

CHAPTER 3

Meal Traditions In the New Testament Period

3.1. Introduction

Our examination of inculturation in the Supper Narratives now turns to the environment which produced the Gospels and 1 Cor to collect data about the cultures against which the four passages might be mapped to see whether themes and gestures from those cultures are used to interpret and explicate the Last Supper. Thus our attention turns to the Eastern Mediterranean of the New Testament period. Space does not permit a full description of the cultures of that time. The study that follows will be restricted to the cultural phenomena associated with the basic human activity found in the Supper Narratives: eating.

3.1.1. Eating and Meals

Eating is a basic human activity: such occasions are described collectively as meals. Meals can bear a number of meanings depending on who eats, what is eaten, when and where a meal takes place. Meals have meaning: they are not empty actions (cf. Douglas 1971, 69). There are a number of terms used to sharpen the differences between meal types. Key terms for this study include the following:

- **Ritual.** A meal which follows a distinct pattern, often with a religious, cultic or social dimension¹.
- **Token.** The act of eating centres on the consumption of a token portion of food or drink. Such token eating is often religious in nature. It may occur within a wider meal context.
- **Full.** The act of religious eating involves consumption of a full quantity of food or drink. It may be combined with a ritual element.

Of these three, “ritual” demands the most care. Cultural norms in 21st century Europe may separate actions: eating may not have any apparent significance. This is not always the case. Meals in ancient societies can include what we might differentiate as both sacred, that is, eaten in a religious context, and secular. However, this distinction need not conform to ours. Garnsey suggests that commensality, “the action of eating together”², always had a religious element in antiquity (1999, 132). Such a religious element demands that commensality includes both vertical and horizontal dimensions, where “horizontal” primarily refers to inter-personal relationships, and “vertical” to the relationship between humanity and deity (Thiselton 2000, 761-2; Barrett 1953, 138 ff.). Care must be taken to respect and identify the significance of the meal tradition in its own context. An over-hasty reading may only interpret the action through the unexamined opinions of the commentator (“domain assumptions”, cf. McLean 1992, 531) and lose the riches of meaning which it held for its own practitioners³. Thus, whilst sociological or anthropological approaches may reveal what has previously been missed, they may overlook or marginalise what was originally important such as a sense of sacrament or the sacred (Dunn 1992, 254-5). Or, to use the terminology given above, they may stress the horizontal, but miss the vertical.

It is possible to argue that different meal types (Jewish, Greek, Roman, secular and sacred) have sufficient features in common that they be described as developing within a common tradition (Smith 2003, 2-6). However, care must be taken to avoid oversimplification of types⁴. Thus we examine the meals under three cultural headings, and note their resemblances and distinguishing features in such away that their similarities and peculiarities are taken into account.

3.2. Graeco-Roman Meals

Eating habits of the Greeks and Romans typically included three daily meals, corresponding to breakfast, lunch and dinner. Of these three, dinner (Gk. δεῖπνον, Lat. *cena*)⁵ came to be of paramount importance. These meals often had a social significance, and guests might be invited. (Smith 2003, 22-5). Certain common features can be noted.

3.2.1. *The Greek Symposium*

Greek literature of different periods bears witness to a meal tradition known as the *symposium*⁶. It has been suggested that this meal type be divided into two sections: the meal proper (δεῖπνον), at which wine was not consumed (Bowie 1997, 2), and a period of drinking after the meal (συμπόσιον-Steele 1983, 390). The *symposium* provided a forum for art, music, politics and sexuality, and was a powerful cultural form throughout Greek history (Burkert 1991, 7)⁷.

The *symposium* itself was a formal banquet:

which was highly structured both in terms of specific roles for the participants (a host, chief guest, other guests) and specific courses of foods (*hors d'oeuvres*, main course and dessert; post-prandial conversation and drinking). The procedure was punctuated by periodic washing of hands (Plato, *Symposium*, 175a)

(Neyrey 1996a, 4)

In Greek custom, guests reclined at meals: sitting denoted inferiority. In some circumstances, guests were given places according to status (Stambaugh & Balch 1986, 114). However, this was not a universal practice, and more egalitarian seating arrangements became identified with Greek culture. Plutarch's *Lycurgus* details the problems he faced when introducing such a code⁸. In Greek cities which adopted these more egalitarian strategies equal shares distributed to the diners denoted their civic equality (Garnsey 1999, 132). What is common, however, is that the practice at meals represents the structure of society both in secular and overtly religious meals (see below, p.79, ¶ 3.2.5.). Diners reclined on their left sides so that they might eat with their right hands. The συμπόσιον tended to be all male, and gave identity to participants through ceremonial drinking.

The συμπόσιον started with a libation, wine offered to a deity. Wine and delicacies (τραγήματα) were served, and hymns or *scolia* might be sung. It might finish with a κῶμος (revelry or procession) which might involve leaving the place where the meal was held (132).

The account in Plato's *Symposium*, allows for the presence of a woman, Diotima, as an interlocutor. Many commentators repeat the generalisation that attendance of women was rare and often a sign of sexual stigmatisation. Burton (1998) reports a wider variety

of meal traditions: meals at which female relatives might be present (147-8), sacrificial meals attended by both sexes (149-150), women-only meals (150-4), meals hosted by women (155-7) and meals in which both sexes gathered on equal terms (157-9). A focus on the male reporting of the male-dominated meals in Classical Athens has distorted the whole picture (143; 159-60). Bookidis raises the possibility that, in some 1st century BCE contexts, dining (that is, sharing sacrificial meat) was not segregated (1990, 91).

3.2.2. *The Roman Convivium*

Roman meals were similar in structure to the Greek *symposium*. Latin terminology divided the meal into *gustatio* (appetisers, Gk. πρόπομα [Plutarch 2.734a]), main courses (*fercula*, or *cena*, qualified by an ordinal number) and the drinking party, *convivium*. This last term is important since it provides an emphasis which was apparently common to Greek meals. Fellowship, good conversation and company were considered at least as important as the drinking implied by the *symposium*. Accounts of meals variously suggest that drinking or cultivated discourse were the prime features or aims of the participants (Smith 2003, 32; 34-8), and that the concept of equality found in the *symposium* highly appreciated⁹. However a careful differentiation must be made between literary accounts, which may idealise equality as the foundation for *amicitia* (friendship) and actual practice. The accounts, particularly those of imperial meals, may be idealised for political or ideological reasons (D'Arms 1990, 315). Yet, even the literary accounts of household contain subtle indications of a meal system in which raking and status were carefully preserved, no matter how idealistic the claims of the writers (315).

For all participants, matters of invitation, seating and food allocation all indicated the relative status and “pecking-order” of participants. These arrangements mirror the structure of wider society to the extent that the chief guest of honour might be given a title synonymous with the highest political office, “consul” (34).

Pliny, *Letters* 2.6 notes different ways of treating guests¹⁰. Such practices were not confined to meals held in private homes. The accounts of imperial banquets, e.g., in Suetonius¹¹, show that such public feasts also used location and foodstuffs as indicators

of status (D'Arms 1990, 309-10). While Greek *symposia* were based on the ideas of freedom and equality, their Roman counterparts were based on a system of patronage with a clearly defined hierarchy (Nappa 1998, 394-5). The difference in foods given to the different classes reinforced the social strata in a most obvious fashion. The practice of giving different qualities and amounts of food to guests of different classes is of particular importance in 1 Cor 11:21 (Ch.8, pp. 373-4, ¶ 8.2.1.).

Meals were held around certain social events, such as birthdays, weddings and funerals.

Roman custom about posture appears to have changed over the years. Initially seating was preferred, but later, as in Jewish practice, the custom of reclining was adopted, perhaps in imitation of Hellenistic culture (Smith 2003, 14-18).

The roles given to women also contained subtle variations from Greek practice. Women appear to have been more welcome at Roman tables. At the end of the Republican period, women could sit at these meals (Neyrey 1996a, 26; Smith 2003, 43)¹². By the time of the Empire, both men and women would recline at table (Foss 1995, 3). However, their degree of participation and what was expected of them might vary according to status: their presence at meals might be for sexual purposes (3). Youths were also regularly admitted to table after marriage (girls), or assuming the *toga virilis* (boys) (2). Again it can be seen that meal practice mirrors the practice of wider society in determining the role and status given to particular guests.

3.2.3. *The Literary Symposium Tradition*

The literary symposium tradition is a readily recognisable literary motif. One of the best-known examples is the *Symposium* of Plato, which describes a meal at which Socrates and his companions discuss the nature of love. Xenophon also places Socrates at such meals in the *Apologia*. Plutarch's *Table Talk* is a further example of this as a literary tradition. Philo favourably compared the meals of the *Therapeutai* to those of the tradition (*Cont.* 57-64)¹³. A considerable literary tradition grew up using the meal as its foundation (Smith 1987, 615-616). The *symposium* is used in Old Comedy as a mirror of society and democracy. Whilst it poses questions about the way in which society

behaves, it does not suggest how unsatisfactory political and social situations might be practically improved (Bowie 1997, 21).

Brumberg–Kraus notes that the literary symposium tradition allows significance, sometimes ritual, to be accorded to seemingly peripheral or insignificant items, actions or sayings. This involves two stages: the singling out of the action (a *fait divers*) for comment and discussion and a narrative frame or dialogue (Brumberg-Kraus 1999, 171; Steele 1984, 381). The literary symposium had much in common with philosophical writing, but a character of its own; more relaxed, and less formal in character (Lukinovich 1990, 264). The close relationship between food and words may also echo the way in which talk and food give further meaning to each other within the sympotic literary tradition. Lukinovich describes this phenomenon in the *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus (ca. 200 CE). The food consumed parallels the discourse:

This parallelism brings out not only the various links possible between the primary and the metaphorical senses of words, but also the various kinds of possible relation between the 'real' model and the 'authentic' copy which the *mimesis* of language and letters is able to create. The verisimilitude of what is said is measured, step by step, against the real event which serves as its model and is offered within the text as a backdrop. In some cases, parallels, analogies, and cross-references underline the mimetic *similarity* of words and deeds, the referential value of the speeches. In this way, not only do the guests comment on elements of the banquet as and when they come to their attention, but also, having spoken, they manifestly wish to take pleasure in the real thing which their words have just forcefully evoked.

(Lukinovich 1990, 269-70)

Athenaeus has turned the symposium into a metaphor which becomes the key to understanding its author's concerns. Just as ordinary meal practice reflects the structure of society, so the philosophical meal mirrors the beliefs of the school.

3.2.4. *Eating Outside the Home: Guilds and Clubs*

Some meals were celebrated outside the home. Clubs that existed for this purpose are recorded as early as the 6th century BCE. They grew in prominence in the Hellenistic period. They were not restricted to the Greek world, but are found in both Greek and Latin societies. These clubs could exist for a number of reasons: religious (θίασος),

social (ἔρανος), and trade. Ὀργεῶνες appear to have had a religious focus. Many also had special clubhouses or dining rooms. Some professional and religious clubs had patrons or benefactors who did not participate in the life of the group (Theissen 2001, 78). Again, the pattern of society, that of patron-client, is shared by the meal structure.

Meals, which were often held on feast days, included regulations about the distribution of food among their members and households. Smith suggests women might attend, but were not “full members”, and given subordinate status (2003, 89-95). However, Burton notes that free women were given portions of similar proportions to men, and that the passing of the women’s portions *via* men was purely for ease of distribution (1998, 150). This would imply a more egalitarian status. However, this must be qualified by the observation that sometimes licence in religious meals was a means of re-inforcing rather than challenging the status quo (Burkert 2000, 258-9).

The Roman equivalents, the *collegium*, *corpus*, *sodalitas*, or *sodalitium*, were also often religious, either for the Olympian or mystery cults. There were also trade and burial clubs. This last type provided a co-operative social security for its members. Some gained notoriety for drunkenness and there were periodic restrictions placed upon them (Smith 2003, 95-7)¹⁴. Others had clear rules about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and conversation.

These “club” meals show features common to the general pattern: reclining, placing guests by status, prescribed roles, and the pattern of courses. They reflect the norms of society in their structure.

3.2.5. Meals in a Religious Context

Religious meals were not restricted to clubs. Many Greek festivals included meals:

The natural and straightforward aim of a festival is feasting- eating and drinking. In Greek sacral practice this element is always present
(Burkert 2000, 107)

This can be seen in the descriptions of the θυσία in Plutarch:

There is a traditional rite of sacrifice (*thysia*), which the archon performs at the public hearth, but everyone else at home, called the driving out of *bulimy*...When I was an

archon, a larger number than usual participated in the public rite. After we had completed the ritual acts and returned to our places at table, we discussed the first term [i.e., *bulimy*]

(Plutarch, *Quaest. Conv.*, 693e-694a in Smith 2003, 69)

The text is open to a number of interpretations (69), but a banquet at which the guests reclined is part of the whole practice. The *thysia* can be described as follows:

The *thysia* is a complex ritual. Its stages are well known: the killing of the beast is followed by the division of flesh and then by the cooking and consumption of the meat.

(Schmitt-Pantel 1990, 14)

Such meals could be held either in public or at home. Meals held in the temple included regulations about the removal of food, either for religious or social reasons (Smith 2003, 71). The differentiated tasks model the structure of society:

...the sacrificial community is a model of Greek society. This is not an exchange of gifts with temple and priests as in the ancient Near East, nor is it a tribute to the gods; it is a separation of gods and mortal men, as between life and death a group of equals assert solidarity in face of the immortals. The group of equals, participants, may be defined more or less exclusively, aristocratically or more democratically but even Greek democracy is an exclusive group confined to full citizens.

(Burkert 2000, 255)

Religion shapes all parts of the community: family (255), the extended family (255-6), cult associations (256), polis or city (256) and federation (256-7). Even rituals which appear to subvert the normal structures of society by enhancing the roles of women or slaves really lead participants to accept their role in society (258-9).

The gods were held to be present at the meals held at several major festivals. Meals of this kind are recorded in Athens, Sparta and Delphi. Records of thinking of this kind are found in both Homer and Virgil:

But if he is one of the immortals come down from heaven, then this is some new thing which the gods are planning; for heretofore have they been wont to appear to us in manifest form, when we sacrifice to them glorious hecatombs, and they feast among us, sitting even where we sit.

(Homer, *Odyssey*, VII, 198)

I sit with gods at their celestial feast.

[Virgil, *Aeneid* I.76]

3.2.6. “Eating with the Gods”: Theoxenia and Lectisternium

Meals eaten with the deity were given titles such as θεοξένια, originally the festival of Apollo. Food (τραπεζώματα or, occasionally, δεῖπνα or παρατιθέμενα) could be placed before an idol or placed in a table. Such foods could be presented at meals, chiefly those classified as social, e.g., weddings (Fotopoulos 2003, 111-2). The Romans called similar meals the *Lectisternium*, a sacred meal in which the icon of a god was brought to the table with the participants. The *Lectisternium* appears to have been celebrated from about 399 BCE (*Livy* 5.13)¹⁵. Initially celebrated only in times of national crisis, they became regular feasts. In these meals, the presence of the gods was represented by images placed reclining on couches with participants in the sacred meals. At the *Sellisternium*, images of goddesses were placed sitting on seats rather than reclining on couches¹⁶. By the time of Horace, such feasts were not just public festivals. Horace’s *Cleopatra Ode* (I.37, 1-4)¹⁷ points to a *lectisternium* (West 1995, 184) whose location is “fictional and ambiguously poised between public and private” (Hendry 1992, 139).

The purpose of these meals is debated. Smith suggests that at these meals the god is welcomed as a guest (2003, 78). Burkert shed light on why this may happen by tracing the origins of the *theoxenia* to worship of the Dioskouroi (2000, 107) who are expected to appear as rescuers of their hosts (213). This would explain the Roman practice of holding *lectisternia* at times of crisis.

The tradition of eating with the gods seems to come from family rather than state religion (107). This origin is also connected to a different phenomenon: meals for heroes and for the dead (107).

3.2.7. *Meals for Heroes and Meals for the Dead*

Meals for heroes and the dead reveal an important distinction in Greek religious thought. Heroes can be defined in the following way:

Heroes are humans who live an extraordinary life, touch deeply other humans through some extraordinary quality, die – sometimes in unusual circumstances- and leave behind “something unpredictable and canny” as they join the powerful dead.

