

## Frames I: Initiations and Commencements

One of the primary ways of organizing narrative is through what discourse analysts refer to as *framing*. ‘Frames are conceptual knowledge units that linguistic expressions evoke.’<sup>1</sup> According to Alexander Ziem and Catherine Schwerin, ‘language users call up these frames from memories to grasp the meaning of linguistic expression.’<sup>2</sup> But framing is used in many different ways in many different disciplines. So to be clear: I do not wish to take on the baggage associated with such terminology due to its background in cognitive theory, case frame semantics, psycholinguistics, or any other field. Instead, I only use frames as an analogy for macrostructural devices in language that help *frame* meaning for large units of text. We can draw this framing metaphor just as easily from cinematography as from cognitive theory. As Halliday notes, ‘In cinema, the frame is important because it actively *defines* the image for us.’<sup>3</sup> In the same way, *literary-linguistic frames* actively define the meaning of the narrative for us, especially in terms of its genre. Readers become familiar with the macrostructural location of certain conventionalized features (usually) early on in the discourse and this helps them know what to expect (generically) in the coming narrative. This all transpires via *framing*. A number of textual frames warrant consideration for genre agnation within Greek historical and biographical discourse: (1) narrative initiations (panoramic vs. focalized), (2) narrative commencements (activity- vs. entity-driven), (3) self-identification (biographical vs. non-biographical), and (4) genealogies (staged vs. embedded).

In this chapter, we will examine the first two (initiations and commencements) of these four scales in the Greek history, the βίος, Luke, and Acts. These two clines function together within the interior architecture of the narratives as the first two global frames that the reader will encounter, one at the discourse and one at the episode level.

---

1 A. Ziem and C. Schwerin, *Frames of Understanding in Text and Discourse: Theoretical Foundations and Descriptive Applications* (Human Cognitive Processing 48; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2014), 2.

2 Ziem and Schwerin, *Frames*, 2.

3 M.A.K. Halliday, *Bloomsbury Companion to M. A. K. Halliday* (ed. Jonathan Webster; New York: Continuum, 2015), 391.

## 1 Initiation: Panoramic vs. Focalized

Every complete narrative initiates in some way—by virtue of necessity; it has to, ranging from basic introductory remarks to a fully formalized preface. While the majority of interpreters acknowledge that Luke's preface fits most comfortably within the Greek historical tradition,<sup>4</sup> most do not find this consideration alone decisive for aligning Luke with Greek history. BurrIDGE, in particular, is able to use the preface as the basis for a family resemblance that identifies Luke, along with the other Gospels, with the biographical tradition on the basis of a parallel 'opening formulae/prologue/preface' features, defined broadly as 'a formal preface by the author, in the first person, explaining his reason and purpose in writing and giving a clear indication of the genre ...'.<sup>5</sup> On this broad definition, both biographical and historical prefaces can be included. In the case of Luke, then, (at least for BurrIDGE) we have a preface that may create expectations for reading the Gospel as history, but these are corrected by the pervasive biographical features that emerge as the Third Gospel continues to unfold.

The ancients recognize the potential role of the preface/opening features in distinguishing genres. Horace emphasizes the importance of introductory forms within a particular genre (Horace, *Ars* 136–52). Within history, specifically, Lucian appears to view features of the preface as a criterion for agnating history from rhetoric. He says: 'whenever [the historian] does use a preface, he will make two points only, not three like the orators. He will omit the appeal for

4 H.J. Cadbury, 'Commentary on the Preface of Luke', in F.J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity* (5 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1922–1933), 1:489–510; W.C. van Unnik, 'Remarks on the Purpose of Luke's Historical Writing (Luke 1.1–4)', in W.C. van Unnik, *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 6–15; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel of Luke I–IX* (AB 28; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 287–301; D.L. Balch, 'ἄκριβῶς ... γράψαι (Luke 1:3): To Write the Full History of God's Receiving All Nations', in D.P. Moessner (ed.), *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1999), 84–123; D.P. Moessner, 'The Appeal and Power of Poetics (Luke 1:1–4)', in D.P. Moessner (ed.), *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1999), 84–123; D.P. Moessner, 'The Lukan Prologues in the Light of Ancient Narrative Hermeneutics', in J. Verheyden (ed.), *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (Leuven: Leuven University, 1999), 399–417; D.A. Aune, 'Luke 1.1–4: Historical or Scientific *Prooimion*?', in Alf Christophersen, et al. (eds.), *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Alexander J.M. Wedderburn* (JSNTSup 217; London: T&T Clark, 2002), 138–48; S.A. Adams, 'Luke's Preface and its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander', *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 177–191.

5 R.A. BurrIDGE, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004; org. 1992), 109.