CHAPTER 6

Actions, Gestures and the Supper Narratives

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the gestures performed by Jesus are examined closely to see if resemblances to other meal traditions, symbolism and concepts can be identified. As noted before, the division of the Supper material into actions and sayings is artificial, but is adopted to make the material under consideration more manageable (Ch.1, pp. 24, ¶ 1.4.2.). Our final conclusions (Ch.9) will necessarily bring together material considered separately in this chapter and the two that follow.

The first three sections (¶ 6.2.- ¶ 6.4.) of this chapter may appear odd, as they do not themselves refer to gestures or actions. Nonetheless, they are significant items in search for inculturation within the Supper Narratives. It also makes sense to consider them in the context of actions or gestures concerned with the performance of the meal.

¶ 6.2. is concerned with the transmission of traditions about Jesus. It is important to set the practice of transmission in its proper context, given that this will reveal the degree of latitude which a writer might have in recording historical details, and incorporating interpretation or reflection upon such events. If then-current modes of transmission allowed only the recording of received historical data, opportunities for inculturation would be limited or, in the extreme, impossible. For inculturation to be possible, there must be room for interpretation beyond the mere recording of events.

The second major section of this chapter (¶ 6.3.) again focusses on a topic which cannot be readily classified as action or gesture, namely, the date of the last meal eaten by Jesus with his disciples. Again, this relates to the parameters of inculturation. If it can be proven that the meal was an historical Passover meal, the implications for this thesis will be markedly different from a scenario in which Passover details can be considered to be interpretive

preferences, chosen by the transmitters of the Jesus tradition, rather than historically accurate.

¶ 6.4. performs a similar function, but with regard to location rather than timing. Here the focal issue is whether or not the location of the meal suggests analogies or affinities with Essene traditions.

¶ 6.5. examines whether or not the fact that Jesus and the disciples reclined to eat yields any reference to a specific tradition: this focusses on claims made by Jeremias and others that “lying down” to eat indicates the Passover *Seder*.

¶ 6.6. and ¶ 6.7. explore the significance of actions related to the bread and wine respectively. They include analysis of the significance of these two elements. Here, attention turns to whether the choice of elements and whether actions and gestures performed around them are signify particular traditions or concepts.

6.2. “ This Tradition…”

[*1 Cor* 11:23]

1 Cor 11:23 brings us straight to the problems of the traditions and texts under examination. *1 Cor* is held to be one of the earliest written accounts of the eucharist, yet it comes from an author who does not appear to have known Jesus during his earthly life. Two questions immediately arise:

- How could Paul receive “from the Lord”?
- Were other mediators of these traditions involved?

The second of these questions may be subsumed in the first. It is unlikely that Paul meant he received this teaching directly from the historical Jesus. The historical evidence is against this. Paul was not part of the community around Jesus, rather he was in opposition to it (Acts 7:58-8:1, 9:1). More precisely, he was not amongst those present at the Last Supper. Direct communication with the earthly Jesus does not seem to be an option. What, then, remains

possible? Paul might have received a direct revelation from the Risen Jesus. This would fit with the accounts given of Paul's Damascus experience (Acts 9:4, cf. 22:6 and 26:14). The other alternative is that Paul has received from the Lord through intermediaries of some kind, that is, other Christians and their traditions. In 1 Cor 11, Paul uses the phrases παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου and παρέδωκα to describe the process. Such Christian usages do not occur in a vacuum. It may be that other scenarios illuminate what was going on.

6.2.1. Terminology

Παραδίδωμι and its cognate, παράδοσις, are used in connection with tradition and its transmission in both Judaism and Graeco-Roman philosophy and religion. They correspond to the Hebrew מסר (Büchsel 1964, 171). In Greek philosophy, they were used of teaching tradition (Plato, *Philebus*, 16c)[1]. It also is used in connection with the Mystery cults (Diodorus Siculus V.48.4: (μυστηρίων τελετὴ παραδοθεῖσα)[2].

Παραλαμβάνω appears only in the Pauline writings in the New Testament. It is used of receiving Christian tradition in a fixed form (1 Cor 11:23; 15:1,3; Conzelmann 1975, 196; 251) or inherited Christian laws of morality (1 Thess 4:1; Morris 1991, 114, fn. 4). A third occurrence (Gal 1:12) uses such terms of receiving the Gospel, that is, material which may have doctrinal, soteriological or practical import (Burton 1977, 422-3). Like παραδίδωμι, it appears in Jewish, Greek philosophical and Greek religious traditions. Its equivalent Hebrew technical term (קבל) traces the chain of tradition back to Moses or God (Delling 1967, 13).

6.2.2. Transmission of Tradition in Graeco-Roman "Schools"

These Greek terms defined the often authoritarian relationship between pupil and teacher. This sense altered in the Hellenistic period, but remained personal, that is, based on the teacher-pupil relationship. It was also used in the mystery religions (Delling 1967, 12; Henderson 2002, 200)[3]. In Judaism,

on the other hand, it is the material transmitted which binds pupil and teacher together rather than personal confidence. Tradition focuses on religious material. As this material is held to be infallible, it also explains the strong authoritarian dimension (Delling 1967, 13).

6.2.3. Transmission in the Mystery Religions

Is it possible to connect the patterns of tradition in *1 Cor*more specifically to any one of Graeco-Roman philosophy, Judaism or the Mysteries? Scholarly debate has put Graeco-Roman philosophy to one side, arguing that common features are coincidental (Delling 1967, 12) and focussed on the competing claims made for Judaism and the Mysteries. Schweitzer denied a connection with the Mystery Religions on the grounds that Paul "did not live in a world of Hellenistic conceptions" (Schweitzer 1998, 266)[4]. Given the complexity of cultural interplay between Judaism and Graeco-Roman culture (above, Ch.1, pp. 8- 11, ¶ 1.3.2.), such a sweeping conclusion is no longer adequate. The TDNT writers bring stronger arguments against the identification with the Pauline tradition and the Mysteries. Of παραδίδωμι in the Mysteries, Büchsel notes:

> We have only partial knowledge of the use of παράδοσις and παραδοῦναι in the Mysteries. It can be shown that τελετή and μυστήριον (and therefore things of a sacramental nature) were objects of παράδοσις and παραδοῦναι (cf. Ranft, 181-5). Teaching occurs less frequently, cf., Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 290 f.
>
> (1964, 173, fn.7)

Thus, partial knowledge and uncertainty weaken the proposed connection. The second point, that Mystery tradition focuses on sacramentals rather than teaching, depends on whether or not the critic considers that this item is classified as "teaching" or "sacrament". Paul does not, however, describe the meal of 1 Cor 11 as either τελετή or μυστήριον.

Παραλαμβάνω does not appear to be used in the sense of the Mysteries either. Again there is a difference in the object of transmission. Thus, Delling:

> In the Mysteries the ref. is to a strict secret, whereas the Christian μυστήριον is the Gospel (Eph 6:19) which is to be declared to the whole world. Again

> the legacy which the Mysteries hand on is a fixed esoteric doctrine, whereas in Christianity it is above all things a living faith.
>
> (1967, 12)

The Christian μυστήριον is a puzzling religious truth rather than a secret. Paul is speaking publicly about it when he calls it a μυστήριον. This is not the way in which Mystery Religions operated: secrecy was paramount (Burkert 1983, 251-3; 2000, 276). Further we can note that the Pauline writings do not combine the terms παραλαμβάνω and μυστήριον where Mystery language might naturally do this (1 Cor 15:51; Eph 1:9; 3:3; 6:19; Col 4:3; cf. Delling, 1967, 12)[5]. The lack of evidence here suggests that a Judaic understanding of tradition may underpin the process described by Paul. Further, theories which would locate tradition within a purely Graeco-Roman milieu would be unlikely sources for authoritative doctrine (Gerhardsson 1998a, 321).

6.2.4. Transmission and Paul

The case for a Judaic origin centres on the correspondence of παραδίδωμι with מסר, and παραλαμβάνω with קבל. Given the overlaps, and Paul's own scholastic background (Murphy-O'Connor 1997, 52-62), there would appear to be a strong case for such an understanding of tradition. But does this Judaic understanding shed any light on the means of transmission?

6.2.4.1. Direct and Remote Transmission

Two alternatives have been suggested: a direct revelation, or a received chain of tradition. Maccoby (1991) has revived the case for Paul's presenting the account of the Supper as a direct revelation. The starting point for the argument is παραλαμβάνω, which can be used in either a "direct" or "remote" sense. The Hebrew קבל gives little help. It can be used of either sense (Jeremias 1987, 101; but cf. Maccoby 1991, 248 for the direct sense).

Jeremias (1987, 101; 202-3) argues that παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου means Paul received a tradition which originated with Jesus. In support of this, he notes that either of two prepositions might be used with παρέλαβον: ἀπό (indicating the source of the tradition) or παρά (those who transmit the tradition (Gal 1.12[6]; 1 Thess 2:13, 4:1; 2 Thess 3:6). Maccoby (1991, 247)

does not accept this distinction, suggesting that Matt 11:29 and Col 1:7 both use ἀπό in the sense of direct transmission. The evidence appears inconclusive. Jeremias cannot make a watertight case for ἀπό used only of the source (within remote transmission), but neither can Maccoby prove conclusively that it demands *direct* transmission[7].

Is there any other evidence in favour of either the option of a direct revelation from Jesus or a human mediated tradition? Maccoby claims that Jesus could not have started a tradition:

> …it makes little sense to speak of Jesus as originating a tradition about what happened at the Last Supper. The only people who could initiate such a tradition were those who were witnesses of Jesus' actions and words at the Last Supper.[8]
>
> (1991, 248)

The tradition needed to pass through intermediary stages. Maccoby's objection seems ultimately to be that Paul could not receive the tradition directly from the earthly Jesus. Thus he adopts the parallel that, as Moses received the tradition from God, so Paul must receive the tradition directly from the "heavenly Jesus". Proponents of the view that Paul received the revelation directly from the Risen Jesus must, however, deal with two distinct arguments. The first is that it is overly psychological. Thus, Conzelmann (1975, 196, fn.35) is critical of Leitzmann's support for direct transmission, saying that it depends on excessive psychologising. The second centres on the agreements between the Pauline and Synoptic accounts:

> Did this logos on the institution of the Eucharist begin as a revelation to Paul, spread to the whole of early Christianity and then become transformed into history at such an early stage that it could even become an intrinsic part of the passion narrative? Or did the miracle happen, and Paul receive the same message, in practically the same words, as that which the rest of early Christianity passed on as tradition from the twelve?
>
> (Gerhardsson 1998a, 321)

However, why must any choice be made, given that the qualitative distinction of direct and remote transmission has already been removed, inasmuch as there is no appreciable technical difference between ἀπό and παρά (cf. Bruce 1986, 110; Lightfoot 1880b, 80)? If these prepositions do not make an

appreciable difference there is also room to consider the absolute use of the verb without either. The important point is that the tradition is claimed to originate with the Lord.

6.2.4.2. Transmission in *1 Corinthians*

The evidence of 1 Cor 15:1-11 would appear important. For in these verses (v.1- παρελάβετε; v.3 -παρέδωκα, παρέλαβον), the terms are used to describe the transmission of a tradition that includes both human beings (vv. 5-9) and Scripture (v.4) as witnesses. Paul cites himself as a witness (v.8). It is worth noting that Paul does not elevate his own encounter above the other witnesses. Rather, he states his own unworthiness to see such an appearance. Our reading of this passage suggests that, for Paul, a direct vision to himself is not superior to the traditions received from others. 1 Cor 15 includes both remote and direct transmission of tradition. The fact that Paul does not describe his own vision as something which he has received (παραλαμβάν-), but seen (ὤφθη- v.8) may tilt the balance in favour of the remote sense. For here he uses παραδίδωμι and παραλαμβάνω only in connection with a remote transmission. At best, this passage would appear to allow for both understandings, and treat both as equally valuable.

6.2.4.3. Paul, Direct Transmission and ᾽Αποκάλυψις

The use of language other than παραδίδωμι and παραλαμβάνω for direct transmission is found elsewhere. Other accounts of direct transmission that refer to Paul are found in *Acts*, in the three accounts of Paul's experience on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-19, 22:4-16, 26:9-18). None of these versions of the stories describes the incident using παραδίδωμι or παραλαμβάνω.

