

Journal for the Study of the New Testament

<http://jnt.sagepub.com>

The 'Ghost' of Jesus: Luke 24 in Light of Ancient Narratives of Post-Mortem Apparitions

Deborah Thompson Prince

Journal for the Study of the New Testament 2007; 29; 287

DOI: 10.1177/0142064X07076309

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://jnt.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/29/3/287>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jnt.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jnt.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav>



The 'Ghost' of Jesus: Luke 24 in Light of Ancient Narratives of Post-Mortem Apparitions*

Deborah Thompson Prince

210 W. Napier, Benton Harbor, MI 49022, USA
drdebnd@yahoo.com

Abstract

Scholarly discussion of Luke 24 often focuses on the physical demonstration of Jesus' bodily presence at the time of his post-resurrection appearances. Based upon ancient beliefs regarding the dead, the palpability of Jesus' hands and feet and his ability to eat during his appearance to the eleven in Jerusalem (24.36-43) are often thought to oppose any conception of Jesus as less than fully alive and physically present. It has been argued recently, however, that these attributes were not absolute proof of one's living status. So, why does Luke employ them? To answer this question, the literary characteristics of Greco-Roman narratives of post-mortem apparitions will be examined and compared to the characteristics applied to the appearances of Jesus in Luke 24. This comparative approach reveals the Lukan text's engagement with these diverse literary traditions, without being limited by any one of them. The picture of Jesus that emerges surpasses all expected modes of post-mortem appearances by virtue of the fact that it incorporates them all.

Key Words

Apparition, literary appropriation, Hellenism, *pneuma*, resurrection

Traditionally, scholars have often made the claim that the author of Luke-Acts, more than any other Synoptic Gospel writer, is concerned with the physical demonstration of Jesus' bodily presence at the time of his post-resurrection appearances.¹ The argument often focuses on Jesus' appear-

* This article has been adapted from a paper delivered to the Ancient Fiction in Early Christian and Jewish Narrative Group at the 2003 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature.

1. Charles Talbert argued, 'With the possible exception of the crucifixion, each of the particular events at the close of Jesus' career which are singled out for special attention by the Third Evangelist is described so as to accent the materiality of the

ance to the eleven and ‘those with them’ in Jerusalem in 24. 36-43. In this passage, Jesus offers as proof of his living, bodily presence the touch of his hands and feet, his desire for food and his ability to eat it. By his own words, Jesus implies that this proof is intended to correct the disciples’ erroneous belief that they were seeing a πνεῦμα, which is often translated as ‘ghost’ (24. 37, 39). Commentators regularly commend this interpretation, stating that ‘ghosts’ were not able to be touched nor were they able to eat. Jesus’ actions, therefore, would fully counter any claim that Jesus’ presence with his disciples after his death was only ‘spiritual’, that of an asomatic apparition of the dead.² That this is not so simply the case, however, has been persuasively argued by Gregory Riley in his book *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (1995). Riley clearly demonstrates that these very proofs could be, and were, interpreted by early Christians to indicate the very opposite position: Jesus’ resurrection was not a bodily resurrection.³ These proofs, therefore, were not absolute. So, why does Luke employ them? Certainly he is engaging contemporary conceptions of apparitions of the dead, or resurrected, in some way, but to what end?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to fully examine the very conceptions that Luke appears to be engaging. Ancient Greco-Roman literature describes a variety of post-mortem apparitions. These range from disembodied souls, to revived corpses, to appearances of translated and/or apotheosized mortals.⁴ Literature produced by Hebrew- and Greek-speaking Jewish communities also provides a valuable context from which to examine these conceptions (e.g. 1 Sam. 28; 2 Macc. 15; Josephus, *Ant.* 17; *b. Ber.* 18b-19a; *b. Ket.* 103a; *b. Shab* 152b). These texts both coincide with and diverge from the Greco-Roman literature. The result is a complex interrelationship that cannot be fairly addressed in one article. For this reason I do not attempt to engage here the full complexity of traditions reflected in the narrative. I have limited my presentation to

event... The witness of the Galileans guarantees the fact that Jesus was not just a spirit but was really flesh and blood’ (Talbert 1966: 30-31). See also Talbert 2003: 126-29; Wright 2003: 657-58; Fitzmyer, 1985: 1575; Alsup, 1975: 164-72. More recently, scholars have attempted to present more nuanced discussions of Jesus’ physical presence; see Johnson 2002; Johnson 1991: 405; Evans 1990: 919.

