

Anni Pesonen

Luke, The Friend of Sinners

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Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed,
by due permission of the Faculty of Theology,
at the University of Helsinki in Auditorium XII
on the 25th of April 2009, at noon.

ISBN 978-952-92-5330-2 (paperback)
Printed in Finland by HSE Print 2009

This dissertation is published electronically by
E-thesis, University of Helsinki
ISBN 978-952-10-5440-2 (PDF)

Acknowledgements

Several scholars have offered guidance and insights as I wrote this study. First and foremost I must thank my two supervisors during the long process. Professor Heikki Räisänen has been a lasting source of inspiration, helpful comments and steady encouragement. Professor Risto Uro has likewise influenced the contents of this work greatly and personally stood by me in times of trouble.

There are numerous others who have helped me by inspiring and informative discussions, by guiding me to important literature, and even by reading and commenting on parts of my work. Among these have been Dr. Outi Lehtipuu, Dr. Nicholas Taylor, Dr. Ville Vuolanto, Dr. Jarmo Kiilunen, Dr. Raimo Hakola, Dr. Matti Myllykoski, and Prof. Ismo Dunderberg.

The atmosphere of friendship among the post-graduate students of the Department of Biblical Studies was a constant source of enjoyment during the ten years or so that I spent at the Department studying as well as teaching. To name some of my closest circles, I remember with affection every person with whom I shared a study; the members of a project called the Hellenistic Context of Christianity; and all women among the post-grads, several of whom have become my intimate friends.

My English in the final version was corrected by Dr Robert Whiting. All remaining mistakes are due to my own negligence.

For financial support I am grateful to the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the Research Unit for the Formation of Early Jewish and Christian Ideology, nominated a Centre of Excellence and funded by the Academy of Finland. Finally I received a grant from the University of Helsinki.

This book was very nearly ready by the end of April two years ago. As far as this book was concerned, these years have consisted of some bitter surprises, much additional labour and worry, and many long delays. My deepest thanks are due to all those who have stood by me during this harassing interval. I thank once more my supervisors Heikki

and Risto, as well as Prof. Raija Sollamo, for guidance and empathetic support, and Prof. Kari Syreeni and Dr. Kalervo Salo for gracious and helpful comments in their preliminary examination of this work. Finally, I can hardly express my gratitude to all my friends who patiently listened to it all and carried me through this experience. Thank you, Kirsi, Outi, Hanne, Ulla, Nicholas, Katri, Laura, Sanna, Pia and Ville, Tiina and Jari, the circle of younger post-grads, and many others; thank you, my colleagues at the Diaconia Polytechnic in Järvenpää; thank you, my precious sister and parents. Finally, it is over. Nunc dimittis!

As ever, my most invaluable source of support, comfort and help was Antti, my husband. It is to you and to our daughters, Emilia and Erenja, that this book is dedicated. You three are the greatest miracle in my life.

In the yellow house at Hakakuja 4, Järvenpää, in March 2009

Anni Pesonen

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I Introduction

There are very few things which are more deeply implanted in both the popular Christian image and the scholarly view on Jesus than that he was deeply committed to “toll collectors and sinners”, and that this was a matter of primary importance in his life's work. It was the author of the Third Gospel, Luke¹, who actually made this theme a central one for all subsequent Christianity. Without him it would hardly have attracted so much attention, being but a minor theme in the other canonical Gospels. Luke, certainly, did not create his picture of Jesus as the great friend of sinners out of thin air. He found it in the earliest written sources about Jesus, namely, the Gospel of Mark and the Q source, and it is possible that he knew other traditions about the matter as well. But without him the matter would never loom so large in Christian preaching or, indeed, in critical Jesus scholarship. This book is an analysis of the contribution of the author of the Third Gospel in making Jesus, for so many people, first and foremost “a friend of sinners”.

I will first sum up the passages that make up the canonical picture of Jesus as a friend of sinners. Apart from Luke's special material there really is not much. In Mark, there is the account in which Jesus calls the toll collector Levi and thereafter shares a meal with Levi and many toll collectors and sinners (Mark 2:15-17); both Luke and Matthew repeat it with small changes (Luke 5:27-32/ Matt 9:9-13). In addition, the Q source contained a speech of Jesus in which he quotes a jibe levelled against him, namely that Jesus was a “glutton and a drunkard, a friend of toll collectors and sinners” (Luke 7:31-34/ Matt 11:16-19). Apart from these, there are only two passages in all of Matthew, Mark and John which contribute to the picture of Jesus as the special friend

¹ Henceforth I will refer to the author of the Third Gospel as “Luke” and as “he”. This is for brevity and convention. I join those scholars who believe that no more can really be known of the author of the Third Gospel than that he was a Christian who wrote in the last decades of the first century A.D., or possibly in the first decades of the second one. Moreover, I assume that he used the Gospel of Mark as a source, and shared with the Gospel of Matthew another source, referred to as the Q source.

of people who were thought sinful in some special and concrete sense. The first is Matt 21:31-32, in which Jesus claims that toll collectors and prostitutes will enter the Kingdom of God before the high priests and elders of his day (addressed in 21:23) because they believed John the Baptist. In this saying, Jesus sets toll collectors and prostitutes up as an example of the right kind of faith, but John, not Jesus, is the one who reportedly impressed these groups. The second is the story of the adulteress (John 7:53-8:11), which is a later interpolation in the Gospel of John, missing from the earliest manuscripts. It is of unknown origin, but obviously much later than the rest of the Gospel of John.² If we set aside the Gospel of Luke, the notion that Jesus himself was on actively friendly terms with toll collectors and sinners is built solely on Mark 2:15-17/ Matt 9:9-13, on Matt 11:19, and on the spurious John 7:53-8:11. Within the greater frame of the remaining Jesus tradition in Matthew, Mark, and John, the theme is a minor one.

For Luke, however, it is extremely significant. In addition to the two passages taken from Mark and Q, Luke tells of Jesus' encounter with the woman who has a reputation as a sinner (Luke 7:36-50). In his fifteenth chapter he lets Jesus tell the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son to defend his meals with toll collectors and sinners in the face of the Pharisees and the scribes. The parable of the Sheep appears also in Matt 18:12-13 but Luke is the one who connects it unambiguously with Jesus' toll collector and sinner followers. In 18:9-14 Luke has Jesus tell the parable of the Pharisee and Toll collector in the Temple. In 19:1-10 he tells how Jesus met Zacchaeus, the chief toll collector. Finally, he recounts Jesus' gracious exchange of words with one of the criminals crucified with him.

In the Gospel of Luke, then, Jesus' relationship to toll collectors and sinners, otherwise a minor feature in the Jesus tradition, figures again and again. The scenes and parables are delivered with memorable story-telling skill and pathos. The theological idea is developed and enriched. Luke's presentation of the theme has left the deepest imprint on how Jesus has been seen by Christians; it permeates Christian

² A group of manuscripts, Family 13 (the Ferrar Group), has the story of the adulteress not in John 7:53-8-11 but after Luke 21:38. Apparently some copyists felt that the anonymous story suited the Gospel of Luke better than that of John.

preaching, Christian culture, and popular images of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke has given us the collection of images, the picture book material, of Jesus as the defender of the repentant sinner. Together with the Pauline teaching of redemption and the remission of sins it forms the firmest biblical foundation for making repentance and the forgiveness of sins the most essential theological core of all Christianity.

Jesus as the friend of sinners in contemporary Jesus scholarship

Like Luke, most scholars of the historical Jesus still lay great emphasis on Jesus' friendship with toll collectors and sinners. In contemporary scholarship, there is still a consensus, broken by very few dissenters, that befriending "toll collectors and sinners" was a quintessential feature in the public activity of Jesus. His meals with them are also given much importance. In the following I will sum up the discussion on the historical Jesus, toll collectors, and "sinners", from the so-called Third Quest of the Historical Jesus research beginning in the 1980s up to the present decade. As an exception, some space must be given to Joachim Jeremias, for his work reverberates through that of several modern scholars.

Two factors in the discussion are of special importance for my work. Who the "sinners" are taken to have been in Jesus' society is one. The second is how much the Lukan portrayal still contributes to the scholar's views.

Joachim Jeremias contended that Jesus' loving and forgiving attitude to toll collectors and sinners was the central feature in his ministry and in stark contrast with the attitude of the Pharisees.³ Jeremias depicted the latter as dominating the public opinion of the Palestinian society of Jesus' day. This society, in Jeremias' view, had a large class of people that the Pharisees despised as sinful. This class consisted of people working in "despised trades", covering quite many occupations, as well

³ Jeremias: *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (1958); *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu: eine kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur neutestamentlichen Zeitgeschichte*. (3., neubearb. Aufl. 1962. Transl. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 1969).

as of the poor and uneducated people referred to as *‘amme ha-arets*, “the people of the land”. All of these would have been “deprived of their Jewish civil rights”.⁴ Jesus, according to Jeremias, threatened the authority of the Pharisees by proclaiming that the sinners were especially called and favoured by God, as well as by eating publicly with them. Here he was acting as the liberator of a significant minority, if not indeed the majority of people. Jeremias defended the authenticity of most Lukan special material, including all the Lukan sinner texts listed above.⁵

Jeremias’ view has later been strongly criticized, first and foremost by E. P. Sanders.⁶ In his view, Jeremias’ analysis of the Palestinian society in the day of Jesus, with its large, clearly-defined group of “sinners” deprived of their civil rights by the Pharisees, is based on a misinterpretation and projection onto the past of Rabbinic texts. The Rabbinic lists of undesirable occupations reflect views which need not have been generally accepted or very influential even in their own day and circle, and they certainly cannot be taken as direct information about first century Palestine. Moreover, the lumping of the poor and the uneducated (*‘amme ha-arets*) together with “sinners” is an exaggeration. It serves the negative characterising of the Pharisees and the justification of Jesus’ cause by creating an artificially severe picture of the social situation. Such a view can never have been wide-spread or influential, or even characteristic of the Pharisaic movement.⁷

E. P. Sanders’ own interpretation of the identity of the “sinners” befriended by Jesus is that they were the “wicked”, people who wilfully and repeatedly broke the law without repenting.⁸ Sanders takes

⁴ Jeremias 1969, 303-312.

⁵ Jeremias 1980, *Die Sprache des des Lukasevangeliums. Redaktion und Tradition im Nicht-Markusstoff des dritten Evangelisten*.

⁶ Sanders 1985, *Jesus and Judaism* 174-208. Jeremias' view has been defended by Meyer, 1991, 451-462. Sanders replied in 1991, 463-477.

⁷ Sanders 1985, 177-180, 182. Sanders is here followed by John P. Meier (1994, 149, 211-212), James Dunn (2003, 528-529) and, in principle, by N. T. Wright (1996, 264-266), though Wright maintains the view that all Pharisees may not always have made much distinction between “sinners” and the “people of the land”.

⁸ Sanders: *Jesus and Judaism* (1985), 198-206; *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (1993), 226-237

an example of usurers: the Torah forbade lending out money on interest (Lev 25:36-38); those who lived on charging interest broke the law flagrantly and systematically.⁹ “Sinners”, then, were not ordinary people but rather those whom the ordinary people regarded as immoral. Prostitutes would have been among these; so were toll collectors because they were universally suspected of dishonesty, of charging more than they should and pocketing the profits.¹⁰ According to Sanders, Jesus gave offense by promising the Kingdom of God to such “wicked” people if only they accepted his message. Jesus was an eschatological prophet who saw the Kingdom as arriving in the immediate future and those who followed him as belonging to God's elect. The toll collectors and other possible “wicked” people in his company were not required to find different ways of making their living but were welcomed as they were, and this was the cause of public critique. It is Luke who later brought in the emphasis, alien to the historical Jesus, of repenting and mending one's ways.¹¹

For Sanders, the Calling of Levi (Matt 9:9-13/ Mark 2:13-17/ Luke 5:27-32) and the Glutton and Drunkard saying (Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19) reflect the historical fact that Jesus associated with “the wicked” and was criticized for it, even if the Levi scene as such is unrealistic.¹² He also thinks that the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son in ch. 15 originated in Jesus' welcoming of the sinners.¹³ Sanders proposes that the Church expanded the motif of Jesus and the sinners, but nevertheless accepts the argument that the fact that Jesus' promise of salvation to sinners comes to us in many diverse forms speaks for its historicity, as does the fact that this material is large in extent.¹⁴ For both of these arguments the contribution of the Third Gospel is crucial; without it, the material would not be large, and the important form of the parable would be missing altogether.

⁹ Sanders 1985, 177.

¹⁰ Sanders 1993, 229.

¹¹ Sanders 1993, 231, mentioning Luke 5:32, 15:7, 15:10.

¹² Sanders 1985, 178-179.

¹³ Sanders 1985, 179; 1993, 197, 231.

¹⁴ Sanders 1985, 174. Sanders lists the diverse forms as “parables, other sayings, flat declarations of purpose, reports of Jesus' activity, and reported accusations against him”.

Marcus J. Borg has tried to combine the views of Jeremias and of Sanders in *Jesus: A New Vision*, 1987.¹⁵ In this work, he visions a large group of sinners and outcasts, which included both the notoriously “wicked” (murderers, extortionists, prostitutes, and the like) as well as members of certain occupational groups, taken straight from Jeremias.¹⁶ These people counted as “non-Jews” and were “virtually untouchables”. Like Jeremias, Borg lumps the impoverished landless together with these: in his view, the difference between the “starkly poor, living on a mixture of begging and day labour”, and the outcast must have been “almost imperceptible”.¹⁷ Jesus' meals with the outcast were part of Jesus' active campaign on behalf of these people: “Jesus' table fellowship with outcasts was an enacted parable of the grace of God, both expressing and mediating the divine grace.”¹⁸ Borg sees the parables of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector (Luke 18:9-14) as well as the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) as authentic and belonging to Jesus' defence of the sinners.¹⁹

Geza Vermes, who aims at planting Jesus and his faith within the boundaries of Judaism, confirms in *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (1993) the standard view that Jesus associated with toll collectors and sinners.²⁰ According to Vermes, Jesus “showed compassion not merely to the unfortunate, the sick and the helpless commended by the biblical prophets, but to the pariahs of his society”, including people who were unclean because of diseases, people possessed by demons, as well as “the social, political and moral outcasts, known in the New Testament as ‘publicans and sinners’”. Jesus had a reputation as their “friend” (Matt 11:19; Luke 7:34), and he “chose a toll collector, or rather a customs official, Levi-Matthew, as one of his apostles, and sat at his table surrounded by Levi's colleagues and other ‘sinners’”. In the Zacchaeus story, according to Vermes, Luke is “probably trying to

¹⁵ Borg's main work on the historical Jesus is *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (1984) where the view on Jesus and sinners is very much that of Jeremias. In *Jesus: A New Vision* (1987) some influence of Sanders is discernible, but the basic view still reflects the work of Jeremias.

¹⁶ Borg 1987, 96 n. 25, referring to Jeremias 1969, 303-312.

¹⁷ Borg 1987, 92.

¹⁸ Borg 1987, 1001-102.

¹⁹ Borg 1987, 106, 145, n. 28.

²⁰ Vermes 1993, 205-206.

improve on the other Synoptics”. Similarly Vermes sees the Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50) as an anecdote that may be of Luke's creation but probably on a factual basis. Mark 2:17 reflects Jesus' genuine attitude, and so does Luke 15:7, even when Vermes recognizes it as a Lukan formulation. Vermes, then, sees Luke as embellishing a firm historical fact.

In his *A Marginal Jew*, John P. Meier takes the picture of Jesus' friendliness with toll collectors and sinners seriously. According to Meier, Jesus was “acting out his message of the Kingdom of God in his table-fellowship with toll collectors and sinners”²¹ and “expressing the joyful time of salvation in his freewheeling table fellowship with toll collectors and sinners”.²² Meier, too, interprets the sinners as “the wicked”, repeating the theory of Sanders without essential change.²³ Meier concentrates his study on Markan and Q material so that Lukan special material is never analysed at length. Meier claims with Sanders that the large extent and the multiple forms of the Gospel material on Jesus' promise of salvation to sinners support its historicity.²⁴ Obviously, the Lukan special material is the greatest cause for the large extent and also significant for the multiple forms.

N. T. Wright, in *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1996), maintains much of the ideas of Jeremias while taking on some of Sanders', at least on a superficial level.²⁵ Wright emphasizes that there was a difference between “sinners” and “people of the land”, that is, ordinary or non-Pharisaic people. Nevertheless, he claims, the Pharisees saw these as being in a continuum, making no sharp distinction between them. Wright, like Jeremias, thinks that Israel was “longing for redemption” as a nation.²⁶ “Forgiveness” was available for private individuals within the existing system of sacrifice and purification, but Jesus was offering

²¹ Meier 1994, 452.

²² Meier 1994, 454.

²³ Meier 1994, 149-150.

²⁴ Meier 1994, 150; Sanders 1985,174.

²⁵ Wright 1996, 264-274.

²⁶ Wright 1996, 273: “...as long as Israel remained under the rule of pagans, as long as the Torah was not observed perfectly, as long as the Temple was not properly restored, so Israel longed for ‘forgiveness of sins’ as the great unrepeatable, eschatological and national blessing promised by her god.”

something more: “the return from exile, the renewed covenant, the eschatological “forgiveness of sins” – in other words, the kingdom of god”.²⁷ He replaced, in practice, the Temple and the offering of sacrifice with himself and his own authority.²⁸ Wright accepts a wide range of texts for his historical database, including the Sinful Woman (7:36-50), the parables of the Lost (Luke 15) and Zacchaeus (19:1-10).

The Jesus Seminar is one representative of the critical scholarly opinion on the authentic words and deeds of the historical Jesus, reached by voting. The seminar agrees that Jesus consorted with “toll-collectors and sinners” and “social outcasts” and that he was criticized for eating with them (*Acts of Jesus*, edited by Robert W. Funk, 1998).²⁹ Here, too, Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19 is seen as the firmest foundation, accompanied by Mark 2:15-17. The Seminar trusts some Lukan special passages, taking the parables of the Lost (Luke 15:4-6, 8-9, 11-32) as well as the Pharisee and the Toll Collector (18:9-14) into the database of who the historical Jesus was (*The Five Gospels*, edited by Funk, 1993).³⁰ The rest of the Lukan sinner pericopes are fabricated by Luke, even though the Lukan anointment story (7:36-50) may also reflect changes during the oral period.³¹

Gerd Lüdemann, too, takes Jesus’ friendship with sinners very seriously (*Jesus nach 2000 Jahren: Was er wirklich sagte und tat*, 2000). Lüdemann thinks that Jesus’ own illegitimate origin made him turn to toll collectors, whores and sinners.³² He practised an open table-fellowship and told parables of how God seeks the lost, visiting toll collectors and whores as an enacted commentary to his parables.³³ Mark and Q are the firmest historical foundation, but Lüdemann takes much of the Lukan material into account as well. He thinks that Luke

²⁷ Without admitting it, Wright ends up defending two ideas openly challenged by Sanders: that Jesus offered forgiveness of sins, which would ultimately have been impossible to achieve within Judaism, and that Jesus liberated the ordinary people who were proclaimed sinful by the Pharisees. Sanders 1985, 175-182, 200-206.

²⁸ Wright 1996, 257.

²⁹ Funk 1998, 66-67.

³⁰ Funk 1993, 355-357, 369. The category for all of these is pink.

³¹ Funk 1993, 304.

³² Lüdemann 2000, 879-880.

³³ Lüdemann 2000, 881, 884.

7:36-50 may come from Luke's special tradition and contain an authentic reminiscence of Jesus' encounter with a prostitute.³⁴ The Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son are all original, and even though Luke wrote 15:1-2, they are indeed connected with Jesus' friendship with sinners.³⁵ The Pharisee and the Toll Collector (Luke 18:9-14) does not go back to Jesus, because it gives a very hostile and historically incorrect picture of the Pharisees.³⁶ Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) is a legend that Luke got from tradition but the fact that Jesus may have known a toll collector called Zacchaeus may be historical.³⁷ The Good Criminal (Luke 23:39-40) was invented by Luke to express his Christological and eschatological views.³⁸

James Dunn (*Jesus Remembered*, 2003) is a bit more cautious about counting on the authenticity of Lukan passages but is as convinced about Jesus' friendly relations to toll collectors and sinners.³⁹ Mark 2:17, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners", goes back to Jesus' response to the criticism of consorting with "sinners", and the Q-reported jibe about "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of toll collectors and sinners" (Matt 11:19/Luke 7:34) reflects the same criticism. It is not credible that such a critique of Jesus was interjected into the Jesus tradition on the initiative of later disciples. He admits that in Luke the motif of Jesus' association with sinners is much elaborated but concludes that even if Luke elaborated the motif, there was a motif in the earliest memories of Jesus' mission to be elaborated.⁴⁰

Dunn also criticizes the attempts of both Jeremias and Sanders to give a concrete and fixed meaning to the term "sinner" in the Palestine of Jesus' day.⁴¹ He points out that a great number of writings from the Second Temple period, such as 4QMMT, Daniel, 1 Maccabees, Enochic writings and the Psalms of Solomon, reflect the view that Jews outside the writer's own group were sinners and law-breakers. The

³⁴ Lüdemann 2000, 387-390.

³⁵ Lüdemann 2000, 458-462.

³⁶ Lüdemann 2000, 475-476.

³⁷ Lüdemann 2000, 480-481.

³⁸ Lüdemann 2000, 511.

³⁹ Dunn 2003, 526-527.

⁴⁰ Dunn 2003, 528.

⁴¹ Dunn 2003, 528-534.

term, apparently, was quite often used in a sectarian manner, marking the boundaries of insiders and outsiders from the speaker's point of view. It was a term of dismissal that had no objective, universally acknowledged point of reference. As such the criticism that Jesus was a friend of "sinners" may, in Dunn's view, after all reflect a Pharisaic view of who was to be seen as sinful.

Dunn's general point, the sectarian and subjective use of the term "sinner", is certainly correct. Nevertheless this does not quite explain the way the term is used in the Gospels, for the evangelists are not conscious of the subjective or sectarian use of the term. They use it as if it had an absolute meaning: in the Gospel texts, Jesus meets "sinners", not "people whom the Pharisees called sinners". A problem remains: if the Pharisaic notion of sinners was of quite sectarian nature, how come it appears so deeply embedded in the Christian Gospel story in which these "sinners" walk and talk as if their sinfulness were obvious to everyone?

John Dominic Crossan does not write about Jesus' friendship with toll collectors and sinners in his *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (1991). His silence on the subject, however, seems due to methodological principles only. As a precaution, Crossan has chosen to build only on material that is attested at least twice in what he deems the earliest, first stratum of Jesus tradition (before AD 60.).⁴² The Q saying Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19 would be early enough, but as Mark with his calling of Levi is on Crossan's second stratum (AD 60-70), Jesus' friendship with toll collectors and sinners will not qualify for the historical database. The Lukan sinner material is also out, as the Gospel of Luke is on Crossan's third stratum (AD 80-120). Crossan, however, underlines that "in theory, a unit found only in a single source from the third stratum might be just as original as one found in fivefold independent attestation from the first stratum."⁴³ It is only as a "safeguard and an insurance" that he concentrates on the traditional units which have multiple attestation on

⁴² Crossan 1991, xxvii-xxxiv. The dating of material into four strata is on pp. 427-434.

⁴³ Crossan 1991, xxxiii.

the first stratum.⁴⁴ Crossan includes most L pericopes in his reconstructed inventory of sayings that, in his opinion, actually do go back to the historical Jesus.⁴⁵ For our purposes the most important ones among these are the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, and the Pharisee and the Toll Collector. Crossan, then, is no adversary of the historical Jesus being a “friend of toll collectors and sinners”.

We now come to the dissenters among the general consensus. Richard A. Horsley, in *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (1987), sees the image of Jesus as the friend of toll collectors and sinners as based on later development.⁴⁶ Toll collectors can never have made up a significant element in Jesus’ following,⁴⁷ and there is indeed very little firm evidence that Jesus associated with them at all.⁴⁸ Horsley sees Jesus as first and foremost loyal to the Galilean peasantry and their basically anti-Roman stance. Horsley’s Jesus would not have offered any support to people who were flouting the tight-knit ranks of the peasantry and could be seen as collaborators of Rome; toll collectors and prostitutes would have been among these. Horsley claims that the woman of Luke 7:36-50 was a debtor, not a prostitute.⁴⁹

Burton L. Mack (*A Myth of Innocence*, 1988) has depicted Jesus as a Cynic teacher whose genuine teaching consists of a handful of aphoristic sayings and parables. Interestingly, Mack believes that the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) was among the seven authentic parables.⁵⁰ However, he sees the contexts that the Gospels give to the sayings of Jesus as thoroughly inauthentic, based on strong rhetorical

⁴⁴ Crossan 1991, xxxii.

⁴⁵ Crossan 1991, xiii-xxvi.

⁴⁶ Horsley 1987, 212-223. Earlier, William O. Walker argued that Jesus’ fellowship with toll collectors is without historical basis (“Jesus and the Tax Collectors”, 1978, 221-238). The grounds given are as follows: Luke 5:27-32/ Matt 9:9-13 relies on criticism by Jesus’ adversaries, while Mark 2:15-17 is an artificial scene. The identification of one of the twelve as a toll collector is problematic. Toll collectors do not appear outside the Synoptic Gospels, and in some synoptic material Jesus has a negative attitude to toll collectors.

⁴⁷ Horsley 1987, 21.

⁴⁸ Horsley 1987, 212-217.

⁴⁹ Horsley 1987, 223.

⁵⁰ Mack 1988, 60-61, 61 n.5.

elaboration and reflecting only the situation of the followers of the later Christ cult.⁵¹ Mack deems it possible that Jesus had discussions with his friends over meals, and for some (less than specified) reason retains the notion that Jesus' company may have been “mixed” and most of the participants “marginal people”, but nonetheless Mack sees the meal scenes in the Gospels as reflecting the later interests of the Christ cult rather than authentic history.⁵² Mack simply ignores Jesus' reputation for befriending toll collectors and sinners; presumably, then, it belongs to the web of artificial situations that Christians created around the few surviving words of Jesus.

In sum, the average opinion within historical Jesus research still is that consorting with toll collectors and sinners was an important feature in the activity of Jesus and reflected his most central message. The firmest historical foundation lies on Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19 and on Mark 2:15-17. However, most scholars take the parables of the Lost, especially the Prodigal Son, into account as well, and some include the Sinful Woman, the Pharisee and the Toll Collector, and Zacchaeus. There is notably a problem in what the “sinners” are taken to mean in the concrete social setting of Jesus' life – in whether the term refers to the viewpoint of the Pharisees or of ordinary people, or, somehow, of both. Notwithstanding this, the majority of recent studies on the historical Jesus still confirm the Lukan view that Jesus really paid considerable attention to toll collectors and sinners.

Jesus as the friend of sinners in contemporary Lukan studies

There is, then, a very wide, if not quite unanimous, agreement among Jesus scholars on the view that Jesus' befriending of toll collectors and sinners was a central feature in his public activity. However, there are

⁵¹ Mack 1988, 199-204. Mack takes an example of the Markan and Lukan anointing stories (Mk 14:3-9, Lk 7:36-50), which in his view are both based on a tiny *chreia* that may have run as follows: “When Jesus was at a table, a disreputable woman entered and poured out a jar of perfumed oil upon him. He said, ‘That was good.’” Everything else in Mark's account, and presumably in Luke's as well, would have grown as a deliberate embellishment by the Christian movement.

⁵² Mack 1988, 80-82.

significant contemporary studies on the Gospel of Luke that challenge this. Among Lukan scholars, it is a well-known, if not uncontested, view that Luke may have taken a very active role in the creation of the specially Lukan teachings and scenes in which Jesus appears as a friend of sinners. If so, this motif that towers so high in both scholarly and popular images of Jesus would really be based on a much smaller basis of tradition than is generally assumed. To be sure, as the motif is present in the Gospel of Mark as well as in the Q source, Luke would not have fabricated it out of thin air. But if, as some Lukan scholars have claimed, all Lukan special material on the matter is really the evangelist's own elaboration on the scanty information provided by Mark and Q (or Matthew, for one of these scholars), the conclusion for Jesus studies ought to be that Jesus' dealings with sinners were not of great importance during his lifetime. Rather, it was Luke who saw the matter as extremely significant and managed to make it so for posterity.

In sketching the development of the topic of the Lukan portrayal of Jesus and sinners during the last three decades I will concentrate on studies in which several of the central Lukan sinner texts are analysed or that contain a thoroughgoing discussion of the origin and possible sources of these texts. The field of Lukan studies is wide, and the following outline of recent scholarship cannot be comprehensive of all studies relevant to the topic. For one thing, to keep this presentation within reasonable limits, commentaries and articles on individual pericopes are not discussed here.

During most of the twentieth century, the dominating scholarly view was that the bulk of Lukan special material on the topic of Jesus and sinners came to Luke from his special source or sources (that is, an L source or L traditions). I will return to these theories and present a short history of research on this field in ch. II 1. Here it will suffice to state that the existence of a Lukan special source or sources was a very widely accepted theory until the late eighties.

In 1989 Michael Goulder published his *Luke: A New Paradigm*, a study contending that Luke had written his Gospel on the basis of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew only. According to Goulder, there never had been a Q source or, for that matter, an L source. The Lukan special traditions dwindle into a few scattered grains of neutral historical

information like the slaughter of pilgrims by Pilate and the collapse of the tower in Siloam referred to in Luke 13:1, 4. Everything else in Luke that surpasses the Gospels of Mark and Matthew is due to the evangelist's conscious elaboration on these two older Gospels. Goulder's book is massive, including a First Part that refutes the assumption of any lost sources and examines Luke's language and literary style, or "the Lukan story", in detail; the Second Part is really a full-scale commentary to Luke.

In the case of Q, Goulder attempts to prove that Luke is in each and every case dependent on Matthew. An evaluation of that argument is beyond the scope of this study; I take the two-source theory as my starting point. It is Goulder's argumentation on the Lukan special material with which I am directly concerned. Goulder builds his case by first contending that the Third Gospel is seething with vocabulary, expressions and grammatical structures that must really be seen as typical of the evangelist himself, even though they often have been seen as typical of Luke's special source or sources. I will return to Goulder's analysis of the Lukan language in ch. II 1. The argument that has intrigued me most has been Goulder's long, detailed and complex analysis of the Lukan story-telling style.⁵³ Goulder catalogues and illustrates features repeated in the Gospel of Luke ranging from details of content like Luke's interest in details of work and in parties, to literary devices like the use of soliloquy, and on to complex and more controversial issues like Luke's "human" characters and the (allegedly) low level of allegory in Luke's parables. The rest of Goulder's argument consists of the steady application of the Razor of Ockham: if the language in each scene, story and teaching is to be explained as the preferred language of the evangelist, and both the literary style and the content are thoroughly Lukan, why postulate a lost source rather than a very creative evangelist?

Goulder's style is brilliant, the book unforgettable, and the argument convincing, at least at first sight. His work later inspired an extremely interesting critical evaluation, Mark Goodacre's *Goulder and the Gospels* (1996). Goodacre's careful, neutral and meticulous study is very helpful in charting out Goulder's great and small short-cuts,

⁵³ Goulder 1989, 89-115.

generalizations and exaggerations. Goodacre's general overview is that many of Goulder's insights remain plausible even after critical appraisal, even though Goulder definitely has a tendency to bend the evidence somewhat. For instance, he often makes the contrast between Luke's style and that of the other Synoptics more clear-cut than it really is by playing down similar features in the other Gospels. He also repeatedly puts rather heterogeneous matter under one heading to make the evidence for a Lukan feature stronger. Nevertheless, in Goodacre's view, Goulder's analysis of the Lukan story-telling style is basically sound.

The conclusions are far-reaching. If, as Goulder argues, the Lukan special passages are in consistently Lukan language, then the evangelist cannot have been copying out a written L source; and if the basic elements of the scenes and stories – features of plotting, characterization, and details of content – are indeed typical of the evangelist, he cannot even have been transmitting traditional items with some personal rephrasing only. If the Lukan literary style goes even nearly as deep as Goulder claims, we are indeed dealing with an extremely creative and inventive evangelist, even if (contrary to Goulder's own view) there actually had been some traditions at Luke's disposal that he shaped and embellished.

David Neale's monograph *None but the Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke* (1991) could hardly be more different from Goulder's book in its method and argumentation. Nonetheless it arrives at perfectly compatible results regarding the historicity of the portrayal of Jesus and sinners in the Third Gospel. Neale's book was triggered by E. P. Sanders' challenging of the incorrect identification of the Gospel "sinners" and of the *'amme ha-arets*, summarized above. In a study on Rabbinic writings Neale first confirms Sanders' claim that Rabbinic views on the *'amme ha-arets* do not explain the synoptic depiction of the Pharisees' antagonism towards "sinners". The Pharisees, to be sure, did have high ideals on tithing and on the purity of food, but these were sectarian ideals, not accepted by the majority of people, and even among the Pharisees there were degrees of observance. Therefore their views could never have led to the general exclusion of the non-observant from society. Neale claims that the quest for the historical "sinners" as a social entity in first-century Palestinian society is futile,

and so is the quest for the Gospel-like Pharisees who despise these sinners and hate all sinner-lovers. “Sinner” is a term from the language of religion, reflecting the black-and-white, ideological categories of religious thought; hence Neale's term “religious category”. “Sinners” and “the righteous” are a religious and ideological distinction, not a social one; they do not and never have existed in any objective sense.⁵⁴

In the second part of his book Neale analyses the central sinner texts in the Gospel of Luke: the Call of Levi, the Sinful Woman, the Gospel for the Lost (meaning Luke 15), the Pharisee and the Toll Collector, and Zacchaeus. In a literary-critical analysis Neale shows what it means in practice that the sinners and the Pharisees in the Gospel of Luke do not reflect two real groups in the social life of Jesus' day, but rather, religious categories. Both are stylized and stereotyped, at home in the world of myth and of ideology, where right and wrong, light and darkness, appear clear-cut. The sinners in the Gospel of Luke are cast as *repentant* sinners, proper objects of Jesus' and God's forgiveness, and the audience is encouraged to sympathize and identify with them. The function of the Pharisees is to serve as the dark foil against which Jesus shines bright. The Gospel story needs its villains to form a contrast to the hero, namely, Jesus. Therefore the Pharisees are depicted in such a way that it is impossible to take their side; they are, simply, blind religionists and bigots. Historically, their portrayal is highly unfair. In all of this Neale's analysis is convincing.

Neale does not address the question of the origin of the text. He is content to show that the portrayal of the sinners and of the Pharisees in the Gospel of Luke is informed by theology and literary dynamics rather than by the historical reality of Jesus' day. Yet this view fits Goulder's theory quite well, for Goulder, too, believes that it is Luke's theology and literary aims that really shape the story. Neither of them has any problem with the idea that there is a gulf between the Lukan scenes and stories, on one hand, and the historical Jesus, on the other.

In 1992 Jarmo Kiilunen published an article in Finnish on the Lukan theology of repentance (“Sanoma kääntymyksestä – Luukkaan toimintaohjelma kirkolle”). He argued that the double work, Luke-

⁵⁴ Neale 1991, 193.

Acts, betrays a consistent theology on this subject, evident in all the central sinner texts which Neale, too, analyses, but also in the Baptist scene (Luke 3:10-14), in the Criminal at the Cross (23:39-43), and in Jesus' threatening sermons to the people (Luke 10:13, 11:32, 13:1-9). In Acts, Luke's repentance theology is most evident of the speeches made by the apostles (Acts 2:14-41, 3:12-26, 5:29-32, 10:34-43, 13:38-41, 17:22-31).

Kiilunen's primary interest is in showing how the isolated theological threads in Luke-Acts really form a consistent system of repentance theology. However, he also asks and answers questions of the origin of the Lukan sinner pericopes, advocating the view that Luke himself created the sinner material that has no direct parallels in the other Gospels. Kiilunen assumes that the Sinful Woman and Zacchaeus are Luke's modifications of Markan texts, and that the Prodigal Son is quite possibly his; the Second Criminal is in Kiilunen's view undoubtedly a Lukan creation.⁵⁵ In all of this Kiilunen is in line with Goulder, although he does not refer to Goulder's work. Their argumentation differs in that Goulder stresses most of all the Lukan story-telling style, whereas Kiilunen emphasizes the consistent repentance theology that spans across Luke-Acts. They join forces in arguing that the postulation of a Lukan special source is unnecessary once it has been shown that Luke himself could have written his special material on Jesus and sinners.⁵⁶

The next Lukan study that concerns Jesus and sinners in the Gospel of Luke was on totally different lines. In *The Story of Jesus according to L* (1997) Kim Paffenroth has sought to re-establish the credibility of the L source. I will explain, as well as evaluate, Paffenroth's method in more detail in ch. II 1. To put it in a nutshell, he begins his search for an L source by separating material that has very often been seen as coming from a Lukan special source. He then develops a statistical method in which he looks for vocabulary only occurring in this block; the theory is that such selective block vocabulary is due to a common written source. Paffenroth then analyses this "L block vocabulary" in the light of Luke's redaction of Mark and of Q. He also pays attention

⁵⁵ Kiilunen 1992, 108, 110, 114, 115.

⁵⁶ Kiilunen 1992, 122.

to grammar and to the formal characteristics of the contents of his alleged L material. Paffenroth ends up by attributing to his L source five-sixths of the block of texts that he first selected for examination.⁵⁷ All of the central sinner texts in the Lukan special material (the Sinful Woman, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, the Pharisee and the Toll Collector, and Zacchaeus) are attributed to this L source. Paffenroth's book shows how very divided the field of Lukan studies is on the question of the origin and sources of the Lukan special material.

Guy Nave's monograph *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts* (2002) also comes close to my topic of Jesus and sinners in the Gospel of Luke. Nave seems to have chosen his texts according to whether or not they explicitly mention repentance, and so leaves out the Sinful Woman, the Pharisee and the Toll Collector, as well as the Criminal on the Cross. However, the Calling of Levi, ch. 15, and Zacchaeus are included in his analysis. Nave interprets the Lukan call to repentance as first and foremost a call to social justice, "the just, merciful and equitable treatment of all people by all people".⁵⁸ Sin is the opposite attitude, illustrated, for instance, by the rich man's treatment of Lazarus.

Nave has at many places laboured hard to understand the social reality behind the text, e.g., by inquiring carefully into the situation of soldiers and of toll collectors. It is all the more surprising that he does not attempt to fathom Luke's use of the groups of "sinners" and of Pharisees and the way these two groups relate to social reality. Nave writes an accurate descriptive analysis of the role played by the Pharisees in the Lukan text but never discusses the critical question whether their portrayal is true to the situation in Jesus' day. To be sure, Nave never openly claims that the Lukan picture of Jesus, the sinners and the Pharisees is historically accurate, but this remains the overriding impression because the question is passed over in silence.⁵⁹

Fernando Méndez-Moratalla's *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke* (2004) completes the series of monographs with a considerable overlap

⁵⁷ Paffenroth 1997, 94-95.

⁵⁸ Nave 2002,

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Nave's analysis of Luke 15 in 179-184.

with my own work in their selection of Lukan texts. Concentrating on conversion, Méndez-Moratalla has chosen to analyse the Preaching of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-17), the Calling of Levi, the Sinful Woman, the Prodigal Son, Zacchaeus, and the Criminal on the Cross. There is a significant difference of emphasis between Méndez-Moratalla and Nave in that Méndez-Moratalla sees Luke's focus as religious conversion, not as (dominantly socio-ethical) repentance. Méndez-Moratalla contends that the Lukan conversion has its ethical and economical aspects, as does ideal conversion in the Jewish writings roughly contemporary with Luke, but claims that it is faith in Jesus as the Christ which Luke emphasizes at least as strongly. In comparison, Nave underlines the ethical aspect of the Lukan repentance so strongly that religious conversion, in the meaning of change in one's set of beliefs and relationship to God, seems relegated to secondary importance.

Méndez-Moratalla shows some interest in his footnotes in the question of how the Lukan picture of Jesus, the sinners and the Pharisees matches the social world of Jesus' lifetime. In this he returns to the basic view contended by Jeremias. Though conscious of Neale's and Sanders' work, Méndez-Moratalla sees the Gospel depiction of the Pharisees, sinners, and Jesus as reliable and historical. In his view, the Pharisees' ideal of eating their own meals in a temple-like state of purity really made them object to Jesus' eating with sinners. The dough of Lukan studies on the subject is not yet leavened by Sanders and Neale, not even in matters where they have clearly pointed out earlier mistakes and misinterpretations.

In the main text Méndez-Moratalla's analysis moves mostly on descriptive lines as Nave's does, echoing and paraphrasing the Lukan view on the Pharisees, the sinners, and Jesus. It is assumed rather than argued that Luke's portrayal describes the historical situation accurately. As with Nave, this approach in itself conveys the impression that there is no reason to question the historical truth in this matter.

The last monograph to be mentioned here is Hans Klein's *Lukasstudien* (2005). It is noteworthy because of its careful and detailed argument,

and very classical results, on the question of Luke's sources.⁶⁰ Klein believes that there was a written L source that contained not only the greater narratives and parables peculiar to Luke in the middle section of his Gospel, but also infancy narratives and a passion-Easter narrative.⁶¹ He also finds it plausible that Luke found short, individual words of the Lord in oral tradition, some of them possibly in fixed sets of sayings. Taking Luke's redaction of Mark as his starting point, Klein claims that Luke retells his material with relative freedom and by choosing his own phrasing but does not alter the content or even the length of the pericopes significantly. However, Klein does not believe that Luke's special sources could be reconstructed, and he proves this effectively. Klein does not refer to Paffenroth's work. His argument and method are similar to earlier studies on the Lukan special sources. I will return to them in ch. II 1. Klein's work, as well as Paffenroth's, shows that the views of Lukan scholars are controversial on the question of Lukan creativity versus the use of pre-Lukan sources in the Lukan special material and the matter must still be regarded as undecided.

It is time to draw conclusions about the development of Lukan studies concerning the topic of Jesus and sinners in Luke. Extremely different views have been presented especially on the origin of the relevant Lukan texts and on the historical reliability of Luke's portrayal of the relationships of Jesus, the Pharisees and "sinners". The most important challenges to the previous consensus view have been presented by E. P. Sanders and David Neale, on one hand, and on the other by Michael Goulder, as well as by Jarmo Kiilunen for those few who know Finnish.

The scholarly field is in many ways divided, and all too often scholars fail to consider each other's findings in any depth or at all. The scholars who are interested in the question of the origin of the Lukan sinner texts, like Goulder, Kiilunen, Paffenroth and Klein, have reached very different results. Scholars who concentrate on the final form of these texts rather than on their development, namely, Neale, Nave and Méndez-Moratalla, have provided valuable insights for the interpretation of these texts, while showing very different levels of

⁶⁰ Klein 2005, 48-84.

⁶¹ Klein 2005, 59.

interest towards the historical accuracy of the Lukan sinner texts and the social context of the first-century Palestine in which the Lukan story is set. Sometimes they see the Lukan sinner controversy in quite opposite ways; Neale sees it as highly ideological and unrealistic, while Méndez-Moratalla believes it to reflect a real controversy between the historical Jesus and the Pharisees. What is missing is scholarship that would integrate questions of content and interpretation, inquiry into the social context behind the text, questions of the origin and the development of the texts in detailed source criticism, and the question of historical reliability.

Does it matter how the Lukan text came about?

Questions of the origin of biblical books and pericopes, of their sources and their authorship, have been out of fashion for quite some time. The turn from redaction criticism to narrative criticism brought the final form of the books, rather than their development, into focus.⁶² In the words of R. Alan Culpepper, the aim was to turn from the search for “separate strains or layers of material” in the text to concentration “on the integrity of the whole, the ways its component parts interrelate, its effect upon the reader, or the way it achieves its effects”.⁶³ The central question of redaction criticism, how the final redactors treated earlier material, has been deemed irrelevant for understanding the books in their final form, as they now are – both the message which the books convey and the way in which this end is achieved.

Narrative criticism has perhaps sometimes served as a healthy corrective in reminding us that the final form of the biblical text is interesting in itself and always has its own unifying logic and message in spite of the incongruities in the text on which redaction criticism concentrated. Nevertheless I cannot see why the question of the development of a text and the question of how its final form functions should be mutually exclusive in biblical scholarship. Certainly it is possible to give attention to both, if one is not very pressed for space or for time. The only question is whether it is worthwhile; whether

⁶² See, e.g., Culpepper 1983, 3-5; Moore 1989, 1-68; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (1990).

⁶³ Culpepper 1983, 3; quoted by Moore 1994, 65-66.

something can be achieved by enquiring into the history of the text that cannot be reached by studying the final form only.

Biblical narrative criticism need not, of course, be practised without inquiry into the social context in which the text was formed. In the monographs introduced above, Neale's *None but the Sinners* is a happy example of such two-fold interest. The work may be called narrative-critical in that little interest is shown to which parts or elements in the Lukan sinner texts reflect older sources or traditions as opposed to free Lukan creativity. Nevertheless Neale has carried out a meticulous study on how the groups of sinners and of Pharisees in the Lukan story-world relate to the actual social milieu in first-century Palestine. This is narrative criticism with good contextualization. As a contrast Neale's work lacks all real inquiry into the social context behind the (alleged) controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees over sinners. Méndez-Moratalla's contextualization of this issue is quite different from Neale's, mostly harking back to the views that Sanders and Neale have criticized, and much less thorough, being conducted at the footnote level only.

Neale's work shows that narrative criticism of biblical texts, when combined with a thorough and critical study of their socio-historical context, is a powerful tool, capable of digging deep into the nature of the text, including its historical reliability. Why, then, add the discussion of the development of the text?

In my opinion, this is necessary for a comprehensive view of the texts, as well as for greater transparency of scholarly discussion. That so many present scholars do not openly discuss their assumptions concerning the origin of the Gospel texts hides an important aspect of how they actually view these texts. For all scholars have some kind of basic view on the birthing process of the Gospels, and these views will influence scholarly work whether or not they are discussed openly. For instance, in Lukan studies those scholars who assume that the Third Gospel faithfully transmits information from early and reliable sources will not easily assume a great difference between the story-world of the Gospel and the social context of Palestine in Jesus' day. Where these two would seem to differ, they will either favour such readings of the text as are compatible with their notions of that social context or

champion those socio-historical theories that confirm the Gospel depiction of Jesus' social milieu. By contrast, those scholars who assume an uncertain course of oral transmission, fewer and later written sources, and/or that the evangelist frequently took recourse to invention for theological and literary reasons, will expect a greater difference between the story-world and the social milieu in Jesus' day. Even where narrative-critical studies do not openly discuss the origin and development of the Lukan text they nevertheless produce results that are compatible with some views on its origin but not with others. For instance, the view of Neale, that the depiction of sinners and of Pharisees in Luke is highly unrealistic and idealistic is quite compatible with Goulder's and Kiilunen's vision of Luke as a creative writer who composed many or most of the sinner pericopes to express his theological views. It is much harder to combine with Paffenroth's conclusion that the Lukan sinner texts are faithfully copied out of an L source that is earlier than Mark.⁶⁴ On the other hand, Méndez-Moratalla's reading in which little or no difference is perceived between the story-world and the social context of Palestine of Jesus' day would go very well together with this very early L source, but would be ill-paired with the views of Goulder and Kiilunen.

Open interplay of all kinds of questions – those concerning the social situation behind the texts, those concerning the development of the Gospel tradition and the birthing of the final text, and narrative-critical observations and interpretation of the final form of the text – is not only interesting in itself, but also fruitful. It leads to a far more comprehensive view; and it brings with it greater transparency – open discussion of all the assumptions, convictions, and observations on which each scholar's results are built.

I will take a couple of examples. The question can be raised, for instance, whether some elements in a given text reflect a later ecclesiastical situation while the rest make sense in an earlier context. The question is a fruitful one for understanding the manifold aspects in the meaning and message of the text, but it can hardly be separated from a theory of the age and origin of the text. Where we expect a late date for a text, we are more ready to see reflections of a later situation;

⁶⁴ Paffenroth 1997, 158.

where we assume an early date, we more easily accept other explanations for the very same elements in the text. No scholar is a *tabula rasa* without pre-expectations or paradigm to guide his or her observations and interpretations; therefore an open display of one's premises is desirable.

Or take characterization. Are the Pharisees in the Third Gospel realistically portrayed representatives of the Pharisaic movement in Jesus' day, or are they, rather, stereotypes who represent the author's view on misguided religion so as to make the Gospel of Jesus shine forth? Both narrative criticism and the social history of Palestine in the first century provide valuable answers to these questions, as Neale's work shows. However, the question of the level of realism and fairness in the characterization is connected with the question of the general historical reliability of Luke. For this reason the scholar's earlier conclusions and assumptions concerning the origin and reliability of the Lukan text may in fact colour the way he or she perceives the Lukan Pharisees in the first place. The scholar who works with the premise that Luke is a reliable source of historical information will more easily take Luke's word for the character of the Pharisees; and historical reliability is usually connected with the idea of an early date or at least early sources. Thus there is a natural link between locating the origin of the sinner texts in reliable early traditions or an early L source and seeing the Lukan drama between the sinner-befriending Jesus and the sinner-despising Pharisees as realistically based on a historical controversy. What we think of as early and reliable, we will more easily perceive as realistic and plausible. Where we expect that an author had a more free rein, we more easily detect characterization guided by ideological views or literary dynamics rather than necessitated by actual fact. In this way supposedly simple observations on how Luke depicts his characters may actually be influenced by hidden assumptions of origin. This being the case, it is better to sail with all lights on and discuss the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the text – the origin of the text and its final form – side by side.