Neither does Paul's own account of his vision 1:12 in Gal 1:15-16. This account differs from the Corinthian material: Paul is using the language of ἀποκάλυψις in contrast to the language of transmission (Gal), to make a claim for the superiority of his own position (Burton 1977, 42).

Another example of direct transmission may be found in 2 Cor 12:1-8. This describes a heavenly vision, which may or may not be autobiographical (Becker 1993, 83; 110; 205). Again παραδίδωμι and παραλαμβάνω are

missing: the language of ἀποκάλυψις is preferred. The biographical element is more important than any doctrinal or liturgical matter.

Likewise, Eph 3:1-16 does not include either παραδίδωμι or παραλαμβάνω: terms such as ἀποκάλυψις are preferred. Eph, with its description of the mystery of Christ, again, has a strong biographical and visionary flavour.

Here it is also important to make a distinction between content and method. Autobiographical material is easily seen in the content of the message. This passage may also add a cultural consideration to the discussion of remote or direct transmission. It shares features with Jewish apocalyptic traditions which recount heavenly journeys and visions (e.g., *1 En., 2 En.*, cf. Tronier 2001, 187-9). It is these "apocalyptic" and visionary traditions which seem to stress direct transmission. The different accounts found in Paul associate παραδίδωμι and παραλαμβάνω more with remote transmission, but vary in the value which they accord to such processes depending on context.

There is also a qualitative difference in the subject matter of accounts of remote and direct transmission. The direct accounts all contain a strong biographical element. None deals with the description of a liturgical event or practice. At no point does Paul use visions as the basis for cultic institutions (Büchsel 1964, 173, fn.11).

6.2.4.4. The Case for Remote Transmission in *1 Corinthians* 11

First, given the evidence of 1 Cor 15, it seems likely that remote transmission lies behind the account of 1 Cor 11. Affinities in subject matter and terminology support this: 1 Cor 11 is a liturgical, rather than a visionary experience. The use of παραδίδωμι and παραλαμβάνω is more commonly associated with remote transmission. Nonetheless, Christ is considered the original source of the genuinely valuable material that is passed on (cf. Col 2:8, cf. Bruce 1984, 98; Lightfoot 1880a, 181).

This understanding of remote transmission has strong affinities to Torah and its transmission which has God as its *fons et origo* (Gerhardsson 1998a, 294)[9]. Jesus is claimed as the source of this material, an understanding also conveyed by Paul's unwillingness to alter the material (McGowan 1999b, 78). Remote transmission of the Judaic type also explains the comparative lack of

interest in any stages of the than the original (i.e., the Lord) and the final, that is, Paul (Gerhardsson 1998a, 322). Care, too, must be taken in reflection about the intermediary stages of such transmission. It is tempting to see the sayings as refined into liturgical formulae. However, the fact that the Corinthians are exhorted (again) to consider such material suggests it was not part of their own liturgical formulations. It should not be assumed that these phrases were part of a liturgical recital (McGowan 1999b, 80;Thiselton 2000, 868).

This focus on origins does not, however, mean that interest is focussed solely on the recording of data. The very fact that we are studying four texts, containing a number of differences, suggests that there is more to transmission than simple copying. In many ways the processes at work resemble rabbinic practice, to the extent that transmission not only preserves material, but also has a creative dimension (Gerhardsson 1998b, 40). It would appear that Paul is using a Judaic understanding of tradition and transmission, which is authoritative, and claims its origin in the Lord. What Gerhardsson says of the transmission and formation of Gospel materials is likely to apply to the tradition received by Paul, given their formation in the common crucible of the early church. Within this pattern material was passed orally via repetition. This explains both variations in the exact wording due to the possibility of faulty memorisation and translation, and perhaps an origin in repetition (Gerhardsson 1998a, 334-5)[10]. This last item is true of Jesus' teaching, but not of the words spoken at the unique occurrence of the Last Supper.

Theories which would place transmission within Paul's personal spiritual experience or within a specifically Graeco-Roman context are neither able to explain how such teaching might become authoritative, either in terms of content or pedagogy, nor how the account given in 1 Cor is so similar to the Synoptic tradition.

To that extent, and without going into further detail, the variations in the accounts point to a process of transmission drawn from Judaic culture.

6.3. The Date of The Meal

[Mk 14:12 ; Matt 26:17-18 ; Luke 22:7-8.]

6.3.1. The Problem: The Variety of Dates in the Supper Narratives

Accounts of the Last Supper, with the exception of 1 Cor, all seem to fix the meal to particular points in the Jewish calendar. These are all connected to the Passover celebration, but there are variations in detail. Thus the Johannine account assumes a meal (John 13:2-3, cf. Brodie 1997, 448) but gives no details beyond the foot-washing. It places the (unspecified) meal in the run-up to the festival (John 13:1). Jesus will die on the day of Preparation at the time when the Passover lambs are slaughtered before the Passover meal proper (John 19:31). Elsewhere, the narrative which includes the sign of bread (John 6:1-15) and the Bread of Life Discourse (John 6:22-end), is connected to the Passover (John 6:4). Thus, the Johannine tradition, in its own way, connects the eucharistic teaching with the Passover (Brodie 1997, 260; 262). The Johannine dating of the meal, often viewed as suspect, should not be too readily dismissed as the result of doctrinal ideas: it still "commands respect" (Taylor1966, 666).

The Synoptics, on the other hand, appear to make a firm identification with the Passover meal: their apparent identification of the Supper with the *Seder* (Mk 14:12; Matt 26:17; Luke 22:8,) would clash with the Johannine chronology (Jeremias 1987, 16-20). These different timings prompt us to ask which, if any, is historically correct, or if there is some way in which these variant traditions can be synthesised, or if they represent different strategies in connecting Jesus' redemptive work to the passover (Nolland 1993,1025-6).

6.3.2. The Calendars of Second Temple Judaism

Some scholars have attempted to resolve the different timings of these accounts by suggesting the existence of a number of different calendars. Thus appeals have been made to calendars allegedly used by the Sadduccees or the Pharisees, or described according to their geographical

provenance: Judea or Galilee. All founder because their actual existence in first century Palestine cannot be proved (Fitzmyer 1985, 1379-80; Taylor 1966, 665).

Firmer evidence exists, however, for one alternative calendar. An overview of the texts and recent scholarship can be found in Vanderkam (1998, 52-90). The "official" calendar was lunar. Some Jews, notably those around the Qumran/Essene groupings, seemed to have used an older solar calendar which produced years of a regular 364 day duration (Schiffmann 1994, 304-5)[11]. Evidence for the calendar is gleaned from references in the Old Testament (e.g., *Lev.* 23:5) and Inter-Testamental writings such as *Jub.* and *1 En.*[12]. One of the firmest pieces of evidence for its existence is found in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls: 11QPs^{a}27:6-7. It is also found in 4Q252, a commentary on sections of the Noah story in Gen (Lim 1997, 136). Another of these writings, 1QpHab 11:4-8, records a conflict between those following the solar and lunar calendars. The Wicked Priest[13] travels to Qumran on the day of rest at the Day of Atonement. How could this happen? Ordinarily such a journey could not be made on this date. It seems that this official is travelling on the dates of the sectarians' solar calendar, not the official lunar calendar by which he would have been bound (Schiffmann 1994, 120; Vermes 1995, 53-4). Yet even the conclusion that the sectarians used a solar calendar must be tempered by the fact that a variety of calendars are found within the library (Schiffmann 1994, 305).

6.3.3. Jaubert: A Synthesis of Calendars

A. Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*, proposed a synthesis of the Synoptic and Johannine dates. The discrepancies in date arose because the traditions were based on two different calendars. Thus:

> Jesus actually celebrated the passover meal with his disciples on Tuesday evening (thereby observing the Essene calendar!) and was arrested during the night Tuesday/Wednesday. The synoptics assume this dating of the passover according to the solar calendar, whereas John follows the official lunar calendar in assuming that in that year the passover was celebrated in the evening immediately after Jesus' crucifixion. This gives us the following

> picture: 'Jesus celebrated the passover meal *on Tuesday evening*, *the time of the passover meal* according to the ancient sacerdotal calendar. Arrested in the night Tuesday/Wednesday, Jesus died on *Friday Nisan 14, the time of the passover meal* according to the *official* calendar.'
>
> (Jeremias 1987, 25, cf. Fitzmyer 1985, 1380-1)

Hence, Jaubert's theory suggests that the Essene calendar can be used to reconcile the differences. Riesner has argued that Jaubert's thesis holds up particularly if a longer passion chronology is envisioned, following a thesis suggested by Ruckstuhl (Riesner 1992, 218). There are several objections to this theory. Jeremias notes its dependency on the *Syria Didascalia*, whose chronology arises from a later, and therefore, anachronistic, tradition about fasting (1987, 25.; cf. Barrett 1978, 50-1)[14]. It also depends on a number of unfounded suppositions about the calendar which Jesus used. There is no evidence for Jesus' using the solar sectarian calendar (Brown 1988, 556; Fitzmyer 1985, 1381). In fact, there is no evidence that Jesus used a sectarian calendar which would separate him from "mainstream Jews" (Charlesworth 1992, 29).The last is an academic issue. Such harmonising of the two traditions:

> rides roughshod over the long-accepted analysis of so many of the passages involved according to form-critical methods that it cannot be taken seriously.
>
> (Fitzmyer 1985, 1380)

Such a criticism depends ultimately on the reliance placed on Form-Criticism which, however well accepted, need not be infallible. Even the best-accepted theories may be subject to review.

6.3.4. Witherington and an "Illegal" Passover

Witherington suggests a different strategy to solve the problem. Appeals to permitted practice cannot solve the problem of the meal's date. He, therefore, suggests that Jesus celebrated an illegal Passover. However, his theory is highly speculative and depends on building up a complex scenario in which a lamb is slaughtered elsewhere and brought to the Upper Room (Witherington 2001, 372). It is difficult to see how such a detailed picture can be constructed

on the sparse evidence given as it depends on geographical and family data which cannot be substantiated from the existing accounts.

Such an argument also would be at odds with the dating references given by the evangelist, which imply a regular Passover. Further, Jeremias (1987, 21, fn. 4 [the *Mishnah*'s prohibitions on private celebrations of the Passover]) anticipates Witherington's claims for an irregular Passover, with the perennial *caveat* that such proscriptions may be anachronistic. Whilst it is always possible that such laws are enacted to prevent abuses which are taking place, there is no indication that such abuses can be attributed to Jesus[15]. Nor did his accusers bring any such accusation against him.

6.3.5. O'Neill: Resolution of the Synoptic & Johannine Dates by Translation

O'Neill adopted a different strategy. He analysed in detail the dates in the Synoptic texts, and concluded that the common translations and understandings of them was wrong. Beginning with an analysis of contemporary Jewish Greek writings, particularly Philo and Josephus, he found that festal references may refer not only to specific days, but also to a more general usage. This is particularly true of Josephus:

> This more general way means that he [Josephus] can call the whole season simply 'The Feast of Unleavened Bread' meaning the days up to and including the Passover, Nisan 14 and Unleavened Bread…(BJ 2.10)
>
> (O'Neill 1995, 170)

This practice originates in the Old Testament (Lev 23:5-8, Num 28:16-18 and esp. Deut 16:4 where the two festivals are described as one feast)[16]. From this vantage point he focused on the Synoptic texts. All three gospels admit inconsistencies, which leave the putative date open to question (Taylor 1966, 539, fn. 16). The inconsistencies can be noted as follows:

- Matt 26:17 uses an expression usually used for *Nisan* 15 to describe *Nisan* 14: Τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν ἀζύμων.
- Mk 14:12 collapses Nisan 14 and 15 together since there is no precedent for calling Nisan 14 the τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν ἀζύμων. Taylor (1966, 536, fn.12) notes the problem, but tries to show that there

are Jewish parallels from the Mishnah. None are accepted by Bultmann (cf. Taylor 1966, 536.) and some are rejected by Jeremias (1987, 17, fn.2) who none the less admits that Dalman's "harsh" contention that no Jew with knowledge of Torah could call *Nisan* 14 the first day of Unleavened Bread is "substantially correct" (93). At any rate, even those texts which Jeremias finds relevant are dated to a different period: they may be anachronistic, or of limited value to a discussion of the first century CE. This is yet another manifestation of a recurring criticism. Jeremias' alternative explanation, that Mk 14:12 is a mistranslation, at best suggests caution over the accuracy of the verse (18, fn.1).

