

CHAPTER 7

Sayings and the Supper Narratives

7.1. Introduction

In some ways, the division of the Supper Narratives into actions and sayings, although convenient, is artificial. For these items are linked together, both as actions and locations of meaning. Luke in particular uses the phenomenon of table-talk (Drury 1973, 195). Leon-Dufour (1967, 36) notes the Lukan tendency to group parables together, not necessarily in a meal context, as further evidence of the presence of this literary genre within the Synoptic tradition. Others tie the practice to recognisable literary forms from the period. Thus, Kurz (1985, 257-8) argues that Luke 22:14-38 follows the basic structure of a farewell dialogue (cf. Johnson 1991, 348). Soards (1987, 55-7) gives the phenomenon a different name: a testamentary meal. Such a literary form is visible elsewhere in the Gospel: Luke 11:37-54 exhibits structural elements of the literary symposium (Steele 1984, 389-90).

Brumberg-Kraus' analysis is more specific in identifying the combination of action and word in the Lukan Last Supper Narrative with the symposium tradition:

...in Luke's account of the Last Supper, the occasion itself of gathering to eat the Passover offering as a small group, and then Jesus' actions of breaking and distributing bread, pouring and distributing the wine, and the argument that breaks out between the disciples each prompt some comment or explanation. Note especially Luke's use of the demonstrative pronoun and the particle *ὅ* to stress the objects and actions right there at the meal as the cues for Jesus' table-talk.

(1999, 171)

These two different literary traditions need not be mutually exclusive. Rather, it is a question of which the critic sees as the primary influence. Thus, Kurz

But my thesis is about the present arrangement of the sayings of Jesus in the form of a farewell address, whether produced by Luke or his source. Greco-Roman symposium discussions probably also influenced Lk 22:14-38.

But the frequency with which Luke imitates and alludes to his Greek Bible suggests that biblical farewell addresses were his primary models.

(1985, 253)

Claims that the Supper Narratives shared in the symposium literary tradition are not denied, but relegated in importance. The influence of the symposium literary tradition will appear stronger if the passages under consideration show evidence of the interplay between meal and narrative found elsewhere, e.g., in Athenaeus (Ch.3, pp. 77-8, ¶ 3.2.3.). It should be noted that, to use Neyrey's "maps of things" (1988, 365-6), the importance placed in recording sayings moves far from the *chaburah* and Qumran/Essene meals where commensality mattered most: the extant sources place little or no importance on interpretation of the meal's significance (Ch.3, pp. 101, ¶ 3.3.6.1.).

Concerns such as these suggest that the various forms of sayings may mirror the findings of the previous chapter about transmission and tradition, i.e., they may include both historical and interpretative elements. The difficulty of language also intrudes. It is possible that Jesus used Aramaic, yet the texts preserved are all in Greek. There is no guarantee that even the earliest traditions preserve the words of Jesus (*ipsissima verba*) in the language which he uttered (see further in p. 309, ¶ 7.2.3.). Thus, the four narratives are approached as reconstructions, accurate according to the conventions of transmission in operation (Ch.6, pp. 262-3, ¶ 6.2.4.4.), of what Jesus might have said rather than *ipsissima verba*.

7.2. The Bread/Body Sayings¹

[Mk 14:22; Matt 26:25; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24]

The baldest statement over the element of bread is found in Mk 14:22. Matt 26:25 contains an additional command, φάγετε - to eat. The accounts in Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:24 add additional descriptions of the "body". It is "for you" (τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν- 1 Cor 11:24) and "given for you " (τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον - Luke 22:19). In both, the command also changes: the action is to be performed in memory of Jesus (τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν).

There is no guarantee that the Markan version is earliest because it is shortest: a strong case can be made for the originality of the Pauline form (Theissen & Merz 1998, 421).

7.2.1. *“Body/Blood/Covenant”: Different Emphases*

The accounts use parallelism to make a link between bread and cup (Hagner 1995, 771; Marshall 1979, 801; Thiselton 2000, 882). The parallels vary in emphasis. Whilst the Markan account (Mk 14:24) would pair body and blood, the Pauline account (1 Cor 11:25) appears to pair body and covenant, with blood relegated to an instrumental role (Conzelmann 1975, 199). The different wordings imply a difference in emphasis. However, this need not mark a major difference in theological opinion, given that themes of atonement and covenant could be amalgamated (below, pp. 333-7, ¶ 7.3.6.). One thing is certain, even if a *Seder* setting is assumed to be the locus of the supper, these words which interpret the elements indicate something new is taking place (Allison & Davies 1997, 470).

It is possible that the different wordings may be influenced by liturgical traditions. This is most clearly seen in the Matthean expansions (e.g., φάγετε) which have a “liturgical” accent (Hill 1972, 338). The earlier accounts may be similarly influenced. The tradition received by Paul in 1 Cor 11: 23-5 may have been shaped by cult activity or ritual precedent (Conzelmann 1975, 196; Marshall 1980, 111-2). The same may hold good for the account in Mk (Conzelmann 1975, 196). However, the influence of liturgical tradition in itself does not constitute adequate grounds for Bultmann’s description of the Supper Narratives as “cult legends” (Fitzmyer 1985, 1387), or other claims that they did not originate with Jesus (Thiselton 2000, 867-8). Nor should it automatically be assumed that the texts are liturgical because they are formulaic. McGowan (1999b, 74) would see them as catechetical rather than liturgical.

7.2.2. “Body/Blood” and *Cultus*

“Body/Blood” sayings make sense in a context of cultic purity. The Last Supper should not be considered in isolation, but in the context already prepared by Jesus’ ministry. Two factors are important. The first is the role of meals within Jesus’ teaching about inclusion and exclusion, which itself must be set in the context of purity, for Jesus both challenges accepted traditions, inasmuch as he accepts those who are “truly wicked”, and offers a new paradigm offensive to normal piety (Sanders 1985, 209-11). The second is his programme of reform for the Temple, most clearly evidenced in his occupation of it (Mk 11:15-17; Matt 21:12-13; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-16; cf. Sanders 1985, 61-76) which the Synoptic writers make a phase in his final visit to Jerusalem, preceding the Supper Narratives². This ordering of events sees Jesus alienated from both Temple and cult. Both body and blood make sense as part of a new understanding of sacrifice:

Jesus would be saying that, alienated from the Temple of which his occupation had apparently failed as a comprehensive program of reform, ...bread alone was his “body,” in the sense of his sacrificial victim, and wine alone was his “blood,” the accompanying fluid of sacrifice

(Chilton 1992, 152)

Such a pairing of “body”, or “flesh” and “blood” originates with the Hebrew *basar* and *dam* respectively (Jeremias 1987, 198-201). “Blood” refers either to occasions of murder (Gen 4:10 etc.) or sacrifice (Gen 9:4 etc., cf. Ashby 2002, 59)³. The Hebrew pairing is more likely to have been that of “flesh and blood” rather than “flesh and body”, and would locate the imagery firmly within the field of sacrifice. However, it is also possible that “flesh and body” can be similarly located. Whilst σῶμα primarily means “body”, its extended meaning as “self, person” may indicate why it has been chosen rather than σάρξ. Brodie (1993, 285) notes that “flesh and blood” bears a similar meaning describing “the earthly character of human life”. Even if the two terms are not paired, they may point independently to Jesus’ death (Nolland 1993, 1053), or self-giving (Donahue & Harrington 2002, 395).

The use of σῶμα in the sense of a sacrifice (Heb 10:5 and Gen 15:11) damages Schweitzer’s contention that such sacrificial understandings are

Hellenistic in origin (Schweizer 1971, 1057-81, esp. 1058-9). This understanding of the elements need not imply a full-blown sacrificial interpretation of the Supper, as this might only have been developed in light of later developments such as the later destruction of the Temple (Chilton 1992, 153; 155-9). On the other hand, it shows that a sacrificial understanding is consistent with the wording of the texts themselves and need not be a later theological import.

All four accounts describe the σῶμα as μου, identifying it somehow with Jesus as the speaker. Chilton (1992, 152-3) would see a reference to food and drink as identified by Jesus as having a sacrificial function.

Daube has suggested that the phrase may be Messianic, and related to a piece of unleavened bread (*ḥpîqôman*= ἄφικόμενος) put aside at the beginning of the Passover service. This would maintain a connection to the ritual, but not necessarily to its later more familiar forms. Like all theories connecting the meal to the Passover, the uncertainty of the precise nature of the ritual in the period is problematic, but it resonates with the Messianic descriptions connected to the elements in 1 Cor 10:4, 16. It further has the merit of giving a symbolic meaning to the unleavened bread which otherwise does not appear to have any such identification until later (see Ch.3, pp. 93-4, ¶ 3.3.2.4., summary and criticisms of Daube in Allison & Davies 1997, 468, esp. fn. 61). The identification of bread with the person of the Messiah may be problematic, particularly if the references to 1 Cor 10:16 are discounted as referring to the elements⁴. Yet it is difficult, if not impossible, to remove all reference to the elements from this verse (Conzelmann 1975, 171, fn. 19; Thiselton 2000, 763).

If Daube is correct, the meaning of σῶμα is not just sacrificial but Messianic, and held together by the re-accentuation of a Passover gesture. Whilst Daube sees this gesture as focussed on the person of the Messiah, identified with the bread, it is also possible that such a reference can be sustained without such a personal reference, but through symbolism for the Messianic age. However, all such theories are only as strong as the evidence which presents *ḥpîqôman* as a working symbol at the time.

Such an identification might suggest commonalities with the Messianic meals of the Qumran/Essene nexus. However, the meals of the sectarians made no reference to either a broken body or shed blood, nor is the Messiah identified with the foodstuffs consumed: they were focussed on a Messiah who was to come rather than an identification with one who had been among them. If there were similarities at any juncture, Christian christology drastically re-shaped them (Davies 1962b, 114).

7.2.3. *The Meaning of ἔστιν*

ἔστιν comes into the equation when the Greek translation of the words apparently uttered by Jesus is considered. Scholars have attempted to reconstruct “original” Aramaic or, less frequently, Hebraic wordings (Jeremias 1987, 196-8). However, there must remain a degree of uncertainty about any reconstruction and any such hypothetical reconstructions must be used with caution (Thiselton 2000, 883).

In neither language would there appear an equivalent of the Greek copula ἔστιν. Whilst, “is” appears straightforward in English, two possible meanings need to be examined: “is identical with” or “it signifies” (Marshall 1979, 802). Fitzmyer (1985, 1400) argues that there is no philological reason to prefer either. The apparent simplicity of “is” belies a complexity of meaning which has fuelled eucharistic controversy and seen the proponents of various viewpoints anathematise, excommunicate and even slaughter each other (Edwards 2004, 79-80). Yet the two may not be so far apart, given the understandings of symbolism which appear to have been held: the symbolic interpretation (“signifies”) need not preclude an element of realism (see below, pp. 331-3, ¶ 7.3.5.). ἔστιν reveals *what happens*, namely, that Jesus is present, but does not indicate *how* this takes place (Behm 1965, 736, cf. Dodd 1953, 339; Patte 1978, 364). This question comes to the fore when the issue of the body (σῶμα) and remembrance (εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν) are addressed. The Synoptic accounts do not dwell on the second question, which are explored further through the Pauline (below, Ch.8, pp. 389-90, ¶

8.4.2.) and Johannine reflections on the body of Christ (below, pp. 331-3, ¶ 7.3.5.).

Of note, too, is Paul's version of the saying, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, further extended in the Lukan τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον. These phrases suggest an identification of Jesus with the element. The use of ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν indicates a salvific effect rather than merely distribution of the bread, for which the Dative (ὑμῖν) would have been adequate (Hering 1962, 116). The construction may reflect Isa 53:12 which both suggests a Semitic background (Hofius, cited in Thiselton 2000, 877) and an inclusive sacrificial reference (see further, pp. 335-7, ¶ 7.3.6.3.; Taylor 1966, 546). The emphasis of both phrases is different. It is worth noting that Luke at no time connects this with the Cross, but the minimal reference to Jesus' suffering is common to all the Gospel accounts of the Supper (Conzelmann 1982, 201). Luke's phrase implies, in its context, that Jesus' body has been given over for the sake of the disciples, his companions at the Supper. The Pauline version, on the other hand, quoted as a paradigm to inform the behaviour of the Corinthians, stresses rather that Jesus' body has been given over for them (Brumberg-Kraus 1999, 182, fn.20).

7.2.3.1. "Eating People is Wrong"

The identification of bread with the body of Jesus has sometimes led critics to query the origins of such teaching. The phrase has been read as containing cannibalistic associations. Anthropophagy (cannibalism, to use the more familiar post-Columban term, cf. Rawson 1999, 168) was viewed as unacceptable in the ancient world. In more contextually relevant terms, it was something done by "barbarians", by people "not like us". Such a distinction could be drawn at a number of points (168; 170-2; 175-8). Without exception, the ascription of cannibalism to a group was pejorative. Dodd (1953, 341, fn.2) further argues that spiritually minded Greek and Roman thinkers would find the concept of "eating flesh" an obstacle because of the low regard in which they held the material order of creation.

Part of the problem is that such language is interpreted literally. It is, however, obvious that this was not the understanding of early Christian writers. How could it be thought otherwise? None of the Synoptic writers appears to be

aware of any potential damage from the utterance: none of them qualifies the statement with a redactorial comment to defend Jesus' teaching⁵. For Paul, such a literal cannibalistic understanding was an impossibility given that the body and blood of the historical Jesus no longer existed (Schweitzer 1911, 156, cf. Ch.8, pp. 385-6, ¶ 8.4.2.2.). For John, the consumption of flesh alone would be of no use without a spiritual dimension (Sanders & Mastin 1968, 197)⁶.

Within Jewish culture, it was possible that such language could be used metaphorically. The Pss contain at least twenty-eight examples of this. "Eating someone's flesh", which becomes a metaphor for hostility. If such thinking is applied to the eucharist, it implies that those who eat are those who have caused the victim's destruction (Fenton 1991, 419-20; Brown 1988, 284). Such symbolic understandings lie behind the theology of John, not a crude literalism (see below, pp. 329-33, ¶ 7.3.4.-5). That metaphor rather than literalism is at work is further evident from John's blending of sapiential and sacramental themes: it is obvious that flesh is more than meat (above, Ch.4, pp.172-4, ¶ 4.4.6.).

There is an alternative symbolic approach. Morris (1995, 336) agrees that eating is symbolic, and takes this as referring to "receiving" Christ. This was not an impossible belief: the gist of it was comprehensible. Such teaching remains hard to accept (σκληρός - John 6:60, cf. Jude 15):

That is, difficult to receive, accept, appropriate. The idea is not that of obscurity. The discourse was offensive, and not unintelligible.

(Westcott 1890, 109)

It is intelligible because it can be understood symbolically. Further, but more contentiously, symbolic identifications may have been part of cult practice. This much is adduced by Lang, based on his reconstruction of sacrificial ritual (Lang 2002, 190-3). He argues that, in Jewish sacrificial rites, the sacrificial victim was named and identified with the offerer. Whilst Lang's reconstruction is appealing, it must, however, be noted that he himself points out that the wording on which such an identification hinges is "conjecture" (191), as there are no extant ancient sources (192).

There would, nonetheless, appear to be strong evidence to suggest a metaphorical or symbolic understanding at work with a eucharistic or sacramental dimension. This is not, however, the final word. Body and blood are linked, and related arguments will be considered in respect of the cup (below, pp. 316-29, ¶ 7.3. *passim*).

7.2.4. *Anamnesis*

The phrase εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, only explicitly used by Luke and Paul⁷ in the context of the bread, deserves attention. It can safely be assumed that it is a memorial of Jesus; he is the object of the memorial act. But who is its subject? Who is being asked to do the remembering? Given the imperative (τοῦτο ποιεῖτε) it would seem likely that it is the disciples (in the historical setting) and the participants (by symbolic identification with the disciples) who do this. But attention must also be paid to the Hebraic understanding of “memorial” outlined in Ch.4, pp.143-4, ¶ 4.2.7.: “reminding-God” language is implicit when Israel remembers. The use of ἀνάμνησιν by both Luke and Paul is a reminder of memorial language of this kind and its influence on the narratives. In Paul, the concept of ἀνάμνησιν appears to include the notion of “reminding-God”. Such an interpretation is supported by the use of general “reminding “ language elsewhere in the Pauline corpus (see Ch.4, p.198, fn. 65):

It becomes impossible to argue from these prayer references that Paul excluded reminding-God from his general thinking and terminology: that he could not, therefore, have favored it in the particular case. *More, we must ask whether the positive suggestion of possibility* (that Paul prayed in reminding-God categories) *is also present in this text.*

(Chenderlin 1982, 169)

What does this mean? That the ritual outlined by Paul is meant to remind God of his promises through Christ to those who follow him, and to give those promises to them; it is not just a command to the faithful to celebrate a ritual activity. It also suggests a firm connection to a Hebraic understanding of memorial which, by happy coincidence, has connections, but not a direct identification with, Hellenistic ideas. The Lukan account, too, is Hebraic, also

drawing on the LXX's terminology for cultic memorials (Caprinelli 1999, 79-80; 88).