The two historical questions, that of how a given biblical text came about, and what the social milieu and situation that it reflects were like, are both relevant for the greater question, how closely the Lukan story-world reflects the social and historical reality of Jesus' life. And that,

according to my conviction, is quintessential for understanding the nature of the Gospel of Luke.

To be sure, the question can be raised whether reliable results can be expected from any study on the process by which the Lukan pericopes came about. That serious scholarship on the subject can produce such perfectly contrary accounts as those of Goulder and Paffenroth may lead to pessimism on the possibilities of achieving any real knowledge about it in the light of the same text corpus. Nevertheless it may be pointed out that the socio-historical milieu behind the Lukan story has likewise been seen in quite different ways, not least regarding the sinners and the Pharisees. The existence of contrary views, as such, does not disqualify scholarly discussion, or prove that any theory is as plausible as any other. There are better and worse theories, well-grounded and less than well-grounded statements; and so we may quest for the best with all kinds of questions that can be asked concerning the Biblical texts we have chosen to investigate. The aim is a comprehensive, and well-grounded, view on how these texts were created, what they mean to say, how they function, and how they relate to socio-historical realities.

The aim of this study

The aim of this study is to build a comprehensive theory of how Luke worked as he developed the sinner theme in his gospel and what did he hope to achieve.

An inquiry is made into what can be known of the origin of the Lukan texts on Jesus and sinners in order to test Goulder's (and Kiilunen's) claim that the evangelist himself could have created them. A re-examination is needed because the view that the evangelist might have freely created his sinner texts is not generally accepted within Lukan studies and has recently been confronted by fresh defence of the theory that a written special source (L) lies behind these texts. Another reason for a new assessment is that the scholars who have argued for great literary creativity of the evangelist in the matter of Jesus and sinners (Goulder, Neale and Kiilunen) have built their arguments in quite different ways, asking different questions and using differing methods

and paradigms. Their various arguments are brought together, reconsidered and evaluated.

As I argued above, questions of content and meaning link up with questions of origin and of historical development; these hypotheses tend to influence each other even where scholars try to keep them separate. In this work question of origins and birthing are openly combined with the questions of the literary construction of the texts, of their theological message, of their socio-historical setting, and of their aim and purpose in the ecclesiastic setting of Luke's day. The content and the literary construction of the texts are examined on closely on narrative critical lines. How are the *dramatis personae* characterized and how do they function in the story? How does the evangelist seek to convince his audience? What message does the evangelist finally convey with his theological drama of Jesus, sinners, and Pharisees? The question of the socio-historical context is important for understanding Luke's motivation in portraying the sinner drama the way he does. Are the groups of Pharisees and sinners meant to connect with some groups or parties in whose welfare Luke was interested? If so, whose interest does the Lukan drama serve, from whose viewpoint is it written, and whose identity does it strengthen?

The structure of this study

Part II: Lukan special material – special source, special traditions or the author's creativity?

In the Second Part, I first assess the methods that scholars have applied to find out whether and to what extent the Lukan sinner texts reflect written sources, oral traditions or the author's own creative invention. Second, the nature of oral traditions, especially the possible oral Jesus traditions, is discussed. Third, an inquiry is made into the role of creative invention in Hellenistic historiography and Luke's possible use of invention as a tool in the creation of his double work.

Chapter II 1 first deals with the theory of a written special source (L) behind Luke. After a short history of research on this topic I analyse how the central arguments in this theory are constructed. Luke's redaction of Mark is crucial for all the champions of an L source. Many

also work on the Lukan redaction of Q, but this is of necessity far more hypothetical as the Q text first has to be reconstructed. Luke's treatment of Mark is therefore all the more important, but unfortunately it is far from unproblematic. There may not be an objective or truly neutral method for finding out how Luke really worked on the Markan text. Too many of the basic assumptions of the L theorists seem to move in a circle. Next, I analyse how Goulder has constructed his argument in denying the existence of an L source. Elements of circularity are found here, too. Linguistic analysis is not as helpful a tool for charting out (or discarding) possible sources as all these scholars have assumed. This chapter, then, states my reasons for trying to discuss the question of Lukan creativity versus the traditions that he may have known on grounds other than the level of word statistics, grammatical structures and Lukan or non-Lukan expressions.

Chapter II 2 aims at assessing the general likelihood of getting valid information on oral traditions that the Lukan sinner texts might reflect. During most of the twentieth century the normal tool for reconstructing an oral tradition behind a Gospel text was form criticism, derived from the folklore studies of the 1920s and early 1930s. Form critics assumed considerable change in the traditions in the time span between Jesus' day and the final Gospel text and built up a methodology for tracking these changes. A voice of dissent was the so-called Scandinavian school, advocating Gospel transmission as strict memorization, allegedly practiced in schools much like later Rabbinic schools. The claims of the Scandinavian school keep resurfacing in scholarly discussion though they have not gained general acceptance. A more serious challenge for the form-critical paradigm was brought about by the so-called oral-formulaic school in folklore studies. The new paradigm emphasized the necessity and fundamental importance of variation in all oral transmission. The basic claim was that oral tradition cannot be reconstructed; the form-critical tool kit developed for the reconstruction of earlier forms does not work. Finally, an alternative vision has been presented by Kenneth Bailey and James Dunn, but it is limited in scope and it, too, provides no method of reconstruction.

Within the Gospel studies, the discussion on oral tradition has now moved on to the social memory theory, emphasizing the essential part

played by community in all remembering. The theory works as a corrective against interpreting the paradigm of oral tradition as constant variation in an excessively individualistic light. Nevertheless the social memory theory will hardly bring a change to the general difficulty of tracking changes in individual traditions. In principle, there may have been oral traditions behind the Gospel text, including the Lukan special material. The problem is that the form critics' means for getting hold of these traditions have proved to be faulty and no new method has since filled the void.

Chapter II 3 seeks to implant the claim that Luke in his double work may have had recourse to creative imagination in a plausible cultural matrix. It is generally agreed that the author of Luke-Acts has in many respects brought the Christian story closer to Graeco-Roman historiography. Lukan scholars, however, have been divided on whether this speaks for greater exactness and historical reliability in the Lukan double work or rather for a more free rein in writing. Some scholars have argued that Luke, like other historians of his day, used invention in Acts, but this view of Luke's working method has, rather oddly, not really been applied to the Gospel of Luke. To give a picture of the wider context, I first discuss how scholars in the field of ancient studies today see the use of invention in ancient historiography. I then conduct a case study to find out how the model of enriching a traditional story with invention, as the ancient historians often did, works for Luke 4:16-30.

Part III: analysing the texts

The most obvious texts to choose for a study on Jesus and sinners in the Gospel of Luke are the Calling of Levi (5:27-32), the Sinful Woman (7:36-50), the Parables of the Lost (ch. 15), the Pharisee and the Toll Collector in the Temple (18:9-14) and Zacchaeus (19:1-10). These are the texts that I call “the central sinner texts”. In four of these (the Calling of Levi, the Sinful Woman, the Parables of the Lost, and Zacchaeus) Jesus gets in contact with “toll collectors and sinners”, arouses thereby the criticism of Pharisees (except in the story of Zacchaeus, where the criticism comes from a crowd in Jericho), and ends the scene with a teaching with which he defends his proximity to the sinners and snubs his critics. The parable of the Pharisee and the

Toll Collector in the Temple lacks the occasion, a scene set in Jesus' life, but is obviously connected to the other central sinner texts by the figures of the Pharisee and the toll collector as well as by its message, which likewise defends the sinner and snubs the critical Pharisee.

Of these central sinner texts, the Calling of Levi comes from Mark while the rest are Lukan special material. As will be pointed out, the basic dynamics in all the rest follow that of the Levi story. They also bring up and expound aspects of a common message.

Apart from the Calling of Levi, there is another text on Jesus and sinners in the Gospel of Luke that according to the two-source theory must depend on an earlier written source, namely the Q saying in Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19. It reflects an early piece of information, namely that Jesus was mocked as “a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of toll collectors and sinners”. The pericope (Luke 7:24-35) concentrates really on John, not on Jesus, and does not truly expound or develop the theme of Jesus as a friend of sinners. For this reason, I have chosen not to write a separate analysis of it. However, Luke 7:34 is important as Luke's background material for the central sinner texts, and it is discussed within their analyses to the extent that it seems to have contributed to them.

There are, however, two texts in the Lukan special material with potential to shed light on the Lukan theology on sinners. It will be argued that they serve as something of a prologue and an epilogue for the theme of Jesus meeting sinners within the Third Gospel. These are the Calling of Peter (Luke 5:1-11) and the Two Criminals (Luke 23:39-43). In the Calling of Peter (5:1-11) the word “sinner” is first brought up, and in a striking manner that is evidently meant to pave way for the sinner characters later in the story. The Two Criminals (23:39-43) forms the last encounter of Jesus and an allegedly sinful person. These texts together with the central sinner texts, the Calling of Levi (5:27-32), the Sinful Woman (7:36-50), the Parables of the Lost (ch. 15), the Pharisee and the Toll Collector in the Temple (18:9-14) and Zacchaeus (19:1-10), form the arch of the Lukan Jesus' meetings with “sinners” and of his central teachings concerning them.

In the analyses, evaluation of what may be known of possible traditional origin goes together with the questions of Luke's theological message and presuppositions, on one hand, and those of the literary realization and style of the texts, on the other. Luke's ecclesiastical agenda is discussed where it seems visible, especially in the analysis of Luke 15. Evidence builds up that there is so much unity of style and content, story-telling and theology, in the elaboration of this motif that the evangelist must have been actively and creatively involved in it.

II Lukan Special Material – Special Source, Special Traditions or Creativity of the Author?

II 1 Luke and His Sources: Linguistic Arguments

The question of origins is unavoidable if one wishes to understand what Luke did to depict Jesus as a friend of sinners. A view of Luke's traditional background and source material for these pericopes is necessary for estimating Luke's own contribution to the present shape of the sinner pericopes. So the question of origins, of tradition and of Luke's own role, will follow throughout the book. Actually I agree with those who think that it is most often difficult to know very much of the traditional origins; but it is a meaningful enterprise to state how much, in my view, can be known of them, and why. This chapter is about theories of Luke's sources for his special passages and the methods which have been used in forming them. The aim is to give a general overview of the theories and methods and to point out certain inherent problems in them.

There were many different attempts during the last century to distinguish between the characteristic language of Luke's source material and his own characteristic language. In my view, the latter is easier to find than the former. I agree with those scholars who attribute the vocabulary and expressions that are characteristic of the Third Gospel to the evangelist; I find the theories that have sought to isolate language typical of a Lukan special source or sources much less convincing. However, the conclusion to be drawn is not so simple that language characteristics of the evangelist point to the nonexistence of sources or traditions. Rather, the analysis of language leads to a no-win situation. It would seem that everything in the Gospel of Luke is bathed in language typical of the evangelist which only proves that whatever the information on which Luke based his writings may have been, he rendered it in his own words.

I have found elements of circularity in all the theories that seek to derive information on the use of sources, or the absolute lack of sources, on the basis of Luke's language. All these theories tend to

produce predictable results that depend on the presuppositions imbedded in the method, even though many valuable insights have naturally been made. I first describe the scholarly history of this question and then concentrate with more detail on the method used in three attempts from the last three decades, those of Joachim Jeremias, Michael Goulder and Kim Paffenroth.

Early theories on Luke's special source

The material that is found only in the Gospel of Luke was first referred to as L by Bernard Weiss who thought that L had been a single source in written form.⁶⁵ Weiss's arguments for this were, from a modern point of view, rather weak.⁶⁶ They were that Luke's prologue differs clearly in style from what follows, the infancy narrative; that Luke's material is Jewish-Christian; and that there is so much L material that it must have been a longish document. Paul Feine identified "a special source" that for the greatest part overlapped with the L of Weiss.⁶⁷ However, he proved even more influential than Weiss with his hypothesis that the Lukan special source had been combined with Q before the writing of the Gospel of Luke. This theory was taken up by Vincent Henry Stanton⁶⁸ and J. Vernon Bartlet⁶⁹. Burnett Hillman Streeter developed Feine's theory into a version that became extremely influential. According to his hypothesis, Luke himself wrote a first version of his Gospel by combining two sources, Q and his own special source, L. These would have formed an independent book, Proto-Luke, which Luke later enriched by adding Markan material in inserted blocks.⁷⁰ Streeter's theory was energetically advocated by Vincent Taylor.⁷¹ The Proto-Luke hypothesis has been rejected by the majority of scholars even though it still has its defenders.⁷²

⁶⁵ Weiss 1886 and 1907.

⁶⁶ Paffenroth 1997, 12-14.

⁶⁷ Feine, 1891.

⁶⁸ Stanton 1909, 220-40.

⁶⁹ Bartlet 1911, 313-63.

⁷⁰ Streeter 1924.

⁷¹ Taylor 1926.

⁷² See Fitzmyer 1981, 89-91, Harrington 1998, 4-45, 98-200, 412-468. Modern supporters of Proto-Luke are, e.g., Boismard 1997 and Brodie 1999.

All these theories assumed that a single source lay behind Luke's special material. None of them gave serious consideration to two quite important possibilities: that Luke might have created some of his special material himself, and that traditional material might come from various sources.

Separating L material on linguistic grounds

Vocabulary and grammatical structures that are typical of Luke-Acts are scattered all over the work. Some scholars have taken this typical language as a sign of Luke's remarkable redactional activity while others have seen in it a sign of sources underlying Luke's work. Sir John Hawkins stated in the conclusion of his examination of "Words and Phrases Characteristic of St Luke's Gospel and Acts" (1899) that Luke apparently dealt very freely with the sources that he used; he had to a large extent clothed the narratives, and to some extent the sayings, in his own favourite language. As a result Hawkins was not surprised that he failed to find any expressions that could certainly be set down as a source, whether of Q, of Mark or specially Lukan.⁷³ Michael Goulder, Joseph Fitzmyer and Hans Klein, i. a. have later agreed with this general view. So do I.

A strong line of scholarship has sought to prove that Luke's special source or sources – an "L source" or, alternatively, "L material" – can be identified by studying the linguistic features of the Gospel of Luke. An early forerunner here was B. S. Easton.⁷⁴ Three German scholars, Friedrich Rehkopf, Heinz Schürmann and Joachim Jeremias, have produced the most important works in this line.⁷⁵ The method used by all three was basically similar. They counted linguistic features as pre-Lukan if these occurred only in non-Markan passages, that is to say, if there was no clear evidence that Luke could also write them of his own accord, unprompted by a source. The starting point is obviously problematic, which I hope to prove below by a more detailed inquiry into the work of Jeremias and the modern representative of basically

⁷³ Hawkins 1899, 15-23, 26. Henry Cadbury produced another much-used collection and analysis of Luke's redactional usage (Cadbury 1920, Part II).

⁷⁴ Easton 1910, 1911, 1926, xxiii-xxx.

⁷⁵ Rehkopf 1959; Schürmann, 1969; Jeremias, 1980.

the same method, Paffenroth. It builds on two unproved assumptions, first, that what is non-Markan is more probably pre-Lukan than Lukan, which belittles the possibility of Luke's own activity.⁷⁶ Secondly it is assumed that what is pre-Lukan presents unified language and style. Such an assumption makes most sense where L is conceived of as one single written source, as Rehkopf does. Schürmann and Jeremias are more cautious in stating this, allowing for various possible origins for the L material.⁷⁷ This is highly problematic for if L is understood to be partly written, partly oral, and originating perhaps in not necessarily the same circle, it follows that unifying features in the language of the Gospel must go back to the evangelist himself. However, the argument moves in a circle even when a single L source is postulated. *If* L is one single source, homogenous language points to its unity; homogenous language alone cannot prove that L is one single source, as it can also be accounted for by the activity of the evangelist.⁷⁸

The present situation

Very different theories have been presented in the last quarter of a century on the sources of the Lukan special passages. The existence of any special L material has been seriously challenged by some while others still rely on the basic view on L material created in the heyday of linguistic source analysis.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer has stated that "L" is to be understood very broadly as information of the Jesus-story in the Christian community that Luke tapped in various ways. It may have been either written or oral, and free creative activity on the part of the evangelist cannot be excluded.⁷⁹ "How can we be sure that such material is really derived from 'L' and

⁷⁶ Goulder, in an acute criticism of Schürmann's work, has called the move from "Lukan redaction cannot be proved" to "is original" quite illegitimate (1989, 18-19).

⁷⁷ Jeremias proposes that "pre-Lukan language" may represent written sources, oral tradition or expressions that Luke took over from his congregation. Its presence still decides the limits of Luke's own redactional activity: pieces with many pre-Lukan features are taken over from tradition (1980, 7-9).

⁷⁸ Similarly Goulder 1989, 81-82.

⁷⁹ Fitzmyer 1981, 66, 83, 85.

not composed by Luke”, Fitzmyer asks and answers, “We shall never know.”⁸⁰

Michael D. Goulder has challenged the previous theories of an L source or L material by claiming that Luke used both Mark and Matthew, and these only, for his sources. Q did not exist; all Lukan special material can be explained as Luke’s *midrash* (free reworking for homiletical ends) of Mark, Matthew and the Hebrew Bible.⁸¹ According to Goulder, there was practically no special L material, apart from some scattered historical information, such as that Pilate had had pilgrims slain in the Temple and that a tower in Siloam had fallen causing casualties (Luke 13:1-5).

Goulder’s argument is twofold. He claims, convincingly in my view, that linguistic arguments cannot prove the existence of any specially Lukan sources. Goulder analyses Luke’s language meticulously, and generally shows convincingly that it can be explained as characteristic of the evangelist. Here he harks back to Hawkins’ simple and reasonable method of counting up expressions that occur with marked frequency in the Third Gospel and are distributed all over it, so that it seems more than plausible that they are characteristic of the evangelist rather than any source.⁸² Hawkins’s list of vocabulary that is typical of the Gospel of Luke is preserved within Goulder’s longer list. Both are extremely useful, even though one must bear in mind that as Goulder does not accept the existence of a Q source, he counts the words and phrases in which Luke differs from Matthew automatically as Lukan redaction. His figures are therefore greater than those accepting the Q hypotheses would allow, but even omitting the Q occurrences of Goulder’s vocabulary its figures are most often striking enough.⁸³

⁸⁰ Fitzmyer 1981, 83.

⁸¹ Goulder 1989. The main view on the doubtful quality of special M and L material was already present in Goulder 1974. John Drury has supported Goulder’s view (Drury 1976).

⁸² Hawkins’ criteria were that an expression occurred at least four times and was either not present in Mark and Matthew or that it was found in Luke at least twice as often as in Matthew and Mark together. Hawkins called these expressions “words and phrases characteristic of St Luke’s Gospel” and concluded from their distribution that they were characteristic of the evangelist. Hawkins 1899, 15-26.

⁸³ Hawkins 1899, 15-23; Goulder 1989, 800-809. See also Goulder, 1989, 79, for other studies on Lukan vocabulary.

Throughout this book I will at times refer to language, terminology, or vocabulary that is typical or characteristic of Luke. By this I mean language, terminology, and vocabulary that are characteristic of the Third Gospel, for I agree with Hawkins and Goulder in that these are best explained by the predilections of the evangelist. Certainly no one has convincingly isolated a significant number of expressions within it that would clearly point to their origin in pre-Lukan sources.

Hawkins drew the conclusion that “the compilers (or at any rate Luke and Matthew) dealt very freely with the sources they used. To a large extent they clothed the narratives, and to some extent they clothed the sayings, which they derived from these sources, in their own favourite language.” He found “no expressions which could be certainly set down as characteristic of any source” – a natural result of the evangelists' free wording.⁸⁴ Here I find myself quite agreeing with Hawkins but unwilling to draw the conclusions which Goulder draws.

Goulder, namely, seeks to show that creative talent combined with the knowledge of Mark, Matthew, and the Hebrew Bible can and do account for nearly everything in Luke's Gospel. The latter claim is difficult to falsify as after the falling of the linguistic argument there is very little firm evidence for the existence of an L source or sources. Nevertheless I find it very rash to conclude that there were no Lukan special sources. I would rather say that there may well have been some special L tradition even though it remains unattainable to us. At a closer look Goulder's thesis is one more attempt to reach certainty of very uncertain matters. His highly imaginative way of finding the explanation for any detail in Luke's special passages either in Matthew or in Luke's own story-telling style can easily be stretched to cover anything. I hope to point this out below.

In spite of such voices as Fitzmyer's and Goulder's, belief in an L source, or at least in the reliability and great age of its central parts, is still wide-spread. François Bovon has, to be sure, in his commentary spoken of “Sondergut”, not “Sonderquelle”, but has nevertheless attributed to it the Prodigal Son, the Dishonest Steward and the Rich Man and Lazarus and suggested that the Lost Sheep and Coin as well

⁸⁴ Hawkins 1899, 26, quoted by Goulder 1989, 80.

as the Parable of the Feast would have been included in L material in a different form from Q.⁸⁵ Within the historical Jesus scholarship, as was made clear in the Introduction, parables like the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) and the Pharisee and the Toll Collector (Luke 18:9-14) have generally been taken as authentic. The Jesus Seminar counts all the great L parables as basically authentic.⁸⁶

Kim Paffenroth has defended the single, written L source again on mostly linguistic and word statistical grounds.⁸⁷ Paffenroth admits that the earlier methods were biased in attributing so many of the linguistic characteristics of the Third Gospel to pre-Lukan sources rather than to Luke's own usage.⁸⁸ He seeks to correct this bias by two steps, first by leaving out of his suggested L source the infancy narratives, the passion narrative and several other pericopes that many scholars have taken to be Luke's own creations or to be based on Mark.⁸⁹ Paffenroth wishes to analyse the linguistic features of that Lukan special material in which the use of an unknown source is most probable, without confusing these with the characteristics that are found throughout the Gospel and are probably due to the evangelist. This makes Paffenroth's method dependent on the present scholarly consensus as Paffenroth sees it. Second, Paffenroth introduces "the stricter criterion that points of style and vocabulary are likely to be pre-Lukan only if they are characteristics that Luke deliberately omits in his redaction of Mark and Q".⁹⁰ How this functions in practice we shall see below.

Hans Klein has proposed that Luke used in addition to Mark and Q a written, unified L source that covered the greater L pericopes. In addition, Luke took shorter speeches of Jesus over from oral tradition and made use of a "fixed, probably written" account of Jesus' passion and resurrection. Klein proposes that this account came from the same

⁸⁵ Bovon 1989, 20-21.

⁸⁶ Funk 1993.

⁸⁷ Paffenroth 1997. Paffenroth includes a discussion on the themes and formal characteristics of the content of his L source (ch. 4) but its function is to confirm conclusions already reached; the main argument relies on Paffenroth's analysis and statistics of vocabulary and grammatical features.

⁸⁸ Paffenroth 1997, 19-20.

⁸⁹ Paffenroth 1997, 27-65.

⁹⁰ Paffenroth 1997, 20.

circle of transmitters as the rest of the L material, apart from the childhood stories, which reflect “Jewish and Jewish-Hellenistic Christian circles”.⁹¹ Interestingly, Klein is critical of the earlier linguistic analyses, e.g., of Jeremias.⁹² He emphasizes that Luke himself is responsible for the general style and language, including the many LXX influences. According to Klein, Luke felt bound to the content, not to the word level of his sources; time and time again he took the freedom to recount in his own words.⁹³

Still, one cannot help feeling that Fitzmyer's skeptical view of how much can be known about the sources of Luke's special passages is more logical than Klein's. It is difficult to see how the exact boundary between a written L source and oral traditions could be pointed out and verified without a consistent system of linguistic arguments, something in the line of Jeremias or of Paffenroth, for a unified L source – and such systems are indeed problematic.

To make evident the weaknesses of the L theories based on linguistic evidence I will now focus on the methods of Jeremias and of Paffenroth. Both assume, as many still do, that there is some kind of core L material that belonged together before Luke, consisting at least of the most important Lukan parables. One can only presume the unity and try to draw distinct boundaries for such a source if it is perceived as a written document. Analyses of pre-Lukan language have been central in the quest to prove its existence.

The third scholar whose argumentation I will here examine critically is Goulder. I follow him in seeing the features that are characteristic of the language of the Third Gospel as due to the evangelist, as well as in the general view that free Lukan composition must be taken seriously as one option for the origin of the Lukan special passages. I part ways with him in that I do not believe that Lukan language necessarily goes together with perfectly free (i.e. tradition-free) Lukan creation in the Lukan special passages, something that Goulder does not state openly but ends up assuming time and time again in his analysis.

⁹¹ Klein 2006, 44-46.

⁹² Klein 2006, 49, n. 24.

⁹³ Klein 2006, 48-50.

The method of Jeremias

In *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums* (1980) Joachim Jeremias presented a verse by verse analysis of the language in the Gospel of Luke, dividing the words and expressions into redactional and traditional language.⁹⁴ In practice, Jeremias claims that nearly everything that is not quite obviously taken from Mark relies heavily on traditional, un-Lukan language.⁹⁵

Jeremias' analysis of the language in Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) serves as an example. Nearly every verse of this pericope is, according to Jeremias, strewn with vocabulary and expressions from pre-Lukan tradition. The impression is created that the story must be basically traditional, as its essential flow is carried on by traditional elements. I hope that two examples will suffice to show the inherent fallacy of the approach.

In 19:7 Jeremias counts the word ἁμαρτωλός, sinner, as traditional. The repercussions of such a decision are naturally great for all the pericopes examined in this book. Jeremias' argument is as follows: In the pericope of Levi's feast Luke takes two of Mark's four occurrences of the word ἁμαρτωλός over but drops two others (Luke 5:29-32/Mark 2:15-17). He also redacts Mark 8:38 so that another occurrence of the word is omitted (Luke 9:26). Luke does not use the word in the whole of Acts, and according to Jeremias does not insert it into Markan text. Jeremias concludes that Luke does not write "sinner" of his own initiative and so the 16 cases in Luke's special material stem from tradition.⁹⁶

Of the arguments of Jeremias, only the last one is significant: it is indeed noteworthy that Luke loses all interest in sinners in Acts. In my view, this is because Gentile Christians are Luke's real concern. Luke lays weight on the theme of toll collectors and sinners in his Gospel because they are the forerunners of the converting Gentiles in Acts, as I will argue in III 3.

⁹⁴ Jeremias 1980.

⁹⁵ The childhood stories are something of an exception.

⁹⁶ Jeremias 1980, 135,277.

As to Jeremias' other arguments, reducing four cases of ἁμαρτωλός to two in Luke 5:29-32/ Mark 2:15-17 is quite clearly a stylistic improvement, as the Markan pericope is laden with tautology. Nor does it make sense that Luke's motive would be his objection to a word that he faithfully copies twice, or lack of interest in a subject that is prominent in his Gospel. The sole basis for assuming that Luke felt some aversion to the word "sinner" would be the redaction on Mark 8:38 diff. Luke 9:26, the logion according to which the Son of Man is ashamed of those who are ashamed of Jesus. That one case can hardly justify the claim that Luke would tend to avoid a word which comes up 18 times in his Gospel when Matthew has it 5 and Mark 6 times.

That Luke would never insert ἁμαρτωλός into Markan text is questionable, for in Luke 24:7 diff. Mark 16:7 he seems to do just that.⁹⁷ Jeremias himself admitted that Luke could be the creator of Luke 24:7 were this not against the general principle that Luke does not write ἁμαρτωλός independently.⁹⁸ Moreover, there is another passage where Luke probably has written ἁμαρτωλός redactionally, and not only once, but four times. In the Q teaching of loving one's enemy Luke warns his audience to love their enemies better than "sinners" do (Luke 6:32-35), whereas Matthew has "toll collectors" and "Gentiles" as the negative examples (Matt 5:46-47). There is no obvious reason why Matthew would have wanted to change an original "sinners" into toll collectors and Gentiles, whereas Luke may have wanted to avoid the negative labelling of these groups towards whom he obviously felt sympathy.

So it seems that of the 18 instances of ἁμαρτωλός in Luke, three stem from either Mark or Q (5:30, 32; 7:34) and five are very probably redactional (6:32, 33, 34x2; 24:7). It would be no marvel if several of the 10 instances in Luke's special passages (5:8; 7:37, 39; 13:2; 15:1, 2, 7, 10; 18:13; 19:7) were redactional too. There is no reason to go straight to the opposite end and take it for granted that none of the ten may have a background in tradition. Still, it is obvious that Luke had a special interest in sinners and that he was quite capable of using the word independently.

⁹⁷ Goulder 1989, 800.

⁹⁸ Jeremias 1980, 135.

Secondly Jeremias claims that ὁ κύριος as referring to Jesus during his earthly life (19:8) is pre-Lukan as it only occurs in this use in the non-Markan material of the Gospel of Luke and does not appear in Acts.⁹⁹

That the term is not used of Jesus as the living man in Acts does not amount to much as Acts, obviously, concentrates on the resurrected Christ. On the Gospel side it is decisive for the argument that Luke's passion narrative is counted as non-Markan material; otherwise the two instances in Luke 22:61 diff. Mark 14:72 would have to count as redactional.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Jeremias does not take into account the Q passages (7:19; 10:1; 11:39; 12:42; 17:5,6). In all of them we must either assume that Q called Jesus the Lord but Matthew for some reason omitted this systematically, or that Luke has written the term redactionally, after all. Jeremias chooses the first alternative.¹⁰¹

Here as elsewhere in the system of Jeremias it is simply assumed that the language of Luke's special source agrees with the language of Q. This could perhaps be explained with the Proto-Luke hypothesis, but as Jeremias does not advocate that theory, the assimilation is really caused by the method of playing "Markan" and "non-Markan" passages against each other. The language of all "non-Markan material", be it Q, be it the infancy narratives, be it the passion narrative, be it the rest of the L material, appears as one unified "traditional language" block as opposed to a much smaller one, that of the passages that are unquestionably Markan in origin.

Jeremias counts as Markan material only quite obviously Markan pericopes. Wherever a logion is considerably different, or a scene is depicted with a marked difference, or extra information is added, redaction on Mark is no longer assumed but the passage counts as non-Markan material. The passion narrative and the scene in the synagogue of Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6/ Luke 4:16-30) are good examples. For caution's sake Jeremias makes the *a priori* decision that Luke never improvises on Mark with any creative freedom. This decision is as

⁹⁹ Jeremias 1980, 158, 277.

¹⁰⁰ Goulder 1989, 805.

¹⁰¹ 12:41-42a at least looks like a Lukan insertion in Q matter, intended to bridge the two parables. Also, 17:5-6a could be Luke's redactional introduction to the logion of the mustard seed.

highly problematic as it is far-reaching in its effects. As a result any pericope that differs considerably from its Markan parallel will count as evidence for traditional language, not for typically Lukan language. The decision is the great fallacy of Jeremias' method, for it assumes as a starting point what it sets out to prove: that Luke is a faithful compiler of Jesus tradition, a copyist rather than a creative narrator.

Another idiosyncrasy of the Jeremias method is the artificial impression that Luke would have been more faithful to the wording of the hypothetical source L than he was to that of Mark.¹⁰² For Jeremias, the changes which Luke quite obviously made to Markan text represent Luke's own preferred language; if features and vocabulary deleted from Mark occur anywhere else, they must stem from a source. Such a theory is unable to explain why Luke should uncritically take these over from an L-source or L-tradition if he found them distasteful in Mark.

Luke's treatment of Mark is a very problematic vehicle for defining Luke's own preferred expressions. First, as was pointed out, there is the problem of which pericopes should count as Luke's redaction. Second, the quite obvious cases of Luke's reworking on Mark are not so many as to give a sufficiently varied picture of what is typically Lukan language. Sheer chance may play quite a big part in which linguistic features surface in them. Third, there are many reasons that may have lain behind a change or an omission, not just pure linguistic preference on Luke's part. In his alterations Luke may have had other motives as well. He perhaps wished to tell the story in a fresh way, or to shorten Markan material, to write better Greek, to write in Septuagintal style, to vary his vocabulary, or to avoid tautology. It is an altogether odd conclusion that where Luke omitted a word or a structure the reason must have been that he generally tended to avoid it, and therefore could not have written it unprompted elsewhere. This is a simple and obvious fallacy – and whole systems of scientific-looking statistical source theory lean on it.

¹⁰² This was Jeremias' conclusion (1980, 9).

The method of Paffenroth

Kim Paffenroth has again argued for the existence of a single L source in *The Story of Luke according to L* (1997).¹⁰³ As before, language is the decisive factor. Paffenroth endeavours to correct the slant of much of earlier scholarship in favour of pre-Lukan tradition, but nevertheless ends up with a method that is obviously biased in favour of the L source.

Paffenroth first limits the material for his hypothetical source L by ruling out the birth narratives, the passion narrative and several other pericopes that are often considered redactional.¹⁰⁴ This leaves him a block of approximately two hundred verses of material that may be based on his L source. To uncover pre-Lukan vocabulary, Paffenroth introduces a two-step method.¹⁰⁵ The first step is an application of word statistics; Paffenroth lists those words in his hypothetical L source block that do not appear elsewhere in Luke-Acts and argues that their great number bespeaks a source.¹⁰⁶ After this he examines this list of

¹⁰³ Paffenroth: *The Story of Jesus according to L*, 1997.

¹⁰⁴ Paffenroth 1997, 27-65.

¹⁰⁵ Paffenroth 1997, 67-85.

¹⁰⁶ Paffenroth's hypothesis is that if a block of this size is based on a unified underlying source there will be an unusually high number of words which occur repeatedly in this block and but do not occur elsewhere in Luke-Acts. Paffenroth has chosen five blocks of similar size consisting of pericopes by Luke (1997, 70) The first is chosen of the passages where Luke follows Mark, and the second of Q passages. These blocks represent text that does have a single source underlying it. The three other blocks are chosen at random, one from the Gospel, two from Acts. They represent material of mixed sources, as well as passages created by the evangelist. Paffenroth has then counted how many different words there are in each block which do not occur outside it. The results are as follows:

block	verses	words	words in this block only
1. Markan	202	3720	5 words
2. Q	232	3933	8 words
3. Random (Gospel)	206	3545	2 words
4. Random (Acts)	198	3607	3 words
5. Random (Acts)	194	3328	4 words
The results for Paffenroth's L source block are:			
6. L material	197	3421	13 words

This raises questions. One is the role of chance, that is, whether a sample of five blocks is adequately representative of the matter. What would these figures look

words occurring in the L block in the light of Luke's redaction of Mark and Q, claiming that they are indeed pre-Lukan if Luke has avoided them there.¹⁰⁷ Paffenroth also looks at the exact meaning of the words and to the use of synonyms: words are likely to be pre-Lukan if they "are omitted by Luke in his redaction of Mark or Q, or because he uses them with a different meaning, or because he elsewhere prefers a synonym."¹⁰⁸

This leads back to the problems that were evident in the work of Jeremias. To take a few examples: among Paffenroth's L block words is ἔλαιον, "oil". Luke omits this noun from Mark 6:13 in his parallel, Luke 9:6. The disciples no longer "proclaim repentance, cast out demons, anoint the sick with oil and heal" (Mark 6:12-13) but "bring the good news and heal everywhere". Paffenroth's conclusion is that the oil used by the Samaritan (Luke 10:34) to cure his patient's wounds must be from a pre-Lukan source, as Luke "does not deem oil appropriate" in the healing of Luke 9:6.¹⁰⁹ Yet this is by no means the only or best explanation of Luke's redaction of Mark 6:13. He may have wanted to concentrate on the essential, namely on preaching and healing, leaving out exorcising and anointing as mere details of healing. It is much harder to explain why Luke should have lapsed into anointing in the story of the Samaritan if we assume that he was decidedly critical of healing with oil.

Or another example, κόπος ("toil, trouble, suffering"). Paffenroth considers it pre-Lukan in 11:7 and 18:5, as Luke has "indirectly omitted it" from Mark's anointing story – by using his own quite different version of the anointing (Mark 14:3-9/ Luke 7:36-50). Yet the

like if the double work of Luke were ten times longer and it were possible to have fifty blocks? The 13 words of the L block and the 8 words of the Q block are very high numbers, while the Markan block's 5 words is much closer to the random samples. Does that not mean that chance seems to play a significant role? Moreover, even if the five blocks above did represent the situation adequately, it is evident that any block has words occurring in that block only. The difference between the Markan block's 5 and the last random block's 4 is very small. Exclusive block words can at best serve to point out words that may, but need not, stem from an underlying source.

¹⁰⁷ Paffenroth 1997, 66-85.

¹⁰⁸ Paffenroth 1997, 79.

¹⁰⁹ Paffenroth 1997, 75-76.

fate of a single word cannot depend on anything but pure chance in such a dramatic alteration as Luke has made here. He was reshaping the whole story, and the content certainly was what mattered, not isolated words. Also, words that belong to the vocabulary most characteristic of the Third Gospel (or of the evangelist, as Hawkins and Goulder would conclude) have been omitted here, for instance πτωχός (“a beggar”).¹¹⁰

The taking into account of synonyms and different meanings often leads to quite artificial distinctions between “Lukan” and “pre-Lukan” expressions. I take two examples. Of εὐφραίνειν Paffenroth writes:

εὐφραίνω (Lk 12:19; 15:23, 24, 29, 32; 16:19). This verb occurs elsewhere in Luke-Acts only at Acts 2:26 and 7:41. Inclining the probability in favour of its being pre-Lukan here is Luke's preference for the synonym χαίρω, which he uses a total of eighteen times throughout his double work: in his infancy narrative, in his redaction of Mark, in Q material, in L material, in verses that are probably of Lukan composition, in the Passion account, and several times in Acts. This preference for the verb χαίρω shows that εὐφραίνω is not Luke's preferred language, and makes it more probable that the verb εὐφραίνω is pre-Lukan here.¹¹¹

What Paffenroth fails to see is that εὐφραίνειν (or rather εὐφραίνεσθαι, med. and pass.) also carries the meaning of "making merry", giving a party. With the one exception of Acts 2:26, where Luke is quoting a Psalm, he uses εὐφραίνεσθαι exactly where the rejoicing takes the form of making merry, that is, of a feast or a party. χαίρειν is used, throughout the line, where there is no cause to associate the rejoicing with feasting. There is no reason to assume that Luke was mechanically repeating the wording of a source whenever he wrote εὐφραίνεσθαι; he wrote it when he needed its exact undertone. Certainly χαίρειν belongs to the standard Lukan vocabulary. So does

¹¹⁰ The omission of πτωχός is likewise caused by matters of content: Luke may well have disapproved of the downplaying of helping the poor, which is a central theme for him.

¹¹¹ Paffenroth 1997, 81. The occurrences of χαίρω are Luke 1:14, 28; 6:23; 10:20 (twice); 13:17; 15:5, 32; 19:6, 37; 22:5; 23:8; Acts 5:41; 8:39; 11:23; 13:48; 15:23, 31; 23:26.

εὐφραίνεσθαι.¹¹² They are both characteristic Lukan expressions, and as such, they may or may not convey pre-Lukan influences in their different contexts.

Secondly, Paffenroth writes:

ὀφειλέτης/ ὀφείλω/ χρεοφειλέτης (Luke 7:41; 13:4; 16:5, 7; 17:10). As noted above, Luke omits the noun ὀφείλημα from Q (Luke 11:4; cf. Matt 6:12). Besides one occurrence in the same Q passage (Luke 11:4), the verb occurs outside of L passages only at Acts 17:29. Given Luke's preference for speaking of “sins” rather than “debt”, it does not seem that this is his own phrasing, and these words thus seem more likely to be pre-Lukan.¹¹³

This is absurd. It makes sense that Luke wished to clarify to his congregation that the petition for the forgiveness of “debts” in Our Father really means the forgiveness of sins; “debts” in this context is perplexing enough. But it makes no sense that Luke would naturally and of his own accord have spoken of “sins” rather than “debts” when he meant a concrete financial debt. What should he have written in order to be “Lukan” rather than “pre-Lukan” in Luke 7:41, 16:5, and 16:7? That one sinner had sinned against the moneylender for the value of five hundred denarii, while the other had sinned for fifty? Or that one of the master's sinners had sinned against him for a hundred measures of oil, while the other sinner had sinned for a hundred measures of wheat? There is a lapse in logic also in that in Luke 13:4 ὀφειλέτης is actually used in the sense that Paffenroth takes to correspond to Luke's own phrasing, that is, in the meaning of “one who has sinned”. To be consistent, then, Paffenroth ought to attribute this word to Luke, and not to a pre-Lukan source, in 13:4; but he does not do this.

In using εὐφραίνεσθαι and not χαίρειν when he meant “making merry” with a party, and speaking of “debt” rather than of “sin” when simple financial debt was in question Luke was guided by the meaning

¹¹² It meets the criteria of Hawkins and Goulder (Goulder 1989, 804) in never occurring in either Matthew or Mark while coming up 6 times in Luke and twice in Acts, in different contexts. Goulder counts one occurrence in Acts, apparently omitting the Psalm quotation.

¹¹³ Paffenroth 1997, 82.

he wished to convey; it was actually not a free choice of synonyms. But even where synonyms really are quite interchangeable, the idea that they would tend to reflect the use of different sources is decidedly queer. People use synonyms all the time, at least when they have any command of the language they speak, and educated writers may consciously strive to vary their expressions. It is obvious that Luke's Greek was fluent and that he was in many ways a skilful writer. It is self-evident that he could use diverse synonyms and expressions of his own accord, not only when prompted by a source.

The strategy of claiming as pre-Lukan those words and expressions (special meanings and synonyms included) that have for some reason or other dropped out of Luke's redaction of Mark or of Q was not invented by Paffenroth; it is rather the classical approach in the hunt for pre-Lukan language. I must underline once more that it is nevertheless a fallacy, and that it disqualifies Paffenroth's analysis of pre-Lukan vocabulary, whatever the value of his rather interesting block word theory otherwise might be. Why could Luke not have omitted or substituted words which he elsewhere uses of his own accord? Luke forms most of his redactional sentences in free paraphrasis, under no obligation to stick to Mark or to Q at word level. A change in phrasing may, of course, sometimes be caused by Luke's correction of an unsatisfactory word or structure, but most of the changes need not imply criticism of the omitted expressions on Luke's part. As I pointed out above, Luke may at times have had special aims, like condensing the Markan narrative, or sometimes embellishing a story that he wished to underline, or avoiding tautology, or striving for a more biblical (that is, Septuagintal) style. But even more importantly, *Luke told in his own words because it was the natural way to tell*. The more we stick to the idea that Luke must have been either unfamiliar with an expression or critical of it in order to alter it, the more difficult it is to explain why he should have taken over from an L source expressions that he found strange or distasteful in Mark and Q.

Paffenroth's method, however, leans not only on vocabulary but also on grammar. There are six grammatical phenomena in Paffenroth's L block, also a legacy from Jeremias, that Paffenroth lists as uncharacteristic of Luke (p. 86-90). These are the abundant use of κἀί, the use of ἵνα, the use of πᾶρά+ acc. in the sense of "more than", the

use of the dative after a verb of speaking, the position of the numeral before the noun, and the use of the historical present.¹¹⁴ Paffenroth claims that the presence of two or more of these in one pericope is significant: Luke might have written one of them on his own initiative, but he uses these elements so seldom that two are already signs of a source.¹¹⁵ These grammatical features are so important to Paffenroth that he includes even pericopes that have no “L vocabulary” at all in his reconstructed L source.¹¹⁶ Paffenroth finishes his thesis by analysing the texts selected by the criteria of vocabulary and grammar. He finds that they have many common features of form and content.

As a test I applied Paffenroth’s method to the Lukan Healing of the Paralytic, a story carried over from Mark (Mark 2:1-12/ Luke 5:17-26). The question is whether the application of Paffenroth’s method would help us to discern that Luke derived this story from a source, and if it does, whether it would lead us to assume that this source was L were the Markan story unknown to us.

The Lukan story contains three of the grammatical features that according to Paffenroth point to the use of a source – namely, abundant

¹¹⁴ Naturally, many scholars have noted the fact that Luke has often altered these six features in his redaction of Mark and Q; see e.g. Hawkins: *Horae Synopticae* (1899), Cadbury: *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (1920); Kenny: *A Stylometric Study* (1982); Jeremias: *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums* (1980).

¹¹⁵ Paffenroth 1997, 85-93, esp. 92-93. To evaluate this list of six, some of these “un-Lukan grammatical elements” are in my view clearly less weighty than others. Luke does not favour them, but they may still belong to structures that he sometimes uses actively. Luke’s avoidance of ἰνᾶ and of the dative after a verb of speaking reflects such weaker cases. ἰνᾶ appears 46 times in the Gospel and 15 times in Acts. Luke has added ἰνᾶ in the Markan/ Q material five times; the dative construction he has added four times (Luke 8:12; 9:45; 20:14; 21:36; 22:30, 32 and Luke 9:12, 20; 18:29, 37, respectively). The dative with verbs of speaking is in Luke’s text clearly less frequent than πρὸς and the accusative, but all the same it is quite common in the Gospel and not unusual in Acts (the verb λέγειν appears with the dative 48 times in the first eight chapters of the Gospel; in the first eight chapters of Acts the number is 8). On the other hand, the historical present has a much stronger claim as an “un-Lukan element”. Luke has omitted 89 occurrences of the historical present in Mark, leaving only one (Mark 5:35/Luke 8:49).

¹¹⁶ Paffenroth 1997, 84-85, 92-93. Paffenroth’s reconstruction of the L source is on pp. 157-165.

use of καί especially in the beginning of the story, ἴνα in 5:24, and the two datives with a verb of speaking in 5:24.

Remarkably enough, the first of these does not seem to be caused by the source, Mark. Certainly, the whole Lukan story of the Paralytic has 19 occurrences of καί while the Markan parallel only has 15. Moreover, the most conspicuous cluster (seven occurrences of καί) is in the obviously redactional opening verse, Luke 5:17. The corresponding Markan opening (Mark 12:1-2) reads καί only thrice.

Nevertheless, the two other phenomena that Paffenroth counts as uncharacteristic of Luke are really derived from Mark: ἴνα in 5:24 echoes Mark 2:10, and the two datives with a verb of speaking in 5:24 reflect Mark 2:10-11. Luke has altered the two other datives with verbs of speaking that Mark has (Mark 2:8/Luke 5:22, Mark 2:9/Luke 5:23).

Paffenroth's method may therefore at first sight seem justified in the light of Luke 5:17-26: there were two or more grammatical elements that Paffenroth sees as uncharacteristic of Luke, and there was a source to the text. However, the significant thing is that the method of Paffenroth would here lead to attributing Luke 5:17-26 to the L source, not to Mark, which really was its source. This is because Paffenroth ends up concluding that two uncharacteristic grammatical elements suffice, even without his (in my view suspect) "pre-Lukan" vocabulary. Even if "pericopae that contain both shared pre-Lukan vocabulary and style" (meaning the six grammatical features) "have the highest probability of being from a single pre-Lukan source", "pericopae that contain either two or more pre-Lukan words, or two or more elements of pre-Lukan style, but not both" are included in his reconstruction: such are Luke 4:25-27; 10:39-42; 13:6b-9, 31b-32.¹¹⁷ Of these, the three last are included because of the "pre-Lukan" grammatical features alone. Any text with at least two of these "un-Lukan grammatical elements" would come from the book L!¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Paffenroth 1997, 94-95, 95 n. 152.

¹¹⁸ I have sometimes been suspected of distorting Paffenroth's method by making it seem more straightforward than it really is. The point of the criticism has been that Paffenroth would only refer to the "likelihood" or "probability" of "a pre-Lukan source" (Paffenroth 1997, 74, 78-79, 85, 87, 88; italics added), without really attributing every pericope with his un-Lukan elements to L. I must underline that it

To be sure, Paffenroth does not base his theory on word statistics only. He also discusses the formal characteristics of the content of his supposed “L” source.¹¹⁹ The chapter on these (ch. 4) brings nothing new to his (re)construction of “L”; its point is to show that the pericopes that Paffenroth's linguistic analysis has already marked as parts of L have common themes. Interestingly enough, even the content of the Lukan Healing of the Paralytic would fit Paffenroth's L source, for it contains five out of six of the “formal characteristics” that Paffenroth finds in the healings in L.¹²⁰ The healings analysed are Luke 7:11b-15, 13:10-17b, 14:2-5, and 17:12-18. The formal characteristics fitting Lk 5:17-26 are that there is no exorcism, no mention of the patient's faith, no actual request for healing, Jesus poses a question to his adversaries, and a controversy is central.

All in all, the example of the Paralytic points in the direction that Paffenroth's method could at most be helpful in sometimes discerning that *some* source, *a* pre-Lukan source, was used; at least it would do as much for Luke 5:17-26. However, it obviously fails to distinguish the assumed L source from any other source. It has an obvious bias in favour of the assumed L source. Therefore Paffenroth's central claim, that “the Book L” existed, remains suspect.