2. Wright 2003: 657-58 (n. 23); Tannehill 1996: 359; Neyrey 1988: 50-51.

3. Riley 1995: 63-68, although Riley overstates the difficulty of Jesus’ palpability for belief in a spiritual resurrection.

4. There have been a number of studies of these phenomena in ancient literature. Some of the most notable have been: Felton 1999; Dodds 1957; Pease 1942; Rohde 1925.

the Greco-Roman literature, with the understanding that a broader study is still needed.

The characteristics applied to Jesus in Lk. 24, of which those identified by the proofs in vv. 39-43 are only a portion, do reflect descriptions of apparitions known from Greco-Roman literature. But this is not to say that Jesus' appearances can be easily defined according to these literary expectations. The difficulty lies in the fact that the characteristics applied to Jesus do not correspond to any one particular descriptive form known from ancient literature, but rather correspond to and conflict with all these descriptions, in the space of 53 verses. I propose that the picture of Jesus that emerges in Lk. 24 surpasses all expected modes of post-mortem apparitions by virtue of the fact that it draws upon them all and distinguishes itself from them all. To claim that the emphasis of Luke's resurrection narrative is to present a fully palpable, bodily presence is to too narrowly define the portrait painted by the text. The resurrected Jesus is even more than this.

I will begin by summarizing the various descriptions of post-mortem appearances found in the Greco-Roman literature. Following this, I will apply these concepts to Luke's portrait of Jesus in ch. 24 and draw some conclusions.

Post-Mortem Appearances in Greco-Roman Literature

Stories of post-mortem appearances are well developed and widely encountered in Greek and Latin literature. These stories reveal diverse patterns of expectations regarding the physical characteristics and activities of ghostly apparitions. In order to gain some perspective on the various literary descriptions of apparitions of the dead, it is helpful to group them according to some general characteristics. These are not intended to be classifications, but helpful descriptions of the different characteristics that were applied to different experiences of the dead. I will describe four groups of apparitions that I think fairly reflect the breadth of expectations current in the first century CE. They are: disembodied spirits, revenants, heroes and translated mortals.⁵ I will summarize the characteristics of each, providing support from the ancient texts themselves. This summary is outlined in Appendix 1.

5. My identification of these four groups is informed by Felton's (1999: 22-37) chapter 'Problems of Definition and Classification', but diverges from it in more clearly establishing a distinction between revenants and heroes.

Disembodied Spirits

One type of ghost known in ancient literature is the disembodied spirit of the dead. These appear as they did in life, but in a shadowy, insubstantial form (*Il.* 23.103-104; *Od.* 11.204-23). Some ghosts return bearing the marks of their death, including any bloody gore (Vergil, *Aen.* 1.355; Apuleius, *Met.* 8.8; Felton 1999: 17). Although insubstantial, such apparitions are able to move about the earth and communicate with the living, but they cannot be touched or grasped.⁶ This insubstantial nature is further attested by the apparition's ability to disappear without a trace (Lucian, *Philops.* 27; Pliny 7.25.10; Phlegon, *Book of Marvels* 2.10). Eating and drinking are usually considered impossible for disembodied spirits, but there are some exceptions. A classic example is Odysseus's mother, Anticlea. In book 11 of Homer's *Odyssey*, when Odysseus is encamped outside the entrance to the underworld, his mother's soul (ψυχή), along with many others, comes out to meet him. She is unable to speak, however, until she drinks the blood of the sacrificed animals provided by Odysseus (*Od.* 11.141-54). Anticlea's insubstantial nature is clearly revealed when Odysseus attempts to hug his dead mother three times, and each time she flits away from him. When he questions her about this, she responds that this is the nature of the dead, 'for muscles no longer have flesh and bones' (σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα, *Od.* 11.204-22; see also *Aen.* 2.768-95). Remember this phrase, it will come back to 'haunt' us in Lk. 24. In another, quite gruesome, example from Phlegon's *Book of Marvels*, a disembodied spirit dismembers a child, devours (ἤσθιε) all but its head, and then disappears (ἀφανῆς ἐγένετο; 2.10). The latter phrase, too, will appear in Lk. 24.

