The Fowler Fallacy: Biography, History, and the Genre of Luke-Acts

ANDREW W. PITTS
andrew.pitts@arizonachristian.edu
Arizona Christian University, Glendale, AZ 85306

Although many New Testament scholars imagine Alastair Fowler's family resemblance model of genre to be at the cutting edge of literary scholarship, contemporary discussion has moved in different directions. To overcome what I shall refer to as the "Fowler fallacy," an alternative approach focuses on genre agnation—considering similarities and differences. I argue that many New Testament scholars have neglected these developments in genre theory, ranging from Richard Burridge's classic statement on the gospels genre (and his subsequent application to Acts) to one of the most recent assessments, that of Luke-Acts by Daniel Smith and Zachary Kostopoulos.

From Richard Burridge's highly influential monograph on the gospels genre in 1992 to Daniel Smith and Zachary Kostopoulos's article in one of the more recent issues of *NTS*, New Testament scholars have drawn generously from the literary theory of Alastair Fowler, especially his family resemblance model.[1] I will use these two studies as representative bookends for illustrating a problematic trend in New Testament studies—the use of Fowler for narrative genre analysis.[2] After

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[1] Daniel L. Smith and Zachary L. Kostopoulos, "Biography, History, and the Genre of Luke-Acts," *NTS* 63 (2017): 390–410. For Burridge's dependence on Fowler's family resemblance model, see Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004; original 1992), esp. 38–43.

[2] There are many intervening studies that use Fowler's family resemblance model. See, recently, Sean A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*, SNTSMS 156 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 50–63, for dependence on Fowler. While Adams does not employ family resemblance language and at times notes genre differences (esp. with the Greco-Roman history), he builds his model primarily on Burridge's family resemblance framework (esp. 116–205). Justin M. Smith (*Why βίος? On the Relationship between Gospel Genre and Implied Audience*, LNTS 518 [London: T&T Clark, 2015], 20–21, 27, 62, etc.) depends heavily on Fowler, claiming that genres are best "understood in terms of family resemblances" (62). Though he does employ family resemblance criticism, he also notes the importance of genre differences. His analysis, however, assumes the viability of Burridge's family resemblance model (he does not make an

three decades, Smith and Kostopoulos still contend that Fowler represents "the best in contemporary genre theory."[3] Ironically (in that Burridge too depends on Fowler) they argue that attempts by scholars like Burridge and others to squeeze Luke-Acts into a singular generic framework (the Greco-Roman biography)[4] succumb to the error of pigeonholing that Fowler critiqued.[5] Genres are instead more flexible, they claim, resembling a pigeon (family resemblance) more than a pigeonhole (classification).[6]

This raises a fundamental methodological problem with Fowler's model, known now for some time to literary critics. If genres are understood mainly in terms of literary similarities, then Burridge needs only to accentuate Lukan commonalities with the βίος to advance his case for a biographical reading of Luke-Acts. Conversely, Smith and Kostopoulos can recruit a convincing range of family resemblances shared by the history and the biography to establish their appeal for genre blending. Without considering genre differences (esp. within larger discourse structures), cases for multiple genres may be developed concurrently and defended with equal vigor, not unlike the situation we discover in contemporary studies of

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independent case for the method—or for the genre of the gospels), which does not maintain this emphasis. See also Alan J. Bale, *Genre and Narrative Coherence in the Acts of the Apostles*, LNTS 514 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 8.

[3] Smith and Kostopoulos, "Biography, History," 394. So also Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 25.

[4] He applies this model to Acts in Richard A. Burridge, "The Genre of Acts Revisited," in *Reading Acts Today: Essays in Honour of Loveday C. A. Alexander*, ed. Steve Walton, LNTS 472 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 3–28. In some ways, Smith and Kostopoulos's presentation of Fowler's model as an advancement in Lukan genre studies is puzzling since Burridge's classic treatment of the gospels genre had thoroughly advocated this approach several decades ago, including a discussion of Fowler's pigeonholing illustration. For his use of Fowler's genre-as-pigeon metaphor, see Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 31–32.

[5] Smith and Kostopoulos, "Biography, History," 391. I label it the Fowler fallacy rather than the family resemblance fallacy due to Burridge's influence on gospel genre study and his direct dependence on Fowler for his family resemblance approach. And Smith and Kostopoulos follow suit. New Testament scholars continue to find certain aspects of Fowler's *Kinds of Literature* useful. These include, for example, Fowler's rejection of the "list of features" approach to genre and his emphasis that in practice genre is more about communication than about classification. In this way, Fowler is quite in sync with much of the work in new genre studies.

[6] Smith and Kostopoulos ("Biography, History," 391) are correct that this distinction embodies Fowler's resistance to generic "classification" or, in other words, the pigeonhole model. But Fowler's genre-as-pigeon conception also functions to express his alternative proposal—family resemblance theory. See Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 37–44, esp. 41–44. It is not entirely clear to what degree Smith and Kostopoulos appreciate the original context of this metaphor, but their analysis of ancient prose genres does reflect its basic underpinnings (see below). Smith and Kostopoulos also seem to tip their hat to the family resemblance theory as they turn to analysis of ancient Greek narratives in their "search for other birds of a similar feather" to Luke-Acts ("Biography, History," 391).

the genre of Luke-Acts. I shall call this attention to genre similarities at the expense of (esp. macrostructural) genre differences *the Fowler fallacy*.

I. Modern Genre Theory and Alastair Fowler

The point I wish to make in response to the use of family resemblance theory in New Testament genre studies is relatively simple: Fowler's model is problematic and has been rejected in literary scholarship for decades, not least by Fowler himself. Although still in use by New Testament scholars, Fowler's family resemblance model passed from the scene of literary theory almost as quickly as it emerged. Earl Miner dismissed the model on logical grounds, shortly after it was introduced.

> The logical difficulty with the principle of family resemblance is that it posits likeness for admissibility to a set and minimizes differences to exclude from a set. In other words, how is one to decide family resemblance does *not* exist? … In short, we need grounds for postulating that a work's assignment to a given family is more explanatory than its assignment to other families. Perhaps we have not achieved the means of making these distinctions. Perhaps we never shall. But family resemblance, as useful as it is, does not fill these needs.[7]

The basic critique is that the family resemblance method targets only genre similarities, not genre differences. In his recent treatment of genre theory, John Frow summarizes the issue succinctly: "Using likeness as the basis of similarity raises the problem of where dissimilarity may be drawn."[8] Genre critic John Swales frames the problem memorably: "Family resemblance theory can make anything resemble anything."[9] Under the weight of such criticisms, Fowler himself eventually concedes, "Philosophically, Fowler's ideas [about family resemblance] represented an

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[7] Earl Miner, "Some Issues of 'Literary Species, or Distinct Kind,'" in *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*, ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, Harvard English Studies 14 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 15–34, here 24.