The method of Goulder

In *Luke: A New Paradigm* (1989) Goulder claims that Luke's special material is Luke's own creation inspired by the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. In constructing this theory Goulder takes note of the language as well as the story-telling style and content of the special

is really Paffenroth, not I, who has made the illegitimate move of attributing Lukan special passages which contain two or more of his “stylistic elements uncharacteristic of Luke” to L, not only to “a pre-Lukan source”. Paffenroth finally includes in his “L” even passages that do not have items of this “pre-Lukan vocabulary”, but only share grammatical and formal features such as the Healing of the Paralytic betrays in abundance. I refer the reader again to Paffenroth 1997, 84-85, 92-95, esp. 94-95. To be sure, the precise term here is “a single pre-Lukan source”, but it turns into “L” in the Conclusions (137-158). The book ends with a reconstruction of the source “L”, reading every pericope that had a “likelihood” of coming from “a pre-Lukan source” (159-165).

¹¹⁹ Paffenroth 1997, 96-116.

¹²⁰ Paffenroth 1997, 104-110.

material. In examining the level of language Goulder emphasizes that Luke has retold nearly everything in his Gospel in his own characteristic words and expressions. In this point I think he is correct.

As was related above, Goulder has produced a list of “Lukan vocabulary”¹²¹. It consists of words and expressions that occur in at least three different contexts in Luke-Acts and that Luke either introduces as a redactor or that occur with a markedly greater frequency in Luke than in Mark and Matthew. Goulder points out, as Hawkins did before him, that any expression that is spread out over several contexts more probably represents the characteristic language of the final redactor than that of his sources, as there is no proof that a unified source would underlie the Gospel of Luke as a whole.

As could be expected, Goulder's Lukan vocabulary is seething with items that Rehkopf, Jeremias, Schürmann and Paffenroth all take to be pre-Lukan. In my view, Goulder is justified in attributing language that is characteristic of the Gospel as a whole to the evangelist. The general view of Hawkins, that Luke did not stick to the wording of his sources but clothed his whole Gospel in his own favourite language, is correct.¹²² Judging by Luke's treatment of Mark the use of sources did not leave easily detectable traces on the language of the Lukan pericopes.

Like Fitzmyer and Goulder, I am of the opinion that Luke made use of his powers of creation and that the Lukan special passages are for a great part probably written without any special sources. However, Goulder's way of using the Lukan creativity argument is problematic. He seeks to turn a possibility into a certainty each and every time – that whatever Luke could have written freely, he did write freely – and this argument seems capable of digesting anything. I will illustrate this by resorting for the second time to the Lukan Healing of the Paralytic (Luke 5:17-26). I have shown above that following Paffenroth's method we would place it in his assumed L source; following Goulder's argument we would see it as a Lukan creation.

¹²¹ Goulder 1989, 800-809.

¹²² Hawkins 1899, 26; Klein 2006, 48-50.

Let us turn first to the vocabulary of Luke 5:17-26. I found altogether 40 instances in it of words and expressions that Goulder lists as Lukan.¹²³ The pericope is indeed clothed in language that Luke uses frequently. This is a story told by Luke in his own words.

Goulder usually argues first that the language of a given pericope does not justify the postulation of a source, and then goes on to claim that the content of the pericope bears Lukan characteristics as well. Goulder has written an impressive introduction to Luke's characteristics as a story-teller.¹²⁴ Several features that Goulder sees as characteristic of the Lukan story are present in the Healing of the Paralytic.

According to Goulder the Lukan introductions are often impressive and elaborate and they usually give the time and place of what follows; 5:17 is given as an example.¹²⁵ A suitable conclusion to the Lukan pericope is that the characters return home;¹²⁶ so does the paralytic in the conclusion of our pericope (5:25). One might even add, as Goulder does not, that the theme of praise and gratitude is often linked to the return, as it is also in the Paralytic (1:23, 2:20, 2:39, 2:51).

Goulder claims that Lukan characters often exhibit "promptitude and alacrity", a brisk "get-up-and-go attitude" (1:39, 2:16, 4:39, 6:49, 12:36, 12:54, 13:13, 14:5, 14:21, 15:22, 16:6, 17:7, 18:8, 19:5, 19:6

¹²³ Figures represent number of uses in Matthew/ Mark/ Luke+Acts.

5:17 ἐγένετο... καὶ (1/0/11+1), καὶ ἐγένετο (7/5/24+4), ἡμέρα (45/27/83+94), καὶ αὐτός ἦν (0/0/6+1), εἶναι+part. x 3 (16/31/62+46), Ἱερουσαλήμ (2/0/27+36), δύναμις (of Jesus' healing power, 0/1/5+2), ἰᾶσθαι (4/1/11+4); **5:18** ἀνὴρ (8/4/27+100), ζήτην (14/10/25+10), ἐνώπιον (0/0/22+13), εἰσφέρειν (1/0/4+1); **5:19** εἰσφέρειν (1/0/4+1), εὕρισκειν (27/11/45+35), μέσος (7/5/14+10); **5:20** ἄνθρωπε (vocative, 0/0/4+0), ἁμαρτία (7/6/11+8); **5:21** οὗτος (in a contemptuous sense, 4/4/15+8), ἁμαρτία (7/6/11+8), θεός (51/48/122+166); **5:22** διαλογισμός (1/1/6), πρὸς + vb. dicendi (0/5/99+52); **5:23** ἁμαρτία (7/6/11+8); **5:24** ἁμαρτία (7/6/11+8), πορεύεσθαι (29/0/51+37), εἰς τὸν οἶκον +gen. (4/6/15+5); **5:25** παραχρῆμα (2/0/10+6), ἀναστάς (2/6/17+18), ἐνώπιον (0/0/22+13), εἰς τὸν οἶκον +gen. (4/6/15+5), δοξάζειν (4/1/9+5), θεός (51/48/122+166); **5:26** ἅπᾱς (3/4/11+10), δοξάζειν (4/1/9+5), θεός (51/48/122+166), πιμπλᾶναι (πλήθειν, 2/0/13+9), φόβος (3/1/7), σήμερον (7/1/11+9).

¹²⁴ Goulder 1989, 89-115.

¹²⁵ Goulder 1989, 89.

¹²⁶ Goulder 1989, 91.

[pp. 92-93]) and that the use of ἀναστὰς, ἀνάσταντες is a typical example of this. Luke 5:25 emphasizes haste accordingly (παραχρῆμα ἀναστὰς ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν). Yet, as Goulder reminds us, Luke's characters sit down when it is appropriate (10:39, 14:28, 14:31); so do our Pharisees and law-teachers in 5:17. Goulder points out that Luke often uses ἦρχατο "in a lively and somewhat pejorative sense", as opposed to a purely pleonastic sense. Among other examples (e.g., 3:8, 12:45, 14:18) is listed our 5:21.

According to Goulder "Luke is adept at having Jesus introduce questions to which there is only one answer: the interlocutor must then put his head on the block, and Jesus lets down the knife... The Lukan Jesus is a formidable opponent".¹²⁷ The examples given are 7:42-43; 10:25-28, 36-37. In the Paralytic, too, Jesus asks a question that silences his opponents, as only the wrong answer remains for them: "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you', or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?" The forgiving of sins, of course, is a theme that is characteristic of the Gospel of Luke.

We might conclude that the language, the story-telling style and the theological content in Luke 5:17-26 all seem Lukan enough when analysed in the manner of Goulder. Indeed the Lukan characteristics of the Paralytic seem quite significant compared, for instance, with the Raising of the Widow's Son (7:11-17), which Goulder attributes to Lukan creativity; that story has only one characteristic of the Lukan story-telling style, namely, its introduction.¹²⁸

It is impossible to prove Goulder in the wrong in his argument that everything in L *could* have been written by Luke without source material. So it could, but it does not prove that this really always was the case. The sources of the special passages simply are difficult to discern. Especially, characteristic Lukan language and origin in Luke's creativity do not go together in the straightforward manner Goulder would have them do.

¹²⁷ Goulder 1989, 96-97.

¹²⁸ In Goulder's opinion Luke 7:11-17 is an adaptation of the Matthean raising of a ruler's daughter, the Matthean healing of the paralytic, and the raising of the widow's son by Elijah, and is motivated by the prophesy of Matt 11:5/Lk 7:22; Goulder 1989, 381-385.

Summary

The Proto-Luke theory long dominated the discussion on the sources of Luke's special passages. It claimed that Luke first wrote a work in which he united his special L material and the Q source, and only later produced his Gospel by combining this earlier work with the material from the Gospel of Mark. This theory has been abandoned by the majority of present scholars.

While some acknowledge the possibility of free creative composition by Luke, most scholars still presume that Luke had an L source, or at least L traditions, for his special passages. A unified, written L document is still being advocated.

The Third Gospel is rich with words and expressions that are characteristic of it in that they are much more frequent with Luke than they are with the other Synoptics. Such language is best attributed to the evangelist for the reason that it is widely distributed in the Gospel. Detailed theories of the language of an L source are unconvincing. They are faulty in their basic reasoning, mostly because they try to extract too much information from Luke's treatment of Mark. Luke's omissions in his redaction of Mark do not give sufficient evidence of his linguistic preferences for differentiating redaction and tradition in Luke's special passages. Theories that take Luke's redaction of Mark as their starting point and concentrate on Luke's language are biased in favour of pre-Lukan tradition.

On the other hand Goulder's exaggerated confidence in Luke's creativity as the sole source for the Lukan special material is suspect as well. The lack of source material can never be proved, and certainty about the use of source material can only be reached if the source has been preserved elsewhere. Goulder manages to prove, as Hawkins has done before him, that Luke rewords and retells everything in his characteristic language. It does not follow that he could not do this to traditional words and narratives, as he has done this to Mark as well.

II 2 Tradition behind L material?

In the last chapter the conclusion was reached that the attempts to use linguistic analysis as a means to get at the sources used by Luke in his special material are not satisfactory. The existence of a single L source cannot be proved, and the methods that seek to isolate traditional language from Luke's redactional language are both circular and arbitrary.

Nevertheless it is not impossible – or rather, it is quite plausible – that Luke based his special passages on traditions, either written or oral ones.¹²⁹ It is too rash to conclude, as for instance Goulder does, that Luke cannot have known special traditions because it is less than absolutely necessary to postulate them. It may be possible to think up ways in which later Gospel writers could have wrought their Gospels on the basis of earlier ones only, but this is hardly the most natural or most plausible hypothesis.

In current research, memory is seen as a social construct,¹³⁰ and the established view on oral tradition is that it usually builds on relatively free composition that makes use of fixed traditional elements. The nature of collective memory and the nature of oral tradition, when they are rightly understood, make it evident that we cannot expect to have real access to Luke's special tradition. It is only to be expected that Luke, as others, transmitted tradition in a way that makes it impossible to retrace his steps into what must have been before him. In oral tradition, we have no access to previous versions and variants, least of all to original forms of Jesus tradition; likewise, we have no access to "pure" or "original" memories of Jesus that would not be shaped and informed by the interpreting community. It follows that even if Luke really had written in a continuum of tradition, as I take to be the case, we could not expect to do more than make cautious educated guesses about the oral tradition that influenced his writing in each individual pericope.

¹²⁹ I use the word "tradition" in order to leave open the question of oral or written medium; "source" has too often pointed to written sources.

¹³⁰ Kirk and Thatcher, 2005.

The nature of social memory is to re-interpret and the nature of oral tradition is to transmit with variation. Both factors make it practically impossible to recapture previous performances or earlier stages of a given tradition, even in its essentials. Still, an interaction of literary transmission and an ongoing oral tradition explains many features of the synoptic tradition more easily than pure literary dependence of later Gospels on earlier ones. To clarify the grounds for this view I will discuss how oral Jesus tradition has been seen within New Testament studies.

Form criticism: Rudolf Bultmann

The method of form criticism was created by Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann, of whom Bultmann became the more influential figure. Form critics assumed that the communal life in the early Church would produce and transmit material in distinctive forms; these forms were seen to open the possibility of tracing the prehistory of a pericope even to Jesus' time. The forms, supposedly, were shaped by the different social settings and purposes that the Church had for the tradition, such as preaching, teaching, apologetics, parenesis, and polemics. For example, a miracle story was expected to have followed a fixed pattern in its original form; if it did not, the abnormality would be a later development. Tradition that was formed according to these stable patterns was expected to retain its shape rather well, which made reconstruction possible, at least approximately.

It is noteworthy that the assumed forms and the social settings rest on circular arguments. Assumed forms and assumed motives of the Church life, the social settings, explain one another; there is very little outward evidence for the existence of either the forms or of the social settings.¹³¹ Bultmann presented several rules and tendencies that regulated the development of the synoptic tradition; the crucial tendency was that tradition would always tend to expand. It would develop from original simplicity towards complexity, from terse sayings or nothing at all by Jesus himself into long speeches by him and narratives about him.¹³² Younger layers of tradition could be

¹³¹ Bultmann himself recognized this (1979, 5).

¹³² E.g. Bultmann 1979, 64-65, 91-97, 132-135, 156-158, 132-135

removed, revealing older layers. The aim was to uncover the original form of the tradition.¹³³ The clear tendencies that Bultmann presented have turned out to be doubtful. The fact seems to be that the synoptic tradition often developed in quite opposite directions.¹³⁴ The hypothesis of ever-growing tradition, especially, is a misleading one. Because of the unpredictability of the line of development the search for an “original form” behind each tradition turns out to be a wasted effort.¹³⁵

Two images of long-standing impact came to illustrate the form critical process: those of literary editing and that of an archaeological tell.¹³⁶ In the editing image the idea was that each transmitter had worked on a tradition like an editor of a text, so that each edition would be further removed from the “original form” of the tradition. In the tell image the form critic was seen as an archaeologist who scrapes off layers of later habitation under which more ancient strata are hidden. Redaction criticism brought a major change in stressing significance of the distinctive views of each evangelist, but the form critics’ method of digging into the tradition preceding them remained in use.

A significant development beyond form criticism and redaction criticism was the work of Helmut Koester. From the late 1950's on he has emphasized that the oral Jesus tradition continued well into the second century in spite of the writing of the Gospels and that the development of the synoptic tradition should not be seen as a linear and, for the most part, literary process.¹³⁷

The Scandinavian school: Birger Gerhardsson

Harald Riesenfeld protested strongly against the form critical theory, claiming that the oral Jesus tradition was carried on in the strictly controlled and scholarly manner of Rabbinic tradition.¹³⁸ His work has been carried on by his pupil, Birger Gerhardsson, in several major

¹³³ Bultmann 1979, 7.

¹³⁴ It could become, e.g., “both longer and shorter, both more and less detailed, and both more and less Semitic”. Sanders 1969, 272.

¹³⁵ Uro 2003, also mentioning the method of searching for *ipsissima verba Jesu*.

¹³⁶ Dunn 2003, 194-195.

¹³⁷ Koester, 1957; “Written Gospels or Oral Traditions?”, 1994.

¹³⁸ Riesenfeld, 1957; 1970.

works;¹³⁹ sometimes these scholars and their followers are called the Scandinavian school.¹⁴⁰

Their basic claim is that oral transmission meant memorization by constant repetition, as in Rabbinic schools: Jesus himself taught by memorization, the apostles in Jerusalem passed the tradition on, and it was not changed essentially by the transmission process. The greatest problem with the hypothesis of strictly controlled tradition is that the criss-cross of similarities, dissimilarities and downright disagreements of the Jesus tradition within the canonic Gospels does not back it up.¹⁴¹

Werner Kelber and the oral formulaic school

Werner H. Kelber's lasting contribution was to raise consciousness within biblical studies of the new discussion on orality that had originally been triggered by folklore studies.¹⁴² Most especially he spread awareness of the fact that the concept of original form, so central in form criticism, is misleading.¹⁴³ The foundation of this crucial idea was the work of the so-called oral formulaic school.

The oral formulaic school in folklore studies was founded by Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord in the first half of the twentieth century. Parry's great achievement was a new theory about the emergence of the Homeric poems.¹⁴⁴ He argued that the poems made use of smaller and

¹³⁹ Gerhardsson, 1961; 1964; 1979; 1986; 1991.

¹⁴⁰ Samuel Byrskog is an important representative of the school today (1994, 2000). Richard Bauckham, though not of Scandinavian origin, continues in the tradition in emphasizing the role of eyewitnesses in the Jesus tradition (2006).

¹⁴¹ Schröter 1997, 29-30; Dunn 2003, 198; Kirk and Thatcher 2005, 35.

¹⁴² Kelber's book, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (1983) relied heavily on the work of Eric Havelock (1963) and Walter J. Ong (1982), stressing the infinite difference that the use of oral or of written medium makes both to the message itself and to the thinking and world-view of the people who use them. The polarity of oral and literary forms of communication has been renounced (Foley 1994, 169; Uro 2003, 108). Kelber represented Paul and Q as betraying an "oral mentality" which had a strong impact on their theological emphases, as opposed to Mark's "textual mentality", with a vision of a major power struggle between the two contending parties (1983, 96-105, 141-168, 185-207). For critique, see Uro 1998, 13-15.

¹⁴³ Kelber 1983, 29, 59, 62.

¹⁴⁴ Parry, *Épithète* 1928; *Formules* 1928.

larger ready-made blocks, meter-fitted conventional expressions and epithets. The nameless singers had improvised on traditional themes using these traditional building blocks. The songs were not carefully composed beforehand and memorized for performance; they were created anew in each situation from traditional materials. Lord verified that this method truly worked in his study of the ballads sung by coffee-shop bards in Yugoslavia in the 1930's.¹⁴⁵ The lasting contribution to the study of oral transmission was a new view on oral transmission: situational improvisation, composition in performance, is as important as memorization, and fluidity is usually even greater than stability.

Ruth Finnegan has since complemented the theory by showing that even though oral poetry is sometimes improvised like this, much of it is carefully composed before performance.¹⁴⁶ Most oral poetry is based partly on memorization, partly on free variation; the degree of variation will differ depending on the surrounding culture, the genre and the individual performer. The rule, however, is that oral poetry changes continually, as a result of both involuntary alterations and of conscious variation. It is extremely difficult to find proof of quite stable, unaltered oral tradition anywhere.¹⁴⁷ Certain religious texts, like the *Rgveda*, are said to have been transmitted verbatim for centuries, but this is impossible to prove and Finnegan is on the whole doubtful of it.¹⁴⁸

Finnegan also underlines the fact that oral and written traditions tend to blend and interact. Oral traditions are written down and become dependent on literary transmission; written traditions influence oral tradition. "Pure" oral tradition is hard to find anywhere and should not be counted on.¹⁴⁹

Kelber brought over to biblical studies the basic conviction that oral tradition likewise in the Gospels builds on "variation within the same", not on memorizing and repeating material or consciously editing earlier "layers" of tradition; there never was only one correct, pure and

¹⁴⁵ Lord 1964, ch. 5.

¹⁴⁶ Finnegan 1977, 52-87.

¹⁴⁷ Finnegan 1977, 135-153.

¹⁴⁸ Finnegan 1977, 135-136, 151-152.

¹⁴⁹ Finnegan 1988, 110-112.

original version of any saying, parable or story, not even in the earliest period of the Jesus movement. The form critical method of revealing the “original form” was fundamentally challenged by this view. To take an example of Jesus’ parables: if he repeated them at all, he would have told them in several different versions, and in any case, his followers would have passed them on in different versions suited to each situation. The same applies to other teachings and to anecdotes of Jesus’ life. No original version can be found or reconstructed, for among the plethora of transmitters and transmitting occasions no version would have been the only right one.

Kenneth Bailey: the model of informal controlled oral tradition

Kenneth Bailey has presented a model of oral transmission of Jesus material based on his experience of Middle Eastern village life.¹⁵⁰ Bailey calls his model “informal controlled oral tradition” so as to point out the difference from the models of Bultmann and Gerhardsson. Bultmann’s model of transmission is informal and uncontrolled as there are no clear roles of teacher and pupil, no structure in which the traditional material is passed on, and the content of the tradition is expected to have changed very much during the transmission.¹⁵¹ Gerhardsson’s model is formal and controlled in that it assumes clear roles of pupils and of teachers (Jesus and, later, the apostles in Jerusalem) and claims that the stability of tradition was secured by note-taking and memorization.¹⁵²

Bailey’s model aims at explaining the partial stability and partial variability that the Gospels attest.¹⁵³ It is based on the type of social gathering called the *haflat samar*. The men of a village gather in the evening, and their talk may include news, rumours, jokes, anecdotes, proverbs, poems, parables and other stories. Poems and proverbs are transmitted in a tightly controlled way: the reciter is interrupted and corrected if they are not recited exactly like before. Jokes, daily news

¹⁵⁰ Bailey: “Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels” (1991).

¹⁵¹ Bailey 1991, 35-36.

¹⁵² Bailey 1991, 36-37.

¹⁵³ Bailey 1991, 50.

and rumours of neighbouring villages are not controlled at all; they may be exaggerated and freely varied, as they are not important to the community.¹⁵⁴ The most interesting phenomenon is the middle category of parables and recollections of historical people in which there is room for some variation but still quite a lot of control.¹⁵⁵ Details may vary but the central threads of each story must be kept stable. The climax of the story may be so fixed as to be recited nearly verbatim, even though other parts are told with much flexibility. Bailey traces stories whose central parts appear to have remained unchanged for several decades.¹⁵⁶ He suggests that tradition about Jesus could have been transmitted in this manner in the Palestinian villages from Jesus' day until the Jewish war.¹⁵⁷

The problem with this claim is that the Christian movement was an international and, predominantly, urban one for several decades before the Jewish war. It flourished in and was spread from cities rather than the villages of Palestine. This means that even if, as Bailey proposes, oral tradition could have functioned like this in Palestinian village life, and even if this is how it was begun in the Jesus movement, significant branches would soon have moved beyond this kind of control.

James Dunn has taken up Bailey's theory with enthusiasm, though admitting its anecdotal nature.¹⁵⁸ His analysis shows that it suits quite well many stories in the Gospel tradition.¹⁵⁹ They often come in versions that have considerable variation in some parts but contain climaxes that are nearly identical (Mark 4:35-41, 7:24-30, 9:14-27, 9:33-37, 12:41-44 with their parallels in Matthew and Luke). Dunn draws the conclusion that even though in each case it is possible to argue for a purely literary dependence, the evangelists seem to have worked in the fashion described by Bailey. The evangelists, then, were

¹⁵⁴ Bailey 1991, 45.

¹⁵⁵ Bailey 1991, 42-44. Jan Vansina gives confirming information in his study of oral tradition in Africa: the more important a tradition is for the transmitting community, the greater is the control the community exercises over the recitation (1965, 31-39).

¹⁵⁶ Bailey 1991, 44-47.

¹⁵⁷ Bailey 1991, 50.

¹⁵⁸ Dunn 2003, 205-210.

¹⁵⁹ Dunn 2003, 210-224.

linked to this kind of transmission and used to it. Quite plausibly Matthew and Luke often knew Mark's material from oral tradition as well.¹⁶⁰ Dunn points out that the thrice-told story of Paul's conversion in Acts betrays the pattern of Bailey's model; there is great flexibility of detail but the basic plot is the same and the exchange of words, the climax of the story, is nearly word-for-word (Acts 9:3-6, 22:6-10, 26:12-16). This proves that an early Christian writer could feel himself bound to exactness at the very climax of the story but otherwise feel free to vary smaller details as called for by the situation and trust his audience to accept this.¹⁶¹ The evangelists told their stories in what Dunn calls an "oral mode".¹⁶² One might also speak of a culture of rhetorical variation. The writers and audiences of early Christian texts tolerated notably different versions of sayings and narratives they knew.¹⁶³

Bailey's model of transmission is a viable one for much of synoptic tradition, and it is also a model in which the still ongoing oral tradition sits comfortably together with the writing and use of Gospel literature. However, it cannot cover everything even in the oral Jesus tradition as there are so many Gospel pericopes that are clearly related but that have moved quite far apart in their separate directions. The model of less effectively controlled oral tradition, capable of significant change during transmission, can be complemented but not replaced by Bailey's model. Unless oral Jesus tradition often underwent quite significant change the evangelists must deliberately have caused every instance in which related pericopes differ from each other. In that case we may as well go back to the view of a purely literary and linear development of the Jesus tradition and assume no oral tradition at all after the writing of the first Gospel, which indeed is the view of Goulder. Dunn himself

¹⁶⁰ E.g. Dunn 2003, 217-218.

¹⁶¹ Dunn 2003, 210-212.

¹⁶² Dunn 2003, 214.

¹⁶³ Another example is the doublets in the *Gospel of Thomas*, which can be seen as the result of chria elaboration (Asgeirsson 1998, 165-167, 179-85). Risto Uro has called attention to the fact that the community responsible for the composition of this Gospel apparently did not see the doublets as contradictory even when they seem so to modern eyes; the differences would be seen as rhetorical variations rather than critical revisions, and the scribes making the changes probably saw them in the same light (Uro 2003, 115-118, 130).

takes the example of Matt 8:5-13/Luke 7:1-10/ John 4:46-54, the healings from a distance, in which the first two variants fit Bailey's model beautifully but the Johannine one appears to be a rather distant cousin of these.¹⁶⁴ The fishing miracles (Luke 5:1-11/ John 21:1-11) and the anointing stories (Mark 14:3-9/ Matt 26:6-13/ Luke 7:36-50/ John 12:1-8) are other obvious cases where the Bailey model is clearly not enough to explain all the variants; further explanations must be sought in literary dependence, an indirect interdependence, conscious alteration by one or more of the evangelists, or a combination of these.

Nor is Bailey's model very helpful in assessing the background of Luke's special material. It is plausible that Luke knew and sometimes made use of this transmitting style. However, this model of transmission is best supported when there are two variants of the same piece of tradition, loosely similar elsewhere but corresponding rather exactly at the climax – a situation that we do not encounter in Luke's special material. Certainly the model cannot rule out different transmission processes of the Jesus tradition, and it is plausible on other grounds that Luke often aspired to work like an historian and an author.

Early Christian culture as a mixture of oral tradition and written word

The early Christian culture in which the writings of the New Testament emerged was a mixture of oral tradition and the written word. The purely oral stage of the Jesus tradition, if ever there was one at all, must have been extremely short, for the Christian movement was quite early a book-oriented one, as Harry Gamble has argued. It emerged from Judaism in which religious writings were of central importance, and it produced texts of its own long before the Gospels were written.¹⁶⁵ Considering the small size of congregations, the carefully composed Gospels were probably meant for wider circulation; Luke and John also indicate that they knew other writings about the life of Jesus (Luke 1:1-

¹⁶⁴ Dunn 2003, 212-216.

¹⁶⁵ Gamble 1995, 29-32.

4, John 21:25).¹⁶⁶ Christian books spread quickly and wide, a fact that points to the importance of the written word in the Church.¹⁶⁷

Nevertheless it is more than plausible that oral tradition flowed before, around and after the writing of the Gospels. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a contemporary of Polycarp, bears witness to the mixture of oral and written information about Jesus and the first generation of apostles that was still available in his day. He reports that he gathered oral tradition about the words of the disciples of the Lord: "... if anyone came who had followed the ancients, I inquired about the words of the ancients – what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples said, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the Lord's disciples, were saying. For I did not suppose that things from books would benefit me so much as things from a living and abiding voice."¹⁶⁸ Papias definitely derived information also from the written word, for he knew at least the Gospels of Mark and of Matthew, 1 Peter and 1 John.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless his words show that oral tradition, too, was still circulating, even though they do not tell anything of its nature, real significance or reliability.¹⁷⁰ Also, theories of the emergence of the *Gospel of Thomas* most often build on the hypothesis of some kind of oral tradition. This is a natural presupposition because the *Gospel of Thomas* shares so much material with the Synoptic Gospels but does not reflect the order of this material in the Synoptics.¹⁷¹ The *Gospel of Thomas* has an

¹⁶⁶ Gamble 1995, 101-103.

¹⁶⁷ Gamble 1995, 140-142.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted by Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 3.39.3-4. Transl. Gamble 1995, 30.

¹⁶⁹ Gamble 1995, 30-31.

¹⁷⁰ Papias' preference of the "living voice" over books is conventional in ancient rhetoric; it was usual to stress one's personal connection to authoritative teachers. One should therefore not be too confident of the extent or quality of Papias' oral information. Still, it is interesting that Papias is not conscious of any special authority of the four canonical Gospels or their authors. Osborn 1959, 335-343; Karpp 1964, 190-198; Körtner 1983, 173; Gamble 1995, 30-31; Uro 1998, 20-21.

¹⁷¹ Even though some scholars have argued that the *Gospel of Thomas* is directly dependent on the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., W. Schrage 1964; for an overview see Patterson 1992, 45-97) very many have assumed a strong oral tradition that fed both the Synoptic Gospels and the *Gospel of Thomas* (e.g., Robinson 1986, 167; for others see Uro 1998, 9 n. 7). Still others have argued that the *Gospel of Thomas* sometimes reflects the Synoptics, but in an indirect way; its author either quoted the Synoptics freely from memory or used tradition that was partly influenced by

especially strong connection with the Q material.¹⁷² Marion Soards has argued convincingly that new legendary information emerged and was added to the passion narrative during the first two centuries after the crucifixion and perhaps even later.¹⁷³ Koester showed that some of the synoptic material in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers seems to reflect oral rather than literary dependence.¹⁷⁴

It is to be assumed that the Gospels both drew from and contributed to this flow of oral tradition. For their part, they produced what may be called “secondary orality”, oral tradition reflecting the writings that drew from oral tradition in the first place.¹⁷⁵ Many of the similarities and dissimilarities between the canonical Gospels and those of Thomas and of Peter may be caused by the indirect influence of another written Gospel, that is, of secondary oral tradition. The processes of literary and oral tradition are to be seen as interacting; written tradition reflected oral tradition and vice versa. This is plausible in the world of the early Christians, a culture permeated by literature but in which most people who listened to it never read the texts themselves. Most people could not read, and even those who did might not have the text at hand at any given time. Even if early Christianity, like Judaism, could be called a book-oriented movement, books were rare and very expensive. What the Gospel of Mark, for example, would have meant for the majority of the congregation and quite possibly also for most teachers and preachers, was not the visual, textual whole book that we know, but rather the general impression and the odds and ends that they would remember from hearing it recited. All Jesus traditions, those drawn from recited written word and those drawn from freely delivered oral performances, would be united in their minds, reshaped and retold, and perhaps eventually written in other books.

the Synoptic Gospels (Haenchen 1961, 178; Snodgrass 1989-90, 19-38; Uro 1998, 31).

¹⁷² Crossan 1998, 248-59, 547-91.

¹⁷³ Soards 1991, 334-350.

¹⁷⁴ This is the main argument of Koester's *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern* (1957). 1 Clem. 13.2, Ign. Eph. 19, Ign. Sm. 3.2-3 and Did. 1.3. are good examples.

¹⁷⁵ The term is used in this sense by Kelber (1983, 197), Snodgrass (1989-90, 28) and Uro (1998, 10, n. 11).

Summary

For the present study, the following findings are crucial:

It is probable that Lukan special traditions did exist. Information about the words and deeds of Jesus was being transmitted in a flow of partly oral, partly written tradition when Luke wrote his Gospel. It is plausible that the Jesus tradition that came to Luke from outside the Gospel of Mark and Q partly overlapped and partly surpassed the material contained in them.

Lukan special traditions, however, cannot be reconstructed reliably. There is no return to the confident reconstruction of oral tradition, for the rules and laws postulated by form critics have turned out to be uncertain. Jesus tradition, in written as well as oral form, was transmitted with constant variation and reflects fluidity and change. It follows that there is no valid method for distinguishing between tradition and Luke's free composition in his special passages. Exact memorization, advocated by some as a vehicle for the oral Jesus tradition, is implausible. A model of "informal controlled tradition" works for some of the Jesus tradition but cannot have been the dominant trend.

Moreover, Jesus tradition did not run in two distinct, separate channels, one oral and one written. The two media interacted and influenced each other. It follows that the Lukan special traditions may in principle have been influenced by Mark and Q.

We seem to be landed with a certain agnosticism as to the existence, scope, and content of the oral traditions that may underlie the Gospels. We know that we cannot hope to know very much of them, or even in any individual case be quite certain that there ever were any. On the other hand we know that we simply cannot expect oral traditions to leave clear and evident traces. It follows that the possibility of oral tradition is always there, even though an individual tradition is irretrievable.

II 3 Invention: Luke as a Creative Ancient Historian

Chapter II 2 dealt with oral tradition as a possible source of the Lukan special passages. I contended that Luke quite probably knew more Jesus tradition than the Gospel of Mark and Q contain, and that this may well have been in oral form – certainly, it is difficult to prove that the tradition should have been drawn from written texts. Perhaps even more important is the insight that the special L traditions cannot be reconstructed. Rhetorical variation was the rule in oral transmission, and Luke was capable of handling his written sources, too, in a creative way.

The present chapter continues the theme of the creative handling of sources. In his double work Luke aimed at bringing the Christian story closer to the genre of ancient historiography than his predecessors had done; in Acts, especially, this purpose is evident.¹⁷⁶ The speeches in Acts, as all speeches in ancient historical works, rely on the author's powers of invention.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, it seems that Luke created not only speeches but whole scenes in Acts very freely, in the style of Hellenistic mimetic, or sensational, historiography.¹⁷⁸ This opens up a new viewpoint to Luke's use of rhetorical variation and creative embellishment in his Gospel. In ancient historiography, the use of invention was an indispensable tool. Luke, too, used it when working on parts in his Gospel that he meant to be theological and dramatic highlights.

Luke was trying to refine the Jesus tradition so that it would appeal also to an audience that was at home with classical and Hellenistic historiography. His methods in working his material were somewhat

¹⁷⁶ For ancient historiography, especially the historical monograph, as the background and genre of Acts, see Plümacher 2004, 1-14; Balch 1989, 343-361. For contending alternatives see Talbert 1974, 125-40 (Acts as ancient biography) and Pervo 1987 (Acts as an ancient novel).

¹⁷⁷ For the speeches of Acts see Dibelius 1951, 120-162; Aune 1987, 124-128; Plümacher 2004, 110-11, 117-118, 123; for speeches in ancient historical works, see Brunt 1993, 150-152; Plümacher 2004, 113-119.

¹⁷⁸ Also referred to as “dramatic”, “tragic” and “tragic-pathetic” history. Plümacher 2004, 33-38; 1972, 80-136. Aejmelaeus (1985, 101-103) is on similar lines.

uneven. Apparently Luke spent much energy on polishing one pericope here and another one there while getting past others quite quickly. As several synoptic parallels make obvious, sometimes he transmitted traditional material with no more alteration than would belong to “informal controlled oral tradition”.¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, at times he worked on his material intensively and at depth. In so doing he attained two goals at the same time: he dressed his theology in the effective garb of drama, and he rose closer to the level of historiography.¹⁸⁰

Rhetorical embellishment, exaggeration for dramatic purposes and the use of invention were indispensable for all ancient historiography. They were heightened in mimetic historiography but present everywhere, even in the works of the historians with a reputation for being more critical, as Thucydides and Polybios.¹⁸¹ Exaggeration and the use of invention were sometimes criticized when they, in someone’s opinion, were used tastelessly or led to quite distorted views.¹⁸² Still, they were part and parcel of the ancient historiographical method and mostly considered a natural and legitimate way of linking up with tradition. Ancient historians and their audiences had a different conception of good historiography from modern people. There is a marked difference in the attitude towards the use of imagination and invention.

The aims and ideals in ancient historiography

Modern historical research is based on the attempt to separate fact and fiction. Scholars, naturally, are conscious of the difficulties of reaching the past “as it actually happened”, and of the impossibility of keeping

¹⁷⁹ Bailey 1991, 34-54, Dunn 2003, 205-224.

¹⁸⁰ Plümacher 1972, 80-136.

¹⁸¹ Woodman (1988, 7-9, 17, 28-32) argues that the “critical” image of some historians is created first and foremost by their style, by the lack of evidence of how they really used their sources, and by their criticism of their predecessors whose authority they sought to call into question. Thucydides, for instance, blames his predecessors of poetical exaggeration in their battle scenes; by this he aims at convincing his readers of the outstanding importance of his own war. The influence of Homer is obvious in his work. Brunt (1993, 148-149, 159) disagrees, defending the critical method of Thucydides.

¹⁸² On Polybios’ criticism of mimetic historians and on his own method, see Plümacher 2004, 38-44.

facts and interpretation apart; the separation of fact and fiction is an ideal, not reality. Notwithstanding its unattainability, this ideal marks the boundary between what the modern mind perceives as historical research and what it perceives as historical fiction. In the modern view, the deliberate mixing of invented material with historical fact belongs to the historical film and the novel, not to historical research and “nonfiction” popularizing of it.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century scholars became more and more aware of the fact that for the ancients the use of invention, the fictional element, was a natural part of all ancient historiography. This view has been strongly advocated by T. P. Wiseman and A. J. Woodman.¹⁸³ It is anachronistic to see any ancient historian as displaying a modern critical consciousness. Invention was not just something into which less than first-rate historians lapsed; no ancient historian even attempted to abstain from it altogether.

Ancient historians themselves often claim to write the strictest truth. It was a commonplace to advertise one’s own truthfulness, especially in a preface. Many scholars, too, believe that these statements betray the ancient ideal at least, if not the normal practice. Consequently at least men like Thucydides and Polybios meant to adhere as strictly as possible to what actually happened.¹⁸⁴ Relying on this view, biblical scholars sometimes claim that Luke's preface warrants his intention to write as truthfully and carefully as the best of ancient historians did.¹⁸⁵ Wiseman and Woodman claim that the ancients saw the use of invention and the manipulation of facts as normal and legitimate tools in historiography, but protested their use for inferior motives such as for tasteless sensationalism or the forwarding of partisan interests.

¹⁸³ Wiseman 1979 and 1993; Woodman 1988 and 1998.

¹⁸⁴ E.g., Brunt (1993, 188-189, 203-304) and Blockley (2001, 14-24) claim that conscious departure from truth was never accepted in ancient historiography, protesting against the view of Wiseman and Woodman on the ancient ideal of historiography. For criticism of Brunt see Pesonen 2001, 143 n. 21; on Blockley, see Vuolanto 2003, 203 n. 97. For further discussion on the question, see Wheeldon 1989, 33-63; Shrimpton 2001, 50-62; Fox 2001, 76-93.

¹⁸⁵ Marshall 1970, 54-57; Witherington 1996, 74-75.

The latter is of primary importance. History was a political concern, reflecting the interests of all those who had any reason to identify themselves with the historical figures. Various founding figures shaped and reflected the identity of the communities who saw themselves as their descendants and followers; they acquired something of a communal personality.¹⁸⁶ Lucian of Samosata described an ideal historian in a way that makes the strong connection between truthfulness and impartiality plain:

This is what a historian ought to be like: fearless, unbribed, freespoken and truthful, calling a fig a fig and a bowl a bowl, as the comedian says. He must not be antagonistic or partial to anyone, not spare anyone out of pity, not be ashamed or shrink from saying anything. He must be an impartial judge, benevolent to all but not giving one party more than its due. In his books he shall be a stranger with no country of his own, independent and kingless. He must not be guided by the opinion of one or of the other, but simply state what was done.¹⁸⁷

The words “impartial judge” sum up Lucian's ideal. The most important virtue in a historian is to distribute honour fairly; Lucian does not condemn the use of imagination as such. Naturally, historians usually did have their political axes to grind and seldom lived up to the ideal of impartiality. This, however, made it all the more important for the historians to convince their readers that they did so, true or not true.¹⁸⁸

Cicero provides valuable information of the ancient view on historiography and invention, as Woodman has argued.¹⁸⁹ In a much-quoted passage of *De Oratore* (51-64) Cicero has the rhetorician Antonius describe good historiography:

As everyone knows, the first law in the writing of history is never to tell a falsehood or to leave the truth untold; there must be no suspicion of favouritism or of a grudge against someone. This foundation is indeed

¹⁸⁶ Wiseman 1979, 24; Aune 1987, 62.

¹⁸⁷ *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 41, my translation.

¹⁸⁸ Woodman 1988, 74.

¹⁸⁹ Woodman analyses *De Oratore* 51-64 (1988, 70-116).

familiar to everyone, but the work itself consists of factual content and of presentation. As to the content, we need chronology and geographical descriptions. Of great and memorable events one expects to hear, first, what was intended; then, what was done; and finally, the consequences. The writer should indicate whether he approves of the prior intentions; of heroic action he should tell not only the bare deeds and words but also the manner in which everything was done. As he speaks of the outcome he ought to analyse the causes of what happened, like fate, cleverness or recklessness. Of people one should tell not only their achievements but describe also the life and the character of famous and illustrious individuals. As to the presentation, the style of the composition ought to be detailed and smooth, quietly and regularly flowing, without the asperity and cutting remarks that belong to speech in law court.¹⁹⁰

Cicero, too, demands that the historian stick to truth and avoid all lying but when the text is read in its context it obviously cannot mean that all use of invention should be abolished. The agenda in Antonius' long speech is that Roman history should be raised from the level of annalistic listing to the level of literature. Before the day of Antonius there had been little but dates, names and events; a historian ought to shed light, for instance, on the personality and personal history of main characters, on their motives, and on the details of heroic acts. The only possible source for all this additional information, however, seems to be invention since the unsatisfactory previous historians did not inform their readers on these subjects and there is no mention whatsoever that a historian could or should look for quite new sources. Cicero calls *de facto* for the addition of new facts, which in the modern view would need to be verified; Cicero, however, sees himself as only demanding better, more ample style.

The ancients themselves did not analyse their own conception of truth or of the limits of permissible use of invention in historiography. Woodman, in his analysis, sees ancient history as consisting of a “hard core” and “superstructure”.¹⁹¹ The hard core of history consisted of factual statements inherited from predecessors, and in the view of the audience it at least should have been based on fact. The hard core was

¹⁹⁰ *De Oratore*, 62-64, my translation.

¹⁹¹ Woodman 1988, 90-93.

the established tradition about the historical topic in question. In practice, the facts could often be erroneous, as critical people well knew, but that idea that the hard core of history should rely on actual events was what made the difference between history and pure fiction.

The superstructure, on the other hand, consisted of the rhetorical elaboration of the hard core, and it could legitimately contain fictional elements, even quite new inventions. It was not evaluated on the basis of whether it was true in the sense of having happened but on the basis of other things, such as dramatics, morality and eloquence. The superstructure was true enough if it supplemented the traditional hard core harmoniously.

In the finished book the hard core and the superstructure would be quite blended, as they would be in a modern historical novel or historical film. Only those who already knew the established tradition of a historical topic could tell them apart. Also, the more fame a historical work gathered the more it would impose on the established tradition. The superstructure of an earlier writing could therefore become part of the hard core for later writers. New additions were often recognized as invention close to the time of their emergence but later authors treat them as hard core, established tradition.¹⁹²

Paul Veyne has emphasized that methodological doubt and the critical evaluation of facts did not belong to the basic self-understanding of ancient historians. Historiography consisted first and foremost of the passing on of established tradition. Historians could sometimes correct and reshape tradition but they were not supposed to reconstruct and verify it anew every time: established tradition was the truth.¹⁹³ It was the duty of the historians to transmit that which everyone should know about the past, whatever their private opinion might be of the reliability of this picture.¹⁹⁴ Veyne has, moreover, compared ancient historiography to modern journalism. The ancient historian and the journalist both address an audience that will have to form its opinion without checking on the sources. The readers will evaluate the text

¹⁹² Wiseman 1979, 32-34.

¹⁹³ Veyne 1988, 5-8.

¹⁹⁴ Veyne 1988, 109-111. A good example is Livy 1.6-10.

relying on intratextual criteria, such as convincing style, the seeming objectivity of the writer, and the extent to which the text fits any earlier information the readers have on the subject.¹⁹⁵

Ancient historiography was a branch of literature, striving for edification, entertainment and artistic pleasure with as much zeal as for correct information about the past. Mere facts without an artistic form were as yet not historiography but only material for it.¹⁹⁶ Ancient historiography is seriously misunderstood if it is seen as having the same aim as modern critical research.¹⁹⁷

Luke and the use of invention

The Gospels are a genre of their own and only resemble Graeco-Roman historiography in some respects. Nevertheless the comparison is a useful one as it sheds light on how Luke may have acted in reworking the sources for his Gospel. It is evident that the stories of Mark were for him established tradition about the life of Jesus. However, fidelity to tradition did not mean that he could not make alterations. In the light of Woodman's interpretation of ancient historiography, the creation of a more elegant and impressive superstructure to the traditional hard core would have been a merit. Invention of new superstructure was a normal way of linking to tradition, meant to enhance the glory and importance of the tradition.

There is no reason why Luke should only have made use of invention in Acts. A prime example of how Luke adds new superstructure on the Markan hard core is the scene in the Synagogue of Nazareth. I analyse it here in this light so as to illustrate how Luke may at times have elaborated his sources.

In all the Synoptics, the accounts of Jesus' visit to Nazareth share the same core story (Luke 4:16-30/ Mark 6:1-6/ Matt 13:53-58). Jesus comes to his hometown Nazareth and teaches in its synagogue. The people recognize him as a native of their town, but are not convinced

¹⁹⁵ Veyne 1988, 9-10.

¹⁹⁶ A view expressed by Lucian in *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 16.

¹⁹⁷ Veyne 1988, 5; Woodman 1988, 197-212.

by him. Jesus replies with the proverb that no prophet is ever honoured among his own people. The town sticks to its unbelief and Jesus leaves.

The Lukan story is much longer than the ones in Mark and Matthew.¹⁹⁸ For a Gospel scene it is very rich in detail, and time and care are taken for the creation of the atmosphere. It tells what Jesus read from the book of Isaiah. Jesus makes a speech, otherwise unattested, of which the proverb of the prophet in his hometown is but a tiny part. The speech fills the audience with such rage that they attempt to lynch Jesus. He is taken to a cliff-edge to be hurled down. Jesus shows his power by walking off through the crowd unharmed.

Most scholars are of the opinion that Luke had no other narrative account for this scene than that of Mark and it must be seen first and foremost as a creation of Luke.¹⁹⁹ If so Luke has deliberately altered the course of events in his source. Most conspicuously, he has the people of Nazareth attempt murder, whereas in Mark they are guilty of no more than small-mindedness and scepticism.

The changes Luke made to Mark, including the leisurely pace of narration, the quotation, speech, and dramatic end, can all be seen as superstructure to the hard core provided by Mark. Luke probably wanted to give the traditional story its due significance by adding thrill, elegance and a richer theology. The dependence on Mark is evident in that the narrative logic of the Lukan story makes perfect sense only when read in the light of the Markan version, as I hope to show below. Luke is writing for an audience already acquainted with the established tradition of the matter and he is partly relying on their previous information.

Luke creates a sense of pregnant expectation around the quotation of Isaiah. The narrative tempo slows down before it as Jesus stands up to read, receives the scroll of Isaiah, opens it, and finds the right place. It comes to a standstill after the reading of the prophecy as Jesus sits down with everyone's eyes fixed on him and proclaims that the scripture has been fulfilled. Luke makes it clear that the audience is

¹⁹⁸ A detailed literary analysis is provided by Siker 1992, 76-86.

¹⁹⁹ Funk 1993, 279-280. For an extensive bibliography see Schreck 1989, 456-471.

amazed in a positive sense: all speak well of Jesus and marvel at his gracious words. This makes a clear difference from Mark, who has his villagers also express astonishment, but in a grudging, reluctant way. Luke underlines that the initial response is favourable to Jesus.²⁰⁰

A change in the atmosphere is initiated by a seemingly harmless question “Is not this Joseph's son?” Jesus' answer is unaccountably aggressive. It is as if he had been belittled and rejected already. You will want me to perform miracles and you will not accept me anyway, he seems to be saying; believe me, God cares for Gentiles more than He cares for you.²⁰¹

A person who did not know anything of the Nazareth scene in advance could be positively nonplussed.²⁰² A tiny remark about Jesus' origin changes the prophecy of God's returning grace into prophecy that this grace will bypass Israel.

Luke is here relying on the fact that the story indeed was well known by his audience. The Christians he wrote for were supposed to remember that Nazareth rejected Jesus. Moreover, they knew that Jesus left his hometown unable to convince it and without performing impressive miracles. Luke has Jesus reject his town in advance before they have time to reject Jesus, and he expects his audience to see this as morally justified.

Naaman the Syrian and the widow of Zarephath are examples in the past of God showing mercy to Gentiles rather than to Israel. They come as something rather out of the blue; again the audience is supposed to read in a missing link. Nazareth did not embrace Jesus as a Saviour,

²⁰⁰ Some scholars have claimed that the reaction of the Nazarenes in Luke 4:22 is negative or at most ambivalent (Jeremias 1959, 37-39; Marshall 1978, 185-186) as Jesus interprets it as such. The only reason that I can see for such an interpretation is the interpreters' desire to portray the angry reaction of the Lukan Jesus as justified.

²⁰¹ Wasserberg 1998, 156-159.

²⁰² Luke obviously intends the question about Jesus' origin to convey the idea that the people of Nazareth will not see Jesus as the Son of God (Tannehill 1972, 53; Wasserberg 1998, 156-157). This, however, is not enough to explain Jesus' aggressive response in the text as no one in the first chapters of Luke as yet professes faith in the divine status of Jesus.

and, by the time Luke wrote, it was evident that the great majority of Jews would not do so either. Luke makes the rejection in Nazareth foreshadow the rejection of Christianity by the Jews. He has Jesus hint that God will choose Gentiles as the recipients of His grace.²⁰³

Scholars have often noted that Luke uses the Nazareth pericope as a programmatic scene.²⁰⁴ It follows a pattern that is repeated over and over again in Acts.²⁰⁵ There the Apostles very often come to a new city and go to the synagogue to preach the Gospel, and the first response is always favourable. However, the majority of Jews, or at least their leaders, take offence and the apostles are driven out with violence. In the later parts of Acts where Paul is the hero the scene usually ends with Paul proclaiming that the Gospel will be preached to Gentiles instead.

