teach to apostate from Moses to all the Jews among the Gentiles, saying not to circumcise the children and no longer walk according to customs”(Acts 21:21).

The interpreter must be warned against any “hypothetical historical reconstruction beyond the text.”\(^{112}\) This is the case with the anonymity of the mystery group who has been taught by word of mouth, xatēcheō compared to the regular teaching, didaskō, of the apostasy of Paul. This means either the groups gossips or rumors. However, Acts proves repeatedly that the Ιουδαίοι are responsible for every instance of persecution.\(^{113}\) The Miletus’s speech of the Lukan Paul also speaks against the “plots of the Jews.” However, these Jews have been in some degree associated with the preaching of Paul, rather than to any regular representation by others. The accusations are not related to the salvation of the Gentiles. The issue has been solved and the court reinstates its decision. This is an intra-debate about halakah, the path one walks, or “to walk after the customs” (21:21).

The Miletus speech serves to answer the alleged accusations of James and the elders. The content of the speech represents a universal double message: first “of repentance toward God,” and

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second “to exercise faith in our Lord Jesus Messiah.” It is difficult to perceive Jews opposing anyone for “repentance toward God.” Bock rightly states, “The issue here is not what Gentiles do…the question is what Jews should do.” 114 The trouble resides in the understanding of the “faith in the Messiah.” Paul has been accused of being an apostate. The complaint discloses the requirements on ‘how to live or walk’ the faith in the Lord Jesus Messiah. These rumors, “they had been told/informed” in the passive voice do not denote an accusation per se, but they foretell the hyperbolic accusations “to all everywhere” from the Jews of Asia. These accusations/rumors are contrasted later in the straightforward statements of the lawyer Tertullus accusing Paul in front of the Roman procurator of being “an agitator among all the Jews of the world” (24:5). Likewise in the Thessalonian’s accusation, Paul “disturbs the whole world-empire putting it upside down” (17:6). The extension of the disturbance in all cases is hyperbolic, but with completely different focuses: the first one is against the markers of identity of Judaism, the second one is on the acceptance of Jesus as the new King-\textit{basileus}, ruler of the empire; it runs against the institutions of the Caesars.

It is not certain that Luke does not know the content of Paul’s letters. However, Acts’ testimony presents him as a traveling companion on account of the “we” sections. Therefore, he must have some general notion of the contents of Galatians 6:15 that “circumcision is nothing” compared to the ambivalence of 1 Cor 7:18. The rumors-accusations of apostasy, true or false, are “uneasiness about the consequences of Jewish propaganda on Gentiles”115 but also an internal threat to the church (Acts 20). Bock reminds us, “It is not clear that Paul tells Jews to disobey the law. He did, however, stress being sensitive to Gentiles and to Jews in outreach, a position with inherent tension that Paul left to conscience (Rom 14-15).”116 For sure there are other issues of Paul’s position here; however, this paper focuses on the structures of power, the politics of power that define identity. It is true that there are no explicit demands of requirements in “order to be saved,” as in the first council, but perhaps there are, since any rupture of the customs will nullify the perpetual covenant. This also implies that any changes in the identity of the group will receive the ‘hand/wrath of God’ (cf. Joshua 22:31), and consequently will legalize those who belong or do not to belong to God. Therefore, these rumors still reflect the mind of the opposition party—with strict nationalistic overtones that there are “binding as if without them there could be no salvation in the gospel for believers.”117 These believing Jews are zealous for the law, perhaps with a strong nationalistic tone against Hellenization (1 Macc 2:42; 2 Macc 4:2; IQS 1:7).118

The reader continues pondering whether the Jews of Asia belong to the ambiguous designation of “they” and as members of the Jewish-Christian group who decided not to accept Paul’s interpretations-explanations. Generally in the history of interpretation, these Jews of Asia have been considered as outsiders to the Jewish-Christians. Luke does not offer explanations either on the identity of the group or even on their indictments against Paul. He clarifies only the false charges of
bringing foreigners into the temple as “they supposed.” This again makes us believe that the accusations may be true.

