

and the Gentile world in his story of Christian beginnings. This allows Marguerat to adopt a mediating position between those who emphasise and accentuate only the apparently anti-Jewish or apparently pro-Jewish elements in Acts. Describing Luke's programme as one of integration, Marguerat argues that Luke holds together both a history of salvation that began in Israel and God's offer of universal salvation where the Roman Empire represents the framework for geographical and political expansion. Christianity is both the fulfilment of the promises of the Scriptures and the answer to the religious quest of the Greco-Roman world.

Though at times densely written, Marguerat's monograph is a mine of exegetical insights. It illuminates both the detail and overall impact of Luke's narrative, but refuses to become embroiled in detailed questions of historical truth or falsehood.

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*The Trial of the Gospel: An Apologetic Reading  
of Luke's Trial Narrative*

SNTSMS 116

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**SUMMARY**

Neagoe notes that existing accounts of Luke-Acts as an apologetic directed at a particular audience or written for a particular occasion can account for only some of Luke's content and concerns. He argues that Luke-Acts is better understood as a defence of the gospel, written for Christians. Luke writes to assure those who know something of the story of their faith that it may be relied on, and that the church has a sure place in the Roman empire.

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

Neagoe bemerkt, dass die Ansätze, die das Lukasevangelium und die Apostelgeschichte als ein apologetisches Werk verstehen, das für ein spezielles Publikum oder eine spezielle Situation geschrieben wurde, nur einigen der Inhalte und Anliegen des Lukas gerecht werden. Er argumentiert, dass Lukas besser als ein Verteidiger des Evangeliums zu verstehen ist, der für Christen schreibt. Lukas schreibt zur Vergewisserung derjenigen, die etwas von der Geschichte ihres Glaubens wissen, dass sie sich auf den Glauben verlassen können und dass die Kirche einen festen Platz im römischen Reich einnimmt.

**RÉSUMÉ**

Neagoe montre que, lorsqu'on considère Luc-Actes comme un ouvrage apoloétique destiné à un public

spécifique ou rédigé pour une occasion particulière, on ne peut rendre compte que d'une partie de son contenu et des préoccupations de Luc. Il s'efforce de montrer que Luc-Actes se comprend mieux comme une défense de l'Évangile adressée à des Chrétiens. Luc écrit pour assurer ceux qui connaissent déjà quelque chose de l'histoire de leur foi que cette histoire est fiable et que l'Église a assurément une place dans l'Empire romain.

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This monograph is based on a dissertation supervised by Max Turner at London Bible College. Its author notes that although there has been much interest in Luke's trial narratives, there has been no monograph specifically addressing Luke's use of this motif. Neagoe's work neatly fills this gap. His discussion includes both a wide-ranging survey of existing scholarship on the function of Luke's trial narratives, and also a persuasive presentation of his own thesis: that Luke writes for a Christian audience, and seeks to assure them of the historical and theological foundations of their faith. Thus Luke's two-volume narrative is an *apologia pro evangelio*. Luke writes to assure those who know something of the story of their faith that it may be relied on, and that the church has a sure place in the Roman empire, despite any accusations to the contrary from Jews, from pagans or from representatives of the Roman imperial order.

Neagoe notes that most previous discussions of the trial motif in Luke-Acts have arisen within discussions of Luke-Acts as some form of apology. Yet he argues that none of the models of apology previously advocated can account for all the diverse ways in which Luke makes use either of forensic trial scenes, or of other 'trial' scenes more broadly conceived. Presentations of Luke's writings as a defence of Paul, or of the church to the empire or vice versa make use of only some of the evidence, whereas Neagoe argues that his own paradigm makes sense of all the emphases that have been incorporated into previous discussions. 'The overall function of Luke's trial narratives is an *apologia pro evangelio*, in the form of a trial and confirmation of the gospel and with particular reference to strategic episodes in the unfolding of the Christian story'. Echoes of van Unnik are clear, and Neagoe stands firmly in the tradition of those who argue that Luke wrote mainly for Christians (Luke 1:4) of a later generation in order to assure them that the saving activity of Jesus remains as valid for them as it did for his contemporaries.