- Luke 22:15 is phrased ambiguously. Our reading of the verse suggests Jesus did, in fact, eat (Ch.7, pp. 341-2, ¶ 7.4.3.). This is not so much an indication of the date as Luke's strategy to present the Supper as a *Seder* (Ch.7, pp. 339-40, ¶ 7.4.1.).

- Luke 22:7 uses a title appropriate to *Nisan* 15, not 14. This is admitted by Marshall (1979, 791). Nonetheless he defends the Lukan text using Josephus, *J.W.*, 5:99[17], a riposte which is parried by O'Neill (1995, 170). The Lukan text is complicated by the subordinate clause, ἐν ᾗ ἔδει θύεσθαι τὸ πάσχα, which clearly ties the act of sacrifice to the day (ἡ ἡμέρα…,ἐν ᾗ…) rather than the feast. The Marcan alternative, ὅτε τὸ πάσχα ἔθυον, may be more ambiguous and could refer to either the day (τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ) or the feast (τῶν ἀζύμων): the ὅτε construction is not so specific. What is more certain is that the use of θύειν τὸ πάσχα is redolent of sacrificial imagery in the LXX (Exod 12:21; Deut 16:2), and picks up a sacrificial understanding of the Paschal lamb expressed in the ritual of a sacrifice followed by a meal (Mann 1986, 54; Taylor 1966, 537, fn. 12a).

O'Neill has shown that the customary translations of these dating phrases and clauses should not be assumed too readily to connect the Supper Narratives to the Passover meal: they are full of contradictions. The difficulties pointed out show that there are a number of problems which prompt a cautious approach. These are not, put simply, the clear and straightforward dates that

are often assumed. Nor should their apparent clarity be used to sway the interpretation of other details which follow in the Supper Narratives.

Nonetheless, they show a connection to the feast in general (Cf. Harrington 1991, 370-1). The subordinate clauses added by Mk and Luke are also significant, for they clearly stress the sacrificial nature of the feast. In doing so, both stress a particular element of the feast, namely, sacrifice. Whilst we have already seen that the Passover was seen as sacrificial in nature, it was predominantly a commemorative feast, reminding the Jewish people of the Exodus. The two evangelists appear to be adding emphasis to a secondary understanding of the text, and so, heightening the perceptions of their audiences to the sacrificial nature of what is to follow.

6.3.6. Fitzmyer: A Passover Meal in 1 Corinthians?

This is not peculiar to and Luke. 1 Cor 5:7 ties together themes of Christ, Passover and sacrifice. Fitzmyer(1985, 1378) contends that the leaven (1 Cor 5:6-8) and cup of blessing (1 Cor 10:16) connected with Passover imply a reference to the Passover meal. Two objections can be raised. First the cup is not mentioned in 1 Cor 5. Given the diversity of materials discussed by Paul in chapters 5 to 10, of the letter, Fitzmyer's description of a "shared context" appears questionable[18]. Even if this is granted, the argument is not watertight. The reference of the cup to the final cup of blessing of the Passover is, in Fitzmyer's own analysis, at best "probable" (1985, 1378). Even if admitted, it must be noted that the significance of the phrase lies in its connection to the covenant rather than the Passover meal (Ch.4, pp. 166-7, ¶ 4.4.2).

The second objection depends on the food references themselves. Fitzmyer suggests that the combination of references to unleavened bread and to Christ the lamb demand a setting in the Passover meal. Again, this is not clear. The Johannine writings show that references to the lamb may hold a significance which relates Christ's death to the Passover, but not to the *Seder*. Furthermore, the imagery of the lamb eaten at the meal is not developed (Moule 1961, 11): bread becomes the focus of the act of eating. Lamb

imagery might refer to sacrifice or to eating, or both, inasmuch as the two actions could be intimately connected (Ch.4, pp.181-2, ¶ 4.5.). The two ideas were not, it must be admitted, exclusive. However, the lamb is *sacrificed*, not eaten. The emphasis is wrong. The important point is its death, not its consumption.

There is a further, flimsier, consideration. The account of the Supper itself in 1 Cor 11 does not refer to the Passover at all. There, the timing reference centres on Jesus' betrayal (ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ᾗ παρεδίδετο), not on the feast. Fitzmyer's analysis suggests a high degree of ingenuity in making elliptical references to the meal. If a meal reference is that important, why, then, is Paul content only with oblique references to the meal, and avoids a clear reference to it in the body of its description? It would seem that Paul focusses on Jesus' death. This does not preclude any interest in the Passover, but there is not enough evidence to support the thesis that Paul's understanding of the Supper is based on the *Seder*.

The Pauline description of the meal makes no mention of the Passover: the event is connected to the "handing over" of Jesus (cf. Ch.7, p. 353, ¶ 7.7). This need not be restricted to the betrayal by Judas (Conzelmann 1975, 197, fn. 44). Here, the close similarity of Isa 53: 6 (καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτον ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν) is revealing. It reveals an acquaintanceship with the full story of Jesus' suffering and death which draws on the scriptural precedents of the righteous who suffer. This is then fixed in cultic ritual action (Koester 1998, 348).

As an incidental detail, we can note that the connection of the Passover (πάσχα) to the suffering of Jesus may exemplify the literary wordplay, a part of literary meal traditions, also found in the *Mishnah* (Brumberg-Kraus 2000, 174). This would put a Christian pun in place of the wordplay between *Pesach*/"pass over". In this case, the pun no longer focuses on the foodstuffs, but shifts attention to Jesus himself.

6.3.7. Conclusion: No Firm Passover Date

The dating references in the accounts appear straightforward, but, when examined in detail, throw up a number of inconsistencies (Lüdemann 2000, 95). This variety warns against considering the dating references to be historically accurate or reliable. Overall, they suggest a general reference to the Passover feast. They may even indicate that some traditions within the early Church, which might be identified with the evangelists or their sources, connected the Last Supper to the Passover meal, or at least give that impression (Browning 1960, 156). They do not, in themselves, provide enough firm evidence to formally tie the Supper Narratives to the Passover meal itself. If this identification is put aside, where might a description of it begin?

The uses of θύ- (sacrifice) in Mk 14:12, Luke 22:7 and 1 Cor 5:7, imported as interpretive or descriptive detail, all suggest that a present, but secondary theme, the sacrificial nature of the feast, and thus of the Supper, is being stressed in the events which will be described.

The question of the date suggested by the Synoptic writers remains important for the investigation of inculturation in the Supper Narratives. All three have dated the Last Supper as a Passover meal and used this as a term of reference to explain Jesus' activity: they have inculturated the Supper into the Passover traditions by this dating.

6.4. The Location of the Meal

[Mk 14:14-15; Matt 26:17-18; Luke 22:11-12]

Does the location of the meal give any indications as to its type or place? The Synoptics and *John* all firmly place the Supper in Jerusalem (Hagner 1995, 764; Lane 1974, 498; Marshall 1979, 791). The location has been more precisely identified within Jerusalem with the Cenacle Church (Capper 1995:20 [o-l]; 2002 23 [o-l]). Even if this precise identification cannot be

maintained, it places the location for the meal within the Essene Quarter of Jerusalem.

6.4.1. Capper: An Essene Connection?

Why is an Essene connection posited? To answer this, Capper (2002, 22 [o-l]) explores the mystery of the man carrying the water-jug (Mk 14:13; Luke 22:10). This might suggest a member of an all-male celibate community such as the Essenes. Yet carrying water may not be the issue, rather it is the jug, which was the vessel used by women: men would use leather bottles (cf. Luke 5:37; Marshall 1979, 791). The sign may indicate an arrangement made previously by Jesus, with no reference to the sect (cf. Fitzmyer 1985, 1383; Johnson 1991, 336)

A further link may come through Jesus' stay in Bethany before his arrival in Jerusalem, since this was the site of one of the principal Essene poorhouses (Capper 2002, 17-21[o-l]; cf. Riesner 1992, 206-13). The possibility of a location in an Essene house is raised. This in turn suggests potential contacts between Jesus and the Essenes, and that Essene rituals may intrude in the conduct of the Supper[19]. Capper's argument may make too much of such proposed connections: at no point, for instance, do the Essenes appear in the exegesis provided by Marshall (1979, 791-2).

The water carrier introduces to the disciples to the "master of the house" (οἰκοδεσπότης)[20]. These verses now describe the location of the room in which the Last Supper was held. We can note that neither Paul nor Matt records details of the room in their accounts. Luke appears to depend on details from Mk (Fitzmyer 1985, 1385).

6.4.2. The Upper Room

In both accounts the location is described using two terms: firstly, κατάλυμα, then ἀναγαιον.

Κατάλυμα has various meanings: inn, lodging, guest room or dining room (BAGD 414a): the last two stem from this context. The immediate qualification

with ἀναγαιον shifts the focus to the room, and would seem to underpin the translations of κατάλυμα as “guest-room” or “dining room”. It is possible that this is an additional room built on the flat roof of a Palestinian house (Marshall 1979, 792).

“Inn” is unlikely given its use in Luke 2:7, and his preferred use of πανδοχεῖον in 10:34 (Fitzmyer 1985, 408). The meaning of “guesthouse” or “lodging” might fit with the concept of the Essene guesthouse (above, p. 247, ¶ 6.4.1.), but there is not enough evidence to suggest that the term must bear such a technical sense: it is more flexible in its meaning (Nolland 1993, 1034).

Since ἀναγαιον has a precise meaning of an “upper room” (BAGD 51a; Mann 1986, 565; Nolland 1993, 1034), it is fair to question whether the two words are synonyms. Both accounts envision going to the lodging (κατάλυμα), and then being shown the upper room (ἀναγαιον) which is part of the building[21].

The detail that the room is furnished (ἐστρωμένον) may lead to a number of suggestions about how the room was furnished, but in reality gives no more information than that the room is suitable for the intended purpose. Jeremias (1987, 48, n.1) gives the most detailed description: it was furnished with cushions (cf. *Ezek* 23:41 [LXX]). This detail, however, adds little to the interpretation of the meal.

6.4.3. Essenes & Feast Days

What are we to make of Jesus’ request of a room to celebrate the Passover? It seems to show an intention to celebrate the feast in accordance with current cult practice. It would argue against the Essene link given their withdrawal from participation in the Temple cultus (Vermes 1984, 118). An intention to keep the Temple Passover would be problematic even if the Essenes did keep the feast according to their own practices (Bowman 1965, 269, fn.1).

6.4.4. An Essene Meal? The Need for Further Evidence

Could an Essene celebration be envisioned, albeit in a form which did not involve participation in the cultus, and might even have fallen on a different

date? It is possible, given that the Qumran/Essene groups included all the feasts of the Hebrew Bible, with the exception of *Purim* (Kugler 2002, 144) [22]. Much of the discussion of different calendars assumes a celebration of the feast in some form (Cross 1958, 36; Schiffmann 1994, 302-3). Keeping the feast, in itself, would not therefore isolate Jesus from the Qumran/Essene sectarians. Yet a *possible* identification of the "water-carrier" as an Essene community member, and the *conjectured* Essene house in Bethany, remains at best circumstantial. There is nothing here of substance. This is highlighted by the fact that there is no evidence to suggest Jesus followed the Essene calendar (pp. 265-6, ¶ 6.3.3.). If a connection between Jesus and the Essenes is to be drawn, further evidence will be needed from the accounts of the Supper and beyond. This seems unlikely, for practices encouraged by Jesus are apparently at odds with Qumran/Essene understandings of purity, Temple and exclusivity. Chilton suggests that there is no analogy between the meal practice advocated by Jesus and the meals of Qumran unless the feedings of the 4000 and 5000 were meant to show his theories about purity and the Kingdom (2002, 181). For all that, it would be "quasi impossible" for Jesus to have used an Essene calendar given his divergence from their other teaching (Vermes 2003, 302, fn.14). Connections to Essene thought might rather stem from elements within the Early Church, that is, in those who subsequently formulated these narratives (Vermes 1984, 124)[23].