There are interesting intertextual connections with the word *apostasia*. Perhaps, the passage that reveals best the concern of identity, keeping the traditions for future generations is Joshua 22. There are similar foreshadowing connections with the conceivable rebellion-apostasy (Heb. *marad*) of the tribes of Israel, remaining on the Eastern shore of the Jordan, erecting a copy of the altar. The high priest and rulers-archs from each tribe, perhaps synonymous of the role of the elders, decide to make war against their ‘brothers’ for alleged *apostasia*, abandoning their customs. The narrative explains that the pseudo-altar was built as a memorial/witness for future generations, to ensure that the Eastern tribes were also part of the people of God, though they were living outside the physical boundaries of Israel, they were still Israelites. Definitely, this is a clear challenge to the identity paradigm. Paul’s ministry expands the territorial—boundaries teaching Jews and Gentiles to live outside of these, but keeping the identity of an Israelite. Perhaps, Luke without defending the charges purposely proclaims them.

Similarly, Josephus uses the intertextual of *apostasia* in the sense of political and religious power, but in the reminiscences of altering issues of identity, i.e., nationalistic identity as in Joshua 22. The intertextual, though a fascinating narrative, remains at the end only in that sphere. Anyone undermining the integrity of the identity of the people of God, losing national identity markers or leading others to do so, is punishable according to both Paul and the Mishnah. The future tractate m.’Abot 3.12 condemns anyone who leads in apostasy from Moses to others, “such a person has no place in the world to come.”

Thus the struggle continues, since Luke presents the apostle Paul as being conciliatory about the Jews and the customs of their ancestors. Paul’s mission welcomes both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Acts 28). Paul understands that in order to fulfill Judaism, the Gentiles must enter into the fold. His submission does not depend just on his chameleon spirit aka 1 Cor 9, “be a Jew to the Jew,” but it shows really who he is. The subservient, passive and inaudible Paul during the time of the trials, complained only once at the Jewish Sanhedrin for his Pharisaical belief and later in the presence of King Agrippa for the chains. After all, he is aware of the Spirit and the church has prophesied about his sufferings.

In a literary and comparative study on the ‘theology of sea storms in Luke-Acts,” Charles H. Talbert and J. H. Hayes make the connection of theological overtones in the “persuasive” correspondence “foreshadowing” in seven steps between Jesus arrival to Jerusalem and his trials (Luke 8:51 – 19:46) and Paul’s final journey to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21-28:10). They established literary foreshadowing parallels of: end of journeys, good reception, going to the temple, seizure, and four trials (Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and Pilate) which are compared to Paul’s trials (Sanhedrin, Felix, Festus and Herod) and two more parallels. Though, I do not fully follow their approach, I think
another is the denial by members of Jesus’ own group: Judas and Peter delivering Jesus, and the Jewish-Christians ceding and abandoning Paul to the angered crowd, with fatal consequence for both.

Likewise, one cannot make the parallelism between Herod Agrippa I (44 CE), responsible instigator of the martyrdom of James the apostle and the incarceration of Peter in his desire to ‘please in all the expectations of the Jews’ (Acts 12:3, 11) with James and the Elders now wanting to please and satisfy all the possible doubts of the sincerity of the ‘apostle’ Paul. Equally, as James the apostle—who God did not release, now the apostle of the Gentiles is given to the mob, which will silence him.

Another parallel of trials, Paul in front of the Jewish Sanhedrin being accused “for questions concerning their law” (23:28), as Claudius Lysias puts it, parallels the expectations of James and the elders. Both cases display similar motives, the need to prove his allegiance to them. The charges agree—there are not “things deserving death.” However, they are intra-disputes among the two different centers of powers: Sadducees vs. Pharisees is compared to the internal divisions of “zealous for the law” vs. Paul’s supposed apostasy from Moses. The first of the groups exhibit internal disputes of legal interpretation. Equally, among the Jewish-Christians mimic the craving for the new identity of the establishment.

Luke as a good story-teller keeps the reader in suspense until “the seven days were almost completed” and finally arrives at the climax of the story. The anonymity and obscurity of the Jews of Asia disappearing quickly from the story make the reader ponder whether this is a planned trap. Paul later will recall in front of the Romans, about the Jews of Asia: “They must be here” (24:19).