Whether the exceptions mentioned above prove the rule that disembodied phantoms cannot eat and drink must be explored further. What is the relationship between food and drink and the dead? It has been well established by material and literary remains that the preparation of food and the offering of drink for the dead at their burial site was a regular practice in the Greco-Roman world (Walbank 2005; Burkert 1985; Garland 2001). Tombs have been found that contain one or more of the following: cooking and serving vessels, evidence of a fire, a stone altar

6. *Od.* 11. 204-23; *Aen.* 2.792-94; Riley 1995: 51-58. In Phlegon, *Book of Marvels* 2, the ghost Polykritos is unharmed by stones thrown at him. In Lucian's story of the appearance of Demainete to her husband Eucrates, the ghost is palpable. But considering Lucian's satirical intent, this may be the exception that proves the rule. This also seems likely considering she vanishes (ἀφανίζω) after delivering her message (*Philopseudes* 27; Felton 1999: 79).

for sacrifice, animal bones, benches around the chamber for seating, and piping inserted into the tomb from without for the offering of libations (Walbank 2005: 272; Garland 2001: 112, 114). Funerary meals were most likely intended to bring the family together and were 'the foundation and expression of family identity' (Burkert 1985: 194; cf. Walbank 2005: 273). Libation offerings were made for the purpose of appeasing the dead, increasing the acceptability of prayers and supplications, and warding off any threatening activity (Garland 2001: 114-15). To what extent the dead were thought to participate in funerary meals, however, is difficult to ascertain. According to Burkert,

The cult of the dead seems to presuppose that the deceased is present and active at the place of burial, in the grave beneath the earth. The dead drink the pourings and indeed the blood—they are invited to come to the banquet, to the satiation with blood... (1985: 194)

Garland describes the purpose of the meals in terms that evoke emotional and physical perception on the part of the deceased:

The tomb feast was the principal manner of honouring the dead and *delighting* his ghost, in view of the fact that *sensual pleasure*... was commonly regarded in antiquity as the supreme reward for a virtuous life (Garland 2001: 110 [my emphases]).

The beliefs, traditions and rituals associated with the cult of the dead, including the relationship between the living and the dead, are quite complex, and scholars can offer only possible descriptions of them.⁷ Based on the evidence, however, one could argue that eating and drinking is, at best, an equivocal indication of one's status as living or dead, 'bodily' or insubstantial.⁸

Revenants

Another ghostly phenomenon found in literature is the reanimated corpse. Modern discussions of these stories often call them revenants, but as one scholar has noted, there is no separate word for this phenomenon in Greek literature.⁹ Not surprisingly, these apparitions also appear as they did in

7. Burkert 1985: 190; Garland 1985: 38-41, whose discussion of the rites associated with the extended period of transition of the deceased is heavily peppered with words such as 'may', 'perhaps' and 'probably'.

8. Scholars have been too absolute in claiming that eating is a clear sign of an individual's living presence. E.g., Wright 2003: 657-58 (n. 23); Neyrey 1988: 50-51.