[8] John Frow, *Genre* (New Critical Idiom; London: Routledge, 2006), 54.

[9] John Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51. Carol A. Newsom frames the problem of family resemblance theory as follows: "Texts in group A might exhibit features a, b, c, group B might exhibit features b, c, d, and group c might exhibit features c, d, e, and so forth. One is left with the uncomfortable conclusion that the family resemblance model could produce a genre in which two exemplars in fact shared no traits in common!" ("Spying Out the Land: A Report from a Genealogy," in *Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies*, ed. Roland Boer, SemeiaSt 63 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007], 19–30, here 23). See also Carol A. Newsom, "Pairing Research Questions and Theories of Genre: A Case Study of the Hodayot," *DSD* 17 (2010): 270–88. For a different version of this objection, see Tomoko Sawaki, *Analysing Structure in Academic Writing*, Postdisciplinary Studies in Discourse; London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 56. For another rejection of family resemblances in biblical studies in favor of more recent trends, see John J. Collins, "The Genre of the Book of *Jubilees*," in *A Teacher for All Generations:*

unsatisfactory amalgam of Wittgenstein, Carnap and the non-structuralist element in Saussure; and he overestimated the part played in interpretation by coding."[10]

II. The "New" Genre Studies

While some New Testament scholars were preoccupied with family resemblance criticism,[11] a new movement in literary, rhetorical, and linguistic theory was emerging. Amy Devitt compares this "New genre study," which treats technique or form alongside content, as constituting genre in social action.[12] Contemporary genre study seeks to reinstate the role of social context that prior—usually structuralist—models had minimized.

Most contemporary genre theorists credit this so-called rhetorical turn away from structuralism toward more sociologically constructed theories to Carolyn Miller.[13] In her influential article entitled "Genre as Social Action," Miller proceeds from the criticisms of traditional genre theory as registered by John Patton and Thomas Conley.[14] Echoing their sentiments, she contends that traditional genre

Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam, ed. Eric F. Mason et al., 2 vols., JSJSup 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2:737–55, here 739.

[10] Alastair Fowler, "Genre," in *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*, ed. Martin Coyle et al., Routledge Companion Encyclopedias (New York: Routledge, 1993), 151–63, here 158.

[11] E.g., Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 38–43.

[12] Amy J. Devitt, "Re-fusing Form in Genre Study," in *Genres in the Internet: Issues in the Theory of Genre*, ed. Janet Giltrow and Dieter Stein, Pragmatics and Beyond NS 188 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2009), 27–47, here 34.

[13] For surveys and/or assessments of contemporary genre theory, including Miller's role in the discussion (Carol R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 [1984]: 151–67), see esp. A. Freedman and P. Medway, "Locating Genre Studies: Antecedents and Prospects," in *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, ed. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994), 2–18; Vijay Kumar Bhatia, "Genres in Conflict," in *Analysing Professional Genres*, ed. Anna Trosborg, Pragmatics and Beyond NS 74 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2000), 147–61; Amy J. Devitt, *Writing Genres*, Rhetorical Philosophy and Theory (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004); Anis S. Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff, *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy*, Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition (West Lafayette, IN: Parlor, 2010); Janet Giltrow, "Genre as Difference: The Sociality of Linguistic Variation," in *Syntactic Variation and Genre*, ed. Heidrun Dorgeloh and Anja Wanner, Topics in English Linguistics 70 (Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton, 2010), 29–51, esp. 33–36; Mary Soliday, *Everyday Genres: Writing Assignments across the Disciplines*, Studies in Writing and Rhetoric (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010); V. K. Bhatia, *Critical Genre Analysis: Investigating Interdiscursive Performance in Professional Practice* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[14] John H. Patton, "Generic Criticism: Typology at an Inflated Price," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 6 (1976): 4–8, here 5; Thomas M. Conley, "Ancient Rhetoric and Modern Genre Criticism," *Communication Quarterly* 7 (1979): 47–53, here 53.

criticism invites reductionism and tireless taxonomies. Instead, for Miller, definitions of genre must be socially configured, centering on function or use in relation to broader layers of context.[15] As Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway explain, "Without abandoning earlier conceptions of genres as 'types' or 'kinds' of discourse, characterized by similarities in content and form, recent analyses focus on tying these linguistic and substantive similarities to regularities in human spheres of activity."[16]

Even though scholars often credit this revolution in genre studies to Miller, many of its trajectories trace back much earlier to the work of M. A. K. Halliday and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), especially in Australia. Ann Johns, therefore, positions (1) the Sydney school and (2) related (SFL) approaches, "where practitioners have been most successful in applying genre theory," as the foundation for her anthology of genre studies in pedagogy. Independently, other movements such as (3) English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and (5) the new rhetoric have also been influential on the development of recent genre theory.[17] This survey reveals the magnitude of genre theory often neglected in New Testament scholarship. As SFL approaches have been so influential in both genre study and New Testament studies, especially work related to Stanley E. Porter and McMaster Divinity College, I will draw primarily from these models in my analysis below.

In response to the Fowler fallacy, new genre critics often build *agnation* models (ways of modeling genre relations especially genre differences but also proximities, i.e., similarities) into their wider theoretical frameworks, where agnation simply refers to formal features of a given writing that allow use to identify how it relates to and differs from a specific genre and/or set of genres. SFL theorists, for example, leverage the concept of genre agnation to model genre differences.[18] Genre agnation analysis can be performed from several methodological angles. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan agnate genres through assessment of their optional versus obligatory elements.[19] Similarly, J. R. Martin (and David Rose) develops his agnation model through genre typology, where clines[20] are used to factor out

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[15] Miller, "Genre as Social Action," 151.

[16] Freedman and Medway, "Locating Genre Studies," 2.

[17] Ann M. Johns, "Introduction: Genre in the Classroom," in *Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives*, ed. Ann M. Johns (2002; repr., New York: Routledge, 2009), 1–13, here 5. The fourth part of her volume looks at intervening approaches, between (1)–(3) and (5), that straddle linguistic and rhetorical approaches.

[18] See Tuomo Hiippala, *The Structure of Multimodal Documents: An Empirical Approach*, Routledge Studies in Multimodality 13 (New York: Routledge, 2016), 75–80.

[19] M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 63.