The attempt of the townspeople to kill Jesus may serve a twofold purpose. It can be seen prefiguring the violent death of Jesus. The sovereign walking away out of the peril of death may stand for the resurrection. On the other hand, the threatening of violence could also symbolize the fate of the Christian message, as Luke sees it: the Jews attempt to destroy it, but it passes on, to more worthy hearers.

All of this is part of Luke's answer to a problem that was pressing for the Church of his day: that Jesus was not recognized as a Saviour by his own people. With the repeated theme of initial positive response, rejection, violence, and turning to Gentiles, Luke legitimizes the situation of the Church in Luke's time. It wanted to see itself as the rightful heir of the promises made to Israel, even though the majority of

²⁰³ Maddox's interpretation of Luke 4:16-30 in the general context of Luke-Acts is very similar (Maddox 1982, 44-45; more generally on Luke's stance towards Judaism, 31-56).

²⁰⁴ First pointed out by Reicke 1973, 51-52.

²⁰⁵ Tyson 1984, 577-581; Neiryneck 1999, 365-375. Relevant are, e.g., Acts 13:13-52; 14:1-2, 5, 19-20; 17:1-14. The pattern is evident also in the macrostructure of Acts, as Christians are at first successful among the Jews, in spite of the opposition of Jewish leaders (2:47; 4:21; 5:13, 15-16, 26), but finally the people of Jerusalem turn against Paul and plot his death (21:30; 23:34-35; 22:22; 23:12-14; 24:1, 9; 25:2).

Christians were of Gentile origin while the majority of Jews remained outside the Church.²⁰⁶

Luke did not usually rework Markan material as dramatically as this. The programmatic nature of the Nazareth pericope seems to be the reason why Luke elaborated this story with such care. He has spun a dramatic scene out of his theological convictions, letting Jesus and the people of Nazareth act it out.

Luke's method in working on the Nazareth pericope is very similar to his technique in Acts as explained by Eckhard Plümacher. In his view, Luke in Acts makes use of the dramatic episode, which is common to both Hellenistic historiography and the Hellenistic novel. Dramatic episodes are characterised by lively narration and gradually rising tension, culminating in sudden and striking incidents.²⁰⁷ Plümacher contends that Luke created such episodes by dramatizing theological ideas into the form of historical scenes. The actions and utterances by the characters convey a message that might as well have been worked into an apologetical tractate. The effect is that Luke's message is intensified; it no longer appears as someone's theological agenda but as a truth verified by the course of history.²⁰⁸

Like the dramatic episodes of Acts, the Lukan Nazareth episode is not coherent or convincing as a historical description – not in the modern view at least. Compared with Mark, Luke renders the people of Nazareth a bunch of marionettes in a theological drama that reflects Luke's views on the relationship of the Christians and Jews in his own day. As a result of the piling up of symbolism the townspeople rush from enthusiasm to murderous rage in a very abrupt fashion.

However, in the ancient view, the change might have made for better history. Luke kept the hard core of tradition intact in that Jesus preached to the people of Nazareth in their synagogue but they rejected him. And there is much that could have made Luke's audience rightly

²⁰⁶ Räisänen 1991, 94-111.

²⁰⁷ Plümacher 1972, 123-126.

²⁰⁸ Plümacher 1972, 80-110. Plümacher bases his view on an analysis of Acts 8:26-40; 10:1-11, 18; 14:8-18; 16:16-40; 17:16-33; 19:23-40; 25:13-26, 32.

proud of the new superstructure. The Lukan episode is more colourful and dramatic than the Markan original. It has a rich theological content, partly overt and partly symbolic, ranging over the significance and message of Jesus, his rejection by Israel, and the legitimation of the Gentile mission. People who value beautiful quotations, carefully created atmosphere, thrill and action, and subject matter for theological pondering, might well choose Luke any day. Whether or not the people of Nazareth really attempted murder would not have been of significance. For the ancient, to present the traditional truth about a historical topic in a more rich and elegant form would have been to present it better.

In the texts analysed in this book the use of invention cannot be pointed out as clearly as in the Nazareth episode, for the simple reason that Luke's sources are not at our disposal. The point, however, was to prove that at times Luke reworked his sources very thoroughly, making ample use of invention, not only in Acts but also in his Gospel. As in ancient historiography, the use of invention was a natural tool for him to use, even an indispensable one.

Summary

Luke works often in the manner of ancient historians. This is most obvious in Acts where speeches and episodes appear as a result of his theological views and creative freedom. At some points the Gospel of Luke betrays a similar technique.

The use of invention was a natural part of all ancient historiography, which was not seen as critical research. In its aims and methods ancient historiography was closer to the historical films and novels of our time than to the modern historical discipline. Historians animated and decorated the hard core provided by earlier tradition with a superstructure of their own creation, without marking out which elements were which. This was a method shared by all historians and taken for granted as part of skilful and artistic presentation.

Luke's elaboration of the Nazareth episode (Luke 4:16-30/ Mark 6:1-6/ Matt 13:53-58) can be seen in the light of invention in ancient historiography. Luke added a superstructure of his own onto the hard

core of previous tradition. As in Acts, it was spun out of his central theological themes, which were given the form of a dramatic episode. This sheds light on how Luke may have treated his special traditions as well. Free creation and the dramatizing of Luke's crucial ideas are part of his method.

III Analysing the Texts

III 1 The Sinful Fisherman (Luke 5:1-11)

Introduction

In 5:1-11, Luke tells how Jesus, sitting in Peter's fishing boat, teaches a crowd that has gathered on the shore. After his sermon he helps the fishermen to catch such a huge number of fish that Peter, struck by terror, asks that the Lord go away from him, a sinful man. Jesus promises to make Peter a catcher of people. Leaving everything, the fishermen follow Jesus.

This pericope is important because through it Luke connects the theme of sinfulness and of sinners with general theological principles. In it the term "sinner" is used quite differently from the other pericopes analysed in this book. It is not about Jesus' friendship with "toll collectors and sinners", spoken of as if they were a group apart from ordinary people. Peter's proclaimed sinfulness is purely theological in the sense that there is no special moral or social stigma behind it. He is being humble and pious in identifying himself as a sinner. The sinner theme, a central one in the Third Gospel, is here inaugurated by Peter, the first and greatest apostle and one of Luke's heroes,²⁰⁹ describing himself as a sinner. Luke very probably introduced the theme of sinfulness into a traditional story with the purpose of preparing the way for his sinner theology. I will deal with the origin of the pericope at some length in order to demonstrate this.

Parallel material and lapses of logic

The Lukan story has seams and tensions in it that point to the use of sources. Most often these coincide with parallel material in Mark (4:1-2, 1:16-20) and John (21:1-11). Luke seems to have combined several traditions in this pericope.

²⁰⁹ For the importance of Peter in Luke, see Collins 2001.

The introductory verses Luke 5:1-3 have an independent plot and point of their own, identical with the teaching scene in Mark 4:1-2.²¹⁰ There is a problem and its solution: the crowd is too large to see and hear Jesus properly, and embarking on a boat *impromptu* enables Jesus to address it conveniently. The point is Jesus' outstanding success as a teacher, while the rest of the pericope is about the miracle, Peter's reactions and his calling. The clearest indication of the shift is that Luke loses all interest in both the teaching and the crowd as soon as the miracle story proper begins. The crowd is simply forgotten.

Of the two boats in the story, Peter's boat plays a far more central part than the other one. It serves as a pulpit for Jesus' teaching, its crew lets down the nets, and all discourse takes place in it. The second boat has no independent function in the story; it only serves to enhance the hugeness of the catch.²¹¹ Moreover, its crew is introduced in a way that interrupts the flow of the story in 5:10. The sons of Zebedee apparently are in this second boat, because Luke makes a distinction between "those who were with Peter" and the sons of Zebedee, who are mentioned after these as Peter's partners or companions (κοινωνοί). It could be that the second boat is there only because Luke wanted to implant the sons of Zebedee, present in the Markan Calling of the Fishermen (Mark 1:16-20), into a traditional fishing miracle story in which they originally did not figure.

There are some curious points in the logic of Luke's story. Luke says that the boats were sinking (ὥστε βυθίζεσθαι αὐτά) because of the weight of the huge catch. Apparently, we are to imagine boats filled nearly to the brim with fish. Yet it seems an odd hazard. Why haul all the fish aboard if it really endangered the boats? Moreover, it would follow that Peter was crouching on fish when he cast himself down at Jesus' knees. Peter next dramatically tells the Lord to go away from him; yet Jesus could not have obeyed him except by swimming ashore.²¹² Finally, Luke forgets about the fish as soon as the party is

²¹⁰ Klein 1967, 2.

²¹¹ Similarly, Klein 1967, 4: the second boat is not indispensable.

²¹² Pesch 1969, 109, 116-117 solves these problems in his reconstruction by letting the boat come to land before Peter kneels down.

safely ashore. The fishermen “left everything and followed Jesus”, so that the huge catch was apparently left to rot.

Three of these lapses happen where the parallel material in Mark and John give reason to suspect that Luke is adding something to traditional material or switching from another tradition to Markan material. Peter’s kneeling on the pile of fish, as well as his request for Jesus to go away from him although in a boat at sea, occur when the very Lukan sinner theme is brought into the miracle story; it is absent from the parallel fishing miracle in the Gospel of John. The fish are forgotten when Luke returns from the fishing miracle to the ending which strongly resembles the Markan Calling of the Fishermen (Mark 1:16-20).

The disciples’ predicament with the huge catch is the only idiosyncrasy that has no apparent cause in the contradictions between various traditions or Luke’s own emphases. The odd occurrence is obviously meant to switch the story to the world of the miraculous, perhaps also to depict the terrifying side of a direct intervention of God. There is a touch of the traditional motif of Jesus saving his disciples from peril at sea (Mark 4:35-41, Matt 8:23-27, Luke 8:22-25, Mark 6: 46-52, Matt 14:22-33, John 6:16-21).

Luke may well have written the opening section (5:1-3) inspired by themes in Mark 4:1-2 (the preaching from a boat) and Mark 1:16-20 (the calling of fishermen). It is also possible that he found these motifs in oral tradition as well as in Mark.²¹³ Either way, Luke has used the traditional motif of preaching from a boat as a device for putting Jesus and Peter out to sea together.²¹⁴

²¹³ For the general probability of synoptic oral tradition circulating after the writing of Mark, see Dunn 2003, 210-254 and ch. II 1 of this book.

²¹⁴ Attention has been called to the fluctuation of the single and plural person in the verbs of 4-5. The fluctuation marks the switch from the introductory scene in which Peter has no special role to the tradition behind the miracle story where Peter is pre-eminent. It betrays a seam between redaction and source material or between two separate sources. Jesus addresses both Peter and several fishermen at the same time: “put out into the deep water” (ἐπανάγαγε) is second person singular, “let down your nets” (χαλάσατε) is second person plural. Peter answers both for himself alone and for a group: “we have worked all night and caught nothing” (first person plural), “yet I will let down the nets” (first person singular).

The two groups of fishermen in Mark 1:16-20 probably inspired the two boats in the Lukan story.²¹⁵ Actually, Mark does not say that Peter and his brother had a boat, only that the Zebedee family had one. Yet Luke may have taken Peter's boat for granted, especially if he knew a story of a miraculous fishing in which Peter acted as the captain of a boat. Also the speech about catching people and the conclusion in which the fishermen leave everything to follow Jesus are taken from this scene.²¹⁶

The names in the story

In 5:8 Luke addresses Peter with the combined name Simon Peter. Normally, he uses either Simon or Peter; the combination occurs nowhere else in the whole of Luke-Acts whereas in the Gospel of John it is quite common. "The sons of Zebedee" is typical of neither Luke nor John. Though James and John are often mentioned in the four Gospels, the name of their father is mentioned but seldom, which makes sheer coincidence improbable. The name of Zebedee in Luke 5:1-11 could be the influence of Mark 1:19 in which case this would be

Klein 1967, 2-3; Pesch 1969; Bovon 1989, 229; Paffenroth 1997.

²¹⁵ Goulder 1989, 317; cf. Pesch (1969, 64-85), who thinks that the two boats came from the traditional story of the fishing miracle. If Mk 1:16-20 is interwoven in the Lukan fishing miracle, as seems to be the case, one may ask why Luke has dispensed with Andrew. One possibility is that Andrew simply was not very important for the church that Luke knew. While Mark mentions Andrew four times, his name appears only twice in the whole of Luke-Acts (Luke 6:14, Acts 1:13; Goulder 1989, 319-320). Another possible reason for the omission is that the sons of Zebedee were mentioned along with Peter in the miracle story that Luke knew, whereas Andrew was not; this is the case in the Johannine parallel (John 21:2). Shellard (2004, 240) suggests that the dropping out of Andrew would betray Luke combining John with Markan/Matthean material. In the latter, Andrew and Peter are fishing together, whereas in John 21:7 Peter and the Beloved Disciple appear to be in the same boat. Luke would solve the tension by leaving the person or persons in Peter's boat nameless.

²¹⁶ Pesch 1969, 64-85. Several scholars have proposed that the miracle story was originally born as an expansion of the logion about the fisher of men (Bultmann 1979, 232; Bovon 1989, 234; Aejmelaeus 1996, 311). The logion would have been doubly attested in Luke's sources; he would have combined the two stories in which it appeared, the calling scene of Mark and the fishing miracle story. This is hardly a necessary assumption. The Markan calling scene alone explains the presence of the logion here.

a link from Mark to Luke and on to John. For contrary evidence, “Simon Peter” could most easily be explained by Luke’s dependence on John.²¹⁷ The evidence of the names, then, pulls in two directions if literary dependence is to be the answer. Oral tradition may be the best explanation for the partial overlapping of the names.

A traditional miracle story

The fishing miracle in Luke 5:1-11 shares many features with its parallel in John 21:1-14. Both evangelists tell that there were several fishermen, the group consisting of Peter and other apostles (in Luke, apostles to be). The fishermen have worked the previous night in vain. Jesus gives the command to lower the nets in a certain place. The amount of fish that they catch is immense. Peter is called both Simon and Peter and appears as the leading fisherman. He reacts to the miracle with a strong physical gesture: in Luke, he throws himself at the feet of Jesus; in John he jumps overboard into the water. Jesus is called the Lord. Both Luke and John connect the story to Peter’s role and duties as the leading apostle – Luke by having Jesus announce to Simon that he will become a catcher of people; John connects the miracle to the discussion where Jesus tells Peter to care for his sheep (John 21:15-19).

However, the differences between the stories are also very great. There is very little agreement in vocabulary between them, apart from Simon Peter, sons of Zebedee, Lord and quite obvious ones like net, fish, boat etc. The stories are in quite different settings, display different theological themes and serve different ends. John’s story is a resurrection appearance and leads to a meal with the resurrected on the shore. The climax is in the recognition of the resurrected Jesus, in which the Beloved Disciple plays an important part. Luke has the miracle happen at the very beginning of Peter’s discipleship, as a calling scene. The climax is Peter’s commissioning as an apostle of the divine Lord. That Peter calls himself a sinner links the pericope into the specially Lukan theme of sinners in the company of Jesus.

²¹⁷ Shellard 2004, 239.

The whole question of John's relationship to the Synoptics is beyond the scope of this study.²¹⁸ For my point of view the most interesting question is whether either of the stories, Luke 5:1-11 or John 21:1-14, presupposes the other in its final form.

The answer, as I see it, is negative. Most likely from Lukan redaction are the combining of the teaching scene in 5:1-3 with the following miracle, the presence of two boats, Peter's confession of being a sinful man, and the ending that clearly echoes the story of calling of the fishermen (Mark 1:16-20). All of this is absent in John's account. Typically Johannine are the names John gives to the disciples: Thomas, Nathanael, the Beloved Disciple and Simon Peter; of these, only Simon Peter occurs in Luke and may result from common oral tradition. There is no reason to see the Johannine Jesus' request for Peter to care for his sheep as dependent on the Lukan logion of Peter as a catcher of people, or vice versa.²¹⁹ Both reflect the very widespread idea of Peter as the leading apostle.

Some scholars have claimed that the Johannine Peter casts himself overboard after the beloved disciple has recognized the Lord because

²¹⁸ It is a much disputed question whether or not the Gospel of John is dependent on the Synoptics. The mainstream opinion has long been that Luke is prior to John (Osty 1951, Boismard 1962, J. A. Bailey 1963, Neiryck 1979, Dauer 1984). On the different explanations of the links between John and the Synoptics, see Dunderberg 1994, 12-23. Some have argued that John did not know the Synoptics, but represents a church whose tradition about Jesus had developed along its own lines; the links between Luke and John are due to oral tradition influenced by the Gospel of Luke and used by John (Dauer 1984). Some claim that the Gospel of John reflects all the Synoptic Gospels in their written form, not only pre-synoptic tradition (e.g., Dunderberg 1994), while according to others John did know the Synoptics and consciously rewrote them. Finally, it has been argued that Luke was the last evangelist and used John as his source. Gericke assumes an indirect influence by John on Luke (1965, 807-820); Cribbs has argued that Luke presupposes some knowledge of Johannine tradition, either oral tradition or perhaps an early draft of John (1971 and 1973). Barbara Shellard claims that Luke knew and used all three other canonical Gospels (Shellard 2004, 200-260, 275-288). The greatest problem in her theory is the resulting general overview of Luke's use of John: story themes and details are carried over much altered and haphazardly, yet no story or teaching is taken over as such.

²¹⁹ Neiryck (1991, 607-608) claims that John replaced the metaphor of the fish with that of sheep. Fortna (1992, 387) denies this.

of repentance and shame after the threefold denial; John's Peter would then display the same feeling of worthlessness that Luke's Jesus brings to words.²²⁰ John, however, does not explain Peter's motive, and as Peter is next mentioned obeying Jesus' orders and hauling the net ashore, the immediate impression is that Peter leaps into the water in order to get to Jesus all the faster.²²¹

The two pericopes look rather like quite different retellings of basically the same miracle. A common tradition is a sufficient link between Luke 5:1-11 and John 21:1-14, whereas literary dependence is conceivable but in no way necessary to assume. Free variation of a traditional story explains the similarities and differences best.²²²

The story suits especially the view of oral tradition as constant variation. In the fishing miracle as attested by Luke and John both evangelists could be freely retelling oral tradition that had probably already come to them in different variants. We can see the same basic outline of the story and we have two examples of the different variants in which it could be rendered. The list of features that Luke and John have in common gives us a good idea of the features that were most stable in this story. The scene is the Sea of Galilee, even if it may be called by different names. Simon Peter, the sons of Zebedee and other prominent disciples go fishing in a boat. They work all night and take

²²⁰ Gee 1989.

²²¹ Fortna 1992, 392-396. I find this plausible. Naturally, the Johannine Peter has the threefold denial in his recent past, and the discussion in John 21:15-17 perhaps looks back to it. Notwithstanding this, the Johannine Peter is more eager than withdrawing in his attitude to Jesus after the resurrection. He runs to the grave at Mary's news and he is ready to profess his love at Jesus' asking. A dive into the water so as to be the first on the shore would fit the picture.

²²² This has long been the majority opinion. The classic study expounding this opinion is Pesch 1969. Nevertheless literary dependence is argued by many. Goulder (1989, 322-323) argues that Luke wrote 5:1-11 on the basis of Mark alone and John then shaped his own fishing miracle on the basis of Luke. Neiryck (1990) also sees John 21 as dependent on Luke. This is not inconceivable though some source-critical problems remain, most conspicuously, the name Simon Peter. The greatest problem lies with John, who would so carefully have erased from the story both all Markan influence and the sinner theology that is characteristic of Luke. This is a more difficult explanation for the genesis of Jn 21:1-14 than that John and Luke would both have known the story of the fishing miracle from tradition.

nothing. Returning in the morning, they meet Jesus who tells them to try one more time and gives them advice about how and where exactly to try with their net. The catch of fish is so huge as to cause problems in getting the fish ashore. Jesus is perceived to be the divine Lord. Narrative detail and the theological message, however, differ very greatly. However, the idea that the huge catch foreshadows the success of the later Christian Church hovers close in both variants.

The overriding impression is that the evangelists acted like their oral predecessors. They kept the essential features of the story while telling the story in their own words, creating details freely and bending the story to express their central theological emphases. But if variation is the rule we cannot hope to reconstruct “the original story” of the fishing miracle with any precision. It will never have had only one correct, stable form. If we knew only one of these variants, Luke or John, it would be impossible to infer what the other was like. The earlier variants known to the evangelists may have been quite as different from one another for all that we know. It is possible that some of the Lukan and Johannine features are inherited from tradition but one cannot count on this.

The linguistic evidence in Luke 5:4-9 is difficult to evaluate, as it usually is.²²³ Practically every verse bears marks of Luke’s hand. Whatever his sources may be, Luke adapts them to his own style and purpose as he usually does. Linguistic analysis cannot be the decisive factor in the search for sources as a brief survey at the verse level makes clear. In 5:7-8 there are several expressions that are unusual in the Gospel of Luke.²²⁴ However, it does not make sense that Luke should have relied on a traditional fishing miracle story in 5:7-8 but not

²²³ The most thorough study of the language in Lk 5:1-11 has been written by Pesch, who contends that Lk 5:4-9 is based on a traditional miracle story (1969, 64-85). Goulder (1989, 326-328) presents the opposite view: the language in Lk 5:4-9 betrays that Luke himself created the miracle with no other basis than the synoptic parallels.

²²⁴ E.g., in 5:7 *καταναεύω* is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament; *μέτοχος* is a *hapax* in Luke-Acts and the canonical Gospels. Several words occur often in Lukan texts but are here used in a manner that is unique in Luke: *συλλαμβάνω* in the meaning “to help” and *πίμπλημι* in the active form, not in the medium. In 5:8 the combined name Simon Peter is a *hapax legomenon* in Luke-Acts and extremely rare in the Synoptic Gospels, though common in the Gospel of John. The list could be continued.

in 5:4-6. Correspondingly, the verses 5:1-3 and 5:10-11, parts that Luke very probably wrote on the basis of Mark, would not stick out for language unusual in Luke.

The sinfulness of Peter

Peter's dramatic "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" is connected with Luke's later sinner pericopes by manifold links. However, there is an obvious difference in the nature of sinfulness in the cases of Peter, on the one hand, and of "toll collectors and sinners", on the other. Luke is working from the theological acceptance of general sinfulness towards recommending his special sinners to his audience.

Emotionalism, bordering on the melodramatic, links Peter's reaction closely to other Lukan pericopes where sinful people encounter Jesus: Luke 7:36-50, 15:11-32, 18:9-14, and 19:1-10. In these passages the "sinners" behave very emotionally, often bringing their feelings to the surface by strong physical gestures. The feelings expressed range from fear, awe, remorse, grief, and humble longing for forgiveness and acceptance, to gratitude, love, joy and relief. Peter, in 5:8, throws himself at Jesus' feet. The sinful woman kneels at his feet, showers them with her tears, kisses and anoints them. In the Prodigal Son, both the father and the elder brother express their feelings physically – running, embracing, kissing, staying outside to sulk, going outside to persuade – while the prodigal son expresses his deep remorse in words. In Luke 18:9-14, the toll collector expresses himself both by words and by the physical gestures of staying further away, beating his breast, and not looking up. In Luke 19:1-10 the delight of Zacchaeus finds expression in both words and physical action, namely clattering quickly down from the tree.

Luke portrays all his sinner figures in a very warm way. Their actions in the past may not have been right, but their reactions in the present are exemplary. They are the ones who go home justified, who love much, whose return is to be celebrated, who are children of Abraham. With these stories Luke gradually persuades his audience to identify themselves with the sinners and to learn right religious attitudes from them.

That Luke has Peter call himself sinful at the beginning of his apostolic career reflects Lukan theology, not social reality. Peter is not confessing any special sin.²²⁵ Luke's Peter has not said or done anything suspicious.²²⁶ The Christian audience, of course, most probably knew that Peter denied his Lord before the death of Jesus. Nevertheless, for Luke, Peter is rather an idealized figure whom he seeks to glorify (for instance, by omitting the Markan *vade retro*, Mark 8:32-33/ Luke 9:21-22; other changes made by Luke to give a more positive image of Peter than Mark does include Mark 1:36/ Luke 4:42, Mark 14:37/ Luke 22:45-46, Mark 14:30-31/ Luke 22:31-32, 34).²²⁷ The point of Peter's confession, then, is not to allude to his weaknesses, but rather to set an example for Luke's congregation.²²⁸

Naturally, Luke is on solid Hebrew Bible ground when he emphasizes that even the best humans are sinful before the glory of God.²²⁹ It has often been noted, for instance, that Peter's reaction resembles Isa 6. In it the prophet reacts with fear and a sense of his own unworthiness when confronted with the glory of God.²³⁰ The Moses story also

²²⁵ Some who take it that the fishing miracle was originally a story of an appearance of the resurrected Christ have claimed that Peter's sinfulness would in tradition have been connected to his having denied Jesus (Fitzmyer 1981, 561-562). Such a view is based on a harmonizing reconstruction of the tradition behind the Lukan and Johannine pericopes. It presupposes an initial unity in a post-Easter context that is quite uncertain. In any case, this is clearly not the meaning of Peter's confession for Luke himself. He does not depict this incident as happening after Easter, and therefore he must have seen the point of Peter's confession in some way that made it meaningful at the beginning of Peter's career. Another interpretation that I do not share is the possibility that Peter's confession would refer to cynicism and disbelief that Peter might have felt in the beginning of the fishing incident itself (Derrett 1980, 122). Peter would only have lowered the nets in order to prove to Jesus that nothing indeed would be gained. The miracle would then have made him repent of his lack of faith. This is possible but nothing in the text really requires it.

²²⁶ Another, rather outdated, explanation for Peter's confession is that Peter would have been among the class of sinners because of his social position or trade. However, it has been made clear that sinners have never formed a clearly defined group that would have included several ordinary trades. Neale 1991, 69-75; Green 1997, 234.

²²⁷ Mullen 2004, 14-15.

²²⁸ Similarly, Salo 2003, 78-79.

²²⁹ Bovon 1989, 234.

²³⁰ E.g., Goulder 1989, 320; Green 1997, 233; McKnight 1999, 245.

displays similar feelings of unworthiness and unsuitability in front of God. In the Mount Sinai story seeing God means deadly peril to all mortals. Luke writes in this tradition. The fishing miracle uncovers Jesus as the Lord, and awakens in Peter the feelings described in Hebrew Bible epiphanies. Peter's reactions, then, are to be understood as Luke's view of what any human being should feel when confronted by the sovereign representative of God.

The idea of general human sinfulness before God may seem so overly familiar that one does not pay attention to the fact that identifying as a sinner before God is indeed a specially Lukan emphasis within the canonical Gospels. Matthew, for instance, lays more emphasis on the demand that his audience identify as the children of God striving for moral perfection according to the teachings of Jesus, while John aims at making his audience see themselves as the children of light, characterized by love for each other, amid a world of darkness. It is Luke who makes identification as a sinner a main Christian virtue.

When Luke has Peter identify himself with sinners, his point is to show the correct attitude before Jesus, the representative of God. The ideal apostle, whose Church will catch countless people in its net, kneels down to confess his sinfulness, acknowledging that Jesus is his Lord. This is not because he is personally somehow suspicious, but rather because he is exemplary.

In this story Luke for the first time sets up feelings of sinfulness and identification as a sinner as ideal piety. Luke does it cautiously, for there is no special, concrete sin in Peter's past to put off his audience. As a result it is possible for people in quite different situations to imitate Peter in this identification. There are no requirements for identifying as a sinner, as the word has no definite social content in this pericope. Peter is not a member of any morally suspect group, as the "sinners" in the following pericopes are supposed to be; but the theological foundation for accepting the latter is laid.

Summary

In the Calling of Peter (Luke 5:1-11) Luke has combined elements from the Gospel of Mark and a traditional fishing miracle story that

also appears in John (21:1-11). The teaching from Peter's boat is inspired by Mark 4:1-2 while the calling at the end reflects Mark 1:16-20. The main lines of the fishing miracle are traditional, probably reflecting freely varied oral tradition. Luke has added the second boat into the story. Most interestingly for our theme, Luke has invented the dramatic culmination in 5:8 where the overawed Peter falls down at Jesus' feet and calls himself a sinful man. Luke has introduced the theme of sinfulness with the purpose of preparing the way for his sinner theology.

Peter's exclamation and kneeling are connected with the following sinner pericopes (7:36-50, 15:11-32, 18:9-14, 19:1-10), which typically display highly emotional behaviour and dramatic physical gestures and make humility a central virtue. However, there is a significant difference in the nature of the sinfulness of Peter and of the "toll collectors and sinners". Peter's proclaimed sinfulness is purely theological in the sense that there is no special moral or social stigma behind it while the later "sinners" are spoken of as if they were a definite morally suspect group. For Luke, Peter is an idealized figure. Luke is working from the theological acceptance of general sinfulness towards recommending his special sinners to his audience.

The idea that even the best humans are sinful before the glory of God originates in the Hebrew Bible. Within the canonical Gospels, however, it is a specially Lukan emphasis. In the Gospels, it is Luke who makes identification as a sinner a main Christian virtue. In the Calling of Peter, Luke for the first time sets up feelings of sinfulness, identification as a sinner, as ideal piety. That he uses the figure of Peter who has no special, concrete sin in his past is caution on Luke's part: he seeks to predispose his audience to the acceptance of the theological ideal of identifying as a sinner before God and the representative of God, Jesus.

III 2 Levi's Feast (Luke 5:27-35)

In the previous scene (Luke 5:17-26) Jesus heals a paralytic and forgives his sins. That episode, as Luke describes it, is remarkable. A dense crowd blocks the entrance, and notable authorities flock into the house in great numbers: Pharisees, teachers of the law, or scribes, “from every town in Galilee and Judaea and from Jerusalem”. Apparently other spectators are also inside, for Luke hardly imagines the Pharisees and scribes as those who begin to praise God in 5:26. One wonders what kind of building this would have to be, as the roofed area in the average Palestinian town house would never have accommodated so many. Was Luke perhaps thinking of a synagogue or a very rich private house, or is it rather that he never thought of the matter at all as he added the numbers of notables to the Markan story?²³¹

As the Lukan Levi story (Luke 5:27-32, or possibly 5:27-35) opens, Luke's audience has just been reminded that Jesus had the power to heal and to forgive sins, that the power of the Lord enabled him to do this, and that crowds of Pharisees and teachers of the law – important people – thought him so extremely important that they made great journeys in order to hear him, but only to criticize and find fault with him.²³²

From this scene we move straight to the Levi scene. Jesus leaves trailing clouds of glory and sees Levi sitting at a toll booth. Luke need not explain the toll booth to his audience: everyone knows that toll collectors are undesirables, ridiculed by the rich and hated by the peasant. Jesus calls the toll collector with two words, no explanations: “Follow me”. Levi “leaves everything” – a significant Lukan addition to the Markan story – “and follows him”. Obviously “leaving everything” stresses that an important and great change is happening in Levi's life, but Luke's concrete meaning is exasperatingly vague. Does Luke mean that Levi called it a day and dropped everything then and

²³¹ Mark 2:1 makes it clear that the town is Capernaum and that the house is the one in which Jesus usually stays; Luke leaves the location open (Luke last mentioned “one of the cities” in 5:12, while 5:17 gives no location at all).

²³² Neale (1991, 109-110) also sees that Luke's point in bringing the Pharisees from all over the country is to “set a dramatic stage for the important events to follow in 5:27-32.”

there, leaving the toll booth and whatever had been that day's take for passers-by to pick up? Or did he quit his job altogether, eventually leave his house and take up the itinerant life?

It is more than likely that Luke never thought the matter out in any concrete detail. In Mark 1:16-20, certainly an important source of inspiration here, Simon and Andrew leave their nets in order to follow Jesus, and John and James leave their father with his boat and his employees. But Levi's name is not on the Lukan list of apostles as are those of the fishermen (Luke 6:14-16), so that Luke apparently does not mean that Levi followed Jesus in his itinerant life. Likewise, in 8:1-3 it is only the twelve and the woman disciples who travel with Jesus, although in 10:1 the Lukan Jesus does have seventy other followers. Moreover, Luke does not say that Levi would leave his home; rather he will next make a feast there. That could perhaps be a farewell feast, but Luke does not say or clearly imply that. Luke 3:12-13 and Luke 19:1-10 attest that the evangelist did not think that toll collectors needed to forsake their profession in order to repent. That other toll collectors attend Levi's feast rather confirms that he did not quit his job. But if "leaving everything" does not entail quitting one's job, one's home, or one's former friends, then what exactly does Levi leave? Maybe all it boils down to is that he abruptly walks off, risking some loss of money and perhaps, at worst, a scolding from his boss if he has one nearby. Luke is simply not thinking the matter over precisely. It is important for him to underline that somehow it alters everything to start "following" Jesus, even though in Levi's case this does not seem to bring palpable changes in occupation, economy, or social circle.²³³

²³³ Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 93-94 maintains that "what Levi's leaving 'everything' indicates is not that he joins the destitute, but the fact that his life changes loyalties from 'mammon' to God." In my view he is reading a lot into a very vague phrase. Kiilunen, too, is hazy on what the change actually involves: "Luukas tuskin tarkoittaa, että Leevi jätti ammatinsa ja omaisuutensa; kysymys on pikemminkin siitä, että hän luopuu entisistä sidonnaisuuksistaan, koko siihenastisesta elämästään." ("Luke hardly means that Levi left his occupation and his property; it is rather that he leaves his previous commitments, all of his life up to that day" [my translation].) For me this formulation seems a repetition of Luke's desire to give the impression that a great change happened in Levi's life without really making clear what exactly was very different. Nave 2002, 167 expects that Levi's leaving everything involved "a complete break with his occupation and an abandonment of

Then, Levi gives a great party in honour of Jesus. One does not strike up a great party in a minute, so we must assume that some while passes – that is, if Luke thought about this clearly. Levi cannot be poor for his banquet gathers a great crowd of toll collectors and others who were with them, later to be alluded to as “sinners”. The Pharisees and their scribes appear seemingly out of the blue, as they do in the Markan and Matthean scenes (Mark 2:13-17/ Matt 9:9-13). The configuration has an artificial and stage-like quality.²³⁴ How could the Pharisees have been present? Did they gate-crash, or did Levi invite them and they accepted? In that case, they must have been intending to eat with the toll collector themselves, which seems as unlikely as their raiding the place uninvited. No, they are present because the story needs adversaries to highlight the significance of Jesus' words and deeds. Their presence is logical in the Lukan story-world where the sole duty of the Pharisees is to keep a reprehensive eye on Jesus' doings.²³⁵

The question “Why are you eating and drinking with toll collectors and sinners?” informs the audience that those of Levi's guests who are not toll collectors are “sinners”. Do Levi's friends really consist of obviously reproachable people only, or is this mere negative categorization on the Pharisee's part? And what kind of people, exactly, are being meant?

The critics address the disciples, not their master; nevertheless Jesus is the one who answers. He hears everything and he, not the disciples, is the leader. The answer harks back to the themes of the Paralytic, namely, the healthy and the sick, the sinners and the righteous. Jesus is the God-sent healer who calls sinners “to repentance” (another significant Lukan addition in the story). The divine “I have come” emphasizes the solemnity of the statement.

his former ways of thinking and living. Levi abandons his occupation as a tax collector.” So does Salo 2003, 79.

²³⁴ In the words of Sanders (1985, 178): “The story as such is obviously unrealistic. We can hardly imagine the Pharisees as policing Galilee to see whether or not an otherwise upright man ate with sinners.”

²³⁵ Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 97 sees this scene as historical and realistic: he sees no problem in the idea that Pharisees and their scribes pay a call to a private house to demand that no one eat with unrepenting sinners.

In the Gospel of Luke, it is possible to see the scene as continuing in the next exchange of words: “But they said to him, the disciples of John fast often and pray, and so do those of the Pharisees, but yours are eating and drinking.” The connection is not evident in translations, but in Greek the scene runs on quite smoothly.²³⁶ Fasting and praying are connected with repentance, which Jesus has claimed as his aim in calling sinners. The point of the question is that Jesus' companions do not look as if they were repenting – rather, they are partying.²³⁷ Jesus' answer is even more laden with Christology and the divine imperative than the previous one. Wedding-guests cannot fast while they are with the bridegroom. The time will come when they lose him, and then they will fast. The answer can make sense only to Christians.²³⁸ For those not ready to give Jesus a quite special significance and those not in the know of his coming violent death it would have been no answer at all.

The Lukan Levi scene, then, in many ways requires Christian notions to make sense. For the Christian, familiar impressions are strengthened. The Christian audience is reminded, first of all, of Jesus' incredible power to call. Two words are enough to persuade a man to “leave everything and follow him”. The Pharisees are the enemies, eager to follow Jesus everywhere to point a finger.²³⁹ Jesus is conscious of his

²³⁶ Goulder 1989, 333; Nolland 1989, 241-251; Tannehill 1996, 107-109; Nave 2002, 170-172. Actually, these scholars see Luke 5:27-39 as a unit, not just 5:27-35, as I do. I am not decidedly against their interpretation, but I see Luke 5:36 as being more probably an independent opening than Luke 5:33 is.

²³⁷ Nave 2002, 171.

²³⁸ Méndez-Moratalla (2004, 96) speaks of “Christological emphasis”: “It is now Jesus who becomes the criterion for the new practice... Jesus' presence and salvific ministry call for joy and not fasting since the eschatological hope of salvation is already present in him.”

²³⁹ Luke's attitude towards the Pharisees has been interpreted in quite varied ways. Some have argued that Luke-Acts betrays a more positive attitude towards them than Mark and Matthew do (e.g., Neusner 1973, 71-78; Ziesler 1979, 146-175; Brawley 1987, 84, 86-88). Others contend, in my opinion quite correctly, that Luke's Gospel is actually far harsher with the Pharisees than the other Synoptics (Neale 1991, 103-108; Moxnes 1988, 17-21; Hakola 2008). Luke 13:31 is the one exception in which the Pharisees appear in a truly positive light in the Gospel; otherwise, Luke omits all positive references (e.g., that the Pharisees came to be baptized by John, Matt. 3:7, and sit on Moses' seat, Matt. 23:2-3) and adds utterly negative ones (Luke 16:14-15). Where Pharisees invite Jesus to meals the scenes develop into covert or overt conflict (Luke 7:36-50, 11:37-12:1, 14:1-6). The

divine authority; he has come (from God, the phrase seems to say) to call sinners to repentance. But this repentance is not the traditional repentance that would consist of fasting and praying. The heart of Christian repentance is, in this text, accepting Jesus as a divine authority. His presence is a cause of celebration like the presence of the bridegroom at a wedding-feast. First and foremost, conversion means faith in Christ. It does not so much matter what one really leaves in “leaving everything” if only Christ is chosen and followed.

The Pharisees, the sinners and social reality

We must now turn to the group of “sinners”. As this is the first time that they appear in the Lukan sinner texts we must call to mind the basic problems with what the term really means. To be sure, my first interest is to contribute to Lukan studies, not to Jesus studies. However, the historical question of whether or not, and how, “sinners” can be located in Jesus' social milieu is important for the further discussion of how the term is used in the Gospel of Luke.

As was explained in the Introduction, since the 1980's and 1990's there has been a new consciousness that such a group is problematic from the viewpoint of social history. The books that set the challenge by

greatest reason for the apparent ambivalence, in the words of Gowler (1991, 301), is the fact that “the portrait of the Pharisees in Luke is primarily negative, whereas the portrait of the Pharisees in Acts is primarily positive”, especially because of Gamaliel in Acts 5 and the Pharisees who defend Paul in Acts 23. Raimo Hakola has explained the apparently “friendly” Pharisees of Acts 5 and 23 in a very convincing way with the help of the social identity theory. To put Hakola's argument in a nutshell, in his Gospel Luke plays the Pharisees off against Jesus, the poor, and the downtrodden, thus defining the Christian in-group with the help of the negatively stereotyped Pharisaic out-group. In Acts the Pharisees appear in two different roles that likewise are explicable with the help of the social identity theory, namely, by the function of deviant group members. Gamaliel and the Pharisees in Acts 23 are out-group members who behave against the norms of the out-group in a way that is in line with the in-group norms, which strengthens the identity of the in-group: “The best of the outsiders, even, admitted that we are right.” By contrast, the Pharisaic Christians in Acts 15 are “black sheep”, in-group members dangerously near to the out-group, whose behaviour threatens the identity of the in-group and so has to be condemned. See Hakola 2008.

opening up the problem are E. P. Sanders' *Jesus and Judaism* and David Neale's *None but the Sinners*.²⁴⁰

Who, actually, are the people who are at table together with Jesus and toll collectors in Levi's house? In Luke 5:29 they are first simply referred to as "others". It is the Pharisees who first call them "sinners" in Luke 5:30 and so one could see this as a pejorative categorization by the Pharisees only, were it not that Jesus confirms their view by also calling these people "sinners" in 5:32. Moreover, in Luke 15:1-2 the evangelist himself speaks of sinners as if they really were as clearly-defined and concrete a group as the toll collectors: "Many toll collectors and sinners were drawing close to hear him, and the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them'". In the world of the Synoptic Gospels, then, "sinners" walk and talk as if it were absolutely clear to everyone, friends and foes alike, that they are sinners. They are spoken of as if they were a caste, as if their sinfulness was in no sense a matter of viewpoint, but a social fact.

The most famous theory that has sought to explain the identity of the "sinners" in the Palestinian social history of Jesus' time was outlined by Joachim Jeremias. Jeremias claimed that the Gospel "sinners" refer to the same group whom Rabbinic writings call "the people of the land", the *'amme ha-arets*. According to Jeremias, these consisted of people occupied in the professions and trades of which the Rabbis (or rather, some of the Rabbis) in the Talmud speak in a doubtful or condemning manner. Moreover, the *'amme ha-arets* also included the uneducated poor who presumably did not know the Torah well enough to obey it. The *'amme ha-arets*, or "sinners", were, then, really a Pharisaic notion; Pharisees are in this theory seen as the moral arbiters of the country. They decided who counted as sinners and imposed their own view on the whole nation.

In David Neale's view, such supposedly concrete social categories are completely without sociological substance.²⁴¹ In the first place,

²⁴⁰ For the reception among scholars, see Introduction.

²⁴¹ Neale 1991, 115, summing up this analysis on pp. 18-97. Sanders treats the theme of sinners in 1985, 174-211.

Rabbinic texts are ideological writings, and their correlation to social reality is complex and often slender. The *ʿamme ha-arets* are an abstraction that stands over against the *haberim* in Rabbinic writings, and their function is to show how one should not act; it does not follow that they formed a socially identifiable group even at the time of the Rabbis.²⁴² Nor did the questionable trades; the notions of the Rabbis on individual professions and trades are quite various and often contradict one another. Finally, Rabbinic texts are highly questionable as sources for first century Palestine because of their late date.

Also problematic is the assumption that the majority of people would have supported such a narrow view on sinfulness. It is perhaps possible, though not certain, that some of the Pharisees did harbour élitist contempt for the great masses; after all, contempt for the great masses is common in ancient literature. But the majority of a people of which the greatest part was illiterate, and of which but a few percent belonged to the wealthy élite, would hardly have agreed that to be uneducated and poor was to be a sinner. We cannot assume that Pharisaic notions on who was a sinner and who was not ever set the tone for the general opinion. It is nowadays common knowledge that Judaism before the destruction of the Second Temple was not as dominated by the Pharisees as it would seem in the New Testament; rather, the Pharisees were a sect among other sects.²⁴³

That Jesus' contemporaries accused him of being on close terms with "toll collectors and sinners" is early and most likely reliable information, for it appears in the earliest source on Jesus, the Q source (Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19). The Markan story of Levi's calling and the following meal is another early attestation to "toll collectors and sinners" in Jesus' company even though the meal scene itself has an unrealistic quality.

But what are we to make of these "sinners"? There are two basic alternatives. The first is to take the term to reflect the viewpoint of the Pharisees, as Jeremias and his followers have done; the second is to look for the meaning of "sinner" by asking, who could have been

²⁴² Paraphrasing Neale 1991, 66-67.

²⁴³ For Pharisees before 70, see Sanders 1985, 194-198; Neale 1991:18-39.

disapproved of by the great majority of people. The choice is inevitable, for in the light of present scholarship the Pharisees did not dominate the religious view of the wider public.

James Dunn has lately argued in a quite convincing manner for the view that the word “sinner” and its equivalents were typically in sectarian use in the Jewish writings roughly contemporary with Jesus' lifetime.²⁴⁴ In his view, there was no agreement on who were sinners; rather, various groups used the word, and similar pejorative epithets, of their enemies. This being the situation, it is quite plausible that Pharisees may have called non-Pharisees sinners. For this reason Dunn suggests that Pharisaic notions could after all lie behind the criticism of Jesus' company. The difference from the classical theory of Jeremias is that the general misery in the situation of the “sinners” has been toned down. Jesus is seen as clashing with a small sect.

One might think that seeing the “sinners” as those whom the Pharisees thought were sinners would explain why *eating* with sinners was, according to the Levi story and Luke 15:1-2, so provocative. There is a wide consensus that the Pharisaic movement aimed at eating meals at home on the level of purity required of priests in the temple, so they certainly cared for eating in the right way. Yet this, too, is unsatisfactory. The Pharisees would hardly have criticized Jesus for eating with people who did not pay attention to Pharisaic concerns unless Jesus himself was a Pharisee and bound to their aims. Alternatively, we must assume that the Pharisees really went around criticizing any religious teacher who ate with non-Pharisees.²⁴⁵ Neither idea is plausible.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Dunn 2003, 528-534.

²⁴⁵ See Neale (1991,120-123). Eating with sinners was not prohibited in the Torah. Eating untithed food or eating in a state of impurity would have been issues for the Pharisees only. “If the Pharisees were charging Jesus with consorting with non-Pharisees then few in Israel would have been guiltless of the charge.” (p. 123).

²⁴⁶ Neale has written a very solid analysis of all possible causes of offence at Jesus' eating with toll collectors and sinners suggested by other scholars (Neale 1991, 118-129). I give some highlights here: The political issue, that toll collectors were strictly avoided because they were collaborators of Rome, is weak in a Galilean setting where they would have worked for Herod Antipas. Nor was there a legal issue: there is nothing in the Torah against eating with sinful Jews. Certainly Jesus' table companions might not have obeyed Pharisaic practices on purity and tithing,

In my view there are two more weak points in the idea that “sinners” in the Synoptic Gospels reflect Pharisaic notions. The first is that the Pharisees are not present in the earliest attestation of the tradition of Jesus and sinners. In the Q parallel Luke 7:31/ Matt 11:16, it is not Pharisees but people in general, people of “this generation”, who deride Jesus for his love of food and wine and his friendship with toll collectors and sinners. The Markan meal scene (Mark 2:15-17) is later, and even there the presence of the Pharisees seems contrived, for their presence in the house remains implausible. The scene may perhaps contain some kernel of a historical controversy, but the details of the scene (where Jesus was, who were present, who said what to whom)

but then most people did not, and Jesus was not a Pharisee. Nor does the hypothesis that Jesus intended his meals with sinners to symbolize and to proclaim their salvation, their parabolic inclusion at the messianic banquet, explain the criticism. Even if Jesus and his disciples thought so, how would the Pharisees have understood this meaning by simply observing Jesus eating a meal? For that, they would have had to share the same perception of the event, “the same story-universe”. (In my words, they would have had to share, or at least know of, the Christian belief in Jesus as the Messiah before they could have seen a meal with Jesus as a promise of salvation). Neale concludes that the problem of the cause of offence at the historical level remains. The original significance of the occurrence behind Levi's meal is lost, as the Gospels have transformed the actual events into symbolic statements of Jesus' mission.

However, some scholars do not see the slightest problem with the Pharisees criticizing Jesus for eating with “toll collectors and sinners”. Méndez-Moratalla, referring to Neale 1991, 118-129 summarized above, simply states that “Neale does not reach any conclusion with regard to the cause of conflict, but he leaves it as ‘an open question’.” Méndez-Moratalla (2004, 97, and 97 n. 43) himself then goes straight back to the very weakest explanation of the situation. He finds it “historically plausible” that the Pharisees appear after the meal “to monitor legal observance” (here Méndez-Moratalla quotes Green 1997, 241) and goes on: “The conflict in the story is introduced as caused first of all by the attitude of the Pharisees towards table regulations, ‘why do you eat and drink with toll collectors and sinners?’ They apply the same purity regulations of the temple to the household, which affects both the ritual cleanness of the food eaten, and the moral character of those sitting at the table.” This is no answer to Neale's criticism and his claims that 1) there were no purity regulations, even for priests in the temple, to forbid eating with immoral people, and 2) Jesus in any case was not a Pharisee. My impression is that Méndez-Moratalla is simply unable to accept the idea that the Levi scene as it stands in the Gospels might not make sense as a real event in Jesus' life. As Neale gives no alternative that would explain it as a reliable historical account, Méndez-Moratalla goes back to the traditional interpretation, in spite of the fact that Neale has convincingly refuted it and Méndez-Moratalla cannot prove that Neale's argument is incorrect.

may have been invented later. The second weakness in explaining the “sinners” with merely Pharisaic views is that the narrator's voice in the Synoptic Gospels never denies the fact that these people really are sinners. Nor does Jesus defend them by claiming that there is really nothing wrong with them. The Gospels operate as if there really was a group whom everybody knew to be sinners.