Finally, it is noteworthy how much Josephus knows about the details—high priests’ families, King Agrippa II, Roman procurators, and about the important events of Jewish-Christianity: John the Baptist, Jesus and the death of James the Just, brother of Jesus with some many facts from his trial—but he does not know Paul. This illustrates that the incidents of Acts as intra-disputes of the sect must have been minor, including the participation in the Jewish Sanhedrin and Tertullus. The reader marvels at Josephus’ narration concerning the death of James the Just and the power exercised on his behalf; whether the Jewish-Christian community cannot intercede and rescue Paul from the Sanhedrin. According to Josephus, four years later, same powerful James the Just, head of the sect of the Nazarenes is put to death by stoning among others, most likely Jewish-Christians, by the high priest and Sanhedrin. However, some powerful friends (elders?) in Judaism who perhaps even belonged to the sect interceded for him and are able to gain access to King Agrippa II and to Caesar himself, deposing the high priest Ananus for his martyrdom.

The comparison between two Sanhedrin—Chapters 22-24
I think the legal requirements of the Jewish law such as issues of halakah, table fellowship, and the perpetual covenant of circumcision to a national identity allow classification of both events (15 & 21) as intra-legal for the Jewish-Christian community. Paul stands before both “entire” Sanhedrin. There are precise words chosen to describe both events. The issues of a clear vocabulary, the establishment of the pseudo-council with a defendant testifying a detail account—“one by one” in front of possible 70(?) elders, makes the selection unparalleled and shows a legitimate process.
Acts is full of riots and trials. Pervo states that “trials have been exploited for their propaganda value since antiquity. They allow the presentation of weighty ideas in exciting dress”. According to his classification, the “about one-fifth of Acts treats juridical conflicts.” However, the number should be higher since he recognizes neither the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 nor Paul against James and the elders in chapter 21. He continues, “legal struggles are a major interest of Luke, gaining much more attention than a host of doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues of concern to modern historians. The net result of all this is perhaps disappointing, since no clarity emerges. If the accounts do little to illuminate the legal situation of early Christians, they do make for pleasant diversion.”

I think this is more than mere “pleasant diversion” because there is a highly theological “plan of God” in the process. Luke demonstrates that at the center of Jerusalem the Jewish-Christians and the institutions that represented Judaism did not appreciate the apostle to the Gentiles, thus seeking to maintain their own status quo of acceptance and prestige.

All the efforts of the disciple “chosen to be an instrument to bring my name to the Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel” (9:15), in this specific order are called to return to the center—Jerusalem. However, unknown to him, there is a directional shift again paralleled and contrasted from the “we arrived to Jerusalem”, Γενομένων δὲ ἡμῶν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα (21:17) to “so we to Rome”, Ὅτε δὲ εἰσήλθομεν εἰς Ῥώμην, (28:16). In the newer structures of power Luke makes sure that his Lukan Paul will affirm once more his absolute ancestral faith, but at the same time that he was rejected by the leaders of the Jewish-Christian establishment.

Concerning the demands of James and all the elders to fulfill the rite and pay for the sacrifices, scholars believe that the mandated rite is of the Nazarite. In fact, the reader has been warned that few months ahead Paul shaved his head “because he was under a vow.” Howard Clark Kee states that “if Paul was to participate in this kind of ascetic rite, the charge by his opponents that he ignored the Law and its provisions for purity would be dramatically refuted.” This ‘refutation’ serves as an act of resistance of double entendre: at the same time that he proves allegiance to his ancestral faith, it is a rebuke to the Jewish-Christian in Jerusalem for not understanding the time of her visitation. It is voluntary submission, but at the same time with mockery. It is as if the Lukan Paul will accept his destiny and submit not only to the human will but to what the Spirit has been warning him in every city, of his future sufferings in order to continue with the “necessity of the divine plan.” Thus, the submission is understood as an act of protest and repulsion.

Josephus recounts the Nazarite vow of Bernice, the sister of Herod Agrippa in reaction to the slaughter of Jews by the Roman governor Florus, shaving her head (if it was). I interpret this as an act of mourning, protest and repulsion. Likewise, the subservient Lukan Paul submits to the council of James and all the elders, who are acting contrary to the Christian spirit of welcoming the other Jews who are living outside the margins, or over the borderline—the spirit of diversity. They are still under the obsolete understanding of salvation in the Jewish Messiah, thus demanding to show absolute allegiance to their accusations. Paul’s submission is an act of repulsion and protest to their accusations.