7.2.5. *A Hellenistic Memorial Meal?*

Whilst it has been argued that the idea of memorial might locate the emerging Christian practice within the context of Hellenistic memorial meals (thus, Lietzmann 1979, 182), there are a number of objections to the identification. Greek accounts tend not to use the language of μνήμη (Jeremias 1987, 241). In contrast, within Jewish circles, μνήμη and cognate terms are associated with cultic activity (244).

Both the frequency and tone of Graeco-Roman meals differ from Christian practice: there are sufficient grounds to deny a commonality (Tacitus, *Histories*, 5.5.5, text in p. 364, fn.16; Ch.3, pp. 81-2, ¶ 3.2.7.; Ch.4, pp.161-2, ¶ 4.3.7.; Jeremias 1987, 242-3). However, there are specific differences between such memorial meals and the Pauline account:

The hero feast seems to have been incidentally related to the hero's death; the sacrifice was not that *of* the hero, but *to* him. Most important, however, was the absence of a covenant nexus with a supreme God and with the past. Whoever put together Paul's Eucharistic scenario saw it as making sense in a "new covenant" context. The "new" suggests that there may have been elements present that were lacking in the old covenants. The covenant aspect is present in the Marcan account too, and its location at the center of a cluster of ideas and terminology whose larger portion, whatever the Hellenistic analogies, is quite at home in the Hebrew milieu, makes it likely that that milieu rather than those analogies was the chief determining factor in the selection of the various elements, whether in Mark or in Paul.

(Chenderlin 1982, 145)

Further analogies with the Epicurean memorial meal have been suggested: held in remembrance of Epicurus, with a pledge that his followers be obedient to his teaching, and might even consider him a "saviour" (DeWitt 1954, 67). Arguments which would posit a similarity based on vocabulary shared with Epicurus (e.g., Conzelmann;1975, 198, esp. fn 56) fail, it seems, to consider the conceptual and metaphysical setting demanded by Epicurean thought which differs radically from that of emerging Christianity (see Ch.5, pp. 221-3,

¶ 5.3.4.5.). Nor does the sacrificial dimension of the Christian meal, connected to a real person, have any parallel within Epicurean or religious meals. Similarly, remembrance should not be confused with the patterns of re-enactment seen in the cyclical myths and rituals of the ancient world (Thiselton 2000, 879).

Whilst it is possible that the Christian meal might be compared with the Epicurean meal (Ch.3, pp. 81-2, ¶ 3.2.7.), there are two objections. First, the Christian meal does not commemorate a “dead hero” after the Graeco-Roman pattern (Fee 1987, 552). Second the description of Jesus’ actions as a “new covenant” is markedly different from the Epicurean will and testament (Witherington 1994, 250).

The vocabulary may be similar, but the underlying ideas and concepts are not. Nonetheless, the partial correspondences suggest a possible “fusion of horizons”.

7.2.6. Hebraic Patterns of Memorial

The more direct association of the Pauline narrative with Hebraic concepts of memorial is further seen in the way in which the account depicts Jesus’ death:

Our point with respect to 1 Cor 11 will not be that the Supper is a sin-offering, but that it is a memorial of an event that is at least closely analogous to one, namely Jesus’ death on Calvary.

(Chenderlin 1982, 122)

The analogy is developed explicitly in the identification of Christ with the ἱλαστήριον (Ch.4, pp. 165-6, ¶ 4.4.1.). The sin-offering of Jesus is not a “sacrifice of jealousy” (Ch.4, pp.188, fn. 21), but an act in which remembering brings forgiveness rather than punishment. Christ’s death truly brings about the forgiveness which was claimed, but not delivered, by the sacrificial systems of Old Israel. It is also possible that his death is read against the background of martyrdom (Ch.4, pp. 142-3, ¶ 4.2.6.3.; thus O’Neill 1984, 51) in which the death of a righteous person might have beneficial effects for a larger group.

The Hebraic understanding may also suggest why the particular phrase (τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν) appears in *Luke* and Paul. These works are written for recipients who more closely identify with Graeco-Roman than Judaic culture. The concept of “reminding-God” which would have been implicit within Judaic understanding needs to be spelled out more clearly.

Hofius sees pertinent Hebraic patterns of remembering specifically, but not exclusively, within the Passover rituals: memory is a foundational activity not only of the Passover, but of Sabbath and daily ritual (Hofius 1993, 105) and is realised in the act of proclamation (103; 106). It is of a completely different order to “meals for the dead” (104).

Thus the use of “memorial” in the Supper Narratives points more towards Jewish antecedents which were ripe for meaningful interpretation on more overtly Graeco-Roman contexts. This also holds good for Paul’s approach (Collins 1999, 428; 433). From this viewpoint, both God and humanity are involved actively in a nexus of reminding and remembering which effects a forgiveness of sin.

7.2.7. Inculturation and the Body Sayings

The sayings about the Body reveal expansions which suggest expansions drawn from Judaic rituals and traditions. These include sacrifice, covenant, the Messiah and remembering. Language about “eating the body”, whilst appealing alien to Second Temple Judaism, resonates with metaphors from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Whilst there are differences between in detail between Graeco-Roman and Judaic occasions for remembering, there is common ground between them, and this gives room for dialogue, understanding and correctives. Nonetheless, “remembering” appears rather to be set in those patterns discernible from Judaic examples. Contact with early Christian practice is most readily seen in the longer versions (Matt and Luke), and these seem to be based on liturgical practice. Thus the accounts about Jesus are being earthed in the liturgical experience of the faith-event as practised in the early Church.

7.3. The Cup/Blood Sayings

[Mk 14:24; Matt 26:27; Luke 22: 17,20; 1 Cor 11:25]

As with the saying over the bread, there are disputes as to whether the Markan or Pauline form is original. Theissen and Merz, on balance, prefer the Pauline form as original, but concede that the reconstructions of the original words are “only conjectures” (1998, 422).

The pairings of “Body/blood” and “Body/covenant” would both appear to suggest a Jewish background (above, pp. 306-9, ¶ 7.2.1.-2.). Yet one element intrudes into this picture and raises major questions about the setting of the blood saying within a specifically Jewish milieu. The problem is not the identification of the cup with blood, an element in ritual with clear and distinct meanings. The problem lies in the actions associated with blood.

When the question of drinking blood is closely examined it appears to be hedged about with dogmatic assertions. The drinking of blood is an action variously described as “abhorrent” (Maccoby 1991b, 99), “taboo” (Vermes 1993, 16), “impossible” (cf. Fenton 1991, 417) or “unthinkable” (Wilson 1997, 165), particularly within Second Temple Judaism, and, perhaps, even within the Graeco-Roman world as a whole.

The vocabulary used needs to be examined. Such blanket assertions are initially attractive, but against what background? For, as we have seen, Judaism was not monolithic, and there were a variety of sects and groups incorporated within such a demarcation. When “Judaism” is invoked there is a danger of making a definition which ignores this variety and, perhaps, even makes an anachronistic school of Judaism represent the whole (Price 2002, 319-20). When the rich variety of Judaism is considered in its fullness, much more caution needs to be taken before invoking such strong terms. The question that a more nuanced view demands is whether such beliefs were impossible in light of the more complex reality.

7.3.1. *For Want of A Name*

Let us suggest first that the Supper Narratives appear to originate with Jesus, even if their exact wording cannot be identified (cf. pp. 309, ¶ 7.2.3.) The traditions, as we have them, begin by connecting wine, blood, and, drinking. All three elements figure, with various emphases, in all of the Synoptic accounts, John, and 1 Cor⁸.

In the Synoptics and Paul, the symbolic identification of wine with blood and the command to drink are present, but the controversial phrase “drinking blood” is not used. The nearest equivalent is found in 1 Cor 10:16: κοινωμία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The action is described as a “sharing”. Yet drinking appears to be implicit in the sharing and consumption of the contents of a cup whose contents are identified with blood and covenant. In fact, the command to “drink” is explicit in two of the Supper Narratives (Matt 26:27; 1 Cor 11:25). Mk 14:23 records the action as a statement rather than an imperative. It appears that accounts which use the imperative may be changing the statement into a rubric for the groups which read the accounts (Argyle 1963, 5). If this is so, it must be noted that this tendency, given its appearance in 1 Cor, is not restricted to the later stages of the formation of the accounts, but appears in one of the earlier written traditions.

There is no apologetic, and no attempt to defend Jesus from any charge. Either the writers are trying to play down these words, or else there is no controversy. The phrase “drinking blood” may not be used, but the action of “drinking blood” in some form is surely implicit, even if not directly named⁹.

7.3.2. *Cup/Wine Metonymy*

All the accounts of the Supper involve actions with the cup. Their natural meaning is that the contents of the cup should be shared (Luke 22:17) or drunk (Matt 26:27, 1 Cor 11:25). It is unlikely that Mk, who alone specifies no verb, held a different meaning. This implies the drinking of the contents of the cup, identified with blood (Mk 14:24, Matt 26:28, Luke 22:20, 1 Cor 11: 25). Luke and Paul appear to accentuate different elements, focussing on the “cup ... in (lit.) my blood” (τὸ ποτήριον...ἐν τῷ [ἐμῷ- Paul] αἵματί [μου- Luke]).

However, Cahill is surely right to point out that such a difference in emphasis is of little real importance:

We have here an obvious metonymy. So, sensibly, Otfried Hofius writes:
"The subject of the word on the cup ... stands by metonymy, for the content, i.e., for the wine in the cup (vessel-content metonymy?)" (97).

(Cahill 2000, np)

A number of commentators have attempted to use the "cup" language as a way of sidestepping the problems raised by the drinking of blood (e.g., Theissen & Merz 1998, 421; Marxsen 1970, 9-10). Does this really help? Such a distinction does not really resolve the key issue (Davies 1962a, 251), and does not deal with the problem across all the texts under consideration. Even if it could be upheld, an explanation would still need to be made in respect of Mk and Matt. It begs a further question: what was to happen to wine so identified by Jesus? The symbol (blood) appears acceptable, but not the action (drinking). What are we to make of this in light of the surviving evidence? Nowhere do we encounter a Christian use of wine in the period which points to an alternate usage acceptable according to the criteria of "classic" Judaic practice. Such an attempt to cut off the unacceptable action seems as unsuccessful as the stress on the cup rather than its contents. If we are to accept the symbolism, the logic of the accounts of the ritual demands that the action of drinking be seen as a necessary component, no matter how difficult this may seem. To do otherwise appears Procrustean.

7.3.3. Possible Sources for the Practice of "Drinking Blood"

Still the problem remains: how might "drinking blood" have been considered an acceptable action? Let us start the search by examining possible sources for "drinking blood". Our previous research has pointed to several possibilities: the Mystery Religions, blood rituals in Roman religion and Jewish eschatological thinking all include the drinking of blood.

7.3.3.1. "Drinking Blood": A Universal Taboo?

There is a long tradition that "drinking blood" was unacceptable in the cultures of the Ancient Mediterranean. Within Judaism and early Christianity there

were distinct prohibitions on the consumption of blood. Within the Judaic cultus, the “classic” practice of ancient Israel, blood was viewed as God’s portion, and its consumption by human beings prohibited (Douglas 1971, 77). Acts 15: 29 appears to uphold the tradition (Dunn 1996, 206; Haenchen 1971, 471-2).

Graeco-Roman culture did not operate with the same prohibitions as Judaism. Yet, the overwhelming view is given that “drinking blood” was also prohibited in Graeco-Roman culture. A number of points need to be clarified.

First, when “drinking blood” is considered, a distinction must be made between anthropophagy and the drinking of blood. Whilst anthropophagy was almost universally taboo, drinking blood (sometimes even human) might be possible, albeit in very few cases. Both Pliny the Elder and Celsus prescribe the drinking of gladiators’ blood as a cure for epilepsy. Pliny is remarkably non-judgemental, but Celsus is in no doubt that it was a terrible cure for a terrible disease¹⁰.

Evidence for a rite called the *assaratum*, in which blood was mixed with wine before consumption, has already been noted (Ch.4, p.149, ¶ 4.3). This allows a literal consumption of blood in some circumstances. Yet “drinking blood” was not restricted to literal understandings, but could also function as a religious metaphor:

It is instructive to recall the context in which the drinking of blood was acceptable. First-century folk who participated in mystery cult rituals were no more tolerant of cannibalism than we are. There is no evidence that, in itself, drinking of blood was not revolting for them, generally speaking. Yet, we find it in religious ritual.

(Cahill 2000, np)¹¹

Thus, ancient precedents suggest that “drinking blood”, though not human blood, might be part of Graeco-Roman cult practice.

7.3.3.2. How Did Drinking Blood become Acceptable Practice in Judaic Tradition?

The possibility of “drinking blood” within Graeco-Roman religious practice is not the end of the matter. It points to a further question, namely, how could an

essentially Jewish theologian view it as now acceptable to drink blood? For this question holds good whether we consider Paul, Mk, an earlier theologian of the tradition, or Jesus himself, to have been the author of such ideas.

The supposed presence of Semitisms (Jeremias 1987, 178-82 [πολλῶν - Mk 14:24], 185 [omission of ἔστιν - Luke 22:20]) within the texts concerned with blood points to a Jewish provenance at some point in the process of transmission¹². However, the number of Semitisms can be questioned, and the two texts cited are open to debate. Mk 14:24 may rather be quoted from Isa 53:12 (N-A 27; Hagner 1995, 773). Variations in the use of ἔστιν may be too haphazard to indicate the presence of a Hebraism or Graecism with any degree of reliability (Maccoby 1991, 266). Nonetheless, despite this, it is well-nigh impossible to imagine a process of transmission which did not involve the participation, and implicitly, the assent of Jewish thinkers in its formulations.

7.3.3.3. "Drinking Blood": A Borrowing from the Mystery Religions?

It is possible that Dionysiac worship provided an encounter with a religious tradition in which the drinking of blood was symbolised by wine. Such theology might have engaged with Jewish thought in the Ptolemaic period when there were attempts to convert Jewish believers to the cult of Dionysus (Price 2002, 322)¹³.

7.3.3.4. Scurlock: Dionysiac Practice in Judaism

A detailed study of the conflation of Dionysiac and Jewish practice and theology is found in Scurlock (2000, 143-150, cf. Cousland 2003, 50). The data suggests neither forced introduction of Dionysiac ritual into Judea (Scurlock 2000, 149, fn. 102), nor a complete lack of contact. Dionysiac imagery appears to have been adopted by some within Judaism. The victory celebrations recorded in 3 Macc 6:30-6 and 7:18-20 include ritual elements similar to Bacchic worship (Cousland 2001, 546). At other points, the victory of the God of Israel shows his superiority in actions associated with Dionysus in the *Bacchae* of Euripides (543-4): sleep (3 Macc 5:3, 11-12), frenzy (5:30-1; 6:21)¹⁴. While this evidence comes from Egypt, it appears typical of a process which took place throughout the Diaspora:

Any doubts about the existence of a fairly massive syncretism in the synagogues should have been dispelled at the very latest with the work of Goodenough. In my opinion it is also beyond doubt that this syncretism betrays the closeness of the Jewish synagogues to the Hellenistic mysteries and to the philosophical schools which had come to behave more and more in accordance with the mysteries.

(Georgi 1986, 115)

A number of commentators are prepared to see such developments as possible in the Diaspora, or arising from predominantly Gentile environments. Thus Cahill is able to say:

That Jesus could have mentioned his blood as symbolized by wine is entirely possible, but the drinking of the wine as his blood is possible only in a Hellenistic Christian community that took the Eucharistic rite a step further under the influence of the surrounding religious customs.

(Cahill 2002, np)

Accounts which would make an action acceptable in Diaspora situations, but not in Palestine, are in danger of setting up a false distinction. Judaism was pluriform, but this was not based on geography. Theories which assume a different level of interaction between the cultures in the two locales appear increasingly outdated:

Driven by the detailed and often polemical studies of such scholars as Morton Smith and Martin Hengel, the paradigms of scholarship gradually shifted to a recognition that, as Smith once wrote, "Palestine in the first century was profoundly Hellenized". The boundary between "Judaism" and "Hellenism" was not geographical. Indeed, "Judaism" was in some senses a Hellenistic religion.

(Meeks 2001, 25)

There is no need to see such syncretism only in the Diaspora: all the components for similar developments were present within Palestine¹⁵.

7.3.3.5. Evidence for Dionysiac Practice in Palestine

What of Palestine? Numismatic evidence points to Dionysus cults in the major cities around Palestine (Wick 2004, 187). The presence of Dionysiac imagery in carvings on the Temple at Jerusalem is also noted (Josephus, *Ant.*,

15.395)¹⁶. Could engagement have occurred at the level of concept and practice?

Whilst this points to possible contact between Dionysiac religion and Judaism, even in the environment which provided the first stages of the Supper traditions, it is still not clear whether the adoption of Dionysiac imagery, and, perhaps, concepts, led some Jews to think “drinking blood” was acceptable. Nevertheless, the presence of Dionysiac practice in the region raises the intriguing possibility that teaching about wine, particularly in the Johannine account, may represent an engagement with Graeco-Roman religious practice, perhaps even such practice mediated through Jewish adherents.

Thus, the “drinking blood” motif could be explained as originating in cults and meal traditions present within in Palestine and surrounding areas.

Can these be connected to what we know of Jesus? To be sure, there is no evidence that directly connects Jesus to the Mystery cults. Scholars have connected Jesus with magic (e.g., Smith 1978) and with philosophical schools such as Cynicism (e.g., Crossan 1991)¹⁷, but none has ventured a thesis such as “Jesus the Mystery Initiate” - yet¹⁸. There is no need to make such a specific identification. Acquaintance with rituals involving Dionysus need not demand an involvement with Mystery practice, but only with the meal traditions of the Graeco-Roman world, which included religious activity exemplified by the pouring of libations.