(Thompson 2000, 693)

The meals and rites connected to the gods of the Olympian pantheon were markedly different from those held for the heroes and the dead. There is a vast difference in the ways in which death and sexuality affect gods and humanity: gods may “enjoy the benefits of the flesh but not its ills” (Parker 1983, 66, cf. 393).

Meals for the dead were connected to funerals, and thus to the death of a person. Funerary banquets appear to have served stressed the value of life and the will to live (Parker 1983, 36). Cicero’s description of a funerary meal suggests that it honours the celebrant rather than the deceased (*In Vatinius* 13:31-2, quoted in Levison 2002, 256)¹⁸. Roman rituals also prescribed a feast held on the ninth day, with food burned and wine poured out for the deceased (272).

The philosopher Epicurus appears to have asked his followers to keep a different kind of meal in which they would meet annually to remember Metrodorus and himself (DeWitt 1954, 66-7)¹⁹.

In the main such meals are marked by different rituals, chief of which is the inclusion of elements of mourning and lamentation in the rites connected with the dead (Burkert 2000, 199).

Different names are given to the libations poured: χοαί (*choai*) for the dead and the chthonic powers, σπονδαί (*spondai*) for the Olympians (Burkert 2000, 200). Some of the Greek gods shunned death (Parker 1983, 393). This radical distinction between the dead and the chthonian powers and the Olympians meant that concepts of divinity and death could not readily be mixed:

To name a festival ‘the day of the burial of the divinity’, as the Phoenicians do ³⁰, is impossible in Greek. A god bewailed as dead, such as Adonis, is always felt to be foreign....

(Burkert 2000, 201)

The admixture of such terms arose from foreign deities such as Adonis and Cybele being incorporated into Greek religion²⁰. Ideas from foreign cults could be incorporated

into Greek theology through syncretism. Both Greek and Roman religions tended to operate in this way: they had porous boundaries and could take up ideas and symbols from elsewhere. Faiths that were perceived as firmly demarcated or exclusive, such as Judaism, were the exception. The Olympian goddess Artemis and some of her local cults exemplify this trend. The cult of the goddess at Ephesus adopted elements from the cult of the Great Mother and Cybele traditions of the Ancient Near East. The adoption of foreign deities and cults flourished especially in a third area of religious life: the Mystery Religions.

3.2.8. *Meals and Mystery Religions*

Not all Mystery Religions were later foreign imports; some such as the cult at Eleusis were long-standing Greek institutions. Mystery Religions focused on eschatological questions and hopes, such as life after death, though individual salvation from death need not have been their primary preoccupation (Price 1998, 191). This *caveat* suggests that the mysteries may well have maintained a political dimension as well. This political or social dimension is enhanced by the secrecy of the Mysteries:

Certain rituals, most notably the Eleusinian mysteries, are further protected by rules of secrecy, and it is probably here that we find at its most marked in Greek religion the connection between sacredness and interdiction. Superficially, secrecy divides profane knowledge from guarded sacred knowledge; it is probably more important, however, that a division is thereby created between those who have access to this knowledge and those denied it.

(Parker 1983, 177)

Secrecy enhances the kinship felt by the initiated.

The foreign cults were often based on myths of “dying-and-rising” gods and heroes. Historians of the early church have long noted uses of initiation and meal rites in the Mysteries.

What form did these meals take? *The Catholic Encyclopedia* provides the following overview:

grains of all sorts at Eleusis, bread and water in the cult of Mithra, wine (Dionysus), milk and honey (Attis), raw bull’s flesh in the orphic Dionysus-Zagreus cult.

(Martindale 1911, np)²¹

There appears to have been a variety both in ritual and in elements.

3.2.8.1. The Eleusinian Mysteries

The Eleusinian Mysteries held in honour of Demeter were held annually at the shrine of Eleusis near Athens. The main celebration involved the Lesser Mysteries which were held in spring and open to all. Rituals involved fasting, washing and purification with water and sacrifices, including pigs, whose sacrifice was usually reserved for chthonic cults which focussed on matters of the underworld (Scurlock 2000, 139). The Greater Mysteries held in September were restricted in admission, and held over a ten-day period. Participation in the rites was not, however, open to all: the rites needed to be paid for, and candidates were expected to be moral in character (Tripolitis 2002, 21). The sixth day of the festival involved resting, fasting, purification and sacrificing. The sacrifice was a barley and wheat cake. Initiates also drank the *κυκεών*, a potion made of barley meal, water and mint. A further ingredient appears to have been *βλήχων* (also *γλήχων* [pennyroyal]), which might induce delirium, loss of consciousness or spasms)²².

Eliade suggests that a sacramental meal followed the drinking of the *κυκεών*, but no details are available (1979, 297). Initially, only Greeks appear to have been permitted initiation, but this restriction had gone by the 1st century CE, as some Romans appear to have joined the cult (Sanders 1997, 70-1). It is possible that initiation was restricted to those who could speak Greek (Feldman 2002, 308).

The Eleusinian mysteries reveal a different concern from the community meals described above. They deal with matters of life and death:

What, in the tribal mysteries and in the case of the gods of Samothrace, is perhaps implied but not explicitly stated becomes the true and universal claim of Eleusis: the mysteries, taking death from its terror, are the guarantee of a better fate in the afterworld.

(Burkert 2000, 289)

The meaning of the rituals is not confined to this dimension; indeed such interpretations seem to be unofficial explanations of the rituals (289). A political meaning was extracted from the myth of Demeter's gift of corn to the world: the Athenians demanded the first fruit offerings from around the world. Burkert concludes

Thus the importance of Eleusis seems to have been transposed to this world, but is not exhausted by it.

(2000, 289)

Thus, this most Hellenistic of Mysteries had both eschatological and political significance.

3.2.8.2. The Dionysiac Mysteries

The Dionysiac mysteries were part of cult practice associated with Dionysus (or Bacchus, Liber [Lat.]), the god of wine. The Dionysiac mysteries in their early Greek form left a legacy of tragedy and comedy: theatrical productions in honour of the god. Suppressed by the Roman authorities in the late Republican period as seditious, the cult gradually returned to favour reaching its highpoint in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. Tripolitis (2002, 25) sums up their rituals:

The Bacchic mysteries that were celebrated in their homes consisted mostly of great feasting and rejoicing, to which was added a small part of the religious ceremony.

Within both the Dionysiac and Orphic cults, ritual meals might involve bread and wine. Like the Eleusinian mysteries, the Dionysiac rites dealt with issues of a more personal nature than those of the polis:

Liberation from former distress and from the pressures of everyday life, an encounter with the divine through an experience of the force and meaning of life are presenting Dionysiac initiation. But hopes for the future, for death and the afterlife were no less a part of the secret advantage promised to those who knew. This is shown above all by the gold leaf from Hipponion which came to light only in 1969.

(Burkert 2000, 293, cf. Lada-Richards 1999, 88)

The Bacchic cults were not exclusively related to Mystery cults. Their political dimension appears in the Maccabean period when Antiochus attempted to force cult practice on resisting Jewish elements. For a Hellenistic perspective these rituals expressed loyalty to the regime through participation in rites in which pig meat (Scurlock 2000, 139-2) was offered to a deity who was a conflation of Dionysus, Osiris and the God of Israel (142-8).

3.2.8.3. The Mithraic Cult

The cult of Mithras was a male only cult, whose *floreat* was in the Imperial Roman period. Mithraic meals are said to have used bread and a cup of some kind of liquid. The meal originally seems to have involved eating the meat and drinking the blood of a bull that had been slain. The ritual meal of Mithraism appears to have followed the slaughter of a bull, given that the meal was served on the hide of the slaughtered animal (Beck 2000, 146). Some 2nd-3rd Century CE depictions suggest that the meat and blood might be replaced with bread and wine (Tripolitis 2002, 50). The proposed use of bread and wine in Mithraic rites (Stambaugh & Balch 1986, 137) is open to question. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 66 makes no mention of wine within the Mithraic ritual, referring to bread and a cup of water (text in Ch.4, pp. 195-6, fn. 43). Further, Beck (2000) never mentions wine as part of the cult meal. Thereafter, there are further differences in interpretation. Indeed, it is increasingly argued that the bread and water ritual of Mithraism was not so much an element of a cult meal as a rite of initiation (145, fn.3).

3.2.8.4. Attis- Adonis

Adonis is a complicated character. Within Greek mythology this hero was the cause of bitter rivalry between Aphrodite and Persephone. He later was identified with Tammuz-Dumuzi (an Akkadian vegetation god) and Attis (a vegetation god from Asia Minor associated with Cybele- cf. Ch.5, p. 213, ¶ 5.3.3.2.), particularly in cult practice. Rituals for Attis-Adonis²³ appear to have changed. Whilst the evidence from Athens is unclear about what was offered, the later Alexandrian rituals appear to have involved baked goods, fowl and meat. These changes appear to show the fertility of Egypt, and the Ptolemies' success as the rulers of the country (Reed 2000, 322). This also suggests that the cults had political dimension. The meal rituals from Ptolemaic Egypt for another god, Osiris, specify fragrant, or perfumed, breads which appear to have been made using honey, olive-oil, and, perhaps, sesame-seeds (331-2). The vessels which held the elements were also identified clearly in later writings: food was taken from a timbrel, and drink from a cymbal (Metzger 1968, 15).

3.2.8.5. The Imperial Mysteries

The Roman imperial cults appear to have combined elements of the different traditions (that is, Mystery religions and meals for the dead) in what might be called the "Imperial

Mysteries” (Brent 1999, 95). Inscription *IGRR* 4.353 suggests these rites were held on specific dates, and the regulations require the provision of bread (ἄρτος), wine (οἶνος), sacrificial cake (πότανον), incense (λίβανον) and lamps (λύχνοι). A blanket (στρώσις) was also required for the images of Augustus (95-6). Again, the Imperial Mysteries show that there can be no automatic delineation between cults offering personal salvation and political loyalties (Price 1998, 191).

3.2.9. Religious Meals at Corinth

The number of archaeological sites at Corinth, coupled with the prominence given to cult practice generated by the contents of 1 Cor 10-11, has led to considerable research and reconstruction of cult practices: an overview of past research by New Testament scholars is provided by Fotopoulos (2003, 1-48).

3.2.9.1. Bookidis: Archaeological Evidence

Bookidis, while noting that banquets were commonly held at major festivals, uses archaeological evidence to reconstruct their history and practice. Her study is particularly significant for New Testament studies because it analyses evidence from the temple precincts in Corinth. The early history of such meals saw common meals celebrated in the open air or under temporary structures. Dining rooms were later constructions. Bookidis’ research queries the common assumption that religious meals were primarily occasions at which men reclined to eat whilst women sat: the archaeological evidence from Corinth suggests that women ate by themselves whilst reclining (1993, 50). Her research further shows a connection between ritual purity and physical cleanliness: bathing rooms were attached to the eating complexes from the fifth century BCE (52). Purity may thus be common thread, if not universally found, in both Greek and Semitic religious meal traditions. The number of remains of *amphorae* (wine containers), together with drinking cups of various forms show that the drinking of wine was a common practice (53-4; Bookidis 1990, 92-3).

3.2.9.2. “Idol-meats”

The way in which English New Testament traditions have referred to “idol-meats” at Corinth in 1 Cor 8-10 may have influenced understanding of the food eaten at such meals. Evidence from further afield shows that, when meat was offered, it could come from a number of different victims: oxen, deer, guinea fowl, geese sheep, pigs, oxen and calves (Fotopoulos 2003, 100). In the Corinthian evidence, traces of meat and shellfish are rare (Bookidis 1993, 55) and far outnumbered by evidence for the consumption of grains²⁴. These might be served in the forms of porridge, unleavened breads, or bread and cakes made from boiled grains. The use of wheat extends into Roman times. Other foods offered included “beans, leeks, seeds and nuts, honey, and possible fresh or dried fruits” (56). Again, we can note features common to Semitic, Greek and Roman traditions: cultic meals in which bread (or cooked grain dishes) and wine²⁵ are shared.

3.2.9.3. Fotopoulos: Eating With Which Deity?

A wide spread of evidence suggests that Corinthian worshippers took part in meals which honoured both the gods of the Olympian and mystery cults: Dionysus, Asclepius, Demeter and Kore, and Isis (Stambaugh & Balch 1986, 136-7)²⁶. Fotopoulos offers the most nuanced and detailed survey of the archaeological sites in the area of Corinth. He concludes that Christians might well have been invited to meals held in the Asklepieion (2003, 69-70), but not at the sanctuary of Demeter or Kore (93). Participation in meals associated with Isis and Sarapis might have been possible either at Corinth or Kenchreai (although there is no archaeological evidence for temple locations for either from the time of 1 Cor): cult meals could be held in other temples or private homes (127-8). The text of 1 Cor 8: 1-8; 10:23 also suggests that one of the Corinthian factions participated in cult meals held in a temple. Their argument about the meaning of such participation rather than their presence or absence indicates that this was criticism of their past actions²⁷.

3.2.9.4. Kennedy: Meals for the Dead

Kennedy offers a detailed description of meals for the dead from Corinth. His study centres on the term εἰδωλοθύτον (1 Cor 8:1) – food offered to idols. The “idols” may

include images of the dead. The “food” (-θύτον) can apply to food served as a meal. Its etymology may involve sacrifice, but it should be remembered that eating and sacrifice were not separated by the Greeks (Lambert 1993, 294, quoted below on p.). A case for seeing the Corinthian controversy as surrounding meals for the dead may be supported by witness of later Christian writers. Similar understandings of εἰδωλοθύτον, and the related term ἱερόθυτον (1 Cor 10:28), as meals for the dead rather than pagan deities are also found in Origen, c. *Celsus* VIII.24, and Tertullian, *de Spect.* 13 (Kennedy 1987, 234-5)²⁸. The reasons given by Origen and Tertullian for not taking part in meals for the dead reveal two purposes which they view as un-Christian.

The texts examined by Kennedy suggest that meals were celebrated according to custom and tradition on particular days after the burial and on anniversaries (230-1, fn. 30). He argues that references in 1 Cor 8:10 refer rather to meals eaten at the graveside rather than meals eaten in a temple: tomb *triclinia* (dining places) fit the context better (232). The best surviving examples are found in Pompeii (233). The rituals held for the dead might include the sacrifice of animals (e.g., Cicero, *De Legibus*, 2.22- the sacrifice of a pig)²⁹. Images, masks and busts of the deceased were also used. The inscription of Sextus Julius Frontinus (ca. 103 CE) gives details for the building and maintenance of a funerary garden at his tomb (*C.I.L.* XIII, 5708, in Kennedy 1987, 231). Yet his theory is open to criticism on three counts. First, the Christian texts on which he bases his arguments about εἰδωλοθύτον tend to come from a later period: there is no guarantee that the locus of meaning was constant. Second, the archaeological evidence on which his arguments are based comes from other locations, e.g., Pompeii. Third, confusion centres on the details of the rooms around the temple and alternative sites: the term “restaurant”, in particular, needs to be examined. The work of both Fotopoulos and Bookidis suggests that participation in meals held in temples and focussed on the Graeco-Roman deities cannot be ignored.

3.2.10. *Graeco-Roman meals: A Summary*

There appear to have been a variety of Graeco-Roman meal types which straddled both constituent cultures. Whilst there may be some variation in practice, say, a preference

for drinking rather than philosophical discourse, different ranking practices, or the treatment of women, the core features remain the same.

Meals in secular and religious settings appear to share similar structures, and component features. Meat consumed at such meals was usually the product of a sacrificial rite. The sharing of food, wine, and culture (discourse, music etc) are common.

The sharing of a meal is commonly an indicator of some kind of social link, family (real or fictive), political, economic or religious. Meal structures reflect, but do not challenge, such structures: they maintain the status quo, even when they appear to subvert some of its conventions. The structure of the meal reflects the hierarchy of the group and internal relationships, expressed in actions such as posture and placement. Patron/client relationships may be reflected in the ordering of meals either in private homes or in clubs and sodalities. At a national or imperial level, participation in worship, and thus cult meals, is indicative of political loyalties. Such political significance extends to some, if not all, of the Mystery cults.

