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The Relationship between Speech Patterns and
Social Context in the *Acts of the Apostles*,
Acts of John, and *Acts of Philip*

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To Priscilla and Chris

Preface

This monograph is a slightly revised version of my doctoral dissertation, which was submitted to the University of Edinburgh in 2013. The latter project and subsequent revisions were made possible by the support and encouragement of academic communities, family, and friends around the globe. For the research question, thanks are due to Malaysian acquaintances whose context-sensitive use of language was the direct inspiration for the topic explored. For facilitating completion of the dissertation, special appreciation goes to Dr. Paul Foster, who provided cheerful feedback on multiple drafts of each chapter, and to the rest of the academic community at the University of Edinburgh School of Divinity, including Dr. Helen Bond and "the boys."

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The completion of this book is also a credit to friends and family in the US, the UK, and around the world, whose prayers and support have been a daily encouragement and an essential component of the research process. The narratives analyzed in this book include many scenes in which extraordinary events, often occurring as a result of prayer, lead to acclamation of the "one god." To this "one god" I acknowledge my debt, and offer thanks for enabling this work.

Edinburgh, March 2014   Julia A. Snyder

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Abbreviations

CChrSA   *Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum*

Concerning the Acts of the Apostles

ActsAp   *Acts of the Apostles*
GLuke   *Gospel of Luke*
Vaticanus   manuscript *Vat. gr.* 1209
$ActsAp^B$ ActsAp as in manuscript *Vat. gr.* 1209
$GLuke^B$ GLuke as in manuscript *Vat. gr.* 1209

Concerning the Acts of John

AJ   *Acts of John*
R   manuscript *Patmos* 188
Z   manuscript *Mezzojuso* 2
AJ^{RZ} AJ as in manuscripts *Patmos* 188 and *Mezzojuso* 2
AJ^R AJ as in manuscript *Patmos* 188
AJ^Z AJ as in manuscript *Mezzojuso* 2
AJ^C AJ as in manuscript *Vindob. hist. gr.* 63
AJR   *Acts of John at Rome*
AJPr   *Acts of John by Prochorus*
PLH   present, living, human

Concerning the Acts of Philip

APh   *Acts of Philip*
APh^A APh as in manuscript *Xenophontos* 32
APh^V APh as in manuscript *Vat. gr.* 824

Chapter 1

Introduction

Sociolinguist Allan Bell writes, "I take the sociolinguist's core question about language style to be this: *Why* did *this speaker* say it *this way* on *this occasion*?"[1] This is also a core question in the study of ancient literature, especially in the fields of Biblical Studies and Early Christianity, where discussions of "why the writer said it this way" populate innumerable articles, commentaries, and books every year. Biblical scholars and variationist sociolinguists tend to approach the "why" question with different hypotheses, however, and rare is the study of ancient literature that considers the range of social factors that may have occasioned a speaker's choice of words, including one of the factors Bell considers particularly determinative: the identity of a speaker's audience.

This book will demonstrate that audience identity must be taken into account whenever the significance of a word or expression in ancient literature is discussed, through three case studies of ancient texts in which ways of speaking correlate with the identity of a speaker's addressees. In each case study, certain words and expressions will be shown to have "social meaning" in particular literary contexts, and it will be argued that because multiple ancient texts attest the same phenomenon, in accordance with sociolinguistic observations for modern languages, addressee identity and other social factors should be considered whenever the "significance" of expressions is explored.

For instance, does the apostle Paul refer to Jesus as "lord" in order to challenge claims of imperial supremacy, as has sometimes been suggested, or to make a statement about Jesus' "divine identity," or does he simply intend to draw on "insider" overtones of the phrase to build solidarity with a Christ-following audience?[2] In the *Acts of the Apostles,* does use of

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[1] Allan Bell, "Back in Style: Reworking Audience Design," in *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*, ed. Penelope Eckert and John R. Rickford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 139. Italics original.

[2] For the "political" and "theological" options, see, e.g., Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan, rev. ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), 355; N. T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg:

Jesus' name in the Damascus road accounts "characterize Jesus as a human being"?[3] This study will demonstrate that questions like these cannot be adequately answered unless account is taken of the full range of social factors that may have influenced a writer's choice of words.