All that need be suggested was that Jesus was familiar with meal traditions of Greeks and Romans living in and around Palestine. Hints at this familiarity can be seen in the Gospel accounts. Smith (2002, 222) lists typical elements of Graeco-Roman practice encountered within the meal descriptions of Mk, even describing the cup drunk at the Last Supper (Mk 14:23) as typical of a libation.

The evidence for such conflation in Palestine, combined with the questions raised about “drinking blood” in the Mysteries, and the actual contents of their rituals, should raise question marks over theories which rush to attribute eucharistic thinking to influence from Hellenistic mysteries. Other less spectacular influences might be at work. A further *caveat* comes from the fact

that influences so attributed (e.g., sacramentalism) need not be seen in the later stages of the development of the eucharist, but can be seen in the earliest stages of its development in both Mk and Paul's writing (Hofius 1993, 76).

Dionysiac thinking may indeed have been the origin for the practice of drinking blood, and may have influenced previous Jewish practice¹⁹. However, the evidence is not conclusive, and no "line of transmission" can be clearly traced from Dionysiac Mysteries to Second Temple Judaism, nor the Supper Narratives, nor the eucharist. At best claims for such an influence are circumstantial. Even if Dionysiac imagery is present, there is no guarantee, given the long interaction between Judaism and alien worship, that any pagan influence remained "live" by the early first century CE (Hengel 1995, 331).

This prompts a further line of examination, whether or not there might be motifs elsewhere within Jewish literature and practice which might provide the seed imagery for these developments. Imagery associated with "drinking blood" from the Old Testament and Second Temple period now needs to be considered.

7.3.3.6. "Drinking Blood" in Judaism: A Fragment of Evidence

With that in mind we can note a small piece of evidence unearthed by Margaret Barker which may point to the consumption of blood being possible in a literal sense. In discussing the *Letter of Barnabas* 7 she finds a verse that suggests that blood might be consumed as part of the Temple ritual (text in Ch.4, p.185-6, fn. 15). As she remarks,

This verse is very important for understanding the original significance of the Eucharist. Eating unwashed parts of a sacrifice means that blood was consumed in a temple ritual. 'Drinking blood', so often cited as an example of the 'unJewishness' of eucharistic symbolism, was Temple practice for the great Atonement sacrifice of Yom Kippur. One can understand why this had to disappear, even though there is a disparaging reference to it in the Mishnah.

(Barker 2003, 300)

These people presumably considered themselves to be "true Jews" although engaged in a practised often described as "impossible". If such beliefs can be

shown to be present within the multiplicity of Jewish sacrificial rituals, there is no need to demand that they originated or developed due to any influence from Graeco-Roman practice. They could have been part and parcel of Jewish understandings of ritual connected with the Atonement. Even if a foreign influence or origin were established, it would imply that some Jews deemed such details acceptable. However, since Barker's findings are still open to debate, and might limit such activity only to a priestly caste, the net needs to be cast further. It is possible that the move to the acceptance of "drinking blood" may originate within the Temple cult itself, or texts from the Old Testament.

7.3.3.7. Blood As Symbol In The Old Testament

Consideration of such practice starts with reflection on possible antecedents within Judaism: we have already noted the significance of blood within the cult (Ch.4., pp. 138-40, ¶ 4.2.5.4.-5.). Within the Old Testament, drinking blood could also be used symbolically.

7.3.3.8. "Drinking Blood": An Eschatological Motif in the Old Testament

The LXX texts of both Zech 9:15 and Ezek 39:17-19 depict an eschatological battle in which blood is drunk. In Ezek, the blood is not drunk by the victors, but by the birds and wild beasts who will feast on the slain enemies of God. In the LXX Zech 9:15, the participants in the eschatological battle (cf. Ch.5, p. 206, ¶ 5.2.7.) may drink blood, but it is far from clear whether the drinking of blood is viewed in a positive light, or could be translated to a ritual context, or might rather refer to the scale of the slaughter, or be redundant imagery (i.e., bereft of its original significance). Isa 49:26 contains similar imagery, but the drinking of blood is viewed negatively: it is a fate which befalls the enemies of God, and condemned using the image of drunkenness.

7.3.3.9. 2 Samuel 23:17 and 1 Chronicles 11:19: A Davidic Precedent for "Drinking Blood"?

Lang (2002, 193) and Wright (2002, 85) have suggested that King David provides a precedent for drinking blood²⁰. Both interpretations begin with blood symbolism. 2 Sam 23:17 and 1 Chr 11:19 portray David symbolically identifying water with blood (that is, the life of those who had put themselves

at risk). Thus there is no problem with symbolic identification of the element. But neither provides a good *prima facie* precedent for drinking blood. Let us reconsider these two Davidic examples carefully. David did not actually drink what had been described as blood. The incident only works as a precedent for drinking blood at the Supper if it is assumed that the actions of pouring a libation and drinking were interchangeable²¹. But, then, the whole point of the original story would be lost if drinking and pouring language were identical. David did *not* drink the water brought to him. David did not wish to be thought even a potential cause of death, and thus did not drink.

Fenton (1991, 420) alone works out a more plausible use of this passage: where David dissociates himself from the men's (potential) death, Jesus appears to make his disciples drink the wine (his blood) and tells them that they are responsible for his death. He further argues that such metaphorical language is primarily Hebraic, and related to metaphorical understandings of "eating flesh", basing his argument particularly on the use of imagery from *Psalms* (see above, pp. 310-2, ¶ 7.2.3.1.) and the New Testament²².

7.3.3.10. 1 Samuel 21:2-7: Davidic Precedent For "Illicit" Practice

1 Sam 21:2-7 tells another story about David which is relevant. David argues that his hungry troops be allowed to eat the bread of offering. This was a breach of customary practice. Significantly, the account is one which figures in the portrayal of Jesus' teaching about the Law (Mk 2:23-28 and //s). There may also be cultic resonances given that the "show-bread" was considered a memorial which might even be described as a "sacramental manna" (Thurian 1960, 49-52). Meier notes that the crux of the passage is not about eating on the Sabbath, but David's consumption of a forbidden food (2004, 575-6). Even if the passage does not provide an exact precedent for Jesus' actions and words at the Supper it sets that event within the wider context of Jesus' reform of cult. The words about blood should be considered as part of the wider programme and discussion on Law, food and purity. This is the approach adopted by Stettler (2004, 173) who argues that such teaching makes human need a priority over and above cultic law. Human need may make a previously illicit action become appropriate.

A further piece of evidence supports the logic of this argument. What is even more significant is that it refers to the use of blood, albeit not in a ritual. Whilst Lev suggests that blood on garments is a pollutant, Rev uses the “blood of the Lamb” as a detergent:

This image of the “blood of the Lamb” also reverses the categorization of blood on garments as seen in Lev 6:27. Instead of polluting, the Lamb’s blood becomes a metaphor of purification when the saints and “the word of God” wash their robes in it (Rev. 7:14; 19:13). Rather than the used detergent that may splash the priest’s vestments, in Revelation’s description washing one’s garments in blood becomes a symbol of either purification and belonging (7:14) or empowerment (19:13, see also 12:11).

(Hanson 1993, np)

It would not seem out of place to suggest that Jesus’ fresh definitions of purity enabled a re-alignment or re-accentuation of actions in which what was previously considered inappropriate has become appropriate. This includes not just the action of drinking, but in certain respects, of washing. This is not an isolated incident: a similar re-alignment appears in Heb 9:20 where the action of drinking, associated with the “blood” of the eucharist replaces the “sprinkling” of the Mosaic covenant, and thus, the Temple ritual (Ch.4, p.167-9, ¶ 4.4.3.1.).

Considered thus, the argument about blood becomes one amongst a number of arguments rather than an isolated incident. “Drinking blood” becomes acceptable because Jesus makes the human need answered by this action a priority over conventional practice. What was previously forbidden has become acceptable because of Jesus’ programmatic reform.

7.3.3.11. 1 Samuel 21:2-7: Associations with Melchizedek

Whilst 1 Sam 21:2-7 is associated primarily with Davidic precedent, it may also suggest analogies to Melchizedek. Such associations are based firstly on the identification of actions exclusively performed by the ancient high priests: the Atonement rituals and the consumption of the “show bread” (cf. Lev 24:9; Barker 2003, 75). The second consideration is the belief that the “show bread” represented the priesthood: this is based on the Midrash (*Rab.Gen.* XLIII.6; cf. Barker 2003, 75; 248) ²³. The identification of Melchizedek as God’s High

Priest and the significance of his actions with bread and wine are also found in Philo's *Allegorical Interpretations* 3.79-82²⁴. The third stage is the recognition that, within Second Temple Judaism, Melchizedek was associated with Atonement ritual (Ch.4, p.135, ¶ 4.2.4.2.). This combination of factors raises the intriguing possibility that analogies to the Melchizedek traditions exist, even if the extant sources themselves did not directly shape the Gospel traditions. The Supper Narratives may well draw on a scriptural precedent for a ritual of bread and wine (Gen 14:17-24) mediated through contemporary reflection on ritual meals²⁵. It also means that, from a comparatively early date, Christian theologians were concerned with the actions of Melchizedek as well as his genealogy (Ch.4, p.169-70, ¶ 4.4.3.2.)²⁶.

7.3.3.12 "Licit" Precedent in the Jewish Cult?

The licit use of blood in Jewish cult practice may also help make the action acceptable. The classic proscriptions in Judaism against the drinking of blood focus on what humans may or may not do (Ch.4, pp.138-40, ¶ 4.2.5.5.). They do not proscribe what is licit or illicit for God. The Temple rites included the symbolic ingestion of blood by God. This relates to the actions performed by Jesus at the last meals he shared with his disciples. These can be described by reference to a number of different meal traditions. What Jesus did may go beyond the role of a *paterfamilias* (Passover meal) or a Messianic priest (meals of the Qumran/Essene type): they may be an imitation of God (*Imitatio Dei*, cf. Ch.4, pp.132-3, ¶ 4.2.3.)

Does Jesus need to be bound by the proscription if he is performing the action of God? We have already seen such activity in ritual described using the language of symbolism and analogy. Within the New Testament, it is possible that a further dimension is also present. By this is meant an iconic representation, a term used by Paul to describe the way in which Jesus resembles God, in which the εἰκών comes close to being "the actuality, the reality, rather than an image in the sense of a partial though perceptible similarity" (Barr 1994, 164).

7.3.3.13. *Imitatio Dei*: The Role of the Disciple

Such a line of arguing might solve the problem of Jesus' "drinking blood", but, it might be rightly objected, does little to explain the disciples' sharing in the cup. They obviously do not share Jesus' iconic role. In the classic pattern of imitation, the priest and offerer play the part of God, whilst the animal sacrificed plays the part of the people of Israel (Klawans 2001, 151). Here the pattern is different: Jesus takes on the role of both the priest and victim as the provider of the meal and the one identified with the elements. The disciples are not portrayed as engaging in actions which would allow them to play the part of God: their role is one of receptivity. They are the beneficiaries of actions undertaken by Jesus rather than active players.

Such a format suggests that "drinking blood" is not legitimised by the participants taking the place of God. There are fundamental differences in the roles undertaken in the "classic" *Imitatio Dei* those of the Supper Narratives which rule out their correspondence²⁷.

7.3.3.14. Conclusions

The above investigation makes several suggestions. First, claims that "drinking blood" was an impossibility need to be qualified. There were a number of exceptions to this overall condemnation in both secular and sacred use in Graeco-Roman culture. These may or may not have arisen as a consequence of syncretism in earlier periods. However, the Supper Narratives cannot be identified as a "direct descendant" of any particular Graeco-Roman ritual. Any connections remain, at best, conjectural.

Within Judaism, the symbolic use of blood and Davidic precedents might have given some legitimacy to this novel action. Fenton's identification of eating as a metaphor for destruction is useful. It remains controversial, and has been adopted by few (above, pp. 310-1, ¶ 7.2.3.1., cf. pp. 337, fn. 30). Whilst noting the existence of the metaphor, he does not show that it translates into a cult setting. A lack of precedent does not mean that something is impossible: were this so, the literary phenomenon of the *hapax legomenon* would not exist.

A stronger case can be made for gaining legitimacy from the Davidic precedents. It is, however, the actions involving the "show bread" (1 Sam

21:2-7) which provide the precedent rather than those involving (symbolic) blood (2 Sam 23:17; 1 Chr 11:19). If nothing else, this makes “drinking blood” an element in a wider programme of purity reform rather than a unique oddity. This conclusion may be supported by noting that none of the Synoptic writers or Paul draws any more attention to the action of “drinking blood” than any other element of Jesus’ reforms.

It appears plausible that the process at work here might be identified with the phenomena known as re-accentuation and *bricolage* (Ch.1, pp.17-9, ¶1.3.4.7.), in which the emerging Christian communities use cultural phenomena in new and unexpected ways to answer their perceived needs.

Thus far, we might have managed to explain how the imagery came into the Supper Narratives, but the identification of a source does not address its controversial nature. It seems to come from Jesus, portrayed as permitting the drinking of blood. Given this source, why does “drinking blood” remain controversial in John when other equally controversial teaching (e.g., about the Sabbath) raises no such problems?

At this point, we do well to remind ourselves again of the wider issue of controversy and conflict about food and eating with Jewish tradition. Sanders’ useful summary of controversies about food and Sabbath laws concludes with a basic insight from modern criticism: the need to identify the *Sitz im Leben* of particular sayings, and whether they address issues from the time of Jesus, or of the Early Church (1993, 220-3).

7.3.4. “Drinking Blood”: The Date of the Controversy

Only in John 6:53ff. does a dispute arise: ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα (John 6:54). It is presented as a controversy between Jesus and the Jews of his time. If, however, we bear in mind Sanders’ analysis, we can legitimately ask whether it has been put in the right context. Does this really centre on Jesus or the Early Church? If it truly involves perceptions of Jesus, or even the early transmission of the Supper material, why does the problem not even appear in any of the other accounts?

It is only in later writings that polemic over the nature of the eucharist surfaces. Such accusations became a feature of theology in the apostolic period. John is commonly represented as a Gospel produced in that later period. Indeed, it is at that point that John 6 undergoes its final redactions (Brown 1988, lxxx-lxxxvi; 287).

Similar remarks are made by McGrath:

The references to blood as well as flesh cannot derive from the manna traditions, and thus its most likely origin is in the Christian eucharistic tradition. As Beasley-Murray, a commentator without any particular pro-sacramentarian bias, writes, "it is evident that neither the Evangelist nor the Christian readers could have written or read the saying without conscious reference to the eucharist". However, it is still necessary to beware of reading later developments back into the Fourth Gospel, and of assuming that later views derived from this text necessarily provide the best interpretation of it.²⁸

(1997, np)

The *locus* for the argument is found in the tension between synagogue and early church (cf. Barrett 1978, 284-5), but also denotes different factions or schools within emerging Christianity (Cullmann 1953, 95). Set in this context, John 6 may be an argument against those who adopted an overly literalistic view of the meal of the early Christians (i.e., accused them of anthropophagy) and ignored the finesse of John's sacramental and symbolic thinking. It is also possible that the argument addresses a more commonly identified theme. Commentators point out that one of the main themes of John is to counter Docetic teaching by using realistic language (John 6:54)²⁹. Yet such literal language itself became open to misinterpretation. This language fits well in the context of a controversy which is addressed throughout the Gospel. However, it is anachronistic to place it in Jesus' context. Such an argument explains both the presence of such realistic teaching in John, and its absence from the other accounts.

The argument about "drinking blood" is a straw man, and its ascription to the historical Jesus has spawned a fruitless line of argument. Let us consider this conclusion from another perspective by asking a straightforward question: if the Johannine account had not existed, would the controversial issue of

“drinking blood” ever have been raised by New Testament scholars? I think not³⁰. The displacement of a later issue to Jesus’ context has only provided an unhelpful diversion.

7.3.5. *Literalism and Symbolism*

We immediately need to make a distinction between literal and symbolic interpretations of “drinking blood”. There is no evidence for crude literalism within the thinking of the Synoptic writers, John, or Paul. The separation of the cult meal from any sacrifice in which real blood was actually spilled makes this an impossibility in any case: where does the (literal) blood come from if there is no sacrifice or victim (cf. Hanson 1993, np)³¹?

Christian thought and practice need to be considered against the background of symbolic ritual, rites in which wine could represent blood, and bread, body or flesh (cf. Morgan 1991, 425).

The distinction of literal and symbolic is a feature of John 6, found elsewhere in the gospel. John 4:7-9 has a similar structure where a discussion of literal drinking leads on to a soteriological dialogue. So, too, does John 3:4-5 where a confusion of the literal and figurative meaning of being “born from above” leads to a misunderstanding of Jesus’ teaching (McGrath 1997, np)³². A confusion of the literal and figurative is evident in John 6 and contributes to misunderstanding and the strong rejection of Jesus’ teaching by the majority. Even symbolic understandings may be difficult. Whilst the argument shifts towards *symbolic* understandings of blood, it should not be assumed that this implies a purely *spiritual* interpretation:

Studying the fourth gospel’s feeding imagery has brought to light the way in which John blends and blurs the literal and the figurative and thus the material and the spiritual. In fact, although literal/figurative, material/spiritual, and external/internal distinctions are helpful for the sake of analysis, they are foreign to John’s thinking. For the evangelist, there is no dualism, nor even an identifiably “sharp distinction” between the two, as Borgen and others believe. The literal is immured in the figurative, the ironic collapses into the paradoxical, and consequently, earthly matters fold into heavenly ones, or to

use the patristics' neo-Platonic image, the earthly "participates" in the heavenly.