9. As Felton (1999: 26) notes, there is some disagreement over whether these resuscitated corpses should be classified as 'ghosts' and whether the ancient Greeks

life. Revenants are fully palpable, and can engage in the same activities as the living. One of the most extended narratives of this type, although the extant text is not complete, is that of Philinnion, found in Phlegon's *Book of Marvels* 1. In this story, at some point after her death and burial the young girl Philinnion emerges at night from her family tomb to rendezvous with a male guest in her father's house. The man has no idea who she is. Before dawn she slips away and returns again to her tomb. This continues for three nights until her parents discover her, at which time she returns to death, her body visibly stretched across the guest bed. Upon inspection by the entire town, her bier is found empty, but for some tokens given to her by the guest during their prior encounters.¹⁰ During this period of reanimation, she eats and drinks and has intercourse with the man. Phlegon's vocabulary when describing the girl highlights the breadth of the ancient category of ghost (Felton 1999: 25). He refers to Philinnion, both during and after her revival, in very physical language, as ἄνθρωπον, νέκρω or σώμα. But at the conclusion she is identified as an apparition, a φάσμα. As evident in the story of Philinnion, the revival of the revenant is generally short-term, lasting anywhere from minutes to days.

Related, but distinct in many ways, are stories that tell of the dead who return to a normal mortal life. Many of these seem to relate only apparent deaths.¹¹ The Greek novels, for example, are filled with such stories.¹² The story of Alcestis (Euripides, *Alc.*; Plato, *Symp.* 179b; Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 1.9.15), however, is a notable exception. In this story, Alcestis, the young wife of King Admetus of Pherae, agrees to die in place of her husband. At the time that Admetus is fated to die, Apollo tricks the Fates into allowing Admetus to escape death if someone else agrees to take his place. Only Alcestis is willing. According to Euripides, when Heracles, a friend and guest of Admetus, hears of her untimely death, he determines

classified them as such. I agree with Felton that the lack of clearly distinctive language for revenants as opposed to disembodied apparitions at least allows for the possibility that such phenomena were thought to be related. I have therefore included such appearances in this discussion.

10. The parallels between this story and that of Chaereas's discovery of Callirhoe's empty tomb (Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 3.3) are quite amazing. The significant difference (for our purposes) being that Philinnion did actually die, while Callirhoe's death was only apparent. See Reimer 2005.

11. Wright (2003: 65 and n. 193) places Plato's famous Myth of Er (*Rep.* 10.614b) in this category.

12. E.g. Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe*; Achilles Tatius, *Clitophon and Leucippe*; Xenophon, *An Ephesian Tale*. See Reardon 1989; Anderson 1984.

to wrestle Death and retrieve her. He is successful and returns her home to her family to resume her mortal life. Her story is clearly distinct from Philinnion, who participates in life only at night, secretly, and dies again immediately upon discovery. In Euripides' *Alcestis*, Admetus is cautious, however, when his wife is revealed to him, thinking that she may be some phantom from the dead (τι φάσμα νερτέρων; 1127). But he is assured by Heracles that she is not.

Heroes

Between these two extremes of disembodied souls and resuscitated bodies are the apparitions of dead heroes. These ghosts certainly seem to be disembodied souls, for their bones and grave sites were revered by their communities and were well-known centers of their local cult.¹³ But at the same time, they are capable of having physical contact with the living. Herodotus tells of the appearance of the hero Astrobacus to the mother of Demartus, the King of Sparta (*Hist.* 6.69). This φάσμα took on the likeness of her husband and lay with her, possibly impregnating her. In a later text, the phantoms of heroes (εἶδωλα) are described as appearing 'sometimes one way, sometimes another, interchanging outward appearance, age, and armor', so that the 'identity of each is not immediately clear'.¹⁴ Pausanias tells the story of the Hero of Temesa, the ghost (δαίμων) of one of Odysseus's sailors, who was defeated in a boxing match by the famous, living fighter, Euthymus (*Descr.* 6.6.7-11).¹⁵ There are also a number of stories relating the return of heroes from the dead to assist their community in battle.¹⁶

One ancient text, Philostratus's *Heroikos*, provides an extensive view into ancient hero cults and the experiences of their devotees.¹⁷ In this fictional dialogue, which takes place in Elaious just across the Hellespont

13. Rohde 1925: 122. For this reason I cannot agree with Felton that some heroes ought to be classified as revenants (1999: 27), although she qualifies this statement on the next page, noting the 'problematic' nature of such a classification (28).