At the same time, the study will not encourage arbitrary attribution of social significance to expressions in ancient texts. Examples will be given of expressions that correlate with different addressee identities in different literary works, and even in different manuscripts of the same works, a finding that calls into question any assertion regarding relationships between speech patterns and social context that is not supported by adequate evidence. A robust comparative method of exploring expressions' social significance will be illustrated in the study, and it will be suggested further that when no comparative speech data is available – as is often the case for Paul's letters, for instance – sociolinguistic hypotheses need to be supported either by metalinguistic information or by a comprehensive survey of speech patterns across an extensive range of texts.

The primary purpose of this book is thus to demonstrate that social factors must be considered whenever the significance of expressions in ancient texts is discussed, and that any conclusions must be based on appropriate evidence, lest the overtones, intentions, and purposes associated with lexical choice be misconstrued. These claims will be established through analysis of the relationship between speech patterns and social context in three ancient narratives: the *Acts of the Apostles* (ActsAp), *Acts of John* (AJ), and *Acts of Philip* (APh). In these case studies, correlations will be traced between select linguistic and social variables in order to explore how characters' speech patterns relate to their own identities, and to the identities of their addressees.

The case studies will also provide the opportunity to illustrate a number of subsidiary benefits of asking "sociolinguistic" questions of ancient texts. These illustrations are included with the hope of inspiring more researchers to take up what has the potential to be an interesting and produc-

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Trinity Press International, 2000), 168–70, 173–75; Mikael Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans and Philippians* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 126–27, 200–206, 250–53; cf. Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 139–41; Steve Walton, "The State They Were In: Luke's View of the Roman Empire," in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, ed. Peter Oakes (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 26–28; John Dominic Crossan, "Roman Imperial Theology," in *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 73; Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Paul* (Eugene: Cascade, 2008), 101–105.

   [3] Timothy W. R. Churchill, *Divine Initiative and the Christology of the Damascus Road Encounter* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), 239.

tive line of research. Illustrations will be provided of ways in which sociolinguistic variation is embedded in the portrayal of social dynamics, and how it contributes to characterization and the development of literary themes. It will also be suggested that attention to sociolinguistic relationships can inform the question of a work's intended audience and further understanding of compositional processes. Specifically, it will be demonstrated that:

– Sociolinguistic relationships in ActsAp indicate social differentiation along both "Christian" and gentile-Jewish lines, and draw attention to the unique relationship between Christian and Jewish identities.

– Sociolinguistic variation in AJ contributes to a portrayal of conversion as a process and calls into question the common view that AJ was written for a non-Christian audience.

– Sociolinguistic differences between sections of APh confirm that the extant text is a collected narrative and that parts of APh 8ff. in manuscript *Xenophontos* 32 have been rearranged.

– In certain episodes of APh, sociolinguistic variation contributes to multi-dimensional and graded constructions of Christian identity, with more required for full Christian status than just "belief."

Beyond simply calling for conceptual and methodological improvements in how the significance of words in ancient texts is determined, therefore, this study will also demonstrate other ways in which asking sociolinguistic questions can enhance appreciation of texts, whether these are well-known texts such as ActsAp or little-researched texts such as APh and AJ. In the process, it will contribute to research in areas such as the construction of Christian identity, the relationship between "Jewish" and "Christian" identification in the early centuries CE, and issues of practice in the transmission, writing, and rewriting of ancient texts.

1. Asking Sociolinguistic Questions of Ancient Texts

The type of analysis done in this study will seem natural to sociolinguists, but may not be familiar to all readers in Classics, Biblical Studies, and Early Christianity. This is not the first project to approach ancient texts from a sociolinguistic perspective, however.

Most similar to the current line of research are a number of excellent studies by Eleanor Dickey, who has analyzed how forms of address in Latin and Greek corpora reflect the relationship between speakers and ad-

dressees.[4] Although most of Dickey's work on Greek forms of address focuses on an earlier time period than that of the texts examined in this study, her results serve as a valuable point of comparison for the current research, and her meticulous application of sociolinguistic methodology to ancient texts is to be commended to anyone interested in conducting similar studies of their own.