(English 2001, 214)³³

Purely spiritual interpretations do not do justice to the physical terms used, whether derived from Hebraic anthropology, early Christian realism, or the context of the Passover and Jesus' Passion (cf. Ashby 2002, 60). As the research in progress indicates, the New Testament writers used all these in their interpretation of Jesus' last meal.

By the time of the final redaction of John to the form which we possess, such language, whilst remaining difficult, had become a valid means of describing the ritual actions demanded by faith. By implication, "drinking blood" had become, at least for some, an acceptable way of understanding a number of gestures within the eucharist. Among them we can number those who subscribed to the theology of the Gospels and became followers of the new emerging Christianity. Whether it was central or peripheral, the ritual activity described in terms which might summarised as "drinking blood" was, for them, not an obstacle to, but vehicle of, salvation. Improbable, yes; impossible, no³⁴. Brodie (1993, 286) argues that such revolting imagery is a consequence of language about death, which is itself revolting, yet is transformed by the eucharist. The horror of death is "swallowed up" (286) by the thanksgiving of the eucharist.

The passage so often used to show the strength of the "orthodox" Jewish reaction to drinking blood (John 6:59-66) actually reveals that, whilst a majority ceased to follow Jesus, a minority presumably overcame their objections³⁵. Klawans (2002, 6) marks the most extreme reaction to the claim that such thinking was impossible, arguing that no eucharistic tradition contravened contemporary Jewish purity codes (cf. Morgan 1991, 425). John 6 notes strong criticism of "drinking blood" (as expressed in the majority view), whilst really affirming the concept.

This should not be seen as a shocking, isolated statement. Rather it should be set against the wider context of Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath and cult, e.g., in Mk 2:23-8. The only documented opponents of the term, let alone the gesture which it described, are those criticised in John. Blood is not

interpreted literally, but rather symbolically. In the thinking of the time, symbol and reality were not be separated (unlike modern symbolic theory): modern terminology might more accurately express such concepts using the language of sacramentals. The Johannine eucharist may be described not merely as a memorial, but having a sacramental significance (Sandmel 1956, 279).

7.3.6. *What Does Blood “Mean”?*

There are a number of symbolic understandings of blood. We have noted its used as a symbol of the life-force, and its shedding as the giving of life. Blood can thus come to signify death. It can operate either as detergent or contaminant. Blood also is the sacrificial element which is associated with God (Ch.4, pp.138-40, ¶ 4.2.5.5.). Do these traditions figure in the Johannine imagery, and the wider context of the Supper Narratives?

Blood, in classic Judaic practice, has two possible uses, to cleanse or pollute, it is self-evident that it is used as a detergent in these accounts, in contrast to the polluting blood of Rev 17:2-6 (King 2004, 307-8). This cleansing effect is connected to ideas such as covenant.

7.3.6.1. Blood and Covenant

Blood was also used as the sign of the covenant. The two are linked in the Old Testament (Ch.4, pp. 138-40, ¶ 4.2.5.4.-5.). That the blood of the Supper functions in this way is made clear by its specific designation as “my blood of the covenant” (τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης - Mk 14:24; Matt 26:28), and “the new covenant in my blood” (ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου- Luke 22:20 and ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ...ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι - 1 Cor 11:25). It is possible that the Marcan τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης is a restructured form. It also might indicate that the locus of meaning is found in covenant symbolism (Thiselton 2000, 884)³⁶. The precise ordering (either verbally or chronologically) of the two terms is, however, ultimately of little importance (Conzelmann 1975, 199; Taylor 1966, 546, fn. 24b).

Such a connection with covenant also helps to resolve the issue of how τῆς διαθήκης should be translated. The translation of “covenant” has been assumed, but need not necessarily be correct. There are two potential

translations of διαθήκη: “covenant” or “testament”³⁷? The former would connect the Supper to the covenant made between God and man, the latter suggest the last wishes of Jesus (Hering 1962, 117). Some scholars have suggested that the “testament” might locate the meal within the realm of Hellenistic memorial meals. Hering notes two difficulties for such a theory. The first, that it was unlikely Jesus knew about such practices, may be open to dispute, given the interplay of cultures in the area(above, pp. 321-3, ¶ 7.3.3.5.). The second is that καινή has neither clear meaning nor relevance in a Graeco-Roman context. Its use presents a strong case for the relevance of Jewish interpretations of διαθήκη, where a distinction of “old” and “new” would make sense (Hering 1962, 118 fn. 51).

Luke and 1 Cor both favour the sense of “covenant”, juxtaposed against the covenant of Sinai (Exod 24). The addition of “new” (καινή) implies both continuity with, and a break from, the previous covenant and its associated rites after the fashion of Exod 24:8 and Jer. 31:31-4 (Barrett 1971, 286-7; Thiselton 2000, 885). The covenant of Sinai is open to sacrificial interpretations: examples are found in both the *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg Ps.-J.* (Green 1997, 763, fn 74). However, the connection to the covenant is drawn in different ways. For Luke, there is no explicit suggestion that sins are forgiven; his emphasis is rather on the inauguration of a new era (Conzelmann 1982, 199-200).

Matt, on the other hand, appears to favour the parallelism with the old covenant because of the qualification, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν:

Matthew’s form of the words ‘My blood of the covenant poured out for many for the *aphesis* of sins’ (Mat.26.28) suggests the same context, since *aphesis* was the translation for *d̥ror*, liberty, the characteristic of the Jubilee which was inaugurated on the Day of Atonement (LXX Lev.25.10; Isa.61.1 also Luke 4.18). Since the great Jubilee at the end of the second temple period was associated with the appearance of Melchizedek and his atonement sacrifice (11Q Melch), we have here a possible contemporary context for the words of institution.

(Barker 2003, 75-6, cf. Hagner 1995, 773)³⁸

Thus, the Supper is interpreted as the means by which the covenant between God and his people is renewed, where the people are no longer the Israel of

history, but the Church, and Jesus is the victim whose sacrifice binds the two parties together. Matt has made a dramatic shift in emphasis from Mk, who uses this phrase to relate the forgiveness of sins to Baptism. Matt's purpose is not to diminish the importance of Baptism, but to stress the forgiveness which comes from Jesus' offering of his own life (Beare 1981, 509). Whilst there are differences in emphasis, the role of blood in effecting change is common to all the accounts.

7.3.6.2. "In my blood": Blood as Agent of the Covenant

The covenant is identified with an agent, blood. Somehow, blood is the means through which a covenant relationship is effected. The blood is specifically likened to Jesus by possessive adjectives which describe it as his own (μου - Mk 14:24; Matt 26:28 and Luke 22:20; ἐμῷ - 1 Cor 11:25). Whilst it is possible that blood may refer in the first instance to fellowship with the Risen Christ (after Lietzmann, cf. Thiselton 2000, 885), the phraseology associated with the covenant and the blood points rather towards a sacrificial understanding, and this means an identification with the spilling of blood, i.e., the death of Jesus (Barrett 1971, 269).

7.3.6.3. "On Behalf Of" Whom?

The construction on "behalf of" (ὑπὲρ + Genit. ὑμῶν) is found in reference to the bread (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24 – both "on behalf of you") and the cup (Mk 14:24- "on behalf of many", Luke 22:20– "on behalf of you"). Matt 26:28 uses a variant (τὸ περὶ πολλῶν- on behalf of many/all)³⁹. Within Mk and Luke these primarily refer to the disciples, but, given their placement within a Gospel addressed to others, may include the readers as well. 1 Cor confirms this emphasis: the historical reference is widened to include Paul's correspondents at Corinth. Matt 26:28 has the widest application, based on the preferred term, πολλῶν. Πολλῶν appears to be the earlier form: the alternative use of ὑμῶν may stem from liturgical rather than theological influence (Jeremias 1968, 543)⁴⁰.

Whilst πολλῶν may be comprehensive in meaning (Davies & Allison 1997, 474), other meanings are possible. The Semitic usage in the Dead Sea Scrolls raises the possibility of πολλῶν having an exclusive or restricted sense

to refer to a specific group (Riesner 2003, 183-4). This raises the question of who benefits from Christ's sacrifice: the world or the faithful?

The wider use of πολλῶν in both the Old and New Testaments suggests an inclusive meaning is intended. First, it must be noted that the potential ambiguity arises because, in Semitic usage, πολλ- also does the work of πᾶς. In Greek, πᾶς is used for "all" (inclusive), πολλ- for "many" (exclusive). This distinction was not found in רבים(ה)[Heb.]/ סגיאין [Aram.] which thus can bear both an exclusive and inclusive sense. As a noun, πολλ- used with and without the article in the LXX may bear an inclusive sense (Jeremias 1968 536-7). Within the New Testament, πολλ- is used mostly, but not always, in an inclusive sense (540-5; Albright & Mann 1971, 323). The characteristic ways in which Jesus acted suggest that an inclusive view is also more in keeping with his personality and teaching (O'Collins 1992, 74-7)

Particular significance arises from Isa 52:13-53:12, which points towards an inclusive sense of πολλ- (Jeremias 1968, 537-8). An inclusive understanding of *Is.* 52-3 is found elsewhere in post-Biblical Judaism, which associates "the many" with the lawless and the ungodly (esp. *1 En.* 62:3,5; *Wis* 4:16-5:3; *T.Benj.* 3:8). The *Peshitta Isa* 52:15, which is held to be pre-Christian (Jeremias 1968, 540, fn. 32), is translated "he will purify many peoples": an inclusive usage.

Commentators note the association of these verses with the description of the cup (Davies & Allison 1997, 474; Marshall 1979, 807). This allusion may be enhanced by the use of ἐκχυννόμενον (Mk 14:24; Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20) which has strong sacrificial connotations, being associated with sacrifice, murder or violent death (Davies & Allison 1997, 474, fn.136; Marshall 1979, 807, on the possible reference to (MT) Isa 53:12). It may also refer, given the Passover associations in the Synoptic accounts, to the slaughter of the Passover Lamb (Davies & Allison 1997, 474). Thus the words placed on the lips of Jesus echo the sacrificial associations of the feast (Mk 14:12, cf. Ch.6., pp. 267-9, ¶ 6.3.5.)⁴¹.

Claims that the use of ὑμῶν in 1 Cor 11:24 and Luke 22:19 imply a restricted sense do not hold up. Luke's preference for ὑμῶν does not detract from his

understanding of the vicarious nature of Jesus' death (Fitzmyer 1985, 1516). The use of πάντων in 2 Cor 5:14, 19 points to a universal understanding of Christ's death, which Paul associates with the eucharist (1 Cor 11: 26-7, cf. Jeremias 1968, 543)⁴².

The exclusive use in the Dead Sea Scrolls does not give sufficient grounds to argue that πολλ- only refers to the participants in the Supper, or, by extension, the community of faith. Stemming from the ambiguity of the Semitic רבים(ה)[Heb.]/ סגיאין [Aram.]⁴³, the preference for exclusivism reflects the different emphases on purity and community within the Qumran/Essene nexus. The different emphasis Jesus gave to purity and community is a major obstacle to his identification with the Qumran/Essene sectarians. Their views should not be the key to interpreting this verse.

The inclusive sense of πολλ- in the Supper Narratives is supported by:

- (a) Equivalent terminology, which is interpreted inclusively,
- (b) The understanding of Christ's death to which the cup is linked,
- (c) The pattern of table fellowship outside the Supper Narratives, and
- (d) The interpretation of Isa 52-3, alluded to in these verses, in post-Biblical Judaism (Jeremias 1968, 545).

The sacrificial understanding, and comprehensive interpretation holds good when the net is cast wider: similar understandings are found in the description of the Passover (Mk 14:12). The variations on the construction (ὑπὲρ + Genit.) appear to share a common meaning. Whatever the minor variations in wording, all four accounts imply that Jesus would shed his blood "for the many" (Cullmann 1959, 64; cf. Cranfield 1963, 427). When considered in relation to similar terms, they present Christ as a sacrifice for the world (Ashby 2002, 60, cf. Barrett 1978, 298) by linking the eucharist and Calvary, rather than as a victim effective only for a particular group or community⁴⁴.

7.3.7. Inculturation in the Cup/Blood Sayings

The drinking of blood appears to be problematic, an apparent anathema with Second Temple Judaism. Whilst this might suggest a process of inculturation which engages with Graeco-Roman practice, the reality is different. Once a confusion of literalism and symbolism is set aside, the symbolic use of blood does appear feasible within this context, particularly within Jesus' revision of purity and contamination. Blood imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures is used, but drastically re-accentuated: what once polluted now cleanses. This imagery further picks up sacrificial and covenant depth: blood remains the means by which the covenant between God and his people is ratified, though its use is drastically altered. Use of covenant language again shows contact between Graeco-Roman and Judaic manifestations, with the writers of the Narratives using Judaic variants (a *new* covenant) which are open to understanding by those from different contexts. The Supper Narratives also act as correctives to contemporary understandings of purity: they stress the inclusive nature of Jesus' programme rather than an exclusivist tendency as is seen in either Pharisaism or the Qumran/Essene nexus.

7.4. Sayings About The Cup & The Kingdom

[Mk 14:25; Matt 26:29; Luke 22:15, 16, 18, 29-30; 1 Cor 11:26]

The three Synoptic accounts all contain sayings which connect the cup to the Kingdom. Mk 14:25 concludes with words which describe Jesus as present in the Kingdom. Phraseology involving the Kingdom, under a number of related terms, is found in all the Synoptic accounts (for wider occurrences, see Ch.5, p. 2228-9, ¶ 5.4.2.). The references to the Kingdom, and, through the depiction of drinking, the Messianic banquet, reflect both Semitic ideas and vocabulary (Taylor 1966, 547, fn. 25a): such language is not part of Graeco-Roman eschatology (Ch.5, pp. 223-4, ¶ 5.3.5.).

Whilst Mk 14:25 describes only Jesus drinking (πίω/πίνω) in the Kingdom, both Matt 26:29 and Luke 22:25 expect that the disciples will join him in this

activity (μεθ' ὑμῶν). A different hope is expressed in 1 Cor 11:26. It emphasises the return of Jesus -ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ. Thus the reference is rather to the Parousia, the return of Jesus (cf. *Did.* 10:6, *Maranatha*; Koester 1998, 345-6; cf. Ch.5, p.250, fn. 50; Ch.8, pp. 381-2, ¶ 8.4.1.). All the accounts share a futurist element, and suggest that a purely “realised” eschatology does not do justice to their full significance.

7.4.1. *The Provenance of the Sayings*

The Lukan accounts contain a parallel saying in which Jesus expresses his desire to eat the Passover with them, and states that he will not eat it again until the Kingdom comes. Luke 22:16 demands a futurist understanding in relation to his Passover interpretation of the meal which parallels the timing of the cup (ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῇ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, cf. Leaney 1971, 267). Does this additional saying identify the Supper with the *Seder*? It would appear to indicate this if it can be traced to the historical Jesus. There are, however, three reasons to suggest that Luke has added this saying.

First, the saying is only found in the Lukan account: it is recorded neither by Mk or Matt. Their sayings relate the cup to the Kingdom, not to the *Seder*. Further, those cup/Kingdom sayings contain a number of Semitisms which indicate a Palestinian origin for the saying (Taylor 1966, 547). However, this is not conclusive given that Luke 22:15 also shows signs of both a Septuagintism and Palestinian Aramaic (ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα- Fitzmyer 1985, 1395).

Second, Luke 22:15 shows signs of a word play typical of the symposium literary tradition. To this extent, it would appear to show signs of Luke’s literary tendencies. Here there is a play on the meaning of the word πάσχ-, drawing out a reference to the death of Jesus (Brumberg-Kraus 1999, 179; Fitzmyer 1985, 1396; Michaelis 1967, 913). There may be some evidence in these sayings for the literary symposium form in Luke, given that this is not an isolated example. The concept of covenant (διαθήκη), common to all the Synoptic accounts, occurs in Luke 22:20. Luke 22:29 features two instances of the related verb, διατίθημι. Brumberg-Kraus (1999, 174, n.10) notes this is

similar to the wordplays found in the *Mishnah* texts about the Passover. Kurz offers an alternative theory, based on his preference of the literary farewell address as an influence of the final form of *Luke*:

A farewell address could hardly begin with the eucharistic words, so these others were prefixed to indicate clearly the situation of a final meal and impending death.

(1985, 268)

Both forms, the symposium literary tradition and the farewell address, suggest that Luke has reworked his material to produce this statement.

Third and lastly come two theological considerations. Luke's account of the gestures, particularly since the Longer Text has been adopted (Ch.6, pp. 288-9, ¶ 6.7.2.), appears to have re-worked the gestures with the cup to stress a reference to the *Seder*. This saying reflects the same strategy: the Supper is being identified as the *Seder* through words placed on the lips of Jesus. The second is that the stress on Jesus' death fits a wider theme which Luke develops throughout his writing: the necessity of Jesus' death (Fitzmyer 1985, 1395; 1512-23).