Let me stress this last point a little. Several scholars have confused the matter by pointing out that Luke also teaches a universal need to repent and that therefore Luke's point, both in 5:29-32 and in Luke 15, would be that *everyone* is a sinner – Luke 13:1-9 being the best example of the universal call to repent.²⁴⁷ That is correct enough for Luke 13:1-9, but it does not erase the fact that Luke also uses “sinners” as a special group and that it is difficult to locate such a group in Palestinian society of the first century. That the Pharisees can *see* that Jesus is eating with “toll collectors and sinners”, as they do in the Levi story and in Luke 15:1-2, can only be because in the story-world these sinners are sinful in some other sense than the average person. The Pharisees, Jesus, and the evangelist all accept the distinction; there is a way in which the “sinners” are sinners *par excellence*, even if everybody needs to repent.

There remains the option advocated by E. P. Sanders, that the “sinners” in the company of Jesus were those who were outcasts in the eyes of the majority, unrepentant law-breakers – people whom the great masses saw as altogether wicked.²⁴⁸ Sanders' best example is usurers. The Torah forbids taking interest from a fellow Jew; those who nevertheless did so would have been seen as sinners.²⁴⁹ Jesus would have promised the Kingdom of God to law-breakers even without a change of life if only they believed in him.

Sanders' theory certainly has some strong points. It explains well the fact that the sinfulness of the sinners is confirmed by the narrator's voice and not denied by Jesus. It also explains the fact that the Pharisees are not connected with the criticism of Jesus' friendship with

²⁴⁷ E.g., Nave 2002, 165, n. 89; Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 98.

²⁴⁸ Sanders 1985, 174-211.

²⁴⁹ Sanders 1985, 177-178.

sinners in the Q source and that they are rather artificially connected with it in the synoptic Levi/Matthew scene.

However, Sanders' theory lands in problems when we try to think concretely of the matter. It is hard to imagine great numbers of usurers and other people who had openly tossed the commandments of religion aside as flocking to Jesus in hope of entering the Kingdom of God. The notion is really very romantic. Nor does Sanders' theory shed light on the curious featurelessness of the “sinners” in the Gospels. Had there been several notorious “sinners” with an openly and palpably Torah-breaking lifestyle among Jesus' followers – other than toll collectors – we ought to know something definite of even a few of these. But there is no Mary the usurer, or John the pickpocket, as there is Levi the toll collector.

Sanders is correct in that it is best to see the “sinners” of the Gospels as referring to people who were outcasts in the eyes of the great majority and not to people who were sinners according to Pharisaic notions only. However, Sanders' vision of Jesus' mission with the Torah-breakers seems to me both unrealistic and unsupported by concrete details in the Gospels. It seems that toll collectors were the only disreputable people in Jesus' regular following; certainly, no others have left as clear and unambiguous an imprint in tradition. Apart from them, nothing is certain. There is even the possibility that the rumour of Jesus' association with “toll collectors and sinners” may have had its origin in scandalous gossip only, in the assumption that where there are toll collectors there may be anything.²⁵⁰ Another explanation, and one that I find more credible, is that Jesus may have associated readily with whoever sought his company and that this may have brought him in short-term contact with some disreputable people. Some possible groups here could be the Samaritans and women with sexual dishonour. Certainly these are groups that surface several times in the Gospel traditions that are later than Q and Mark as people whom Jesus met and

²⁵⁰ Walker (1978, 230-233) has gone even further by arguing that Jesus may not have associated even with toll collectors, given that the Q saying (Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19) is an accusation by Jesus' enemies, that the Markan Levi story (Mark 2:15-17) has an artificial quality, and that the other Gospel traditions about Jesus befriending toll collectors and sinners probably reflect these two earlier traditions. Similarly, Horsley 1987, 217-218.

set up as positive examples (Matt 21:31-32; Luke 7:36-50; Luke 10:30-37; John 4:4-42; John 7:53-8:11). All the same, the matter of Jesus' "sinful" followers, apart from toll collectors, is a very hazy one, and certainly much exaggerated by Christians out of theological interests. In my opinion we had better not envisage any determined, grand-scale mission on Jesus' part to rescue disreputable people, or imagine that these were either very numerous or continuously present in Jesus' following. Had this been so they would probably have left a clear trace in the earliest sources.

Luke's motives for optimizing the sinner theme

Then whence all the later interest? Why did Luke take up a theme that was of minor importance to the authors of Mark and Q; why did he see it as so very significant?

Some general reasons are obvious. For one thing, those who formed the Christian story had to present Jesus as offering better and more efficient salvation than the old mother religion, Judaism.²⁵¹ Secondly, the Christian story needed contrast and conflict. Jesus would shine forth from the shadow cast by his enemies all the brighter if his enemies were portrayed as narrow-minded bigots who had missed the point of true religion, and could not see God's grace. Pharisees got this role.²⁵²

There was also a reason for elaborating Jesus' *eating* with toll collectors and sinners. The early Church was racked by an internal dispute over the common Eucharistic practice between Christians of Gentile and of Jewish origin.²⁵³ The burning question was probably

²⁵¹ As Neale puts it (1991, 129): the religious purpose "was to show the superiority of Jesus' mission in that he sought and rescued the very worst of society".

²⁵² This is Neale's central idea. He writes: "... the reason for this Lucan hostility to Pharisees is that the Gospel story itself requires such a conflict. No conflict, no Gospel story... All Gospels, it would seem, must embody conflict and portray the struggle between an ideological good and evil; Luke's Pharisees, as we shall see, fulfil this role." (Neale 1991, 108). For Luke's treatment of Pharisees in his double work, see above, n. 238.

²⁵³ Esler (1987, 72) proposes that vindicating the table-fellowship between Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin is a central purpose in Luke-Acts.

whether Jewish Christians could partake of the communion meal if it was prepared in Gentile fashion in a Gentile house, disregarding the Jewish purity regulations about food. The issue must have become all the more urgent as the number of Gentile Christians grew and grew. In Acts 15:19-20 Luke appears to look for a minimum of purity regulations to be kept by the Gentile Christians to enable a common table at Eucharist. That Luke may have seen Jesus' table company as connected with the communion dilemma of his Church is reflected in the detail that in the Lukan Levi scene the question that the Pharisees ask the disciples is not "Why does *your teacher* eat with toll collectors and sinners?" but runs "Why do *you* eat with toll collectors and sinners?" (Luke 5:30, cf. Mark 2:16; Matt 9:11).²⁵⁴ Luke also returns to the matter in Luke 15:2 where the Pharisees and the scribes murmur because Jesus "welcomes toll collectors and sinners and eats with them". Jesus' final answer to that murmuring, namely, the parable of the Prodigal Son, ends with the elder brother refusing to partake of the festive meal together with his sinful brother; their father nevertheless keeps persuading him to do so. We will return to this theme in the analysis of the Prodigal Son.

Let us now put aside, for the time being, the questions of the historical background of the sinner theme and Luke's motives for constructing such a cathedral of it. It is time to look at how Luke handles the configuration of Jesus, the sinners, and the Pharisees.

The Lukan sinner triangle

According to my own theory the characters in the Lukan sinner pericopes act in three typical roles. They form a triangle configuration that I will call the Lukan sinner triangle.²⁵⁵ There is a repentant sinner or sinners, there is a representative of God – either an allegorical figure or Jesus – and there is a third party, namely, the pious critic(s). The last party provides the contrast that sets the first two parties into relief. The sinner figure longs for forgiveness and the presence of the representative of God; the criticizing figure heightens the tension by trying to separate the sinner and the representative of God by

²⁵⁴ Evans 1990, 307.

²⁵⁵ Pesonen 2000.

discrediting their closeness. The climax is reached when the representative of God justifies the advances and presence of the sinner, teaching the critic a lesson.

The triangle has its roots in Mark 2:13-17, where Jesus befriends toll collectors and sinners even though “the scribes of the Pharisees” would not let him eat in their company. This theme is elaborated over and over again in the Gospel of Luke. Altogether the triangle of Jesus or another character that presumably represents God, repenting sinners, and contemptuous pious critics occurs in the Gospel six times. It is there, taken over from Mark, in Levi's Feast (5:27-32), in the setting of the parables about the Lost (15:1-2), in the parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32), in the story of the Sinful Woman (7:36-50), and in the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10). The sixth case is the parable of the Toll Collector and the Pharisee (18:9-14), which in my view relies on the same dynamics, though in it the “God corner” of the triangle is present in an indirect way. God is there as the silent recipient of the prayers of the two men, and Jesus serves as his mouthpiece, mediating the divine opinion when he states that the toll collector went home justified whereas the Pharisee did not.

That this configuration occurs in Luke six times to Mark's (and Matthew's) one already points to the likelihood that Luke took up the idea and multiplied it by shaping his material in this direction. Doing so, Luke underlined that being a “friend of toll collectors and sinners” was not just one small feature in the general overview of Jesus' words and actions, but a central and dominant aspect of his career. Portraying Jesus as the friend of sinners (most especially, of repenting sinners) fits well the Lukan summaries of his central theology (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38, 5:30-31, 17:30).²⁵⁶ Luke also brings up the theme of sinners, repentance and forgiveness at important points in the structure of his Gospel. It is foreshadowed in the Benedictus (1:76-79) and plays a major part in chapters 5-19. In 5:17 Luke brings an important audience from all parts of Galilee, Judaea and Jerusalem to witness the

²⁵⁶Jarmo Kiilunen, in his article published only in Finnish, gives an excellent overview of how Luke elaborates the theme of repentance both in his Gospel and in Acts. A consistent and powerful theology emerges, with clear links to the obviously redactional layer (Kiilunen 1992).

discussion on forgiveness; the episode of Zacchaeus (19:1-10) is the last incident in the Lukan Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, and finally it is referred to at the end of the Gospel (24:46-47).²⁵⁷ Altogether the sinner motif is so beautifully developed and so far from casual in the Gospel of Luke that it is not conceivable without the conscious, creative, and theologically thorough work of the author. Luke evidently did more than cutting and pasting to develop it. Moreover, 15:1-2 belongs to the most obviously redactional parts of the Gospel, proving that Luke could actively and creatively expand the motif of the sinner triangle.

The Lukan sinner triangle as a Cinderella story

To understand the dynamics of how the Lukan sinner triangle appeals to the audience, a comparison to the world of fairy tales may be helpful. In my view the Lukan Jesus, the sinners and the Pharisees act much like characters in Cinderella.

That Jesus is the hero of the Lukan Gospel story is self-evident. Like Cinderella, the sinners are deprived of their original inheritance. A sinner is really, for Luke, a lost child of Abraham, like Zacchaeus, or a lost son, like the prodigal; sinners are lost coins of the treasure, lost sheep of the precious flock, and they are to be restored to their proper honour as Cinderella is to be restored to love, safety, happiness, and her proper class. Like Cinderella, the Lukan sinners land in acute hardship and appeal to the empathy of the audience by their suffering: there is the lachrymose sinful woman, the destitute prodigal, the breast-beating toll collector, the crucified malefactor. Moreover, the degradation of both Cinderella and the Lukan sinners consists not just of suffering of the noblest kind. It has also off-putting features. Cinderella looks ugly because she has a dirty face and rags for clothes. Luke's sinners are sometimes cast in a sexually dishonourable light (as are the sinful woman and the prodigal son), make a living by despicable professions (as the sinful woman probably does, and as the toll collectors do and the prodigal and the malefactor did). They may have brought about their own downfall (as the prodigal son and the crucified malefactor), and may even be presented in a comical light (as is the diminutive, tree-climbing chief of the toll collectors). Yet like Cinderella, the

²⁵⁷ Neale 1991, 108-109, 188-190.

Lukan sinners are really good guys, and the audience is led to rejoice in the happy ending, their union with the hero.

The Pharisees are acting like the stepmother and envious stepsisters. They are professedly of the opinion that the “sinners” are unworthy, undesirable and impossible as the hero's choice. Such criticism is included in Simon's reaction when the woman touches Jesus, in the elder brother's reaction to the feast given at the younger son's return, and in the repeated question of the Pharisees as to why Jesus eats with the sinners. The Pharisee in the Temple takes his own privileged position before God for granted. In Zacchaeus the motif of envy and competition is very obvious: Jesus should not lodge with a sinful man but (presumably) with one of the crowd.

What the prince really does in the Cinderella story is that he prefers Cinderella to her bullying sisters. He saves by his choice. Otherwise he is rather passive; it is the women who flock around him and fight over him, it is Cinderella who has to clear her way to the ball. Similarly the sinners take great pains to get close to Jesus; the sinful woman and Zacchaeus certainly do this, and the penniless prodigal takes the long road back to his father. The father stays home, and Jesus simply is there, drawing sinners and Pharisees to him like a magnet. What he does is state his preference for the sinners over and over again. Those who are well do not need him; he has come to call the sinners, *not* the righteous, to repentance. The woman's love is greater than that of Simon, and she has served Jesus much better than Simon has. In Luke 15 the aim is at unity and so even the righteous are included in the flock, in the treasure, in the family, but *there is more joy* over sinners than over the righteous. Cinderella is the chosen one. After the parable of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector in the Temple, Luke's Jesus again makes clear that the sinner is the preferred one. Of all the people in Jericho, he chooses Zacchaeus for his host.

In the fairy tale, the sisters act as competitors, the other option for the prince. They also try to scare Cinderella off by their disdain. They seek to lower Cinderella in her own eyes in order to make her give up and withdraw. Likewise it is the aim of the righteous critics to prevent the union of the sinner and the representatives of God. In the Lukan scenes the business of making the sinners internalize their own unworthiness

has already happened, and at least some of them have certainly internalized it. The woman weeps and weeps, the prodigal is ready to cast himself to the earth, the toll collector beats his breast and dares not look at Heaven. As in Victorian novels, true modesty only makes these characters more desirable. But as Cinderellas, the sinners have nevertheless not given up, and we meet them in the ball-scene, close to the prince Jesus. It remains for the righteous critics to try and convince the representative of God of the utter unsuitability of the Sinners. But every time, he clearly states his preference for them. This is where the Lukan scenes cut off. We never get to the wedding, but the matter is as good as decided.

What are we to make of this? I am not suggesting that the Gospel of Luke and the much later fairy tale are dependent on each other. However, there is a similar strategy in inviting and encouraging the audience to identify with these characters – Cinderella and the sinners. Peter's calling himself a sinful man was one part of Luke's strategy to get his audience to identify as sinners who are called and protected by Christ, though that was a preliminary only, Peter really being a most respectable figure in the view of Luke's audience. The Cinderella-colours are for the “real” sinners. They appeal, perhaps, to our experiences of being forlorn and helpless, insecure, unloved, and oppressed; to our need of loving approval; why not to our sibling jealousy and the need to be loved best and show them all.

Summary

I have argued here that the crowd of Pharisees that Luke has added as spectators to the previous scene, the Healing of the Paralytic (5:17-26) sets the scene for the Levi episode. That Levi “leaves everything” when he follows Jesus is a significant Lukan alteration to the synoptic story. It conveys that an important and great change is happening in Levi's life, but Luke's concrete meaning is quite vague. As no palpable changes follow in Levi's occupation, economy, and social circle it seems that Luke never thought the matter out in concrete detail.

The meal scene, especially the presence of the Pharisees in Levi's house, is unrealistic; it is motivated by the need to have the Pharisees present as the enemies, as a foil to Jesus. The Lukan Levi scene also

requires Christian notions in order to be understood. Jesus is conscious of his divine authority and mission to call sinners to repentance. As the Lukan pericope continues smoothly in Luke 5:33-35, repentance gets close to conversion: it includes faith in Christ.

The “sinners” appear in the Synoptic Gospels as if they were a group with some concrete meaning, as if there really had been people in Jesus' society whom everybody knew to be sinners. Yet all attempts to spell out this concrete meaning are unsatisfactory. According to the traditional interpretation the meaning of “sinner” has been anchored to (supposedly) Pharisaic notions; it would have meant people whom the Pharisees despised; but this does not take into account the fact that Jesus and the voice of the narrator in the Gospels also take the sinfulness of these people seriously. Moreover, this interpretation involves an unduly negative and historically questionable view on the Pharisees. It seems a better option to look for the meaning of “sinner” in the view of public opinion and ask what kind of people would have been disreputable in the eyes of the majority of Jews – perhaps Samaritans and women with a suspicious reputation in sexual matters, to make a guess. However, toll collectors are the only concrete group that is mentioned in the earliest sources, Mark and Q. It would seem that if there were any other undesirables among Jesus' followers, they were not significant enough to leave a lasting imprint in the Jesus tradition.

It seems obvious that Jesus' association with toll collectors, and possibly other disreputable people as well, was later invested with a powerful symbolic meaning. With Luke they play roles that do not reflect real situations and people any longer. Both Pharisees and sinners become literary vehicles with which to attain his own objectives for Luke. These are partly literary: a good story needs adversaries. More significantly even, they are theological. The Lukan story proclaims that Jesus is the Christ and therefore able to save even the dregs of society. Finally, Luke has ecclesiastical motives in the controversy of the Gentile Christians and the Jewish Christians.

The Lukan sinner triangle is a configuration which is repeated six times in the Gospel of Luke, the first being Levi's Feast. There is a repentant sinner or sinners, there is a representative of God – either an allegorical

figure or Jesus – and there is a third party, the pious critic or critics. The sinner figure longs for forgiveness and the presence of the representative of God; the criticizing figure heightens the tension by trying to separate the sinner and the representative of God. The climax is reached when the representative of God justifies the advances and presence of the sinner, teaching the critic a lesson. In addition to Levi's Feast the sinner triangle is utilized in the introduction to the parables about the Lost (15:1-2), in the Prodigal Son (15:11-32), in the Sinful Woman (7:36-50), in Zacchaeus (19:1-10), and in a modified form in the Toll Collector and the Pharisee (18:9-14).

The Lukan sinner texts are a Cinderella story in which the prince Jesus chooses the sinners rather than the rival Pharisees. He invites his audience to identify with the sinners with much the same means and strategy that make readers identify with Cinderella.

III 3 The Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50)

In the Calling of Peter, Luke introduced the theme of identifying as a sinner and set it up as an ideal with the help of one of his greatest heroes, the apostle Peter; the story of Levi first introduced a “real” sinner, a toll collector, and the accusation that Jesus ate with “toll collectors and sinners” came up for the first time (Luke 5:30). In the story of the Sinful Woman Luke pauses to illustrate what the “sinners” could mean by giving one example. Immediately before the story of the woman Luke gave his version of the Q teaching of John the Baptist (Luke 7:18-35/ Matt 11:2-19), concluding with the information that Jesus' contemporaries called him “a glutton and a drunkard, friend of toll collectors and sinners” (Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:19). Luke, therefore, perhaps wanted to ascertain that his audience understood the nature of this “friendship” correctly.

I contend that the story is basically a Lukan creation. It reflects the social world of Luke rather than the Palestine of Jesus' day; neither the woman nor the Pharisee are anchored in first century Palestinian society and its special concerns. Moreover, the story is very Lukan in its dynamics. There is the Lukan triangle of a sinner, a pious critic and a representative of God; there is flowing emotionalism, accompanied by dramatic physical gestures;²⁵⁸ and there is lively novelistic storytelling. The story shows Lukan favourite motifs and concerns in dealing with a meal setting,²⁵⁹ women,²⁶⁰ humility,²⁶¹ love and forgiveness, sinners and Pharisees.

²⁵⁸ It was pointed out in ch. III 1 that great emotions and physical gestures expressing them are typical of Luke's treatment of the theme sinners; the woman's melodramatic actions fit the picture.

²⁵⁹ Smith 1987, 613-638.

²⁶⁰ For Luke on the theme of women, see Levine 2001, Seim 1994, D'Angelo 1990.

²⁶¹ Humility is clearly much admired in the Third Gospel, as can be seen in the behaviour of Peter, of the prodigal son, of the toll collector in the Temple and of the criminal on the cross (5:1-11; 15:11-32; 18:9-14; 23:39-43). All of these are depicted as feeling themselves unworthy and seeing their only chance in an appeal for mercy. Mary's praise of the lowly (1:51-52) and the advice to seek the lowest place in the wedding banquet (14:10) are in line with this.

Questions of origin, of tradition versus Lukan invention, will follow throughout the following analysis, for in my view they are inseparable from the question of how Luke's own role in the shaping of the narrative is to be seen. In the following analysis the existence of some underlying tradition is found plausible. However, as the story stands now it is essentially a short story by Luke.

I will not linger on the study of the language of the pericope. The general reasons are stated in ch. II 2. On linguistic grounds it is clear that Luke has shaped the story of the Sinful Woman choosing freely his own wording. He does not seem to have repeated the sentences of anyone else. Vocabulary and constructions that are characteristic of the Gospel of Luke abound in the pericope, covering its whole length from beginning to end.²⁶² No item in the vocabulary can be made to prove the use tradition.²⁶³ The same goes for grammatical structures.²⁶⁴ Yet as

²⁶² For instance, the words κατακλίνειν, πόλις, ἁμαρτωλός, καλεῖν, ὑπολαμβάνειν, χαρίζεσθαι, πορεύεσθαι. Also common in the Third Gospel are the generous use of δέ, the combinations καί ἰδού, ἰδῶν δέ and ἀποκριθεῖς... εἶπεν, the use of ἔχειν with the infinitive, of λέγειν with πρὸς and the accusative, of *genetivus absolutus* and of the word στραφεῖς to emphasise Jesus' actions (Delobel 1966, 421-444; Frei 1978, 31-99; Bovon 1989, 389).

²⁶³ The story contains quite many other words and expressions that are unique or rare within Luke-Acts or within the whole of the New Testament: κομίζειν, ἀλάβαστρον and ἐκμάσσειν are all *hapax legomena* in Luke-Acts, βρέχειν in the sense of showering with tears is a *hapax* in the New Testament, χρεοφειλέτης appears in the New Testament only here and in Luke 16:5, φίλημα appears in Luke-Acts only here and in 22:48, δανιστής and διαλείπειν are both *hapax* in the New Testament. Yet the significance of rare words as indices of sources has been much criticized. Goulder has claimed that the use of a *hapax legomenon* "does not prove anything pro or contra redaction". In the material that is widely agreed to be taken over from Mark, Luke actually adds more *hapax legomena* to the text than he takes over from his source (Goulder 1989, 20-21). It seems, then, that Luke's own large vocabulary and rich variety of expressions cause more *hapax legomena* in his text than does the use of a source. Also, the exceptional nature of what happens in the pericope may bring up specific vocabulary that does not prove anything about possible sources (Delobel 1992, 1585, 1588).

²⁶⁴ As was explained in ch. II 1, Paffenroth (1997, 92-93) has listed as un-Lukan six stylistic elements, namely 1) abundant use of καί; 2) the use of ἴνα; 3) the use of παρά with the accusative in the sense of "more than"; 4) the use of the dative after a verb of speaking; 5) the position of the numeral before the noun; 6) the use of the historical present. Five of these (1,2,4,5,6) are present in Luke 7:36-50. Of these the abundant use of καί and the use of the historical present are the most remarkable ones, and even these are inconclusive. The rather clumsy καί-connected

I argued in ch. II 1 this fact does not rule out the use of tradition, but rather the repetition of a tradition word for word, which would also be unlikely in the light of oral studies (see ch. II 2).

The anointing stories and the tradition behind Luke

The stories of Jesus' anointment (Matt 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, Luke 7:36-50, John 12:1-8) have inspired a labyrinth of scholarly theories about their transmission and redaction, especially on the question of who is dependent on whom.²⁶⁵

Luke's anointing story is strikingly different from the other three. In spite of many differences, the basic plot and the point of the stories of Matthew, Mark and John are close to each other. They are set in Bethany shortly before Easter and lead up to the passion narrative: a woman anoints Jesus with a costly perfume, is rebuked by some for her wastefulness but defended by Jesus who claims that the anointing was for his approaching burial. Luke sets the scene in Galilee, in the house of a Pharisee, and in the early days of Jesus' ministry. The woman who enters and anoints Jesus, weeping and kissing his feet, is characterized as a "sinner in the town" (Luke 7:37). She raises critical thoughts in the host, not by her wastefulness but by "who and what she is" (Luke 7:39); this criticism is extended to Jesus for allowing the woman to touch him. Like the other anointing women, she is defended by Jesus, but in a very different way. Jesus attacks his host by telling a parable of two forgiven debtors and praising the woman for behaving more lovingly than the Pharisee. Finally he proclaims that her sins are forgiven, to the astonishment of everyone present. The Lukan anointing pericope is twice as long as any of the other three.

sentence in 7:37-38 does catch attention (Delobel 1966, 469). Nevertheless, Acts 2:44-45, a summary commonly considered redactional, is not far from it in style. Considering Luke's treatment of the Markan material, the historical present (φησίον in 7: 40) is also noteworthy. However, as φησίον is used 10 times in Acts it can hardly be called un-Lukan (Acts 2:38; 8:36; 10:31; 19:35; 22:2; 25:5, 22, 24; 26:24, 25).

²⁶⁵ For summaries and comprehensive bibliography, see Delobel 1966, 416-421; Wiefel 1988, 153-154; Bovon 1989, 383-384; Nolland 1989, 349-350.

The versions of Mark and Matthew are by far the closest to each other among the anointment stories of the four Gospels; direct literary dependence is evident there. Compared with these two, John and Luke display bewildering similarities and dissimilarities. Strikingly, Luke and John agree in that it is Jesus' feet that the woman anoints and that she dries them with her hair. Another connection between John and the Gospel of Luke is that in the Johannine scene Mary and Martha are depicted much as in Luke 10:38-42. Martha is serving their guests while Mary plays the role of a loving disciple at Jesus feet.²⁶⁶ Generally the Johannine account makes the same point as those in Mark and Matthew, bearing special similarity to Mark.²⁶⁷

The evident but distant relatedness between John and Luke has led some scholars to assume that these two draw from common roots in oral tradition: "That both Luke and John should coincidentally invent a story in which a woman anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair does not seem likely. It is more likely that they shared some common tradition about foot anointing." Luke, then, would have known from oral tradition another anointing story beside that of Mark, one in which it was Jesus' feet that were anointed. I agree that the possibility is there and remains an option. However, it relies on the assumed independence of the two Gospels and their tradition streams of one another.²⁶⁸ In the light of orality studies this may be more than can be taken for granted. In chapter II 2 it was contended that oral and written traditions would have mingled in the early Christian culture when the Gospels were produced. Written traditions could and did echo in oral tradition as oral traditions echoed in the written word and the texts already written could thus produce what may be called secondary orality. Secondary orality, perhaps Luke's influence on Johannine

²⁶⁶ Mullen 2004, 84.

²⁶⁷ The points made in the dialogue are the same. Certain details are identical in John and Mark: the description of the perfume as *νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς/ πολυτίμου*, the price of the perfume as three hundred denarii, and that Jesus tells the criticizing party to leave the woman alone (*ἄφετε/ ἄφες αὐτήν*). For contrast, there are no special links between John and Matthew except for the very slender one that Judas as the criticizing party is a step closer to Matthew's "disciples" than to Mark's "some people".

²⁶⁸ Mullen (2004, 88,90).

tradition, could account for the somewhat haphazard agreements in this story as well as elsewhere.²⁶⁹

The Johannine, Markan and Matthean anointings would suit the model of informal controlled oral transmission extremely well.²⁷⁰ There is rich variation of detail, yet the core elements are clearly identifiable; verbal agreement is altogether sparse but it strengthens in the dialogue that carries the point of the story. The Lukan story is the odd one out. The verbal agreement is minimal, the dialogue and the theological point are quite different. If the Lukan version has roots in tradition it indicates that all oral tradition cannot have been effectively controlled, either formally or informally.

The parable in 7:41-42 has very often been seen as stemming from older tradition for the reason that it sits uneasily in its context. It has been correctly remarked that if the parable stood alone, independent of this passage, it would have made a different point, e.g., that sinners, whether great or small, are unable to redeem themselves; nevertheless God's magnanimous forgiveness is available to sinners, great and small alike.²⁷¹ The parable could also easily lead to a teaching similar to Matt 18:23-35, emphasizing the necessity that the debtors acknowledge their basically similar position and treat each other with fellow-feeling.²⁷² Luke, however, makes the parable serve a peculiar end, namely the discussion on the love and gratitude felt by the forgiven debtors. It has also been pointed out that the parable does not really fit in the

²⁶⁹ In theory, of course John could also be the earlier Gospel producing secondary orality, reflected in Luke, as the interdependence of John and Luke has been explained in many ways; see, e.g., Dunderberg 1994, 12-23; Shellard 2004, 200-202. In Luke 7:36-50/ John 12:1-8 the influence from Luke to John is the easier explanation for with Luke the wiping of feet with hair sits more easily in its context. It goes together with the Lukan woman's remorse, disreputable status and somewhat chaotic behaviour. Also, the Lukan procedure of first wiping tears off with hair and only then anointing Jesus' feet makes more sense than mopping a great quantity of ointment directly into one's hair, which is what Mary does in John (Pesonen 2000).

²⁷⁰ Dunn 2003, 192-254. See also ch. II 2.

²⁷¹ Mullen 2004, 92.

²⁷² Goulder 1989 (400-401) sees the kinship of Luke 7:41-42 and Matt 18:23-35, attributing it to Luke's dependence on Matthew. I find common traditional roots a more natural explanation than literary dependence for such very different parables.

following discussion in Luke 7:44-46, in which the Pharisee Simon emerges as a much blacker figure than the debtor with the smaller debt, who still did love a little.²⁷³ The parable only contains the contrast of “much–little”; in the later discussion the contrast is sharpened to “all–nothing”.²⁷⁴ Obviously, there is at least the possibility that this parable had a prior existence independent of its current narrative location and explanation.²⁷⁵

The parable, then, may stem from pre-Lukan tradition. Because of the agreements between the Johannine and Lukan traditions it is conceivable that it came to Luke as Jesus' reaction to a woman who came to Jesus and wet his feet with tears and dried them with her hair and perhaps anointed them too. If the parable went with such an anecdote, forming a *chreia*, the woman may have been presented as a sinner, or a prostitute, before Luke. To be sure, the existence of such a *chreia* is far from certain. Whether or not a traditional anecdote ought to be postulated turns on the relationship between Luke and John, that is, whether the coincidence of the woman drying Jesus' feet with her hair is due to influence of the Gospel of Luke on Johannine tradition or not.

The other alternative is that Luke created the woman sinner as a radical rewriting of the Markan anointing story. Luke knew and used Mark and for some reason omitted the Markan anointing scene. There is also a

²⁷³ Kilgallen 1991, 309-311. Kilgallen interprets the figure of Simon in the light of 18:9-14, where the Pharisee did *not* go home justified: “there is no ‘little justice’ ascribed to the Pharisee (of 18:9-14), despite all his good deeds – and likewise there is no forgiveness ascribed to Simon in our story” (Kilgallen, 1991, 311 n.19). I have earlier disagreed with this interpretation (Pesonen 2000), suggesting that Simon's character be read in the light of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal son, as Mullen does (2004, 104-105); Luke would keep open the possibility that the Pharisee “repents” and sees himself as a forgiven fellow-debtor. Read in this way, Luke would appear as much more tolerant of the Pharisees. Pleasant though such a reading would be, I no longer think it is justified in the light of the last words of the most authoritative characters in these stories, namely, those of Jesus and the father of the prodigal. The father's last comment on the elder brother is that he is always with his father and shares his belongings (Luke 15:31). Of Simon, Jesus' final judgement is the repetition of “You did not (show love to me)” (Luke 7:44-46).

²⁷⁴ Delobel 1992, 1582.

²⁷⁵ Mullen 2004, 93.

conceivable motive for this omission. Luke, who very much championed the cause of the destitute, may well have disapproved of Mark 14:7, the cynical and indifferent remark that the poor will always be there and Jesus must be attended to before them.²⁷⁶ Luke seems to have brought over from Mark the name of Simon, and he may have brought over the anointing motif as well. It is not inconceivable that Luke radically rewrote the Markan anointing story, creating his own version with no other traditional basis than the debtor parable, to illustrate the meaning of Jesus' reputed friendship with toll collectors and sinners, brought up in Luke 7:33-34.²⁷⁷

Be that as it may, Luke definitely drew on his powers of invention in the creation of this story. Even allowing for the possibility of a traditional *chreia*, the greatest part of the story seems spun by Luke. I turn to the elements that I find easiest to explain as Luke's work.

The Pharisee Simon as the critic in the Lukan sinner triangle

Very probably it was Luke who created the figure of the Pharisee Simon. In the other anointing stories, those who criticize the woman belong to Jesus' disciples and followers. If there really was a pre-Lukan *chreia* that contained the encounter of Jesus and a sinful woman as well as the parable of the Two Debtors, it may be assumed that someone in it was critical of the woman's presence as Jesus had cause to defend her. However, there is no special reason to assume that this critical party must have been a Pharisee. A fellow-follower of Jesus is more likely in the light of the other anointment stories and of the thematically related parable in Matt 18:23-35 which is addressed to Peter. To contrast a Pharisee and a sinner is a Lukan predilection. In order to do so Luke either created a new story or reworked a traditional *chreia* along these lines in the case of the Sinful Woman.

²⁷⁶ Mullen 2004, 97,99. Luke mentions the poor in 4:18; 6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 19:8; 21:3. On Luke and the poor, see Johnson 1977; Seccombe 1987; Esler 1987, 164-189.

²⁷⁷ This theory is represented by Goulder 1989, 397-406.

The Pharisee's role and function in the story is that of the Pious Critic in the Lukan sinner triangle, introduced in the previous chapter. Luke uses him, on one hand, as a contrast to the woman's humility and adoration of Jesus, and on the other, as a contrast to Jesus' welcoming and forgiving attitude towards the woman.²⁷⁸

In the synoptic tradition, toll collectors and prostitutes are conventional examples of sinners; Pharisees and scribes are cast as their traditional antitypes and critics (Mark 2:13-17/ Luke 5:27-31/ Matt 9:9-13; Luke 7:29-30/ Matt 21:28-32). Luke takes up the theme, identifying his pious critics as Pharisees in four of his six sinner triangles (Luke 5:27-32, 7:36-50, 15:1-2, 18:10-14). In this role the Lukan Pharisees do not reflect the historical Pharisees of Jesus' day but intra-Christian concerns of Luke's own time.²⁷⁹ Luke has here, as in the other sinner triangles, stereotyped Pharisaism in a very negative way.²⁸⁰ Simon serves as a contrast figure both to Jesus and the woman.²⁸¹ He represents false ideas of what God is like and what a prophet should be like, and his cold estimation of the woman sets off Jesus' protecting and forgiving attitude. On the other hand, his detachment contrasts with the overflowing emotion of the woman. He is the one who is left out of all this forgiveness and love, and so makes the part of the sinner the more desirable.

A Lukan social setting: a Pharisee and the *symposion*

That Luke must have played a significant role in the creation of the Sinful Woman is further indicated by the fact that the pericope makes more sense in the general Graeco-Roman social milieu than in first-century Palestine. This is most evident in the role given to the Pharisee as the host of a *symposion*.

Many questions are debated by critical scholars studying the Pharisaic movement of the first century. Critical consciousness of the

²⁷⁸ Schottroff 1990, 311.

²⁷⁹ So also Neale (1991), who argues convincingly that both "sinners" and "Pharisees" in the Lukan sinner pericopes do not represent the social reality of Jesus' day but rather stereotyped religious categories.

²⁸⁰ Schottroff 1990, 312.

²⁸¹ Schottroff 1990, 311.

weaknesses of the extant sources has risen during the latter half of the twentieth century and onwards so that much of the former scholarly consensus has been called into question, for instance, on how influential and how numerous the Pharisees were in Jesus' day. Among the rather certain things, however, is that the central aim of the Pharisees was to organize their lives so that they could eat their daily meals in the state of ritual purity expected from the priests in the Temple.²⁸² This was a significant effort, requiring special care in the purchasing, cooking and serving of food, in the cleansing and handling of dishes and cooking utensils, and in seeing to it that everyone handling the food was ritually clean; a Pharisaic household had to have easy access to a bath specially constructed for ritual use.²⁸³

For these reasons it makes very little sense to depict, as Luke does, a Pharisee as hosting a public feast of the kind in which a prostitute may appear. A prostitute certainly was someone who could be suspected of being most often in a state of ritual uncleanness.²⁸⁴ The woman's presence, then, should have been problematic because of purity reasons, but this is far from clear. True enough, Simon is critical of the fact that Jesus allows the woman to touch him, but this disapproval may well be of quite universal nature. Actually Simon's thoughts only reveal that he does not believe that a man is a prophet if he does not recognize a prostitute when he sees one. More significantly, the

²⁸² Neusner 1994, 38, 109. In his study on the Rabbinic traditions about the first-century Pharisees, Neusner has claimed that 229 out of 341 individual prescriptions deal with table fellowship (1971, 97). Neusner's view has been challenged by Sanders, arguing that it is not at all clear that all Pharisees before AD 70 were *haberim*, people who had undertaken to maintain a priest-like level of purity in everyday life. Sanders, too, admits that "there was probably an appreciable overlap between Pharisees and *haberim*. See Sanders 1985, 187-188, 188 n.59.

²⁸³ While the general populace and the aristocracy seem most often not to have observed this practice, *miqveh* pools for ritual bathing have been found in the small homes of Jerusalem; Sanders argues that these would have belonged to the Pharisees (1992, 224-229).

²⁸⁴ According to Lev 15:16-18, she would have been that if she had had a customer after the previous sunset. Also it is unlikely that women driven to prostitution by extreme poverty or by slavery could have afforded not to work for seven days at every sign of menstruation or other flux. I am conscious of the idealistic nature of the text of Leviticus and of the fact that many of its statutes probably were not observed by the ancient Israelites on a daily basis, but they would have been important for the Pharisees.

possibility of chucking the woman out does not surface even in Simon's thoughts, though certainly this would have been easy enough for him to do had the woman really been an unwelcome intruder.

Some scholars solve the problem by claiming that all this proves that Luke cannot think of the woman as a prostitute or even as an uninvited guest. I hope to show below that this is not the case: Luke does give hints that lead the audience to identify the woman as a prostitute and he never corrects this view. The woman's problematic presence at the dinner-table of a Pharisee is best explained by the fact that Luke's own cultural sphere is different from that which he describes.

Luke seems to be envisioning a *symposion*, a Graeco-Roman drinking party following a public dinner. Traditionally respectable women were not present at all in such a party; the women of the family were expected to withdraw into their own quarters. Disreputable female entertainers were hired to provide music, dance, clever conversation or sexual favours.²⁸⁵ By the first century the custom of keeping respectable women away from public dinner-parties was changing, a process that also enabled the Christian Eucharist practice. Women were beginning to partake of festive meals, especially when escorted by their husbands, but they were also severely criticized for this.²⁸⁶

In Hellenistic literature the *symposion* inspired a genre of its own. Dinner parties and their conversations were described with special literary conventions, many of which can be found echoing in our pericope. These include an event that prompts conversation, and the revealing of the superior intelligence of a guest. The name of the host is often introduced late; the host often emerges in a satirical light. It seems clear that Luke wants to link up with this literary tradition.²⁸⁷

In all probability *symposia* were held in Palestine in the Hellenistic period, as they were everywhere in the Graeco-Roman culture. That Luke has a Pharisee give one in his house, however, points in the direction that Luke really had a rather vague idea of the central

²⁸⁵ Corley 1993, 26, 38-48.

²⁸⁶ Mullen 2004, 133.

²⁸⁷ Steele (1984, 379-394) argues this for the dinner scene in Luke 11:37-54.

concerns of the Pharisees. He was informed by his own general cultural milieu rather than the particular milieu of first century Palestine when picturing this scene.²⁸⁸ Perhaps the fact that his sources attributed so much power and authority to the Pharisees led Luke to believe that they must have belonged to the eminent patron class of whom public parties were expected. Having only superficial knowledge of and little real interest in the Pharisaic way of life, but accustomed enough to *symposia* and *symposion* literature, he chose one as a plausible setting for an encounter between Jesus, a disreputable woman and a Pharisee. This goes well with the general impression that Luke did not know Palestine and was more at home with the general Graeco-Roman culture than the specific culture of Palestinian Jews.²⁸⁹

Whoever created the story of these three meeting at a meal in the house of the Pharisee seems to have been a step removed from the historical reality of Jesus and the Pharisees, and Luke is an obvious candidate for two weighty reasons. First, Luke repeatedly plays the Pharisees against the toll collectors and sinners. For Luke, the Pharisees are the pious critics par excellence, but they seldom raise questions of purity: their disapproval is of a moral nature. Second, Luke is the only evangelist who depicts Jesus at meals in the houses of the Pharisees. On two such occasions the discussion is unique to Luke (7:36-50, 14:1-6); for one (11:42-54) there is parallel material in Matthew, but that appears in a quite different context (Luke 11:42, 52; Matt 23:13, 23).²⁹⁰ Luke, then, seems to have created these meal settings.

A prostitute or not?

The woman in the story has traditionally been seen as a prostitute, even though Luke never says this explicitly.²⁹¹ Several scholars have lately challenged this view, often out of feminist consciousness.²⁹² They have

²⁸⁸ Mullen 2004, 105-109.

²⁸⁹ Mullen 2004, 82-83.

²⁹⁰ Mullen 2004, 105-106.

²⁹¹ For an extensive bibliography for the interpretation that the woman is a prostitute, see Hornsby 2001, 122 n.3.

²⁹² E.g., Thibeaux 1993, 155; Reid 2001, 112-117; Hornsby 2001, 122-128; Mullen 2004, 109-116. Certainly, feminist consciousness has not prevented other scholars from arguing the opposite (see below).

pointed out verse by verse that the prostitute interpretation emerges in the mind of Luke's readers when their imagination fills in the gaps and silences of the author. The readers, really, are drawing their own conclusions when they take for granted, e.g., that the woman was an intruder rather than a family member or an invited guest; that a respectable woman would not have been present at all; that flowing hair and perfume must necessarily betoken a prostitute, and that, generally, there is only one way in which a woman can notoriously "sin".

All of this is correct as far as it goes. Certainly Luke never makes the situation quite clear and so the final identification of the woman as a prostitute is left to the reader. In theory, one might as well assume that the woman was suspected of dishonesty in trade, or of stealing, or of extorting money, or of killing her children and setting it up as an accident – anything whatsoever. Or perhaps she had previously been publicly punished for some such offense.

Still, it is noteworthy that the author has managed to awaken the idea of prostitution in countless people from antiquity to modern critical scholars. There is a play with hints and allusions that seems deliberate on Luke's part. He is definitely giving clues for identifying the woman as a prostitute.²⁹³ "A sinner in the city" makes sense as Luke's euphemism for a prostitute making a living in that town, and Simon's attitude seems to suggest this.²⁹⁴ The flowing hair in a party of male guests is a daring sign as it was indecent for grown women to be seen in public with hair that was not put up and covered.²⁹⁵ The prolonged contact in her kissing, drying and anointing of Jesus' feet is for me, as for many, difficult to imagine without an erotic undertone.

Altogether there are at least six features prompting the reader to interpret the woman's "sin" as sex-connected. There is the ancient *symposion* setting, itself compromising the women partaking in the party; there is the fact that the woman came to this party of her own

²⁹³ Karlsen Seim 1994, 90; Schottroff 1996, 334; Green 1997, 309.

²⁹⁴ Bovon 1989, 390; Wiefel 1988, 154; Schottroff 1990, 319-320; Corley 1996, 124.

²⁹⁵ Ilan 1996, 129-132.

initiative and apparently unattended by a male guardian; there is Luke's vague and allusive "a sinner in the city"; there is the loosened hair; there is the prolonged and public caress; and finally, there is the Pharisee's "if he knew who and what kind of woman she is...". In my view the moving but melodramatic scene also has a somewhat apologetic flavour. It certainly takes the notions of respectable readership into consideration in laying so much emphasis on the woman's sinfulness and sin. The woman is depicted as acting in a half erotic, half hysterical, remorseful and extremely humble manner; this is how a repenting prostitute would and should act, Luke seems to say.

Nevertheless Luke is careful not to make the nature of the woman's sin explicit; he stays deliberately ambiguous about it. The intention may be to make it easier for his audience to identify themselves with the woman. She is not "a prostitute", something to put off the respectable reader, but "a sinner", which is what the apostle Peter has already called himself (5:8). "A sinner" also reminds Luke's audience of the people Jesus has protected and chosen at Levi's feast (5:27-32). In the present context, it obviously is connected with the fact that shortly before Jesus had been referred to as "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of toll collectors and sinners" (7:34). Our pericope has been located directly after this slanderous jibe in order to ensure that the audience understands it correctly. It depicts Jesus' eating and drinking as sober and respectable, taking place in the eminent house of a Pharisee, and in no way lessening Jesus' personal authority. The sinner is portrayed as a humble and repentant one, and Jesus' friendliness to her as magnanimous and lofty forgiving of her sins. As witty conversation was one form of entertainment provided by prostitutes in *symposia*,²⁹⁶ the woman's silence may signify that she decidedly wants to differentiate herself from them.²⁹⁷ Luke may have tried to indicate that the woman was an ex-prostitute who is repenting and trying to mend her ways.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Corley 1996, 43-44.

²⁹⁷ Mullen 2004, 112-114.

²⁹⁸ Obviously, there is a certain clash between the woman's silence as demure, proper behaviour and the erotic gestures of letting down her hair and caressing Jesus publicly and at length. It goes with the general artificial quality of the scene. Luke needs to indicate that the woman is indeed a "sinner" – a prostitute – and that she is a harmless, repenting one. He is not describing any individual's behaviour in

That Luke here failed to see the socio-economic plight and the structures of oppression that drove women to prostitution is beside the point. True enough, women were reduced to prostitution by slavery, poverty and widowhood, as well as by divorce, if fathers or other male relatives refused to welcome them back.²⁹⁹ For the prostituted slave “repentance” would not have been possible at all; even where the woman was free it would most often have meant starvation for her and for those dependent on her. But it is unlikely that Luke would have recognized this.³⁰⁰ He saw Jesus as calling sinners *to repentance*, as he stresses in 5:32 (cf. Mark 2:17/ Matt 9:13), and he saw *forgiveness*, not social support or economic assistance, as the answer to her problems. Unfortunate though it may be, Luke did not share modern socially enlightened views of the causes of prostitution. There is no reason why Luke should not have thought in line with the moralistic imagery of the prophetic tradition that demanded repentance and chastity of the adulterous prostitute, Israel.

It has been claimed that one of the functions of the story was to encourage and defend Christian women who found themselves subject to doubts and misconceptions of their moral integrity because they attended Christian meetings without their male guardians, being widows or wives of unconverted men. As the presence of women at public meals was a subject of social criticism, especially when they were unattended by a husband, joining the Christian movement and attending the meetings in the face of public suspicion would have been emotionally extremely challenging. In this reading of the story, Luke

a realistic manner but creating a scene that serves his theology (see ch. III 3). His scene reflects the stereotypical notions of his culture on prostitutes and on women in general, among them the notion of prostitution as first and foremost a moral problem.

²⁹⁹ Schottroff 1990, 320; Corley 1993, 124.

³⁰⁰ Schottroff (1990, 320-322) makes the opposite interpretation, arguing that the woman is a prostitute who is unable to change her life; in the story, Jesus shows mercy and respect in spite of the fact that she cannot change it, while Simon remains prejudiced and merciless. Schottroff’s interpretation fits the fact that there is no admonition by Jesus that the woman should mend her ways. The interpretation is beautiful and impressive, and perhaps conceivable for the historical roots of the tradition of Jesus and prostitutes, but in the light of Luke 5:32 it is improbable that the evangelist would have meant this.

would deliberately have exposed the woman to the misconception that she is a prostitute and then have clarified that Jesus approved of the woman's presence and of the public risk she took in attending the party and seeking contact with Jesus. That the woman really ought to be seen as reputable and that her sinfulness as not being sex-related is shown by her silence, so markedly different from the expected behaviour of a prostitute.³⁰¹

It is not impossible that the story was indeed read in this light by some early Christian women. Here as elsewhere the fact that Luke leaves the exact reason for “sinfulness” without an explicit explanation makes it possible for people with very different causes of distress and/or guilt to identify with the sinner. Still it is hardly likely that Luke deliberately planned to deliver such a message. If the point was to affirm that the woman was not sexually suspect in spite of seeming so, why not say it? Why confirm the suspicion by proclaiming forgiveness of great sins? It is more plausible that Luke wanted to depict the woman as a prostitute, though a repenting one. He had an apologetic interest: Jesus did have a reputation for befriending toll collectors and sinners, and Luke wanted to underline that this did not mean encouraging them in their sin. A prostitute may have been prompted by Luke's tradition, as I have suggested above. Alternatively, Luke may have chosen to create a story about one because the Markan scene suggested an anointing woman. Luke, interested in including female characters in his Gospel, would have made use of the cultural stereotype of prostitution as women's special sin.

A woman's sinfulness and her sexuality are linked here, creating the pervasive image of love for Jesus and remorse over sexual conduct, blended together, dominating a woman disciple's emotional life. This fact has some lamentable effects. Besides confirming the view that prostitution is a moral problem instead of a social one,³⁰² it has forwarded the patriarchal norm dictating that sexual conduct is the one thing that matters above everything else in a woman's life, deciding her social status, as well as being a central concern in her spiritual life. Nevertheless I doubt the wisdom of trying to rescue the story, or the

³⁰¹ Mullen 2004, 113-116.