The current project also has affinities with the work of Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, who has drawn extensively on linguistic and sociolinguistic insights in her study of ActsAp as represented in Codex Bezae.[5] In her monograph *The Bezan Text of Acts: A Contribution of Discourse Analysis to Textual Criticism,* Read-Heimerdinger argues that the Bezan text exhibits a consistent purposefulness in its use of language, and in a number of contexts she concludes that speech patterns reflect the perspectives of speaking characters. Since her monograph also evokes the importance of addressees and includes discussion of references to Jesus and the Christian god, the primary linguistic variables examined in the study, it is an important counterpoint to the current work, although the emphases of the projects differ. The current study focuses on the Vaticanus rather than the Bezan version of ActsAp and chooses to assess the relationship between speech patterns and addressees systematically, and at the level of full noun phrases, leaving aside some of Read-Heimerdinger's questions such as the significance of word order, spelling, and article use. While the two studies have much in common, their relationship is complementary.

The current project also stands in a complementary relationship to a number of other recent studies that have employed sociolinguistic insights to further understanding of ancient texts and communities. In the field of Classics, Andreas Willi has investigated a variety of sociolinguistic topics, including language change, women's speech, and "foreigner talk" in Aristophanes.[6] Stephen Colvin has explored language attitudes by analyzing

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[4] See, e.g., Eleanor Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address: From Herodotus to Lucian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); *Latin Forms of Address: From Plautus to Apuleius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); "The Greek Address System of the Roman Period and Its Relationship to Latin," *Classical Quarterly* 54 (2004): 494–527. She summarizes her results in Eleanor Dickey, "Forms of Address and Markers of Status," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 327–37.

[5] See Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Bezan Text of Acts: A Contribution of Discourse Analysis to Textual Criticism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002); Josep Rius-Camps and Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae: A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition*, 4 vols. (London: T & T Clark, 2004–2009).

[6] Andreas Willi, *The Languages of Aristophanes: Aspects of Linguistic Variation in Classical Attic Greek* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). He discusses register as it relates to genre in Andreas Willi, "Register Variation," in *A Companion to the Ancient*

how non-Attic dialect is represented in Old Comedy.[7] Other Classicists have taken interest in topics such as "technical language" used in medical and mathematical texts.[8] In Biblical Studies, the most vocal advocates for sociolinguistic approaches are Stanley Porter and Jeffrey Reed, who have provided helpful explanations of linguistic concepts such as register and discourse analysis, and have offered examples of their implementation.[9] Also in Biblical Studies, Colin Hemer has employed sociolinguistic concepts to discuss the nature of New Testament Greek vocabulary, discussing issues related to the uniqueness – or not – of words used by Christian authors.[10] Graham Stanton has suggested that the term "gospel" developed a distinctive sense in early Christianity and served an identity-marking function.[11] Philip Harland has demonstrated that the use of "brother" language for fellow group members is not a unique feature of Judaean or Christian speech in the Graeco-Roman world.[12] Peter Tomson has argued that speech situation is relevant to the distribution of the terms "Jew,"

Greek Language, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 297–310. On women's speech, see also Thorsten Fögen, "Female Speech," in ibid., 311–26.

[7] Stephen Colvin, *Dialect in Aristophanes and the Politics of Language in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999). Both Colvin and Dickey also discuss the issue of whether one can ask sociolinguistic questions of written texts (ibid., 12–21; Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address*, 30–42).

[8] Francesca Schironi, "Technical Languages: Science and Medicine," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 338–53; cf. Willi, *The Languages of Aristophanes*, 51–95. For other linguistic analyses of classical texts, see Andreas Willi, ed., *The Language of Greek Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[9] See, e.g., Stanley E. Porter, "Dialect and Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Theory," in *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to New Testament Interpretation*, ed. M. Daniel Carroll R. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 190–208; Stanley E. Porter, "Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Application with Reference to Mark's Gospel," in ibid., 209–29; Jeffrey T. Reed, "Modern Linguistics and the New Testament: A Basic Guide to Theory, Terminology, and Literature," in *Approaches to New Testament Study*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 202–65. See also the essays in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000).

[10] Colin J. Hemer, "Reflections on the Nature of New Testament Greek Vocabulary," *Tyndale Bulletin* 38 (1987): 65–92. Cf. Porter's critique in Porter, "Dialect."

[11] Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49–52, 61.

[12] Philip A. Harland, "Familial Dimensions of Group Identity: 'Brothers' (ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ) in Associations of the Greek East," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124 (2005): 491–513; Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 1, 63–81.

"Israel," and "Hebrew" in some early Jewish and Christian texts.[13] Carol Newsom has discussed the functions of "insider language" for the sectarian community of Qumran.[14] John Barclay has suggested that the adjective πνευματικός, "spiritual," functioned as "insider language" in Pauline Christian communities.[15] Together, these works draw on a variety of different sociolinguistic ideas to elucidate ancient texts, language practices, and communities.