Some may object that such a thesis demands too liberal a view of transmission (cf. Ch.6, pp. 274-5, fn.9). This might be true if Luke was adding novel material to the tradition, but this is arguably not the case. The sayings about the cup and the Kingdom already imply a reference to the death of Jesus, inasmuch as he anticipates the Kingdom drinking as a future, post-mortem experience (Taylor 1966, 547). Luke clarifies that stance through both his literary style and theology. Similarly, the understanding of Jesus' ministry as a replacement of the Passover is a recurring theme throughout the words spoken at the Supper. Luke, in common with both Mk and Matt, has attempted to express that link through an identification of Supper and *Seder*, and exceeded the other two in the degree to which he has emphasised that link through the expansion of *Seder* material. Yet, the identification of *Seder* and Supper was problematic from the earliest stages of the transmission of the tradition (Ch.6., pp. 264-71, ¶ 6.3.). Luke 22:15-16 has served only to stress ideas which are part and parcel of the traditions he has received: the death of Jesus and the Supper as *Seder*.

7.4.2. “The Fruit of the Vine”

All three of the Synoptic accounts refer to the “fruit of the vine” (τοῦ γενήματος τοῦ ἀμπέλου - Mk 14:25; Matt 26:29; Luke 22:18). As these remarks follow the sharing of the cup, it can be assumed that this reference is also connected to the preceding act, and thus to the cup of the Last Supper. The phrase is a periphrasis for “wine” (Isa 32:12, cf. Marshall 1979, 799; as a Semitism- Hagner 1995, 774)⁴⁵. There may be a literary link to the Passover: Johnson (1991, 338) sees a reflection of the *Haggadah* in the use of the phrase (cf. Hagner 1995, 774- “probably”). The contents of the cup can therefore be identified with wine on the basis of this phrasing. Wine, according to Jewish custom, was reserved for festivals of different kinds, and was a necessary component of the Passover rituals (Jeremias 1987, 50-1)⁴⁶. Thus it would fit the context of the meal suggested by the Synoptic writers.

7.4.3. Did Jesus Drink the Cup?

Some commentators have suggested that Jesus did not drink the cup with his disciples (Jeremias 1978, 208-18). This is mirrored by Luke 22:15 which shares a similar, *but not identical*, phrase, about Jesus’ wish to eat the Passover.

The evidence that Jesus did drink the cup arises from a careful reading of the texts. All three include temporal phrases which bear the sense “from now on” (οὐκέτι [Mk 14:25] - “no longer”; ἀπ’ ἄρτι [Matt 26:29]; ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν [Luke 22:18] - both “from now on”). Further, the tense used is important. The use of the punctiliar Aorist tense has already been noted (Ch. 6, pp. 281-2, ¶ 6.6.5.). Thus the words spoken follow what Jesus did. This argument may not be particularly strong: all it shows is that the action with the cup preceded these words. The action itself must be examined to consider whether the gestures with the cup would have included Jesus’ own act of drinking. Contemporary practice, both Jewish and Graeco-Roman, suggests that Jesus would indeed have drunk, and this would square with the sense of “no longer”. The notion of commensality also demands this: the whole point of such beliefs is that the acts of eating together affirms the link between those who share, particularly if

the present action makes a statement about the perfect future hope (cf. Taylor 1966, 547, fn. 25b). For Jesus not to have drunk the cup would have compromised the whole point of the meal, and would have shown a dislocation rather than fellowship⁴⁷.

7.4.4. The Cup and the Kingdom

The connection of the cup to the coming Kingdom is made explicit in all of Mk 14:25, Matt 26:29, and Luke 22:18, 29-30. In Mk and Matt, Jesus remarks that he will not again until he tastes the new wine in the Kingdom. In Luke, Jesus will not drink wine again until the Kingdom comes. Our examination of meals within the Christian tradition has already revealed that some of the meals which Jesus shared with others anticipated the coming of the Kingdom: they anticipated, or pointed to, the Messianic Banquet (Ch.5, pp.207-8, ¶ 5.2.8.; pp. 233-4, ¶ 5.4.8.). We need to consider whether the Last Supper performs a similar function. Is it a further example of a meal which anticipates the Kingdom, or is it a fulfilment of the hopes expressed in the earlier meals?

7.4.4.1. The Cup: A Fulfilment of the Kingdom?

A long-standing interpretation, from Ephraim the Syrian to Markus Barth, suggests that fulfilment of the hope of sharing in the Messianic Banquet can be seen in the post-resurrection meals which Jesus shared with his disciples (Wainwright 2003, 46). In many ways, these arguments mirror the wider debate about the Kingdom, seen in the overview of the timing of the Kingdom (Ch.5, pp. 229-32, ¶ 5.4.3.-6). Fulfilment theories are similar to those for realised eschatology, anticipation theories the “futurist”.

Modern Roman Catholic exegesis has argued that the eucharist is, in fact, the fulfilment of hopes focussed on the Messianic Banquet. This is borne out by Luke’s placing of the sayings of vv. 15-18 *before* any of the actions with the bread or cup (Benoit, cited in Wainwright 2003, 47). It also depends on identifying the Kingdom, table and thrones (Luke 22:29-30) with the Church, the eucharistic banquet and the government of the community (48). Kilmartin (1965, 49-53) goes further, arguing that not only Luke, but all the three of the Synoptics, support this view. Indirect support comes from John 2, the miracle

at Cana, used as a symbol of the eucharist (Wainwright 2003, 47), but this interpretation is by no means universally accepted⁴⁸.

7.4.4.2. Criticism of the Fulfilment Theory

The “fulfilment” interpretation is, however, open to criticism. Other passages, such as Rev 19:7-9, suggest a degree of consummation or fulfilment in the future which is as applicable to the Messianic Banquet as the Kingdom itself. This appears to be echoed in the texts under consideration by the phrase, τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης (Mk 14:25; Matt 26:29).

The fulfilment theory depends on using βασιλεία for the Church. It is not, always so. Thus, Schurmann, in particular, argued for the futurist understanding on the grounds that βασιλεία in Luke never referred to the church but to the eschatological Kingdom. However, this does not really hold up. In Luke 22:16, it would demand that the fulfilment of Jesus’ signs took place in the Kingdom rather than in the ministry of Jesus or in the church: a unique occurrence in the New Testament (Wainwright 2003, 48). Luke 17:21 equally would allow for a “present” or “realised” dimension for the Kingdom as well in the ministry of Jesus, if not in the church as well, though the timing of the Kingdom may not really be the point at issue (Fitzmyer 1985, 1159)

Whilst such remarks suggest an element of fulfilment, the futurist element cannot be discounted.

7.4.4.3. The Cup and the Coming of Jesus

The futurist element is to the fore in 1 Cor 11:26, where the emphasis is not on the Kingdom, but the coming of Jesus. It manifests itself through associations with the Aramaic *Maranatha* which refers to future expectations rather than the immediate presence of Christ, a eucharistic presence, or the Incarnation (see Ch.5, p. 237, ¶ 5.4.11.; p. 250, fn. 50; above, p. 338-9, ¶ 7.4.). The Pauline stress on Jesus and his coming makes clear that he is depicted in a Messianic role: these statements about the Kingdom, placed on Jesus’ lips, suggest either his own Messianic consciousness or his depiction as Messiah by the evangelists (cf. Taylor 1966, 547, fn.25b).

7.4.4.4. Communion and Future Consummation

In these sayings and statements, Jesus is depicted in strongly Jewish concepts and vocabulary. Both linguistic and symbolic evidence suggest that he was considered to have shared the cup with his disciples, and expressed a hope in the future coming of the perfect Kingdom. Such considerations lead to the conclusion that at best the sayings indicate a partial fulfilment of what will eventually be completed in the coming of the Kingdom, a sharing in Jesus' own royal state (Morris 1983, 308). The door must always be left open for the promise of a future, final consummation of God's work.

7.4.5. The Lukan Description of the Kingdom

Whilst Mk, Matt, and 1 Cor mention the Kingdom by name alone, Luke expands the description of the Kingdom by giving two descriptive details. The first of these makes a reference to eating and drinking (22:30 - ἵνα ἔσθητε καὶ πίνητε ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ μου), the second describes the disciples seated on thrones, judging Israel (22:30 - καὶ καθήσεσθε ἐπὶ θρόνων τὰς δώδεκα φυλὰς κρίνοντες τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ).

Both are built on Jewish imagery. The concept of a heavenly, never mind a Messianic, meal is much more strongly developed in Jewish than Graeco-Roman thought. So too is the picture of judgement. Whilst a number of eschatological scenarios involve the action of judgement, the most obvious parallel is with the Old Testament precedents of the twelve patriarchs sitting in judgement over Israel. That scheme is accepted, but in a modified form. As the Passover is viewed through the lens of Jesus of Nazareth, so too a new focus, judgement by the twelve disciples, is given to an old motif (Matt 19:28; Leaney 1971, 270)⁴⁹.

7.4.6. Inculturation and The Kingdom Sayings

The Kingdom sayings reveal a point of contact with a theme present in the Hebrew Scriptures and the concerns of Second Temple Judaism. The Banquet imagery found in the Synoptic accounts clearly indicates and

explores such themes. Jesus' activities are portrayed as having a Messianic significance. Matt and Luke extend the saying to include references to the disciples, which indicate that the disciples will share in the Final Banquet. In common with other sectarians, this also reflects the status of the participants in the current meal as fit to enter the Kingdom. Whilst the statements are futuristic, they also contribute to the participants' understanding of their current favourable status with God.

The Pauline version takes a different approach. Eschatological expectation is present, expressed not in terms of the Kingdom, but christologically, on the return of the Lord.

7.5. Lukan Sayings About Service 1- Ranking

[Luke 22:24-8]

Luke includes a number of sayings which are not found in the other Synoptic accounts of the Supper. The insertion of additional saying material into the Supper narrative may reflect the symposium literary tradition in which often the conversation held at the meal is as, if not more, important than the meal itself. Such remarks need not contradict Kurz's suggestion that the farewell address, seen in both Graeco-Roman and biblical forms, shapes the narrative of Luke 22 (Kurz 1985, 251; above, pp. 304-5, ¶ 7.1.). Within the New Testament, the influence of the symposium literary tradition reaches its apogee in the Johannine account, which devotes scarcely any attention to the meal, but focuses on the final sayings of Jesus.

7.5.1. The Sayings: Echoes of the Essenes

The conjectured geographical connection with the Essenes (Ch.6, p. 271-2, ¶ 6.4.) is matched by an overlap in concerns with their teaching. Capper (2002, 23 [o-l]) notes the similarity of Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:1-20) to Essene teachings about menial duties. Concerns similar to some Essene teaching may also be reflected in the words of Jesus in John: the

“new commandment of mutual love” (Brown 1988, 612-4; cf. Capper 2002, 7 [o-l]). However, the major differences between Jesus and the sectarians suggest shared common elements rather than a dependence on their teaching.

7.5.2. *The “Ransom” Logion*

Luke’s account (22:26-7) is similar to the Ransom Logion found in Mk 10:45, // Matt 20:28, but varies in the second part. Luke’s concern appears to be ethical rather than focussed on the death of Jesus: Mk 10:45 is famously the only verse in the gospel to be so explicit about Jesus’ death (Taylor 1966, 444-6). The origins of the passage are notoriously complicated (Kurz 1985, 257, esp. fn. 17). Bultmann (1968, 63) argued for the priority of the Lukan version, arguing that Mk 10:45b was a secondary development in light of the Passion. The contrary position has been argued by Jeremias, Gundry and Stühlmacher (cited in Riesner 2003, 173). Riesner, however, argues that the logion is well-known in a variety of forms, that the form in Luke is special to his tradition⁵⁰, and that he has particular reasons for keeping the words here:

It appears that it was not Luke who transported this catena of logia in the Cenacle but that he found them already at this place in his special tradition. Since the longer form of the Eucharistic words including the passage ‘this cup that is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood’ (Luke 22.19-20) is the best textual reading, Luke had already mentioned in strong terms the sacrificial character of Jesus’ death. So it was not out of theological, that is, anti-sacrificial, reasons that Luke passed over a saying on the atonement like Mk 10.45. For the evangelist, Jesus was both sacramentum and exemplum. After giving the sacrament (Luke 22.14-20) Jesus talked about exemplary behaviour (Luke 22, 24-27).

(2003, 177)

This allowed Luke to stress Jesus’ importance as an ethical role model for church leaders (192), working from a sacrificial interpretation of his role (179). A similar stress, connected to ideas found in the Ransom logion is found elsewhere in the Lukan writings (Acts 20:18-35, esp. v. 28 and 35), which again highlight Jesus’ sacrifice and ethical example.

7.5.3. *Table-Talk and The Symposium*

Such ethical instruction, in general, fits well with the pattern of table-talk found in the symposium literary tradition (Smith 1985, 617-20). The debate about ranking (vv. 24-8) may also indicate the symposium literary tradition as it is a recurring theme (619). However, it must be noted that this theme can also be interpreted as a component in a farewell address (Kurz 1985, 258). It also echoes wisdom traditions in the Old Testament: the practical advice given in these verses is similar to the advice of Prov 25:6-7.

There appears to be a difference from conventional table-talk about ranking. Such comments usually focus on current practice, whereas these remarks seem to focus on ranking in the Kingdom (Smith 1987, 620: cf. Mk 10:35-45, and Luke 22:24).

Elsewhere, Jesus does not appear to engage with the question of contemporary ranking practice. In Luke 14:7-11, where he gives practical advice on how to choose a seat, there is no attempt to reform or do away with the practice. Yet the Ransom Logion, in both the Marcan and Lukan forms, does offer critical comment on the practice. Ranking is not to be undertaken on the criteria advanced by contemporary society. The desire to serve (δῖακονεῖν) becomes the new standard for ranking. This is explicitly contrasted with the practice of ranking used by contemporary ruling elites (Donahue 1983, 49).

It also differs in practice from the system of ranking noted in the Qumran/Essene communities which mirrored their hierarchical structure based on degrees of purity (48; cf. Ch. 3, pp. 99-102, ¶ 3.3.6.1.).

This focus on service also denies that the ranking debate focusses exclusively on the Kingdom, since the very criterion on which Jesus bases his system of ranking demands a particular response in this realm. Ranking is not a purely utopian phenomenon; it has a locative, social and ethical dimension in the life of the diners. In this respect, the Lukan passage shares common features with the literary tradition of the symposium, although this need not rule out reference to the traditions of farewell addresses⁵¹ or the Old Testament wisdom traditions. The strongest argument in favour of a symposium influence

in Luke is, put simply, the fact that the ethical instruction has been located in the setting of a meal, either in the shaping of the tradition adopted and maintained by the evangelist or in his final redaction.

7.5.4. Benefactors

Luke's contrast of the behaviour of Christian leaders with the "kings of the nations" (οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν) performs two functions. It divorces them from the claim that they were proposing an alternative to Roman kingship. In addition to this, it makes the contrast apply also to the Hellenistic monarchs of Egypt and Syria by their further identification as "benefactors" (εὐεργέται, cf. Green 1997, 768; Leaney 1971, 269; Marshall 1979, 812). The behaviour expected of the disciples is set up as a deliberate challenge rooted in current experience.

7.5.5. Summary

The sayings deal with a topic familiar to many different cultures in the ancient world: ranking and status. The presentation made here is couched in terms familiar to Luke's readers from their own context (e.g., εὐεργέται). It also appears to fit the pattern of the symposium literary tradition in which it is particularly appropriate given that meal patterns highlighted such questions. Within Judaism, the emphasis on menial duties as defining status appears to be shared with the Essenes, who nonetheless maintained a hierarchical meal practice. The Lukan sayings appear to share the ethical concern, but remain quiet about meal hierarchy. Yet, both Qumran/Essene and Lukan narratives appear to share a common revaluation of assessing status, based on service, which is at odds with much contemporary Graeco-Roman practice, where status is associated with class, wealth, power and family. The assessment of ranking is not couched in the contemporary debate about these issues. Where the Lukan account becomes distinctive is in its focus on Jesus as the moral exemplar: this solution to the question of ranking can also be seen in 1 Cor (Henderson 2002, 200; cf. Ch.8, p. 379, ¶ 8.3.4.)

7.6. Lukan Sayings About Service 2- Revising Lifestyle

[Luke 22:35-38]

Luke 22:35-38 mark a change in Jesus' thinking. The short dialogue contains subject matter concerned with lifestyle which, again, is neither out of place as table-talk (Smith 1987, 623) nor a farewell address (Kurz 1985, 266). However, it is also similar in shape to a number of dialogues in the Johannine tradition: the interlocutors fail to grasp the symbolic or metaphorical importance of Jesus' teaching (above, pp. 331-3, ¶ 7.3.5.; cf. John 3:4; 6:52; cf. Ch. 7., p. 366, fn. 32).

7.6.1. A Comparison with Luke 10:4

The subject matter is not new: Jesus has voiced similar thoughts elsewhere (Luke 10:4), and refers to that occasion (22:35). But now he gives different advice. This material is found only in Luke, most likely edited by him from sources (Marshall 1979, 824).