14. In Philostratus, *Her.* 21.1-6, the vinedresser tells of a farmer in Ilion who was visited by Palamedes' εἶδωλον but did not recognize him.

15. See also Philostratus, *Her.* 18.4-6; 19.1-5 for stories of physical attacks (or the possibility of an attack) by Ajax and Hektor, or sightings of Achilles hunting (*Her.* 22.1-2).

16. Herodotus, *Hist.* 8.38-39, 64, Plutarch, *Life of Thes.* 35.5; Pausanias, *Descr.* 1.15.3; 4.32.3-4.

17. This text should be dated to the first half of the third century CE. For a summary of introductory issues, see Maclean and Aitken's introduction in Maclean *et al.* 2001: xlii-xlv. Quotations of the *Heroikos* are taken from this translation.

from Troy, a vinedresser relates his experiences with the hero Protesilaus (the first Greek warrior to die in the Trojan war), who appears and converses with him 'four or five times a month' (11.3). Again, the particular nature of Protesilaus's presence with the vinedresser is difficult to determine. His burial site is known. According to the vinedresser, Protesilaus was buried in Elaious where the dialogue takes place. It is here that a sanctuary stood to him, and nymphs placed elm trees around his burial mound that had been divinely decreed to blossom in an unusual manner (9.1-7). However, a tradition of Protesilaus's return to life after his death at Troy, followed by a second death, is known by both the characters in the dialogue (2.9-10). But notwithstanding the intimacy of their relationship, the vinedresser claims ignorance as to how he returns again to visit: 'But how he returned afterwards too, he does not tell me even though I've wanted to find out for a long time. He is hiding, he says, some secret of the Fates' (2.11). The vinedresser, however, does describe the hero. He appears as the youth he was at time of his death (10.2) and he is palpable. He can be embraced and kissed (11.2) and he leaves footprints (13.2-3). The vinedresser has not observed him eating or drinking, but when he has offered sweetmeats, wine and milk at his burial site, 'the things are eaten and drunk faster than the blink of an eye' (11.9). This text sustains the distinctive descriptions of the apparitions of dead heroes, which claim palpability for these apparitions without the presence of the deceased's physical body.

Translated Mortals

Finally, it is necessary to consider the case of mortals who are translated, whether before or after death. These translation stories tell of a human being that is 'removed from the sphere of ordinary humanity and made immortal' (Collins 1995: 90-91). This may have involved a life of bliss at the far end of the world, or ascension to the gods. In some of these stories, the one translated returns to the world of the living to announce to another their new status. It is specifically such appearances of translated individuals that are appropriate to this discussion. It must be acknowledged that these appearances are distinct from the ghostly phenomena above in one vital way: most of these individuals did not die, or at the very least, their deaths were disputed. There are some cases in which death clearly preceded the translation. But in these cases the body either continues to exist under ground, although in a state of immortality (Rohde 1925: 99-100), or it is removed before burial. This is the case for Aristeas, whose story is known from Herodotus (4.14) and Plutarch (*Rom.* 28.4). Some of the most well-known stories involve the disappearance of the person,

without any apparent death.¹⁸ The tradition of Romulus's disappearance is a prime example. His story is narrated by no less than five prominent Greek and Latin authors. All share the following common elements: (1) Romulus disappeared while holding a public assembly; (2) a tremendous storm blew up which concealed his disappearance; (3) the people came to believe that he had gone to the gods and was deified; (4) his new identity was that of the divine Quirinus; (5) after his disappearance he appeared to Julius Proculus in order to explain his disappearance, announce his new divine status and commission Julius to report this and further words of encouragement to the Roman people. From these stories it is clear that the apparitions appear as they did in life, and can communicate with the living. What is not defined in the narratives is the palpability of the apparition. It could be assumed that physical interaction is possible if the individual has been translated bodily, but this is not demonstrated in the encounters themselves. And there are cases in which the body is cast off and the soul alone receives immortality. This is the claim made for Heracles (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 7.72.13; Seneca, *Herc. Oet.* 1966-68; Lucian, *Herm.* 7), for the deified Roman emperors (Price 1987: 75-76) and for Asclepius and his sons (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 7.72.13; Aelius Aristides, *Orat.* 38.20). But whatever the nature of the specific case, these apparitions are no longer a part of the mortal sphere of life and so are connected in an essential way to appearances of the dead.¹⁹