The network of relationships revealed by meal practice need not be completely political, or concerned with the “horizontal”. Occasions such as the *theoxenia* or *lectisternium* demarcate a relationship with the god as guest, often invited to help solve some problem or crisis. Participation in Mystery initiations and rituals, which include meals, are not exhausted by political interpretations: on occasions, they reveal that the initiate expects to be a beneficiary of blessings in this life or in the afterlife.

3.3. Jewish Meals

Jewish meals reveal a number of customs surrounding meals. These include purity laws and preparatory practice. This section does not cover all these intricacies but focusses on the main types of meal which have been identified in Second Temple Judaism.

3.3.1. Jewish Meal Practice: Not Unique

Jewish meal practice was not, by the first century CE, distinct from Greek or Roman. Any such claim would not be an accurate reflection of historical reality. The different cultural traditions had overlapped (see Ch. 1, pp. 8 -11, ¶1.3.2.)

3.3.1.1. Overlaps with Graeco-Roman Practice

Overlaps with Greek custom may have started early: the meals criticised in Amos 6:4-7 share similarities with Greek meals. These include reclining, luxury, wine in bowls, anointing, and music. Archaeological evidence shows the presence of Greeks in the region in this period and before.

By the period 200-180 BCE, even clearer parallels between Greek, Roman and Jewish practice can be found. The writings of Ben Sira (Sir) show evidence of invitations (13:9), luxury (31:12-32:13), the placing of guests by status (12:12), the president (32:1-2), music (32:3-6, 40:20-1), posture (32:1-2) and conversation (32:3-4). Mixed (male and female) meals were possible (Esth 6:7), and women can be depicted reclining at meals (Esth 7:8). Sir also includes advice on etiquette which is similar to the rules of the *symposium*³⁰. Similar meals are recorded in the earliest stratum of rabbinic literature, the Tannaitic. Thus, they may provide evidence of meal traditions contemporary with the New Testament period. *Tosephta* records an order for a meal with similarities to the *symposium*³¹: reclining, three courses, washing hands, mixing water and wine and the blessing of wine.

3.3.1.2. "Religious Meals"

Given the link between the sacred and the ordinary in Jewish spirituality, it might be argued that every kind of meal was a "religious event" (Rowland 1985, 239). Blessings over any quantity of food greater than an olive or an egg were enjoined on male Jews in *Tosefta* (Dix 1946, 52). However there is an important difference between the various religious meals. The legends which lie behind the Graeco-Roman meals focus on the story of the deity, those of Judaism on the history of the nation (Bultmann 1956, 37). The study of the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper has focussed increasingly on specific meal types. Key to this change, and to any subsequent study, is Jeremias' *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, which puts forward strong arguments for a basis in the Passover meal. Jeremias' thesis has, however, been increasingly criticised. Scholarly

attention has turned also to *Qiddus*, *Haburah*, *Tôdâ* and more recently, Essene community meals.

3.3.2. *The Passover*

Tradition set the Passover meal firmly in the context of the Exodus story. Yet neither the myth nor the ritual of the Passover was created in a vacuum. Evidence that Passover ritual was shaped by its context can be found in two distinct areas. First, its sacrificial thinking has common points shared with other religions of the Ancient Near East. These include motifs such as sacrifice (Prosic 1992, 86-88). Second, it is possible that the Passover could be construed as a fulfilling the role taken by fertility cults in other Ancient Near Eastern cultures (90-2).

3.3.2.1. Passover In The Pentateuch

The Priestly tradition joins the two feasts of the Passover and Unleavened Bread together (Exod 12: 1-20,40-51; Num 9:1-14, 28:16-25, Lev 23:5-8). Ezek 45:21-4 also give a brief outline of the feast. Central to its celebration was the eating of a meal. Exod 12:8, the fullest description, prescribes that a lamb, roasted whole, should be eaten together with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Further, none of the meals should be left over until the following morning for consumption. Leftovers were to be burned (Exod 12:10). Households were encouraged to celebrate together to minimise waste (Exod 12:4). The lamb for the slaughter was selected on Nisan 10, slaughtered on Nisan 14, and the meal held in the evening of Nisan 15, that is the same day as the slaughter.

3.3.2.2. The Deuteronomic Reforms

The celebration of the Passover changed over the course of time. A key change appears in the Deuteronomic reforms at the time of Josiah. The Deuteronomic practice, like the Priestly tradition, appears to connect Passover with the feast of Unleavened Bread, but this appears an artificial unity (de Vaux 1976, 485-6). The two feasts appear to have been celebrated in this way under Josiah (2 Kgs 23:21-23), but not before: it was a novelty. Despite the links between the two feasts in the documentary evidence it

appears that what had been two feasts (Passover and Unleavened Bread) only became joined at this point (488-493) .

The amalgamation of the two feasts under Josiah also saw the place of the Passover change. Its predominantly family character altered and it became part of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, a focus of national identity³².

3.3.2.3. Passover in Second Temple Judaism

This pattern remained until the first century CE, evidenced by the incidental description of Jesus travelling to the city for the feast (e.g. John 2:13). Changes may also have arisen from Hellenistic influence. However, growth of population and the number of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem meant that some prescriptions had to be relaxed. It was no longer the case that the meal was eaten by all in the Temple precincts, nor could all the pilgrims spend Passover night within the walls of Jerusalem (Jeremias 1987, 42-3).

The destruction of the Temple in 70 CE meant an end to the sacrificial cult to which the Passover had come connected. This had come about through the link, especially in location, between the Passover celebrations and the Temple. The form of Pharisaic Judaism which arose after those events was one in which the Passover *Seder* gained an increasingly sacrificial import, perhaps even as a replacement for the cultus (Schiffmann 1979, 56). Others argue that its sacrificial significance was less important than its commemorative aspect (Taylor 1966, 537, fn. 12a), though the two need not be exclusive. However, this change was not an innovation, but rather the culmination of a long process (Schiffmann 1979, 46). The bulk of accounts of the *Seder* are based on later formulae, so care must be taken that any investigation of the 1st century CE ritual is not, in fact, anachronistic (Allison & Davies 1997, 469, esp. fn. 98; Donahue 2002, 398; Taylor 1966, 666-7).

3.3.2.4. Passover in the 1st Century CE

With that *caveat* in mind, Went offers a possible reconstruction of the Passover in the first century CE. The dates of the festival are well established:

10th Nisan: purchase of Passover Lamb (Exod 12:3-6)

14th Nisan: Passover feast (Exod 12:6ff)

15th-21st Nisan: Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exod 12:18ff)

The feast of the First Fruits (Lev 23:9-14; see Went 1998, 2) was kept on a Sunday within Nisan. There were several distinct features of the Passover *Seder*:

- The meal was eaten at night
- It was eaten reclining at table
- Food was dipped in the bitter herbs
- Bread was broken
- Wine was drunk (Exod 6:6-7 suggests four cups corresponding to the themes of deliverance, freedom, redemption and consummation [Went 1998, 3])
- Gifts were given to the poor
- Hymns were sung
- There may have been talking about God.

Explanations of *Pesach* (Passover), *matzah* (unleavened bread) and *maror* (bitter herbs) were introduced by Rabban Gamliel at the end of the 1st century CE (5). Brumberg-Kraus 2000, 171-7 details the way in which the rabbinic accounts of the Passover (*m. Pesah*) were shaped in the literary style of the symposium: of special note are the use of *faits divers* and wordplay (171 & 174).

Similarities with Greek meals can also be seen: reclining, division into courses, benediction over wine before the symposium proper, and table talk.

The apparent coincidence of details, particularly with Synoptic accounts of the Last Supper suggest that there are strong grounds for considering Passover ritual and imagery as influential on the event and/or recording of the Supper traditions in the New Testament. Certainly the exegesis of phraseology and actions in the chapters below will engage with these similarities and explore whether Passover traditions might be formative. Many would go further and argue that the Last Supper was indeed a Passover meal. Such a view is not without criticism and these too will need to be borne in mind in the discussion that follows.

3.3.3. Jewish Festival Meals (*Qiddus*)

The *Qiddus* meal is associated with the Sabbath. *Qiddus* refers to the blessing given at the beginning of a Sabbath or a feast day. Jeremias (1987, 26-8) argues that too much emphasis has been put on the *Qiddus* as a distinct meal type. For him, the *Qiddus* is little more than an ordinary meal in which a special blessing is inserted instead of the normal grace:

The *qidduš* is therefore neither a meal, nor a sacrifice, nor does it have sacrificial significance, but it is just a simple blessing. '*Qiddus* meals' (the term is a modern invention) have never existed, if anything more is meant by them than meals at which a special blessing was inserted into the normal grace because of the fact that a Sabbath or feast day had begun during, or before, the meal.

(27-8)

Meals that included the *Qiddus* were, further, tied to particular dates in the calendar, or days in the week, and could not be moved in anticipation (29). While *Qiddus* as a description of a meal may be disputed, the term is still important inasmuch as it refers to a specific part of a meal, the blessing, related to the *berakoth* (thanksgiving) (Mazza 1996, 288-9).

.3.4. Fellowship Meals (Chaburah)

A third meal type that is viewed as a possible formative influence on the Supper traditions is the *Chaburah*. These were essentially fellowship meals. Belonging to a group that met together for meals might mean adherence to certain laws of purity and cleanliness. Cleanliness for table fellowship seems to have been an identifying characteristic within Pharisaism. Neyrey (1991a, 363) sees such meals confirming "membership in the brotherhood of those who share Pharisaic ideology". In short, eating together shows some kind of bond of solidarity either as a family or "fictive-family group" (363). Such fellowship meals have affinities with the club meals of the Greek world. Here purity is being used as the boundary marker between those who are within or outside the group (Smith 2003, 151-2).

The idea that the *chaburah* provides precedents for the Supper traditions appears to originate with Leitzmann (Schweitzer 1998, 249). Dix (1946, 50-4) gives an extended description of the *chaburah*. His description hinges on the identification of the meal with

the descriptions of meals given in the Tractate *Berakoth*. Jeremias (1987, 30-31) is critical of such an identification for giving a special significance to what are essentially ordinary meals. Prayers were to be said when anything more substantial than an olive was consumed (Dix 1946, 52), raising the question of whether they confer a special significance to any meal tradition. Jeremias notes also that such meals were primarily “*duty meals*” connected with weddings, rites of passage, funerals and the like, and is critical of the view that they might rather be seen as community meals (1987, 30-1).

The inclusion of funeral meals may be controversial, Levison makes no mention of meals in descriptions of Jewish funeral practice, noting that the meals associated with the funeral of Herod were included as some of many Roman practices as signs of power and wealth rather than piety (2002, 272).

Two further criticisms can be made. Firstly, Schweitzer rightly asks where the evidence of Lietzmann’s suggestion that Jesus was accustomed to hold regular fellowship meals with his disciples is to be found (1998, 250). Secondly, accounts of Jesus’ sharing with the Pharisees in meals must be treated with caution. Yet they reveal incidental details. Jesus’ criticism of how he has not been treated may criticise his host’s specific *chaburah* practice (if the meal is so identified) or his general hospitality: he was given no water, no kiss, and no oil (Luke 7:44-5, cf. Neyrey 1988, 386).

These accounts do, however, show Jesus’ acquaintanceship with the meal structures of such sectarians, they are also highly critical of some of the thinking that lies behind such practices. (Neyrey 1991, 378-6). Neyrey’s sociological analysis of Pharisaic meals sheds more light on their practice than Jeremias’ pessimistic comments suggest. The accounts allow various “maps” to be drawn. Thus, the first map is that of persons, of kinship, and ranking (364-5). Thus the president at the meal claims leadership and knowledge of the *chaburah*: the roles of leader and disciple are spelled out and status is allocated (375, cf. Luke 14:7). The second is that of objects (“things”- 365), which includes food and matters of conversation, the third of times and occasions, which includes the order of events in the meal (366-8). Here food is important, as the rules about what may or may not be consumed and when are indicators of purity, and thus of whom may belong to the group. Talk is less important: there are no clearly laid down stories which need to be told (Neusner 1975, 45). Third comes “mapping of places” : the location of a meal may or may not guarantee whether it can be eaten in purity. This

also includes ranking, an overlap with the mapping of persons (366). Fourth is the mapping of times: when a particular meal should be eaten during the day, within a calendar, and the order of the meal (366-7). Within a Pharisaic meal, all these maps are designed to ensure that those who eat, do so in such a way that they guarantee their purity, and this must match that of the Temple priests (Neusner 1975, 43-4). Pharisaic regulations placed a great importance on this: Neusner, in an analysis of Pharisaism before 70 CE, suggests that 67% of regulations dealt with meals and the maintenance of purity (1973, 86)³³. These regulations pay attention to the way in which the purity of the body is maintained through control of what touches or enters it, particularly through eating (Neyrey 1991, 383-4). Correct eating parallels basic Pharisaic values:

Like Israel, and especially its Temple, they are a people "set apart" and "holy", that is separated from non-Jews and non-observant Jews. Their bodily concern with mouth (and hands) replicates social concerns among priests and others for God's holiness and orderliness, especially as this is embodied in the central symbol, the temple...In short, Pharisees' table behaviour embodies and confirms their view of a distinctive Israel and its temple, even as it affirms their particular role and status in Israel.

(384).

3.3.5. *Tôdâ Meals*

The *Tôdâ* was a Jewish liturgical meal in which eating was accompanied by words of praise and proclamation. It appears to be connected with thanksgiving:

Todah is Hebrew for "praise" or "confession." Scripture sometimes speaks of offerings of todah, and modern Bibles generally translate this as "thank offering," "sacrifice of thanksgiving," or some similar phrase. Thank offerings are mentioned in such passages as Leviticus 7:12-15; 22:29; 2 Chr. 29:31; 33:16; Psalms 50:14,23; 56:12; 107:22; 116:17; Jeremiah 17:26; 33:11; and Amos 4:5.

(McLaughlin: *OT Answers*, np)

Tôdâ came to apply to meals in which a meal usually comprised of harvested grain or fruit was shared with God. Such meals might take place in the Temple and increasingly were connected to the sacrifices offered there after the period of the Babylonian exile (Fabian 1999). Leon-Dufour connects the *tôdâ* with the *zebah tôdâ* of Lev. 7:12³⁴. The

tôdâ prayers which accompany such sacrifices may also be found in situations which do not mention sacrifice (Leon-Dufour 1986, 42). A shift takes place in which sacrifice is transformed into an offering of words. A similar movement is found both in Qumran, where the sectarians opted to remove themselves from the corrupt, as they perceived it, sacrifice of the Temple. It is also found in Philo, where geography excludes the worshipper from sacrifices which had to be offered in the Temple (43). Yet, simultaneously, legislators focussed on prescriptions and formulae for correct ritual. A custom of sacrifices followed by meals and accompanied by canticles arose. When the legislators then talk of a *tôdâ*-sacrifice:

The expression cannot refer exclusively to the meal which completed the communion sacrifice, but must designate the meal insofar as it included a celebration of praise. The *zebah tôdâ* would thus represent the fusion of two tendencies in the biblical tradition: the one that insists on ritual sacrifice and the one that is concerned more with the prayer of praise.

(43-4)

In this scheme, the *tôdâ* comes to represent the most perfect sacrifice, and will continue to be offered, even if the action of sacrifice should cease (44). Important here for our study is the implication that “joy” and “praise” become the defining characteristic of *tôdâ* (and, by implication, *tôdâ*-meals) rather than a sacrificial ritual. A sacrificial rite need not accompany *tôdâ* meals.

The *tôdâ* hypothesis faces two objections. The first is that the reconstruction of its history is, as Leon-Dufour himself admits, “impossible to reconstruct...in detail” (42), and remains hypothetical. The second is the objection that such a broad characteristic as “joy” may not be adequate to define a distinctive meal tradition, unless it can be proven that other meal traditions were not joyously celebrated. Interestingly, such distinctions might have been possible in the ancient world: Tacitus, *Hist.*, 5.5.5. appears to make such features the key to differentiate Jewish and Dionysiac worship (text in Ch. 7, p. 364, fn. 16).