Much is made of the way in which this passage differs from the cited parallel. The disciples are now encouraged to obtain items they had previously been told not to worry about. Such a change may symbolise the change in their mission. The world is not so welcoming or as hospitable as it had been. A fresh item is added to their list: a sword. The sword shows the way in which their missionary context has changed. The world is not just inhospitable, it has become hostile (Manson 1961, 341; Marshall 1979, 824-5).

The disciples' literal understanding of Jesus' teaching about swords misses his point. Their misunderstanding is compounded by the tendency to interpret Jesus' words, ἰκανόν ἐστιν, as implying that two swords will be enough. This implies Jesus' approval of the purchase of swords and, by extension, the use of violence. This is odd in light of his apparent predictions of impending death and desertion (Luke 22:15, 21, 31-4). A chain of events is to unfold which buying swords will not stop. This becomes more of a riddle at his arrest, as he not only prohibits the use of violence, but also heals the one who has been struck (Luke 22:50-1). Such a validation of the weapons, but a ban on their

use and admission of their uselessness, is inconsistent. Better to follow Manson (1961, 342) in taking these words to mean, “That will do”: a Semitic idiom implying the end of the conversation. This might take the form of a brusque rejection of the disciples’ plan (Schweizer 1984, 341), or sheer exasperation (Green 1997, 775). At any rate, Jesus does not want to enter into a misdirected conversation about armed resistance (cf. Nolland 1993, 1077; Soards 1987, 54).

7.7. Sayings About “Betrayal”

[Mk 14:18-21; Matt 26:21-5; Luke 22:21-3, 31-34; 1 Cor 11:23]

The heading for this section purposefully places “betrayal” in inverted comments to highlight its potential ambiguity. The root παραδίδ- may refer either to “handing over” or “betrayal”. This is frequently taken in English translations to refer to the betrayal by Judas (e.g., NJB), but such a heading begs the question. We can note that of the four Supper Narratives only Matt 26:25 conclusively points to Judas as the betrayer of Jesus. Within this verse, the explicit identification of Judas as the betrayer of Jesus occurs in a description made by the redactor (ὁ παραδίδους αὐτὸν). Judas’s calling Jesus ῥαββί (teacher) rather than κύριε (Lord, master) may also indicate his role (Allison & Davies 1997, 459, 464; Hagner 1995, 767-8; Schweizer 1976, 489). Jesus’ own answer to Judas’ question is the more enigmatic οὐ εἶπας, which need not be interpreted as a clear affirmative (cf. Matt 26:64). Yet, it is likely that Judas will have understood it in that way (Hagner 1995, 768). Within Mk and Luke, the identification of Judas as the betrayer is found in material outside the Supper Narrative⁵². That said, the reader is presumably aware of Judas’ identity as the one who shares food with Jesus (Mk 14:20; Matt 26:23; Luke 22:21).

7.7.1. Danielou: A Reference to Qumran/Essene Practice?

The description of the traitor in this way led Danielou (1958, 29) to conjecture a reference to the Essenes and the meal of 1 QS^a 2:17-20. Further, on these grounds, Judas’ action, in which he dips out of turn, has been interpreted as

denying Jesus' leadership (Mann 1986, 586). Such conclusions must be tempered by the differences apparent between Jesus' style of table-fellowship and Essene practice. It is also weakened by the fact that the Gospels use a number of different expressions to describe the action of eating together which are not identical to the phraseology of 1QSa. Danielou's argument is based on the idea of "hands at table". Yet in 1 QSa, the stretching out of hands is linked to giving a blessing (see above, Ch.3, pp. 99-104, ¶ 3.3.6.1.). In the Gospels, the action is associated with eating: Mk 14:20 talks of "dipping" (ὁ ἐμβαπτόμενος μετ' ἐμοῦ εἰς τὸ τρύβλιον), as does Matt 26:23, ὁ ἐμβάψας μετ' ἐμοῦ τὴν χεῖρα ἐν τῷ τρυβλίῳ. Fenton (1963, 416) considers the Matthean wording indicative of the Passover meal, but τρυβλίῳ may indicate only a common action: a shared bowl of sauce or relish into which bread or other food was dipped (Hagner 1995, 767)⁵³.

7.7.2. The Common Dish: Criticism of the Qumran /Essene Proposal

Mention of a common dish provides an alternative to Essene practice in keeping with an obvious wider theological programme: the identification of the Supper as the *Seder*. The uses of bitter herbs as a relish was part of *Seder* practice (Ch.3, pp. 93-4, ¶ 3.3.2.4.). The strict hierarchical purity regulations of the Qumran/Essene groups surely raise a question mark over whether such a common bowl could be used, or whether some would endanger their purity ranking by sharing so intimately with those of a different rank: Josephus indicates separate plates, not a communal dish (cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 2:131, quoted in pp. 99-104, ¶ 3.3.6.1.). Luke 22:21 makes no reference to a specific action, using a phrase which describes location at a common table (μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης). Danielou's argument is not convincing.

7.7.3. Capper: An Economic Motive for Betrayal?

Capper (2002,17-21 [o-l]) also suggested an influence from the Essenes at work. Jesus' anointing at Bethany was the beginning of Judas' disillusionment: the option for the poor had been smothered by expensive ointment. This led Judas' to reject Jesus' ministry and connive in his betrayal.

Whilst attractive, this scenario first demands that the Bethany house be clearly identified as an Essene house, which is debatable (Ch.6., pp. 272-3, ¶ 6.4.1.-2.), and an overly psychological analysis of Judas' motivation. Barnes gives an interpretation which is not economic, but rather based on gender:

Spilling out costly perfume over his head as he reclined at the table, this woman receives "indignant" reactions from Christ's own disciples, those who should have best known the worthiness (or lovability) of Christ. Judas' betrayal, juxtaposed with this anointing, arguably implies a disgust at this type of devotion and a resistance to move away from an ethic of good deeds and keeping the law. The woman's "waste" is highly exalted. This woman (unnamed in this gospel, and perhaps significantly so, in order to represent a more general what we might call *feminine* response seen throughout the Old Testament,) wastes costly materials on her lord; in the next scene Judas sells out his lord for the price of a gored slave. In this, Matthew seems to set up a grand disparity between the feminine and the masculine concerns, embodied here as male and female characters. Here the feminine concern of personal devotion and attention to Christ wins praise.

(2003, 7)

Betrayal for economic reasons need not concern the Qumran/Essene sectarians.

7.7.4. Betrayed by Whom? The Role of Peter

Luke 22: 31-2 adds a further dimension to the Supper Narrative, for he imports traditions unparalleled in Peter's betrayal or (Nolland 1993, 1070). Luke 22:33-4 does however record materials similar to Mk 14:29-31 (1071-2). None of this means that the Lukan version need be a novelty: Fitzmyer (1985, 1422) suggests that this is a saying of Jesus which has been preserved⁵⁴. The Lukan account is much about the actions of Peter as of Judas. Peter's betrayal is described in Old Testament terms: he is to be sifted like Israel of old (1422; cf. *Amos* 9:9). Peter's subsequent return to faith is due to Jesus' prayers for him (1422). Jesus' remarks to Peter show affinities to the farewell address (Kurz 1985, 259), a symptom of Luke's collecting sayings into a construction of this kind (251). The concept of a Satanic assault is one which

resonates with intertestamental literature (Green 1997, 771): it is likely to be trope familiar to some of Luke's readers.

7.7.5. The Betrayal of Jesus

There is one feature common to all four accounts. What will befall Jesus is referred to, not as the direct action of any individual, but as an event that happens to Jesus: he is betrayed or handed over. The Passive voice is important. This appears to be the intended meaning in 1 Cor 11:23, which contains no reference at all to a "betrayal" by Judas. This raises the possibility of a word play of the kind found in *symposium* literature, given that παραδίδ- is used both of what befalls Jesus and of tradition (Conzelmann 1975, 196-7). It also highlights a major difference from the mythic element of Mystery Religions. It gives a strong historical dimension to the events of the cult narrative (Moffatt 1938, 168). Whilst the phrase may refer to the historical betrayal by Judas (which may be assumed rather than made explicit), it may also refer to the "handing over" of Jesus (cf. Rom 4:25, which may reflect LXX Isa 53:12, cf. Bruce 1986, 111).

This further suggests a common theme of "handing over" both in Jesus' surrender of self, and the behaviour of the participants in the ritual (i.e., their proclamation of the original "handing over") (Thiselton 2000, 869-70). Jesus' identification of himself with the food which is consumed may also be part of this literary play: for the parallels between what is said and what is consumed within the literary symposium indicate the participants' wish to partake in the realities which are discussed (cf. Ch.3, pp. 76-8, ¶ 3.2.3.). Thus the language games here indicate the wish of participants in the meal to appropriate to themselves the reality represented, the handing over of Jesus to death.

7.7.6. Conclusion

The "Betrayal" sayings appear to have dimensions which extend far beyond a historical recounting of the actions of Judas and Peter: the true focus of interest is in the betrayal of Jesus.

These accounts share similarities with the literary symposium tradition, suggested by word play on παραδίδ-. They also share similarities with farewell addresses and other contemporary literary tropes. The location of such words in the context of a meal stresses that the literary symposium tradition is significant.

7.8. Sayings at the Supper: Conclusions

It perhaps states the obvious to say that the sayings indicate the exemplary and significant role given to Jesus: the disciples are reduced to the status of foils or correspondents. He is the focus of attention, not only the key agent, but also the key speaker.

Despite the warnings (above, pp. 304-5, ¶ 7.1.) about *ipsissima verba*, it may be possible to reconstruct some of what Jesus said. Thus, Vermes (2003, 307) suggests that Jesus offered mystical union with himself, couching this in eschatological, non-paschal, language. If terms common to all the Narratives are examined, it is possible to give more detail. Jesus appears to have identified the bread and wine with his Body and Blood. These, in turn, are connected to the covenant and the Kingdom. Participants in the meal somehow eat with Jesus (commensality). Such an analysis begins to point towards inculturation within Judaic contexts. It is appropriate to examine more detailed resemblances under the cultural headings familiar from previous chapters.

7.8.1 Inculturation: Judaic Contexts

Much of the vocabulary used in the Narratives is Semitic, or refers to concepts particularly visible in Jewish thought. Terms and concepts such as covenant, memorial and Kingdom are particularly prominent. The accounts are redolent of sacrificial terminology: phrases such as “for you” (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:24) and “for many” (Mk 14:24; Matt 26:28), allusions to the covenant in Exod 24, the Paschal (*Seder*) setting, and memorial all have sacrificial connotations. Also possible, but less certain, are the sacrificial inferences of

flesh and blood, as well as Jesus' act of giving (Klawans 2002, 15-6). The additional presence of both Judaism and references to the Septuagint further suggest a location of many such ideas within existing Jewish thought and practice. So too does the linking of different elements: the combination of meal symbolism and eschatological concerns in particular show the influence of Jewish thinking over the material, and suggest resemblances to the Messianic Banquet.

The Gospel writers in their different ways have adopted an interpretation intimately associated with the *Seder*. This would appear to stem, in part, from historical factors inasmuch as Jesus died around the time of the feast (cf. Ch.6, p. 271, ¶ 6.3.7.), but it is also a matter of their preference, indicated by the controversy over the timing. One thing becomes increasingly clear: this was only one tradition for interpretation, and others, obscured by the focus put on it, should also be re-examined. Büchsel admits this much, noting the way Luke emphasises *Seder* elements at the expense of the sacrificial (1965, 310-2). Yet these are undoubtedly present.

Linguistic and conceptual evidence reveals the presence of ideas such as covenant, Atonement, Kingdom, and Messiah. The evidence for these is incontrovertible. More speculative is the connection of these ideas with rituals prefigured by Melchizedek's. By this, it is not meant that the ritual was inherited from him, but that the wealth of speculation about this figure has remained vital and may have been used in the Supper Narratives.

This last proposal depends on the connection of priesthood and ritual, particularly in relation to covenant, Atonement ritual, and the "show bread". All these themes have been shown to be present in the Supper Narratives in their various forms. The suggestion is buttressed by other factors in the Supper Narratives and external features: the use of bread and wine, the identification of Jesus as a Messianic priestly figure, the Davidic traditions, and the concern with the Kingdom. They suggest that the use of Melchizedek typology is more prevalent in the Gospels than might have been assumed. Other texts also witness to traditions which might have included speculation about Melchizedek such as the sapiential theme in John 6 (Ch.4, pp. 172-4, ¶ 4.4.6).

Such an interpretative dimension in the Supper Narratives would not thus be an isolated phenomenon. Nevertheless, this stratum has been obscured by a pre-occupation by the *Seder* with which it has much in common, namely, a concern with the renewal of the cultic covenant and shared imagery (e.g., manna).

Melchizedek conceptuality differs in the weight attached to the *Exodus* narrative. The Exodus story is key to *Seder*, but redundant in the Melchizedek story, which like Paul's reflection on faith in Rom 5, and the discussion of priesthood in Heb 7, looks rather to an Abrahamic precedent. The Passover and Melchizedek traditions overlap to the extent that both the Exodus story and the Atonement rituals share a mutual concern with covenant renewal. The strong Judaic influence is obvious in both the material associated with Melchizedek and Passover adopted by the evangelists.

Manna has also appeared as an interpretative device. It too may impinge on both the Passover (the typology of the Exodus narrative) and Melchizedek traditions (via the "show bread"; above, pp. 326-7, ¶ 7.3.3.10.). Within Second Temple Judaism, *Jos.Asen.* identifies manna as a sacramental food. That manna might be interpreted sacramentally means such layers of meaning may also be present in the Supper Narratives. Sacraments are here understood in the more general term *sacramentals*, than the later formulations of Christian doctrine. Such a sacramental impulse is built on Judaic concepts such as memorial and extension of personality (Ch.4, pp. 144-6, ¶ 4.2.8.).

From a different tangent, the Supper Narratives share a common impulse, that of "sacrificialisation" (Ch.4, pp. 146-8, ¶ 4.2.9.), with other Jewish groups and sects. In the Supper narratives, this manifests itself in the use of sacrificial terminology placed on Jesus' lips to interpret his actions. It is a phenomenon also seen in Pharisaism and the Qumran/Essene nexus both developed rituals which could achieve to goals intended by sacrifice without the actual practice of such rites. Note that in this understanding the Temple rituals are viewed positively rather than negatively⁵⁵.

The Qumran/Essene material also dwells on Messianic themes. The more recent translations of 1QSa 2:17-21 (quoted on Ch.3, pp. 99-104, ¶ 3.3.6.1.)

stress the identification of the priestly celebrant with the Messiah. The presentation of Jesus as the Messiah which permeates the gospel suggests a similar identification in the Supper Narratives⁵⁶. Reflections on the sayings in the Supper Narratives appear to confirm remarks distinguishing the Supper from the beliefs and practices of the Qumran/Essene nexus (Ch.6, p. 293-5, ¶ 6.8.1.). The defining characteristics of the Messiah vary between the two traditions. The Qumran/Essene meals do not record an identification of the elements of the meal either with the Messiah or his death. These meals also appear to have been strictly hierarchical as a result of the purity regulations of the sect: such concerns are not echoed in the discussion of ranking in the Supper Narratives.

The Supper Narratives, irrespective of the typological preferences of the critic, appear to be suffused with both the language and symbolism of Jewish ritual, sacrificial language and thought.

7.8.2. Inculturation: Graeco-Roman Contexts

It is correspondingly difficult to identify clear analogies to related concepts in their Graeco-Roman form. Even a concept apparently as foreign to Judaic practice as “drinking blood” can be earthed within its symbolic language and scriptural precedents. Much of the problem with this phrase has arisen from an anachronistic presentation of Jewish “orthodoxy” in the period.

The strongest resemblance to a Graeco-Roman phenomenon comes from the shape of the Narratives rather than their content. The relationship between gesture and saying resembles Graeco-Roman literary tradition. This holds good even if it might be proven to originate in a Jewish phenomenon such as *Haggadah*, which might itself in any case already be influenced by Graeco-Roman practice. As in the symposium literary tradition, there is interplay of meaning, a parallelism between words and actions. The Supper Narratives, too, function as a metaphor which becomes the key to interpreting Jesus’ understanding of the language of meal and sacrifice, as well as the aspirations of the participants.

In particular the Lukan account shows signs of this tradition through the incorporation of additional sayings material into the meal context. It is not, however, the sole literary influence: farewell addresses have also influenced the content of the table-talk which accompanies the meal. However, the symposium literary tradition manifests itself in two ways. The first is the ethical dimension of the material which has been inserted. The second is that the sayings material relates to the action of the meal. As in the symposium meals of Athenaeus (Ch.3, p. 77, ¶ 3.2.3.) both the meal and the sayings are significant. In the Lukan model, the ethical sayings material gives additional advice to Jesus' followers of how they may live out the fellowship expressed in the common meal which they share. This is certainly a literary style which will strike chords with Graeco-Roman readers.

The contents yield fewer apparent resemblances. Historically, many have argued not only for resemblance, but dependence of the final form of Super Narratives on the theology of Graeco-Roman Mystery cults. For some, the soteriological function of the meals found in the Christian tradition shifts the focus towards the Mystery cults. Yet such arguments are neither conclusive nor watertight. Differences may over-rule similarities. Thus, in describing the Johannine and Pauline traditions:

There can be no question in either Paul or John of the kind of blood mysticism we find in the mysteries. The enhanced realism of sacramental thinking in John is to be explained in the light of the anti-docetic trend common to both the Gospel and the First Epistle.