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In doing so, there is no need to read the farewell of Miletus as *vaticinia ex eventu*, but as a proper prophecy and fulfillment that Paul makes of this future destiny.

**The Silencing Approach as a Manner of Conclusion**

Seemingly, diversity and openness have been defeated but the “necessity of the plan of God” offers another solution for the presumed conflict. As Pervo illustrates, “The Christian community enjoys *homonoi* and eschews unproductive *stasis*. Factionalism (*stasis*) is not a problem for Christians. Historically, the reports of the meetings gloss over very important conflicts and transitions.” Now in this particular case, it is silencing the structures of power.

The narrative has been experiencing a shift that goes back to the origins, as if the story is coming to an end by going back to the beginning. Again there is a movement that goes to Pentecost’s feasts, Nazarites rites and other ceremonial customs and worshipping at the temple. This time, it is not at the Beautiful Gate or Solomon’s Portico. Now the doors of the temple are shutdown to Jewish Christians who want to open the bounderies. The Lukan Paul will try to keep the flame alive. After the Jewish-Christian council, the whole church of Jerusalem disappears with the hyperbolic “James and all the elders” invisible to the sufferings of the apostle. Meanwhile, the Jerusalem church does not even offer a word of prayer for deliverance as in the old times (cf. 3-5, 12). Pervo states, “On order alone: The Twelve, then the Seven (who seem to evaporate); Peter is in charge. In Acts 12-15 elders appear with the Twelve; James is prominent. By chap. 21 the Twelve have disappeared and James leads. There are no bishops or deacons. Not one of these transitions is explained. The reader must infer them from the church assemblies.”

I will add, the original Christian church of Antioch of Syria, the mother church of those who were called *Christianoi* disappeared since the first council of Jerusalem to a minor mention in passim (18:22). When the story shifts gear, the reader wanders lost seeking leadership, structure and order. This will come not with the continuation of the reputed pillars and those who side with triumphant Jewish Pharisaism. The winner continuators of the story: the Lukan Pauline Christianity and Rabbinical Judaism, as two siblings, will fight for the supremacy of authority and power.

Though, Luke makes the Lukan Paul now mock the same accusation with his declaration of Ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, “I am a Jewish man!” Paul the Jew and a zealot for God “as all of you are”, “I have been taught according to the exactness of the law of our parents” (Acts 22:3). The term “accuracy/exactness” is important here denoting the reality of a community, which does not want to leave the environment and regulations of their ancestors. But at the same time either by jealousy or bias the establishment does not want to open the boundaries of identities.

However, the plan of God does not allow the powerful structures of the Jewish-Christian Sanhedrin to return to the basic old-fashioned customs with its bias of superiority. There is an implicit rejection or protest to their *historicism renewal*. As a clever craftsman, Luke closes another chapter of
the sources revealed/researched and available to him, deciding for himself the future of the story. I do not see the pessimism some scholars that “Luke certainly knew more than he chose to share, with the result that the outcome of this meeting is probably permanently obscured.” Quite the contrary, I believe the hybrid Lukan Paul though still ‘in-chains’ goes free to welcome all. Paul finally is liberated and conditioned by Luke from their own nationalistic bias of inclusivism.

Even early disciples as Mnason the Cypriot, a Hellenist—a Jew from the diaspora—do not seem to have space in the development of the new structures of power. After all, though he had opened his home for the weary travelers, now Paul had a sister living in Jerusalem, indicating once more the shift of gears. Even the early disciples need to leave in order to make room in the seat of world power.

The new leadership, based on the structures of power with foundations in Judaism, leaves the center, going from Jerusalem to the margins—the end of the earth. In doing so, the leadership re-creates the new center in order to continue the story. Structures of power have been mimicked successfully. Though not biblically, the future sources will know James as a powerful leader that will become the “residential “bishop” (episkopos) of Jerusalem. This title was not given to him in Acts. However, Eusebius reports that he was “first elected to the episcopal throne of the church in Jerusalem” Historia Ecclesiastica 2.1.2. Thus, the story continues but without biblical foundation.