Another recent work that draws on sociolinguistic concepts is Paul Trebilco's *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*.[16] In his book, Trebilco catalogues the distribution of substantive expressions used to refer to Christian groups in the New Testament and explores the literary contexts in which they appear, discussing how they illuminate the authors' viewpoints and how they may have functioned to shape the audience's sense of identity and to further the construction of group boundaries. Trebilco also explores the range of people included in the designations and reflects on their historical development, suggesting that terms such as "saints" and "the assembly" may have been "abbreviations" that formed elements of a Christian "social dialect." Although concrete evidence for his conclusions is sometimes lacking, the issues are fascinating and his hypotheses worth considering.

Within this set of recent studies that approach ancient texts with sociolinguistic awareness, the current project plays a particular role. Rather than asking the same questions as the studies described above, it seeks to expand our collective understanding of ancient language use by focusing on a different aspect of social context that has, apart from Dickey's work,

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[13] Peter J. Tomson, "The Names Israel and Jew in Ancient Judaism and in the New Testament," *Bijdragen: International Journal for Philosophy and Theology* 47 (1986): 120–40, 266–89; Peter J. Tomson, "'Jews' in the Gospel of John as Compared with the Palestinian Talmud, the Synoptics and Some New Testament Apocrypha," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel: Papers of the Leuven Colloquium, 2000*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2001), 301–340.

[14] Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 91–190; Carol A. Newsom, "Constructing 'We, You, and the Others' through Non-Polemical Discourse," in *Defining Identities: We, You, and the Other in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the IOQS in Groningen*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Mladen Popović (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 13–21.

[15] John M. G. Barclay, "*Pneumatikos* in the Social Dialect of Pauline Christianity," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*, ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 157–67.

[16] Paul R. Trebilco, *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

almost never been systematically explored. While previous studies have often investigated how ways of speaking in ancient texts relate to genre, situation, or speaker identity, the current project is distinctive in systematically assessing the relationship between speech patterns and the identity of addressees. This difference in emphasis exists even in some cases where studies have employed similar terminology, such as in the work of Stanton, who employs the phrase "insider language," but whose research focuses as much on speaker identity as on addressees, and in the work of Trebilco, whose use of "insider language" does not always preclude the possibility that the same ways of speaking might also have been employed in "outward-facing" contexts. In the current book, the phrase "insider language" will be reserved for speech patterns whose usage relates in an exclusive manner to the "insider" status of a speaker's audience.

The current study's focus on addressees is by no means meant to question the importance of the sociolinguistic factors explored by other scholars, nor is the study intended as a critique of any particular scholar's work, but the results do present a challenge to two types of conversations sometimes held about language use in ancient texts. First, by demonstrating that speech patterns in several different texts correlate with aspects of addressee identity, the study indicates that a relationship between speech patterns and audience factors is a real possibility in ancient texts, and one that should be considered whenever a writer's choice of words is discussed. Given how rarely social factors such as addressee identity are mentioned in books and articles that discuss lexical significance, especially in the fields of Biblical Studies and Early Christianity, the results of the study thus constitute a call for an across-the-board broadening of perspective on language use in these fields, and for more explicit discussion of sociolinguistic possibilities both in language-oriented studies and in other articles and commentaries.

Secondly, by showing that relationships between speech patterns and social context differ between several texts, the study problematizes any claims regarding sociolinguistic relationships that are not evidenced by appropriate metalinguistic, comprehensive, or comparative speech data, especially suggestions that certain expressions are "insider language" – that a writer would not have used these expressions if addressing an "outsider" audience – when no comparative data has been provided to demonstrate that the writer would actually have employed different words with other addressees. An example of the latter sort of hypothesis is Trebilco's suggestion in *Self-designations* that certain group designations found in the New Testament would probably not have been employed if Christians were addressing non-Christians. He posits that the apostle Paul and other Christians would typically have used the self-designation "brothers" only with

Christian addressees, for instance.[17] As Trebilco acknowledges, however, one simply does not know how Paul and other Christians would have spoken to those who did not share their "Christian" affiliation, because too few "outward-facing" documents are extant and available for comparison.[18] Although his suggestions could be historically accurate, the current project will demonstrate that he has not yet provided enough support to allow for any larger exegetical or social-historical arguments to be built upon the basis of his sociolinguistic hypotheses, which would first need to be substantiated by comparative, comprehensive, or metalinguistic evidence.