Resurrection Appearances in Luke 24

With these categories before us, I would like to apply them to Lk. 24. My initial assumption, when I began comparing these texts, was that Luke would try to counter any suggestion that the Jesus of the appearance stories was a ghost with narrative evidence that showed otherwise. I examined, therefore, descriptions of Jesus' physical nature and his activities in ch. 24. Appendix 2 provides a listing of characteristics based upon this examination. Although this list is not exhaustive it highlights the main shifts of expectations that are at work in the chapter. I sought to ascertain if these descriptive characteristics conflict with one, or more, of the identifiable traditions of apparitions. The result was that Jesus' appearances displayed characteristics that were both consistent and inconsistent

18. Cleomedes (Plutarch, *Rom.* 28.4-5); Heracles (Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 2.7.7); Apollonius of Tyana (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 8.31).

19. These apparitions, however, are not described using the usual terms for ghost.

with every one of these groups. No pattern emerged that clearly followed any one type, or opposed any one type. Initially, this picture appears to be a jumble of characteristics that shirks literary convention. At various points the expectation is raised that Jesus' appearance fits into one of these apparition traditions or another, only for that expectation to be dashed at the next moment.

It is necessary to begin at the end of ch. 23. The reader is told in no uncertain terms that Jesus has died and been buried. People have witnessed his death (23.46-49) and know where he is buried (23.55). This would immediately set aside any expectations of a translation story, since the majority of these involve a situation where death is uncertain and/or the body somehow ends up missing before burial. The reader then discovers that the tomb is found empty (24.3-12). This would further limit the possibilities, for the bodies of heroes and disembodied spirits are not disturbed. The reader may assume, therefore, by a process of elimination, that the story will follow the pattern of revenant traditions, like Philinnion.

By the close of the Emmaus passage, however, this assumption is undercut by the statement that Jesus disappeared (ἄφαντος ἐγένετο; 24.31). This is not an ability associated with revenants, due to the fact that they are described as having a (temporarily) resuscitated body. This is, however, a commonly recognized characteristic of disembodied spirits. This reversal of expectation is reinforced when Jesus appears to the eleven disciples by entering the room unseen (αὐτὸς ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν) (24.36). Again, such a description would not commonly be associated with a resuscitated body. It is at this point, moreover, that Luke reports that the disciples thought they were seeing a spirit (πνεῦμα). The reader may now be wondering if in fact Jesus is an insubstantial spirit.

But before one can begin to feel confident in Jesus' disembodied state, he offers his hands and feet for inspection by the disciples (24.39). The visual inspection (v. 39a) raises no problem, ghosts usually appear unchanged in death, but a tactile inspection (v. 39b) of his 'flesh and bone' (σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα)? This type of inspection certainly contradicts classic descriptions (by first-century CE standards) of disembodied spirits. Odysseus's mother explains that shades do not have σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα (Homer, *II*. 11.2). Jesus explains that an inspection will show that he does have flesh and bone,²⁰ thus reverting again to descriptions of Jesus that are consistent with a bodily presence, such as a revenant, a hero or one who returns to mortal life. The reader would likely be completely dis-

20. Notwithstanding Marcion who, according to Riley (1995: 65), interpreted this verse to mean the opposite.

oriented at this point, since Luke has neglected to provide an unequivocal description of the risen Jesus. That Jesus requests food and eats it may bolster the connection with embodied apparitions, but it does not clearly exclude disembodied phantoms, since, as mentioned earlier, there are exceptions to the expectation that eating and drinking are activities of the living.