These verses do not force a revision of the conclusions reached above about the date. They do not confirm a connection to the Passover meal. The location in Jerusalem can be explained as referring to the place where Jesus died: it need not prove a *Seder* setting.

Nor do they give adequate grounds for a link to Qumran/Essene practice: this reads too much into the possible identity of the water carrier. Such an identification is also outweighed by wider consideration of the differences between Qumran/Essene meals and Jesus' practice. They do, however, suggest, following Capper and Vermes, that some elements in the early church, particularly within those around the Lukan traditions, may have subsequently included Qumran/Essene thinking in their interpretation of early Christian meals, but these would have been radically re-interpreted and

moved away from their “rigidity and extremism” (Saachi 1992, 135). If the process of inculturation takes place in regard to the Qumran/Essene communities, it takes the form of a corrective or critique of their practices and theories.

The location in the Upper Room may be dealt with even more briefly: its description does not reveal any fresh details about the nature of the Supper.

6.5. The Meal Setting

[Mk 14:17-18; Matt 26:20-21; Luke 22:14-15]

6.5.1. The Timing of The Meal

᾽Οψίας γενόμενης is found in Mk 14:17 and Matt 26:20. It suggests the period after sunset on the beginning of *Nisan* 15 (Gnilka 1979, 232; Lane 1974, 497; Taylor 1966, 540) and the *Seder*. This reference to the time of day does not prove that the Supper was a *Seder*. Rather, it only serves to locate the event within a time frame, whose complications have already been noted (pp. 264-71, ¶ 6.3.).

Luke uses a less specific phrase, “when it was the right time”, which may be, in part, a habitual editing of the Marcan phrase (Marshall 1979, 794).

6.5.2. Posture: Lying Down to Eat

These verses give indications about posture. Many Graeco-Roman meals were eaten lying down, and the practice had infiltrated Judaism. Do ἀνακειμ- and ἀνέπεσεν give specific indications that Jesus and the disciples reclined to eat? For, it is possible that ἀνακειμ- might refer to specific act of reclining (from its etymology), which gains a specific sense, “reclining at table” (BAGD 55, ii). This may then be generalised in a different way to suggest, “eating” rather than a specific posture. Mk 14:18, however, suggests that ἀνακειμένων refers to the specific act of reclining. If it bore a generalised sense, “eating”, ἐσθιόντων would be a pleonasm.

Mk uses ἀνακειμ- on four occasions. A variant reading of Mk 5:40 sees it used in the general sense “lie, recline”. It is used of Herod’s dinner guests (Mk 6:26), of the disciples at the Supper (Mk 14:18) and of the disciples after the resurrection (Mk 16:14). Only Mk 5:40 sees it used outside of meals.

In Matt, ἀνακειμ- is used of Jesus as a guest (Matt 9:10). In Matt 22:10-11 it is used in a parable for guests at the Messianic banquet. In Matt 26:7 it is used of Jesus’ posture at the meal held in Bethany.

Luke prefers ἀνέπεσεν which he uses four times: of Jesus at table in the house of a Pharisee (11:37), of a guest at a wedding banquet (14:10), and of a farmer returning from the fields (17:7), in addition to the Supper. John also uses ἀνέπεσεν (John 13:12) to describe Jesus’ posture at the Supper.

6.5.3. Jeremias: Reclining and The Passover Meal

Does reclining refer to any particular meal tradition, specifically to the Passover? Reclining does not appear in the Pentateuch accounts (Exod 12:1-14; Lev 23:5-8; Num 28:16-25; Deut 16:1-8; Ezek 45:21-4). Nowhere does the LXX use any of the above Greek terms: the most detailed set of instructions (Exod 12:1-14, esp. v. 11) do not include any mention of reclining.

Reclining as a ritual action appears to have entered the Passover ritual in the intervening period, possibly due to Greek (*Sir.* 41:19) or Roman influence, though it may have come into Jewish practice from elsewhere in the Ancient Near East (Amos 3:12; 6:4). Jeremias (1987, 49) argues that reclining at meals indicates a ritual meal, and cannot be used of an ordinary meal. He goes even further, concluding that reclining must refer to the Passover meal:

> There can only be one answer: at the passover meal it was a *ritual duty* to recline at table as a symbol of freedom, also, as is expressly stated, for the ‘poorest man in Israel’.
>
> (49)

6.5.4. Criticism of Jeremias' Claim

Yet Jeremias' own analysis of the words which refer to "reclining" should force a re-examination of his conclusions. For, as he himself notes, reclining is used of a meal in the open, a party, a royal banquet, a wedding feast or the feast of salvation (48): it is not confined *only* to the Passover meal (thus, Taylor 1966, 540, fn.17). Jeremias discounts evidence that does not fit his interpretation, specifically Luke 24:30 and Mk 16:14: the first as a Lukan idiom, the second as a later, and thus historically irrelevant, stratum of tradition (Jeremias 1987, 49). Yet Jeremias does not even attempt to show why the Supper cannot be presented as an example of some of the other meals at which reclining was permitted. Certainly, the Supper was not held in the open, but what is to stop it being one of the other types? Is it not possible that reclining might point to the meal being understood as the feast of salvation, and celebrated with ritual which would indicate this? Given his own research (48, fn.4), it would appear that reclining, at most, indicates a *ceremonial* meal. But is even this so? Luke 17:7, not discounted as an historical irrelevance by Jeremias on linguistic or form-critical grounds, would not even go that far. The verse describes events at the end of an ordinary working day (Marshall 1979, 646). There is nothing in the parable to suggest that a ceremonial setting of any kind is demanded. Reclining may, on this piece of evidence have no special connotations.

6.5.5. Conclusion: No Necessary Connection of Passover and Reclining

Jeremias' conclusion, that the Last Supper was the Passover meal, appears to drive the interpretation of the evidence about reclining. Indications from the texts make it likely that Jesus reclined at the Supper with his disciples, but this posture neither demands a specific setting at the *Seder*, nor at any ceremonial meal. In terms of culture, the directive to lie down was a commonplace of both Judaic and Graeco-Roman traditions, and reflects common practice rather than make any particular point.

6.6. Actions with the Bread[24]

[Mk 14:22; Matt 26:26; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:23-24]

6.6.1. The Bread Event: The Textual Accounts

The Supper Narratives share a set of actions with bread. With the exception of Luke, these precede the actions with the cup. The breaking and sharing of bread was an important part of the Passover meal, and this has supported, for many, the suggestion that the Supper was a *Seder*. However, the breaking and sharing of bread was a gesture which featured in other meals (below, pp. 286-7, ¶ 6.6.9.).

6.6.2. What Kind of Bread?

The word used for bread, ἄρτος, is problematic. It is used at a number of points in the Septuagint for a number of different kinds of bread. It is used for Manna (Neh 9:15; Wis 16:20; Exod 16:4), for unleavened bread (Exod 12:8,15; 23:15; 29:2; Lev 2:4; 8:26; Num 6:15,19) and for the bread of the presence (Exod 40:23; 1 Kgs 21:7; 1 Chr 9:23; 23:29; 2 Chr 4:19; 13:11; 2 Macc.10:3). Greek may also use ἄζυμα (Heb. מצות) for unleavened bread.

The wide breadth of meanings attached to ἄρτος has led some commentators to suggest that it stands for unleavened bread in this context, and thus implies a *Seder* setting (e.g., Fitzmyer1985, 1399; Jeremias 1987, 56-62).Yet the LXX texts used to support such a contention qualify ἄρτος with the adjective ἀζύμος. This must raise doubts about how clearly ἄρτος is understood to represent unleavened bread, and whether the unqualified usage found in all of our texts could bear such an interpretation. It is worth asking whether or not a reference to the Passover would not have been drawn more clearly by using the LXX's conventional phrasing, ἄρτος ἀζύμος or ἄζυμα. There is certainly no reason to assume, on linguistic grounds, that ἄρτος must mean unleavened bread (cf. Hering 1962, 115). Indicators which point to this ought, in the absence of qualifying adjectives, to come from the context, and these do not automatically and unequivocally demand a setting

in the *Seder*. It is also possible that bread might suggest an reference to the meals of the Qumran/Essene sectarians (Ch.3, p.102, ¶3.3.6.1.), but this might be a common shared element rather than one drawn directly from their practice.

῞Αρτος could also be differentiated from other types of bread, in particular, μᾶζα, "barley bread" (Hippocrates, *VM* 8)[25]. Wheat bread was a more up-market or aspirational food, and its adoption as a foodstuff would have appealed to consumers, particularly those from the urban areas where many early congregations were based (Garnsey 1999, 121; cf. Schnackenburg 1980, 442, fn.25). If such thinking lies behind the use of ἄρτος, it would appear that its use was giving status to participants, by allowing them to partake of an aspirational, high-class foodstuff. The choice of bread as the food element might well give an indication of how God, or Jesus, perceived those who partook of it. They shared in a rich foodstuff, and, by implication, were accorded a high status. Whilst critics may object that μᾶζα is not used in either the Septuagint or Early Christian literature. This might be a strong argument against such a point in the Synoptic texts, but the situation is different in Corinth. It must be stressed that the Corinthians' use of language was not bounded by these limits. There is evidence not only for wheat and barley bread being used in Corinth, but for the increased preference for wheat bread as a foodstuff in meals at the temple of Demeter and Kore (Bookidis 1993 55-6). This practice might have been known to Christians in Corinth and been a part of their vocabulary even if they are unlikely to have consumed idol-meats from there (Fotopoulos 2003, 92). The physical and linguistic arguments from Corinth need not be restricted solely to that city: it is possible, at least, that other early Christians might have lived in similar circumstances in which the same inferences might be drawn.

6.6.3. Bread: A Sacrificial Food?

That the bread is not specifically identified as unleavened suggests that the meal in question is not necessarily the *Seder*. It may, however, have a sacrificial importance, given that grains and foods prepared from them might

be deemed sacrificial foods. Brumberg-Kraus (1999, 185, fn. 24) suggests that the Christian emphasis on bread and wine rather than meat as their sacrificial food includes a renunciation of contemporary hierarchical views, specifically patriarchy. Care needs to be taken. As he himself admits, neither Paul nor Christian groups realised any such theory in their actual practice. Further, he makes a qualitative difference between meat sacrifices and those of other kinds. Sacrificial meals or foods did not need to include meat, a state of affairs which he appears to assume (185)[26]. Finally, it is difficult to see how he can maintain a distinction of meat and other sacrifices on the basis of preparation (the differentiation of "raw" and cooked", on 187-8). ῎Αρτος may indeed be a generic term for food, but not in this instance. Both bread and wine are produced with a measure of human activity, and this degree of preparation places them firmly in the category of "cooked" foods. The claim that meat is, by nature, "raw", and therefore a different kind of symbol is highly subjective, especially since raw meat rarely provides the stuff of a post-sacrificial meal. It is by no means certain that Brumberg-Kraus can claim:

> Real meat- with or without the blood drained from it, even cooked, is closer to raw and organic material than bread or wine.
>
> (185)

Bread too could have a sacrificial significance. It remains to be seen whether the element will be interpreted in this way.

6.6.4. "One" Bread

All the accounts refer to bread in the singular and impart a symbolic meaning of unity. In 1 Cor 10:17, this is particularly significant since the unity of the bread is in direct contradiction to the fragmented Corinthian congregation of which Paul is so critical elsewhere (1 Cor 1:10-2). That bread can symbolise unity is also seen in *Did.* 10:4-5. This unity is not however restricted to the life of the congregation and their inter-relationships. The eucharist also has a "vertical" dimension, in which the congregation are at one with God (Thiselton 2000, 770-1, for "vertical" and "horizontal", see Ch.3, p. 73, ¶ 3.1.1.).