3.3.6. Qumran/ Essene Meals

The Essenes have long been known through writings such as Josephus' *Jewish War*. Care needs to be taken with Josephus' account which appears to be based on an earlier source (also used by Philo), rather than personal experience (Grabbe 2000, 200). That said, it must be noted that both writers document communal meals preceded by bathing (200). A further account is also found in Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 5.73³⁵.

The discovery at Qumran in 1947 of the Dead Sea Scrolls led to the identification of the Essenes with the Qumran sectarians. However there are complications, and some scholars question whether or not the Essenes, the Qumran community and the writers of the Scrolls are really one and the same (Mason *WJS*; Ullmann-Margalit 1998, 5-12)³⁶. The sources principally disagree over issues of location and celibacy (Grabbe 2000, 203). There are two possibilities: either that there were two separate groups, Essenes and the community at Qumran, or that the two are somehow related. It is possible that there were different types of Essenes: those who lived in isolated communities and others who lived a communal life in towns: their different rules may reflect different degrees of radicalism (Grabbe 2000, 204-5; Riesner 1992, 207)³⁷.

A note of caution is still needed. The Qumran "library" was large, and not every text necessarily central to the faith and practice of the sect (Kugel 1998, 3): particular texts might force the "fine-tuning" of existing theories (Schiffmann 1994, 89). Individual texts will need to be placed carefully within the context of the proposed community's life, faith and practice.

There are also discrepancies between the external documents and the Scrolls. These can be explained in a number of ways such as the perspective of the observer, degree of completeness, sources from different periods, and variety within the movement itself (Grabbe 2000, 204). In spite of this there is a degree of consensus:

In this case, most scholars find it difficult to believe that the agreements between Pliny, Philo, Josephus, and a certain group of the Scrolls can be mere coincidence. These agreements are on peculiar points, not on customs and practices likely to have been common to a wide range of Jewish groups.

(204)

3.3.6.1. Sources for Qumran/Essene Meals

Three different sources give evidence for the Qumran/Essene meals. These are the accounts of the Jewish groups (Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes) found in Josephus' *J.W.* 2:111-162, the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, notably in 1 QS 6:4-6 and 1 QSa 2:17-21, and the inter-testamental *Jos.Asen.* 8:5,9; 15:5; 16:16 and 19:5. Differences in precise detail between Josephus' account and those in the Scrolls may arise because Josephus did not have access to the secret traditions of the sect (Kuhn 1957, 74).

If it is accepted that there appear to have been different Qumran/Essene groups, notably, a sect that lived in community, and others who lived within a town movement (i.e., not in restricted communities), it makes sense to assume that they might have had different meal practices due to their circumstances. Koddo suggests that the Damascus Document refers to the practice of the "town movement". Whilst it makes no clear provision for meal practice, other factors suggest that its adherents would not have eaten with "outsiders" (2000, 104-5).

The meal practice of the community seems better documented. The account in Josephus describes Essene traditions and gives the following account of their meals.

After the purification, they assemble in a special room which none of the uninitiated is permitted to enter; pure now themselves, they repair to the refectory, as to some sacred shrine. When they have seated themselves in silence, the baker serves the loaves in order, and the cook sets before each one plate with a single course. Before the meal, the priest gives the blessing, and it is unlawful to partake before the prayer. The meal ended, he offers a further prayer; thus at the beginning and at the close they do homage to God as the bountiful giver of life

(Josephus, *J.W.*, 2:131, in Jeremias 1987, 33)

The accounts given in 1QS and 1QSa are similar to the Essene traditions described by Josephus:

Wherever there are ten men of the Council of the Community there shall not lack a Priest among them. And they shall all sit before him according to their rank and shall be asked their counsel in all things in that order. And when the table has been prepared for eating, and the new wine for drinking, the Priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand to bless the first-fruits of the bread and new wine.

(1QS 6:4-6, from Vermes 1987, 69; 1995, 77)

[This shall be the assembly of the men of renown [called] to the meeting of the Council of the Community

When God will have engendered (the Priest-) Messiah, he shall come [at] the head of the whole congregation of Israel with all [his brethren, the sons] of Aaron and the Priests, [those called] to the assembly, the men of renown; and they shall sit [before him, each man] in the order of his dignity. And then [the Messiah] of Israel shall [come], and the chiefs of the [clans of Israel] shall sit before him, [each] in the order of his dignity, according to his place in their camps and marches. And before them shall sit all the heads of [family of the congregation], and the wise men of [the holy congregation,] each in the order of his dignity.

And [when] they shall gather for the common [table], to eat and [to drink] new wine, when the common table shall be set for eating and the new wine [poured] for drinking, let no man extend his hand over the first-fruits of bread and wine before the Priest; for [it is he] who shall bless the first-fruits of bread and wine, and shall be the first [to extend] his hand over the bread, [and] all the congregation of the Community [shall utter a] blessing, [each man in the order] of his dignity.

(1QSa 2:17-21, from Vermes 1995, 121-2)

As with the Pharisaic meal, the important action is that of eating together, and the extant accounts do not include any historical or mythical stories which need to be recounted (Neusner 1975, 45-6).

The accounts in Josephus can be combined with the accounts given in the Scrolls to give a more complete account of the sect's practice, if the Qumran and Essene groups are held to overlap (Vermes 1984, 127-9). From this standpoint, both Josephus and 1QS 6:1-6 agree:

...that all the meals of the order were held in common, and they had the character of a cult meal. This is shown by 1QS, where it considers the eating and the prayers as parallel features, and the character of the meal as an official manifestation of the community

(Kuhn 1957, 70)

The purity system of the Qumran/Essene group also exemplifies these changes. Their rituals shape the boundaries of the community, those who are "in" or "out" (Kugler 2002, 137-8). The rituals of the Qumran/Essene axis show that eating is connected to purity, inasmuch as purity is a pre-condition of eating (1QS 5:13-4; Josephus, *J.W.*, 2.129), and perhaps to a priestly understanding (see further Ch.4, p. 142, ¶ 4.2.6.2). The

character of the meal further gives expression to the group's identity, as they used it to express their values.:

The eschatological banquet described in 1 QSa matches Bell's notion of a feasting rite more closely. The instruction in 1QSa 1:4 to read the law to those assembled occasions a reaffirmation of the group's basic religious values. The same may be said of the anticipated presence of the messiahs of Aaron and Israel, the pre-eminence of the priestly messiah, and the blessings offered over the food by both messiahs (1 QSa 2:12-14,17-21). If the community council mentioned in 1QSa 1:26 also entailed a meal (cf. 2:22), the purification required prior to attending it would further reflect the community's purity ethos. The seating order and restrictions on the behavior at the meal (2:11-17) also reveal community boundaries.

(Kugler 2002, 138)

The meal also reflects the sectarians' understanding of themselves as a holy people. Divorced from the Temple cultures which they regarded as impure, they understood themselves as a "sort of spiritual temple" (Evans 1992, 248), using spiritual sacrifices and offerings as substitutes for the literal offerings and sacrifices of the cult (249). Their self-understanding as a priestly community includes even the Levitical proscriptions on priesthood: the physically challenged are automatically barred from participation (Lev 21:17-24; 1 QSa 2:3-10; 1 QM 7:4-6; 4 QCD^b; 11 QTemple 45:12-4, cf. Dunn 1992, 263-4). They also saw themselves as standing in a covenanted relationship with God: sharing in the meal thus is also a sign of covenant fellowship (Dunn 1992, 262).

The meal is hierarchical, and reflects the structure of the community. The priest takes the most important role (Kugler 2002, 136). 1QSa shares with 1QS a rubric about the preparation of the table, and for the wine or, possibly, unfermented grape juice (Vermes 1987, 7). The priest who presides at the meal is the first to touch the bread. In contrast to normal Jewish practice in which the bread is blessed before the meal, and the wine after, both elements are blessed before the meal. Note that the meal consists of more foodstuffs than bread and wine. These are mentioned specifically because of the benedictions which would be offered over them (Schiffmann 1994, 334). The meal, according to Josephus, finishes with a benediction. Food is distributed according to rank within the community, which includes in order of seniority: the Master, the sons of Aaron and the sons of Levi. Community members were also ranked on admission and their grading reassessed annually (Kee 1992, 110).

The two meal descriptions in the Scrolls also appear to overlap: the regular meal of 1 QS may *prefigure*³⁸ the Messianic meal of 1 QSa (Vermes 1987, 51; 1995, 57-8), a point re-iterated by Kee:

This structure and function of the community were to continue until the time of renewal (1 QS 4), when the eschatological prophet would come, together with the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel, who are the priestly and royal rulers respectively. The chiefs of Israel will be assembled before him, and the heads of the families of the congregation according to rank. The climax of this consummation (which was probably performed as an anticipatory ritual) will be the table where the bread and wine will be set out. The priest (Messiah of Aaron) will bless the wine first; then the Messiah of Israel, to which the congregation responds by uttering a blessing.

(110, cf. Dunn 1992, 263)

Thus the meals described with the Qumran/Essene nexus reflect the structure of the community in terms of who eats, what, when and where: thus they map person, things, places and times.

They also re-iterate the community's self-understanding as the holy community of the Messiah(s). This last point is debatable. 1 QSa 2:17-21 is fragmentary and difficult to translate. It has often been translated as simplifying the presence of two Messiahs. Yet a change can be noted in the translations between Vermes' 3rd and 4th editions of *the Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. In the 4th, Vermes' translation implies that there is one Messiah, not two, (as in the 3rd edition). O'Neill supports Vermes' translation at the beginning of the passage:

On the great day when God begets the Messiah among them.

(1995b, 65)

Within this reconstruction, the Priest is identified with the Messiah (65-7), rather than the two Messiahs demanded by the traditional translation (above, cf. Vermes 1987, 54). This traditional translation itself depends on a conjectural emendation which Vermes, for one, no longer accepts (O'Neill 1995b, 65, fn. 28). For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that supporters of both interpretations support the view that the text points to a Messianic meal.

The meals appear to have general similarities with the associations of the Graeco-Roman world: they express the community's self-understanding and structure.. However, there are also significant differences. The Qumran/Essene meals of 1QS were daily (not occasional), exclusive and focussed on purity (Baumgarten 1998b, 97). This focus on purity does, however, indicate a shared purpose, but different strategy, from the Pharisaic *chaburah*. The Qumran/Essene accounts also raise intriguing similarities with early Christian tradition: A meal involving bread and wine with Messianic significance.

3.3.7. *Joseph & Aseneth*

Other texts associated with a Qumran/Essene background are illuminating. The work called *Jos Asen.* is sometimes placed within this grouping³⁹. *Jos.Asen.* was not written by the Qumran/Essene community, nor found in the libraries of Qumran. It is dated between 100 BCE and the rule of Trajan (98-117 CE)⁴⁰. It comes from a Jewish setting outside Palestine, and appears useful in understanding more the religious thinking of Greek-speaking Jews of the Diaspora.

There is no evidence that *Jos.Asen.* had a direct influence on early Christianity (Burchard 1987b, 104). However, it may provide fresh insights into the development of Christian thought.

3.3.7.1. The Meal in *Joseph & Aseneth*

The relevant six passages from *Jos.Asen.* add only one detail about the meal itself, but are of more importance for looking at its significance.

“It is not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God and eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality and anoint himself with blessed oil of incorruptibility to kiss a strange woman who will bless with her mouth dead and dumb idols and eat from the table of their strangulation and drink from their libation a cup of insidiousness and anoint herself with ointment of destruction.”

[8:5]

“And renew her by your spirit,

And form her anew by your hidden hand,

and make her alive again by your life,
and let her eat your bread of life, and drink your cup of blessing
and number her among your people
that you have chosen before all (things) came into being,
and let her enter your rest
which you have prepared for your chosen ones, and live in your eternal life for ever
(and) ever.”

[8:11]

“Behold, from today, you will be renewed and formed anew and made alive again, and
you will eat blessed bread of life, and drink a blessed cup of immortality, and anoint
yourself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility”

[15:5]

“And the man stretched out his right hand and broke a small portion off the comb, and he
himself ate and what was left he put with his hand into Aseneth’s mouth, and said to her,
“Eat.” And she ate. And the man said to Aseneth, “Behold you have eaten bread of life,
and drunk a cup of immortality, and been anointed with a ointment of incorruptibility.”

[16:15-16]

“And a man came to me from heaven today, and gave me bread of life and I ate, and a
cup of blessing and I drank.”

[19:5]

“...and gave me to eat bread of life,
and to drink a cup of wisdom, and I became his bride for ever and ever.”

[21:21]

3.3.7.2. Similarities to the Qumran/Essene Meal

There are some similarities to the Essene texts: a cult meal (apparently) with shared bread and wine. Eating may focus on a token amount rather than a full meal (15:5). The honeycomb also comes to symbolise the bread and wine. Aseneth is depicted as eating a piece of the honeycomb, but this is described as eating bread and drinking a cup (16:15-16; 19:5; 21:21. Cf. Burchard 1987a: 190; 229 Note n; Kraemer 1998, 148 n.127). The reference of the metaphors is, however, unclear: they might refer to cultic meals, Jewish diet or even be Christian interpolations (Burchard 1987a, 191; 212, n. i).

3.3.7.3. The Meal as Heavenly Food

The heavenly origins of the honeycomb (16:11), and the connection of this symbolism to “manna” (Hubbard 1997, 98;108; Lieber 2004, 68), would seem to suggest that special, or cultic, food, was envisioned rather than the normal earthly food of the usual diet. The identification of the honeycomb as a heavenly food may stem from the tradition of the feeding in the wilderness in some of the Exod accounts: in Deut 32:13-5,18 the people of Israel are fed with honey and oil from the Rock (Oropeza 1998, 63). In 17:3-4 the comb is burned, which may also imply a sacrificial or cultic setting, given the common practice of sacrificial offerings being burned. Ordinary dietary food would not need such an origin, nor end. Whilst many commentators argue that this refers to a meal, others are less certain. *Jos.Asen.* may refer rather to the Jewish way of using food, drink and ointment (Burchard 1987b, 117, cf. Chesnutt:2005, 115).

Even if this is so, it does not mean that *Jos.Asen.* is irrelevant for the discussion of the Supper Narratives (132). Burchard's conclusion is worth quoting in its entirety:

What JosAs can do perhaps is to explain why the central rite of that new religious movement, Christianity, was a solemn form of consuming ἄρτος and ποτήριον, why gestures concerning just these two things were remembered from, or attributed to, Jesus' last supper (such gestures are what Mark 14.22-24 par. is about, after all, not a meal), and why a narrative concerning them was formed at all.

(Burchard 1987b, 118-9)

3.3.7.4. Differences from the Qumran/Essene Traditions

Complications, however, also arise in identifying the *Jos.Asen.* traditions with the Qumran Essene nexus (Chesnutt 1995, 186-98). *Jos.Asen.* is “thoroughly unapocalyptic” (Burchard 1987b, 108) which is at odds with significant portions of the scrolls. There are differences in detail, too: a woman is allowed to partake. This suggests a different provenance from, if not all, at least the all-male Essene communities.

3.3.7.5. The *Therapeutai*

Such features lead some to suggest that it has more to do with the Egyptian *Therapeutai* than the Essenes (Kuhn 1957, 76). The *Therapeutai* are best described as an Egyptian Jewish order, and Philo, *Contempl.* 8-11 describes their communal life⁴¹. Whilst Kuhn claims that they were an offshoot of the Palestinian Essenes, they obviously evolved in a different way (e.g., by allowing women to share in the meal)⁴². There may well be points of contact between the Essenes and the *Therapeutai*, but care must be taken not to conflate what were two distinct, even if related, traditions. Thus, Schiffmann notes, as does the above analysis, that focus of the meals at Qumran differed from those of the *Therapeutai*, *Jos.Asen.* and the Passover *Seder* in what was a predominantly Pharisaic expression of Judaism after 70 CE. The meaning of the Qumran meals was based primarily on Messianic expectations, whilst the others were replacements for the sacrificial cult of the Temple.