Finally, the story tells of Jesus' assumption to heaven. And with this action, translation and apotheosis traditions are brought to the forefront of the reader's mind, traditions that were dismissed at the outset of the chapter due to Jesus' publicly acknowledged death and burial. A reader may be left to wonder if Luke really knows what he is talking about. But Luke is no novice when it comes to responding to the expectations of an ancient Greco-Roman audience, so the reader must expect a method to this madness.

Conclusion

I submit that the method at work in Lk. 24 is an attempt to disorient the reader in order to reconfigure the traditions known to the author and reader in light of the disciples' extraordinary experience of the resurrected Jesus. After all, Luke can only describe Jesus' post-resurrection appearances with the vocabulary and literary models he has at his disposal. But what if these are deemed inadequate for his purpose, and no one type of apparition is thought sufficient to represent what the disciples had experienced? In this case Luke would be left with insufficient language and models. If, however, all possible models are incorporated, thereby displaying the breadth and magnitude of Jesus' resurrected presence, while at the same time the limitations of each model are highlighted, then the author is able to work within the parameters of the literary and cultural expectations of the audience to express a phenomenon that surpasses those expectations.

Another scholar studying different, but not unrelated, phenomena within Luke-Acts supports this conclusion. Susan Garrett, in her book *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings*, concludes that Luke does not discount or ridicule magic and Satan's power, but uses these categories, as well as language and situations recognizable to the audience, to show how Jesus and the gospel overpowered them (1989: 101-109). She too claims that Luke uses Greco-Roman contemporary beliefs to establish the superiority of the Christian story. I think that this is evidenced in Lk. 24 as well.

In this case, to focus on any one of these models, or its attending characteristics, and claim it to be the primary model is to miss the complexity of

the resurrection stories and the phenomenon of Jesus' resurrection itself as it is interpreted in Luke's Gospel. Likewise, to focus only on the deed of appropriation of ancient literary models, as scholars often do when describing Luke–Acts as an apologetic text that seeks to understand or defend itself in light of its larger Hellenistic community, too simply defines the relationship between the Lukan texts and their context. As this study demonstrates, it is not only whether or not appropriation occurs in a particular text, or what kind of literary models are adopted, but also how these are adapted or redefined. In Lk. 24 the author invites his readers to re-imagine and resist, to an extent, the perspectives of their Hellenistic community in light of their Christian community's unique experience of, and convictions about, the resurrected Jesus.

Appendix 1
Characteristics of Greco-Roman Apparitions

Disembodied spirits: appear as they did in life; cannot be touched; able to disappear

Homer, *Iliad* 23.103-104; *Odyssey* 11.204-23

Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.768-95

Phlegon, *Book of Marvels* 2

Revenants: reanimated corpse; appear as they did in life; fully palpable; revival is short-term

Phlegon, *Book of Marvels* 1; 3.4-5

Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Tale* 6.14-15

[Return to mortal life—many are apparent deaths; Alcestis is exception

Euripides, *Alcestis*

Plato, *Republic* 10.614b; *Symposium* 179b

Apollodorus, *Library* 1.9.15]

Heroes: graves are known and revered; physical contact is possible; may change appearance

Herodotus 6.69, 8.38-39, 64

Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece* 6.6.7-11

Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* 35.5

Philostratus, *Heroikos*

Translated mortals: most often without death, or death is disputed; appear as they did in life; palpable, or body is cast off and soul alone ascends