6.6.5. Actions With the Bread: A Series of Events

All the accounts provide a series of actions connected with the bread. Mk and Matt place both within the context of a wider action, "eating" (ἐσθιόντων)[27]. The use of the present participle suggests that this is a "linear" action. The other actions are all described using the Aorist, either in the indicative or as participles, and thus "punctiliar" (Moule 1953, 99-100): they form a sequence of actions. The sense can be caught by using "while" and "then":

> And *while* they were eating, he took bread, *then* blessed it, *then* broke it and *then* gave it to them, and *then* said… – Mk 14:22

A similar sequence of actions can be discerned in the other texts, with slight variations in order: 1 Cor omits "give", but its presence is implicit. The use of the participle λαβὼν (Mk 14:22) may be a Semitism (Jeremias 1987, 175), suggesting either a Jewish source or reworking of the tradition. However, this might imply that the action is redundant, which would not appear to be the case (Taylor 1966, 543, fn. 12).

It is important, following Taylor, to distinguish the different actions. Whilst some are obviously sequential (i.e., one needs to take before breaking, and then break before giving), others are not. Dix's influential four-fold action has obscured the whole sequence of events as the acts of blessing and speaking have been elided together ("take, *bless*, break, give", cf. 1946, 78). The use of the Aorist goes against this: "blessing" and "saying" should be different actions at different moments. We will not deal here with the content of the "saying": that will be examined in the following chapter (Ch.7, pp.305-38, ¶ 7.2.-7.3.). "Blessing", however, needs to be considered, as no direct speech qualifies the action.

This act is described using different terms: εὐλογήσας in Mk and Matt, εὐχαριστήσας in Luke and 1 Cor.. A similar spread may be noted in the Feeding Miracles, in which both terms are used (εὐλογέω - Mk 6:41; Matt 14:19; Luke 9:16; εὐχαριστέω - Mk 8:6; Matt 15:36; John 6:11). It has been claimed that εὐλογήσας is a Hebraic term, and expresses the notion of "blessing", and that its replacement by εὐχαριστήσας (giving thanks) appears

to represent a Graecising tendency (Jeremias 1987, 113). Greek-speaking Judaism could use εὐχαριστέω as a synonym for εὐλογέω (Conzelmann 1974, 412), even if it was the less usual word (Marshall 1979, 798). Note that both Mk 14:23 and Matt 26:27 use εὐχαριστήσας of the cup, suggesting that the use of the two terms is chance and does not imply a technical difference (798). Nonetheless, this lexical overlap is not without some significance: it appears to emphasise the action as a thanksgiving rite rather than propitiatory, avertive or apotropaic.

6.6.5.1. The Sequence of Actions and the Feeding Miracles

Gestures associated with bread share similarities with other meals, most noticeably the Feeding Miracles. In Mk 6:41, Jesus takes, blesses, breaks and gives bread (λαβών…εὐλόγησεν…κατέκλασεν…ἐδίδου). In Mk 8:6, the same order occurs with a variation in wording (λαβὼν/ εὐχαριστήσας/ ἔκλασεν/ ἐδίδου). In Matt 14:19 they appear again (λαβὼν/ εὐλόγησεν/ κλάσας/ ἔδωκεν), as well as in Matt 15:36 (ἔλαβεν/ εὐχαριστήσας/ ἔκλασεν/ ἐδίδου). Luke 9:16 uses a similar sequence (λαβὼν/ εὐλόγησεν/ κατέκλασεν/ ἐδίδου). John 6:11 again repeats the sequence (ἔλαβεν/ εὐχαριστήσας/ διέδωκεν) with the omission of “break” (κλά-). There are differences, too. All of Mk 6:41, Matt 14:19 and Luke 9:16 include the action of looking to heaven before the blessing (ἀναβλεπ-). The accounts in Mk 6:41, Matt 14:19 and Luke 9:16 also mention fish as a foodstuff. Yet the pattern of take, bless, break and give is common to all: the gestures at the Supper mimic those of the miracles (Johnson 1991, 342). The Supper Narratives add the detail of speaking in addition to the blessing (above, p. 281-2, ¶ 6.6.5.).

These four actions (take, bless, break, give) may be common gestures with no further significance than describing actions necessary for the sharing of food, but the possibility remains that such actions may add a Messianic dimension to the Supper Narratives. This does not create a circular argument for the identification of the Feeding Miracles as Messianic does not rest solely on these actions, but on other features, too (Ch.5, pp. 233-4, ¶ 5.4.8.).

Regardless of this, the Feeding Miracles share a concern with the Supper Narratives to present Jesus as the provider of the meal, though all the

scenarios show others involved in setting up the meals. Thus, the disciples go ahead of Jesus to prepare for the meal (Mk 14:12-16; Matt 26:17-19; Luke 22:7-13), and others bring the basic foodstuffs for the Feeding Miracles (Mk 6:38, 8:6; Matt 14:17, 15:34; Luke 9:13; John 6:9).

6.6.5.2 The Sequence of Actions and the Qumran/Essene Meals

The actions depicted share similarities with Qumran/Essene practice: the blessing of the elements is common to both. This, however, may be a commonplace, given the omnipresence of blessing across Judaic meal traditions. There are certainly differences in other practice: there is no replication of the Qumran/Essene sectarians' hierarchical distribution of what has been blessed (cf. Ch. 3, p. 102, ¶ 3.3.6.1.).

6.6.6. The Significance of "Blessing/Thanksgiving"

Given the classification of the act of blessing and the later words of Jesus as separate linear actions, what form did this "blessing/thanksgiving" take? It must be remembered that the Judaic "blessing" is not a blessing of the bread, but rather of God for the gifts which can be offered: "giving thanks" avoids this ambiguity (cf. Thiselton 2000, 870-1).

Those who describe the Last Supper as a Passover, and the Synoptic writers may be included among them, would identify this with the prayer said over the Unleavened Bread (*Matzah*). Modern forms of this prayer included additions made by later rabbinic Judaism. Went conjectures a 1st century CE form like this:

> "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt.
> All who are hungry let them come and eat: all who are needy, let them come
> and celebrate Passover with us . . ."
>
> (Went 1998, np)

Thus, the "blessing/thanksgiving" would include an invitation to table-fellowship. This would fit the serving of bread in the *Seder*, but is less clearly identifiable with the bread of the Supper. Whilst the *Seder* timing would fit with Luke 22:19-20 and its sequence "cup-bread-supper-cup", both Mk 14:22 and Matt 26:26 place the bread with in the frame of "eating", which is far less

precise, but gives the impression of an action within the eating phase of a meal, rather than a preliminary. Such a sequence does, however, conform to a general *symposium* pattern with a phase of eating followed by a phase of drinking. If there is any substance to this reading, it would appear that Luke, more than Mk and Matt, is describing the Supper as a *Seder*. The shape of the prayer is also problematic. It is perhaps more difficult to see how a prayer of this kind, apparently an invitation to the *Seder*, might be classified as a thanksgiving, beyond the general element of thanksgiving implicit in much Jewish prayer and ritual.

The identification of the prayer does not have to be confined to *Seder* practice. If this is put aside, prayers of this kind can still be located within Judaic practice. Grace at meals was a common phenomenon: the correspondence between grace in the Qumran/Essene axis, Pharisaic Judaism and the *Did.* has already been noted (above, Ch.3, p. 114-5, ¶ 3.4.4.2.; Brumberg-Kraus 1999, 166, fn.1 for Pharisaic Judaism; Weinfield 1992, 436-7 for all). The covenantal and Messianic content of such prayers would fit as well as, if not more closely, with the later “sayings” than Passover material[28]. The act of “blessing/thanksgiving” may thus have associations with covenant and/or Messianic practice.

6.6.7. The Significance of “Breaking”

The choice of ἔκλασεν may be significant. This particular word is not used of “breaking bread” in Classical or Hellenistic Greek. One occurrence is found in the Paris Magical Papyrus[29], but this appears to be influenced by Jewish and/or Christian usage (Behm 1965, 728). Diodorus Siculus uses διακλώμενοι for “broken pieces of bread”, but Graeco-Roman usage has no ceremonial implications (Conzelmann 1975, 197, fn. 49)[30]. The idea of breaking bread for ceremonial meals is restricted to texts of Jewish provenance, including *Jer* 16:7 and *Lam* 4:4. The action, if not itself originating in a Jewish milieu, has been described in such a terminology.

Breaking may either be a practical action (i.e., the bread must be broken for distribution) or symbolic. Breaking may signify that the meal has begun

(Conzelmann 1975, 197, n.49; Orr & Walther1976, 251), or, in the manner of the prophets, be a symbolic action. As such, it may refer to the breaking of Christ's body to come (Taylor 1948, 118). The parallelism of clauses about body and blood suggests that the symbolic Christological interpretation is correct, and need not exclude the more mundane meal reference (Thiselton 2000, 765-6). "Breaking" also has a social significance, indicating shared fellowship. This is highlighted by 1 Cor 10:16 (875).

6.6.8. The Role of Jesus

The actions focus on Jesus, who takes, breaks and distributes. He is portrayed as the chief actor in the ritual drama. The disciples are put in the role of recipient. Is this significant? In the Passover setting envisioned by the Synoptic writers, Jesus takes the role of the head of the family: his actions match those of the *paterfamilias* at the Passover meal. His action thus passes a blessing to those who receive the bread:

> When at the daily meal the *paterfamilias* recites the blessing over the bread - which the members of the household make their own by the 'Amen' - and breaks it and hands a piece to each member to eat, the meaning is that each of the members *is made a recipient of the blessing by this eating*; the common 'Amen' and the common eating of the bread of benediction unite the members into a table fellowship.
>
> (Jeremias 1987, 232)

There are similarities too with the Qumran texts which envisioned the priest taking a prominent role (Ch.3, p. 102, ¶ 3.3.6.1.).

An even greater claim might be made: the selection, breaking and distribution of the bread (and the parallel acts with the cup) are reminiscent of the *Imitatio Dei* that informed some Jewish ritual and sacrificial practice (Ch.4, pp. 132-3, ¶ 4.2.3.). Not only may Jesus be presented as the head of household (fictive or real), or priest, but even as taking a divine role in the ritual drama: he may play the part of God whilst the disciples play the part of Israel. This might be described as an analogy, but, depending on how such an analogy functions, it may reveal an existential truth. These actions may point to the divinity of Christ.

It is not yet possible to identify whether the role of provider has either a priestly, Messianic or divine dimension. Supporting evidence for such theories will need be adduced from the sayings which interpret the actions (cf. Ch.7, pp. 305-38, ¶ 7.2- 7.3.). It may be overly cautious, but at this juncture there seems only evidence to identify Jesus as the "head of the family". Even this may have associations to rituals other than the *Seder* suggested by colouring of the Synoptic accounts.

Comparisons with Graeco-Roman sacrificial meals are more difficult, given the scarcity of detail. Smith (2003, 67-85) reveals the large gaps in the accounts of such practice. This frustrates a clear identification with, say, a priestly role in a particular ritual. Within the wider sphere of meal practice, Jesus is put in the position of the host, provider, patron or chief celebrant, of the meal. He is presented as an ideal figure (Soards 1987, 55) or exemplum (Henderson 2002, 200). The disciples are put in the role of those who receive from Jesus, or are his guests or clients, even if involved in the preparation of the meal.

6.6.9. The Significance of "Sharing"

It seems that actions with the bread may be linked to a number of meal traditions. Certainly the Passover is one of these, given the specific action of sharing bread which is involved in its celebration, and the identification with the meal made by Mk, Matt and Luke. Probably the biggest difference is from that of the Qumran/Essene meal where any distribution of food is complicated by issues of hierarchy and purity (Ch. 3, p. 102, ¶ 3.3.6.1.), which are not in evidence here. Links may also be made to a variety of Jewish meals which included the breaking of bread (Jeremias 1987, 232). That said, "breaking bread" is a commonplace, found in a number of traditions and practices, and may born of necessity rather than specific symbolism: bread must be broken before it can be shared and consumed. However, even a commonplace may accrue significance.

Consider, for a moment, the breaking of bread. The bread can be broken and given to others by one individual, or each participant may receive it, and break

off a piece. Similarly, the cup must be passed around. Is this necessity merely described by using words like “give” or “take, receive”? The differences are not without social or ritual significance. They imply role, function, activity, passivity, and even, perhaps, hierarchy. Nor is their meaning restricted to the purely “horizontal” and social. Such actions, in the context of worship may have a “vertical“ significance, and indicate the relationship between the believers, the group and God.