This interaction between past (the ministry of Jesus, and the emergence of the church) and present (the contemporaries whom Luke addresses) is partially reflected in the division of Neagoe's monograph into two main sections. Part One discusses the trial of Jesus, which Neagoe presents as centred on conflict over Christological claims. Much of his attention is given to the trial narrative itself, but he also discusses the narrative precedents of the trial – traces of conflict throughout his ministry – and retrospective references



and allusions to the trial which provide clues as to Luke's understanding and interpretation of this event. 'The fact that virtually all these trial references come in contexts where their function is to provide assurance with regard to Jesus' identity and his role in the economy of God's salvation strongly suggests that the account of Jesus' trial is itself meant to have a similar function for Luke's readers'. Therefore he concludes that previous scholarship has marginalized what is at the heart of Luke's representation of Jesus' trial: 'the author's concern with the confirmation of the Christological tenets of the gospel'.

Part Two, the Church on Trial, finds similar themes throughout the trials of Acts. Even where Peter, Stephen or Paul or those explicitly on trial, in reality it is the gospel which is the primary focus of their trials. The apostles do not defend themselves but testify to the gospel, whether in the face of Jewish, pagan or Roman opposition. Thus Luke provides an *apologia* for the gospel which shows that it is the true fulfilment of Jewish Scripture, that it has a legitimate place in the Gentile world of the Roman empire, and that there is no incompatibility between being either Jewish or Roman as well as Christian, as seen especially in the person of Paul.

Neagoe's study offers a reading of Luke-Acts which incorporates much of the text into one consistent understanding of Luke's purpose in writing. It also offers numerous helpful exegetical insights along the way. Thus, for example, it makes the whole account of Paul's shipwreck and deliverance an integral part of the trial of the gospel and the basis for his preaching of the gospel in Rome, and it supports the view that the ending of Acts is a carefully crafted and fitting conclusion. Only now is it clear not only that Paul has done nothing to deserve death, but also that he is competent to help others experience divine salvation. 'His innocence is a sign that this message can truly lead God's people to salvation. It is only after Paul's personal innocence and the trustworthiness of his witness have been established that the success of the gospel in Rome can be envisaged'.

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**Goethes Theologie**  
**Peter Hofmann**

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**SUMMARY**

An intriguing study of Goethe by a 'fundamental theologian' who shows himself well-versed in the primary material of Goethe's works, even if the interaction with secondary literature both Germanist and historical-theological insights seem lacking overall. Stimulating for

the student of culture and the Christian apologist alike.

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

Eine faszinierende Studie über Goethe von einem Fundamentaltheologen, der zeigt, dass er mit dem Werk Goethes gut vertraut ist, auch wenn die Interaktion mit germanistischer sowie historisch-theologischer Sekundärliteratur insgesamt fehlt. Das Buch ist stimulierend sowohl für den kulturell interessierten Studenten als auch für christliche Apologeten.

**RÉSUMÉ**

C'est là une étude surprenante sur Goethe de la part d'un théologien fondamental qui se montre bien versé dans les œuvres de Goethe, même s'il semble manquer à cet ouvrage la prise en compte de ce qui a été écrit sur Goethe et son œuvre tant du point de vue de la littérature allemande que du point de vue historico-théologique. Un travail stimulant au plan culturel et au plan de l'apologétique chrétienne.

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This book shows how Goethe replaced 'book of Scripture' with 'book of Nature', and thus it is really a theology of Nature which was self-confessedly only semi-Christian. This may seem like the old 'natural science versus faith' conflict, but in Goethe it came to mean a lot more. Nature is not just to be studied scientifically but viewed symbolically, adored and communed with. He stood against the position of Jacobi who would only take that wisdom from nature which agreed with Scripture: that was, for Goethe to be ungrateful. To know God where he reveals himself is the most blessed thing. But that is in the receipt of pure phenomenon, the idea in its appearing, from which many reception one has to form into an 'aggregate'. (254)

We might wonder just where Goethe's theology is to be found. I would have thought, in Faust and in sections of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. It is however Goethe's theory of colour (the *Farbenlehre*) which provides Hoffmann with his fundamental Goethean theological text. There are some similarities with Schelling's 1809 'Freiheit' but of course it is a development out of Spinozism in regarding the unity of all to be found in the aperçu of all in symbol. A theology of Nature as setting limits and framework for what a theology of History can do. Nature is thus an *Offenbarungsdatum*, and Goethe provides something more than the subjectivity of an Idealist philosophy of Identity.

Goethe's religion, which was wary of tradition and all that seemed too obviously confessional-theological was a good one for *Kulturprotestantismus* to use in its attack on Catholic doctrinalism, despite Goethe's obvious sympathies for the catholic religious aesthetic which was full of 'awe' and symbolism, and despised Kant's cosy optimism which did not see how life was about suffering and the experience of the cross (see 394-403). As the angels sing at the end of Faust: 'Wer immer strebend sich bemüht/Denn können wir erlösen'. He was aware