[20] J. R. Martin and David Rose, *Genre Relations: Mapping Culture* (London: Equinox, 2008). On this model, texts agnate through several clines. If narrative beginnings form a cline of more generic (history-like discourse) or individualized (biography-like discourse), Xenophon's *Anabasis* can be said to be more individualized and thus biographic *relative to this cline*. This history,

similarities and differences (e.g., event-oriented vs. participant-oriented discourse).[21] The theory of genre prototypes has been quite influential in the ESP school. According to Swales, we may assess genre differences based on their proximity to or divergence from a given genre prototype.[22]

The limitations of Fowler's model are well appreciated by recent genre critics, even if not always by New Testament scholars. Neglect of issues connected with genre agnation leaves studies like Burridge's, for example, highly vulnerable—where the focus clearly remains on genre similarity, not divergence. As Adela Yarbro Collins noted many years ago, besides very scattered references, "Burridge's case for defining the Gospels as *bioi* appears so strong in large part because he did not consider any *serious* alternative"[23]—a direct symptom, in my view, of his dependence on Fowler. Although Smith and Kostopoulos seek to provide a sustained comparison of the biographical and historical genres, moving away from Burridge in this respect, their analysis suffers from the same kinds of problems (neglect of genre differences) that are entailed by Fowler's methodology.

III. Text Types, Macrostructures, and Genre Blending

Many of the phenomena noted in recent studies of the genre of the gospels and Luke-Acts appear to confuse *genre* with what many contemporary critics refer to as *text type*—similar to Fowler's notion of mode.[24] Text types may be defined as modes of writing where, for example, narrative refers to a text type and biography refers to a genre. Douglas Biber contrasts "genre categories," which "are determined

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therefore, blends with the biographical genre per this macrostructural feature. The degree to which a work like *Anabasis* proximates to and diverges from consistently realized macrostructures in the Greek historical and biographical genres can, then, be assessed relative to several similar clines, allowing such relativized comparisons for a range of documents.

[21] J. R. Martin, "Analysing Genre: Functional Parameters," in *Genre and Institutions: Social Processes in the Workplace and School*, ed. Frances Christie and J. R. Martin, Open Linguistics (London: Cassell, 1997), 3–39, here 13. Martin and Rose substantially expand this model with reference to a number of genres in their *Genre Relations*.

[22] Swales, *Genre Analysis*, 51–52. Swales associates prototype theory with Eleanor Rosch's work, for example, Rosch, "Cognitive Representations of Semantic Categories," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 104 (1975): 192–233.

[23] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Genre and the Gospels," *JR* 75 (1995): 239–46 (241; emphasis mine). Collins seems to overstate the case slightly here as Burridge does consider alternative genres sporadically (e.g., in his treatment of verbal subjects).

[24] See, e.g., Douglas Biber, *Dimensions of Register Variation: A Cross-Linguistic Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), passim; Tuija Virtanen, "Variation across Texts and Discourses: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives on Text Type and Genre," in Dorgeloh and Wanner, *Syntactic Variation and Genre*, 53–84; Graeme D. Kennedy, *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*, Studies in Language and Linguistics (New York: Routledge, 2016), 185. On the distinction between genre and mode, see Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 106–29.

on the basis of external criteria related to the speaker's *purpose* and *topic*" and "text types," which "represent groupings of texts that are similar in linguistic form, irrespective of genre."[25] Therefore, as Pascual Cantos observes, "texts from biographies, press reportages, and academic prose may all be similar in having a narrative linguistic form and might be grouped together as a single text type, even though they represent three different genres."[26] Many genre theorists seek to extract Biber's external criteria for genre categories (related to topic/purpose) through macrostructural analysis. Halliday, Hasan, Martin, and Rose, for example, all view genre as that element of the cultural configuration that determines the macrostructure of texts.[27] *Macrostructures* refer to higher-level (global) discourse elements (usually discourse and episode levels), where topicalization/purpose tends to be most heavily coded, in contrast to *microstructures* or lower-level (local) constituents. In contemporary genre studies, macrostructural analysis bridges the ever-elusive gap between social context (register) and form.

We isolate genre from text type by focusing on the macrostructural organization of texts, especially in terms of how topicality and purpose are developed. Structures like the preface, the transition from the preface into the narrative body, and other global organizational patterns not only should be given priority in genre identification but also should provide the interpretive frame for lower-level structures. An atomistic focus on local structures, therefore, reveals a preoccupation with text type, not genre, since linguistic forms are considered *apart from their broader macrostructural and social contexts*.

Recent genre theorists recognize that the elasticity of discourse and the facility with which texts adapt to social contexts means that at times generic classification may be difficult (e.g., genres blend).[28] Nevertheless, the stability of culture with its predictable sets of genres seemingly grounds our ability to distinguish one genre from another, typically at the macrostructural levels of the discourse.[29] So a more adequate genre theory would allow that Luke-Acts could be blended. But whether a genre agnates from or blends with other genres is studied not through an assessment of text type but through macrostructural literary divergence.

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[25] Douglas Biber, *Variation across Speech and Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 170 (emphasis added).

[26] Pascual Cantos, "The Use of Linguistic Corpora for the Study of Linguistic Variation and Change: Types and Computational Applications," in *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics*, ed. Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre, Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 99–122, here 116.

[27] Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context*, 63; J. R. Martin, *English Text: System and Structure* (Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1992), 500–502; Martin and Rose note that in their research "recurrent global patterns were recognised as genres" (*Genre Relations*, 5).

[28] Martin and Rose, *Genre Relations*, 133.

[29] Ibid.

IV. Family Resemblances and the
Greco-Roman Biography

Stressing (esp. local-level) parallels or similarities with other ancient texts has played a significant role in the storied history of New Testament interpretation. In the 1960s Samuel Sandmel felt the need to censor our discipline for its proclivities toward what he famously termed "paralellomania."[30] In concert with many streams of New Testament study, literary resonances in the gospels with the Greco-Roman biographical tradition had been exploited for many years prior to Burridge's work in attempts to better understand the gospels genre. For example, we think immediately of the contributions of C. W. Votaw, Charles Talbert, Philip Shuler, Albrecht Dihle, and David Aune[31]—all of which recruit a range of shared formal features as a basis for establishing a literary connection between the gospels and the Greco-Roman biography.[32]

Burridge did not establish this model, but he did enshrine it methodologically, so that most recent treatments of genre defer to him on questions of literary theory.[33] Burridge's *What Are the Gospels?* continues the trend of former studies in correlating a list—albeit a more comprehensive one—of features present in both ancient biographical and gospel literature. Burridge also expands the theoretical basis of this method by introducing Fowler to the discussion. I pointed out above that Fowler recruited Ludwig Wittgenstein's "family resemblance model" in an effort to construct a robust theory of literary genre.[34] Burridge defines the focus of his own investigation along the same lines, as an attempt to "identify … 'generic features' as a list against which we can compare the gospels and Graeco-Roman βίοι, to see whether they exhibit the same pattern and family resemblance."[35]

Greek history and biography share many things in common as instances of

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[30] Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13, https://doi.org/10.2307/3264821.