The breaking of bread in the Supper Narratives gives a particular prominence to Jesus which stresses his place at the centre of the group. He is the focus of the actions, the provider of bread shared at the meal, and this is confirmed by his words which interpret these actions[31].

It is also possible that the actions of breaking and sharing indicate a token ritual: it is unlikely that that the quantity of bread consumed in this manner would constitute a full meal.

6.7. Actions with the Cup

[Mk 14:23; Matt 26:27; Luke 22:1, 20;1 Cor 11:25]

6.7.1. The Cup Event: Textual Accounts

In Mk, Matt and 1 Cor an action with a cup follows the action and saying over the bread. The sequence of actions is described in identical terms in Mk 14:23 and Matt 26:27 (λαβὼν…εὐχαριστήσας…ἔδωκεν), whereas 1 Cor 11:25 uses ώσαύτως καὶ to suggest that the actions with the cup replicate those with the bread. The account in Luke has affinities to both the other Synoptic accounts, except that δεξάμενος is used in place of λαβὼν (22:17), and also to 1 Cor, when the ώσαύτως construction is used (22:20). The use of the two different constructions in two different verses indicates a major difference in Luke: the presence of two cups.

6.7.2. The Lukan Version: A Textual Problem

The Lukan text differs from the other traditions in its description of two cups, one preceding and another following the actions with the bread. How does this come about? For many scholars, the issue of the two cups is text-critical. Whilst it is possible to identify six different traditions (Fitzmyer 1985, 1388), the crux of the matter is whether 22:19b-20 should be omitted from the text of Luke. Either a gloss (of some form) has been added to the original text of Luke (thus identified with the shorter text) or Luke has always contained these two cups, and some copyists chose to omit the reference to the second cup (that is, the original longer text has been cut). From the time of Westcott and Hort until the 1950s, scholars favoured the shorter text, but, more recently, an increasing number have preferred the longer text. It has gained sufficient acceptance to form the preferred reading in the most recent versions (N-A 27, UBS 4).

Consideration of questions of this kind admits a further puzzle. One of the basic principles of textual criticism is that the more difficult text is likely to be original (*lectio difficilior potior*). Yet advocates of both the shorter text (Marshall 1979, 800) and of the longer text claim that this principle supports their conclusion.

It is helpful to look at the different points synchronically:

For the authenticity of the shorter text	**For the authenticity of the longer text**
1) The longer text is due to assimilation of 1 Cor 11 and Mk 14:24b	1) The longer text is not based on 1 Cor 11, as the style reflects a pre-Lukan rather than a Pauline tradition.
2) The shorter text is more difficult to explain. (*Lectio difficilior potior*)	2) The shorter text is too difficult grammatically: 19a could not stand on its own.
3) The shorter text omits sacrificial language alien to Luke's theology	3) Luke does not avoid "sacrificial" theology. Note 22:27 and Acts 20:28.
4) The shorter text preserves the secrecy of Jesus' words	4) Why does no other writer feel the need to do this?
5) The shorter text is found in a number of ancient authorities: (D a ff^2 I l sy^h).	5) The shorter text is only supported by one Greek manuscript. It only finds partial support in the western tradition.

Others re-arrange the verse order: (b e sy^{p} bo^{pt})	Widespread interpolation is less likely than the verses being an original part of the text.
6) The second cup is added in an attempt to replicate the other Synoptic ordering.	6) The second cup demanded by the longer text is more difficult to explain and unparalleled elsewhere.(*Lectio difficilior potior*)
7) Why would an attempt to harmonise use the cup-bread order? Surely it would be better to omit the first cup?	7) The shorter text cuts out the second cup in an attempt to harmonise accounts
8) The cup-bread sequence is mirrored by the *Did*.	8) The *Did.*'s order may be an irrelevance. It is an account of an early eucharist, not the Last Supper held by Jesus. There is no reason that the two would necessarily follow the same order.

On examination, the longer text is preferred. Firstly, the textual evidence is stronger (5). The suggestion that the shorter text is the more difficult reading (2) does not seem sustainable. The *lectio difficilior potior* argument for the shorter text is not so much difficult as unworkable, implying a saying which would refer to the bread, but then jump to the Betrayal saying.

The choice depends on whether it is more likely that the section might be removed or added (7)[32]. It would seem more likely that an editor who wished to resolve difficulties would remove a reference to a cup than insert it. Even the question of the cup-bread order is not an insurmountable difficulty as it is found in other traditions, notably the *Did.* (8). It might, however, indicate a colouring of the event by contemporary eucharistic practice rather than the recording of an historical detail. A single cup tradition, of either order, has clearer parallels than a tradition with a double cup. Thus, it is more difficult to explain the Longer Text. Yet even origin of the Longer Text can be explained: the insertion of a second cup has a logical explanation. Luke has asserted the connection of the Supper and the Passover meal: the addition of the second cup would fit with such a strategy. Some scholars describe such a strategy in greater detail linking the two cups in the Lukan narrative with specific cups in the *Seder* (below, pp. 290-2, ¶ 6.7.3.). Nonetheless, the Longer Text remains our preferred reading, even if it can be explained by reference to Luke's understanding of the Supper as the *Seder*.

6.7.3. The Cup(s) and the Passover

The identification of the bread in the Supper is much more straightforward than the identification of the cups. There is, after all, only one *Seder* gesture involving bread. Complications only arise in its possible place in the order of events (above, pp. 283-4, ¶ 6.6.6.). However, the Passover *Seder* involved a number of cups. In the "classic" accounts found in *m. Pesah*, four cups are mentioned. Even critics who question identification of the first century *Seder* with *m. Pesah* admit this possibility (see Ch.3, pp. 92-4, ¶ 3.3.2.3.-4). Commentators exploring connections to the *Seder* have thus posited possible identifications of the Supper cup (or cups in the Lukan text adopted) with particular cups used in the *Seder*.

Johnson (1991, 337) identifies the first Lukan cup with the second cup of the Passover which is interpreted "why this night is different from other nights" (cf. *m. Pesah*. 10:4; cf. Johnson 1991, 339). He identifies the second Lukan cup with those taken at the end of the meal (*m. Pesah*. 10:7): one is accompanied by the meal blessing, the other with the *Hallel* (Pss 113-118). However, he also indicates conflation of the two cups. The first cup described as the "fruit of the vine" is connected to the blessing cup, and themes related to the Kingdom (338). There thus remains a possibility that the second cup in the longer Luke text might be identified with the third cup of the Passover.

Lane (1974, 508), discussing the Marcan account, posits a connection between the cup offered by Jesus and the third cup of the Passover, which is associated with themes of redemption.

Taylor (1966, 545, fn.23) suggests that attempts at such identification are unnecessary if the Supper is not the Passover meal. However, such an all or nothing approach fails to recognise the greater subtlety advocated by Burchard, who argues that particular actions or gestures from a ritual may be used without demanding its wholesale adoption (see Ch.3, p. 106, ¶ 3.3.7.3).

Such explanations must, of course, always retain an element of doubt, given the lack of precise detail about the 1st century CE *Seder*[33]. Detailed parallels based on the later rabbinic writings may have imported anachronisms. However, they do suggest that various Passover gestures and themes were

seen as important for the definition of Jesus' meal with his disciples, even if different writers stress different points, and confuse or conflate gestures from the *Seder*. This conclusion holds good, even if the Supper itself is not identified, in its entirety, with the *Seder*.

6.7.4. Sharing One Cup[34]

How is the cup shared? The use of the singular ποτήριον suggests that those present drink from one vessel: Mk 14:23 makes this most explicit (ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες)[35]. Yet such a scenario is implicit in all the other accounts. Does the sharing of a common cup indicate any connection to a particular meal tradition?

Like the sharing of bread, the drinking of the cup indicates a share in a blessing. Such understandings are not limited to particular ritual meals in Jewish practice, but a self-evident idea, true of all meals, learned from childhood onwards (Jeremias 1987, 233). Thus, the sharing of a common cup whilst found in particular ceremonial meals, notably the *Seder*, need not indicate a provenance beyond general usage. Further, like the sharing of bread, it would appear to indicate a token action: a shared cup is an unlikely vessel, on grounds of quantity alone, to describe a full meal ritual. Yet the idea of sharing a common cup may indicate a difference from the hierarchical Qumran/Essene meal. Descriptions of that meal talk of wine rather than a cup, so the number of vessels used is uncertain. A common cup would have needed to pass down the hierarchy so that contamination by lower ranks was avoided, or else separate vessels be used. In either case the practice appears different from that attributed to Jesus.

The fact that wine is drunk, apparently in a small quantity, is significantly different from much Graeco-Roman practice. Graeco-Roman meals involved the pouring of libations, and, in their everyday manifestations at least, are characterised by a conspicuous consumption of wine (Ch.3, pp. 73, ¶ 3.2.1.). Both the quantity and actions demand here suggest that these are unlikely sources for Supper Narrative accounts.

What of the contents of the cup? Most commentators assume that the cup was a cup of wine, but the Supper narratives themselves give no word to describe the liquid itself in the physical descriptions, except for the phrase ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τοῦ ἀμπέλου (Mk 14:25; Matt 26:29, see Ch.7, p. 341, ¶ 7.4.2.).

6.7.5. Δεῖπνον in 1 Corinthians

Paul (1 Cor 11:25) and Luke 22:20 both describe the cup being shared μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι. The scholarly consensus is that the Lukan text here follows Paul (Marshall 1979, 805). This may reflect the language of the standard Greek evening meal. We have noted that this was divided into two parts: the meal proper (δεῖπνον), and the drinking-libation-entertainment (συμπόσιον) which followed (Ch.3, pp. 74-6, ¶ 3.2.1.-2; above, pp. 283-4, ¶ 6.6.6.). They both might thus be equating the sharing of the cup with the *symposium* stage. Such a reading would support my earlier hypothesis (King 1997, 170) that μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι means “after the meal”. This, however, needs further qualification: it would, from the socio-cultural perspective outlined, mean “after the eating part of the supper” (see also Thiselton 2000, 882-3).

6.7.6. A Full Meal or a Token Meal?

Does this setting indicate a full meal (δεῖπνον) followed by a *symposium* as the practice at Corinth? O’Neill, arguing that the Christian ritual meal was originally a token meal, saw this phrase as problematic. It appeared to indicate a full meal, and so he argued that it was a non-Pauline insertion (1995a, 178). By this he appears to have meant a post-Pauline redaction rather than the inclusion by Paul of an earlier tradition. This seems a complex solution given that these words, in themselves, need not indicate anything about what happened at Corinth. They form an aetiological account, which, in themselves, might either support or contradict practice at Corinth. Do they demand that the Supper itself or intervening traditions be considered a full meal? Not necessarily. They might equally imply a full or token meal[36] and

need not precisely indicate the nature of the Supper itself. The significant gestures with both bread and cup (above, pp. 286-7, ¶ 6.6.9.; pp. 291-2, ¶ 6.7.4.) involve token rather than full quantities, and thus a token ritual should not automatically be discounted.

The 1 Cor account does, however, allow us to postulate that Paul presented the meal using terms familiar from every day life to the recipients of the letter. Might this be significant? Paul's identification of the bread with δεῖπνον and the cup with συμπόσιον suggests a holistic approach to what was going on. Neither stage of the meal could be disregarded as peripheral or unimportant. This will be considered further in the more detailed study of the Corinthian meal in Ch.8, pp. 377-8, ¶ 8.3.3.).

6.8. Conclusions

It is appropriate at this point to consider the resemblances between the gestures found in the Supper Narratives and the cultures which form their backdrop. The Supper Narratives appear to contain a mixture of historical and interpretative detail, shaped in accordance with Judaic transmission of teaching and tradition. There is a basic historical kernel to the events described. Jesus offers blessings over bread and wine which are given to his disciples (Vermes 2003, 306). However, the New Testament writers set the Supper in Jerusalem *around* the Passover and Unleavened Bread, and this may have some historical basis[37]. Further details would appear to be interpretative: this is deduced from the variations in the four different accounts, such as the *Seder* dating and the sequence of events, notably in respect of the cup. They may be considered under the headings of Judaic, Graeco-Roman, and early Christian resemblances.