The connection of *Jos.Asen.* with the *Therapeutai* can be queried because it does not advocate their monastic lifestyle (Burchard 1987a, 194). Whilst *Jos.Asen.* appears to describe a process of conversion, any associated rites remain obscure because there is no corroborating evidence (193). We can, however, note the stress that these texts put on the ideas of table-fellowship, and of salvation earned through right eating and purity in a cultic context. The connection between *Jos.Asen.*, Qumran and the *Therapeutai*, posited by Kilpatrick and Kuhn, hinges on an older Jewish meal practice which remains unknown, and whose purpose is uncertain (Burchard 1987b, 11). *Jos.Asen.* presents an understanding of a meal in which purity is of concern: a feature held in common by both Pharisaism and the Qumran/Essene nexus. The meal in which she shares conflates the maps of persons, things and time: Aseneth's purity is guaranteed by eating the food offered to her by the man. However, the offer can only be made because she has already translated herself to a new location, away from the idols and the foods which are shared by their devotees.

3.3.8. *Jewish Meals: A Summary*

This analysis of Jewish meals reveals similarities with the Graeco-Roman tradition. Again, meals perform a social function in marking identity. The extant evidence shows that, for a number of religious groups, commensality marks who belongs to the group and who does not. Ranking also may function as an indicator of a group's hierarchical structure (e.g., in Essene meals). Rules and regulations about who eats together, what is eaten, when it is eaten and where it is eaten reaffirm the groups' structures and self-understanding. In a number of the traditions, these reveal a concern with the expression of the participants' purity either as individuals or as a group.

Like their Graeco-Roman counterparts, some Jewish meals (e.g., Passover) were connected to sacrificial activity. A strong religious component seems to have pervaded all meals, with prayers and thanksgiving given a particular prominence. This religious significance also includes symbolism, some foodstuffs being identified with the stuff of the myths which formed Jewish identity, though the exact details of such symbolism in the 1st century CE are open to debate. This sacrificial dimension will be examined further in Ch.4.

This context, together with Graeco-Roman traditions and customs, marks the point in time and history where Jesus appeared. It is likely that the meals of Jesus and followers will engage with similar issues to these.

3.4. Early Christian Tradition

If there is a common feature to Christian texts about their ritual meals it is scarcity of detail. This is mirrored even in the descriptions of other meal traditions. A recurrent frustration of studying the ancient world is the discovery that it is the most commonly performed actions which are most poorly recorded (cf. Hicks 1959, 5). There was no need to record such actions and events; everyone was familiar with them.

The Gospel accounts to which we shall soon turn provide the most detailed descriptions of a meal tradition. However these are difficult texts to interpret because they may perform a variety of functions. They may give an historical precedent for the eucharist, or justify a particular understanding or performance of it. The disentangling of these elements is made more difficult by the lack of details in the early church traditions. In scientific terms, we might say that the lack of a "control", or a detailed set of facts

against which the accounts might be compared, makes the identification of different elements and their function more complex.

Bruce Chilton has identified six different patterns of the eucharist in the New Testament, all of which draw on Jewish meal types. The first type he considers to be based on Jesus:

Israel as forgiven and willing to provide of its own produce was for him the occasion of the kingdom.

(Chilton 2002, 181)

The second, also associated with Jesus and based on the Temple cult, was a kind of surrogate sacrifice. He associates the next two groups with specific apostles: Petrine Christianity favoured a meal based on Jewish blessings (*berakhah*), whereas the circle of James favoured the *Seder*. The fifth, found in Paul and the Synoptics stressed the connection between Jesus' death and the eucharist. The sixth, a sacramental understanding, is found in John (182-5). A couple of cautionary remarks must be made. First, the types identified with particular apostles are probably the most contentious as they depend on the reconstruction of factions claimed to exist in the emerging church, rather than refer to specific texts⁴³. The second is that the types are not mutually exclusive: different patterns share common elements. The order in which they are presented suggests a series of developments, and stages. The research that follows does not share all of Chilton's views. In Ch.8, for example, the case will be made that sacramental understandings of the Christian meal emerge much earlier in the process than he concludes. Further, his ascription of such sacramental thinking to a Hellenistic environment and a comparatively late stage of the proposed developments is to be queried (see Ch.7, pp. 305-38, ¶ 7.2-3.). Whilst disputing details like these, we note that his research reveals the breadth of Jewish meal types associated with the meals of the emerging church, and provides a fresh analysis of the analogies.

3.4.1. The Meals of Jesus

Meals figure prominently in the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' life. Neyrey counts 24 references to eating, 5 to meals, 6 to commensality, 2 to the breaking of bread, 3 to

foodstuffs, 3 to etiquette and three to hospitality in Luke alone (1991, 361-2). That said, they provide little in the way of details. As is the case with Jewish meals, the categories of who, what, when and where are important. Jesus' approach to these categories is markedly different from many of his contemporaries, so much so that Neyrey can refer to him as turning the system upside down (378).

Jesus' choice of table companions marks the first break with many of his contemporaries. As has been noted, the meal structures of both Pharisees and the Qumran/Essene groups were exclusivist. Like ate with like to ensure purity: holy ate with holy. Jesus' practice is different: he eats not only with the holy (e.g., Luke 7:36-50; 11:37-44; 14:1-7), but with the outcasts (e.g., Luke 5:29-36; 15: 1-2; 19:5-7). His practice also subverts contemporary wisdom about ranking and status (Luke 14:7). It must be stressed that this is a challenge not just to social but religious order: those accorded fresh status in Jesus' practice are not just the marginalised of society, but of cult. Lev 21:16-20 would deny access to the cult for those who are physically challenged, as in the Qumran/Essene documents, yet these are the ones who Jesus' makes a point of inviting to meals (Luke 14:13, cf. Dunn 1992, 264-7). Jesus himself does not occupy the same position at meals, on occasions he is the guest (Luke 7:36-50), on others the host (Matt 14:15; 15:32-3; Luke 9:10). These varying accounts do not suggest a hard and fast hierarchy at the meals Jesus ate.

Jesus' teaching about what may be eaten is also controversial. The complexity of Pharisaic food laws has been noted. In contrast Jesus pays scant attention to how food is prepared, the vessels used, and the foodstuffs themselves (Mk 7:1-3, 14-23).

Conventions about place and time are also challenged. Jesus' prepares food in the desert, where purity cannot be guaranteed (Matt 14:15; 15:32-3; Luke 9:10; cf. Neyrey 1991, 380), and eats when others expect him to fast (Mk 2:18-21, 23-7).

Does this mean that Jesus rejected the conventions of purity, and viewed purity as an irrelevance? Such an answer would throw the baby out with the bathwater. A more nuanced approach is needed. Thus Mk 7:14-15 can be described in Chilton's words as:

an assertion *concerning* defilement, not a general denial of defilement.

(Neusner & Chilton 1995, 122)

Matters of cleanliness and purity still matter: the difference lies in how one views these as being obtained or practised. In contrast to those who would make purity an issue of exclusion, Jesus takes a more inclusivist approach:

His argument here in Mark 7:15 is as simple as an aphoristic assertion, just as his practice generally was straightforward: the purity of generic Israel is acknowledged as true purity. On that assumption, the promulgation of the kingdom by word and deed, by Jesus and by his disciples, could and should proceed. The statement concerning defilement represents a policy of treating all of Israel as *Israel*, pure by means of its customary practice.

(123)

This is supported by Jesus' advice to his disciples as they travel (Matt 10:11-13; Mk 6:10; Luke 9:4; 10:5-7). The instruction assumes that wherever they go and whatever they are offered, that food will be clean (Dunn 1992, 255; Neusner & Chilton 1995, 124). This was not an easy teaching, and controversy about who might eat what and where bedevilled the earliest Christian generations (Acts 15, cf. Neyrey 1991, 381-2; Gal 2:11-4). We note the difficulty of this controversy, and that the issue is pursued no further in this thesis for reasons of time and space. If such teaching caused problems amongst Jesus' followers, it must have been an even greater bone of contention for others who adopted a more exclusivist approach. Such reflections have prompted Karris to suggest that Jesus was killed because of how he ate (1985, 70).

3.4.2. *Acts*

Acts refers to the "breaking of bread" (Acts 2:46; 20:7). The second account, which includes a vigil extended by Paul's preaching, suggests that the early Christians would meet for a vigil service culminating with the breaking of bread on a Sunday morning. This appears to have become an established pattern by the second century CE (Gonzalez 2001, 234)⁴⁴. Other details are never fully described. A key difficulty is whether the phrase implies a meal in which only bread was shared, or which included a sharing of the cup (which is not made explicit in the title). Identification with Jewish meals is not helpful as "breaking of bread" could refer to *any* Jewish meals. Identifications with the *Qiddush*, which could include a wine element on Sabbaths and festivals (Maccoby 1991, 250-1), might well imply that a wine element might be

included on occasion. The term might even carry two meanings. Used in Acts 2:46, “breaking of bread” might merely refer to Jewish meal traditions, whereas the event of Acts 20:7, on the first day of the week, assuming a festal significance from such a specification, might refer to a *Qiddush* meal which included a cup⁴⁵.

In Acts 2:42; 46 the first descriptions of “breaking of bread” do not define roles for the participants. Acts 6:1-7 describes the appointment of a distinct group to “serve at tables” (v.2). In the latter sections, distinct roles begin to be identified. Acts 20:11 ascribes the action of “breaking the bread” to Paul. The same phrase is used in Acts 26:35 to describe Paul’s meal after his shipwreck⁴⁶. Thus there appears to be a movement, however slight, towards increased identification of roles in the early church, and, we might venture, the beginnings of its ministers being identified with the role which had been assumed by Jesus⁴⁷.

3.4.3. 1 Corinthians

The account in 1 Cor 11:17-22 focuses on two abuses of a Christian meal which includes both bread and wine: factional disputes and the issue of satiety and hunger. Both imply that there is a breach of the communal intention of the meal. Actual details of the meal are not recorded. Paul’s preoccupation is with what should happen and why than with recording actual practice. A number of commentators have suggested parallels between the Corinthian meal and the Passover. However, the details recorded in 1 Cor 11:23-5, even if linked to the Passover, do not necessarily describe what was actually happening in Corinth or indeed any liturgical order (McGowan 1999b, 79-80; Thiselton 2000, 883).

The meal is also mentioned in Ch.s 8-10, but again there are few details about the conduct of the meal at Corinth. The arguments of these chapters suggest that there are some resemblances between the Christian meal ritual and the rituals of pagan worship. They also raise issues of purity or cleanliness, and whether one might eat anything, or if food offered to idols is a table too far and, if so, why (cf. Ch. 4, p.175, ¶ 4.4.7; pp. 177-8, ¶ 4.4.10). These arguments focus rather on the significance of the meal than its conduct. Christian congregations do not seem to have followed the pattern of some Graeco-Roman clubs which had “disinterested” patrons or benefactors (see above, p.

78, ¶ 3.2.4.). That said, it is possible that such behaviour might have shaped the conduct of meals in Corinth in other ways (Theissen 2001, 78).

Taken at face value, there appears to be major difference between the two accounts in 1 Cor. The argument in 10:16-17 uses the order of cup-bread, whereas the institution narrative in 11:23-5 uses the reverse: bread-cup. This need not imply that Paul is reforming the order of liturgical events. The order of 10:16-7 need not actually reflect any liturgical sequence, but only that Paul wanted to comment about the bread rather than the cup (Marshall 1980, 119).

3.4.4. *The Didache*

Did. provides further accounts of an early Christian meal ritual:

CHAPTER 9

The Eucharist -- The Cup -- The Bread

1 And concerning the Eucharist, hold Eucharist thus: 2 First concerning the Cup, "We give thanks to thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy child, which, thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy child; to thee be glory for ever."

3 And concerning the broken Bread: "We give thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy Child. To thee be glory for ever.

4 As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy Kingdom, for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever."

5 But let none eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptised in the Lord's Name. For concerning this also did the Lord say, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."

CHAPTER 10

The final prayer in the Eucharist

1 But after you are satisfied with food, thus give thanks: 2 "We give thanks to thee, O Holy Father, for thy Holy Name which thou didst make to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy Child. To thee be glory for ever. 3 Thou, Lord Almighty, didst create all things

for thy Name's sake, and didst give food and drink to men for their enjoyment, that they might give thanks to thee, but us hast thou blessed with spiritual food and drink and eternal light through thy Child. 4 Above all we give thanks to thee for that thou art mighty. To thee be glory for ever.

5 Remember, Lord, thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in thy love, and gather it together in its holiness from the four winds to thy kingdom which thou hast prepared for it. For thine is the power and the glory for ever. 6 Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosannah to the God of David. If any man be holy, let him come! if any man be not, let him repent: Maran atha, Amen."

7 But suffer the prophets to hold Eucharist as they will.

8 -- none --

CHAPTER 14

The Sunday worship

1 On the Lord's Day of the Lord come together, break bread and hold Eucharist, after confessing your transgressions that your offering may be pure; 2 but let none who has a quarrel with his fellow join in your meeting until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice be not defiled. 3 For this is that which was spoken by the Lord, "In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king," saith the Lord, "and my name is wonderful among the heathen."

(Lake:1912, np)

3.4.4.1. Date & Provenance

The scholarly consensus holds that this work should be dated between 90-150 CE (Draper 1996, 10; Streeter 1929, 286-94), originating in Syria or Palestine (Goguel 1954, 267; Kirby 2001,4; Streeter 1929, 147). However the prayers in chapters 9-10 may be accorded an earlier date around either 50-2 CE (Draper 1996, 31), or even 48-9 CE (Mazza 1996, 279-83).

3.4.4.2. Similarities to Jewish Meal Traditions

Chapters 9 and 10 record prayers to be said over the cup and the bread together with a thanksgiving. These appear to share elements common to Qumran/Essene and Pharisaic traditions of blessings at meals: Torah and covenant (10:2), food for all creatures (10:3), Zion and the Messiah (10:5). They appear to come from Jewish *berakhah* tradition (Draper 1996, 9-10). Alon also notes this common tradition, but further points out that *Did.* never uses the Passover tradition to describe the eucharist

(1996, 182-3). Christological material has been added to this Jewish tradition (Weinfield 1992, 436-7). *Did.* also picks up the concern about purity which has surfaced repeatedly in our examination of Jewish meals: there are also restrictions on partaking. In both 9 and 14 it is advised the elements should not be given to the unbaptised or those who have not confessed their sins (9:5).

3.4.4.3. One Meal or Two?

Dix proposed that *Did.* 9-10 and 14 did not refer to a common tradition but rather to two types of meal: 9-10 to the *agape*, and 14 to the eucharist (1946, 90-6). This allowed him to postulate an *agape* tradition free of references to the death of Jesus (9-10), and a sacral meal tradition (14). For Dix the problem was the “wrong” order of the cup and bread, and he argued that the passages referred to an *agape* rather than a eucharist. It seems that his own presuppositions about order led to this conclusion (McGowan 1999, 22). Further, at no point does *Did.* use different terms to describe these meals. The term *agape* is never used, and the writer’s own preference is to describe the meal of 9-10 as a *eucharistia* (22). Dix has not proved that 9-10 do not refer to the eucharist. Betz would take matters further, arguing that *Did.* 9-10 originated in a sacramental Lord’s Supper (1996, 253).

Jeremias also uses the “cup-bread” order to suggest that 9-10 refer to an *agape* (1987, 118). Maccoby brings two criticisms (1991, 251). First, Jeremias’ view that there was *never* a eucharist with the order “cup-bread” begs the question. Second, his contention that the eschatological material marks the beginning of a eucharist (and thus the end of an *agape*) is not borne out by later tradition. Justin Martyr, *Apology* I.66, places such apocalyptic formulae at the end of the eucharist (251). However, Maccoby’s argument needs correction. What he cites as a text from Justin Martyr is actually *Did.* 10:6 (for Justin, *Apology* 1:66, see Ch.4, p. 196, fn. 43)⁴⁸. Nonetheless, it supports the point he makes against Jeremias: eschatological material does not need to come at the beginning of a eucharist.

The fact that the meal descriptions do not refer to the death of Jesus, or use the terminology of “body and blood” is sometimes used as evidence for them describing non-eucharistic traditions. Yet the variety of theses appears to indicate a common weakness:

Each commentary or study seems to provide its own variation on these themes. In all such cases there seems to be an a priori refusal to deal with evidence for eucharistic meals in terms other than the search for a previously defined norm.

(McGowan 1999, 22)⁴⁹

Nonetheless, the similarities between the two passages, and the methodological principles outlined, lead us to adopt the thesis that both accounts refer to be identified as “eucharist” (Mazza 1996, 283-7).