In a moment, a few sociolinguistic concepts will be introduced that are relevant to the current project, but first two clarifications are in order about the nature of the study. On the one hand, it needs to be remarked that the project does not represent a top-down application of sociolinguistic theory to ancient texts. Sociolinguists would be the first to acknowledge that their theories are works in progress, subject to ongoing refinement and change, and it would misrepresent the field of sociolinguistics to treat sociolinguistic observations as "facts" and to "apply" them to literary works in a mechanistic way. Instead, the current study is structured as both a sociolinguistic and a literary study. It begins not with "answers" drawn from sociolinguistics, but with sociolinguistic questions, asking those questions of ancient texts. The possibility is left open that ancient writers may have used language differently than modern speakers.[19]

Secondly, it is important to clarify the sorts of historical claims that will be made in this book. It will not be argued that speech patterns in ancient texts necessarily reflect conversational practices in living communities, because I am skeptical that one can extrapolate from literary works to spoken language with any degree of accuracy, as will be explained in chapter 5. On the other hand, it will be suggested that observing relationships between speech patterns and social context can provide insight into compositional and redactional processes, and that it can clarify possibilities as to a text's intended audience.

Let us now listen in on a few sociolinguistic conversations that hover in the background of the current project. More questions will be introduced here than will be discussed in the study itself; the bonus information will

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[17] He suggests that early Christians may have been more likely to refer to themselves as "Christians" when addressing those who were not part of their group (ibid., 37–38, 67, 294–97, 304; see also 177–78).

[18] See ibid., 304.

[19] Such would no doubt be of interest to sociolinguists. Cf. Eleanor Dickey, "The Ancient Greek Address System and Some Proposed Sociolinguistic Universals," *Language in Society* 26 (1997): 1–13.

further clarify the nature of the claims to be made, and will introduce possibilities for future research.

2. Variation in Speech

As mentioned above, a number of research projects in Classics and Biblical Studies have discussed variation in speech as it relates to speaker identity, a phenomenon that is often called "inter-speaker variation." These studies have drawn on the sociolinguistic observation that different individuals often speak in different ways. Sociolinguists interested in this type of variation ask how an individual's way of speaking relates to his or her social class, ethnicity, gender, age, regional identity, national identity, education, employment, life experiences, and participation in social networks.[20]

Although the current study will discuss inter-speaker variation to a certain extent, exploring how speech patterns relate to characters' "Christian status" and "gentile-Jewish identity," the primary focus will be on another type of variation that has been much less frequently considered in the analysis of ancient texts, "intra-speaker variation" that takes place within the corpus of a single individual's speech, or, in this case, within the speech corpus of a set of individuals of similar social identity. Sociolinguists researching this type of variation, which is often referred to as "stylistic" variation, ask questions such as how an individual's way of speaking relates to his or her addressees, bystanders, target, topic, setting, genre, motives, emotions, attitudes, purposes, key, voicing, and stance.[21]

2.1. "Audience Design"

Of the latter social factors, the primary interest of the current project is in the question of audience, a consideration championed by Allan Bell, who has suggested that "speakers design their style primarily for and in

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[20] For an overview of research on inter-speaker variation, see Scott F. Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation and Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 53–89; and J. K. Chambers, *Sociolinguistic Theory: Linguistic Variation and Its Social Significance*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

[21] For an overview of research on intra-speaker variation, see Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 90–103; and Penelope Brown and Colin Fraser, "Speech as a Marker of Situation," in *Social Markers in Speech*, ed. Klaus R. Scherer and Howard Giles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 33–62; Natalie Schilling-Estes, "Investigating Stylistic Variation," in *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, ed. J. K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill, and Natalie Schilling-Estes (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 375–401. A helpful schematic is provided at Brown and Fraser, "Speech as a Marker," 35.

response to their audience."[22] For Bell, "audience" is not strictly limited to addressees. He observes that how a person speaks may also be influenced by other people in the room, and he divides bystanders into several categories, suggesting that "auditors" whom the speaker knows about and ratifies may have more influence on speech than "overhearers" whom the speaker knows about but does not ratify, or "eavesdroppers" whose presence is unknown.[23] In more recent articulations of his theory, Bell also emphasizes that absent "referee" groups may influence how an individual speaks. These are "third persons not usually present at an interaction but possessing such salience for a speaker that they influence style even in their absence."[24]