[31] C. W. Votaw, "The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies," *AJT* 19 (1915): 45–73, 217–49; Charles H. Talbert, *What Is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1978); Philip L. Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); Albrecht Dihle, "Die Evangelien und die biographischen Traditionen der Antike," *ZTK* 80 (1983): 33–49; David A. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, LEC 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 46–77.

[32] The recent argument of Steve Walton ("What Are the Gospels? Richard Burridge's Impact on Scholarly Understanding of the Genre of the Gospels," *CurBR* 14 [2015]: 81–93) that Burridge's work established the current consensus on the Gospels genre is likely overstated in this respect.

[33] E.g., Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 58; Smith, *Why βίος?*, 36; Michael R. Licona, *Why Are There Differences in the Gospels? What We Can Learn from Ancient Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

[34] Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*; Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 38: "The attraction of 'family resemblance' is that it is sufficiently vague to cope with the blurred edges of genre (unlike 'class'), yet still sharp enough to have some meaning."

[35] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 105.

related but distinct Greek narrative discourse, a point where the Fowler-Burridge family resemblance model struggles to make convincing distinctions. The problem materializes most directly in the categories Burridge deploys to create his family resemblances. For example, Burridge's "mode of representation,"[36] where βίοι are composed in (for the most part third-person) prose narrative, is applicable to many instances of Greek narrative, not exclusively to biographies. Similarly, "length and size" may be a helpful feature to consider but it too detects several groups of works, not just biographical texts. As instances of narrative, Greco-Roman histories, monographs of various sorts, biographies, and many more are composed in the same prose meter, so this provides another feature common to multiple genres (cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Comp.* 3[37]). When Burridge speaks of "use of sources" as a genre indicator, he recognizes that the types of sources used by biographies (oral tradition, histories, memoirs, the poets, etc.) may be used by many other genres in the ancient world, including the Greco-Roman history.[38] Comparable "literary units" (e.g., speeches, discourse, sayings, etc.) show up in a range of narrative prose texts. Similarly, "style" can serve to disambiguate the type of Greek a genre was typically composed in, but this too will cast a wide net and so merely functions as a proximity or detection criterion—it detects multiple related genres but does not disambiguate them from one another. Burridge mentions the tone, mood, attitude, and values of a work as a formal feature of the biography, but we discover these features in historical works as well.

Burridge acknowledges the need to study genre differences; however, he develops only a single criterion—verbal subjects (explicit subjects in the nominative case)—to service this methodological need.[39] Verbal subjects are said to exhibit higher densities in biographical literature. The validity of this argument depends in part on the quality of the "control" corpus that Burridge constructs.[40] The corpus consists of Homer's two epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and two books from Herodotus's *Histories*. Besides a few scattered references to ancient sources in the context of other features he explores, we should note that Burridge offers only "control" results for the verbal subjects criterion. Moreover, this criterion seems inconclusive since the very limited sample corpus he erects fails to meet the standard criteria for corpus design and compilation often utilized by recent genre theorists.[41] Contemporary critics stress the importance of corpus size

[36] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, chapter 5, provides his list of criteria, referred to here.

[37] Dionysius here divides genres into metered (poetry) and nonmetered (narrative).

[38] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 120–21.

[39] Burridge concedes that, for all his features, only "subject" criteria (where the biographical subject frequently functions as the grammatical subject of a work) are "determinative for βίοι" (*What Are the Gospels?*, 107).

[40] Ibid., 131.

[41] Alex Chengyu Fang and Jing Cao comment, "By and large in the past 50 years, the representative function of the corpus has been thoroughly understood and appreciated" in genre studies (*Text Genres and Registers: The Computation of Linguistic Features* [Berlin: Springer, 2015], 6).

and representativeness when collecting a set of texts for genre analysis.[42] The three compositions that Burridge chooses predate any of the biographical texts that he considers—Homer, by centuries. Contemporary corpus linguists often discuss the importance of a *representative* corpus. But what does Burridge's corpus represent? All the nonbiographical genres? Poetry and prose texts? Whatever its design, the corpus seems incomplete as it currently stands. To illustrate this point, we need only consider the fact the *Odyssey* turns out to feature verbal subjects quite often in a "pseudo-biographical" way, according to Burridge.[43]

The problem of corpus size now is apparent here in that one-third of the sample texts (and one-half of the authors) exhibit a feature supposedly unique to the βίος. Further, treatment of only a portion of Herodotus disregards the role of macrostructural analysis in genre configuration. Even if we assume for now the viability of the verbal subjects criterion, the *emphasis* of Burridge's methodology still remains on genre proximity (detection), not divergence (disambiguation), since he provides a control corpus for only one of his criteria.

While Burridge recognizes the literary overlap of the βίος with several other genres in the ancient world, he provides no systematic comparison of his features for the βίος genre with features in these other genres. He represents this visually with a helpful display of the literary relation of βίοι to other Greco-Roman literary forms in the ancient world.
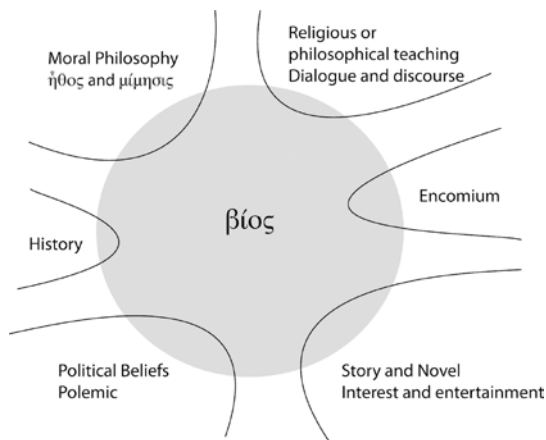

Figure 1. Burridge's Genre Proximity Criteria based on Family Resemblances. Adapted from Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 64.

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[42] On these criteria, see Douglas Biber, "Representativeness in Corpus Design," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 8 (1993): 243–57; Matthew B. O'Donnell, *Corpus Linguistics and the Greek of the New Testament*, New Testament Monographs 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), 137; Fang and Cao, *Text Genres*, passim; Kennedy, *Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*, passim, esp. 74.

[43] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 112.

The grey circle (which I have darkened from the original) highlights all the material that Burridge's criteria catch. As it stands, most of Burridge's criteria detect not only βίοι but also features found in both the βίος and overlapping genres.