6.8.1. Judaic Resemblances

The actions depicted in the Supper Narratives are ambiguous. Their meaning is linked to other details such as the date of the meal. When the narratives are tied firmly to the *Seder* this identification can drive the interpretation of particular actions. However, our research has shown that such identification

cannot be readily assumed as historical. There are discrepancies in the dating of the Supper, and these raise the possibilities of other meal traditions being brought into the equation.

This critique of the historicity of the *Seder* does not mean that it is to be expunged from the interpretation of the actions. All three of the Synoptic accounts suggest that the *Seder* was drawn on to identify the Supper. However, it should be given a less prominent, and certainly not an exclusive, place. A connection to the Passover is still apparent, but not to the extent that the Supper *as a whole* could be identified with the *Seder*.

Analyses which focus exclusively on the elements shared between the Supper Narratives and the *Seder* distort the eventual findings. The critic may wish to take issue with Moffatt's comment on such issues: "what Jesus left out is *more significant* than what he retained" (Moffatt 1938, 165, italics mine). Nonetheless, there is an important point here: attempts to identify the Supper and the Passover are specific to particular gestures, not the *Seder* as a whole, and much does appear to be omitted, or of little significance (Nolland 1993, 1047-8). If not "more significant", this is, at least, equally significant.

Both the sharing of bread and cup point in the direction of a token meal ritual: neither would appear to fit with the pattern of a full meal. There are analogies for a meal of this kind, particularly from the pattern found in *Jos.Asen.* which is more likely to have provided a helpful pattern for Christian writers than the Graeco-Roman Mystery cults (Kilpatrick:1983, 59-65; O'Neill:1995a,180-4)[38].

The use of bread and wine in the *Seder* allowed Passover symbolism to be incorporated into the Supper Narratives. However, the symbolism of bread and wine is not confined to this one meal, and other references were possible. In the Supper Narratives Jesus is identified as the one who carries out the key actions. He *breaks* the bread, and *gives* the cup. A number of identifications may follow. He might be identified with the *paterfamilias* of the Passover (Ernst 1977, 585), or the Messiah/Priest of the Qumran/Essene meal: further evidence both inside (the sayings uttered) and outside the Supper Narratives help to establish whether such identifications are either valid or possible. External criteria suggest that identifications with the Qumran/Essene traditions

are problematic: the associated rules of purity and vary considerably. That bread and cup are shared without distinction on the grounds of status or hierarchy gives a very different feel to the actions being carried out, and their significance for the participants in the meal. A further complication comes from the possibility of a token meal: those described in the Dead Sea Scrolls are full meals. If Qumran/Essene meal practice was a source for either the practice of Jesus, or for the description of his actions by his followers, whatever is used has been subjected to an extreme re-accentuation within Jesus' radically different programme of purity.

Actions associated with blessing relate to both bread and wine. This is also true of the fact that the disciples share both the elements over which the blessings were said. Such rituals commonly see the participants enjoying a meal or feast. Such meals may be sacral or non-sacral. If meals are located in the realm of the sacred, the fact that a meal takes place suggests affinities to the sacrificial pattern of the communion meal rather than the holocaust. The use of blessings was common to a number of Jewish meal traditions. The sharing of food and drink is found in a number of Jewish and Graeco-Roman traditions. There is no single meal tradition involving the gestures with bread and wine which appears to define the Supper: Chilton has noted that there are analogies to most Jewish meal types (2002, 181).

The presence of such patterns, even if not linked intimately to a particular meal tradition like the *Seder*, is important. It indicates the workings of a theological process in which an event is being portrayed and given meaning by reference to particular gestures, that is cultural phenomena and signs. The significance of such gestures needs to be explored further, particularly in light of their potential sacrificial significance and symbolism. Indeed, such an opening out is demanded, not least because of the potential wider significance of the token meal pattern which has emerged. Judaic meals, and the use of bread and wine within them, appear to provide strong antecedents for the Supper Narratives. However, any elements or actions which are inculturated are not adopted without due reflection, and their frame of reference is altered by the writers' understanding of Jesus' theological programme.

6.8.2. Graeco-Roman Resemblances

In general terms, the order of "cup-bread" in the accounts resembles the classic shape of the Graeco-Roman meal in which a meal (δείπνον) was followed by a period of drinking (συμπόσιον): the additional cup in *Luke* is explained as a *Seder* reference. Thus there is a chance that the Supper Narratives may resemble specific meal types within this *genus*. However such resemblances would seem to point to a full meal tradition which is at odds with our findings. These have suggested an interest rather in two significant gestures identified by the elements of bread and cup. This raises questions about the validity of describing the Supper as a *symposium* or *convivium*, as indeed does the manner of their consumption. This will be re-iterated more closely in Ch.8 when Paul's interpretation of the Supper is scrutinised.

Nonetheless, the act of eating in a ritual context remains a common denominator. Even if the events differ in detail, it may be that resemblances in purpose may remain. Christian and Graeco-Roman rituals share a number of common concerns such as the enhancement of group identity. Meals for the dead, particularly in a Roman context, served to stress social links and have been posited as an influence on merging Christian practice.

However such Christian practice differs in several respects. Firstly, the Supper narratives locate "eating with Jesus" in his earthly life: this is not a practice restricted to post-mortem fellowship. The roles are also different: departed ancestors are guests at, not providers of, the Graeco-Roman meals. Further the participants in the Supper are not involved in a ritual which tries to curry favour with the departed spirits as sometimes happened in pagan practice (Ch.4, p.161-2, ¶ 4.3.7.). The Supper Narratives clearly give Jesus a different role: he is the provider, not the beneficiary (see above, pp. 285-6, ¶6.6.8.).

The emotional field of the rituals is notably different: Note also Wright (2003, 62 ; cf. Ch.5, p. 224, ¶ 5.3.6.) which identifies grief as the appropriate emotion for participants in meals for the dead. The gestures performed at the Supper were associated with thanksgiving and blessing rather than grief. This

surely indicates a difference in thinking between the different rituals, particularly within contemporary thinking (cf. Tacitus, *Hist*., 5.5.5; cf. Ch.7, p. 364, fn.16).

Many of these meals were the function of guilds, clubs or associations. These again show significant differences in structure from the Supper Narrative patterns. One example is the existence of sponsors who were not necessarily participants in the meals. This was one part of the complex issue of ranking which appears in Graeco-Roman meals. The actions detailed in the Supper Narratives suggest a lack of interest in hierarchy. If so, this marks a departure from all but the egalitarian patterns found in Greek rather than Roman practice. Ranking will re-appear as an issue in the next chapter, and it is at that stage that remarks can be more competently made about this subject and its place in a process of inculturation. One important idea, related to ranking and status, which may be inculturated is that of the status of bread. This is developed most fully in 1 Cor (cf. Ch. 8).

The differences between token and ritual meals, and between their tone and purpose, raise objections to Graeco-Roman practices being considered precursors of the meal described in the Supper Narratives, and unlikely media for inculturation. Nonetheless, the Hellenistic memorial meals provided a background for the understanding of Jesus' death (Fitzmyer 1985, 1401), and gave an introit for the understanding of the new Christian rituals in Graeco-Roman contexts.

6.8.3. Early Christian Resemblances

Resemblances between the Supper Narratives and other early Christian witnesses are frustrating. Gestures with bread appear significant, given the references to the "breaking of bread" found in *Acts* (Ch.3, pp. 111-2, ¶ 3.4.2.). However, the lack of detail blocks further progress. The *Did.* shares gestures with bread and wine, but frustratingly puts them in a different order: cup appears to precede bread (Ch.3., pp. 115-6, ¶ 3.4.4.3.). It also mentions blessing, a feature shared with the Supper Narratives. Blessing and saying should not be conflated: they are distinct punctiliar actions. This means the

words of the Supper Narrative should not be identified as the blessing: some other words, not recorded in the Supper Narratives, were used. This not only suggests that the details of the Narratives may complement those of the *Did.* and vice-versa (see Ch. 3, p. 116, ¶ 3.4.4.4.), but also allows the possibility that the blessing made by Jesus might come from the same stable as that of the *Did.*, and have wider resemblances to Jewish blessing prayers of the time (Ch.3, pp. 114-5, ¶ 3.4.4.2.).

The order of events and terminology in the Supper Narratives resemble those of the Feeding Miracles. These appear to focus primarily on actions with food, including bread, with many overlaps in vocabulary and order. The discourse on John 6 which follows the feeding miracle does, however, introduces teaching which refers to wine as well, and suggests eucharistic significance. Shared terminology may be necessary solely for descriptive purposes, but raises the possibility of resemblances being drawn between the Supper, the eucharist and the Messianic meal which is anticipated in the miraculous events.

The resemblances of the Supper Narratives to early Christian liturgy must be noted. Here, a frustrating lack of detail, that we only have glimpses of early Christian ritual, makes the task of discerning resemblances more difficult. It also warns against assuming, simplistically, that either liturgy shapes narrative, or vice-versa. The reality is likely to be more complex, and the existing evidence does not resolve the issue.

There appears to be a shared focus on bread and cup, together with blessing and sharing of food. The strongest argument in favour of a liturgical influence in this chapter comes from an unlikely source: the language used to describe the transmission of material in 1 Cor. This strongly suggests a cultic, rather than an apocalyptic or visionary tradition. However, this must be tempered by the fact that Paul appears to be reminding the Corinthians of something basic, a point that warns against it being considered a strong *existing* influence.

The action of blessing is also important. The Jewish form of blessing which would appear to have been used is seen clearly in the *Did.* which does not refer to any other words of Jesus. Does this mean that early Christian

tradition, in this form, was independent of the Supper Narratives? This research has indicated complementarity rather than difference. This point has been obscured by the actions of “blessing” and “saying” being conflated: the influential “four-fold” action described by Dix and others has distorted reflection on the actions described, and skewed their interpretation. The Supper Narratives assume, but do not explicitly state, a blessing of this kind. Conversely, the *Did.* assumes knowledge of the Supper Narratives, inasmuch as it assumes an acquaintance with the Gospel traditions, but does not spell it out (Ch.3, p. 116, ¶ 3.4.4.4.).

Inculturation with regard to early Christian tradition would appear to focus on the transmission of tradition which in turn gives validity to the accounts, and to the acts of sharing bread and wine. Further speculation is made difficult by difficulties in judging the inter-relationship between the Supper Narratives and the ritual context of their respective readers. The most detailed conclusions can be made about practice in Corinth, simply because there is more evidence (Ch. 8).

6.8.4. An As Yet Unconsidered Action

One action or activity is conspicuously absent from the above considerations of what Jesus does. He speaks. The emphasis placed on the interpretation of the meal appears very different from the extant sources for both the *chaburah* and the meals of the Qumran/Essene sectarians. His words put a novel interpretation onto traditional elements and gestures. Even if the gestures were exclusively linked to the *Seder*, the presence of new interpretations would demand that the meaning of Jesus’ actions had transcended the traditional boundaries and meanings. It is these interpretations which become the focus of an examination of the recorded statements in the next chapter.

Notes

1

> **Socrates**
>
> One which is easy to point out, but very difficult to follow for through it all the inventions of art have been brought to light. See this is the road I mean.
>
> **Protarchus**
>
> Go on what is it?
>
> **Socrates**
>
> A gift of gods to men, as I believe, was tossed down from some divine source through the agency of a Prometheus together with a gleaming fire; and the ancients, who were better than we and lived nearer the gods, handed down the tradition that all the things which are ever said to exist are sprung from one and many and have inherent in them the finite and the infinite. This being the way in which these things are arranged,…
>
> (Fowler (1925). On-line at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0174&layout=&loc=Phileb.+16c)

2 Diodorus Siculus (90-21 BCE) may have used this as a descriptive term from within the Mystery tradition, or as a more general term.