It is not necessary to go into all the details of Bell's theory here, the main idea of which is simply that how an individual speaks at any given time may be influenced by other people. This will be the primary hypothesis tested in the current study. Each case study in chapters 2–4 will examine whether characters' speech patterns co-vary with the identity of their addressees, and the influence of bystanders will be considered in chapter 3.[25]

2.2. "Acts of Identity" and Targeting

Although the current study focuses on addressees, it does not follow Bell's earlier work in suggesting that audience factors are necessarily the *primary* explanation for intra-speaker variation, and a few of the other ways in

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[22] Bell, "Back in Style," 143; cf. Allan Bell, "Language Style as Audience Design," *Language in Society* 13 (1984): 145–204. Although he uses the word "design," he remarks that this may not always be a conscious process (ibid., 199 n. 10).

[23] Bell, "Language Style," 159, 172–78. Similar distinctions between types of bystanders had been made by Erving Goffman, *Forms of Talk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 9–10, 131–37. On bystanders, see also Brown and Fraser, "Speech as a Marker," 45.

[24] According to Bell, "Referee design can involve a speaker shifting to identify more strongly with their own ingroup, or to an outgroup with which they wish to identify," or to both simultaneously (Bell, "Back in Style," 147; cf. 165). Although Bell included "referee design" in his original theory, he places more emphasis on it in the later reworking.

[25] Although I have only found it necessary to invoke bystanders in one case study, the possibility of bystander influence should always be kept in mind when exploring lexical significance. It has been observed in empirical research. In a study of pre-school children in Trinidad, Valerie Youssef observed that the presence of a bystander such as a child's mother sometimes influenced how the child spoke more than the identity of his or her addressee. See, e.g., Valerie Youssef, "Children's Linguistic Choices: Audience Design and Societal Norms," *Language in Society* 22 (1993): 268. She suggests, "The individuals present who command the greatest attention of the speaker have the greatest controlling effect on code, whether they are addressee or auditor" (ibid., 270).

which sociolinguists have approached the latter phenomenon are therefore worth mentioning. R. B. Le Page and Andrée Tabouret-Keller, for instance, have suggested viewing linguistic behaviour as "a series of *acts of identity* in which people reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles."[26] This approach suggests that when an individual speaks in a certain way, he or she is "essentially making a statement about identity,"[27] about gender, ethnicity, educational background, group membership, or several of these at once. Understanding linguistic behaviour as "acts of identity" is not inimical to an addressee focus, and this view shares features with the idea of "referee design," but it does raise the question of whether individuals always design their speech solely with others in mind. In some cases, one suspects, an individual's most important audience may be himself, or his way of speaking may be directed, or "targeted," at some combination of self, audience, and referee groups.[28] Although the current study will not devote space to "acts of identity" and "targeting," these issues are certainly worth keeping in mind when considering the significance of a writer's choice of words.

2.3. Other Contextual Factors

Neither should the study's focus on addressees be understood as a claim that the linguistic variables analyzed in chapters 2–4 only co-vary with addressee identity and not also with other social or non-social factors. In fact, it is very likely that the same expressions could be shown to correlate with other contextual factors in the texts, including some of those that have been observed to play a role in intra-speaker variation in modern speech. Sociolinguistic studies of modern corpora have sometimes observed a relationship between speech patterns and topic, for instance, a relationship that may also be perceptible in ancient texts.[29] In future research, one could

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[26] R. B. Le Page and Andrée Tabouret-Keller, *Acts of Identity: Creole-Based Approaches to Language and Ethnicity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 14. Italics original.

[27] Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 93.

[28] On "targeting," see Nikolas Coupland, *Style: Language Variation and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 112.

[29] On the relationship between ways of speaking and topic, see Jan-Petter Blom and John J. Gumperz, "Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code-Switching in Norway," in *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, ed. John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 425; Natalie Schilling-Estes, "Constructing Ethnicity in Interaction," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8 (2004): 163–95; Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 99. In some cases, linguistic variables have been observed to co-vary with both topic and addressee, e.g., John R. Rickford and Faye McNair-Knox, "Addressee- and Topic-Influenced Style Shift: A Quantitative Socio-

consider whether "Christian" speakers refer to Jesus differently when dis-
cussing community dynamics than in relation to ritual practice. Setting
could also be significant: particular ways of speaking in ancient texts
might relate meaningfully to specific locations or social situations, such as
dinner parties, temples, or law courts.[30] Furthermore, ways of speaking
might correlate with genres of speech: certain expressions could be
employed particularly in defense speeches or in prayers.[31] A number of
scholars in Classics and Biblical Studies named above – those interested in
"register" – have begun to investigate topics like these, but much more
could be done.