Burridge confronts here a problem that has traditionally faced the family resemblance model for genre study. Genre detection criteria (family resemblances) help isolate the group of related genres that includes the βίος, but we need more rigorous genre disambiguation (or agnation) criteria to augment this analysis by further distinguishing the βίος from within this larger group of related genres. Sustained genre analysis must emphasize both features for genre detection and genre disambiguation, especially with closely intersecting genres, such as the βίος and the Greek history.
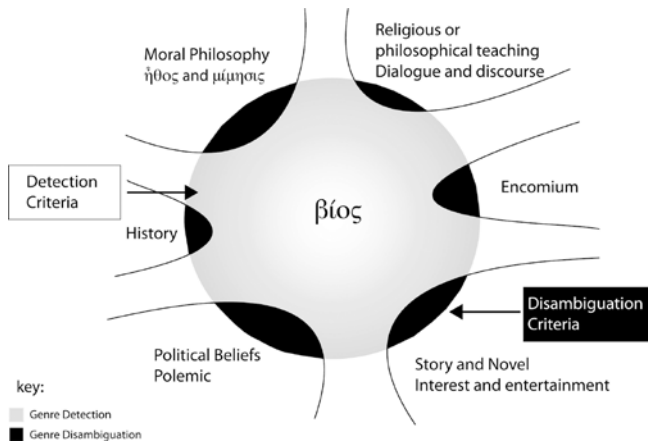

Figure 2. Genre Detection and Disambiguation Criteria

One must study proximity features to understand genre, but overlapping features require a further set of criteria designed to push beyond family resemblances and disambiguate the literary environment of texts with overlapping formal characteristics (as in fig. 2). This has been the traditional critique of the family resemblance model, and Burridge's use of it does little to avoid it.

V. Genre Blending in Greek Historical Prose

Smith and Kostopoulos treat Diodorus Siculus in the most detail, so I will focus primarily on his history as well, but the problems I note here will apply equally to their conclusions regarding other historians since they derive from the same methodology. Smith and Kostopoulos refer initially to fragmentary sketches of Aeneas, Romulus, Solon, Croesus, and Pythagoras in books 7–10 of Diodorus's *Library of History*; but, since very little (if any) remains of these narratives, we

cannot assess their macrostructural configurations. They note that, despite the annalistic character of much of the remaining narrative, books 16–17 blend with the βίος genre in their focus on the careers of Philip (book 16) and his son Alexander (book 17), with both books ending with the death of the narrative subject.

As with Burridge, Smith and Kostopoulos proceed from Fowler's family resemblance model (genre as pigeon, in their terms), emphasizing local-level genre similarities while underplaying macrostructural genre differences. I take Smith and Kostopoulos's argument to run something like this:

1. Biographies are biographical portraits.
2. Histories contain biographical portraits.
3. Therefore, histories contain biographies (i.e., the genres blend).

Their comparison of narratives independent of their wider macrostructural and social contexts reflects a highly circumscribed perspective, as though genres are not discourse-wide phenomena. Showing that two genres do similar things (family resemblances) at local levels of the discourse only establishes that they share linguistic commonality *relative to certain formal features* (i.e., text type), not that one genre has swallowed or mixed with another in the way that Smith and Kostopoulos suggest.

To illustrate this point, we may compare Diodorus with the collected biographies of Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius. Since Diodorus includes multiple biographical portraits, Smith and Kostopoulos's thesis must entail that it is the collected biography that blends with Diodorus's history. But at the macrostructural level, the collected biographies are formally segmented, whereas Diodorus and Luke-Acts are not. Therefore, the nonsegmented macrostructural (historical) context of the biographical portraits in Diodorus constantly reinforce their historiographic function, in no way eliciting generic ambiguity for the literarily sensitive reader.

Susan Stewart and Patricia Miller see this point clearly when they stress the importance of distinguishing between an accumulation of characters (as we no doubt have in Diodorus and Luke-Acts) and a collection of lives in a narrative. Following Stewart, Miller proposes that, by definition, a collection (i.e., collected biography) is different from mere accumulation because "the collection is *not constructed by its elements*; rather it comes to exist by means of *its principle of organization*."[44]

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[44] P. M. Cox, "Strategies of Representation in Collected Biography: Constructing the Subject as Holy," in *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. Tomas Hägg, Philip Rousseau, and Christian Høgel, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 31 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 209–54, here 215 (emphasis mine), citing Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 153. In his somewhat recent treatment of the collected biography, Adams cites this analysis approvingly (*Genre of Acts*, 110–11). He also emphasizes that in the Illustrious Men category of biographies "works are structured on a particular organisational pattern of (nearly) discrete discussions of individuals" (239).

This can be seen through the successive narrative segmentation according to clearly defined life modules employed invariably by both Plutarch and Diogenes but not by Diodorus (or Luke-Acts). Once these larger macrostructures are considered, it becomes clear that the two genres are not as blended as Smith and Kostopoulos insist.

TABLE 1. Macrostructural Organization in Diodorus, Plutarch, and Diogenes*

Diodorus, *Library*	Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*	Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*
Historical Preface	Biographical Preface	Biographical Preface
Historical Transition	Biographical Transition	Biographical Transition
Egypt and Mesopotamia (1.1–2.34)	**Theseus** (*Thes.* 3.1): Θησέως τὸ μὲν πατρῷον γένος εἰς Ἐρεχθέα καὶ τοὺς πρώτους αὐτόχθονας ἀνήκει, τῷ δὲ μητρῴῳ Πελοπίδης ἦν.	**Pittacus** (*Vit. Phil.* 1.74): Πιττακὸς Ὑρραδίου Μυτιληναῖος. φησὶ δὲ Δοῦρις τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ Θρᾷκα εἶναι. οὗτος μετὰ τῶν Ἀλκαίου γενόμενος ἀδελφῶν Μέλαγχρον
History of Various Nations (2.34–3.74)		
Greek Myths (4.1–5.84)		
Fragments on Wars/Nations (6–10)	**Alexander** (*Alex.* 2.1): Ἀλέξανδρος ὅτι τῷ γένει πρὸς πατρὸς μὲν ἦν Ἡρακλείδης ἀπὸ Καράνου πρὸς δὲ μητρὸς Αἰακίδης ἀπὸ Νεοπτολέμου, τῶν πάνυ πεπιστευμένων ἐστί.	**Cleobulus** (*Vit. Phil.* 1.89): Κλεόβουλος Εὐαγόρου Λίνδιος, ὡς δὲ Δοῦρις, Κάρ. ἔνιοι δὲ εἰς Ἡρακλέα ἀναφέρειν τὸ γένος αὐτόν·
Wars: Greek, Persian, Spartan, etc. (11–15)		
	Caesar (*Cae.* 1.1) τὴν Κίννα τοῦ μοναρχήσαντος θυγατέρα Κορνηλίαν, ὡς ἐπεκράτησε Σύλλας, … Ἰουλίᾳ γάρ, πατρὸς ἀδελφῇ Καίσαρος, ὁ πρεσβύτερος συνῴκει Μάριος, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεγόνει Μάριος ὁ νεώτερος, ἀνεψιὸς ὢν Καίσαρος …	**Periander** (*Vit. Phil.* 1.94) Περίανδρος Κυψέλου Κορίνθιος ἀπὸ τοῦ τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν γένους.
Philip (16.1–65) Transition (16.2.1): ἐπ' ἄρχοντος γὰρ Ἀθήνησι Καλλιμήδους Ὀλυμπιὰς μὲν ἤχθη πέμπτη πρὸς ταῖς ἑκατόν, καθ' ἣν ἐνίκα στάδιον Πῶρος Κυρηναῖος, Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ κατέστησαν ὑπάτους Γναῖον Γενύκιον καὶ Λεύκιον Αἰμίλιον. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις Φίλιππος ὁ Ἀμύντου υἱός, Ἀλεξάνδρου δὲ τοῦ Πέρσας καταπολεμήσαντος πατήρ, παρέλαβε τὴν τῶν Μακεδόνων βασιλείαν διὰ τοιαύτας αἰτίας.		
	Aristides (*Ari.* 1.1) Ἀριστείδης ὁ Λυσιμάχου φυλῆς μὲν ἦν Ἀντιοχίδος, τῶν δὲ δήμων Ἀλωπεκῆθεν.	**Anacharsis** (*Vit. Phil.* 1.101) Ἀνάχαρσις ὁ Σκύθης Γνούρου μὲν ἦν υἱός, ἀδελφὸς δὲ Καδουΐδα τοῦ Σκυθῶν βασιλέως, μητρὸς δὲ Ἑλληνίδος· διὸ καὶ δίγλωττος ἦν.
Timoleon and Philip (16.66–95)[45] Transition (16.66.1): ἐπ' ἄρχοντος γὰρ Ἀθήνησιν Εὐβούλου Ῥωμαῖοι	**Cato Minor** (*Cat. Min.* 1.1): Κάτωνι δὲ τὸ μὲν γένος ἀρχὴν	