3.4.4.4. *Did.* and the New Testament

The absence of any explicit reference to the death of Jesus may only indicate a different set of theological priorities. That *Did.* contains no reference to the death or resurrection of Jesus may only show the cult of Jesus as crucified Christ or risen from the dead was less important than self-identification as the special, gathered people of God (Mack 1996, 240-1). It may also be likely that *Did.* does not need to dwell specifically on such points because they were already given factors in their beliefs and practices. The texts of *Did.* do not provide a comprehensive collection of a group’s belief, but only a part (Betz 1996, 254). This applies to both baptism and eucharist: the narrative of neither ritual is reported (Klawans 2002, 4). The *Did.* has close affinities with Matt (Carrington 1957, 500; Dix 1946, 92), or with both Matt and Luke (Tuckett 1996, 128). Thus, ideas current in Matt and its inherent traditions may be implicit in the context of the *Did.* (cf. Wright 2003, 488-9), and the writer has chosen not to make them explicit in the text (Schöllgen 1996, 63)⁵⁰.

3.4.5. Feeding Miracles

The texts of the New Testament also suggest other meal traditions which might be of relevance. A number of symbols and images relate eating, food and matters of faith. The Feeding Miracles recounted in both the Johannine and Synoptic traditions are of importance more for their symbolism than for their accounts of ritual action (Mk 6:34-44; 8:1-9; Matt 14:13-21; 15:32-39; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15). They portray Jesus as the one who provides food to people invited to eat: he is identified as the host or source of the meal. Additional meaning may be attached to this role. Thus Schweitzer outlines the

feeding at Gennaseret as a Messianic feast with eschatological meaning (1998, 107; cf. Ch.5, pp.233-4, ¶ 5.4.8.). They also break with contemporary Judaic conventions by their outdoor, wilderness location (above, pp. 109-11, ¶ 3.4.1.)

3.4.6. *Symbolic Prototypes*⁵¹

1 Cor 10:1-6 suggests counterparts of Christian sacraments in the Exodus narrative: Baptism is prefigured by the passing through the Red Sea, the eucharist by drinking water from the rock in the wilderness (Schweitzer 1998, 20). Other texts may take symbolism of this kind even further. Manna traditions inform the Bread of Life discourse in John 6. Burchard notes that the Manna traditions link John, 1 Cor and *Jos.Asen*. Study of the Last Supper and Lord's Supper texts will need to be sensitive to such symbolism being stated explicitly or implicitly.

3.4.7. *Early Christian Meals: A Summary*

Discussion of early Christian meals is made frustrating by a lack of detail about their exact content. It becomes difficult to map them as a result. Jesus appears to have left behind an inclusivist legacy which expressed his view of Christian eating as a practice which revealed the purity of the generic Israel. Whilst early Christian writing points to this ideal, the history of the early Church shows that it still remained contentious. Restrictions in purity are seen in behaviour (e.g. Peter at Antioch, the idol-meats controversy at Corinth) and become part of the advice for celebrations of the rituals (*Did.*). Symbolic understandings of meals also appear, particularly through "manna" imagery. In common with some Jewish meals, notably that of the Qumran/Essene tradition, traces of eschatological, and particularly Messianic, imagery begin to appear as well.

3.5. Concluding Remarks

Meals in all three cultural groupings are related to the societies or communities which perform them. Meals express kinship, in family, political or fictive groups: they reveal who is in, who is out, and where such boundaries may be drawn. Boundaries can be of different types: they may be based on family or kinship, or on politics (as in the Greek states and Roman imperial meals), or on shared religious belief or understanding such as purity.

Their practice may also mirror the structure or hierarchy of these groups: they reveal the order in which participants stand to each other. Thus meal practice may reveal client-patron relations, seniority, or status. Meal practice may reflect a wish to break with conventional practice (as Jesus appears to have done), or may reinforce the status quo (as is even the case with the feasts of licence in Graeco-Roman contexts).

There is, however, more to meals than their sociological dimension. The appearance of phenomena such as Temple meals, libations, and the like, points this way. Meals often have a religious significance (more so in the ancient world than in many contemporary societies). They take place in holy places, and between holy people who need to be pure to take part in them, and may prepare their food according to rules that guarantee its purity. Food that is prepared is not just served raw, and is not just cooked, but may be invested with a sacral significance. Often this includes rituals involving sacrifice, and it is to this phenomenon that this work now turns.

Notes

1 "Ritual" can be described in such a way that it appears a blanket term for religious or cultic activity (Burkert 2000, 54-5). However, religious practices can be differentiated further. "Rituals" deal with status transformation, whilst "ceremonies" confirm the values and structures in the institutions of a society (McVann 1991, 334-5). Under this analysis it is sometimes more accurate to describe meals as ceremonies rather than rituals (Neyrey 1991, 362-3). Frankfurter 2001, 355 criticizes the tendency to use "ritual" as a pejorative.

2

In all societies, sharing food is a way of establishing closeness, while, conversely, the refusal to share is one of the clearest marks of distance and enmity. ... Commensality, the action of eating together, is thus one of the most powerful operators of the social process.

(Bloch 1999, 133, cf. 138)

3 Whilst McLean writes expressly about concepts of sacrifice (which will be examined in Ch.3) his remarks hold good for the general discussion of meal types as well. Similar warnings conclude Martin's summary of scholarship on Judaism and Hellenism ((Martin 2001, 61). It is easy for commentators to be impeded by unexamined assumptions about the eucharist when examining even the actions of the Last Supper and Lord's Supper. Beck notes how such thinking affects not just Christian but classical scholarship about ancient religions, particularly in relation to sacramentalism and utopian eschatology (2000, 173-4). Price further shows that care must be exercised in making distinctions between religion and politics in the study of ancient religion (1980, 42-3).

4 Five different perspectives in the analysis of meal traditions can be identified: ceremony, purity, body symbolism, economic reciprocity and social relations (Neyrey 1991, *passim*; 1996a, 14).

5 These are the terms as used in the New Testament period. For the prehistory of meal terminology, see Smith 2003, 20-1.

6 Smith gives an overview of the philosophical banquet (2003, 47-65).

7 The nature of entertainment and the kinds of food offered varied considerably. By the 1st century CE, recitation and music were common (Sherwin-White 1985, 121). Petronius' *Satyricon* contains an extended satire on ostentation in the banquet of Trimalchio (Smith 1982, 1-50; Walsh 1996, 20-66). Other writers take pride in describing more austere fare, and can even make a virtue out of the poor fare offered. The value of the meal lies in friendship and wit rather than in rich food:

You shall have a good dinner at my house, Fabullus, in a few days, please the gods, if you bring with you good dinner and plenty of it, not forgetting a pretty girl and wine and wit and all kinds of laughter. If, I say, you bring all this, my charming friend, you will have a good dinner; for the purse of your Catullus is full of cobwebs. But on the other hand you shall have from me love's very essence, or what is sweeter or more delicious than love, if sweeter there be; for I will give you some perfume which the Venuses and Loves gave to my lady and when you sniff its fragrance, you will pray the gods to make you, Fabullus, nothing but nose.

(Catullus 13 in Walker 1998)

8

The third and most masterly stroke of this great lawgiver, by which he struck a yet more effectual blow against luxury and the desire of riches, was the ordinance he made that they should all eat in common, of the same bread and same meat, and of kinds that were specified, and should not spend their lives at home, laid on costly couches at splendid tables, delivering themselves up into the hands of their tradesmen and cooks, to fatten them in corners, like greedy brutes, and to ruin not their minds only but their very bodies, which, enfeebled by indulgence and excess, would stand in need of long sleep, warm bathing, freedom from work, and, in a word, of as much care and attendance as if they were continually sick. It was certainly an extraordinary thing to have brought about such a result as this, but a greater yet to have taken away from wealth, as Theophrastus observes, not merely the property of being coveted, but its very nature of being wealth. For the rich, being obliged to go to the same table with the poor, could not make use of or enjoy their abundance, nor so much as please their vanity by looking at or displaying it. So that the common proverb, that Plutus, the god of riches, is blind, was nowhere in all the world literally verified but in Sparta. There, indeed, he was not only blind, but like a picture, without either life or motion. Nor were they allowed to take food at home first, and then attend the public tables, for every one had an eye upon those who did not eat and drink like the rest, and reproached them with being dainty and effeminate.

This last ordinance in particular exasperated the wealthier men. They collected in a body against Lycurgus, and from ill words came to throwing stones, so that at length he was forced to run out of the market-place, and make to sanctuary to save his life

(Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 11 in White 1966, 57-8)

Theissen notes that Plutarch further mentions Lycurgus' attempts to institute egalitarian common meals in *Moralia* 226E-227A (2003, 380). It is a moot point whether Theissen can legitimately use such an incident from a different era and city state to inform the situation at Corinth. Even if Plutarch writes as a near contemporary, the anecdotes may reflect a very different environment, whether historical, fictional or idealistic.

9

Really, Paetus, I advise you, as something which I regard as relevant to happiness, to spend time in honest, pleasant, and friendly company. Nothing becomes life better, or is more in harmony with its happy living. I am not thinking of physical pleasure, but of community of life and habit and of mental recreation, of which familiar conversation is the most effective agent; and conversation is at its most agreeable at dinner-parties. In this respect our countrymen are wiser than the Greeks. They use words meaning literally 'co-drinkings' or 'co-dinings' (symposia, symdeipna) but we say 'co-livings' (convivia) because at dinner-parties more than anywhere else life is lived in company.

(Cic. *Ad Fam.* 9. 24. 3 (trans. Shackleton Bailey) from D'Arms 1990, 311)

Cf. Grant 1960, 231; Luschignig 2002, 2.

Nappa shows how Catullus 12 and 13 both use the convivium as a paradigm for friendship which ultimately transcends even the meal itself (1998). In fact, Catullus uses the ideal of Greek symposium rather than the Roman convivium to stress the value of friendship (395). There is a curious parallel here with *John* in which the values and teaching of Jesus ultimately transcend the value of the meal itself.

Marrucinius Asinius, you do not use your left hand nicely amid the jests and wine: you make off with the napkins of the careless. Do you think this is witty? It escapes you, fool, how coarse a thing and unbecoming it is! Don't you believe me? Believe your brother Pollio who would willingly give a talent to divert you from your thefts: for he is a lad skilled in pleasantries and clever talk. Therefore, either expect three hundred hendecasyllables, or return me my napkin which I esteem, not for its value but as a pledge of remembrance from my comrade. For Fabullus and Veranius sent me napkins as a gift from Iberian Saetabis; these I must love even as I do Veraniolus and Fabullus.

(Catullus 12, On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Catul.+12>. Catullus 13 in fn.7)

10

Some very elegant dishes were served up to himself and a few more of the company; while those which were placed before the rest were cheap and paltry. He had apportioned in small flagons three different sorts of wine; but you are not to suppose it was the guests that might take their choice: on the contrary, they might not choose at all. One was for himself and me; the next for his friends of a lower order; and the third for his own freed-men and mine. One who sat next to me took notice of this, and asked me if I approved of it. "Not at all," I told him. "Pray, then," said he, "what is your method on such occasions?" "Mine," I returned, "is to give all my company the same fare; for when I make an invitation, it is to sup, not to be censored. Every man whom I have placed on an equality with myself by admitting him to my table, I treat as an equal in all particulars." "Even freed-men?" he asked. "Even them," I said; "for on these occasions I regard them not as freed-men, but boon-companions." "This must put you to great expense," says he. I assured him not at all; and on his asking how that could be, I said "Why you must know my freed-men don't drink the same wine I do, but I drink what they do."

(Melmoth (1909). On-line at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/pliny-letters.html>)

Pliny is critical of his colleague's self-indulgence and meanness rather than his making social distinctions between his guests. Such criticisms are not new, and can be found from the time of Elder Cato (234-149 BCE; Sherwin White:1985, 152). Martial comments on the different treatment for friends (social equals) and clients (some how dependent on the host for social or financial reasons) :

Since I am asked to dinner, no longer, as before, as a purchased guest [i.e., a client], why is not the same dinner served to me as to you? You take oysters fattened in the Lucrine lake, I suck a mussel through a hole in a shell; you get mushrooms, I take hog funguses; you tackle turbot, but I brill. Golden with fat, a turtledove gorges you with its bloated rump; there is set before me a magpie that has died in its cage. Why do I dine without you, although, Ponticus, I am dining with you? The dole has gone: let us have the benefit of that; let us eat the same fare

(Martial, *Epigrammata*, 3.60, quoted in Smith 2003, 45)

Smith summarises the variety of foodstuffs (2003, 31-3). Luschignig gives a neat summary of the variety:

Meals in the Roman Empire may be divided into two groups: the ideal meal at which the food is simple and the talk sublime and the extravagant meal at which the food is too rich and the company ridiculous. The first type we find described in the letters and poems of invitation to friends for little dinner parties by writers like Pliny the Younger and Martial. The second type is described by the satirists, Horace, Petronius, Juvenal and Martial too, men whose job was to mock the foibles and failings of their fellow men. Or we might divide our two types of meals in to the meals that we have ["we" being the people of wit, culture, taste, and discretion, naturally] and the meals that they have ["they" are the people to whom the food and service are more important than the guests]. The ideal of the ideal meal was appropriately Plato's *Symposium*, the pagan world's most magnificent party, intellectually speaking, at which Socrates arrived too late for his supper, but treated his friends to a brilliant discourse on the nature of Love. Pliny, in a note accepting a dinner invitation, asks that the food be simple and the talk Socratic—but, he insists, even that must be kept in moderation. For Pliny did not want to repeat the performance of Socrates and his fellow talkers who drank each other under the table and continued to talk until morning, after which Socrates, a man of prodigious stamina went to his bath and began his daily rounds.

(2002, 2)

These remarks may apply to the meals as in their real, or idealised literary form. In either case, they show that such understandings reveal meals as indicators of social inclusion or exclusion by a variety of criteria.

11

He made a present to the people of three hundred sesterces each on three occasions, and in the course of one of his shows in celebration of the feast of the Seven Hills gave plentiful banquets, distributing large baskets of victuals to the Senate and equites, and smaller ones to the plebeians, and he himself was the first to begin to eat.

(Suetonius, *Domitian*, 4, trans. in Rolfe (1914). On-line at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/suet-domitian-rolfe.html>)

12

There is no Spartan widow of such high birth that she will not go to a dinner party hired for a fee. (5) In almost all of Greece, it was among matters for high praise to be proclaimed a victor at Olympia; to appear on the stage and to be viewed by the populace, no one regarded as a matter for disgrace, among those same nations. At Rome all these acts are regarded as, in part, dishonouring, in part, low and alien to decent behaviour. (6) On the other hand, there are numerous actions decent by our standards which are thought base by them. For what Roman is ashamed to take his wife to a dinner party? Where does the lady of the house not occupy the place of honour, and receive guests? This is all very different in Greece: (7) she is only invited to dinners of the family and sits only in the inner part of the house, which is called the women's quarters: no one enters unless bound by ties of kinship.

(Cornelius Nepos 1989, 29-30)

Ovid, *Amores*.1.4

Your husband will be with us at the treat,
May that be the last supper he shall eat.

(Trans. Mahoney (1855). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Ov.+Am.+1.4.1>)

notes the custom of a husband and wife attending a dinner party. The scandal here is not in the woman's presence, but that she will be in the same room as her husband and her lover.