Herodotus 4.14

Cicero, *Republic* 2.17-20

Livy, *History of Rome* 1.16

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.56.1-5, 2.63.3-4; 7.72.13

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14.805-28; *Fasti* 2.503

Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 27.3-28.3; 28.4-5

Lucian, *Hermetimus* 7

*Appendix 2**Characteristics and Actions Applied to Jesus in Luke 24*

- Lk. 23.46, 55: Jesus is dead, his tomb is known
Inconsistent with disappearance and translation traditions
Consistent with disembodied spirits, heroes, and revenants
- Lk. 24.3, 6, [12], 23-24: The tomb is empty
Inconsistent with most translation stories, heroes and disembodied spirits
Consistent with revenant traditions
- Lk. 24.31: Jesus disappears (ἄφαντος ἐγένετο)
Inconsistent with revenant traditions
Consistent with disembodied souls
- Lk. 24.36: Jesus enters a room unseen (αὐτὸς ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν)
Inconsistent with revenant traditions
Consistent with disembodied souls
- Lk. 24.39a: Jesus offers a visual inspection of his hands and feet to establish identity
Consistent with expectations of all apparitions; appearance is unchanged in death
- Lk. 24.39b: Jesus offers a tactile inspection of his 'flesh and bone' (σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα)
Inconsistent with disembodied phantoms
Consistent with revenants and heroes
- Lk. 24.42-43: Jesus eats in the disciple's presence
 No absolute *Inconsistency* with any tradition
 Clearly **Consistent** only with revenant traditions
- Lk. 24.51: Jesus is bodily taken up to heaven (ἀναφέρω)
Inconsistent with traditions of disembodied souls, heroes, and revenants
Consistent with translation/apotheosis traditions

References

- Anderson, Graham
 1984 *Ancient Fiction: The Novel in the Greek and Roman World* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble).
- Alsup, John E.
 1975 *The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition* (Calwer Theologische Monographien, 5; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag).
- Burkert, Walter
 1985 *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
- Collins, Adela Yarbro
 1995 'Apotheosis and Resurrection', in Peder Borgen and Søren Giverson (eds.), *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (Oxford: Aarhus University Press): 88-100.

- Dodds, E.R.
1957 *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Boston: Beacon Press).
- Evans, C.F.
1990 *Saint Luke* (TPINTC; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International).
- Felton, D.
1999 *Haunted Greece and Rome: Ghost Stories from Classical Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press).
- Fitzmyer, Joseph
1985 *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV* (AB, 28A; New York: Doubleday).
- Garland, Robert
2001 [1985] *The Greek Way of Death* (2nd edn; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- Garrett, Susan
1989 *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press).
- Johnson, Andy
2002 'Our God Reigns: The Body of the Risen Lord in Luke 24', *WW* 22: 133-43.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy
1991 *The Gospel of Luke* (Sacra Pagina Series, 3; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press).
- Maclean, Jennifer K. Berenson, and Ellen Bradshaw Aitken (trans.)
2001 *Flavius Philostratus: Heroikos* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 1; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature).
- Neyrey, Jerome
1988 *The Resurrection Stories* (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier).
- Pease, Arthur Stanley
1942 'Some Aspects of Invisibility', *HSCP* 53: 1-36.
- Price, Simon
1987 'From Noble Funerals to Divine Cult: The Consecration of Roman Emperors', in David Cannadine and Simon Price (eds.), *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 56-105.
- Reardon, Bryan P. (ed.)
1989 *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Reimer, Andy M.
2005 'A Biography of a Motif: The Empty Tomb in the Gospels, the Greek Novels, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*', in Jo-Ann Brant, Charles W. Hedrick and Chris Shea (eds.), *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative* (Symposium Series, 32; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature): 297-316.
- Riley, Gregory
1995 *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press).
- Rohde, Erwin
1925 *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (New York: Harcourt, Brace).
- Talbert, Charles
1966 *Luke and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press).

- 2003 'The Place of the Resurrection in the Theology of Luke', in *Reading Luke—Acts in its Mediterranean Milleu* (NovTSup, 107; Leiden: Brill): 19-30.
- Tannehill, Robert C.
1996 *Luke* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press).
- Walbank, Mary E. Hoskins
2005 'Unquiet Graves: Burial Practices of the Roman Corinthians', in Daniel N. Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen (eds.), *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (HTS, 53; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press): 249-80.
- Wright, N.T.
2003 *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God, 3; Minneapolis: Fortress Press).