* In the table, underdots indicate an unclear reading in the manuscript (due to, e.g., a hole in the manuscript) but where the text has been reconstructed. Underlining indicates similarities.

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[45] Beginning in *Bib. hist.* 16.66.1 the careers of Timoleon and Philip are interlaced chronologically. Timoleon's career is covered in 16.66–69.6; 70.1–6; 72.2–73.3; 77.4–83; and 90.1, while the narrative of Philip's career is continued in 16.69.7–8; 71.1–2; 74.2–76.4; 77.2–3; 84.1–87.3; 89; and 91–95.

Table 1 (*cont.*)

Diodorus, *Library*	Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*	Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*
κατέστησαν ὑπάτους Μάρκον Φάβιον καὶ Σερούιον Σουλπίκιον. ἐπὶ δὲ τούτων <u>Τιμολέων ὁ Κορίνθιος</u> προκεχειρισμένος ὑπὸ τῶν πολιτῶν	ἐπιφανείας ἔλαβε καὶ δόξης ἀπὸ τοῦ <u>προπάππου</u> Κάτωνος ...	**Phaedo** (*Vit. Phil.* 2.105) <u>Φαίδων Ἠλεῖος</u>, τῶν <u>εὐπατριδῶν</u>, συνεάλω τῇ <u>πατρίδι</u> καὶ ἠναγκάσθη στῆναι ἐπ' οἰκήματος·
	Cato Major (*Cat. Maj.* 1.1): <u>Μάρκῳ</u> δὲ <u>Κάτωνί</u> φασιν ἀπὸ <u>Τούσκλου</u> τὸ γένος εἶναι ...	
Alexander (Book 17) Transition (17.1.3, 5) [3] ἐν ὀλίγῳ δὲ χρόνῳ μεγάλας πράξεις. οὗτος ὁ βασιλεὺς κατειργάσατο καὶ διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν σύνεσίν τε καὶ ἀνδρείαν ὑπερεβάλετο τῷ μεγέθει τῶν ἔργων πάντας τοὺς ἐξ αἰῶνος τῇ μνήμῃ παραδεδο-μένους βασιλεῖς·... [5] <u>Ἀλέξανδρος</u> οὖν γεγονὼς κατὰ <u>πατέρα</u> μὲν ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους, κατὰ δὲ <u>μητέρα</u> τῶν Αἰακιδῶν	**Brutus** (*Brut.* 1.1): <u>Μάρκου</u> δὲ <u>Βρούτου</u> <u>πρόγονος</u> ἦν Ἰούνιος Βροῦτος ...	**Myson** (*Vit. Phil.* 1.106) <u>Μύσων</u> <u>Στρύμωνος</u>, ὥς φησι Σωσικράτης Ἕρμιππον παρατιθέμενος, <u>τὸ γένος</u> Χηνεύς, <u>ἀπὸ κώμης</u> τινὸς Οἰταϊκῆς ... **Anaximander** (*Vit. Phil.* 2.1) <u>Ἀναξίμανδρος</u> <u>Πραξιάδου</u> <u>Μιλήσιος</u>
Wars with Alexander's Successors (18.1–75) Other Wars, esp. with Sicily (19.1–20.113) Fragments, often on wars (Books 21–40)		

To begin with, one may note a range of macrostructures that help guide generic expectations for the entire discourse (including books 16–17 of Diodorus's *Library*), beginning with the preface. Histories and biographies employed distinct formal prefaces. The prefaces to Plutarch and Diogenes both identify their works with the βίος genre, while Diodorus clearly claims to write universal history, which Smith and Kostopoulos recognize.[46] These macrostructures encode the broader

[46] M. J. Edwards argues for literary self-identification as one of the most persistent features of the Greco-Roman biography in the first century and beyond ("Biography and Biographic," in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. M. J. Edwards and Simon Swain [Oxford: Clarendon, 1997], 228–34, here 230). The pattern seems broken only when an author includes a preface. For example, although Plutarch's *Caesar*, *Cicero*, and *Romulus* do not include a literary self-designation, each of these books happens to be the second volume of one of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Each set includes a preface located at the beginning of the first life Plutarch documents, where βίος language is applied to both books in the set: *Alexander* (3x), *Demosthenes* (1x), and *Theseus* (1x). Plutarch follows this pattern in several of his

purposes of the author and consequently frame literary expectations for the reader. Generic coding strengthens as we move from the preface to the (macrostructural) transition into the narrative body. Lucian emphasizes the importance of a properly formed historical transition (*Hist.* 55), and Loveday Alexander has alluded to its potential value in ancient genre studies.[47] Histories consistently transition into the narrative body with an event related to groups,[48] as Diodorus does,[49] while the collected biographies transition with reference to an individual.[50] From here, the collected biographies are formally segmented according to numerous life modules in the cases of both Plutarch and Diogenes. Diodorus, by contrast, maps the global organization for his history primarily on annalistic structures. Local biographical narratives must be interpreted in light of these broader macrostructural paradigms in both histories *and* biographies. Formal linguistic comparison of texts outside of the macrostructural and social configurations that help support the identification of their literary function misses the mark of genre study entirely. It results for Smith and Kostopoulos in the problem of identifying something like the biographical mode of discourse or text type *as a genre*.