13

VII. (57) Now of the banquets among the Greeks the two most celebrated and most remarkable are those at which Socrates also was present, the one in the house of Callias, when, after Autolycus had gained the crown of victory, he gave a feast in honour of the event, and the other in the house of Agathon, which was thought worthy of being commemorated by men who were imbued with the true spirit of philosophy both in their dispositions and in their discourses, Plato and Xenophon, for they recorded them as events worthy to be had in perpetual recollection, looking upon it that future generations would take them as models for a well managed arrangement of future banquets; (58) but nevertheless even these, if compared with the banquets of the men of our time who have embraced the contemplative system of life, will appear ridiculous. Each description, indeed, has its own pleasures, but the recorded by Xenophon is the one the delights of which are most in accordance with human nature, for female harp-players, and dancers, and conjurors, and jugglers, and men who do ridiculous things, who pride themselves much on their powers of jesting and of amusing others, and many other species of more cheerful relaxation, are brought forward at it. (59) But the entertainment recorded by Plato is almost entirely connected with love; not that of men madly desirous or fond of women, or of women furiously in love with men, for these desires are accomplished in accordance with a law of nature, but with that love which is felt by men for one another, differing only in respect of age; for if there is anything in the account of that banquet elegantly said in praise of genuine love and heavenly Venus, it is introduced merely for the sake of making a neat speech; (60) for the greater part of the book is occupied by common, vulgar, promiscuous love, which takes away from the soul courage, that which is the most serviceable of all virtues both in war and in peace, and which engenders in it instead the female disease, and renders men men-women, though they ought rather to be carefully trained in all the practices likely to give men valour. (61) And having corrupted the age of boys, and having metamorphosed them and removed them into the classification and character of women, it has injured their lovers also in the most important particulars, their bodies, their souls, and their properties; for it follows of necessity that the mind of a lover of boys must be kept on the stretch towards the objects of his affection, and must have no acuteness of vision for any other object, but must be blinded by its desire as to all other objects private or common, and must so be wasted away, more especially if it fails in its objects. Moreover, the man's property must be diminished on two accounts, both from the owner's neglect and from his expenses for the beloved object. (62) There is also another greater evil which affects the whole people, and which grows up alongside of the other, for men who give into such passions produce solitude in cities, and a scarcity of the best kind of men, and barrenness, and unproductiveness, inasmuch as they are imitating those farmers who are unskilful in agriculture, and who, instead of the deep-soiled champaign country, sow briny marshes, or stony and rugged districts, which are not

calculated to produce crops of any kind, and which only destroy the seed which is put into them. (63) I pass over in silence the different fabulous fictions, and the stories of persons with two bodies, who having originally been stuck to one another by amatory influences, are subsequently separated like portions which have been brought together and are disjoined again, the harmony having been dissolved by which they were held together; for all these things are very attractive, being able by novelty of their imagination to allure the ears, but they are despised by the disciples of Moses, who in the abundance of their wisdom have learnt from their earliest infancy to love truth, and also continue to the end of their lives impossible to be deceived.

VIII. (64) But since the entertainments of the greatest celebrity are full of such trifling and folly, bearing conviction in themselves, if any one should think fit not to regard vague opinion and the character which has been commonly handed down concerning them as feasts which have gone off with the most eminent success, I will oppose to them the entertainments of those persons who have devoted their whole life and themselves to the knowledge and contemplation of the affairs of nature in accordance with the most sacred admonitions and precepts of the prophet Moses.

(On-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book34.html>)

14 Smith (2003, 97-131) provides detailed accounts of the different Greek and Roman associations, including Statutes of the College of Diana and Antinous (Roman- 136 CE) and the Iobakchoi (Athens- 2/3 century CE;)

15

The priests who had charge of them appointed for the first time in Rome a *lectisternium*. Apollo and Latona, Diana and Hercules, Mercury and Neptune were for eight days propitiated on three couches decked with the most magnificent coverlets that could be obtained. Solemnities were conducted also in private houses. It is stated that throughout the City the front gates of the houses were thrown open and all sorts of things placed for general use in the open courts, all comers, whether acquaintances or strangers, being brought in to share the hospitality. Men who had been enemies held friendly and sociable conversations with each other and abstained from all litigation, the manacles even were removed from prisoners during this period, and afterwards it seemed an act of impiety that men to whom the gods had brought such relief should be put in chains again.

(Roberts (no date) On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Liv.+5.13>)

16 For further details on the origins and development of the *Lectisternium*, see *Lectisternium* (1911) and Yates (1875). See Lake (1937) and Taylor (1937) for the possible Greek origins of both the *lectisternium* (at which gods reclined) and the *sellisternium* (at which they sat). Rawson notes that, in Roman culture, a *lectisternium* might be held after a safe birth for "congratulations, good wishes, and consultations about nursing and the future" (1991, 13). Such rites would appear in both kinship and politics. Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44 mentions a *sellisternium* as one of the propitiatory rituals undertaken after the great Fire of Rome in 64 CE:

These several regulations were, no doubt, the best that human wisdom could suggest. The next care was to propitiate the gods. The Sibylline Books were consulted, and the consequence was that supplications were decreed to Vulcan, to Ceres, and to Proserpine. A band of matrons offered their prayers and sacrifices to Juno, first in the Capitol, and next on the nearest margin of the sea, where they supplied themselves with water to sprinkle the temple and the statue of the goddess. *A select number of women, who had husbands actually living, laid the deities on their sacred beds, and kept midnight vigils with the usual solemnity.* But neither these religious ceremonies nor the liberal donations of the prince could efface from the minds of men the prevailing opinion that Rome was set on fire by his own orders. The infamy of that horrible transaction still adhered to him. In order if possible to remove the imputation, he determined to transfer the guilt to others. For this purpose he punished with exquisite cruelty a race of men detested for their evil practices, by vulgar appellation commonly called Christians.

(Laing 1903, 430, italics mine)

Sellisternia is here translated "laid the deities on their sacred beds" which obscures the wider ritual sense.

The preference for goddesses to sit may reflect some Greek patterns (Lake 1937, 255), in which both gods and goddesses might be depicted sitting, rather than the Roman practice that women should sit or recline at meals.

17

Now drink we deep, now featly tread
A measure; now before each shrine
With Salian feasts the table spread;
The time invites us, comrades mine.

(Conington (1882). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hor.+Carm.+1.37>)

18

But I pass over the fact of its having been a banquet of the Roman people, the day of festival, adorned with the exhibition of silver plate, and robes, and all sorts of furniture and ornaments; I ask who ever in a time of domestic mourning, who ever at a funeral of one of his own family, sat down to supper in a black robe? Who ever, except you, as he was leaving a bath, had a black gown given to him? When so many thousand men were sitting at the feast, when the master of the feast himself, Quintus Arrius, was in a white robe, you introduced yourself into the temple of Castor, with Caius Fidulus and the rest of your Furies, in black

garments, like the assistants at a funeral. Who was there who did not then receive you with groans? Who was there who did not lament over the fate of the republic? What other topic of conversation was there at that banquet except this, that this city, so great and so wise, was now exposed not only to your frenzy, but also to your derision? [32] Were you ignorant of the usual practice on such occasions? Had you never seen a feast of the sort? Had you never, when a boy or young man, been among the cooks? Had you not a short time before satisfied your ancient voracity at that most magnificent banquet of Faustus, a noble young man? And when did you ever see the master of a feast and his friends in mourning, and in black robes, while sitting at a feast? What insanity took possession of you, that you should think, that, unless you did what it was impious to do, unless you insulted the temple of Castor, and the name of a feast, and the eyes of a citizen, and ancient custom, and the authority of the man who had invited you, you had not given sufficient proof that you did not think that a properly decreed and formal supplication?

(Yonge (1891). On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Cic.+Vat.+31>)

Other examples in the Ancient Near East are documented in Amos 6:1-7, Isa 65:4 and Jer 16:1-9 (Kennedy 1987, 228; Neyrey 1996a).

19 The text is found in Diogenes Laertius X.X :

Out of the income which is derived from that property, which is here bequeathed by me to Amynomachus and Timocrates, I will that they, consulting with Hermarchus, shall arrange in the best manner possible the offerings to the names in honor of the memory of my father, and mother, and brothers, and myself, and that my birthday may be kept as it has been in the habit of being kept, on the tenth day of the month Gamelion; and that the reunion of all the philosophers of our school, established in honor of Metrodorus and myself, may take place on the twentieth day of every month. They shall also celebrate, as I have been in the habit of doing myself, the day consecrated to my brothers, in the month Poseideon; and the day consecrated to memory of Polyænus, in the month Metageitnion.

(Trans. Yonge (1853). On-line at <http://www.epicurus.info/etexts/Lives.html>)

Smith suggests that a memorial banquet is intended, but this is not clear from the text (2003, 58). Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 35. 2 makes references to a sacrificial practice:

And yet the very same persons adorn the palæstra and the anointing-room with portraits of athletes, and both hang up in their chamber and carry about them a likeness of Epicurus. On the twentieth day of each moon they celebrate his birthday by a sacrifice, and keep his festival. known as the "Icas," every month: and these too, people who wish to live without being known! So it is, most assuredly, our indolence has lost sight of the arts, and since our minds are destitute of any characteristic features, those of our bodies are neglected also.

[On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Plin.+Nat.+35.2>]

Cicero, *de Finibus*, 2:30 (101) refers to a meal:

However in spite of this I understood the meaning intended. What I want to know is this: if all sensation is annihilated by dissolution, that is, by death, and if nothing whatever that can affect us remains, why is it that he makes such precise and careful provision and stipulation that his heirs, Amynochus and Timocrates, shall after consultation with Hermarchus assign a sufficient sum to celebrate his birthday every year in the month of gamelion, and also on the twentieth day of every month shall assign a sum for a banquet to his fellow-students in philosophy, in order to keep alive the memory of himself and Metrodorus

(Rackham 1921, 193)

20 The conflation of a number of these deities is noted in Ch.4, p. 154, ¶ 4.3.4.1.

21 On-line at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11388a.htm>

22 A tea containing pennyroyal may have been drunk at the Thesmophoria;

A long time she sat upon the stool without speaking because of her sorrow, and greeted no one by word or by sign, but rested, never smiling, and tasting neither food nor drinks because she pined with longing for her deep-bosomed daughter, until careful lambe -- who pleased her moods in aftertime also -- moved the holy lady with many a quip and jest to smile and laugh and cheer her heart. Then Metaneira filled a cup with sweet wine and offered it to her; but she refused it, for she said it was not lawful for her to drink red wine, but bade them mix meal and water with soft mint and give her to drink. And Metaneira mixed the draught and gave it to the goddess as she bade. So the great queen Deo received it to observe the sacrament.

(*Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 2:198 – 211. Trans. in Evelyn-Whyte:1914. On-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=HH+2+184>)

See also:

We remember from the Homeric Hymn how Demeter refused wine but broke her fast by drinking the *kykeon* made of barley meal, water, and tender mint; thus she observed the sacrament. So, too, the initiates after a fast of perhaps several days drank the same potent sacrament as the final preparation for the mystic initiation. Kerenyi on the significance of the *kykeon* cites the opinion of a pharmacologist: "It is well known that visionary states can be induced by hunger alone.... The content of the visions, as experiments on visionary states induced by chemicals, that is, drugs, have shown, is largely or perhaps entirely determined by expectations,

spiritual preparation, initial psychic situation, and by the surroundings." —Kerenyi *Eleusis* p. 179

The third ingredient after roasted barley and water was the *glekon* or *blekon*, *Mentha pulegium*. This is a variety of pennyroyal, and the principal ingredient is poley oil —*Oleum pulegii*, prepared as an aromatic in southern Europe by distilling the wild. In large doses it may induce delirium, loss of consciousness, and spasms. The word *blekon* implies a carminative or antispasmodic that may have been a narcotic. Pindar uses the word in relation to the rivers of the underworld:

the slow rivers of dark night,

and to:

the sluggish gift of sleep

Once the Epheians were in rebellion and asked the philosopher Heraclitus for advice. He said not a word, took a cup of cold water, sprinkled barley into it, stirred it with a branch of *Mentha pulegium*, and drank it down. —Kerenyi *Eleusis* p. 179-180

According to Dr. Hofmann, "The volatile oils contained in poley oil —*Oleum pulegii* might very well, added to the alcoholic content of the *kykeon*, have produced hallucinations in persons whose sensibility was heightened by fasting." —Kerenyi *Eleusis* p. 180 With this heightened awareness, the initiates were ready for the spiritual visions which would briefly lift the veil from death and show them a spiritual reality into which they would be born after death.

(Beck (2003). On-line at <http://www.san.beck.org/Eleusis-3.htm>)

23 Whilst Attis and Adonis appear originally separate, perhaps from different regions, the cults came to be conflated.

Thus,

Another of those gods whose supposed death and resurrection struck such deep roots into the faith and ritual of Western Asia is Attis. He was to Phrygia what Adonis was to Syria. Like Adonis, he appears to have been a god of vegetation, and his death and resurrection were annually mourned and rejoiced over at a festival in spring. The legends and rites of the two gods were so much alike that the ancients themselves sometimes identified them. Attis was said to have been a fair young shepherd or herdsman beloved by Cybele, the Mother of the Gods, a great Asiatic goddess of fertility, who had her chief home in Phrygia. Some held that Attis was her son. His birth, like that of many other heroes, is said to have been miraculous. His mother, Nana, was a virgin, who conceived by putting a ripe almond or a pomegranate in her bosom. Indeed in the Phrygian cosmogony an almond figured as the father of all things, perhaps because its delicate lilac blossom is one of the first heralds of the spring, appearing on the bare boughs before the leaves have opened. Such tales of virgin mothers are relics of an age of childish ignorance when men had not yet recognized the intercourse of the sexes as the true cause of offspring. Two different accounts of the death of Attis were current. According to the one he was killed by a boar, like Adonis.

(Frazer 1998, 346)

24 Note Templeton's astringent summary of modern analysis:

24.1 It is Paul's view that one man's god is another man's devil, but that one man's meat is another man's meat. He allows his progressive views on butcher-meat to be blackmailed by the stick-in-the-muds.

24.11 'As Zimmern has said, the usual Attic dinner consisted of two courses, the first a kind of porridge, and the second a kind of porridge', (Kitto, 1951, p.33, cit. Barrett, 1964-5, p.145). With a little bit of luck the question of 'The Sunday Joint of the Christian Housewife' (Ehrhardt, 1964, p. 276ff.) would never have arisen.

24.12 But it did. Not only might one find oneself dining with the french-Beytaghs, to keep up with the Smiths, but supping at the sofa of Sarapis (Deissmann, 1927, p.351, fn.2, cit. Barrett, *ibid.*, p.146). And meat is not only meat if it is declared to be more than merely Smiths' meat.

(Templeton 1988, 89)

Cf. Barrett 1982, 48.

25 See McGowan for the use of wine as a common element in sacral meals (1999, 64). For this reason, its use might lead to concerns similar to those raised about meat from rituals.

26 Care may be needed to avoid anachronism. The references to Isis come from the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius which dates from the 2nd century CE.

27 Much has been made of whether the debate about the "strong" and the "weak" (Fotopoulos 2003, 1-4). Scholars have argued whether this is a real or hypothetical debate within the Corinthian situation. Fotopolous' observation that the division is real seems eminently sensible. As he points out, Paul would have no reason to import a hypothetical factional dispute into a situation which was already riven by so many other controversies (10).

Let us now see on what grounds Celsus urges us to make use of the idol offerings and the public sacrifices in the public feasts. His words are, "If these idols are nothing, what harm will there be in taking part in the feast? On the other hand, if they are demons, it is certain that they too are God's creatures, and that we must believe in them, sacrifice to them according to the laws, and pray to them that they may be propitious." In reference to this statement, it would be profitable for us to take up and clearly explain the whole passage of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which Paul treats of offerings to idols. The apostle draws from the fact that "an idol is nothing in the world," the consequence that it is injurious to use things offered to idols; and he shows to those who have ears to hear on such subjects, that he who partakes of things offered to idols is worse than a murderer, for he destroys his own brethren, for whom Christ died. And further, he maintains that the sacrifices are made to demons; and from that he proceeds to show that those who join the table of demons become associated with the demons; and he concludes that a man cannot both be a partaker of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. But since it would require a whole treatise to set forth fully all that is contained on this subject in the Epistle to the Corinthians, we shall content ourselves with this brief statement of the argument; for it will be evident to any one who carefully considers what has been said, that even if idols are nothing, nevertheless it is an awful thing to join in idol festivals. And even supposing that there are such beings as demons to whom the sacrifices are offered, it has been clearly shown that we are forbidden to take part in these festivals, when we know the difference between the table of the Lord and the table of demons. And knowing this, we endeavour as much as we can to be always partakers of the Lord's table, and beware to the utmost of joining at any time the table of demons.

(Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 8.24.)