³⁰² Schottroff 1990, 310.

woman in the story, by insisting, against Luke's allusions, that her sin need not have been of a sexual nature. No story has only one meaning or interpretation, but this one, definitely, is offered by Luke.

Luke as the author of the conversation after the parable

As we noted above, there is a widely recognized problem with how the parable of the moneylender (7:41-42) fits into its context. Verse 7:47 seems to combine the parable and the behaviour of the woman (7:36-38) in a problematic way, containing two contradictory views of love and forgiveness. As a result it has often been regarded as the redactor's attempt to unite two separate items, the woman's action and the parable. The first part, "therefore I tell you, her many sins are forgiven, for she loved much", fits the actions of the woman well, as she first displays love (7:37-38) and is consequently forgiven (7:47a). The next clause (7:47b), "but the one who is forgiven little, loves little", refers to the parable, where the debtors are pardoned and then respond with greater or lesser love. Obviously there is a logical contradiction here if the question is which comes first, love or forgiveness.³⁰³

The best explanation is that Luke never aimed at answering the question of the exact sequence of love and forgiveness. The shift in the

³⁰³Very many scholars have tried to do away with the discrepancy in 7:47 by explaining that the conjunction ὅτι should be not be taken to introduce "the reason why the fact is so, but whereby it is known to be so" (e.g., Fitzmyer 1981, 687; Wiefel 1988, 156; Nolland 1989, 35; Reid 2001, 110 n.6). This would make the woman's love the consequence of her forgiveness, not the reason for it. The solution is difficult to defend. Of the 175 cases of ὅτι occurring in the Gospel of Luke, not one can be interpreted in this way; by far the most natural interpretation is the simple "for" or "because" (Delobel 1966, 470-471). Accepting the forced grammatical solution appears at first glance to solve the logical problem, as it connects 5:47 harmoniously with the parable. In the whole of the pericope, however, the contradiction in the order of love and forgiveness goes deeper than just the verse 5:47. In the parable, it is the moneylender who first pardons the debts and the debtors who respond with either great or little love. In the story, it is the woman who first shows love and Jesus who responds to it by proclaiming forgiveness. Also, had the woman been forgiven previously, the forgiveness proclaimed in 7:47 and repeated in 7:48 would be superfluous from the woman's point of view, only stated so as to bring the point home to the Pharisee and his guests.

Salo suggests that Luke is not advocating either interpretation. His point would be more generally that love for Jesus and forgiveness of sins go together, not that one or the other must necessarily come first (Salo 2003, 83).

logic is much like that in ch. 15, where the initiative for human repentance and reconciliation seems to waver between the sinner and God. The shepherd and the woman rejoice, for they have found what they themselves have laboriously searched for (15:6, 9); still, Luke's explanation of the parables is that there is joy over the sinner who repents, as if it were up to the sinner alone to repent (15:7, 10). Similarly, it is the prodigal son who returns to his father, who only sits waiting at home; nevertheless the father rejoices because the son has been found (15:24, 32), as if someone had been searching for him. Interestingly, these supposedly redactional additions in ch. 15 go in opposite directions in their view of whether people or God take the first or essential step in the process of repentance, some of them emphasizing human initiative, some of them divine. Luke apparently sees the relationship of God and the repenting individual as a circle of reciprocal love that can perhaps be entered at any point. Much of the scholars' feeling that where salvation is concerned, the initiative of God and the initiative of a human being can never coexist in the mind of one individual writer is due to post-reformation theological sensitivity. The text is unclear and contradictory about the sequence of love and repentance because it has no interest in the question.³⁰⁴ I could imagine the latter half of 15:47 as related to the traditional *chreia* that I hypothesised above,³⁰⁵ but in the light of chapter 15 Luke could probably have written both halves.

If 7:47 sheds but little light on which parts in the pericope have come from tradition and which are created by the evangelist, the handwriting of Luke is for other reasons obvious in 7:44-47 and in 7:48-50. I begin with the first passage. The problem is that the woman, represented by the debtor who owed more, is being forgiven by Jesus and therefore loves him, and that Jesus in 7:44-46 accuses the Pharisee of not doing

³⁰⁴ Schottroff 1990, 321.

³⁰⁵ To play mind games, I could imagine the *chreia* running something like this: "A prostitute came to him and wept on his feet and then dried the tears off them with her hair (and anointed them with costly perfume). Peter said to the Lord: 'Send her away before we all get a bad reputation'. Jesus said to him: 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt for both of them. Do not be merciless even if but little has been forgiven to you.' " I emphasize, however, that this reconstruction is but fantasy; I do not seriously believe in our powers of reconstructing lost traditions behind the Gospels.

this. The inner logic takes for granted that Jesus and God are to some extent identical. Jesus has not just proclaimed God's forgiveness as a Rabbi or even as a prophet, for especial love should be expressed towards Jesus as a person, not towards God only. On the historical level a Pharisee might certainly have agreed that he, too, was a pardoned debtor of God,³⁰⁶ and still not have seen why he should go kissing Jesus for that. Both Luke and his intended audience take for granted that Jesus has the right to represent God in this story, as in the Gospels in general. The woman's actions, the application of such a parable, and the contrasting of the woman and the Pharisee in 7:44-46 build a sensible whole only if one accepts the right of Jesus to forgive in God's name and be loved in return as God would be loved.

As many scholars have noted, the end of the story echoes two Markan pericopes (Mark 2:5/ Luke 5:20; Mark 5:34/ Luke 8:48). The proclaimed forgiveness (7:48) confirms what the whole scene – both the woman's action and the following discussion – has been driving home: that Jesus is the one endowed with God's authority to forgive. The incredulous question of the spectators' choir (7:49) emphasizes this. The benediction conferred in 7:50 confirms that the woman's life has been healed just as the woman with hemorrhage was healed. The literary link perhaps results from the fact that both of the women represent female sexuality in a disconcerting, disorderly state, in which impurity was a regular condition. Luke has fabricated a suitable ending inspired by Markan pericope endings.

³⁰⁶ Sanders 1985, 200-202.

Summary

In the pericope of the Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50), as in the synagogue of Nazareth, Luke has reworked his source material so strongly that what emerges is first and foremost a Lukan product. Luke may have had a traditional parable or perhaps a *chreia* to work with, but the scene as it stands has several features that probably come from Luke. The *symposion* setting, used anachronistically for bringing a Pharisee, a prostitute and Jesus together, is one. The triangle structure in which a pious critic seeks to cut a repenting sinner from the company of Jesus, the representative of God, is another. That the Pharisee serves as a negative foil to Jesus' forgiving attitude and the woman's fervent devotion to Jesus is Lukan; so is the stress on humility and the emphatically emotional depiction of the sinner. The pericope centres on the Christological theme of Jesus as the divine forgiver, not merely as a proclaimer of God's forgiveness, and therefore reflects full-developed Christian theology. Luke has most likely created the greatest part of the conversation; the ending of the pericope betrays clearly the use of the Gospel of Mark as a source of inspiration.

Luke's motive in writing the story was to illustrate the correct meaning, as he saw it, of the traditional piece of information that Jesus was criticized for being "a friend of toll collectors and sinners". He wanted to clarify that Jesus' acceptance of sinners did not mean encouragement of sin, especially of sexual misconduct of women. Luke's interest is apologetic. Jesus' "friendship" with sinners is depicted as the proclamation of forgiveness and moral support for *repenting* sinners.

III 4 The Parables of the Lost (Luke 15:1-32)

Chapter 15, a tightly knit whole, is Luke's major teaching on sinners and repentance. The introductory setting (15:1-3) is followed by three parables, namely the Lost Sheep (15:4-7), the Lost Coin (15:8-10) and the Prodigal Son (15:11-32). The three parables are linked together by the common introductory setting as well as by the themes of sin, repentance, searching, celebration, rejoicing, eating, and regaining a lost unity. The socio-historical background of this chapter and its place in the Lukan theology is best seen when the chapter is read in the context of the whole of Luke-Acts. Even though the chapter is historically connected with Jesus' actual association with toll collectors and possibly other "sinners" such as prostitutes, Luke's main motivation is to speak for the unity of the Church, or rather, for the Gentile Christians. He makes the traditional motif of Jesus' friendship with toll collectors and sinners an argument for this end.

Introduction (15:1-3)

The introduction is a vague ideal scene that reflects no specific incident in Jesus' life.³⁰⁷ The scene lacks concrete information and details, for instance location and chronology. It is hyperbolic: "*all* the toll collectors and sinners" coming to Jesus brings to mind how "*all*" were astonished in Luke 9:43, and how "*all*" Jesus' adversaries were put to shame while "*all*" the people rejoiced in Luke 13:17.³⁰⁸

Luke has obviously created the scene inspired by Mark 2:15-17, the meal scene in the house of Levi. I pointed out in ch. III 2 that Luke repeats in his Gospel a configuration which appears in the Levi tradition, that is, the triangle of sinners, the pious critics and the representative of God (which in the Markan scene was Jesus). Here we have the same situation and the same dynamics: toll collectors and sinners are drawing close to Jesus and eating with him; the pious, represented by the Pharisees and the scribes, object to this; Jesus makes

³⁰⁷ The opening verses are commonly attributed to Luke, e.g., Jeremias 1971, 185-189; Bultmann 1979, 193, 334-35; Grundmann 1969, 305; Marshall 1970, 599; Bovon 2001, 18; Neale 1991, 154-156.

³⁰⁸ Neale 1991, 155.

a reply that affirms the sinners' right to approach him. And as in Luke's version of Levi's dinner (5:27-32), his Jesus of ch. 15 again makes it clear that the defended sinners are repentant.

The socio-historical setting of the parables of the Lost

In the introductory verses of 15:1-3 Luke presents the parables of the Lost as told by Jesus in order to defend his association with sinners against the attack of the Pharisees. Although the verses are clearly formulated by Luke, one may ask whether Luke may have been correct in his view of the socio-historical setting of the parables.³⁰⁹ Jesus' association with toll collectors, and possibly also with some other suspicious people like women of loose reputation or Samaritans, did raise derision and criticism that both Q and Mark report and seek to ward off; moreover, the variants in Thomas, Matthew, and Luke prove that the parable of the Sheep, at least, was very wide-spread. As such it is not inconceivable that the parable was used as an apology for Jesus' undesirable company by Jesus himself or by the early Jesus movement.

However, the role of Pharisees as Jesus' opponents is generally much exaggerated by the evangelists. Here it could be caused by Mark 2:15-17. The Lukan setting seems to encounter problems because the Pharisees and the scribes are presented as the sole targets of the teaching. This creates the misleading impression that there might be ninety-nine Pharisees and scribes to each sinner, which cannot have been Luke's intention.³¹⁰ The ninety-nine righteous in 15:7 function best as referring to all of God's people, Israel, not to a minority group like the Pharisees.

The point of the Sheep parable is that the sinners are part of God's flock, his people; God rejoices to see them restored to the flock. Such a

³⁰⁹ This was argued by Jeremias (1971).

³¹⁰ Goulder 1989, 604-606 argues that the Lukan setting is artificial while Matthew's is the original. In Matthew, the 99 who do not need repentance refer to the majority of the Christian flock. In Luke the 99 would have to refer to the Pharisees, who in Luke's view really would need repentance; Luke, then, stumbles in his allegory. I agree that the Pharisees bring some confusion but do not share the view that the parable would work only in the Matthean context of Christian church discipline.

message might have been applied to either Jewish or Christian communities. The Pharisees or scribes are not the only possible recipients of such a parable. There would have been a socio-historical setting for the parable in Jesus' day in the simple fact that many people would rather have seen Israel without undesirables like the toll collectors. Ironically, Matt 18:17 ("if the offender refuses to listen even to the Church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a toll collector") shows that a negative attitude to toll collectors was common within some early Christian circles as well. Jesus' association with this group would obviously have been problematic enough to call for apology, especially if the toll collectors of the Jesus movement had continued in their profession.³¹¹

Luke, then, seems responsible for making the Pharisees and the scribes the special recipients of these parables. These groups were suggested to him by Mark 2:15-17. Luke picked up the motif because it enabled him to address a problem of his own day, namely, the controversy between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Matthew, a writer standing close to Jewish Christian circles, speaks of toll collectors and Gentiles as if they were outsiders by definition; a follower of Jesus must be much better than toll collectors and Gentiles (Matt 5:46-47), and if the follower will not repent of sin, he or she must be treated "like a toll collector and a Gentile" (Matt 18:17). Such an attitude among (at least some) Jewish Christians would explain why "toll collectors and sinners" could function as the symbolic representatives of Luke's real interest group, the Gentile Christians.

That it is, rather than Jews versus Christians, Jewish Christians versus Gentile Christians that Luke is thinking of in his fifteenth chapter, is most evident in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Here, however, it can be pointed out that the message of the entire ch. 15, viewed as a whole, fits the situation of Jewish Christians as opposed to Gentile Christians better than Jews as opposed to Christians.

³¹¹ Sanders (1985, 200-208) has argued that Jesus' friendship with sinners, or rather, the unrepentant transgressors, raised so much opposition and criticism because the sinners did not repent and change their life-style. Schottroff (2006, 147-148) sees this view as realistic with regard to toll collectors and prostitutes.

All three parables set up the unity of God's people as the final goal. The aim is to get all the sheep, all the coins, all the family together again. For this end, two things are essential: to recover the lost and to have the not lost accept this as a positive thing. The Pharisees in the introduction are being persuaded to accept this view by setting the joy of angels in heaven as an example for them. The elder son in the third parable is likewise being persuaded by his father to accept the return of the younger brother. In the world of this chapter, once the lost are recovered the only thing that still stands in the way of unity is the resistance of the righteous: the unwillingness of the Pharisees and the scribes to let Jesus receive toll collectors and sinners, and the unwillingness of the elder brother to let the father receive the younger son. This fits perfectly the Gentile Christian point of view of the unity of the Church in Luke's day: since all Christians agreed on the central fact that Jesus was Christ, the only thing still hindering unity was that the Jewish Christians would not accept the Gentile Christians wholeheartedly and without conditions. (The Jewish Christians, of course, might have said that the only hindrance was that the Gentile Christians would not do the will of God by obeying the Torah.) But it would never have been true from anyone's point of view that the only thing preventing full unity between Jews and Christians was that the Jews would not accept Christians unconditionally as the children of the same God. In that controversy, the status of Jesus as Messiah would have been quintessential. The Christians would have wanted the Jews not only to admit that Christians, too, belonged to the people of God; they would have wanted them also to confess that Jesus was Christ and the Son of God. For Luke, the door would be open to the Jewish Christian brother if only he admitted that the Gentile Christian brother was welcome as well; but the door was *not* open any more to those Jews who were not convinced about Jesus. This is evident in the light of Luke's final scene, Acts 28:16-28.³¹²

³¹² Contra Pokorný (1998, 57-59) who argues that Acts 28:16-28 ought to be read in the light of Luke 15, which proves that the “door” was really open to the Jews; Acts 28:16-28 is then only meant to be a serious warning for the Jews. Pokorný's interpretation tones down Luke's negative stance toward unconverted Israel. The latter has been emphasized, e.g., by Maddox (1982, 31-56); J. T. Sanders (1987); Cook 1988, 102-123.

The origin and point of the Lost Coin (15:8-10)

Besides Luke, the Lost Sheep is attested in Matt 18:12-14 and *Gos. Thom.* (107); the Coin is unattested elsewhere.

I will address briefly the question of whether Luke received the two parables together, as a double parable, or created the Coin himself.³¹³ He treats the two as if they formed a unit as they both follow the introductory clause “he told them *this parable*” (15:3); in 15:11 the Prodigal son is then introduced with “and he said”.³¹⁴ The Sheep and the Coin are also extremely similar in their style and content; the same point is driven home first using a male, then a female character. The clearest parallel for this is the double parable of the Mustard Seed and Yeast (Luke 13:18-21/ Matt 13:31-33). Another is the Teaching of Those Taken and Those Left in Luke 17:34-35/ Matt 24:41-42. There was a pattern in the Jesus tradition for such double teaching, and this enhances the possibility that the double parable came to Luke from tradition. It is not impossible, of course, that Luke perhaps took up the traditional pattern and utilized it, enlarging the parable of the Sheep into a double parable.³¹⁵ However, male-female pairing is really not very common in Luke’s special teachings, despite his considerable willingness to include women in his Gospel; thus the enlarging of the Sheep into a double parable by Luke is slightly less probable.³¹⁶

The view that the Lost Coin and the Lost Sheep were united before Luke has also been backed up by the claim that the Coin seems to have

³¹³ The basic alternatives presented in literature are that a) Luke found the Sheep and the Coin in Q; b) Luke found the Sheep in Q and wrote the Coin himself; c) Luke found the Sheep and Coin in L. Most scholars have defended the first or the second alternative (Kloppenborg 1998, 176). I will return to the Q question below.

³¹⁴ Kloppenborg 1988, 176.

³¹⁵ Argued by Jacobson (1992, 227-28) and Shellard (2004, 119).

³¹⁶ Male/female pairing appears in Matthew, too, and is therefore not distinctive of Luke. The only Lukan teaching besides the Coin in which clearly the same point is made with a male and a female character is 4:25-27. It is a considerable exaggeration to claim that “Luke seems to prefer male/female paired accounts whenever possible” (Jacobson 1992, 227-228); surely Luke could have used this device in his numerous other special parables as well, for instance in the double parable in Luke 14:28-32.

influenced the Sheep in one important respect: the party.³¹⁷ It is more natural for the woman to strike up a party as she is at home, surrounded by her friends and neighbours, than for the shepherd who has to return home to arrange for it. Moreover, celebration does not belong to Matthew's variant of the Lost Sheep, nor to that of Thomas.

For a counterargument it has been pointed out that parties are among the most distinctive features of Lukan story-telling.³¹⁸ The theme is considerably more common with Luke than with Matthew or Mark, so that Luke could be responsible for both of the parties.³¹⁹

This line of thought is worth some attention. The fact is that the parable of the Coin consists mainly of elements that are more or less characteristic of Luke.³²⁰ Vividness of detail, especially of work,³²¹ is one of these: she "lights a lamp, sweeps the house and searches carefully". Repetition of the culmination point of the story in direct speech ("Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost") appears in other Gospels as well as in Luke, but is most common in

³¹⁷ Linnemann 1975, 67-68; Fitzmyer 1985, 1080; Bovon 2001, 18,25,30. Jeremias (1980, 247) has argued the unity of the double parable in tradition on the basis of underlying Aramaic words.

³¹⁸ Goulder 1989, 95-96; Goodacre 1996, 176-177. Luke's Levi gives a large party (5:29), Elizabeth's friends and relatives "rejoice with her" and gather to celebrate the circumcision of John (1.58-59); Jesus is invited to meals by Pharisees (7:36, 11:37, 14:1); Luke gives advice about whom to invite and how to behave at dinner parties (14:7-14) and tells the parable of the Great Dinner (14:15-24); there is celebration when the prodigal returns (15.22-24).

³¹⁹ Goulder 1989, 607.

³²⁰ Lukan characteristics have been analysed in an interesting way by Michael Goulder (1989) whose analysis has been tested and for the greatest part verified by Mark Goodacre (1996) in a very careful and critical study on Goulder's claims. As Goulder, in my view, at times rather stretches his evidence, and Goodacre, on the whole, does more careful and more comprehensive work, I usually refer to only those of Goulder's claims that have been confirmed by Goodacre.

³²¹ Goulder 1989, 95, 97; Goodacre 1996, 174-176. Luke's interest in details of work, which aim at lively story-telling rather than allegory, is seen, e.g., in Luke 6:48/ Matt 7:24; Luke 14:18-19/ Matt 22:5; Luke 10:34, 40; 12:18; 13:8; 14:28-30; 15:8; 15:15-16; 16:3; 17:7-10. References to work are uncommon in Mark. Matthew has some, but much fewer than Luke has.

Luke and especially characteristic of Lukan parables.³²² Interest in women, sinners and repentance are very Lukan as well. All this considered it seems a plausible suggestion that Luke could have created the parable of the Lost Coin in order to reinforce the teaching of the Lost Sheep.³²³

However, the Lukan creativity argument is much weakened by the fact that the Sheep also bears nearly the same Lukan characteristics, with the details of work, the culmination of the story in direct speech, the party, and that here too the point is the repentance of a sinner. Lukan characteristics, like Lukan language, are as such no certain proof that a parable could not have traditional roots. They show that Luke moulds whatever material he has into his strongly characteristic story-telling style. Lukan characteristics, then, do not decide the origin of the Coin.

The fact that two successive parables make the same point strongly underlines Luke's message. The reader is made to take the point in twice. Special care is taken to address both men and women in the audience, which in spite of some parallels is not at all usual in Gospel literature. The Lukan characteristics, as well as some discrepancies to which we shall return below, point in the direction that Luke reworked his traditional material thoroughly.

The parable of the Coin, as it stands now, emphasizes the utmost importance of the finding of the lost. The woman has lost one tenth of all her money, which is much more in proportion than the shepherd has lost. If all her property is ten drachmas she is living very nearly hand-to-mouth, and the lost money should be seen as hard-earned, bitterly necessary money.³²⁴ Most people lived in poverty, and poor women worked hard to add to the family income. A drachma was about the

³²² Goulder 1989, 103-104; Goodacre 1996, 238-243. Examples are Luke 15:4-6/ Matt 18:12-14; Luke 7:19-20/ Matt 11:3; Luke 1:41, 44; 13:6-7; 14:29-30; 15:8-9; 15:18, 21, 24, 32; 18:2, 4.

³²³ Among others, Salo 2003, 100.

³²⁴ I follow Schottroff in the interpretation of the woman's situation. The interpretations that the ten drachmas are the woman's bridal portion or household allowance are without firm foundation. Given the general poverty it is only to be assumed that the money is all the money there is. Schottroff 1995, 91-100; 2006, 154.

same value as a Roman denarius, the daily wage for a male labourer, worth a couple of days' food for one. A woman's daily wage would have been something less than half of this, so the lost drachma would have been twice as hard for her to replace as for a man. The gathering of the women will certainly be no banquet; these are poor women who will gather in a yard to chat, to sing, and perhaps to share what food they have. They share such moments of mirth, rest, and social support as their hard life offers.

Many have drawn attention to the fact that a sinner takes a more active part in getting "lost" than a coin does, questioning the compatibility of the parable and the Lukan interpretation. We will return to this question below. However, too much concentration on this point may cloud the fact that this is not the point Luke wants to make. The *tertium comparationis* in the parable of the Coin is not how the lost gets lost, or how a sinner becomes a sinner, but the relief and the joy which are felt when something really necessary is recovered.

The origin and socio-historical setting of the Lost Sheep (15:5-7)

The discussion of whether or not the Lost Sheep was included in Q, and if it was, whether the Coin was included also, would easily fill a book. *The Critical Edition of Q* includes 15:1-5a and 7 without hesitation and 15:8-10 in double brackets, indicating that it was probably in Q but this cannot be seen as certain. The verses 15:5b-6 are seen as a Lukan addition. The proposed wording in 15:1-5a and 7 contains a great number of double brackets due to the difficulty of reconstructing a text when Matthew and Luke have little vocabulary in common.³²⁵

It is hard to see why literary dependence need be assumed at all. Oral tradition is a natural enough explanation for the similarities. It is an old observation that the common words are those without which the parable could hardly be told at all: man, hundred, sheep, one of them,

³²⁵ Robinson, Hoffmann and Kloppenborg 2000, 478-481. For literature see Kloppenborg 1988, 174, 176.

go, seek, find, rejoice, ninety-nine.³²⁶ The parallel in *Gos. Thom.* 107 shows that the simple plot of the parable is quite capable of survival without the literary context or the theological interpretations provided by Matthew and Luke.³²⁷ The small amount of common vocabulary makes the reconstruction of a common original extremely hypothetical. Certainly the Sheep is a case that alone would hardly lead to the postulation of a common written source unless there were other reasons to assume the existence of Q. I find the overlapping of M and L traditions more plausible in this case.³²⁸

As it now stands the double parable is so Lukan that Luke must have reworked it strongly. It was already pointed out that the introduction was written by Luke. The interpretative clauses in 15:7 and 10 with their stress on the *repentance* of *sinners* are evidently also formulated by Luke. Both terms are extremely common in the Gospel of Luke and rare in the other Gospels, and Luke's emphasis that Jesus came to call sinners *to repentance* (Luke 5:32, diff. Mark 2:17; Matt 9:13) is again of utmost importance.

It has often been pointed out that the pictures of a sheep and a coin that are (passively) being found and a sinner who is (actively) repenting are not perfectly compatible.³²⁹ Certainly there is a slight discrepancy caused by the fact that Luke interprets the parables with his favourite

³²⁶ Streeter 1924, 245.

³²⁷ Bovon (2001, 23-24) sees the variant in the *Gospel of Thomas* as an indication of an oral Jesus tradition that continued well into the second century.

³²⁸ Similarly, Marshall 1978, 602-603; Taylor 1972, 109-110; Beare 1962, 178; Hunter 1950, 178-179; Manson 1949, 282-283. The weightiest reason for assuming literary dependence is the presence of compassionate “angels” and of “heaven” in the immediate vicinity of the parable (Schürmann 1968, 123, 224, 280 n.15). In Matthew, the parable is preceded by the admonition not to despise “these little ones” because “in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven” (Matt 18:10); the parable is closed with “so it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost”, which confirms the connection of “these little ones” with the straying sheep. Luke has rejoicing in heaven in 15:7 and angels rejoicing in 15:10 over one repentant sinner. The Matthean and Lukan pictures are quite different but share the vague idea that angels care and feel for the persons whose situation is illustrated by the sheep that is lost and found. Yet that much, surely, can be accounted for by oral tradition (Evans 1990, 584).

³²⁹ Arai 1976, 112-113; Kiilunen 1992, 111; Räisänen 1992, 1618; Bovon 2001, 28.

theological terminology. Nevertheless it is improbable that this really would have made a significant change to the interpretation of the parable in Luke's tradition. The difference from the way in which the Matthean sheep is being found is not very great. In the light of the immediate context, Matt 18:15-17 is about church discipline in the Christian congregation, and it appears that the sheep is gained back to the flock when he or she listens to the rebuke of the congregation and stops sinning. What is this supposed to mean if not repentance? The supposedly Lukan contradiction of passivity (being found) and activity (repenting) is there in the Matthean interpretation too, though it is better hidden under the surface. There is no palpable difference in the degree of activity that the sinning person is expected to show in practice.

It has been pointed out that the pastoral image, picturing God as a shepherd and Israel as his flock, is a commonplace in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ps 23:1-4, 100:3, 119:176; Is 40:11, Jer 31:10; Ez 34:11-31).³³⁰ For this reason both Jewish and Christian circles would easily and naturally have associated the parable with the unity of God's flock and the worry for the members who stray outside. Matthew and Luke both share this general interpretation. In the Matthean pericope the flock is the Christian congregation, and so it is the Christian leaders who are invited to care for the straying sheep lest these end up as sinful outsiders with toll collectors and Gentiles.

Contrary to Matthew, Luke provides a socio-historical setting for the parable in Jesus' reputed controversy with the Pharisees and the scribes. He makes the parable serve an apologetic function in explaining and defending Jesus' association with toll collectors and sinners. For him, too, the flock, the ninety-nine, are God's people; Luke's Jesus is trying to make the Pharisees understand that the strayed sheep of Israel need to be restored to the flock. He is appealing to them to adopt the viewpoint of the good shepherd, representing the will of God. The Lukan introduction (15:1-2) makes the audience associate Jesus with the shepherd. The two conspicuous differences are that

³³⁰ Goulder 1989, 604.

while in Matthew Jesus is addressing his own³³¹ and “toll collectors and Gentiles” belong outside of God's flock, the Lukan Jesus is addressing Jewish authorities, as Luke sees them, arguing for the restoration of “toll collectors and sinners” into this flock.

The parable, reduced to its basic story line, which Matthew, Luke and *Gos. Thom.* 107 all share, can, because of its Hebrew Bible imagery, be seen as teaching that God wants all straying members to be searched for and restored to his flock.³³² As such the parable would have worked in the context of early Christian congregations, but it would have worked also in the context of Judaism or of the early Jesus movement. It is possible that it was composed within the later Christian Church, but it might as well go back to the Jesus movement or even to Jesus himself. Jesus' friendship with toll collectors is as certain as anything in his life. The significance of this friendship in the context of Jesus' whole life story has been strongly emphasized (and, most probably, rather exaggerated) down the centuries by theologians who have used it to prove their theological agendas. This process was begun by Luke (“Now *all* the toll collectors and sinners kept drawing near to him...”), probably in the interests of Gentile Christians.

³³¹ Matthew has Jesus address the disciples, the natural counterparts in the Matthean story for the Christian leaders of his own day (Matt 18:1).

³³² *Gos. Thom.* 107 differs from this basic story line by adding the feature that the sheep that went astray was the biggest one, and that the shepherd loves it more than he does the ninety-nine after taking pains to find it. Because of this *Gos. Thom.* 107 seems related to the teachings in which the valuable is chosen and the less valuable cast away (*Gos. Thom.* 8, 76). There is, however, the significant difference that the shepherd does not let the ninety-nine go after finding the lost one, so that *Gos. Thom.* 107 does not quite make this point either. *Gos. Thom.* 107 has probably taken over some colour of the teachings of discarding the ignoble as a secondary development because such teaching runs against the grain of the pastoral image. It makes sense to sell other goods to invest in a valuable pearl (*Gos. Thom.* 8), or to throw the useless little fish back into the sea (*Gos. Thom.* 76), but the very image of herding a flock is associated with the aim of keeping the animals safe and together – until slaughter, at least. Certainly there would be no gain in learning not to care for some of the flock or in sacrificing the majority of the sheep for one of them, as could genuinely be the case with small fish and pearls.

The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

Luke has played so significant a part in the creation of the parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32) that the parable as it now stands must be attributed to him.³³³ Luke may perhaps have worked on a traditional parable. The view that Luke's own role was great arises from three basic observations. The present parable betrays characteristic Lukan story-telling. It reflects Hellenistic influences, and it seems to address the controversy between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.³³⁴ By appealing to his audience with this symbolic family, Luke strove to achieve something that was of extreme importance to him: to explain where, in his view, the Gentile Christians stood in the schism of the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians, and to plead for the unity of the Church. This provides a clue to the question of why the sinners were of such crucial importance to Luke. They are the forerunners of the converting Gentiles in Acts.

Features of Lukan story-telling in the Prodigal Son

Like the other parables of the Lost, the Prodigal Son is marked by several Lukan characteristics that may rightly be called Lukan story-telling style.

In analysing Luke's story-telling style it is good to keep in mind that many features are clearly *characteristic* of Luke (appearing in the other Synoptics much more seldom than in Luke) while only a few are

³³³ Similarly, Schottroff 1971; Goulder 1989, 609-618; Räisänen 1992. The great majority of scholars have seen Luke as reworking a traditional parable from the Lukan *Sondergut* or L source, making only minor changes to it. Fitzmyer, e. g., sees Luke's redactional touch in a few superficial changes only: εἶπεν δέ in 15:11, 21; "not long afterward" in 15:13; ἀναστῶς in 15:18, 20; εἶπεν πρὸς with the acc. in 15:22; "he was lost" in 15:24, 32; the optative mood in the indirect question "what it was all about" in 15:26; and the verb πυνθάνεσθαι in 15:26 (1985, 1084).

³³⁴ Although much of this chapter addresses the question of sources and origin, I will not look for answers by examining the language of the parable. In the first part of this book I dealt with the linguistic quest for Luke's special sources, stating my reasons for mistrusting it. For those interested, a thorough examination of the language in this parable, including the Aramaisms claimed by certain scholars, has been conducted by Räisänen (1992, 1631-1633).

distinctive of Luke (not appearing at all in the other Synoptics).³³⁵ The distinctive features are naturally the most significant ones in defining typically Lukan style. The characteristic features only work as cumulative evidence. Where these abound it is quite probable that Luke had the deciding role in shaping the parable, but one must nevertheless allow for the possibility that some of the “Lukan” features may have been present in his tradition base after all.

Two features in the parable are extremely Lukan. Luke is the writer in the New Testament who most often makes use of soliloquy. Most typically, Luke uses the device in his parables, where the characters reflect on circumstances and contemplate on future action in soliloquy. The prodigal son does this in 15:17-19. Other Lukan examples are in the parables of the Rich Fool (12:16-21), the Unjust Steward (16:1-9) and the Unjust Judge (18:1-8).³³⁶ We noted above that the interest in work and its details is also distinctively Lukan.³³⁷ In this parable these abound. The Prodigal is herding pigs and feeding them with pods; the servants of the house are busy adorning the son and slaying the calf, while the elder brother is working in the fields.

Several more of the features in this story are characteristic of Luke and amply attested in other Lukan parables. They are Lukan in the sense that they are much more prominent in the Third Gospel than in the others. It was shown above that the party is one of these.³³⁸ Several Lukan parables express some kind of reversal of values as the parable of the Prodigal Son does, namely the parables of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37), the Rich Fool (12:16-21), the Unjust Steward (16:1-9), the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31), and the Pharisee and the Toll Collector (18:10-14).³³⁹ Repentance is a theme much loved by Luke. It is present in all the sinner pericopes, in the episode of the Sinful

³³⁵ The distinction between characteristic and distinctive features is Goodacre's (1996, 274-282).

³³⁶ Sellin 1974, 184; Goulder 1989, 613; Sellev 1992, 239-253; Goodacre 1996, 169-171. To be sure, there are some examples of monologue or soliloquy in the other Gospels as well; for these I refer the reader to the detailed discussions of Sellev and Goodacre.

³³⁷ Goulder 1989, 95; Goodacre 1996, 174-176.

³³⁸ Goulder 1989, 95-96; Goodacre 1996, 176-177.

³³⁹ Sellin 1974, 183-184.

Woman (7:36-50), the parables of the Sheep and the Coin (15:4-10), the Pharisee and the Toll Collector (18:10-14) and Zacchaeus (19:1-10). Joy is emphasized in the parables of the Sheep and the Coin as well as in the story of Zacchaeus.

Further, there is the “middle class” or everyday scale that Luke seems to favour, to a certain extent at least. The family seems to live on a prosperous “middle class” farm. The elder son works in the fields; the younger son’s share keeps him in riotous life for some time, but in everyday life there is no luxury. This recalls the Lukan parable of the Great Dinner (14:15-24), which is much more down-to-earth than its Matthean parallel, and the debts in the parables of the Money-lender and Debtors (7:41-42) and the Unjust Steward (16:1-9) which are also on the level of everyday life.³⁴⁰

It was pointed out above that Luke often has his characters repeat central points in direct speech; this is especially characteristic of the Lukan parable.³⁴¹ The Prodigal Son is especially rich in these repetitions: we hear twice or even thrice that the younger son was starving (15:14, 17), that the boy sinned against Heaven and his father and is not worthy of being called his son (15:18-19, 21), that a fatted calf was slaughtered (15:23, 27, 30), that the son spent up all that he had got (15:13-14, 30) and that the father saw him as one that had revived from death and been found after being lost (15:24-32).

Like the rich man in 16:19-31 and the steward in 16:1-9, the characters in the parable of the Prodigal appear human, or round, with several qualities, even contrasting ones.³⁴² To describe each of them would take

³⁴⁰ Goulder 1989, 98-99, 613; Goodacre 199-201. Goodacre admits this general tendency in Luke but points out correctly that there are exceptions. While Matthew, especially, is often more grandiose in his settings than Luke (Matt 18:23-35, 22:1-14, 25:14-30), he often has the everyday scale as well (7:24-27, 13:31-33, 13:44-46, 18:10-14, 21:28-32) and there are some examples of kings and noblemen in Luke, too (Luke 14:31-32, 19:11-27).

³⁴¹ Goulder 1989, 103-104; Goodacre 242-243.

³⁴² For a nuanced discussion on what exactly various scholars have meant by “round” characters as contrasted with “flat” and/or “stock” characters, see Lehtipuu 1999, 74-81. Recognizing the ancient lack of interest in individual psychology, I mean by the “roundness” of a Gospel character both vividness and complexity; those characters that allow for several plausible interpretations of their

several adjectives. The father in the story might, for example, be seen as “weak, warm-hearted, generous, exaggerated, tactful, balanced and restrained”, and the younger son “impatient, decisive, adventurous, improvident, unprincipled, independent, realistic and humble”.³⁴³ Every individual reader would probably see the three characters differently, for they offer extremely rich material for interpretation. The hundreds of diverse readings written on these three figures among scholars alone attest to their shaded and nuanced depiction in the story. A minor connection to other Lukan parables is that two more of these are built around a triangle drama, namely, the Money-lender and Debtors (7:41-42) and the Rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31).³⁴⁴

To be sure, one should not exaggerate the general “roundness” of the characters in the Third Gospel. It is true that most Lukan characters, though very convincing because of their vivid depiction, really represent stereotyped groups rather than individuality. Their function is to offer a moral example, to illustrate either laudable or avoidable behaviour.³⁴⁵ Thus Lazarus, for example, is destitute, suffering and humble, and nothing else; he is the poor good man whose function is to show that God finally vindicates the humble poor. But in the Prodigal Son Luke aspires to something more; he gets very close to making the feelings and reactions of each character understandable, even those of the elder son who gathers least sympathy.

In the light of the Lukan features – most significantly, of soliloquy, interest in work and other rich detail, the party, repentance, joy, and the repetition of important points in direct presentation – it seems evident that Luke has contributed a great deal to the present shape of the parable. Not only is the choice of words in his hand, but also the way the characters are described, the picture of the farm life, the use of soliloquy and dialogue, the details like work and the party, and the feelings betrayed – in sum, all the flesh on the bones of the basic idea. Even if he inherited the basic elements of the story from tradition, the work of art that we have before us now is his own. As a metaphor we

characteristic traits and of their motivation in acting as they do are, for me, the roundest ones.

³⁴³ Goulder 1989, 93-94.

³⁴⁴ Sellin 1974, 184.

³⁴⁵ Syreeni 1991, 36-57; Lehtipuu 1999, 81-86.

may think of a folk music band that makes a new arrangement of a simple traditional melody, choosing which instruments to use, composing the accompaniment and the solos, producing a unique new interpretation. They and not the anonymous composer(s) would have the copyright for the recording. If someone was to have the copyright for Luke 15:11-32, it would belong to the evangelist: it may be his version of something older but it is nevertheless decidedly his unique creation.

The Hellenistic and Jewish literary parallels

The two most thorough analyses of literary parallels for the prodigal son have been written by Eckhart Rau and by Wolfgang Pöhlmann.³⁴⁶ The most interesting parallels by far are to be found from Latin rhetoric, Philo, and Rabbinic parables. Rau contends that the closest literary milieu to the parable of the Prodigal Son is Palestinian Judaism, while the Graeco-Roman influence is indirect.³⁴⁷ Pöhlmann is on similar lines, seeing the parable as created by Jesus and reflecting Palestinian Jewish tradition.³⁴⁸ However, the conclusion seems an odd one, as especially the similarities to Latin declamations are quite striking.³⁴⁹

To describe the situation briefly, the parallels in Philo consist of exegesis of the story of Jacob and Esau³⁵⁰ and a discussion on Divinity as a benign parent.³⁵¹ What is interesting in the Jacob and Esau parallels is that Philo contrasts them as an unethical brother (Esau) and a good one (Jacob); their father seeks to help the unethical brother, Esau, as this one otherwise has clearly much less hope of caring for himself successfully. The speech about Divinity as a loving parent may be influenced by the same story, as there are some similarities to the passages about Jacob and Esau. The point is that God, as parents often do, takes especial care of his lost (ἀσώτων) children, even more than of the wise ones (σώφροσιν). God's motivation is twofold: he hopes to

³⁴⁶ Rau 1990, 216-394; Pöhlmann 1993, 1-121.

³⁴⁷ Rau 1990, 406.

³⁴⁸ Pöhlmann 1993, 124, 157-158.

³⁴⁹ Schottroff 1971, 44-47; similarly Räisänen 1992, 1629.

³⁵⁰ *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin* VI, 198 and *Quod omnibus probus liber sit* 57.

³⁵¹ *De Providentia* II, 15 (in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* VIII 14, 2-6).

give those who are lost time to repent, and he must be consistent with his own merciful and loving character. The parallel texts in Philo are not in the form of parables or even of narratives. The parallelism lies in the metaphor of God as a loving father, benevolent towards his wise children as well as those of his children who are leading a guilty life (τῶν ὑπαιτίως ζώντων), but showing especial care for the latter.

The Rabbinic parallels are in the form of quite short parables. However, there is little similarity to the Prodigal Son. Two groups are of interest. Firstly, there are parallels about a king and two sons.³⁵² However, these parables are about quite various themes, the only unifying feature being that there are two sons with opposite qualities. Often they illustrate opposite ways to act, and sometimes two daughters or two stewards appear in the same function.³⁵³ Secondly, there are parables of a father (who again often is a king) and a sinful son.³⁵⁴ These are in many ways quite close to Luke's description of the prodigal – the son usually leaves his father, gets in trouble, repents, and finds mercy by the father – but the figure of the upright brother is not present in them. The repentance and return of the one son to the father stands for return to God. The important thing to note is that the brothers who act in opposite ways and the son who repents and returns to his father do not appear together in Rabbinic parables. Matt 21:28-32 is the only parallel of Luke 15:11-32 in early Christian and early Jewish literature that combines the themes of two different sons with the repentance of one of them. Matt 21:28-32, however, is very different from the Lukan parable of the prodigal son in its total lack of interest in what attitude the characters in the parable take to one another and whose actions and whose views of the others are justified. This interest Luke 15:11-32 shares only with Latin declamations.

³⁵² *Midrash Tehillim* on 9:1(1); *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* XXX, 10; *Mekilta, Beshallakh* VI on 14,22.

³⁵³ *yTa'anit* 66 c. Pöhlmann 1993, 123-125.

³⁵⁴ *Devarim Rabbah* II, 24, on 4:30; *Midrash Shemot Rabbah* XLVI, 4, on 34:1 (the parable of the healer's son); *Megillat Esther* (the parable by R. Meir); *Pesiqta Rabbati* 184b. The parable in the Apocalypse of Sedrach (6:1-8) is close to this group, though in it the father refuses to forgive. In the parable of the children of the judge (also in *Midrash Shemot Rabbah* XLVI, 4, on 34:1) there are several children, not one son, who leave their father and long for forgiveness. They are collectively cast in the role of the sinful child; no one is the upright brother. Here, too, the father is unrelenting.

Four declamations, or rhetorical exercises, have come down to us that are built around a father, a wasteful son and an upright, frugal son.³⁵⁵ This indicates that the theme was widely known. In three of these, the father appears to favour the wasteful son unfairly, and is accused by the upright frugal son.³⁵⁶ The case description (*narratio*) is followed by the defence of the father's action in the following declamations. The speeches aim at moving the audience on behalf of the wasteful son and of the father, for instance, by describing the father's compassion caused by the son's utter helplessness and by his expressed feelings of unworthiness,³⁵⁷ or by warm and vivid descriptions of how the father runs to the dying prodigal son for reconciliation.³⁵⁸ Similarities to the Lukan parable of the Prodigal Son are manifold. In each case the short *narratio* itself is not very far from the narrative in a parable, though of course the pattern is broken by the extensive speeches that follow. The protest of the upright son is at home here, while it is totally absent in the Jewish parallels. There are several common motifs, including the son's wastefulness, the sharing of property, inheritance and the possibility of disowning the son, dissolute life with prostitutes, and a perilous journey to distant lands.³⁵⁹ The declamations, like Luke 15:11-32, are full of pathos and appeal strongly to the emotions of the audience. The most noteworthy thing is that the father's motives are explained and his action is defended. This theme is totally absent in the Rabbinic parables, though there is an element of this in Philo, who in *De providentia* II 15 endeavours to explain why God seems to favour his lost children more than the wise ones. But Philo has nothing like the concrete accusations of the upright brothers of the declamations; indeed, he does not have a narrative of any kind.

³⁵⁵ "aeger redemptus", Quintilian, *Declamationes Maiores* V; "abdicandus qui abdicatum fratrem adoptavit", Seneca, *Controversiae* III, 3; "nepos ex meretricio susceptus", Seneca, *Controversiae* II, 4 and Calpurnius Flaccus, *Declamationes* 30. The *narratio* in the last one is practically the same as in Seneca, *Controversiae* II, 4.

³⁵⁶ "aeger redemptus", Quintilian, *Declamationes Maiores* V; "nepos ex meretricio susceptus", Seneca, *Controversiae* II, 4 and the declamation on the same case that is given in Calpurnius Flaccus, *Declamationes* 30.

³⁵⁷ In "aeger redemptus", Quintilian, *Declamationes Maiores* V.

³⁵⁸ Seneca *Controversiae* II, 4,1.

³⁵⁹ Pöhlmann analyses the terminology of Lk 15:11-32 on the topos of *luxuria*, finding several Greco-Roman idioms (1993, 108-109).

It is conceivable that someone who had practised or listened to Latin declamations on the theme of father and sons could have coloured a traditional parable of a father and a repenting son, or possibly even a parable of the two different sons of a father like Matt 21: 28-30, so that it resulted in the present parable of the prodigal son. It is not impossible that our parable owes the figure of the elder brother, many of its motifs, and the basic theme of defending the father against accusations of favouritism, to the Roman declamations.

This idea resembles the old tradition-historical claim that there is a seam between the first part of the parable, 15:11-26, and the second, 15:25-32, the latter being a later addition.³⁶⁰ If a traditional parable, perhaps a one-son parable springing from Palestinian roots, was indeed enriched with the second son and the triangle dynamics, this will most probably have happened only after Christianity began to win converts with knowledge of Latin language and rhetoric culture. Luke himself or someone before him may have been responsible for the change. Latin declamations are unlikely to have reached Jesus or the early Jesus movement in Palestine where Greek, not Latin, was the *lingua franca*. Yet even if such a tradition-historical development is conceivable, it is artificial to draw a line of tradition and redaction right across the present parable, taking the first half to be “original” and the second half to be a later addition. Lukan language and story-telling style cover both halves. Luke told the whole story freely in his own style, shaping the first part of the parable as much as the other.

The socio-historical setting of the Prodigal Son

In 15:1-3 Luke depicts the parables of the lost as Jesus’ self-defence for eating with toll collectors and sinners. This introduction itself is an exaggerated ideological scene, as many have remarked. One day *all* the toll collectors and sinners are drawing near to Jesus, as if in great

³⁶⁰ Since Wellhausen (1904, 81-85) it has been argued that the second son and the second part of the parable that centres on him (15:25-32) are later additions, as the point of the father’s mercy is driven home by the first part alone (Loisy 1924; Schweizer 1948 and 1949, though changing opinion in 1974; J. T. Sanders 1969, 433-34). The unity of the parable has been defended by Jülicher 1910, 333-365; Jeremias 1958, 115; Bultmann 1979, 212; 1980, 60; Fitzmyer 1985, 1084, Bovon 2001, 44.

herds; a choir of Pharisees and scribes, always so conveniently present, begin to grumble and criticize, whereupon Jesus raises his voice and recites three carefully planned parables to this mixed audience. But in spite of the theatrical quality of the scene, the fact that Jesus was ridiculed for his friendship with “toll collectors and sinners” and criticized for eating with them is confirmed by the Gospel of Mark and the Q source (Mark 2:15-17, Luke 7:34/ Matt 11:17). Very probably later antagonism gave Pharisees the leading role in this criticism, but it is possible that Jesus created parables to defend his action in the face of such criticism – for his followers, if outsiders would not listen.

However, the early Church, too, had a strong interest in such teaching, for the Church raised doubts and antagonism with its mixed meals between Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin. Luke would have had an interest in elaborating tradition that could be seen as relevant for the mixed meals controversy. The bitter debate on the issue described in Gal. 2:1-14, as well as Luke’s manifold, anxious and apologetic description of how the inclusion of Gentile Christians was begun in the Church by Peter himself after powerful visions and miracles (Acts 10-11:18), are indicators of how sensitive the question was. Luke also rewrites Mark 2:16 in a remarkable way in 5:30 when he has the Pharisees and their scribes ask the disciples: “Why do *you* eat and drink with toll collectors and sinners?” In Mark, the question is, why does *your teacher* eat with them. The change could reflect the grave issue of whether or not Jewish Christians could eat with Gentile Christians.³⁶¹

Chapter 15 begins and ends with the theme of table fellowship. In 15:2 the complaint is that Jesus accepts toll collectors and sinners *and eats with them*, even though the eating is not necessary in a teaching scene. At the end of the third parable, it is the slaying and eating of the calf that is repeated to catch attention, rather than, say, the ring or the shoes or the very fact that the younger boy has been welcomed home as the son of the family.³⁶²

But does the emphasis on table fellowship point to Jesus' day or rather, to Luke's? There has been much debate about how controversial it

³⁶¹ Similarly, Evans 1990, 307.

³⁶² Similarly, Wolter 2002, 43.

could have been for Jesus to eat with Jewish undesirables, as well as about how influential the strict eating practices of the Pharisees could have been at that time. The issue is evidently difficult to decide, but quite many scholars are of the opinion that the influence of the Pharisees was not as great in the Palestine of Jesus' day as it would seem in the light of the New Testament, and that they did not impose their own halakhic practice on non-Pharisaic Jews.³⁶³ Controversy with the Pharisees was not as central in the life of the historical Jesus as the Gospels would have it. On the other hand there is little doubt that the table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians was a highly controversial matter, echoing through most of New Testament, especially the Pauline letters, the deutero-Pauline letters and Acts.