(Behm 1964a, 175)

There are also fundamental problems in positing dependence of emerging Christian meal theology on the Mysteries.

Participation in the rituals was the means to salvation, or the receipt of benefits. With the exception of the Eleusinian mysteries, specifically in their entry requirements, an ethical dimension appears secondary. The remarks of Diogenes (Ch.5, p. 241, fn. 15) illustrate that the ethical dimension was debated. What is of further significance is that Diogenes' remarks take place in the context of the Eleusinian mysteries, one of the few which had an explicitly stated ethical dimension (Ch. 3, p. 83-4, ¶ 3.2.8.1.). Metzger (1968,

14) summarises the difference by noting that the mysteries work *ex opere operato* (the correct performance of ritual guarantees efficacy, without a moral element) whereas the eucharist is a *donum data* (dependant on the gift [of God]), which expects a moral change in the life of the participant. This, in essence, highlights a difference between the interrelationship of blessings, rituals and ethics. Thus, even where ethics appeared within a Mystery tradition, the actual relationship between morality and soteriology was open to question.

This marks a major departure from the Supper Narratives. Eating is not a purely ritual or even magical phenomenon in which the participant automatically receives the promised benefits of participation (see further Ch.8., pp. 393-4, ¶ 8.5.2.). It has an ethical dimension. Such a dimension fits more closely with the philosophical schools than the Mysteries: ethics, without exception, were a key plank of their teaching and content. Emerging Christian ritual thinking suggests a wider engagement with other forms of popular religion and philosophical speculation. Indeed, at points the teaching on ethics located within the Supper narratives mirrors some of their ethical concerns: the debate about ranking, and the ethical imperative of the Epicurean memorial meal, are prime examples (Ch.7, pp. 313-4, ¶ 7.2.5.; pp. 345-8, ¶ 7.5.1.-4.).

The eschatological speculation of the schools, furthermore, is broad enough to include both locative and futurist (post-mortem speculation) elements. They provide a reminder that such elements need not be mutually exclusive: a philosophy or theology may include both dimensions.

However, even this does not demand a Graeco-Roman setting, for the conjunction of ritual and ethics, specifically with regard to property and wealth, is also a feature of the groups around the Qumran/Essene axis⁵⁷. Nor is it enough to limit engagement to the Mysteries and the schools. The analysis of material from Corinth suggests that general social practices, e.g., the pouring of libations at *symposia* and meals centred around “idol-meats”, also provide an arena for engagement. The more rarified strata of the schools and Mysteries should not be given a significance beyond their influence in society,

or viewed as the only phenomena which might have had an impact on Christian thought and practice.

Whilst there appear affinities to the hero cults of Greece and Rome, these are not addressed by the early Christians themselves. However, the use of story and ritual finds parallels in the politics of Israel, Greece and Rome, too. The early church is not just a religious association (συναγωγή, θιασος, κοινόν). The early Church uses Graeco-Roman terms like ἐκκλησία instead. Such an identification implies a political role (Koester 1998, 349). Ritual is key to this self-identification:

...the new understanding of the significance of Jesus' celebration of common meals in anticipation of the "messianic banquet" and the story of his suffering and death provided the constitutive elements for the self-definition of the community as a new nation and of its claims to eschatological fulfillment of the hopes of all people.

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Yet, the Christian traditions do not appear to be exhausted this to the extent that their Graeco-Roman counterparts are. The concept of memorial which lies behind the combination of myth and ritual is not primarily shaped by Graeco-Roman practice, but more strongly based on Judaic practice.

Close and direct resemblances between Graeco-Roman traditions and the Supper Narratives are much harder to find than their Jewish counterparts. The parallels and resemblances which can be identified seem rather to share a common content (e.g., the ethical material, ranking and the like) or be described as, e.g., "general sacramentalism".

7.8.3. Inculturation: Early Christian Contexts

The most immediate resemblance to early Christian practice appears to be to the eucharist. This stems particularly from the identification of the Supper Narratives as the myth that accompanies the ritual. The relation of myth and ritual is complex: to posit a simple dependency of one upon the other is too trite.

However, there is a problem. The rituals of the early church remain sketchy, and their earliest formularies have not survived. Suggestions that any particular text has been influenced by early liturgical practice must always be tempered by the lack of extant evidence: the exact wordings of the liturgies remain unknown.

The exception to this general rule is the *Did.*, whose liturgical texts can be given an early date (Ch.3., p. 114, ¶ 3.4.3.1.). It must, however, be admitted that there is no certainty whether these prayers were actually used, or represent ideal forms. The *Did.* texts make no reference to the *paradosis* recorded in the Supper Narratives, but provide prayers which are in the form of blessings. The recorded words spoken by Jesus in the Supper Narratives and the wording of the rituals described in the *Did.* are very different. The potential similarity of Jesus' unrecorded blessings and those of the *Did.* remains a mystery.

This is not, however, to deny all correspondence. Both the Supper Narratives and the *Did.* share eschatological concerns. The former records these in words about the Kingdom, the latter in its citing of *Maranatha*. The juxtaposition of the *paradosis* and *Maranatha* in 1 Cor reveals the connection of both ideas, perhaps in a context influenced by liturgical traditions. The Supper Narratives share an eschatological concern with the liturgical patterns of the time. It is worth noting that the Supper Narratives share the futurist understanding which is also expressed in the use of *Maranatha* (above, pp. 343-4, ¶ 7.4.4.3.; Ch.5, pp. 237, ¶ 5.4.11). The eschatological patterns in both share a common feature: the ethical dimension.

This concern with ethics in turn, impinges upon a further common feature to be identified as "sacrificialisation". This can be seen in the *Didache's* restrictions on communion, and the hopes for salvation associated with participation in the meal. "Sacrificialisation" is also part of the theological programme in Heb 13 (Ch.4., pp. 179-80, ¶ 4.4.11.)

This is not the only association to Heb, which potentially shares an interest in the character of Melchizedek. It must however be admitted that the way in which this is expressed varies. The primary identification of Jesus found with

Melchizedek centres on genealogy (Ch.4, pp. 170-1, ¶ 4.4.3.2.), the more contentious identification in the Supper Narratives would focus on his ritual activity (above, pp. 326-7, ¶ 7.3.3.11.).

Whilst manna itself is not mentioned in the Supper Narratives, the presence of this type in both the Johannine (John 6) and Pauline writings (1 Cor 10) is echoed in the Supper Narratives by references to the *Seder* and the Exodus narrative. It is worth noting that the account in John 6 is likely to have adopted such imagery from a liturgical setting rather than straight from the biblical accounts, which contain no reference to blood (see McGrath, quoted above on Ch.7., p. 330, ¶ 7.3.4.).

7.8.4. Methodological Considerations

The theological method being used by the writers under consideration is becoming clearer. Elements of a tradition are again seen to be picked up and re-accentuated to formulate the interpretation of bread and wine in reaction to the writers' perceptions of Jesus. The new construct transcends the meaning of the original materials which are incorporated into it. The writers are engaged in a process of inculturating material about Jesus, using traditional elements, motifs and symbols. This process of inculturation uses techniques described in modern theory as re-accentuation (exemplified by the "new covenant", and the re-interpretation of the *Seder*), and *bricolage* (seen in the development of the "blood" motif, which pieces different elements together to make a new construct).

Notes

1 Sections of ¶ 7.2 and 7.3 have been published previously in King 2004, 159-60, 162-72.

2 It is also implied in his teaching about its destruction in the Last Days (Mk 13:1-2, 14; Matt 24:1-3; Luke 21:5-7. Note Matt 24: 3 specifically connects such destruction with the return of Jesus. Cf. Sanders 1985, 77-90.

3 The only exceptions to this general rule are Lev 15:19 (menstruation) and 1 Kgs 18:28 (purely literal. I reckon that the text of Ashby (2002, 59) which cites 1 Kgs 12:28 is a misprint)

4 Note Maccoby (1991b, 196-7, fn.37) which is critical of Daube's *aphiqoman* argument, as

- No other instances of Messiah identified with bread
- Referring to the Messianic age rather than Messiah
- *B. Sanh* 98b, 99a refs to "eating (the Messiah) in the days of Hezekiah", but this is an idiom for "they enjoyed him"
- *Aphiqoman* as bread may only be a medieval accretion.

Maccoby's arguments raise again the issue of how different sections of Christian tradition, particularly within the canonical texts, are to be treated as evidence for particular concepts and phenomena. The scholar who automatically discounts early Christian traditions from discussions of Second Temple Judaism in the first century CE is bound to reach different conclusions about the breadth of beliefs possible. Maccoby appears to do this, discounting them as having any relevance to Second Temple Judaism. On such approaches, see the discussion in Ch.1, p.26, fn.11, as well as the earlier discussion about definitions of orthodoxy and ideology (Ch.1, pp. 13-9, ¶1.3.4. *passim*).

5 This argument would be stronger if such comments were used regularly. They are, however, sporadic. Some are placed as interpretations on Jesus' own lips (e.g., Mk 2:22), others as editorial inserts (Mk 7:20).

6 Note that John is not denying value to the material, after the fashion of Graeco-Roman thought (Hoskyns & Davey 1947, 284).

7 Some suggest that the phrase is not part of common tradition, since Luke does not repeat it in regard to the cup, and Mk does not use it at this point. However, Mk may have omitted the phrase because it did not suit his narrative, and it may be implied in Luke 22:20 - ὡσαύτως (Thiselton 2000, 878).

8 Even a tradition such as the *Did.*, which does not include such imagery, appears to come from a context that knew and approved of such terminology, probably from Matt and Luke. The writer chose not to repeat what the readership already knew, cf. Schöllgen 1996, 63 and Tuckett 1996, 128.

9 As an aside, the author was asked whether the eucharistic liturgy which contains the narrative of institution really meant this, "Drinking Jesus' blood"- by a 7 year old. Although from a different time and place, the anecdote shows such a train of thought is not impossible. See also Fenton 1991, 414-5.

10

Epileptic patients are in the habit of drinking the blood even of gladiators, draughts teeming with life, as it were; a thing that, when we see it done by the wild beasts even, upon the same arena, inspires us with horror at the spectacle! And yet these persons, forsooth, consider it a most effectual cure for their disease, to quaff the warm, breathing, blood from man himself, and, as they apply their mouth to the wound, to draw forth his very life; and this, though it is regarded as an act of impiety to apply the human lips to the wound even of a wild beast! Others there are, again, who make the marrow of the leg-bones, and the brains of infants, the objects of their research!

[Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 28.2]

Some have freed themselves from such a disease by drinking the hot blood from the cut throat of a gladiator: a miserable aid made tolerable by a malady still most miserable.

[Celsus, *On Medicine*, 3.23.7]

Further descriptions of pagan consumption of human blood and cannibalism in Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 8-9. Latin Trans. in Glover & Rendall 1977, 43-55.

11 The mystery religions are often cited as examples of such rituals, but such interpretations may not hold up under close scrutiny (Willis:1985, 46-7, cf. Bultmann 1971, 224, fn.2 [on Mithras], Fotopoulos 2003, 22; Tripolitis 2002, 34-5 [on Attis], cf. Ch.4, pp.133-9, ¶ 4.3.4.. For wine as a metaphor for sacrifice, cf. Ch. 4, pp. 148-50, ¶ 4.3..

12 Maccoby (1991, 266-7) disputes the number of Semitisms claimed by Jeremias, and argues that the three which remain are of limited value in identifying the Eucharistic stratum in the Supper narratives as an early part of the tradition. The question of how a Jew could assent to such an "impossible" doctrine is not solved by Maccoby's portrayal of Paul as a bad scholar or his denial of Paul the Pharisee, unless these really drive the definition of true Jewish identity.

13 Cf. 3 Macc 2:29 ff., referring primarily to Egypt. This also appears in Artap. 3.27.20 & 24-6: 3.2.24-6 appears to refer to the initiation rites, 9.27.20 to the wearing of linen garments as assimilation of the Dionysus cult. Note that such interpretations are at best "no more than a possibility" (Collins, Artap. in Charlesworth 1985, Vol. 2, 890. Texts on p. 901). No data shows the extent of such activity.

14 Cousland(2003) stresses that the parallels found throughout 3 Macc are part of the literary device of *peripateia* (the reversal of fortunes). For the reversal of ritual (44). Such details may be for literary or historical effect (39, fn. 3).

15 Note however, that some still hold that there is a degree of distinction between the Judaism of different regions. Thus, Feldman 2002, 296-300. See Metzger (1968, 8) for the view that Mystery Religions did not really penetrate Palestine. Subsequent research has unearthed more evidence than he credits. However, evidence is cited for the mysteries of Attis in Bethlehem (8, fn.1).

16

The temple had doors also at the entrance, and lintels over them, of the same height with the temple itself. They were adorned with embroidered veils, with their flowers of purple, and pillars interwoven; and over these, but under the crown-work, was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and fine workmanship of which was a surprising sight to the spectators, to see what vast materials there were, and with what great skill the workmanship was done

(Josephus, *Ant.* 15.395, in Church 1942, on-line at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=J.+AJ+5.1>)

They believe that Being to be supreme and eternal, neither capable of representation, nor of decay. They therefore do not allow any images to stand in their cities, much less in their temples. This flattery is not paid to their kings, nor this honour to our Emperors. From the fact, however, that their priests used to chant to the music of flutes and cymbals, and to wear garlands of ivy, and that a golden vine was found in the temple, some have thought that they worshipped Father Liber, the conqueror of the East, though their institutions do not by any means harmonize with the theory; for Liber established a festive and cheerful worship, while the Jewish religion is tasteless and mean.

(Tacitus, *Histories* 5.5.5, Whiston (1895), on-line at <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~josephus/josephus/tacitus.htm>)

The passage from Tacitus shows that the confusion of Yahweh with Dionysus is found in Latin thinking as well as Greek. "Liber" is one of the Latin names for Dionysus/Bacchus. The confusion clearly arises from the ways in which elements of ritual garb and practice common to both were interpreted.

17 For criticism of portrayals of Jesus which over-emphasise the role of teacher, see Davies 1995, 9-15.

18 See Evans (1999) for a summary of the various descriptions of Jesus.

19 See Price (2002, 320-1) for the view that assimilation of polytheistic belief was a long-standing part of Jewish theological method.

20 The identification of Jesus with David is not restricted to the examples which follow. Note also the Messianic identification of Jesus through the use of the titular "son of David" (Matt 9:27, cf. Rom. 1:4). On Matt's description of Jesus as son of David in both title and action, see Paffenroth 1999.

21 Such an identification may have been possible at an earlier juncture. It is possible that the distinction between pouring libations and drinking as (un)acceptable ways of using blood developed later. Note that Hittite religion described a libation as 'the king drinks the deity' (Hooke 1958, 106) which may be interpreted as "gives the god to drink", "drinks in honour of the God" or even, in a mystical sense, "drinks the god" (106, fn.1). Identification with Graeco-Roman practice, which also included the use of libations within meals (symposia), might include a similar conflation of meaning and practice.

22 2 Tim 4:17 (Ps. 22:21), 1 Pet 5:8 (Ps. 22:13), John 2:17 (Ps 69:9), Rev 12:4, 2 Cor 11:20, Gal 5:15, Jas 5:3.

23 This last reference also connects the "show-bread" to the "sapiential" traditions which describe Wisdom as bread. These are found in Johannine teaching (Ch.4, pp. 172-4, ¶ 4.4.6.).

24

XXV. (79) Moreover, God made Melchisedek, the king of peace, that is of Salem, for that is the interpretation of this name, "his own high Priest," without having previously mentioned any particular action of his, but merely because he had made him a king, and a lover of peace, and especially worthy of his priesthood. For he is called a just king, and a king is the opposite of a tyrant, because the one is the interpreter of law, and the other of lawlessness. (80) Therefore the tyrannical mind imposes violent and mischievous commands on both soul and body, and such as have a tendency to cause violent suffering, being commands to act according to vice, and to indulge the passions with enjoyment. But the other, the kingly mind, in the first place, does not command, but rather persuades, since it gives recommendations of such a character,

that if guided by them, life, like a vessel, will enjoy a fair voyage through life, being directed in its course by a good governor and pilot; and this good pilot is right reason. (81) We may therefore call the tyrannical mind the ruler of war, and the kingly mind the guide to peace, that is Salem. And this kingly mind shall bring forth food full of cheerfulness and joy; for "he brought forth bread and wine," which the Ammonites and Moabites were not willing to give to the beholder, that is Israel; by reason of such unwillingness they are shut out from the companionship and assembly of God. For the Ammonites being they who are sprung from the outward sense of the mother, and the Moabites, who originate in the mind of the father, are two different dispositions, which look upon the mind and the outward sense as the efficient causes of all existing things, but take no notice of God. Therefore "they shall not come," says Moses, "into the assembly of the Lord, because they did not come to meet you with bread and water when you came out of Egypt," that is, out of the passions.

XXVI. (82) But Melchizedek shall bring forward wine instead of water, and shall give your souls to drink, and shall cheer them with unmixed wine, in order that they may be wholly occupied with a divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself. For reason is a priest, having, as its inheritance the true God, and entertaining lofty and sublime and magnificent ideas about him, "for he is the priest of the most high God." Not that there is any other God who is not the most high; for God being one, is in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and there is no other besides Him." But he sets in motion the notion of the Most High, from his conceiving of God not in a low and grovelling spirit, but in one of exceeding greatness, and exceeding sublimity, apart from any conceptions of matter.