But even at more local levels, there are differences that Smith and Kostopoulos's family resemblance model minimizes. The opening clauses of all but one of the fourteen collected lives examined above employ the name of their subjects in the first clause of their work with a genealogy, a highly persistent feature of

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other βίοι as well (e.g., Plutarch, *Aem.* 1.1–3; *Ara.* 1.2–3; *Cim.* 2.3). Diogenes (1.1) describes his work in terms of βίος in the preface to his *Lives*, and Lucian's βίοι use this structure as well (e.g., Lucian, *Alex.* 1–2; *Dem.* 1).

Diodorus opens his work by clearly identifying his purpose to document κοινὰς ἱστορίας ("common history") (*Bib. hist.* 1.1).

See Smith and Kostopoulos, "Biography, History," passim.

[47] Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTSMS 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 30–31.

[48] E.g., the Persian war: Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.1; the War between Epidamnus and its neighboring cities: Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.24.3; the War between Lacedaemonians and the Athenians: Xenophon, *Hell.* 1.1; the Roman crossing over the sea from Italy: Polybius, *Hist.* 1.5.1; the creation event: Josephus, *A.J.* 1.1.1 §27; Rome's war with the Italian nations: Appian, *Bel. civ.* 1.7. Cf. Martin and Rose, who posit a participant identification cline (*Genre Relations*, 131), where (modern) historical texts tend to foreground groups of people over individuals while autobiographies/biographies exhibit the opposite trend, but neither manifests these identification strategies exclusively.

[49] Diodorus transitions into a discussion about the origins of animal life (*Bib. hist.* 1.9–10) since Egypt is the country where mythology places the origin of the gods (1.9.6) and since animal life first appears there (1.10.2). His entire first book of the *Library*, therefore, covers a range of Egyptian customs and religious traditions.

[50] The biographers almost invariably transition from the preface into the narrative body by topicalizing the biographical subject on the opening line of the narrative body, e.g., Plutarch, *Alex.* 2.1; *Cae.* 1.1; *Dem.* 4. 1; *Cic.* 1.1; *Thes.* 3.1; *Rom.* 4.1; *Artex.* 2.1; *Oth.* 2.1; e.g., Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* 1.22; Lucian, *Dem.* 3; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 1.5.

Greco-Roman biographies from Plutarch on.[51] Diodorus seemingly ignores such conventions, introducing characters more deeply within his narrative, positioning their genealogies at more embedded syntactic locations. Timoleon's life sketch does not include a genealogy at all. The insertion of Timoleon's life within Philip's also resists the collected biographical tendency to segment lives more sharply.

Despite Smith and Kostopoulos's insistence to the contrary, Diodorus frames his biographical portraits in a distinctly historical way. He justifies his sustained treatment of Philip in a ἱστορικαῖς because it helps the historian to treat "the history of states or kings" from beginning to end (*Bib. hist.* 16.1). The opening line of book 17 reminds the reader that the lives of Philip and Alexander only provide time lines in service of the ulterior agenda of documenting "events connected with other kings, peoples and cities which occurred in the years" of their reigns (*Bib. hist.* 17.1; Wells, LCL). This is evident by the embedding of the story of Timoleon within the so-called life of Philip, among other things. Diodorus explicitly expresses his historical motivation for selecting a more biographically oriented mode of discourse in books 16–17: "This is the best method, I think, of ensuring that *events* will be remembered, for thus the material is arranged topically" (*Bib. hist.* 17.2; Wells, LCL; emphasis mine). These narratives provide the chronological axis for the treatment of topics related to broader historical events, in other words. Diodorus's use of these life sketches does not represent a careless slip (i.e., blending) into the biographical genre, but an intentional historiographic strategy. The social function of these biographical portraits is fundamentally historiographic, not biographical. To insist otherwise confuses genre with text type, focusing only on local-level linguistic commonality.

Smith and Kostopoulos also point to examples of life sketches in Dionysius and Eusebius, but these assessments elicit the same methodology.[52] A few examples will suffice. They claim, "Like Plutarch and other biographers, Dionysius will instruct

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[51] Only Plutarch's *Caesar* deviates from this pattern, but some think the opening portions of this text may not have been preserved; see, e.g., Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, ed. Bernadotte Perrin, LCL (Medford, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 443. For the standard pattern, see, e.g., Plutarch, *Alex.* 2.1; *Dem.* 4.1; *Cic.* 1.1; *Thes.* 3.1; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* 1.45; 1.106; 4.29; *Vit. Aes.* 1; *Vit. Arist.* 1; *Vit. Eur.* 1–2; *Vit. Pind.* 1; *Vit. Soph.* 1; Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 1; Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* 1.22, 116; 2.1, 125; 3.1; 4.1, 62; 5.1, 86; 6.1, 94; 7.1, 179; 8.1, 51–53; 9.1, 61; 10.1; Iamblichus, *Pyth.* 2.1; Plutarch, *Lyc.* 1.1–2.1; *Num.* 1.1–4; *Pub.* 1.1–3; Ps.-Herodotus, *Vit. Hom.* 1; Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 1–2; Soranus, *Vit. Hip.* 1; Tacitus, *Agr.* 4; Suetonius, *Aug.* 1–5; *Tib.* 1–5; *Cal.* 1–7; *Cla.* 1.1–6; *Ner.* 1–5; *Gal.* 1–3; *Oth.* 1.1–3; *Vit.* 1.1–3.1; *Ves.* 1.1–4; *Tit.* 1.1; *Dom.* 1.1; Nepos, *Mel.* 1.1; *Them.* 1.1; *Aris.* 1.1; *Paus.* 1; *Cim.* 1.1; *Alc.* 1.1; *Thr.* 1.1; *Dio.* 1.1, and so on. Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 1.1; 2.1; 4.1; 5.1; 7.1; 8.1; etc.), in general, tends to include genealogical tradition at the beginning of his life, but clearly in many cases this information was not available to him.

[52] Smith and Kostopoulos ("Biography, History," 404–5) refer to Josephus's *Life* as well, arguing that it represents a biographical portion of the *Antiquities* based on the interesting comment of Eusebius that the *Life* is part of the material Josephus "adds at the end of the *Antiquities*" (*Hist. eccl.* 3.10.8–11).

his contemporaries by examining the virtuous lives of famous men,"[53] but none of Dionysius's so-called lives employs the narrative segmentation strategies of the collected biographies. The same applies to their analysis of the biographical sketches in Eusebius. Here, Smith and Kostopoulos's analysis collapses into the trap that Stewart and Cox warn us to avoid: equating an accumulation of characters with a collection of lives.[54]

Based on Burridge's verbal subject densities, Smith and Kostopoulos go as far as to claim at one point that, "if the rest of the *Roman Antiquities* were lost, and only a fragment containing 4.41–85 survived, scholars would classify the work as an early βίος."[55] This statement reflects the atomistic perspective on genre that seems to drive Smith and Kostopoulos's larger argument. Despite clear trends in contemporary genre study in the opposite direction, for Smith and Kostopoulos, macrostructural and social constraints apparently play little role in genre identification. After all, their argument seems to depend at many levels on extracting biographical narratives from their macrostructural historical contexts.