The parable as we have it seems designed to be associated in the minds of the early Christian audience with the precarious relationship between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. It seeks in the first place to reconcile these two groups, and secondarily to convince its audience that the Gentile Christians are justified in their stance and are only waiting for the opposing party to reconcile themselves to God's will.³⁶⁴

From the premodern period into the present day the parable has given rise to interpretations in which the younger son is associated with Christianity and the elder with Judaism, or with (supposedly Christian) justification of sinners and (supposedly Jewish or Pharisaic) piety of good works, respectively.³⁶⁵ There are features in it that are easy to connect with Judaism and with Gentiles, probably because Luke wished to call forth that association. Naturally, this means that the parable is an allegory,³⁶⁶ but that may well be if Luke's role in its creation was as great as it seems to be. After all it would be odd if the

³⁶³ Smith 1956; Cohen 1979; Goodman 1983, 78, 93; 1987; Neusner 1983; Sanders 1985, 309-17; 1992, 388-404; Hakola 2005, 61-65. For the opposite opinion on the general influence and authority of the Pharisees, see Mason 1988, Mason 1990, Newport 1991, Hengel and Deines 1995.

³⁶⁴ Heininger 1991, 166; Pokorný 1998, 172-173. The most thorough study in this line is Räisänen 1992. Salo (2003, 102-106) follows his interpretation.

³⁶⁵ For the history of interpretation, see Bovon 2001, 54-55; Antoine et al. 1978; Wright 2002.

³⁶⁶ Schottroff (2006, 148) criticizes all interpretations where the two sons are identified with two religious groups of allegorizing reading.

evangelists, themselves at home with the allegorical interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, would never have used allegorical meanings in their own texts.³⁶⁷ The “far country” (χωρὰ μακρὰ) and its pigs have usually been seen as alluding to the Gentile world. Pigs, obviously, were forbidden to conscientious Jews, and μακρὰν refers to Gentiles in Acts 2:39, 22:21; Eph 2:13,17, even though it most often, of course, is used quite neutrally.³⁶⁸

Most significantly, Luke 15 and Acts present an extremely interesting comparison. There are several points of contact between the Prodigal Son and passages that deal with the Gentile Christians in Acts if we accept the working hypothesis that sinners in the Gospel of Luke sometimes foreshadow the Gentiles in Acts.³⁶⁹ In the Cornelius episode (Acts 10:1-11:18) Peter is criticized by “circumcized believers” for eating with the uncircumcized (Acts 11:2-3), as Jesus is criticized for eating with toll collectors and sinners (Luke 15:2). The Cornelius episode is concluded by the words “Then God has given even to the Gentiles the *repentance* that leads to *life*” (ἄρα καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἔδωκεν); the repenting son has likewise revived from death to life in the eyes of his father (Luke 15:24, 32). In Acts 15, Luke’s description of the apostolic council, the general topic is whether the Gentiles who have converted to Christianity should be made to accept circumcision and therewith the Mosaic law; this is demanded by “certain individuals who came down from Judaea” (Acts 15:1) and by “some believers *who belonged to sect of the Pharisees*”

³⁶⁷ In the Gospel there are several pericopes where the later situation of the church, its opening for Gentile Christians, seems transparent; such pericopes are very much open to an allegorical interpretation, probably because Luke wished to make them so. Most conspicuous are Luke’s Great Dinner (14:16-24) and the programmatic sermon in Nazareth (4:16-30). See Räisänen 1992, 1626-1627. One might add that the fact that Luke often takes pains to write in Septuagintal style shows that he is striving to elevate the story of Jesus onto the level of Scripture. It seems credible in an era of allegorical reading of the Scripture that he may also have hidden allegorical meanings in the text, at least in some pericopes.

³⁶⁸ Räisänen 1992, 1624-1625, even though Wolter (2002) points out that “the far country” appears also in Luke 19:12 without a Gentile connotation.

³⁶⁹ This passage follows Räisänen (1992, 1625-1627). Also J. T Sanders connects the Jewish outcasts – toll collectors and sinners – with the Gentile mission in Acts. In his view, there is a movement from the Palestinian Jews to “the periphery” Luke-Acts, beginning with Palestinian Jewish outcasts and progressing via Diaspora Jews and proselytes to Gentile God-fearers (1987, 132 ff).

(Acts 15:5). The question is solved by Peter and James who refer to the Cornelius episode (Acts 15:7-9, 13-14). In Acts the Pharisees, then, are concerned lest the Gentile Christians be accepted too easily; in Luke 15, their problem is that Jesus accepts sinners too easily. A minor point of contact is also that brethren hearing of the conversion of Gentiles from Paul and Barnabas feel “great joy” (Acts 15:3); in Luke 15:7 and 10 there is great joy for the repentance of one sinner. In Acts 21 Luke once more brings up “thousands of believers among the Jews who are all zealous for the law” and suspicious of Paul, fearing that he teaches disobedience to the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:20-21). The similarities can be listed as follows:

Luke 15

1. Jesus eats with toll collectors and sinners; Pharisees criticize him for this.
2. The repenting prodigal has revived from death to life.
3. The repentance of sinners and the return of the prodigal bring great joy.
4. The elder brother, who has obeyed the commands of the father, would not have the disobedient brother accepted.

Acts

1. Peter eats with Gentiles; circumcized believers criticize him for this.
2. Repentance leads Gentiles to life.
3. Conversion of Gentiles brings great joy.
4. Jewish or Pharisaic Christians would not have Gentile Christians accepted unless these, too, keep the Law.

In addition, there are interesting points of contact between the parable of the Prodigal Son and Ephesians 2.³⁷⁰ There the former Gentiles were once “dead” through their sins (Eph 2:1.5, Col 2:13); they were alienated and strangers (Eph 2:12). They were “far off”, but have now been brought near (Eph 2:13). Those who were far off and those who were near now both have access to the Father (Eph 2:17-18). Ephesians is close in age to the Gospel of Luke. Both are usually dated in the eighties or nineties, in any case before the end of the first century. Both represent the aftermath of Paul’s teaching. Unless one of the texts,

³⁷⁰ Räisänen 1992, 1629.

Ephesians 2 or the parable of the Prodigal Son, echoes the other, it may be that both reflect imagery that was used in post-Pauline circles to describe the situation of the Gentile Christians. Luke, then, deliberately wrote the parable of the Prodigal Son in a way that was meant to be associated with the situation of the Gentile Christians in post-Pauline circles.

Objections have been raised against this idea. One is that the allegory of “returning to the Father” would not suit the situation of the Gentiles who have never known the God of Israel. Another is that an allegorical exhortation for Jewish Christians would presuppose that the Gospel of Luke was addressed to a Jewish Christian audience. Thirdly it has been claimed that the admission of Gentile Christians was no longer an issue by the time Luke wrote his Gospel.³⁷¹

None of these objections is to the point. First of all, the conversion of Gentiles is indeed depicted as returning or repentance by Luke in the Areopagus scene, especially Acts 17:26-31, and by Paul in Rom 1:18-21. Odd though it may seem to the modern mind, Luke and Paul share the idea that the Gentiles somehow ought to have known God through his creation and therefore have wilfully chosen idolatry. Conversion from Gentile religions is for both Luke and Paul a moral issue and requires repentance of sin. The Letter to the Ephesians naturally reflects this starting point as well.

Nor is it necessary to think of Luke as writing for a dominantly Jewish Christian audience. A mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians would do very well,³⁷² and so would a Gentile-dominated one.³⁷³ Ephesians is clearly addressed to a predominantly Gentile Christian audience and which is very much preoccupied with themes of Gentile inclusion and mutual reconciliation: Gentiles are entitled to the “inheritance” of Israel, Gentiles belong to the same “household” of God, peace reigns between the two groups (of Jewish and Gentile origin) who now form one family and “both have access to the Father” (Eph 2:12; 2:13-22; 3:6). Deutero-Pauline letters on the whole witness

³⁷¹ Wolter 2002, 53-54.

³⁷² Esler 1987, 93 ff sees Luke’s audience as a mixed community.

³⁷³ Proposed by Maddox (1982, 183-185).

to the fact that Gentile Christianity continued to discuss its own legitimation vis-à-vis its parent movements, Judaism and Jewish Christianity, quite long, apparently even after all realistic hope of a reunion between the two had ceased. The relationship between Gentile Christianity, Jewish Christianity and Judaism proper was of interest to Christians, both of Gentile and of Jewish origin, at the end of the first century. The groups still existed side by side.³⁷⁴

Luke's message: the relationship between Gentile and Jewish Christians

Luke was a Gentile Christian of the third generation.³⁷⁵ He was not, like Paul, painfully giving birth to the Gentile Christian theology in the midst of turbulent congregational life. For him, the question of how Christianity relates to the commands of the Torah as the expression of God's will was not agonizing or even difficult. Luke was not solving the problem any more: rather he was explaining and legitimating the ecclesiastical situation as he knew it, content with the established Gentile Christian views on the role of the Law.

In the Lukan logic, the central function of Scriptures is that they foretell Christ. In this logic obeying the commandments of the Torah was all right for Jews before the rise of Gentile Christianity. Positive paradigmatic characters in the beginning of Luke illustrate this: Zacharias serves as priest in the Temple, the family of John the Baptist gather to circumcize him, Mary and Joseph offer in the Temple, Hannah and Simeon wait for the coming of Christ in the Temple. Their role is to legitimate the new faith, show that it is in line with the Scriptures, and prove that Christ is the fulfilment of the Jewish faith that was to come. Kari Syreeni has seen in the Third Gospel's attitude towards the Torah the "careless piety of the outsider": for Luke the

³⁷⁴McDonald (2004, 433-437) sees Ephesians, written during Domitian's reign, as reflecting an extremely ambiguous and fluid relationship to Judaism. The difficulty of taking a clear stance vis-à-vis Judaism was not because the relationship was no longer of importance but because it was of crucial importance. The ambiguity would be caused by the changing political fortunes of both Jews and Christians as well as the continued and necessary closeness of Christians and Jews who were living in the same cities.

³⁷⁵Conzelmann 1966, 305-307.

Temple and the commandments of the Torah were all right in their time, which is clearly over. Luke could afford a positive view of law-observing Judaism before the beginning of the Gentile mission because it cost him nothing. As a contrast, in Acts the Law is quite suddenly called a burden which the (Jewish) ancestors of apostles could not bear, and those who would require that the converted Gentiles should obey the commandments of the Torah, especially the commandment of circumcision, are presented as the troublemakers whose views are finally not deemed correct by the apostles (Acts 15, esp. 15:1, 10, 19, 24). Probably the stipulations of the Apostolic Decree were for Luke accepted tradition, not his own attempt at a compromise. The *nunc dimittis* of Simeon is important in the Lukan paradigm, for it puts Judaism in its place as the forerunner of Christianity. The function of the paradigmatic good law-observant Jews in the beginning of the Gospel of Luke is to legitimate the new faith that will replace Judaism as a salvation system, legitimately inheriting its place and its scriptures.³⁷⁶

As in Luke's view the time of Judaism proper is over, unconverted Jews are unlikely to be Luke's concern in the Prodigal Son. What is required of them, in the light of the Acts, is simply conversion to Christianity. There is too much enmity in the Lukan view on the unconverted Jews as it is reflected in the closing of Acts (28:23-28) for it to be likely that these could be portrayed as the brother mildly and gently persuaded by (God) the father in the parable. The elder brother who only has to welcome the younger one is closer to the situation of those Christians who required that Christianity should go together with circumcision.

Luke wrote his Prodigal Son to explain to his Gentile Christian audience their situation and standing as opposed to Jewish Christians. Yet it is possible and even likely that Luke was casting a side-glance at Jewish Christians as recipients as well. For a comparison, Paul wrote mainly to Gentile Christians in the interest of Gentile Christians, but in Romans he sought to recommend himself to Jewish Christians as well, and in Romans 14 he aspired to a eulogy of mutual tolerance, reciprocal consideration, and harmony which is the direct opposite of

³⁷⁶ Syreeni 1990, 133-151.

the angry intolerance of the Galatians. The parable of the Prodigal Son could be the Lukan equivalent to Romans 14. It is Luke's tribute to the idealistic Christian dream of unity and the reconciliation of the Christian sects. It is his vision of the situation, as well as his recipe and his call for reconciliation at the same time.

Not surprisingly, Luke's viewpoint is a thoroughly Gentile Christian one. For Luke it is God (namely, the father) who has already decided to welcome Gentile Christians (namely, the younger son) on his own terms, and it remains for Jewish Christians (the elder brother) to accept the fact and the terms, not to alter the basic situation. Luke does not want to exclude Jewish Christians altogether and therefore pictures the father as still gently persuading his elder son, but the fact that Luke really finally sides with the younger brother can be seen in the plain fact that ninety-nine commentators out of a hundred seem to sympathize with him rather than the elder brother.

Nevertheless the parable, rather surprisingly, reflects some genuine concern for the elder brother's feelings and decisions. The family is not whole without him. That Luke is striving for fairness can be seen in the fact that the elder brother's criticism of the younger one is never proved groundless, though it is depicted as harsh and resentful. The elder brother speaks of the younger one as having "devoured the father's property with prostitutes" (15:30), and though this is aggressive it seems quite compatible with the milder hint of "dissolute living" which the reader has received in 15:13. The father confirms rather than corrects the elder brother's view of the younger one's undertakings in stating that the boy has been "dead" and "lost"; his condition has really been serious. Nor does the father call to question the elder son's view of his own faithful service; he confirms that too in 15:31. The elder brother is resentful with some good reason, and the father acknowledges this. The scene closes with the father standing by his own decision to welcome the younger son and steadfastly waiting for the elder son to relent and join the party, to the final reunion of the

family. The reader, too, is left to await the elder brother's final decision and to hope that it is a positive one.³⁷⁷

Not all agree here. Some claim that the elder brother's final stance is already made clear by his haughty behaviour towards his father and by his refusal to enter the party, a gesture that can be seen as highly symbolic in the light of Luke 11:52, 13:24 and 14:16-24.³⁷⁸ This interpretation does not convince me because it downplays the weight and authority of the father's patient and understanding answer. An obvious point of the parable is that the reader is to see the younger brother as the father sees him, re-establishing and confirming his value and dignity. Is the elder brother then not to be seen in the same light, as his father sees him? For Luke, the father in the parable is God, and the father's word, "you are always with me and all that is mine is yours", is to be taken at face value as the final verdict over the elder brother. Luke hopes and believes that the elder brother will eventually join the party.³⁷⁹

It may seem odd to some that Gentile Christianity should be associated with repenting sinners, thus underlining their despicable "sinful" origin, if Luke's meaning is really to legitimate them. One insight into the sociological and psychological mechanism behind this can be found in Gerd Theissen's theory of the role of self-stigmatization in early Christianity.³⁸⁰ Theissen describes self-stigmatization as

the demonstrative and voluntary adoption of a subordinate position which draws the aggression of others upon itself and endures it. Through this the other is not to be reinforced in his action but to be disconcerted.³⁸¹

³⁷⁷ Niebuhr (1991, 486) has seen the conclusion of the parable as deliberately left for the reader to imagine. Salo, too, maintains that the solution is left open-ended (2003, 106).

³⁷⁸ Wolter 2002, 46-48.

³⁷⁹ This makes it extremely unlikely that Luke could be thinking of Jews in general for the final prophesy concerning these (Acts 28:25-28) is that they will not convert. Luke betrays an undeniably anti-Jewish orientation in his double work. Maddox 1982, 42-46.

³⁸⁰ For this suggestion I am grateful to Prof. Kari Syreeni.

³⁸¹ Theissen 1999, 89.

Theissen sees self-stigmatization as an important strategy in cultural change. The prevailing values are shaken by being diverted through a demonstrative adoption of roles which are seen in a negative light. Someone who deliberately practises a form of behaviour that is rejected indicates to his environment that the values underlying the rejection and contempt are false. The one who has the gift of finding adherents here can bring about a change of values — even in the face of a majority consensus about these values.³⁸²

With self-stigmatization, the sinful origin of the Gentile Christians is transformed into a victory: in and through Jesus, God chooses, loves, and indeed favours repenting sinners. They are actually the most true and best Christians, Luke seems to say. Luke's strategy is to portray his sinners as so humble and penitent in their repentance that it is actually impossible not to feel for them; not to do so would be to accept the negative role of the righteous critics. The strained relationship to Jewish Christianity is reflected in the need to compete in this indirect way.

Jesus and the father in the parable as representatives of God

In addition to the Gentile Christian – Jewish Christian allegory there is one more way in which the theology of the parable suits the time of Luke better than the time of Jesus, especially in the context of the introduction in verses 15:1-3. The message of the chapter as it reads now is that the prodigal son is to be seen in the light of his repentance and his return to his father, not in the light of his former exploits. Likewise, the toll collectors and sinners are to be seen in the light of the fact that they are drawing near to Jesus, not in the light of their committed sins.³⁸³ The comparison works only if Jesus is seen as representing God; if not, there would be no similarity in the situation of the sinners who turn to Jesus and the prodigal who returns to his father, who in the parable stands for God. Both 15:1-2 and 15:11-32 are repetitions of the Lukan triangle of the sinner, the righteous critic and the representative of God. The idea that Jesus himself created this

³⁸² Theissen 1999, 143.

³⁸³ Wolter 2002, 43-45.

parable to defend his friendship with undesirables presupposes that Jesus saw himself as somehow representing God. Defending Jesus' friendship with sinners with a parable like the Prodigal Son requires the conviction that Jesus is God's chosen messenger in some very special way. Given the difficulty of biblical scholars in reaching any kind of agreement on Jesus' views of himself, it is better not to build too much on such an assumption. The evangelist, on the other hand, certainly could equate drawing near to Jesus with drawing near to God.

Tradition behind the very Lukan parable?

The story-telling style of the parable suggests that Luke had a central role in shaping the parable. Moreover, the literary parallels and the socio-historical setting of the parable support a relatively late origin – the ecclesiastical questions of late first or early second century rather than the social milieu of Palestine of Jesus' day.

As nearly every feature in the story fits Luke's own story-telling style and theological interests well, the conclusion could easily be made that he must have invented the parable himself. Certainly this is not inconceivable, but the conclusion would still be a rash one. If the model of oral tradition as constant variation is to be taken seriously it ought to be admitted that Luke may have worked on a traditional core even when that is difficult to prove and impossible to reconstruct.

This point has been excellently illustrated by Mark Goodacre with the parable of the feast (Luke 14:15-24/ Matt 22:1-14).³⁸⁴ The Matthean variant of the parable of the feast is seething with specially Matthean features and theology – for instance, the regal setting, the wedding feast, the allegory of the slain servants (prophets) and the burnt city (Jerusalem), and the final separation of the worthy and the unworthy. On the other hand, the Lukan variant is as rich with Lukan features. Such are the opening line of the parable, beginning with “a certain man”; the ample use of dialogue, covering most of the pericope; great liveliness and rich details; the everyday setting of not so rich people, the master having but one servant to run his errands; and the two sets of guests that finally are included, symbolizing the poor of Israel and the

³⁸⁴ Goodacre 1996, 284.

Gentiles.³⁸⁵ What could we make out of these parables if only one version existed? If one proceeded to remove everything that was typical of the author, either Luke or Matthew, and then ask the question whether the remainder could possibly have circulated as an independent parable, the answer would be in the negative. Certainly the other variant could not be reconstructed on the basis of the known one. Knowing just Matthews's variant, one could not deduce a variant like Luke's; knowing Luke's version, one could not deduce Matthew's. It follows that we cannot reconstruct earlier variants that a Gospel parable may have had. The fact that a parable looks very much like a product of a certain evangelist does not yet prove that it is not traditional. The theory of oral tradition as constant variation leads to the conclusion that the parable of the Prodigal Son, as Lukan as it appears, may have had previous variants that are out of our reach now.³⁸⁶ The tradition that Luke knew will remain an open question.

It is obvious that Luke has powerfully shaped and formed the parable that we now have. It is likewise obvious that it reflects the interests of the post-Pauline Gentile Church. This brings us closer to Luke's motivation than we have been before. Luke is such a great friend of sinners because he is a great friend of converted Gentiles.

Summary

Chapter 15 is Luke's major teaching on sinners and repentance. Luke's main motivation is to speak for the unity of the Church in the controversy between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.

³⁸⁵ Goulder 1989, 588-592.

³⁸⁶ The theory of Bailey and Dunn, as interesting as it is, is not very helpful here (see ch. II 2). It may be that there was a prodigal son parable in Luke's tradition and that the vital core resisted change better than the constant variation theory would lead one to suppose, but knowing only Luke's variant there is no telling what the vital core would have been in this case. We noted before that the Bailey-Dunn theory does not cover all transmission of the Gospel material, as there are cases where a tradition obviously has broken free of control, producing pericopes that are clearly related but do not share a common basic core.

The introduction (15:1-3) is an ideal scene created by Luke. It clearly reflects Mark 2:15-17, and the Pharisees and scribes are carried over from that pericope.

Because of its Hebrew Bible pastoral imagery, the point of the parable of the Sheep in its basic story line is that the sinners are part of God's flock, his people, and that God rejoices to see them restored to the flock. Such a teaching could originate in a Jewish as well as in a Christian community. It may have been used as an apology for Jesus' undesirable company by Jesus himself or by the Jesus movement. Oral tradition is a natural enough explanation for the similarities of the versions. The interpretative clauses in 15:7 and 10 with their stress on the repentance of sinners are evidently formulated by Luke. They made no dramatic change to the interpretation of the parable in Luke's tradition.

Luke probably received the two parables of the Sheep and the Coin together, as a double parable. The parable of the Coin, as it stands now, emphasizes the utmost importance of the finding of the lost. The woman has lost a considerable part of hard-earned and bitterly necessary money. The point Luke wants to make is the relief and the joy that are felt when something really necessary is recovered.

The Sheep and the Coin both bear Lukan characteristics, with the details of work, the culmination of the story in direct speech, the party, and interpretation of the parable as the repentance of a sinner. Lukan characteristics do not prove the non-existence of traditional roots, but they show that Luke moulds his material into his own strongly characteristic story-telling style.

Luke has played so significant a part in the creation of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32) that as it now stands the parable must be attributed to him even if he had a traditional parable on which to work. Characteristics of Lukan story-telling are soliloquy, the interest in work and its details, the party, repentance and the repetition of important points in direct speech.

The parable reflects Hellenistic influences. Rabbinic parables of a King's sinful son are significant as literary parallels but Latin

declamations are at least as significant. It is in these that we find triangle dramatics that truly resemble the Prodigal Son. It is possible that Luke owes the motifs of the protest of the upright son and the justification of the father's leniency to Latin rhetoric.

The Prodigal Son reflects the controversy between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. The tradition of Jesus' friendship with toll collectors and sinners was relevant for the mixed meals controversy. Chapter 15 begins and ends with the theme of table fellowship. Clues for connecting the parable with Judaism and Gentiles include the pigs, the far country and the death and life imagery. There are striking similarities between Luke 15 and the Acts where Peter is criticized for eating with Gentiles while Pharisaic Christians try to make these obey the Law. The phraseology and imagery of the chapter are much like those of Ephesians, also addressing the controversy of the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians.

Luke's first agenda in chapter 15 is the legitimation of Gentile Christianity, and his second is mutual reconciliation of the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. Luke hopes for peaceful coexistence, but he actually envisions the reconciliation as happening according to the wishes and views of the Gentile Christians. That Luke still hopes that the elder brother will eventually join the party makes it likely that Luke is thinking of Jewish Christians rather than Jews.

Luke 15 reflects the interests of the post-Pauline Gentile Christian Church. This brings us closer to Luke's motivation than we have been before. For Luke the toll collectors and sinners who followed Jesus are the forerunners of converted Gentiles.

III 5 The Pharisee and the Toll Collector (Luke 18:9-14)

In his earlier sinner pericopes, Luke has striven to point out the fairness, justice, beauty and grace of Jesus' welcome of repenting sinners. A pious person must acknowledge himself or herself a sinner before God, and to follow Jesus, for everyone needs to repent (Luke 5:1-11); there is nothing to criticize in Jesus' table fellowship with sinners, for Jesus has come to heal them by calling them to repentance (Luke 5:27-32); repentant sinners are the ones who truly love Jesus as their Saviour (Luke 7:36-50); God in heaven wants to recover sinners and rejoices when they repent; those who do not welcome repenting sinners are like the resentful older brother who will not rejoice at the return of his brother (15:1-32). To create a contrast for this reasonable and merciful Jesus, Luke has cast the Pharisees as the opposing party, those who would not have a man of God have anything to do with sinners. In this role the Pharisees are unsympathetic, priggish, and misinformed at best, and haughty and aggressive at worst. In our present parable Luke sketches a picture of Pharisaism as arrogant self-righteousness and the opposite of the humble identification as a repentant sinner. The point is to make the reader see the Pharisaic attitude as the obviously wrong choice. For this end, the picture of Pharisaism is a strongly caricatured one.

The outline of the parable

The Pharisee sets himself apart to pray.³⁸⁷ He expresses a corresponding emotional distance from others by thanking God for not being “like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this toll collector” and concludes his prayer by lauding his dutiful fasting and tithing. The author's use of saucy hyperbole is evident in that the Pharisee quite casually equates other people with thieves, rogues and adulterers. This Pharisee sets himself up as a unique, superior category

³⁸⁷ I take it that the πρὸς ἑαυτὸν makes most sense connected to the preceding σταθεῖς rather than to the following ταῦτα προσήχητο: the Pharisee was “standing by himself and praying like this”, not “standing up and praying by himself like this”.

of his own.³⁸⁸ He singles out the toll collector to represent the inferior “others”.

The toll collector is portrayed as humble, suffering and harmless. Whereas the Pharisee is actively evaluating other people, the toll collector is portrayed as the passive object of such evaluation. He is being judged by the Pharisee and by God and he seems conscious of the fact that any judgement is likely to be negative. He stands “far off”, not daring to approach the holiest parts of the Temple with confidence as does the Pharisee. He does not dare to look up to heaven but beats his breast and asks God to be merciful to him, a sinner. The toll collector does not threaten the self-esteem of the audience as the Pharisee does; I take it that Luke’s audience, as indeed any audience, would have been nettled by the Pharisee’s careless denigration of “other people”.

The Pharisee, then, is set over against the toll collector in dualistic terms. The reader is offered a simple choice about with whom to identify. This is, of course, no real choice at all. The negative representation of the Pharisee forces, as it were, the reader to align himself or herself sympathetically with the “sinner”.³⁸⁹ The compact portrayal of the two men provides the emotional justification of the conclusion. The Pharisee and his like are to be condemned, for the character is irritatingly self-satisfied and truly offensive in his blindness to the value of others. The toll collector commends himself to the audience by his non-aggression, anguish, and humility, and by being slighted by the conceited Pharisee; he and his like will therefore be exalted.

Origin: tradition or Lukan creation?

In the Pharisee and Toll collector in the Temple there are really no logical inconsistencies that would point to redactional seams and the use of sources.³⁹⁰ The saying on exalting and humbling oneself (Luke 18:14b) is clearly an independent logion that could be applied in

³⁸⁸ Neale 1991, 173.

³⁸⁹ Neale 1991, 172.

³⁹⁰ I will not examine the vocabulary for reasons stated in ch. II 1.

different contexts, and it is illustrated in Luke with two different parables (Luke 14:8-11; 18:9-14). It also appears in Matt 23:12. But apart from this, the rest of the little story seems of one piece. Therefore the question seems to be whether the parable as a whole would suit the time of Luke rather than an earlier period. Let us turn first to the typically Lukan features in the parable.

I argued in ch. III 2 that our parable once more reflects the Lukan sinner triangle: a repenting sinner draws near to a representative of God, while a pious person criticizes this closeness; the representative of God announces that the sinner is welcome and the pious critic is in the wrong. Not everything in 18:9-14 fits the model to perfection. It could hardly be expected because God in this story is not represented by a human being, but by the Temple, in which God is believed to dwell – more precisely by the Holy of Holies, which the toll collector modestly stayed further away from than the Pharisee did. Naturally, God's immovable and mute Presence in the Temple does not react to the Critic and the Sinner in any direct way. Therefore the reaction of God comes in Jesus' closing words (18:14), solemnly emphasized with "I say to you": the Sinner went home justified whereas the haughty Pharisee did not. As God is not represented by a human, and the Temple can hardly be expected to warn the toll collector off, Luke cannot have the Pharisee actually criticize the representative of God for receiving the toll collector. Instead, the Pharisee expresses his certainty that the toll collector is not and will not be acceptable to God. The parable, then, reflects the basic dynamics of the Lukan sinner triangle in a somewhat altered form.

The very fact that it is about sinners and repentance makes the parable extremely Lukan, as sinners are a characteristic theme in the Gospel of Luke and repentance is a dominant theological theme in the whole of Luke-Acts.³⁹¹ Instruction in the right kind of prayer is also a Lukan emphasis, attested in the L parables of the Unjust Judge (18:1-8) and the Friend at Midnight (11:5-8).³⁹² The fact that the two men's prayers appear as soliloquy is a remarkably Lukan feature. As prayers, the men's words are technically addressed to God, but in the story their

³⁹¹ Neale 1991; Nave 2002; Méndez-Moratalla 2004.

³⁹² Goulder 1989, 668.

most important function is to inform Luke's audience of the private thoughts of these two characters. The men do not communicate with each other or any other character in the story with their prayers. Soliloquy in a parable is almost distinctively Lukan, best paralleled in the Gospel by the Rich Fool (12:17-18), the Prodigal Son (15:17-19), the Unjust Steward (16:3-4), and the Unjust Judge (18:4b-5).³⁹³

According to a wide-spread classification, Luke 18:9-14 is not really a parable but an example story (also called exemplary or illustration-story). It conveys directly its own moral by giving examples of types of character.³⁹⁴ Four Lukan parables, namely the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), the Rich Fool (12:13-21), the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31), and the Pharisee and the Toll Collector (18:9-14) are generally classified as illustration-stories.³⁹⁵ Within the canonical Gospels this type of story is unique to Luke, which seems to point in the direction that Luke either created them³⁹⁶ or at least worked his traditional material toward this goal.³⁹⁷ Generally, Luke has more parables that make an imperative rather than an indicative point than Mark and Matthew do; the emphasis in them is on how one should act.³⁹⁸

³⁹³ Goulder 1989, 668; Goodacre 1996, 169-171. Goodacre points out that there is a short soliloquy in two non-L parables, namely "they will obey my son" (Mark 12:6/ Matt 21:37/ Luke 20:13) and "my master is delayed in coming" Matt 24:48/ Luke 12:45). However, Goodacre agrees that it is almost distinctive of Luke to have soliloquy in parables. He notes that all the other examples of Lukan soliloquy have the form of reflection on circumstances followed by a statement of what the character will do, but counts 18:9-14 among instances of soliloquy, as solitary prayer in drama is usually seen as soliloquy (169 n.6).

³⁹⁴ This is Creed's definition (Creed 1930, lxix). The classification of illustration-story, or *Beispiel Erzählung*, was first presented by Jülicher (1910, 112-115).

³⁹⁵ Jülicher 1910, 585-641; Creed 1930, lxix; Bultmann 1979, 192-193; Linnemann 1966, 4-5.

³⁹⁶ Goulder 1989, 101, 483-492, 534-539, 628-634, 665-670.

³⁹⁷ Crossan (1972) argues that original parables of Jesus were later transformed into example stories.

³⁹⁸ Goulder (1989, 101-102, 668) claims that the Lukan parable nearly always makes an imperative point while the Markan and Matthean parables usually make an indicative one. Goodacre (1996, 217-229, esp. 228-229) softens this claim quite significantly, reminding of Mark 13:32-37 (Watchful Servants) and of the parables in Matt 24-25 which can likewise be seen as making an imperative point. He also points out that, for a change, Luke has an indicative point in the Lost Sheep while Matthew has an imperative one. Nevertheless Goodacre agrees on that imperative parables are more numerous in Luke than they are in the other Synoptics, and that

To sum up so far, the general themes of the parable (sinners, repentance, right attitude to prayer) are among Luke's special concerns; the dynamics are those of the Lukan sinner triangle; the pointed aim at teaching right attitudes and conduct (example or illustration-story) is Lukan; and the story-telling has the notably Lukan feature of soliloquy. I should say there are reasons enough here to conclude that Luke took a very active part in shaping this story. However, the weightiest reason to attribute this parable to a period considerably later than that of Jesus is its negative stereotyping of the Pharisee. We will return to this below; first we will discuss the subject of how repentance is pictured in this pericope.

Outlook of repentance in Luke 18:9-14

The Lukan portraits of repentant sinners have been much used in protestant theology of justification *sola gratia*. The parable of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector in the Temple lends itself easily to such an interpretation because it concentrates on emotional remorse and does not even mention a moral change of life or acts of restitution.

The parable is about the inner attitudes that people have towards themselves, each other, and God. Petr Pokorný, for one, has interpreted the message of the parable in terms reminiscent of both existentialism and of Lutheran theology. The toll collector who dares not lift his eyes towards Heaven stands before the living God knowing that whoever sees the face of God must die (Ex 33:20; Judges 6:22, 13:22; Isa 6:5):

He is the one who truly communicates with God. His attitude of unconditional falling back on the grace of God justifies him (Luke 18:14). He belongs to the sinners and the lost whom God loves because he has forgiven them much (Luke 7:36-50). The Gospel of Luke is a Gospel for the lost ... Striving for righteousness according to the Law³⁹⁹ (as well as the Temple cult, for the toll collector has brought no offering) leads to alienation, while consciousness of one's total dependence on the grace of God enables one to

they abound in L passages in which there are four illustration-stories, the Friend at Midnight (11:5-8), the Tower and Embassy (14:28-32), the Unjust Steward (16:1-9), the Servant of All Work (17:7-10) and the Unjust Judge (18:1-9).

³⁹⁹ *Gesetzesfrömmigkeit*.

stand before God's judgement and enter (new) life. That is the culmination of the Lukan teaching on sin...⁴⁰⁰

Summarizing the Lukan teaching on sin and repentance as a warning against works-righteousness and the call to full consciousness of one's dependence on grace makes Luke considerably more Lutheran than he probably was. It has been correctly pointed out that ethical social concern is at least as significant an aspect of the Lukan repentance theology.⁴⁰¹ According to Guy Nave, repentance in Luke requires "treating others fairly, justly and equitably":

This type of communal concern is part of what the author considers to be "fruits worthy of repentance". What John requires of the crowd is not simply some internalized sense of guilt or remorse nor is it merely some introspective philosophical spiritual exercise of piety. Instead, what John requires are concrete acts of selfless concern for the well-being of others.⁴⁰²

Repentance in Luke-Acts often begins with a sense of guilt over past conduct – guilt over the fact that sin has set one in opposition to God (cf. Luke 5:8; Acts 2:37-38) – but guilt itself is not repentance, nor is it the fruit that testifies to repentance. Guilt must be accompanied by a change in the way one lives one's life.⁴⁰³

Nave manages to make his point that the communal concern or ethical side of repentance is extremely important in Luke-Acts and that this is evident when the work is viewed as a whole. The view that Luke's strongest emphasis in repentance is ethical reform suits especially well passages such as Luke 3:7-14, 13:1-5, and 19:1-10.

In my view the truth lies somewhere between the interpretations of Nave and of Pokorný. Luke teaches both ethical social behaviour and a correct inner attitude, self-identification as a sinner. Ethical social concern is certainly one of the aspects of Lukan repentance, but it is not everything.⁴⁰⁴ Certainly there is no reason to downplay the Lukan

⁴⁰⁰ Pokorný 1998, 127, my translation.

⁴⁰¹ Kiilunen 1992; Nave 2002.

⁴⁰² Nave 2002, 153.

⁴⁰³ Nave 2002, 153 n. 35.

⁴⁰⁴ In my view Nave exaggerates when he claims that "throughout Luke, most of the teachings of Jesus, like those of John the Baptist, emphasize ethical social behavior that focuses on abandoning greed and treating all people fairly, justly and

emphasis on remorse. In our parable the social and economical aspects of the Lukan repentance theology are missing; they are overshadowed by the themes of humility, guilt and appeal for mercy. Three of the Lukan sinner pericopes (7:36-50, 15:11-32, 18:9-14) amply display remorse, even bordering on the melodramatic. In two of these (Luke 7:36-50, 18:9-14) there is no emphasis on and no information whatsoever of a following change of life; in Luke 23:39-43 it is positively certain that no ethical change will ensue. Reading the pericopes of the Sinful Woman and the Pharisee and the Toll Collector one might even imagine that Luke wishes to portray their anguish at *not* being able to change their lives. So while in the Gospel of Luke there really is ample material on ethical social behaviour, as Nave attests,⁴⁰⁵ there are also pericopes in which repentance consists only of faith in Jesus (23:39-43), of remorse and faith in Jesus combined (7:36-50), or of remorse only (18:9-14).

Negative stereotyping of the Pharisee

In order to convince his audience of the impossibility of the “Pharisaic” standpoint, Luke constructs two character-types that are in stark contrast to each other. The toll collector is characterized by humility, repentance, and the status of a sinner, and the Pharisee by aggressive religious conceit and uncritical self-aggrandizement. Luke gives two clear role models, an obviously good one and an obviously bad one.

The characterization is a literary construct that serves theological and didactic purposes. However, Christians through the ages and many scholars have taken the negative portrayal of the Pharisee for the truth about what Pharisees were like. Many have argued that the Pharisee and his self-sufficient prayer represent a genuine Pharisaic attitude

equitably ... the Lukan Jesus suggests that the fruits worthy of repentance are those that are manifested in the context of human interpersonal relationships and that demonstrate ethical social concern for the well being of others” (Nave 2002, 175). That the Lukan Jesus should mainly teach ethical behaviour in interpersonal relationships seems a summary to suit the modern (and post-modern) mind; certainly Luke aimed at teaching about concerns like God, salvation, eschatology and the afterlife as well.

⁴⁰⁵ Nave 2002, 175.

against which Jesus protested.⁴⁰⁶ Others claim, in my view more plausibly, that what we have here is not a realistic portrait of either Judaism or of Pharisaism, but a distorted caricature of the latter.⁴⁰⁷

Naturally there is some connection to certain genuine features of Rabbinic Judaism. Caricatures work because they are always in some sense inspired by real life, even though they exaggerate and distort it. Thanking God for not being among the impious is not unparalleled in Rabbinic literature: such prayers did exist.⁴⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the Lukan Pharisee's prayer is a caricature of this type of prayer. The difference from original Rabbinic thanksgiving of this kind is that the Lukan Pharisee sets himself up as the *only* one who is righteous: for him "other people" consist only of "thieves, rogues, and adulterers".⁴⁰⁹ It is this excluding of all others that is unparalleled in any serious Rabbinic prayer, and it is definitely not a fair portrait of either the Rabbis or of historical Pharisaism. The Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 can by no means be taken for "the man that the Rabbis wished to be and were".⁴¹⁰ The toll collector is similarly a stylized figure, all humility, shame and contrition.

Luke and the negative stereotype

Some have claimed that the parable may go back to Jesus, exaggerated and polemical though it is.⁴¹¹ An origin in the teaching of Jesus is here as generally difficult to rule out altogether, considering how uncertain all knowledge of Gospel origins is and what great changes tradition and

⁴⁰⁶ Neale (1991, 166-168) and Fiedler (1976, 230) sum up the scholarly discussion on whether the figure of the Pharisee represents truthfully the Pharisaism of Jesus' day or is an exaggeration or caricature of it. Among those who have seen the Pharisee here as drawn from historical reality are, e.g., Joachim Jeremias, Eta Linnemann, Ernst Haenchen, Norman Perrin, I.H. Marshall and Joseph Fitzmyer.

⁴⁰⁷ Montefiore 1970, 396; Schottroff 1973, 439-461; Fiedler 1976, 228-233; Neale 1991, 172-173. Bovon (2001, 210) considers that the Pharisee is a polemical caricature of the opponent but still takes this for an authentic teaching of Jesus.

⁴⁰⁸ A much-quoted parallel is the Rabbinic prayer at b. Ber. 28b.

⁴⁰⁹ Neale 1991, 172-176.

⁴¹⁰ Montefiore 1970, 396.

⁴¹¹ Bovon (2001, 209-210) admits that the parable builds on a polemical caricature of the opponent and may be wounding, but sees caricature as containing accurate elements and opines that it could go back to Jesus.

the creativity of the evangelists may have caused. Nevertheless the parable as it stands now fits best later Christian anti-Pharisaic polemic, which is, if anything, heightened in Luke. It also serves Luke's special interest of using the Pharisees as the dark foil against which the repentance of the sinners stands forth.

Luke's portrayal of the Pharisees is ambivalent because it reflects his attitude towards the Jews. For Luke, the Pharisees represent Judaism as its influential leaders.⁴¹² Luke is keenly interested in Judaism but his fundamental aim and motivation is to show that the Jews are to blame for the parting of Christianity and of Judaism. In the words of Robert Maddox,

Luke is sharply aware of the separation that has taken place between the Christians (now largely of Gentile origin) and that part of Law-keeping Judaism which has not accepted Jesus as the Messiah ... there are in Luke-Acts not only an undeniable "Jewish orientation" but also two other closely related factors, which we might call a "Gentile orientation" and an "anti-Jewish orientation", which must be studied if we are to arrive at a proper understanding of Luke's aim.⁴¹³

Respectively, Luke may be said to have a Pharisaic orientation which at close examination turns out to be motivated by a deeply anti-Pharisaic orientation. The Pharisees play a central role in Luke 5-19 as well as in Acts. There are certain ambivalent features in the Lukan portrayal that have given rise to the interpretation that Luke would be on the whole more positive in his attitude towards the Pharisees than the other Synoptics.⁴¹⁴ Luke says that the Pharisees shared with Christians the belief in angels and in the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8), that some Pharisees were converted to Christianity (Acts 15:5) and that the Pharisees at certain points saved Jesus and the apostles in Jerusalem from violence by other Jews (Luke 13:31, Acts 5:33-40; see also Acts 23:9). Pharisees represent the mother religion, Judaism, as Luke sees it; this includes what Luke sees as the best heritage of Judaism (eschatology, righteousness) and what he sees as its worst sides (legalism, hypocrisy, blindness to God's intentions, opposition to

⁴¹² Jervell 1972, 170; Maddox 1982, 42.

⁴¹³ Maddox 1982, 42.

⁴¹⁴ E.g., Ziesler 1979, 146-157; Brawley 1987, 86-88; Neusner 1973, 71-78.

Jesus). But in spite of this ambivalence the overall impression is that Luke is even more hostile towards the Pharisees than Mark or Matthew. Luke tells us that the Pharisees are lovers of money (Luke 16:14); that the leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy (Luke 12:1, diff. Mark 8:15/ Matt 16:6); and that the Pharisees justify themselves before people but are an abomination to God who knows their hearts (Luke 16:15). The three scenes in which Pharisees invite Jesus to eat in their houses all lead to teaching that aims at undermining the authority and status of the Pharisees (7:36-50, 11:37-12:12, 14:1-24).⁴¹⁵ The dominant motive in the Lukan depiction of the Pharisees, as of the Jews, is the need to show that they misunderstood God's intentions and turned away from God in disbelieving Jesus and his followers, that they present an inferior interpretation of faith and that they and not the Christians caused the separation of the two religions.

Halvor Moxnes and David Neale have called attention to the fact that the Lukan picture of the Pharisees is not informed by historical interest in the first place but rather by the need to create a negative contrast for Jesus. They are, in the words of Moxnes, "not so much historical figures as stereotypes ... Their main characteristic is that they are described as anti-types to Jesus and his disciples."⁴¹⁶ Neale claims correctly that the real reason for the Lukan hostility to Pharisees is that the Gospel story itself "requires such a conflict. No conflict, no Gospel story."⁴¹⁷

The negative stereotyping of the Pharisee in 18:9-14 is informed by this Lukan need to create a contrast for the merciful sinner-befriending Jesus and his message of salvation for repentant sinners. Haughtiness and contempt contrast with Jesus' empathetic mercy; self-righteousness with true humility, which shows itself in the toll collector's self-identification as a sinner; and concentration on legalistic minutiae with

⁴¹⁵ In Luke 11:37-12:1 the setting of the scene for the Q Woes, a meal in a Pharisee's house, enhances rather than softens the anti-Pharisaic message. As a result the Lukan Jesus becomes an extremely arrogant and aggressive guest; his behaviour towards his host is inexcusable unless the audience already sees the Pharisees as enemies par excellence.

⁴¹⁶ Moxnes 1988, 152.

⁴¹⁷ Neale 1991, 103-108.

true piety.⁴¹⁸ The characterization is closely related to that of the Pharisee Simon, whose cold and contemptuous attitude was contrasted to the humility and love shown by the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-50, and to the negative sentences on the Pharisees as hypocrites and those who justify themselves before people but are really an abomination to God (Luke 12:1, 16:15).

Luke 11:37-12:1 is also illustrative as a parallel to our parable. The Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 seems nearly an illustration of the verses 11:42-43. In the latter, the Pharisees are said to “tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds” but “neglect justice and the love of God”; they are also said “to love to have the seat of honour in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the market-places”. Similarly, the Pharisee in 18:9-14 practises meticulous tithing. He has apparently chosen a much better place than the toll collector and sees himself as much more respectable than other people, matters that correspond to the Pharisees’ love of seats of honour and general respect in 11:42-43. Finally, in both texts the Pharisees fail in their relationship to their human neighbours as well as to God. In 18:9-14 their failure is in a disdainful attitude to others and a wrong estimation of how God views the Pharisee and the toll collector; in 11:42-43 they fail to show justice and love of God.

As 11:42-43, stemming from Q, shows, the negative stereotyping of the Pharisees came to Luke from tradition. Luke did not invent anti-Pharisaism though he did enhance it. Luke 18:9-14 betrays Luke's anti-Pharisaism in depicting the Pharisee as hypocritical, bigoted and aggressive, the anti-type of Jesus and his favourites, the repentant sinners.

The pericope and the controversy of Jews and Gentiles

Luke’s manner of picturing his Pharisees is connected with his views on the justification of Christianity against Judaism. The Pharisees in the Gospel of Luke are informed by Luke’s theological views on the Judaism of his day.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ For the tithing system, see Neale 1991, 46-50. That Luke considers tithing as legalistic minutiae is obvious in the light of Luke 11:42.

⁴¹⁹ See ch. III 3.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector is certainly a distorted, unfair and highly partial depiction of Christianity versus Judaism. Luke aims at presenting the opponents of Jesus and his message in an extremely unattractive light, an obviously wrong alternative. The Pharisee is characterized by the Jewish practice of tithing (fasting Luke knows as Christian practice, too, Acts 13:2-3).

As we noted in ch. III 3, repentance was associated with the conversion of Gentiles. Intertestamental Jewish writers like Philo and the author of *Joseph and Aseneth* join New Testament authors like Paul and the author of Ephesians in associating Gentiles with sin, darkness, and evil, and their own religion with virtue and righteousness (Gal 2:15, Rom 2:25-29, Eph 4:17-19).⁴²⁰ The conversion of Gentiles into Judaism or Christianity was therefore seen to require remorse, repentance and a new life (Eph 2:1-3, 11-2; 4:17-24).⁴²¹ Gentile religions were seen as idolatry that always contained the element of disregard for the true God (Rom 1:19-21, Acts 17:29-30).⁴²² Philo claimed that conversion brought about a life of virtue and discarding of vice.⁴²³ In this cultural context repenting sinners are not an odd symbol of and model of identification for converting Gentiles.

⁴²⁰ In Rom 1-3 the association is evident despite Paul's emphasis that in practice Jews are no better than Gentiles and all are saved by grace; those who obey the Law must be regarded as "circumcized", whether they be that physically or not; what matters is that one is "inwardly a Jew" (Rom 2:25-29). Circumcision and Jewishness, then, are still the standards and symbols of righteousness; a good Jew is not regarded as "inwardly a Gentile", but *vice versa*.

⁴²¹ Philo discusses the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism in the tractate *Περὶ Μετανοίας*, to be found in his *De Virtutibus* 175-185.

⁴²² Philo: *De Virtutibus* 177-180.

⁴²³ Philo writes: "And at the same time it is necessary that, as in the sun shadow follows the body, so also a participation in all other virtues must inevitably follow the giving of due honour to the living God; for those who come over to this worship become at once prudent, and temperate, and modest, and gentle, and merciful, and humane, and venerable, and just, and magnanimous, and lovers of truth, and superior to all considerations of money and pleasure; just as, on the contrary, one may see that those who forsake the holy laws of God are intemperate, shameless, unjust, disreputable, weak-minded, quarrelsome, companions of falsehood and perjury, willing to sell their liberty for luxurious eating, for strong wine, for sweet meats, and for beauty, for pleasures of the belly and of the parts below the belly; the miserable end of all which enjoyment is ruin to both body and soul (*De Virtutibus* 181-182, translation by Guy Nave, 2002, 94-95).