A second passage implies meals for the dead inasmuch as heroes, demons and gods are all identified as objects of worship:

And we would put to Celsus this question in regard to those who are honoured as gods, as demons, or as heroes: "Now, sir, can you prove that the right to be honoured has been given to these by God, and that it has not arisen from the ignorance and folly of men who in their wanderings have fallen away from Him to whom alone worship and service are properly due? You said a little ago, O Celsus, that Antinous, the favourite of Adrian, is honoured; but surely you will not say that the right to be worshipped as a god was given to him by the God of the universe? And so of the others, we ask proof that the right to be worshipped was given to them by the Most High God." But if the same question is put to us in regard to the worship of Jesus, we will show that the right to be honoured was given to Him by God, "that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.

(Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 8:9. Both on-line at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-04/anf04-63.htm#P11336_3087128)

Compare:

We have, I think, faithfully carried out our plan of showing in how many different ways the sin of idolatry clings to the shows, in respect of their origins, their titles, their equipments, their places of celebration, their arts; and we may hold it as a thing beyond all doubt, that for us who have twice renounced all idols, they are utterly unsuitable. "Not that an idol is anything,"¹ as the apostle says, but that the homage they render is to demons, who are the real occupants of these consecrated images, whether of dead men or (as they think) of gods. On this account, therefore, because they have a common source for their dead and their deities are one—we abstain from both idolatries. Nor do we dislike the temples less than the monuments: we have nothing to do with either altar, we adore neither image; we do not offer sacrifices to the gods, and we make no funeral oblations to the departed; nay, we do not partake of what is offered either in the one case or the other, for we cannot partake of God's feast and the feast of devils. If, then, we keep throat and belly free from such defilements, how much more do we withhold our nobler parts, our ears and eyes, from the idolatrous and funereal enjoyments, which are not passed through the body, but are digested in the very spirit and soul, whose purity, much more than that of our bodily organs, God has a right to claim from us.

(Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, 13. On-line at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-03/anf03-09.htm#P890_350630)

29

With regard to the rite of sepulture, it is so sacred a thing that all confess it should be discharged in consecrated ground, and if possible in the country where the family of the deceased resides. Thus, in ancient times, Toquatius adjudicated respecting the Popilian family. And certainly the Denicale feasts, so called from the Latin words *de nece* (implying deliverance from death) would not have been appointed as holidays in honour of the dead, as well as other celestials, unless our ancestors who have departed this life, were believed to have past into the great assembly of divinified minds. The order of solemnizing these days, which is different from that of other public festivals, declares the ecclesiastical character of this institution, and its great sanctity and importance.

It is necessary for us at present to explain the proceedings of families in funeral ceremonies, what kind of sacrifice should be offered to the lares, or guardian genii, from the rams of the flock—how the bone which remains unconsumed must be covered with earth—how in some cases it is necessary to sacrifice a sow, when the sepulchre is to be considered as consecrated, and such minute details.

(Barham 1842, 120)

30 Thus Sir :15-6; 12:29-34; 13:8-13; 19: 1-3; 29:21-3; 31:12-8, 23-4, 25-30; 32:1-2, 11; 37:27-31; 41:19. See also Smith 2003, 133-9.

31

What is the order of the meal? The guests enter [the house] and sit on benches, and on chairs until all have entered. They all enter and they [servants] mix for them the cup; each one says the benediction for himself. They [servants] bring them the appetizers; each one says the benediction for himself. They [guests] go up [to the dining room] and they recline, and they [servants] give them [water] for their hands; although they have [already] washed one hand, they [now] wash both hands. They [servants] mix for them the cup; although they have said a benediction over the first [cup] they say a benediction [also] over the second. They [servants] bring them the dessert; although they said a benediction over the first one, they [now] say benediction over the second, and one says the benediction for all of them. He who comes after the third course has no right to enter.

t. Ber. 4,8,98, originally in Bahr 1977, 474, quoted in Smith 2003, 145; 333 fn.38

32 Note that earlier traditions appear to have included pilgrimages to destinations other than Jerusalem (Prosic 1999, 81)

33 Neusner's analysis has been challenged by E.P. Sanders (1985, 128; 181;177-88). This challenge is vigorously contested by Neusner himself (Neusner & Chilton 1995, 12-17; 48-53) and Dunn (1992, 257-60).

34 Gese has put an alternative view of *tôdâ* forward. In this the words of *Ps.* 22:22 suggest Jesus is offering a *tôdâ* as a communal sacrifice. The theory also implies that the meal is not founded by Jesus (Theissen & Merz 1998, 413).

35 Thus Philo, *Prob.*, 86:

They all have a single treasury and common disbursements; their clothes are held in common and also their food through their institution of public meals. In no other community can we find the custom of sharing roof, life and board more firmly established in actual practice

(LCL, quoted in Dunn 1992, 261)

Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 5.73:

On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of range of the noxious exhalations of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes, which is remarkable beyond all the other tribes in the whole world, as it has no women and has renounced all sexual desire, has no money, and has only palm-trees for company.... Lying below [*infra*] the Essenes was formerly the town of Engedi....Next comes Masada.

(translation from Grabbe 2000, 200)

36 Mason, for one, is highly critical of the identification of the Essenes with either the Qumran community or the producers of the scrolls:

I do not understand why the group or groups behind the DSS impress so many scholars as eligible for Essene identification. Read by themselves, the sectarian Scrolls from Qumran produce a fairly vivid picture of what William James would call a world-denying group, practising the religion of the "sick soul" or the "twice-born." Any survey of their central convictions--Vermes (1995), VanderKam (1994), Garcia-Martinez (1996), Flusser (1989)--turns up more or less the same points. They embrace rather sharp cosmic, anthropological, and temporal dualisms. They are a small, righteous remnant who consider themselves in opposition to a main stream--the wicked and the "seekers after smooth things" among others--presumably including such a comfortable Temple aristocrat as Josephus. Apocalyptically minded, if any group ever was, they eagerly anticipate the end of the present order, which is dominated by the wicked powers in Judea and abroad, in a decisive cosmic battle. Schooled in the ordinances of their Righteous Teacher, they now await the two anointed leaders (or "messiahs") who will lead the vindication of their cause. They interpret scripture characteristically with *pesharim*, to speak of themselves as the end-time community.

It is hard to imagine a less likely group for identification with Josephus's Essenes, even if these also have long initiations, eat meals together and share things, bathe daily, require that one does not spit at the group, and that sort of thing. It is hard to imagine, that is, how such a group as the one reflected in the DSS could have commended itself first to Philo and then to Josephus as the best illustrations of their own world-affirming, once-born, Rome-friendly, moral-philosophical, and anti-apocalyptic presentations.

Without really explaining Josephus's Essenes in context, scholars who hold to the Qumran-Essene hypothesis commonly assert either (a) that Josephus plagiarized *War* 2.119-61 without understanding or bothering to correct it, or (b) that he did the opposite: he bent the story entirely out of shape, suppressing the uncomfortable parts, to serve his (never articulated!) "agenda." But (a) is impossible, and not in the rhetorical sense of that word (i.e., "I disagree with it"), but in the same sense that it is plainly contrary to observable facts. And (b) simply exacerbates the problem. For if Josephus had to undertake such radical surgery that he effectively re-created the Qumraners as something else entirely, why did he bother using them in the first place? Why did they stand out in his mind as the most compelling examples of his and his Roman readers' virtues? These are not convincing explanations of Josephus's Essenes, to say the least, and so any hypothesis that uses such arguments is implausible from the starting gate. Better arguments will need to be found.

5. What about Pliny's famous notice concerning a solitary tribe of Essenes near the Dead Sea? Since this is often cited as if it were decisive proof of the Qumran-Essene hypothesis (Cross: 70; Albright and Mann: 11-13), I should like to insist that it cannot logically be used that way. We need to think clearly about this. First, Pliny does not necessarily know what he is talking about concerning Judean geography. The Judean section of his *Natural History* is a farrago of outright errors and half-truths. But even if for some reason we gave him the benefit of the doubt in the Essene case, we still would not know what he *meant*.

This is the essential point: No one could have identified Qumran on the basis of Pliny's notice alone (cf. Goodman 1995: 105). He does not mention Qumran, and there are plenty of reasons to imagine that he describes a different part of the desert. Before the DSS were discovered, scholars thought that he was describing a place in the vicinity of 'En Gedi (Bauer 1924: 390). Therefore, the identification of Qumran as Pliny's referent *depends upon the Qumran-Essene hypothesis*. Granted, if the Qumran-Essene identification were decisively established on other grounds, one could conceivably bend Pliny to accommodate it, with generous allowance for misleading assertions: "a unique tribe," "palm trees," "away from the coast," "En Gedi lies 'below them,'" "without women," "thousands of centuries," replenished by world-weary throngs, and a remarkably fertile Jerusalem. But his description is obviously not *independent* evidence for the Qumran-Essene hypothesis. Since Pliny's description can only be linked with Qumran as a consequence of the Qumran-Essene hypothesis, to summon it also as a (or the) *basis* for the theory is to make a fully circular argument.

(Mason:00-2.shtml, final page)

37 Josephus describes Essenes as having two orders: one celibate, and male-only (*J.W.* 2.119):

These Essens (sic) reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be virtue. They neglect wedlock, but choose out other persons children, while they are pliable, and fit for learning, and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners. They do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage, and the succession of mankind thereby continued; but they guard against the lascivious behavior of women, and are persuaded that none of them preserve their fidelity to one man. These Essens (sic) reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be virtue. They neglect wedlock, but choose out other persons children, while they are pliable, and fit for learning, and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners. They do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage, and the succession of mankind thereby continued; but they guard against the lascivious behavior of women, and are persuaded that none of them preserve their fidelity to one man.

The other allows marriage (*J.W.* 2.160):

Moreover, there is another order of Essens (sic), who agree with the rest as to their way of living, and customs, and laws, but differ from them in the point of marriage, as thinking that by not marrying they cut off the principal part of human life, which is the prospect of succession; nay, rather, that if all men should be of the same opinion, the whole race of mankind would fail. However, they try their spouses for three years; and if they find that they have their natural purgations thrice, as trials that they are likely to be fruitful, they then actually marry them. But they do not use to accompany with their wives when they are with child, as a demonstration that they do not marry out of regard to pleasure, but for the sake of posterity. Now the women go into the baths with some of their garments on, as the men do with somewhat girded about them. And these are the customs of this order of Essens (sic).

Josephus' account does not support the idea of an isolated community, but describes the Essenes as "dwelling in every city" (*J.W.* 2.124):

They have no one certain city, but many of them dwell in every city; and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go in to such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them.

(All on-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=J.+BJ+2.117>)

38 Language like "anticipates" or "fulfils" complicates the issue. "Anticipates" suggests a qualitative difference between the two events: this distinction was already blurred by the identification of the community with the age to come (see further, Ch.5, p. 185-6, ¶ 5.2.9.). "Fulfilment" is also unsatisfactory, for the fulfilment can only be partial at best. In such an instance, "partial fulfilment" seems paradoxical. The most helpful way of describing the relationship seems to be that of Vermes. His "prefigures" neatly differentiates symbol and reality whilst suggesting an intrinsic unity.

39 Chesnutt details the differences between *Jos.Asen.* and the two communities (1995, 186-9:1995, 186-98). Brooke notes that motifs from one may nonetheless assist the interpretation of the other (2005, 160).

40 Moule suggests that the work should really be treated as a later text, and, thus, of no value in the discussion of the eucharist in the early church (1961, 23). Metzger notes, as do others, that *Jos.Asen.* may be a Christian document (1968, 16, fn.2). Even so, he claims it still provides evidence of a Jewish sensibility. Brooke, Collins and Portier Young (all 2005), replying to Kraemer's preference for a later Christian origin, maintain a Jewish provenance from this period. The earlier date which is proposed by Burchard (1987b, 104-5), and re-iterated in Burchard (2005), admits textual difficulties, which will be noted as appropriate.

41 Translation on-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book34.html>. Engberg-Pedersen (1999) contends that this

account is essentially fictional, whereas Beavis (2004) in reply suggests rather an idealized account which contains factual details.

42 For a detailed analysis of the role of women in the *Therapeutai*, see Taylor (2001). Josephus, *J.W.* 2.160 suggests women members of the second type of Essene groups might take part in lustral rites, but does not specify their participation in communal meals (see above, fn.37).

43 Chilton himself proposes that the beliefs of the Jacobean party anticipate the Quartodeciman dispute. To that extent he extrapolates the group's identity from a proposed identification with a later controversy.

44 Young (2003) argues that the New Testament examples (1 Cor 16:2, Acts 20:7 and Rev. 1:10) do not show conclusively that Sunday was the day for regular meetings. This interpretation has been inferred because of later practices.

45 See further discussion of the inter-relation between Acts and the *Did.* in fn. 48.

46 For a eucharistic interpretation of this passage, see Wainwright (2003, 162-3).

47 A similar movement is seen elsewhere in Acts. Consider Jesus' healing ministry (e.g., Acts 3:1-10) and, perhaps more controversially, his baptismal ministry (e.g., Acts 8:26-40). In the case of Baptism, such a movement rests on the implication that Jesus himself baptized. This is sometimes questioned on the grounds of John 4:2. This verse appears to be contradicted by John 1:28. The apparent contradiction may have a grammatical origin:

The statement in John 4:2 that Jesus himself did not baptise but his disciples did probably means what the Syriac Sinaiticus makes it mean: Jesus himself was not the only one who baptised but his disciples did also. The statement seems to be a blunt negative (not this but that), but we know the common idiom found in the Old Testament and other Jewish writings by which this expression conveys the idea: not only this but that. The Syriac translator was familiar with the idiom and translated accordingly.

(O'Neill 1992, 1)

48 Maccoby's final contention, that this is not a Pauline eucharist, even though it is titled εὐχαριστία, depends on acceptance of the meals in Acts as a kind of *Qiddush*. This, in turn, depends on identifying them with the meal of *Did.* 9-10, and arguing that 9-10 and 14 are separate descriptions of meals. 14, in this scheme, would be a later interpolation. The key question is whether the very basic descriptions of "breaking of bread" in Acts can even be matched with those of the *Did.*

There is a problem with an easy identification. If Acts 2:46 is taken as referring to a "bread-only" meal, corresponding to the customary Jewish midweek, non-festal, "breaking of bread", it is at odds with the *Didache* 9:1-2 (the blessing of a cup) and "But let none eat or drink of your Eucharist" (9.5) [italics mine]. Why would a reference to a "bread-only" ceremony include a reference to drinking? Further, the difference cannot be readily dispensed of as a later accretion as happens sometimes in the case of *Did.* 14. It would seem that the *Did.* records an early tradition of eating **and** drinking in the meal. At best, one might concede that *Did.* offered insights into **some**, but not all, of the instances of "breaking of bread" in Acts. In any case, cracks appear in the construction of theories based on the identification of Acts, *Qiddush* and *Did.*

49 For the purposes of this thesis, the question of whether 9-10 and 14 refer to one tradition can be put aside. Our search is not restricted to "eucharistic" meals, but parallels between any meal traditions and the Supper narratives.

50 McGowan suggests that the texts in the gospels perform a catechetical rather than a liturgical function (1999b, 74). They might thus illuminate the liturgical actions outlined in *Did.*

Goguel adopts a completely different approach, arguing that the Hellenistic Mystery religions may have influenced the shape of *Did.* 14 (1957, 381-2). Thus the reason for its theology being so different is because it influenced by Greek mysticism rather than theologies akin to Paul. His argument builds not only on the account of 9-10, but also on the terms used to describe Christ in Ch. 11. He is the παῖς θεοῦ (child of God) who reveals life, knowledge, faith and immortality. Thomas (*The Didache*, 2) on the other hand, argues that παῖς theology echoes Acts:

The prayers and thanksgiving are full of archaic terminology, echoing not only the servant (*pais*) theology of the early speeches of Acts (*Did.* 9:2f; 10:2f; Acts 3:13,26; 4:27,30) which Robinson calls "the earliest Christian liturgical sequence (*Did.* 10:6; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:22-24)"

See further in Betz (1996, 245; 254) and Robinson (1976, 325). This alternative, which places such key terminology in the earliest strata of the development of the Christian faith, would diminish the chances of influence by mystery traditions as suggested by Goguel. At least, it shows that an alternative source is possible.

51 Such symbolism is further explored in Ch. 4, pp.171-2, ¶ 4.4.5-6.