(Yonge (1854-90, np). On-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book4.html>)

25 Such conclusions represent a marked contrast to the established commentaries of Fitzmyer (1985) and Marshall (1979) which respectively record two and one index references to Melchizedek, none in reference to the Supper Narratives. Similarly Taylor (1966) records no indexed mention of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, the shadowy figure of Gen appears even more vapid in the Gospels. Yet, there are other references to the Melchizedek tradition which need to be explored further. These include the appearances of Ps 110, where a search for Melchizedek might well follow the Davidic references, and the importance of Isa 61, in light of the coming of the Kingdom and the Jubilee. Barker (2003, 38-9) points to all of these and sets a challenge for investigation of this neglected avenue which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this work.

26 The concern with Melchizedek's actions is more strongly represented in writings of the third century CE than the first.:

4. Also in the priest Melchizedek we see prefigured the sacrament of the sacrifice of the Lord, according to what divine Scripture testifies, and says, "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine." Now he was a priest of the most high God, and blessed Abraham. And that Melchizedek bore a type of Christ, the Holy Spirit declares in the Psalms, saying from the person of the Father to the Son: "Before the morning star I begat Thee; Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek; " which order is assuredly this coming from that sacrifice and thence descending; that Melchizedek was a priest of the most high God; that he offered wine and bread; that he blessed Abraham. For who is more a priest of the most high God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered a sacrifice to God the Father, and offered that very same thing which Melchizedek had offered, that is, bread and wine, to wit, His body and blood? And with respect to Abraham, that blessing going before belonged to our people. For if Abraham believed in God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, assuredly whosoever believes in God and lives in faith is found righteous, and already is blessed in faithful Abraham, and is set forth as justified; as the blessed Apostle Paul proves, when he says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Ye know, then, that they which are of faith, these are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, pronounced before to Abraham that all nations should be blessed in him; therefore they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Whence in the Gospel we find that "children of Abraham are raised from stones, that is, are gathered from the Gentiles." And when the Lord praised Zacchaeus, He answered and said "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." In Genesis, therefore, that the benediction, in respect of Abraham by Melchizedek the priest, might be duly celebrated, the figure of Christ's sacrifice precedes, namely, as ordained in bread and wine; which thing the Lord, completing and fulfilling, offered bread and the cup mixed with wine, and so He who is the fulness of truth fulfilled the truth of the image prefigured.

(Cyprian, *Ep. LXII.4*. Trans. Roberts & Donaldson. On-line at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-05/anf05-87.htm#P5951_1869716)

The proposals outlined in this thesis would suggest that writers like Cyprian drew on a tradition which they could discern within the New Testament rather than inventing a new sacramental aetiology. This tradition could be dated along with *Heb.* which is variously dated in the second half of the first century CE. Thus on the date of Heb : Attridge 1989, 9 - 60-100 CE; Kümmel 1984, 403 - 80-90 CE; Moffatt 1933, 451- late 80s CE, period of Domitian; Moffatt 1986, xxii - pre 85 CE; Robinson 1976, 200-20 - late 60s CE.

27 Klawans (2001, 151) notes that *Imitatio Dei* does not explain all sacrificial patterns in Ancient Israel. Further Klawans (2002) at no point mentions *Imitatio Dei* in his interpretation of the Last Supper. This suggests that Klawans, an advocate of the *Imitatio Dei* as a sacrificial mechanism, may see no place for it within the sacrificial symbolism of the Supper.

28 In support of such a view McGrath further notes evidence which points to the debate being an argument within the early church:

- Manna imagery is used to legitimise eucharistic theology in eating terms familiar from the OT
- It is disciples of Jesus who find the teaching hard, not outsiders.
- Vv.61-5: "grumbling" draws parallels between members of the community with the people of Israel in the wilderness.

29 Lindars (1972, 268-9) argues that the use of τρώγων reflects the limitations of John's vocabulary rather than polemic.

30 Morgan (1991, 424) is equally critical of the extent of the problem, but for different reasons than to those outlined here. He views the identification of the elements as an anachronistic intrusion, whereas, the thesis outlined here sees such an identification arising from contemporary sacramental thinking. Morgan is perhaps dismissive of theories which focus on the elements. He suggests that only those influenced by later thinking on transubstantiation or later prayer books based on John 6 might be lured into thinking about cannibalism. It is, perhaps, worth pointing out that such criticisms could be put on the lips of Roman opponents of Christianity in the apostolic period:

Now the story about the initiation of young novices is as much to be detested as it is well known. An infant covered over with meal, that it may deceive the unwary, is placed before him who is to be stained with their rites: this infant is slain by the young pupil, who has been urged on as if to harmless blows on the surface of the meal, with dark and secret wounds. Thirstily-O horror!-they lick up its blood; eagerly they divide its limbs. By this victim they are pledged together; with this consciousness of wickedness they are covenanted to mutual silence.

(Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 9)

To which the following reply is made:

And now I should wish to meet him who says or believes that we are initiated by the slaughter and blood of an infant. Think you that it can be possible for so tender, so little a body to receive those fatal wounds; for any one to shed, pour forth, and drain that new blood of a youngling, and of a man scarcely come into existence? No one can believe this, except one who can dare to do it.

(30, both texts on-line at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-04/anf04-34.htm#P5579_831897)

Whilst it is true that this does not deal with the minutiae of eucharistic theology, it does suggest that thinking about cannibalism might well have had to be addressed.

31

Animal blood is never used literally, but only metaphorically in Revelation as "the blood of the Lamb" referring to Christ's death (7:14; 12:11; see also 19:13). This demonstrates a real departure from the Jerusalem cult's use of blood from bulls, goats, lambs, and birds. No more sacrificial cult is envisioned in this nascent Christian community. Instead, Christ's blood is what is efficacious for redemption and freedom from sin.

(Hanson 1993, np)

Cf. Rev 1:5; 5:9-10.

32

The discourse material in this chapter begins in a way reminiscent of John 4, where Jesus discusses living water with the Samaritan woman. Both conversations begin with a reference to ordinary food or water (4:7-9; 6:26 in the context of the earlier feeding), to which Jesus responds by referring to the need to be concerned with eternal food or drink (4:10; 6:27). Jesus' interlocutor(s) then ask(s) for this eternal water/bread, yet still understanding it as a permanent form of ordinary food/drink (4:15; 6:34). In both cases, the water or bread is referred to in terms of 'life' and/or its cognates ('living water', 'bread of life'), which is said to provide eternal life. It may also be noted that both conversations take place in the context of a particular OT tradition (in John 4 Jacob's well, in John 6 the manna). There are also significant similarities between this discourse and the discourse with Nicodemus in John 3. In both cases Jesus' interlocutor misunderstands him, and responds with a question containing *pws dunatai* (John 3:4; 6:52), to which Jesus responds with a double 'Amen' and a saying beginning with 'unless' (*ean mh_*; John 3:5; 6:53). We thus are confronted here with another example of the Johannine dialogue, which takes a misunderstanding, usually caused by Jesus' use of a term which can have more than one meaning, and elaborates it.

(McGrath 1997, np. On-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/info/john-food.html>)

33 We can also note that the spiritual and physical realms were not exclusive and separate in the ancient world: the discussion of 1 Cor 11:30-32 picks this up: spiritual malaise can have physical consequences (Ch.8, pp. 393-7, ¶ 8.5.2.-3.). There the linking of the two realms is based on concepts familiar from Greek medicine. In emerging Christian theology the linking of the physical and the spiritual is also seen in discussions about the nature of the resurrection body, in which the Christian writers expected a transformation of the body rather than a separation of body and soul after the pattern of Greek metempsychosis (see further in Ch.5, p. 211, ¶ 5.3.1.). The connection of the material and spiritual was identified and maintained by the early fathers, particularly during the Arian controversy (Leech:1994,150-1). The question of realism and literalism continued to dog eucharistic theology throughout the patristic period and beyond: note the controversy of Radbertus (Walsh 1988, 229). Hering (1962, 119-20) suggests that a purely symbolic understanding of the eucharist is only possible in a modern sense because of the Cartesian distinction of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*.

On a completely different tack, gross literalism still flourishes in odd corners of eucharistic thought, e.g., <http://home.inreach.com/bstanley/true.htm> and <http://dsanford.com/miraclehost.html>

See Shrage (1991, 68-89) for an extended discussion of the interpretation of the eucharist in Christian theology and Pless (1983) for summary of recent eucharistic writing.

34 The distinction is most famously found on the lips of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's literary creation, Sherlock Holmes:

- Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth. -- *The Sign of the Four*
- How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth? -- *The Sign of the Four*
- We must fall back upon the old axiom that when all other contingencies fail, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth. -- "The Bruce-Partington Plans"
- When you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth. -- "The Blanched Soldier"

[On-line at <http://www.sherlockian.net/about/faq.html>]

35 It is worth noting that, in this passage, an *ad maiorem* argument is used. If they cannot accept the teaching about blood, how will they cope with seeing the ascension of the Son of Man? Drinking blood may be an issue, but it is not perceived as the greatest obstacle. Such teaching needs to be set in a higher context, which is cryptic and mysterious (Brodie 1993, 287-8). Lindars (1972, 270-2) has a similar approach. Breaking John 6 into segments, he argues that "offence" of v.61 is not eucharistic theology, but rather the theology of Jesus' Incarnation. Those who find the teaching difficult are not therefore critics of John's eucharistic theology, but of his Christology. They find it hard to cope with the Incarnation, but they will find it even more difficult to cope with the exalted Christ. However, surely the difficulty of v.63, with its apparent denial of value to the flesh, would be as problematic for "orthodox" Christology as eucharistic theology? Nor does Lindars' argument address the connective phrasing of v.59 (ταῦτα εἶπεν) which refers to the preceding arguments, including section vv. 51-8. Whatever the conjectured pre-history of the traditions in John 6, the final redaction has placed these pericopae together.

Even so, the implications of Lindars' theory support the contention that the problem here is not the language either of "eating flesh" or "drinking blood", and its supposed offence within Second Temple Judaism.

36 This argument may seem at odds with earlier remarks. It appears to start with a hypothetical Aramaic construction suggesting a *Sitz im Leben* of the third cup drunk at the Passover. Elsewhere, a close link with the Passover has been queried. Yet, it would still remain possible that a Passover gesture or utterance might have been used, without recourse to an order which copied the whole meal. Indeed eucharistic practice would seem to suggest that only particular gestures were used. The arguments which follow suggest that there are strong grounds to connect cup and covenant which could be independent of the Passover meal, and, indeed, that the significance of the covenant far outstrips that of the Passover meal.

37 The use of διαθήκη in Gal 3:15 does not demand that "testament" be used in this context, since the covenant with Abraham was not marked by sacrifice (Hering 1962, 117). Note that the shorter Western text of Luke would omit much covenant language

38 Senior (1975, 82-3) gives a sacrificial interpretation of Matt 26:28

39 Matt's use of περὶ is variously attributed to style, confessional language, sacrificial terminology or LXX Isa 53:10, cf. Davies & Allison 1997, 474. Senior (1985, 67-9) puts the case for the Suffering Servant. Gundry (1994, 528) considers the sacrificial terminology of the LXX to lie behind it.

40 The Pauline use then influences the Lukan version. Both, thus, may stem from liturgical considerations. Marshall (1979, 807) also considers the Lukan version to be secondary.

41 Heil (1991) goes further arguing that, in Matt, the Jewish people bring upon themselves the blood of Christ identified with the wine of the Supper:

At this point in the narrative, especially through the connection established by the image of the "shedding of blood" in 23:35 and 26:28, the reader realizes that the Jewish leaders, in bringing upon themselves "all the righteous blood" of the prophets "shed" (*ekchynnomenon*, 23:35) upon earth, including the blood of the "prophet" Jesus (21:11,46), whom they are seeking to kill

(12:14; 21:33-46), are also bringing upon themselves the covenantal blood of Jesus to be "shed" (*ekchynnomenon*) for the forgiveness of all people's sins (26:28).

(1991, np)

This should not be interpreted in a vengeful or anti-Semitic fashion. In an ironic twist the truth of Jesus' claim is substantiated in the use of Judas' returned money to buy a graveyard for foreigners, and, indeed, the Jews' own chance of salvation:

The innocent "blood" of Jesus that all the Jewish people are willing to accept the full responsibility for shedding is the same "blood" that Jesus at his last supper designated as "my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many for the forgiveness of sins" (26:28). Precisely and paradoxically because the whole Jewish people brought upon themselves the tragic "price" as well as the salvific "value" for shedding the innocent blood of Jesus as a "prophet" and the suffering "righteous one" of God, they make possible the forgiveness of the sins of all people, including Peter who wept bitterly in remorse after denying Jesus (26:59- 75), Judas who repented his sin of betraying Jesus' innocent blood (27:3-10), and the whole Jewish people who invoked his atoning blood upon themselves and their future generations.

(1991, np)

42 Isa 53:6,10 and 12 appear to inform both 1 Cor 11:24 and 2 Cor 5 (Bruce 1986, 210). The Johannine equivalent (ὁ κόσμος- John 6:51) points unreservedly towards an inclusive interpretation.

43 Both the use of ἐκχυννόμενον and πολλὰ reflect Semitic usage (Taylor 1966, 546 fn.24).

44 O'Neill (1984, 71-4) argues that a sacrificial understanding of Jesus' death is implied in the even in the *Did.* which does not allude directly to the historical events of his life.

45 Γένημα is an example of LXX phraseology rather than classical Greek (Marshall 1979, 523; Taylor 1966, 547, fn. 25b).

46 Jeremias (1987, 53) contends that red wine was drunk at the Last Supper. This is open to the criticism of being based exclusively on later Talmudic sources.

47 This is true of all sacrificial rituals including those in which the deity does not literally eat. However, the burning or offering of a portion of the victim or gifts, or the pouring of a libation, represents this activity.

48 Such thinking demands the miracle be located in a Jewish context. This is not universally held. Bultmann (1971, 120, fn.1), for example, is critical of Jewish antecedents for the Cana miracle, preferring to stress its affinities with the Dionysiac cult (119, fn.1). Brown (1988, 101, 103) in turn questions Bultmann's thesis, but also is more cautious about the eucharistic symbolism of the miracle (109-110). *In nuce*, Bultmann argues that similarities are due to the evangelist borrowing from pagan religion, whereas Brown suggests that similarities stem from the early Church practice of replacing pagan religious themes with a Christian alternative.

49 The fullest exposition of such symbolism is found in Rev 21:9-27.

50 See also Taylor (1966, 446) for the Lukan version as an independent saying.

51 Mk 10:35-45 does not help to choose between the two literary forms. The *logia* are placed neither in a meal nor a farewell setting.

52 Mk 14:10-11, 43-5; Luke 22:3-6, 47-51; Acts 1:16-20. Whilst outside the scope of this research, we might note that John 13:21-30 brings in a fiscal dimension to the betrayal through the common purse which may contain an echo of the discussion of holiness and justice which focusses on ἴδιον and κοινά (see below, Ch.8, p. 377, ¶ 8.3.1.3.).

53 This need not rule out all references to Qumran/Essene nexus in the accounts about Judas. See Van De Water (2003) for intertextual similarities in the traditions about Judas and the Wicked Priest.

54 For variations in emphasis between the different accounts, see further Fitzmyer 1985, 1423.

55 The replacement of the Temple cult is often seen as a criticism of it (Klawans 2002, 8). The understanding adopted here takes a positive view of the practices, comparable to the prophetic criticism of cult (Ch. 4, p.146-8, ¶ 4.2.9.). Klawans argues that such understandings explain why the first followers of Jesus did not isolate themselves from the Temple and sacrificial worship (9-15).

It is worth considering how the reader's own world-view may contribute to a negative or positive take on the Temple. This is clearly seen in the debates of the Reformation where exegesis often appears to have been driven by ideological concerns over the nature of the eucharist. What is perhaps more difficult for us to see, because the issue is too close to us, is how modern and post-modernist thinking might still prejudice contemporary attitudes to sacrifice.

56 Some may object that the phenomenon of the Messianic Secret might negate such a conclusion. The view presented here is based on two phenomena: the first is O'Neill's theory about the charges against Jesus, which suggests that Jesus did not so much hide his Messiahship as refrain from proclaiming it publicly (see Ch.1, p. 28, fn. 11). The second is from Schweitzer's criticism of the literary hypothesis of the Messianic Secret. Such a theory is

weakened by three incidents within Jesus' life: the confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:27 ff.), the High Priest's knowledge of Jesus' Messiahship (Mk 14:60-5) and the entry into Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-11; cf. Schweitzer 1981, 339-40). Schweitzer finally dismisses it:

...the question arises: what interest had the persons who set up the literary theory of secrecy, in representing Jesus as having been openly put to death as the Messiah and in consequence of his Messianic claims? And the answer is: "None whatsoever: quite the contrary." For in doing so the theory of secrecy stultifies itself. As though one were to develop a photographic plate with painful care and, just when one had finished, fling open the shutters, so, on this hypothesis, the natural Messianic light suddenly shines into the room which ought to be lighted only by the rays of the dark lantern.

(340)

57 The ethical link between the Qumran/Essene axis and emerging Christianity is only partially revealed by the Supper Narratives. A fuller investigation will need to examine the traditions recorded in Acts 2:44-55; 4:32, 34, 36-5:11; 6:1-6 (Capper:1995, np).