3 Care needs to be taken with the dates. Porphyry's dates are 232-305 CE. *Suidas* (The Suda) is a tenth century CE Byzantine collection of ancient commentaries. The Hermetic writings come out of ancient Egypt in the early Christian period. Thus, there is a *caveat* about how widespread such terms might have been in the time of the Pauline writings.

4 Maccoby quotes this remark of Schweitzer's, and uses it dismissively (Maccoby 1991, 248). This remark on its own fails to do justice to the complex cultural realities of Paul's time. However, it is not Schweitzer's only word on the unsuitability of Mystery language to describe Paul's thinking on the Eucharist. At the beginning of the same work he sets out a detailed analysis of the differences between Mystery religions and Pauline thought. In discussing 1 Cor 10:1-6, he notes:

> That the realistic view of a sacrament is thus conditioned by the notion of an annulment of its effect by unworthy conduct is still a further proof that Paul's thought does not move in the same world as the Hellenistic mystery-religions. These avoid entering into the question which the apostle here decides so confidently. They concern themselves with the initiation only, or if they do consider the subsequent life and activities of the initiate they incline to assume that the reborn is raised above all the conditioned-ness of the natural life. Attempts to preserve the rights of the Ethical within the Sacramental only occur in isolated instances and are not pressed home with any energy. The realistic simplicity of Paul's sacramentalism makes him unreceptive for the romanticism of the Hellenistic Mysteries.
>
> (Schweitzer 1998, 21-2)

There appears to be a qualitative difference between Paul's understanding and the Mystery religions. Schweitzer's phrase, "same world" does not mean "in the same context", but rather has the sense "agree".

5 For a more detailed analysis of μυστήριον, see Fraser (1998, 24-38) for the polyvalent meanings of the word in Graeco- Roman use, and (45- 86) for Jewish apocalyptic literature and Philo. Fraser concludes that both Jewish and Hellenistic use influenced Paul's use of the term. Graeco-Roman influence was not however restricted to the use of the term as found in the Mystery religions: Stoicism appears to have been equally, if not more, important (122-3; 169).

For further examination of the different terminology used in the Mysteries and the (deutero-)Pauline material see, Bruce 1984, 84-6; 232; 310-7; Mitton 1981, 54, 121-3.

6 For a detailed examination of transmission in Gal, see Betz 1979, 62; 64-6.

7 Jeremias' thesis that ἀπό is remote (and this implies a direct origin) is weakened by Col 1:7 where ἀπό is used of Epaphras (Lightfoot 1880a, 29). Maccoby's counter-claim, in turn, suffers because Col 1:7 does not clearly point to Epaphras is as source or transmitter, but is ambiguous.
The whole argument may be a red herring since the phrase παραλαμβάνω παρά is not used in the New Testament. This suggests that there may not be a finely wrought technical differentiation of παραλαμβάνω παρά and παραλαμβάνω ἀπό.

8 Scholars are divided as to whether the tradition of the eucharist can be traced back to Jesus himself. Thus, Meier 1995, 335-51 and Crossan 1991, 360-7. For views defending Jesus as the primary source, see Hofius 1993.

9 Gerhardsson (1998, 293-323) provides an extended comparison of tradition in both Paul and rabbinic Judaism. Tradition from and about the Lord corresponds to *Talmud*, apostolic teaching to *Mishnah* (302ff). Paul is attempting to produce teaching similar to *halakah* (308ff).

Miller (1998) provides a useful summary of scholarship on the limits placed on transmission in this period.

10 Gerhardsson's theories were initially subject to much hostile criticism, but have undergone a recent rehabilitation, particularly through their re-issuing. The critical issues are discussed by both Gerhardsson himself and Neusner in the preface and foreword to the reprint (1998a, ix-xxii; xxv-xlvi respectively). Gerhardsson also provides an overview of important subsequent work on oral transmission in the Gospel traditions (xvii-xxii).

11 For further descriptions of the Essene calendar, its divergence from the official calendar and bibliography see http://www.bibarch.com/Concepts/Calendrics/essene_calendar.htm

12 Duff provides the textual references in detail:

> The calendar is mentioned in 1 Enoch (Ethiopic Enoch): Chapters 72-82 of Ethiopic Enoch deal generally with this calendar (though there are references in the rest of Ethiopic Enoch to show that the calendar was probably also assume by the writers of those parts of the "text" as well - 72 and 82 are the clearest and also the statements in 74.9-17 and 79.5-6. Chapters 73,74,78,79 all try to relate the calendar to the moon. This is not a sign of a different calendar - once one has a fixed calendar of 364 days per year one can calculate both the moon's and the sun's path. …
>
> Without wanting to lay out all the references we see the same calendar at work in Jubilees (particularly 6.23-38 but it also underlies all the dates on which the festivals are celebrated throughout the work).
>
> (Duff 1996, np)

English text of *1 En.* also available on-line at http://wesley.nnu.edu/noncanon/ot/pseudo/enoch.htm and of *Jub.* at http://doig.net/Jubilees.html.

13 For a re-investigation of the identity of the Wicked Priest, see Van De Water 2003, 395-7. This question of identity need not affect the points raised here about the calendar.

14 Dunn (1999, 360) suggests that the *Didascalia* might have preserved an older tradition about Jesus' arrest, but does not give a firm date. Riesner suggests that the traditions it contains date from well within the 2nd century CE (1992, 218).

15 Moule (1961, 11-2) provides a summary of a number of theories which stress the irregular nature of the "Passover", noting that their degree of "irregularity" is dependant on how "orthodox" Judaism of the period is perceived to have been.

16 Jeremias admits that such a meaning is possible, but dismisses it solely on the grounds that it would be too much of a "linguistic subtlety" for the Gentile Christians addressed in John (1987, 21). His criticism depends entirely on his own speculation about what such readers might understand, and that this is, ultimately, the element that shapes possible meanings. He never addresses the question of the Old Testament evidence, or considers that the reference might be part of a tradition used by the evangelist.

17

> As now the war abroad ceased for a while, the sedition within was revived; and on the feast of unleavened bread, which was now come, it being the fourteenth day of the month Xanthicus, [Nisan,] when it is believed the Jews were first freed from the Egyptians, Eleazar and his party opened the gates of this [inmost court of the] temple, and admitted such of the people as were desirous to worship God into it.
>
> (Josephus, *J.W.*, 5.98 ff., trans. Whiston (1895). On-line at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0148&layout=&loc=5.99)

18 Proposals *that 1 Cor* is not a unitary document would further complicate the issue. Such theories, and problems with these approaches, are summarised in Thiselton 2000, 36-41.

19 See Capper (1995, 30) for similarities between the daily meal practice of the Early Church (Acts 6:1) and Essene systems.

20 Luke's τῆς οἰκίας is a pleonasm (BAGD 558a) at odds with his usual careful style (Fitzmyer 1985, 1383).

21 A translation which respects the two terms would read something like this:
Mk: And wherever he should enter, tell the owner that the teacher says, "Where is the lodging where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" And he will show you a large upper room ready and furnished…
Luke : And say to the owner of the house, the teacher asks you, "where is the lodging where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" And he will show you a large upper room already furnished."

22 See also,

> In the Jubilee calendar of the Essenes the Passover always fell on Wednesday, which began the prior Tuesday night. Thus, it is supposed, Jesus ate a Passover Last Supper according to the solar sunset calendar of the Essenes. The Passover according to the lunar sunset calendar fell three days later on the Sabbath, after the Friday crucifixion. However, the Last Supper followed the slaying of the lambs at the Temple; this could not have been done for the Essenes,

> who opposed the current Temple ritual and observance of holy days. This also would interpose two extra silent days in the Gospel, between Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. The observance of the Essene Passover by Jesus is unlikely, especially since some of His teachings were antithetical to the Qumran community.
>
> (Doig 1990, on-line at http://www.doig.net/NTC21.htm)

23 For similarities and differences between the theologies of Jesus, emerging Christianity and the Qumran/Essene grouping, see Vermes (1984, 115-125; esp.118-9 for attitudes to the Temple). Vermes concludes (124) that the influence of Qumran/Essene thinking on Jesus was less pronounced than on the first generations of the early Church.

24 For a detailed discussion of the main positions on the section of the paradosis in Matt 26:26-29, including its *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of effect), see Luz 2002, 93-122.

25

> And if one would compare the diet of sick persons with that of persons in health, he will find it not more injurious than that of healthy persons in comparison with that of wild beasts and of other animals. For, suppose a man laboring under one of those diseases which are neither serious and unsupportable, nor yet altogether mild, but such as that, upon making any mistake in diet, it will become apparent, as if he should eat bread and flesh, or any other of those articles which prove beneficial to healthy persons, and that, too, not in great quantity, but much less than he could have taken when in good health; and that another man in good health, having a constitution neither very feeble, nor yet strong, eats of those things which are wholesome and strengthening to an ox or a horse, such as vetches, barley, and the like, and that, too, not in great quantity, but much less than he could take; the healthy person who did so would be subjected to no less disturbance and danger than the sick person who took bread or cake unseasonably. All these things are proofs that Medicine is to be prosecuted and discovered by the same method as the other.
>
> (Hippocrates, *VM.*, 8. Adams (1994-2000), on-line at http://classics.mit.edu/Hippocrates/ancimed.8.8.html)

26 The variety of foods used for sacrifice is much wider that the text used by Brumberg-Kraus, even in Judaism. When the further complications of Graeco-Roman practice are added to the equation, it can be seen that Brumberg-Kraus's theory hangs on identification with one particular text rather than sacrificial practices in general. See Ch.4, p.109, ¶ 4.1. for further detail on the variety of sacrifices.

27 Jeremias (1987, 113) suggests this phrase is a secondary addition in *Mk*, as it competes with 14:18.

28 It would also fit with our earlier theory that the *Did.* works from a familiarity with Matt (above, Ch.3, p.95, ¶ 3.4.3.4.). Within this scenario, the *Did.* could even be considered to fill in the "blank" (i.e., the content of the blessing) which Matt has referred to, but not described in detail. Burchard (1987b, 124) makes a similar suggestion for different reasons.

29

> Καταλιπὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρτου, οὗ ἐσθίεις, ὀλίγον καὶ κλάσας ποιήσον εἰς ἑπτὰ ψωμούς
>
> (Behm 1965, 728, fn. 2)
>
> - leave a little of the bread which you eat, break it and make seven fragments (translation mine)

See further *PMG* IV 1390 in Betz 1992, 64. The papyrus is dated to the 4th Century CE (xxvii).

30

> There were other strange happenings too, calculated to spread confusion and terror among people. At the distribution of rations on the Macedonian side, the broken pieces of bread (οἱ διακλώμενοι τῶν ἄρτων) had a bloody look -

(Diod. Sic., *Bibl. Hist.*, 14.41.7 Trans. Oldfather (1989), on-line at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Diod.+17.41.1). Cf. Conzelmann 1975, 197, fn.49.

31 For the thesis that Jesus' understanding of his impending death comprises authentic sayings shaped by older traditions, see Balla 2001, 239-58.

32 See O'Neill 1984, 603 for criticism of the short Western text based on scribal activity.

33 See Ch.3., p. 92-4, ¶ 3.3.2.3.-4.

34 The question of whether Jesus drank from the cup is explored further in Ch.7, pp. 341-2, ¶ 7.4.3.

35 The phrase need not be a Semitism (Taylor 1966, 545, fn. 23b)

36 It can be argued that the presence of εις δεῖπνον in a variant reading of 1 Cor 10:27 demands the meaning of a full meal. Against this we can note, firstly, that textual evidence weighs against the phrase as part of the original text (N-A 27). Secondly, even if the words are held to be part of the text, qualifying adjectives might alter the field of meaning (King 1997, 170-2). On ritual and token, see further Ch.8, pp. 377-9, ¶ 8.3.3-4.

37 Thus Chilton 1992, 150-4; Filson 1967, 273; Marshall 1980, 35; Theissen & Merz 1998, 423-6. Crossan (1991, 360-7; 435-6) argues that the material is from an early historical stratum, but this does not guarantee historicity.

38 Problems with details of the Mystery cults have been described in Ch.3, pp. 82-6, ¶ 3.2.8. ; Ch.4, pp.153-9, ¶ 4.3.4., and Ch. 5, pp. 212-5, ¶ 5.3.3.