Other dynamics could also be addressed. Sociolinguists investigating
intra-speaker variation in modern corpora have suggested that how an indi-
vidual speaks may relate to his or her motives, emotions, attitudes, or
purposes.[32] Richard Bourhis comments, "The assumption must be that a
speaker's behaviour is never completely determined by social norms and
rules within a situation … Individuals' needs, motives, perceptions, and
attributions must play some part in determining the speech strategy."[33]
Drawing on this observation, future research on ancient texts might ask
whether speech patterns relate to the moods of writers such as the apostle
Paul, and whether sociolinguistic variation in narratives reflects the differ-
ing motives being attributed to various characters.

When discussing the "significance of words," account could also be
taken of the "key" in which the words are uttered: is the given expression
employed in a serious or mocking tone?[34] It would also be worth consider-
ing whether the speaker concerned is adopting the voice of someone else,
as occurs in sarcastic statements or in performance contexts.[35] Finally, one
might reflect on the speaker's "stance." How certain is the speaker about
his or her assertion? Does the speaker adopt a friendly or dominating

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linguistic Study," in *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Register*, ed. Douglas Biber and
Edward Finegan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 235–76.

[30] On the relationship between ways of speaking and setting, see Brown and Fraser,
"Speech as a Marker," 44–45; Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 94.

[31] On speech genre, see Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 95; Coupland, *Style*, 16. Coup-
land remarks that "styling can reshape conventional speech genres."

[32] Bell, "Language Style," 168.

[33] Richard Yvon Bourhis, "Language in Ethnic Interaction: A Social Psychological
Approach," in *Language and Ethnic Relations*, ed. Howard Giles and Bernard Saint-
Jacques (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979), 119. Also to be considered are the speaker's
"moods, motives, feelings, beliefs, and loyalties."

[34] On "key," see Coupland, *Style*, 114.

[35] On "voicing," see ibid., 102, 114; cf. Schilling-Estes, "Constructing," 188–90;
Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 96.

stance towards his or her interlocutor?[36] Sociolinguists investigating modern corpora have suggested that "why this speaker said it this way on this occasion" could relate to any or all of these factors, and it would therefore be worth asking about all of them when seeking to determine the "significance" of an expression employed in an ancient text.

2.4. Embracing Complexity

Sociolinguistic observations from modern settings also suggest that those who want to appreciate the significance of a speaker's words need to cultivate a willingness to embrace complexity. Variationist sociolinguists tend to reject simplistic explanations for linguistic variation, emphasizing that communication is multi-faceted and our understanding of it incomplete.

Although one might like to know which of the factors discussed above – topic, setting, genre, mood, or addressees – are most likely to influence a writer's choice of words, for instance, some theorists suggest that a universal hierarchy of priority may not exist. Scott Kiesling comments, "In some communities identities may be important; in others it may be that addressees are more important."[37] Nikolas Coupland writes in the same vein:

> It seems that imposing some general theoretical priority in favour of speakers or listeners as the targets or beneficiaries of stylistic processes is too restrictive … The explanatory devil is in the detail of particular social contexts and their particular relational configurations.[38]

Allan Bell has also revised his original suggestion that speech style is fundamentally designed for a speaker's audience: "We are always positioning ourselves in relation to our own ingroup and other groups, and our interlocutors … Yes, we are designing our talk for our audience. But we are also concurrently designing it in relation to other referee groups, including our own ingroup."[39]

Further complexity is added by the suggestion that multiple factors may shape the way an individual speaks at any given time, which raises the question of whether the same linguistic variables may co-vary with more than one contextual element, and whether those elements may be inter-re-

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[36] Kiesling, commenting on Nikolas Coupland's study of stylistic variation at a travel agency, suggests that it is the travel agent's stance towards clients that leads her to accommodate her speech (Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 99–100). On "stance," see Alexandra Jaffe, ed., *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[37] Kiesling, *Linguistic Variation*, 94.

[38] Coupland, *Style*, 80.

[39] Bell, "Back in Style," 165.