Even when we consider the local structure of the passage, Dionysius's treatment of Tarquinius in his *Antiquities* defies biographical standards. The birth narrative of Tarquinius, for example, occurs in a prior book (3.46.5), not in the book about the narrative subject, as it does frequently in the biographical tradition. Dionysius then picks up with the genealogy in 4.6.1. When the biographers include birth narratives, by contrast, they consistently follow the genealogy (see Plutarch, *Alex.* 3.2; *Cic.* 2.1; *Rom.* 3.3; *Thes.* 3.3–4.1; Tacitus, *Agr.* 4.1; Suetonius, *Aug.* 5.1; *Tib.* 5.1; *Cal.* 8.1; *Ner.* 6.1; *Gal.* 4.1; *Art.* 1.1; *Oth.* 2.1[56]). Dionysius, however, uses the reverse order, with the birth of Tarquinius (*Ant. rom.* 3.46.5) preceding the genealogy (4.6.1–6).

VI. What about the Genre of Luke-Acts?

What value might contemporary genre agnation methods bring to the study of the genre(s)[57] of Luke-Acts? To begin with, it must be recognized that genre

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[53] Smith and Kostopoulos, "Biography, History," 402.

[54] Cox, "Strategies of Representation," 215.

[55] Smith and Kostopoulos, "Biography, History," 403–4.

[56] As can be seen from this list of Suetonius's lives, the birth narrative after the genealogy was a persistent literary feature for him. See also Suetonius, *Ver.* 3.2; *Ves.* 2.1; *Tit.* 1.1.

[57] The paradigm-shifting work of Henry Cadbury has convinced most scholars of the literary unity of Luke-Acts (*The Making of Luke-Acts* [New York: Macmillan, 1927]). But a growing movement questions this unity, e.g., Richard I. Pervo, "Must Luke and Acts Belong to the Same Genre?," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1989 Seminar Papers*, ed. D. J. Lull, SBLSP 28 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 309–16. My conclusions in this article do not depend on the unity of Luke-Acts but focus instead on methodological assumptions in New Testament scholarship that drives the analysis of both documents, whether independently or as a set.

labels are secondary and that the ancients were not attempting to squeeze their documents into tightly formed generic categories. Therefore, modern genre analysis has more of a descriptive rather than prescriptive function. Nevertheless, once the limitations of family resemblance criticism are recognized, the conclusions neither of Burridge nor of Smith and Kostopoulos on the genre(s) of Luke-Acts seem sustainable. Although my project here has been primarily concerned with methodology, I wish to close by briefly illustrating how attention to literary divergence could inform future Lukan genre studies.

Genres can blend, and since we recognize genre distinctives primarily through macrostructural encoding, this is where blending most naturally occurs. For example, Xenophon's *Anabasis* lacks a historical preface and begins its narrative with the genealogy of an individual (Cyrus), mentioned in the first clause of the work (*Anab.* 1). Here, we have legitimate genre (i.e., macrostructural) blending. Relative to other features, Xenophon may function more like history, but it begins as biographies typically do—Martin and Rose's cline analysis is helpful for modeling this type of relation. No such ambiguity exists with either Diodorus or Luke-Acts. Rather than blending with the biographical tradition, they agnate from it in the direction of history within the major macrostructures of their narratives. Both include (at the very least)[58] a nonbiographically oriented preface (Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 1.1–8; Luke 1:1–4, not mentioning Jesus at all)[59] and transition into the narrative body with an event (Diodorus, *Bib. hist.* 1.9–10; Luke 1:5),[60] not a biographical subject. As with historians like Dionysius, Luke embeds his genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23–38) rather than staging it in the opening lines of the narrative (as, e.g., in Matthew) and defies biographical standards by including his birth account (2:1–38) before the genealogy. Nor does Luke-Acts formally segment its character sketches. As Gregory Sterling contends, "the narrative unity of Luke-Acts is far greater than the

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[58] Most agree that the gospel preface favors historical conventions. See David P. Moessner, "The Appeal and Power of Poetics (Luke 1:1–4)," in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy*, ed. David P. Moessner, Luke the Interpreter of Israel 1 (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1999), 84–123; Moessner, "The Lukan Prologues in the Light of Ancient Narrative Hermeneutics," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. Joseph Verheyden, BETL 142 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 399–417; David E. Aune, "Luke 1.1–4: Historical or Scientific *Prooimion*?," in *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Alexander J. M. Wedderburn*, ed. Alf Christophersen et al., JSNTSup 217 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 138–48; Sean A. Adams, "Luke's Preface and Its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander," *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 177–91.

[59] Biographical texts consistently mention their subjects in the preface. See also Philo, *Mos.* 1.1; Plutarch, *Alex.* 1.1–3; *Dem.* 3.1–3; *Art.* 1.1–3; *Oth.* 1.1–3; Lucian, *Dem.* 1–2; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 1.1–2.

[60] Luke transitions with Ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἡρῴδου ("it happened in the days of Herod," 1:5), leading up to the narrative on John the Baptist's birth.

sequential lives of the individual figures of the philosophic schools of Diogenes."[61] These agnation structures undermine the conclusions of both Burridge and Smith and Kostopoulos.

Burridge and Smith and Kostopoulos have propelled our understanding of the ancient biographical form but perhaps not in the way that most think. Together, their studies help elucidate a wide range of features common to Greek narrative discourse, punctuating the genre blending that occurs within this text type. In this way, both studies highlight the complexity of genre study and the need to further clarify the differences between genre and text type. Smith and Kostopoulos have pointed to evidence that historians like Diodorus and Dionysius can maintain their historiographic macrostructure while moving into biographical description at more local levels of the discourse—a shift in text type, not genre. This does not require that Luke-Acts blend genres. It may suggest, however, that the long biographical portrait of Jesus in Luke 3–24 framed by the broader macrostructural context of Luke-Acts has a distinctly historiographic function. Burridge's definition of genre according to linguistic form (i.e., "clusters of features")[62] and his neglect of nonbiographical genres in his analysis seem to limit his conclusions, for the most part, to text type rather than genre as well. All of this, it seems, can be linked in some way or another back to the Fowler fallacy.

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[61] Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke–Acts, and Apologetic History*, NovTSup 64 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 319.

[62] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 41.