The Prodigal Son seems to be a carefully composed allegory of the mutual relationship of Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians. It is much less likely that Luke might have had the Jewish Christians in mind in creating the Pharisee in 18:9-14, for the treatment of the theme is very different in the Prodigal Son. As I understand that text, Luke certainly presents the elder brother there as being in the wrong and needing to change his attitude, but he nevertheless stresses that the door to the party is still open and that the father (God) keeps persuading his elder son to enter. What is more, the elder son is portrayed in a subtle and nuanced manner that makes it possible to understand his point of view, and even to identify with him to a certain extent; he is hard working, faithful and outspoken, at the least. By contrast there is nothing in the Pharisee in 18:9-14 with which one would like to identify. He is a self-satisfied, priggish and covertly aggressive cardboard character. He is viewed mercilessly, sarcastically, and from the outside, and as a result he does not appear to have a single good quality. The figure of the Pharisee in our parable is informed by Luke's general anti-Pharisaic tendency, the motivation of which is Luke's desire to explain why the great majority of Jews refused to convert.⁴²⁴

The importance of the historical questions

Luke 18:9-14 is one of the most anti-Pharisaic pericopes in the Gospel of Luke and as such has contributed greatly to the later Christian negative stereotyping of the Pharisees, of the Rabbis, and even of Judaism in general as the heirs of Pharisaism.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ Cf Salo who sees the parable as referring to the situation of the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. In his view, Luke's point is that an upright Jewish Christian would never pray like the Pharisee in the parable (Salo 2003, 141).

⁴²⁵ Schottroff 1973, 439-461; Neale 1991, 166-168. Schottroff has later sought to interpret the parable in a way that would free it from anti-Pharisaism (2006, 8-9). Her solution is that both the toll collector and the Pharisee act in ways that are not expected of them. The self-righteous Pharisee is not supposed to be a typical representative of Pharisaism any more than the repentant toll collector is of all toll collectors. Schottroff's interpretation does not work in the Lukan context, for Luke has by his ch. 18 definitely schooled his audience to expect mostly negative things from the Pharisees and repentance from the toll collectors – if they had not learned that much from Mark, Q and tradition already.

Schottroff's aim is to avoid an anti-Pharisaic interpretation, but I am doubtful of interpretations that seek to deny Luke's inherent anti-Pharisaism.

Lukan sinner pericopes, and especially the parable of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector with its unfair caricaturing of the Pharisees, show the necessity of discussing the historical reliability of the Lukan portrayal of Jesus, the sinners and the Pharisees. Purely descriptive literary criticism in which historical questions are waved aside leads to mere re-presentation of the Lukan thought-world. When issues like the pejorative depiction of Pharisaism and of Judaism are involved, this is ethically problematic.

I take two recent examples. The first is Guy Nave's *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts*.⁴²⁶ The third chapter deals with the concept of repentance in contemporary Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish literature.⁴²⁷ Nave finds with Philo an understanding of repentance that has important connections with that of Luke, for instance, the ideas that true repentance always includes a moral change for the better and that repenting sinners are to be welcomed and embraced, though Nave does not point these similarities out. The fourth chapter of the book consists of an insightful and interesting reading of the whole of Luke-Acts; in it Nave claims that repentance with a strong emphasis on ethical social behaviour is the central and dominant concern in all of Lukan theology.⁴²⁸ The problem with the book is that as historical questions are never asked, Luke's idyllic, idealistic, and anti-Jewish, picture of Jesus over against the Pharisees remains an unquestioned truth. In Nave's book, as in Luke, Jesus is the prophet of mercy, solidarity, and justice, who calls for a radical change; the Pharisees, with Nave and with Luke, are the contrasting force that makes Jesus shine forth so brightly. Nave has actually, in his analysis of Philo, proven that the Lukan vision of true repentance which leads to ethical behaviour and loving welcome to repentant sinners was *not* unique or unheard of within contemporary Judaism, but he never draws this conclusion explicitly. True enough, Nave never really claims that the Lukan picture of Jesus, the sinners and the Pharisees is historically

Unfortunate as it is, the roots of anti-Pharisaic stereotyping are in the Gospels, as Schottroff herself had earlier readily admitted (1990, 218-220). Her earlier view on Luke 18:9-14 is that it is a merciless caricature of Pharisaism (1973, 439-461; 1990, 312).

⁴²⁶ Nave 2002.

⁴²⁷ Nave 2002, 39-144.

⁴²⁸ Nave 2002, 145-224.

accurate. This, however, remains the overriding impression because the question is passed over in silence. Nave passes the Lukan juxtaposition of the merciful, compassionate, and just Jesus and the merciless, priggish, blind and unjust Pharisees on to the reader without a comment on its historical tenability.

My other example is Fernando Méndez-Moratalla's *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke*.⁴²⁹ Méndez-Moratalla is to some extent interested in basing his analysis of the Lukan conversion on historical argument. Unfortunately he repeats faulty notions. He claims that since the Pharisees did not share table-fellowship with the sinful ones,⁴³⁰ "it was no surprise to find the Pharisees and scribes checking on Jesus' table-fellowship (and observance of the law) in order to accuse him."⁴³¹ "The Pharisees deprived the lost of forgiveness and what is more poignant, they also opposed Jesus for offering it himself."⁴³² Such claims appear to affirm without proof the obviously slanted Lukan views that, first, the Pharisees and scribes exercised great authority over everybody in Jesus' day, and second, that they took it upon themselves to see that *no one*, not even non-Pharisees like Jesus, ate with sinners, and third, that they were opposed to the idea of God offering forgiveness to the sinners. None of these claims are well grounded.⁴³³

Mostly, however, Méndez-Moratalla moves on purely descriptive lines, paraphrasing Luke as he understands him:

In Luke, the divine salvific initiative manifested in Jesus' welcoming of people otherwise rejected by those who generally accept conventional socio-religious values becomes a major element of the criticism and opposition to his ministry... According to Luke, religious leaders censure and murmur against Jesus' association with these people, accusing him of befriending toll collectors and sinners.⁴³⁴

Repentance... is the sole condition for forgiveness... While the ministry of Jesus emphasizes the universal need of repentance regardless of any claim,

⁴²⁹ Méndez-Moratalla 2004.

⁴³⁰ Here Méndez-Moratalla (2004, 131 n. 5) quotes Marshall (1978, 599).

⁴³¹ Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 131 n. 5.

⁴³² Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 134.

⁴³³ Sanders 1985, 194-208.

⁴³⁴ Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 218.

those who oppose him and his ministry do so from a limited and factional point of view that characterizes them as (self-)righteous. The emphasis is unambiguous: since all are sinners, all need to repent.⁴³⁵

As to “the religious leaders”, Méndez-Moratalla might as well have written “the Pharisees and the scribes”, for they obviously are the figures who in the Gospel of Luke oppose Jesus' association with the toll collectors and sinners; Jesus' sinful company is not an issue with the high priests, the rulers and Herod, the only other figures who appear as leaders of the Jews in Luke. Méndez-Moratalla's reading, then, passes on without a critical comment the Lukan views that the Pharisees and scribes were the religious leaders of the Judaism of Jesus' time; that they represented “conventional socio-religious values” while “divine salvific initiative” is manifested in Jesus; and that those who opposed Jesus (apparently, the Pharisees) had a “limited and factional point of view” and were self-righteous.

David Neale's work is an example of a fruitful and ethically responsible combination of literary critical analysis and historical analysis.⁴³⁶ Neale does not brush aside the question of the relationship of the Lukan picture and of historical reality but centres on it. In a combination of literary criticism and historical perspective, he claims that the Lukan Pharisees are a religious category, not authentic historical agents. Their characterization is not based on what the Pharisees were really like in Jesus' day, but on a theological drama in which the opposing parties, Jesus and the Pharisees, are cast as representing right and wrong, light and darkness, good and evil, respectively. Such an analysis faces the deep anti-Pharisaic tendency of the Gospel of Luke frankly and shows that its roots are in a black-and-white, polarized religious world-view rather than in Palestinian social history.

Luise Schottroff, in her essay on anti-Judaism in the New Testament, claimed that the mass-destruction of the Jews resulted from an ahistorical Christology in which religious and political superiority was claimed for those who believed in Christ.⁴³⁷ Responsible theology “after Auschwitz” must not bypass or make harmless the anti-Jewish

⁴³⁵ Méndez-Moratalla 2004, 219.

⁴³⁶ *None but the Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke*, 1991.

⁴³⁷ Schottroff 1990, 221.

statements of the New Testament but rather face them and analyse them.⁴³⁸ Schottroff herself is of the opinion that the Christology of the New Testament is not anti-Jewish in its essence but rather becomes anti-Jewish when it is combined with Christian theology that claims to be absolute and sees the New Testament as an absolute, ahistorical truth.⁴³⁹ In my opinion, literary criticism with no historical perspective, or with scanty and slanted historical information, opens the door for just such claims of the absolute truth of Christian theology.

I do not agree with Schottroff's view that anti-Jewish theology could only originate through unsound interpretation of the New Testament while the essence of the New Testament would be entirely clean of it. Naturally interpretation is crucial. Real social and political trouble begins when potentially oppressive texts (for example, texts with traces of anti-Judaism or of patriarchalism) are taken to represent quintessential and absolute theological truths. But everything relies not on interpretation, for the texts lend themselves more easily to some interpretations than to others. The parable of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector is a good example. Obviously, an unfairly negative picture of Pharisaism is painted in it; in short, Pharisaism appears in it as self-righteousness, as the opposite of true humility before God. The negative caricaturing is not just in the "eye of the reader"; the fact that "pharisaical" in common usage stands for "hypocritical" and "self-righteous" reflects the strong overall impression of the canonical Gospels and is not the result of haphazard or bad Bible-reading. We may think of alternative ways of interpreting the parable of the Pharisee and the Toll Collector, but these involve reading it against the grain. Luke simply saw the Pharisees in a mostly negative light and nearly always depicted them accordingly; our parable is one more proof of his bias. I see no reason to deny the fact, but it is ethically questionable to let the negative Lukan picture stand for the historical truth.

I find the parable invaluable as a teaching of the crooked directions piety can take. It offers all the more intriguing material for meditation in betraying simultaneously a very clear vision of and perfect blindness to the very dangers of which it warns, namely, self-righteousness and

⁴³⁸ Schottroff 1990, 221-223.

⁴³⁹ Schottroff 1990, 221-222.

negative stereotyping of others. Luke projects these qualities onto the Pharisees, outside his own Christian group, and Christian interpreters have followed his lead by confirming the Lukan projection: this is what the historical Pharisees were truly like. In the history of interpretation, the Pharisee has mostly been a picture of someone else, be that someone the Pharisees in the time of Jesus, or their spiritual heirs the Rabbis, or the Jews in general, or those Christians who opposed the reformation,⁴⁴⁰ or whosoever is supposedly not seeing the meaning of grace correctly enough. As soon as the Pharisee is seen as a portrayal of other people rather than of one's own group the door opens to what has been called "a Pharisaic attitude toward the Pharisees": "Thank God that I am not like that Pharisee."⁴⁴¹ It is an ironical turn for a parable that was, according to Luke, aimed at those who thought themselves righteous and regarded others with contempt; but it is an attitude from which Luke himself is not exempt.

Summary

In 18:9-14 Luke sketches a picture of Pharisaism as arrogant self-righteousness, the ideological opposite of the humble self-identification as a repentant sinner. Pharisaism is strongly caricatured so as to appear as the obviously wrong choice.

The word on exalting and humbling oneself (Luke 18:14b) is an independent logion that was applied to different contexts. The rest of the story is of one piece. It could have been created by Luke because of its many Lukan features and because of its anti-Pharisaism, which also suits Luke as an evangelist and the Christianity of his day in general.

The general themes of the parable (sinners, repentance, correct attitude to prayer) are among Luke's special concerns. The dynamics are those of the Lukan sinner triangle. The parable is really an illustration-story that appears in the New Testament only in Luke. The story makes use of the notably Lukan feature of soliloquy.

⁴⁴⁰ Melancthon accused his adversaries of believing themselves better than others like the Pharisee in Luke 18:11. *Apologia confessionis Augustanae*, IV 332.

⁴⁴¹ Mottu 1973, 196.

In our parable the social and economic aspects of the Lukan repentance theology are missing; they are overshadowed by the themes of humility, guilt and appeal for mercy. This is not in disharmony with the Lukan teaching on repentance, for Luke teaches both ethical social behaviour and a correct inner attitude. While there is ample material on ethical behaviour, there are pericopes in which repentance consists only of faith in Jesus (23:39-43), of remorse and faith in Jesus (7:36-50), or of remorse only (18:9-14).

In the parable the Pharisee is set over against the toll collector in dualistic terms that serve theological and didactic purposes. This is not a realistic portrait of either Judaism or of Pharisaism, but a distorted caricature. The difference from original Rabbinic thanksgiving is that the Lukan Pharisee sets himself up as the *only* one who is righteous.

The parable as it stands now reflects Christian anti-Pharisaic polemic, which is often very harsh in Luke. The theme of Pharisees and sinners is here connected with Luke's views of Christianity versus Judaism. Luke uses the Pharisees to show that the Jews in general turned away from God in disbelieving Jesus and that they and not the Christians caused the separation of the two religions. The Pharisee is characterized by the Jewish practice of tithing, whereas repentance could be associated with the conversion of Gentiles.

The negative stereotyping of the Pharisee in 18:9-14 is informed by Luke's need to create a contrast for the merciful, sinner-befriending Jesus and his message of salvation for repentant sinners. The characterization of the Pharisee here is closely related to that of the cold and contemptuous Pharisee Simon in Luke 7:36-50 and to the negative sentences on the Pharisees as hypocrites and those who justify themselves before people but are really an abomination to God (Luke 12:1; 16:15). There is also a close connection to Luke 11:42-43 where the Pharisees are characterized by meticulous tithing and by failing in their relationship to their human neighbours as well as to God.

The characterization of the Lukan Pharisees is based on a theological drama in which Jesus and the Pharisees are cast as representing right and wrong, light and darkness. Its roots are in a polarized, black-and-white religious world-view rather than in the social history of Palestine

in the first century. Because the negative image of the Pharisees is all too easily projected onto present-day Judaism it is ethically questionable to let the negative Lukan picture pass unquestioned for the historical truth.

III 6 Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

In the story of Zacchaeus the Lukan theme of the repentance of toll collectors⁴⁴² reaches its climax. This is the last time that toll collectors are mentioned in Luke-Acts. Moreover, the toll collector here is an ἀρχιτελώνης, a chief toll collector, and his conversion is a model one, with outstanding almsgiving and restitution of extorted property.

In this chapter, I will first handle the origin of the story. For analyses on the language of the pericope I refer the reader to ch. II 1. A widely supported view, based on tradition-critical notions, has been that most of the story is traditional while some sentences are Lukan additions. In my view there are weighty reasons to see Luke's creative writing as much more thoroughgoing than that. Luke may have based his story on a historical (or legendary) reminiscence, but the greatest part of the story, rather than some isolated sentences, bears Lukan characteristics and expresses favourite Lukan themes.

Second, I will make an excursion into a literary-critical analysis of the construction of the point of view in the Zacchaeus story and the other sinner pericopes. For this end, some space must be dedicated to introducing the method and terminology. I hope this approach will provide even more insight into how exactly Luke leads his audience towards his theological goal, identification with the repenting sinner. Luke is writing the story more consistently from the point of view of the repenting sinner than ever before.

The origin of the story

I hope to have shown in ch. II 1 that the language-based methods of sorting traditional and redactional elements in the Lukan special material are arbitrary and that their basic presuppositions are circular. However, there are redaction-critical and tradition-critical observations that are worth considering.

The most conspicuous inconsistency often noted in tradition-critical analysis in this story is that verse 19:8 does not link up smoothly with

⁴⁴² Previously worked on in 3:12-13, 5:27-32, 7:29-30, 15:1-2, 18:9-14.

the previous and following verses. The crowd has been speaking in 19:7. In 19:8 Zacchaeus makes a speech, but not to the crowd, but to Jesus. At the beginning of 19:9 Luke reports that Jesus answered Zacchaeus (εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν), but the words of Jesus are, surprisingly, addressed to the crowd and not to Zacchaeus, for he is spoken of in the third person. Rudolf Bultmann has offered the classical solution to the problem: if 19:8 (and, apparently, the words πρὸς αὐτόν) were removed Jesus would answer the crowd directly, without the pretence that it is Zacchaeus whom he is addressing.⁴⁴³ The ethics of 19:8 are in line with Luke's general concern for the poor, and, moreover, they link up with the demands that Luke has John the Baptist present (3:10-14). Luke, then, could have added 19:8 to the traditional story, stressing that the salvation of Zacchaeus did not consist only of intimacy with Jesus but also of a moral transformation. The point of the traditional story would originally have been the table fellowship of Jesus and Zacchaeus, in which Zacchaeus' joyful reception of Jesus signalled his being a son of Abraham (cf. 7:36-50).⁴⁴⁴ Eating together is not mentioned, but it would naturally have followed from an invitation to someone's home. By the addition of 19:8 the evangelist spelled out the appropriate response to Jesus' grace.⁴⁴⁵ Bultmann claimed that 19:10 was likewise added by Luke. Many agree inasmuch as the verse sums up the Lukan theology of sinners as the lost whom Jesus came to save. It presents Luke's summary of Jesus' activity in the whole period in Galilee and in Judaea, as Jesus next rides to Jerusalem.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ Bultmann 1979, 33-34.

⁴⁴⁴ Talbert 1984, 176.

⁴⁴⁵ Bultmann's solution has been widely accepted, as 19:8 indeed fits Lukan ethics remarkably well and obviously creates a tension in the flow of the episode. Paffenroth (1997, 122-123) has raised the objection that giving away only one half of one's property would be more lenient than Luke's own ethics, which would require giving all. Such a distinction between the opinions of L material and Luke as the redactor of Mark and Q seems exaggerated. In his Gospel Luke does mention leaving or selling "everything" several times (e.g., Luke 5:11/ Mark 1:20, Luke 5:29/ Mark 2:15, Luke 18:22/ Mark 10:21), but Luke 5:29/ Mark 2:15 seems to indicate that this cannot be taken literally. Luke's Levi "left everything", but was nevertheless able to give a banquet in his house.

⁴⁴⁶ E.g., Marshall 1970, 116. Bultmann (1970, 58-60, 64-65) also believed that the oldest part in the traditional story was 19:9. He classed the story as a biographical apophthegm in which a fictitious ideal scene had been created around an originally independent word of the Lord. The artificial quality of the scene was in his opinion obvious in the fact that Zacchaeus and Jesus could have not known what the people

It must be admitted that 19:8 really does sit in its context uneasily. There is indeed considerable inconsistency in the flow of the story here. It is likewise correct that 19:8 fits Lukan ethics well. The only problem with the view that 19:8 is a Lukan insertion in a traditional story is that there is much besides 19:8 in the story of Zacchaeus that fits Luke's ideology and story-telling style extremely well. Let us look closer at the Lukan features in the story.

The Lukan character of the story

The story is rich in themes and features that appear often in the Lukan special passages.⁴⁴⁷ Giving alms and donating one's property are virtues that Luke emphasizes (Luke 3:11, 11:41, 12:33; Acts 2:44-45). The hero is a sinner like the sinful woman (7:36-50), the toll collector in the Temple (18:9-14) and the prodigal son (15:11-32), and, like them, he repents.⁴⁴⁸ The Lukan sinner triangle is repeated once more. The murmuring righteous would shut a sinner out from Jesus' presence; Jesus as the representative of God confirms his gracious acceptance of the sinner (15:1-2 and again, the stories of the sinful woman, toll collector in the Temple, and the prodigal; see chapter III 2). The emphasis of something marvellous happening "today" is very typical of the Gospel of Luke (2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 19:5, 9; 23:43), as is speech

were murmuring about. Yet there is no reason why the discontent expressed by the verb *diagoggu/zein* could not have been voiced or otherwise easy to perceive; in 15:2, as well, it refers to criticism that is quite obvious to Jesus. Also, the very idea of 19:9 as an independent logion is odd, as Tannehill has pointed out. It requires an explanation: to what and to whom could "this house" and "he too is a son of Abraham" refer without the surrounding story? It seems more natural to claim that the speech of Jesus in 19:9-10 is a rhetorical and logical whole (Tannehill 1993, 207-210).

⁴⁴⁷ Goulder 1989, 677-678.

⁴⁴⁸ There has been much discussion on whether Luke means to depict Zacchaeus as a sinner who decides to repent on the very day described in 19:1-10, or as an upright man who is marginalized by his prejudiced neighbours and vindicated by Jesus. The question turns on whether Zacchaeus's statement in 19:8 reflects a fresh resolve or is a description of his normal actions. The vindication theory was first presented by White (1979, 90-94) and is defended by Fitzmyer (1985, 1221-1222), Mitchell (1990, 162), Ravens (1991, 21-27) and Green (1997, 671-672). The traditional view of the story as one describing the repentance of Zacchaeus is held by Talbert (1984, 176-177), Goulder (1989, 677), Hamm (1991, 249-252), O'Toole (1991, 108-109) and Tannehill (1993, 203).

about salvation (σωτηρία/ σωτήριον as a noun, 1:69,71,77; 2:30, 3:6). Luke often mentions Abraham (1:55,73, 13:16, 16:19-31). There is the errand of seeking the lost (sinners), which Luke makes much of in chapter 15. The themes of rejoicing and of entertaining guests (chapter 1, 5:29, 7:36, 10:38; 11:37, 14:1, chapter 15) are also prominent with Luke.

The Zacchaeus story could be called a more novelistic and colourful cousin of the episode of Levi. Assuming Markan priority, the similarity and possible relatedness of these episodes can in principle be explained in two ways: either Mark influenced the development of a traditional story or he served as Luke's direct inspiration. Bultmann, who believed that the story was for the most part older than Luke, thought that the story of Levi (Mark 2:14-17) had provided inspiration for creating the scene of 19:1-10 around a speech of Jesus.⁴⁴⁹ Goulder claims that Luke himself wrote the story on the basis of the Levi episode.⁴⁵⁰ The similarities, certainly, are hard to miss. A toll collector invites Jesus to his home, presumably also to eat. The Lukan sinner triangle repeats itself: the proximity of Jesus to a sinner/ sinners arouses discontent in righteous people, but Jesus confirms that the sinner(s) have a right to his company. However, the differences are conspicuous as well. The absence of disciples, of Pharisees, of scribes and of a meal setting, as well as the lively description of Zacchaeus and the unforgettable way in which this character gets close to Jesus, makes the story very different from the Levi episode.

⁴⁴⁹ Bultmann 1970, 58-60, 64-65.

⁴⁵⁰ Goulder 1989, 675. Less than convincing in Goulder's theory of the origin of the story is his view that Luke is dependent on the Matthean version, Matt 9:9-13 (Goulder 1989, 676-677). Luke would have chosen the name Ζακχαῖος because of the similarity to Μαθθαῖος. Moreover, Luke would have made Zacchaeus a chief toll collector because Matthew in Matt 9:9 is sitting at the tax booth, καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸ τελώνιον, which Luke chose to understand as referring to a position of eminence, as the preposition ἐπὶ also means "over". The similarity of the names seems far-fetched to me, and it is difficult to grasp why Luke should make no mistake about the meaning of καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸ τελώνιον in the story of Levi, where he takes it straight from Mark (Luke 5:27/ Mark 2:13). Salo is on similar lines with Goulder: Luke may have created the Zacchaeus story himself (Salo 2003, 108-109).

The basic observation that the essentials of the plot of the story suit Luke's predilections is important. It is not only the ethics of verse 19:8 or the language of the story that seem Lukan. So also do the joy of Zacchaeus, his inviting Jesus to his home, the people who murmur about Jesus befriending a sinner, the fact that Jesus stands up for the sinner, and all the themes in Jesus' concluding comment.

Tradition and Luke's own favourite themes and interests may of course sometimes overlap. In chapter II 2 I called attention to the fact that the Healing of the Paralytic in Luke (Luke 5:17-26) might look like a Lukan creation if we did not happen to know its source in the Markan version (Mark 2:1-2). The Calling of Levi is another example of a surprisingly "Lukan" but Mark-based story (Luke 5:27-32/ Mark 2:13-17). Features that fit Luke's characteristic theology and favourite themes in it are the interest in sinners and repentance, Jesus as a guest at meal in someone's home, and the Pharisees as the murmuring critics. There are the dynamics of the Lukan sinner triangle (which Luke apparently found here and took over to embellish and vary). It is good to keep in mind that episodes that score high on Luke's list of predilections sometimes certainly have a source as a precaution against over-confident conclusions in favour of Lukan free creativity and lack of sources in his special material. It is more than probable that "Lukan" features at times reflect his source material.

Notwithstanding this I find it plausible that Luke improvised on his favourite themes and theology with the help of his typical stylistic devices and so ended up multiplying the number of the features that we call characteristic of Luke. They are Lukan in the sense of being prominent in his Gospel while they are peripheral elsewhere, and this is probably due to his own interest rather than to that of his sources. It follows that the accumulation of many Lukan features in a pericope makes it quite likely, if never altogether certain, that the evangelist has shaped the pericope to a considerable degree.

This goes for the story of Zacchaeus. The evangelist seems to have influenced the story at its core. Not just the wrapping but also the contents of the parcel seem Lukan. Bultmann pointed out a real problem, and his solution is extremely plausible if we look at the logic of this pericope alone: the rest of the story would do better without the

verse 19:8 and the words πρὸς αὐτόν in 19:9. The problem is that both the supposedly additional verse and the rest of the story suit the emphases of the author of the Gospel: the exchange between the crowd and Jesus, which 19:8 seems to interrupt, is as Lukan as the seeming interpolation.

Goulder, who uniformly advocates Matthew and Mark as the only sources of the Gospel of Luke, attributes all irregularities of this kind to Luke's tendency to "make a muddle"; any incongruity results from the fact that Luke's mind is not exact.⁴⁵¹ This may not be entirely convincing; in Hebrew Bible scholarship this kind of incongruity would quite naturally lead to the dividing of the text in older and younger layers. Verse 19:8 does make one wonder whether such an obviously isolated verse as this could be the work of Luke's pupils, seeking to clarify Luke's meaning (as they saw it) by linking up with another theological emphasis of their master, almsgiving and concrete acts of repentance. But all in all the theory of the Lukan muddle, by the carelessness and human failures of one author, is still more convincing than hypothesizing with multilayered material. It seems pointless to postulate older and younger layers, either by assuming an author who has extremely like-minded sources or an author who has extremely like-minded pupils, if there is no discernable difference of theological or ethical content.

The details of the opening of the story may stem from tradition with somewhat greater probability than the rest. For one thing, shortness combined with the occupation of a toll collector formed a derisive image of Zacchaeus in the ancient view since both the profession and the physical abnormality were common objects of ridicule.⁴⁵² The figure would hardly be less funny for climbing a tree in spite of his richness and high status among toll collectors. Yet Luke takes pains to make his audience empathize and identify with this character, as will be argued below, and he finishes the pericope with a solemn statement of the Son of Man seeking and saving the lost (19:10). One wonders

⁴⁵¹ Goulder 1989, 102-103. Evans also connects the problem with 19:8 with "a certain lack of logical unity in the story as a whole, and of precision in relation to its main point" that "appears also elsewhere in Luke" (Evans 1990, 660).

⁴⁵² Parsons 2001, 50-57.

whether Luke deliberately created the comical overtones or whether he just made the best he could of a well-known personal legend.

The name of Zacchaeus, his small size, his position as a chief toll collector,⁴⁵³ and his climbing a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus are not connected to Luke's favourite themes – unless the fact that Zacchaeus seeks contact with Jesus is counted as such a theme. Sinners do so in 7:36-50 and in the opening of chapter 15. However, the Gospels are rife with figures who seek contact with Jesus, so that this alone is hardly significant. It has been suggested that Zacchaeus is a symbolic name deliberately chosen by Luke, as it derives from the Hebrew root זכה, “to be innocent, pure, righteous”. The point would be that the toll collector proves himself worthy of such a name although the prejudiced crowd does not believe it.⁴⁵⁴ But it would have been very odd of Luke to create Hebrew puns. Luke himself used the Septuagint, and there is no evidence that he knew Hebrew at all; what is more, he was writing to a Greek audience on whom such meanings would have been wasted in any case. It would follow that if there really is intended symbolism in the name it is more likely to derive from tradition than from Luke. The name is evidence for tradition rather than against it. However, the evidence is slender, for the symbolism may be quite accidental. Hebrew names normally have a meaning, often a pious one.

According to Evans, such “circumstantial and humorous” details as found in 19:1-4 are “not characteristic of the oral tradition when it is primarily controlled by interest in the single religious message to be conveyed, and they are likely to be due to the story-teller's art”, by which he apparently means Luke – as if there were no story-tellers in the transmitters of oral tradition.⁴⁵⁵ I fail to see the logic. There is ample evidence that the early tradition was interested in personal legend and anecdotes. The possibility remains that these details may,

⁴⁵³ The title of Zacchaeus, ἀρχιτελώνης, only appears in the Greek corpus here and in texts referring to this text. It may perhaps have been a real office, though otherwise unattested. It may also be an unofficial term invented either by Luke or earlier tradition for a toll collector that is in a leading position. Either way, it cannot be called clearly Lukan or clearly traditional.

⁴⁵⁴ Ravens 1991, 31-32.

⁴⁵⁵ Evans 1990, 660.

after all, be due to Luke's lively imagination as a story-teller; but it is equally possible that Luke was inspired by a reminiscence, or a personal legend, of a toll collector follower of Jesus who met him in this memorable way. I am rather inclined to accept the latter alternative.

Whatever else tradition may have had to say about Zacchaeus can no longer be discerned, given the very Lukan character of the rest of the story. It may be for the greatest part a Lukan creation. In this case Luke would have set out to vary the Levi story so as to finish off the theme of repentant toll collectors with proper grandeur; he may have worked in some traditional information of a toll collector friend of Jesus. However, the story is also conceivable as a far echo of the Levi story, perhaps as an instance of secondary orality, a reflection of the Markan Levi episode in oral tradition. Even in this case it is very unlikely that the influence of the evangelist would be limited to 19:8 and 19:10. This is a very Lukan story in all its parts, and considerable moulding by Luke is likely.

We now turn to another topic altogether, an analysis of the use and construction of point of view.

Literary construction of point of view

In an inspiring article, Gary Yamasaki analyses how the author uses point of view in the story of Zacchaeus.⁴⁵⁶ The literary-critical model is taken from Boris Uspensky's classic in the study of literature, *A Poetics of Composition*.⁴⁵⁷ Compared with the classical Russian novels that Uspensky analyses⁴⁵⁸ the Gospel pericopes are short and economical, many characters surface quite briefly, and the use of the point of view of each character is much more limited. Notwithstanding this, Yamasaki, working on the theory of Uspensky, makes the interesting

⁴⁵⁶ Gary Yamasaki: "Point of View in a Gospel Story: What Difference Does It Make? Luke 19:1-10 as a Test Case". JBL 125, 1/2006, 89-105.

⁴⁵⁷ Boris Uspensky: *A Poetics of Composition. The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*, 1973.

⁴⁵⁸ The authors most often analysed by Uspensky are Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov and Leskov are also referred to with relative frequency.

observation that the story of Zacchaeus is narrated predominantly from the point of view of the sinner figure, the toll collector Zacchaeus.⁴⁵⁹

Many have compared the use of point of view in literature to the use of the camera in the making of a film.⁴⁶⁰ As the camera in a film may be following one character, so the author of artistic text may move along with one character. We may switch from one scene to another when one of the characters does so, leaving the rest unfollowed when separated from this character. Or we may find ourselves looking as if through the eyes of one character, even if that character is at the moment out of focus. We will also get close scenes of some characters but not of others.

Uspensky sees the construction of point of view in literature as functioning on four planes. These are the spatial-temporal plane, the phraseological plane, the ideological plane, and the psychological plane.

We may deal with the two aspects of Uspensky's spatial-temporal plane separately for the sake of clarity.⁴⁶¹ In the temporal aspect an interesting thing to observe is the slowing down of the tempo of the narration to underline the importance of what happens. Spatially we may observe which character it is that the imagined "camera" of the author follows, and on whom the camera zooms in for details, giving the sense of being near enough for these to be discerned. The question at the phraseological plane is whose point of view does the phraseology of a given textual item express.⁴⁶²

The ideological plane is, according to Uspensky, the most difficult to analyse formally, as it most often lies between the lines and is grasped intuitively.⁴⁶³ In principle literature can be divided into works dominated by one ideological viewpoint and into polyphonic works

⁴⁵⁹ Yamasaki 2006, 96-105.

⁴⁶⁰ Uspensky 1973, 60; Berlin 1983, 44; Yamasaki 2006, 90.

⁴⁶¹ Uspensky speaks of four planes, treating the spatial-temporal plane as one unity (1973, 57-77); Yamasaki speaks of five, treating the spatial and temporal planes separately (2006, 91-92).

⁴⁶² Uspensky 1973, 17-49.

⁴⁶³ Uspensky 1973, 8, 13.

that truly allow several ideological viewpoints to exist side by side. In the former, viewpoints that differ from the dominant ideological point of view may surface but it is finally made clear to the reader that these are wrong.⁴⁶⁴ Sometimes a character or several characters are made into the vehicle of the dominant ideological point of view.⁴⁶⁵ In the Gospel of Luke Jesus is obviously such a character, while his adversaries, such as the Pharisees, are those with whom the author dissociates himself.

The psychological plane in a narrative is about the perceptions, motives and emotions of the characters.⁴⁶⁶ Psychological information can be mediated by direct or indirect means. It is mediated directly by an omniscient author who simply assumes the position of knowing what each character is feeling or thinking, or by the character herself in direct quotation or first person narrative. Indirect psychological knowledge is given when the authorial point of view relies on an individual consciousness or perception, when we seem to be looking at a scene through the eyes of one of the characters. Information that is mediated by the point of view of a certain character always carries with it some psychological information of that character, and it tends to draw the reader psychologically closer to him.

In the words of Yamasaki, the key to the psychological point of view is the presence or absence of “inside views”, that is, looks into a character’s thoughts, intentions, and feelings.⁴⁶⁷ Psychological

⁴⁶⁴ Uspensky 1973, 8-10.

⁴⁶⁵ Uspensky 1973, 11-13.

⁴⁶⁶ Uspensky’s treatment of the psychological plane is in 1973, 81-100. I have modified it to some extent in order to clarify Uspensky’s somewhat difficult and inconsistent use of the word “internal”. An “internal view” on a character can in his text mean either psychological insight and information on this character or the formally internal view in which the narrator builds her description on the experience of a certain character at a certain point. Likewise, “internal information” can in Uspensky’s text refer either to psychological information, mediated by any means, or to any information mediated by an internal view in the formal sense. This is confusing as the distinction between internal and external description is not limited to the psychological plane only, as Uspensky himself points out. Another source of confusion is that even though internal description always carries some psychological information on the character on whose experience the internal view is based, external description can sometimes be used to mediate even more psychological information.

⁴⁶⁷ Yamasaki 2006, 92.

information is essential for identifying with a character, though it can also be used to dissociate the reader from her. Those of whom little or no psychological information is given remain minor characters with an entirely functional role.

When point-of-view manipulation is focused on a particular character, for instance, by following him spatially through long stretches of the narrative, by providing ample psychological information about him, by giving information as mediated through his perception system, and giving him an ideological stance that coincides with evaluative comments in the narratorial voice, the result is the establishment of that character as the point-of-view character. The audience is led to experience the events in the story line from the perspective of this character and thereby to experience a sense of identification with him.⁴⁶⁸

Let us turn to the analysis of point of view in the Zacchaeus story.

The use of point of view in Luke 19:1-10

The opening verse 19:1 links up with the general story in the Gospel of Luke, which, as usual, follows the figure of Jesus: “He (Jesus) came to Jericho and was passing through it.” In the next following verses (19:2-4), however, Jesus is reduced to a background figure. He is supposedly still somewhere finding his way through the town, but the narrator turns to follow Zacchaeus.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ Yamasaki 2006, 94-95. He quotes Susan Sniader Lanser (1981, 206): “... our central psychological identification, as readers, tends to be with the perceiving consciousness. Affinity with a character thus depends to some extent on the degree to which that character is “subjectified” – made into a subject, given an active human consciousness. The more subjective information we have about a character, as a rule, the greater our access to that persona and the more powerful the affinity.”

⁴⁶⁹ Yamasaki (2006, 96-98) sees Luke as calling the attention of the audience away from Jesus by not mentioning him by name, by not giving any details about him in this verse, and by using the imperfect tense which only paves the way for the real action in the aorist which is yet to come. The first point is in my opinion exaggerated, considering how common it is in the Gospels to begin a pericope by referring to Jesus by the pronoun “he” alone.

On the Gospel scale, the description of how Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus but is prevented by his own shortness and the crowds blocking his view, and how he then runs ahead and climbs a tree under which Jesus would pass, is quite rich in detail. Many figures in the Gospels are introduced with clauses as terse as “a certain man came to him and said...” On the Gospel scale, then, there is considerable slowing of tempo in the detailed narration here. The slow pacing fixes attention on Zacchaeus and creates a sense of nearness, of being close enough to follow this man narrowly.⁴⁷⁰

Zacchaeus' twice-recounted motive, wanting to see Jesus, can in the condensed Gospel style be seen as psychological information, an inside view of this character. Moreover, it coincides with the authorial ideology: it is laudable to persist in one's attempt to meet Jesus in the face of criticism or of physical obstacles.⁴⁷¹ This is done, for example, by the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-50, by the sinners in Luke 15:1-3, by those who bring children to Jesus in Luke 18:15-17, by the blind man in Luke 18:35-43, by the bearers of the paralytic in Luke 5:17-26, and

⁴⁷⁰ Yamasaki also notes that the pacing in 19:4 is slowing down. However, he makes a strict distinction between “scene material” and “summary material”, the criterion for which is that it takes less time to read the description of an action than it takes for the action to take place. It is only when the time of reading the description takes as much time as the action itself that “summary material” changes into “scene material”. In this distinction Yamasaki follows Gérard Genette (1980, 93-112). Yamasaki applies this principle strictly, hypothesizing on how many minutes each action would take and declaring everything but the verses 19:5, 19:8 and 19:9-10 as summary material (Yamasaki 2006, 91, 99-101). This method seems to me to disregard the general style of the Gospels. The biblical style is in general so condensed that hardly anything would count as scene material by these standards. Isolated sentences in direct quotation may pass the test, but this relies on the assumption that the author really intends the lines as word-for-word recordings of what was being said, not as summaries. For instance, are Martha's words in 10:40 summary or scene material? How do we know whether Luke imagined them as a brief and blunt protest, or rather as the gist of a much longer complaint? Similarly, does Luke really mean that the speeches of the apostles in Acts took only a couple of minutes each? I should say that on the strict criterion nearly all narrative material in the Bible is summary material, direct quotations included. This, however, makes the distinction practically meaningless for biblical studies. It seems more reasonable to pay attention to the *relative* slowing down of the narrative tempo as compared with the general style of each book.

⁴⁷¹ Yamasaki has not observed the overlaps of Luke's authorial ideology and the actions of Zacchaeus.

many others who are healed in this Gospel. Remembering the fact that psychological information that coincides with the author's ideological stance usually raises empathy, we may conclude that Luke attempts to put Zacchaeus in a favourable light. This is remarkable considering the ambivalent information that Zacchaeus is a chief toll collector (generally despicable and ridiculous in the ancient world) and rich (often questionable in Luke, e.g., 1:53, 12:16-21, 16:19-31).

For the construction of point of view in the narrative it is significant that in 19:5 Jesus is observed through Zacchaeus' perception system rather than vice versa. Luke does not write, for example, that Jesus saw Zacchaeus looking down from the tree, but that Jesus looked up, as Zacchaeus would see him.⁴⁷² The audience is led to perceive Jesus from the point of view of Zacchaeus and thus listen to the words of Jesus with a sense of identification with Zacchaeus.

The following verse, 19:6, contains more psychological information on Zacchaeus in his hurrying down and his rejoicing at receiving Jesus. Here there is more coincidence of psychological information on Zacchaeus and authorial ideology. The audience is strengthened in its identification with Zacchaeus. This is necessary, as next, in 19:7, there follows a threat to this identification. The crowd's discontent at Jesus' acceptance of Zacchaeus and his reputation as a sinner puts it in jeopardy. Furthermore, the point of view switches momentarily to that of the crowd: they, as subjects, see what happened and do not like it. Yamasaki claims that the narrator manipulates point of view here in order to create in the audience a sense of vulnerability, an apt state of mind for truly appreciating what follows.⁴⁷³

The identical phraseology used by Zacchaeus and Luke in 19:8, in addressing Jesus as "Lord", points to their common ideology,

⁴⁷² As the narrator relies on the perceptions of Zacchaeus, he is technically giving an external view of Jesus and an internal one of Zacchaeus. See the example in Uspensky 1973, 82. According to Yamasaki, Luke takes pains here to keep Zacchaeus as the carrier of point of view, as the audience is used to seeing Jesus in this role once he arrives on the scene (Yamasaki 2006, 101-102).

⁴⁷³ Yamasaki 2006, 103.

presumably further recommending Zacchaeus to the audience.⁴⁷⁴ The generous resolves of Zacchaeus expressed in 19:8, giving alms and offering restitution, are in line with the authorial ideology of Luke-Acts (Luke 3:10-14, 8:3, 12:33, 16:13-15, 16:19-31; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32,34-37) and further recommend him to Luke's audience. The point of view shifts back to Zacchaeus.

In 19:9-10 Jesus solves the tension created between Zacchaeus and the criticizing crowd. Jesus reassumes his usual position as the main character in the Gospel of Luke and as the vehicle for the authorial point of view. However, the empathy of the audience has been secured for Zacchaeus. As in 19:5, Jesus' words come to an audience that has been identifying with Zacchaeus, and so they are able to listen to them from Zacchaeus' point of view.⁴⁷⁵ Summing up we may say that the dominant point of view in the episode is that of Zacchaeus.

Formally, such a construction of point of view can be seen as a culmination point in the Lukan sinner pericopes. It is the one that is most clearly written from the point of view of a sinner figure, moreover a character whose sin is concrete and openly described to the audience. I shall make a brief analysis of the other sinner pericopes to bring out the difference.

Point of view in the other sinner pericopes

Peter the Sinful Fisherman (Luke 5:1-11). At the beginning of the episode (5:1-4), the point of view is clearly that of Jesus. He is the one

⁴⁷⁴ Yamasaki (2006, 103-104) argues that the epithet "Lord" in "Zacchaeus said to the Lord" is an echo of the phraseology of Zacchaeus in the voice of the narrator since Zacchaeus uses this epithet in the next sentence, joining those in the Gospel who express faith in Jesus. Yamasaki claims that this is one more indication of the narrator's use of the point of view of the toll collector in this story, this time on the phraseological level. However, it is more correct to say that here the phraseology of Zacchaeus and that of the narrator overlap, as there are numerous instances in which Luke as the narrator calls Jesus the Lord. It might be that the narrator assumes the phraseology of his characters when these are followers of Jesus (e.g., 10:39, 17:5), but quite often this is impossible as the characters speaking with "the Lord" are Jesus' adversaries, as in 11:39 and 13:15. It is, therefore, Luke's own phraseology as narrator to call Jesus the Lord.

⁴⁷⁵ Yamasaki 2006, 104-105.

who sees two boats and the fishermen working their nets on the shore. The narrator follows him spatially and observes the scene through his perception system. In 15:5 Peter and the other fishermen begin to dominate the scene. The whole fishing miracle is told from the point of view of the fishermen, and among these, predominantly from that of Peter. The powerful glimpse into the state of mind of Peter is partly meant to reflect the reaction of all the fishermen, but no doubt Peter is the one who first and foremost calls forth feelings of identification from Luke's audience. The sinfulness of Peter is very abstract and theological in nature, as was argued in chapter III 1; it is based on the universal sinfulness of all people rather than concrete acts. The author uses the point of view of Peter to call forth the theological ideal of self-identifying as a sinner. There is yet a big step to take into assuming the point of view of "real", socially disreputable sinners.

The Conversion of Levi (5:27-32) does not utilize the point of view of the toll collector at all. In the initial situation in 5:27 Levi is described as observed by Jesus. The rest of the episode is written from the generally dominating point of view of the narrator rather than that of any of the characters.

The Sinful Woman (7:36-50). The sinful woman is not the main character in her own story, which does not utilize or express her point of view in any way. Verses 7:37-38 describe her actions in great detail, but from the point of view of an external observer. The external observer is one who can see the woman standing behind Jesus at his feet, therefore the Pharisee rather than Jesus (we are not told of the other guests yet, though their presence may be assumed). Verse 7:39 confirms that it was the Pharisee whose perceptions informed the scene. The rest of the episode is a contest between the two men, in which Jesus' observations and evaluation of the woman triumph over the Pharisee's observations and evaluation of her. The dominant point of view in 7:44-48 is that of Jesus; the woman remains a silent object. Jesus is clearly the vehicle for the authorial point of view. The audience is distanced from the point of view of the Pharisee and persuaded to assume the point of view of Jesus, which is identical with that of Luke. The story retains a carefully external point of view on this sinner, quite probably because she is a morally questionable woman and the story

has a rich erotic undercurrent. Luke fiercely defends her right to repentance and forgiveness — in principle and from outside.

The Parables of the Lost (Luke 15) consist of an interplay of the viewpoints of all the angles of the Lukan sinner triangle, namely the angles of the repentant sinner(s), the representative(s) of God and the righteous critic(s). The parables of the Sheep and the Coin are told from the point of view of the shepherd and the woman, representing the God angle. As in the episode of the Sinful Woman, they persuade by suggesting identification with this topmost angle and observing the sinner angle from outside.

It is in the parable of the Prodigal Son that Luke for the first time formally utilizes the point of view of a sinful character who really is connected with palpable immorality. Verses 15:11-15 follow the younger son's undertakings spatially and in detail, though the formal point of view remains that of the narrator. 15:16 describes his hunger through his own perception system (it is not said, for instance, that "he attempted to eat" but that "he craved to eat"), and 15:17-19 gives us, for the Gospel style, a very thorough inside view of his state of mind. The psychological information coincides with Luke's own ideology, recommending the character to the audience and making the prodigal son the vehicle for the authorial point of view. The confession of sinfulness goes together with the exclamations of Peter (Luke 5:8), of the toll collector in the temple (Luke 18:13) and of the criminal on the cross (Luke 23:41), whereas the assumption of the position of a servant agrees with the specially Lukan exhortation to consider oneself a worthless slave (Luke 17:7-10). Verse 15:20b introduces the point of view of the father. The son turns again from the subject to the observed object, and we are given an inside view of the compassion that fills the father. Through the rest of the story the viewpoints of the father and of the elder son, both of them very visible in the lively story, alternate, and the prodigal son is seen, described and evaluated by them. The final carrier of the authorial point of view is the father. However, the partial utilization of the point of view of the younger son predisposes the audience to accept the favourable decision of the father and distances it from the critical point of view of the elder son.

The Pharisee and the Toll Collector in the Temple (18:9-14). The introduction to this pericope (18:9) represents the voice and point of view of the author. The ideology does not differ from that of Jesus in the concluding verse (18:14). The viewpoints of Jesus and the author are, as usual, practically identical. In verses 18:10-13 both of the characters, the Pharisee and the toll collector, are viewed first from the outside and then, as their thoughts are heard in their prayers, from the inside. It is remarkable that the formally internal view dominates in the description of the Pharisee because of the lengthy prayer, whereas the opposite is true of the toll collector because of the detailed description of his gestures and his very short prayer. The toll collector is being observed more closely than he is listened to, even though the psychological information concerning him is positive and the psychological information about the Pharisee is ultimately negative. The narrator, though wishing to recommend the toll collector and his attitude, is mainly relying on an external view of him. The author wants to refute the viewpoint of the Pharisees (as he takes them to be) once and for all by making the audience first formally adopt it but then making it impossible to adopt it in any deeper sense, negatively caricatured as it is. The final comment, representing the viewpoint of the God angle of the sinner triangle as well as the authorial point of view, confirms the conclusion that the point of view of the Pharisee is an unworthy and erroneous one.

In the *Criminals on the Cross (23:39-43)*, to which we will return below in ch. III 7, the voice of the humble criminal occupies considerable space. Formally, the scene is reported through the external viewpoint of the author, as if he were merely recording the conversation in an objective fashion. Notwithstanding this, the audience is transmitted psychological information on the attitude and thoughts of the humble criminal whereas no such information is given of Jesus or the other criminal. The opinions of the repenting criminal coincide with Luke's authorial ideology, not only his confession of culpability but also his proclamation of Jesus' innocence, an equally important point. Once more the "correct views" of the character work to recommend the sinner to Luke's audience. Formally, however, the dominating point of view is that of the narrator, not of the criminal.

It is in the parable of the Prodigal Son, in the Zacchaeus episode and in the episode of the Criminals that Luke lets real sinners speak for themselves at any length. The prodigal son and Zacchaeus are the only real sinners (that is, sinners with concrete sinful acts in their past) whose perceptions inform the narrative, resulting in internal views in the formal sense. In the story of the Prodigal Son the sinner's point of view is utilized in the first part of the story but then it gives way to the dominant viewpoint of the father. Zacchaeus is the only sinner who can be called the point-of-view character of the episode in which he appears; his point of view is the one that dominates the story.

Perhaps the wholesale adoption of Zacchaeus's point of view reflects Luke's confidence in having secured the favour of his audience. Luke has by now worked hard in the construction and defence of his sinner theology. The audience has finally been led into identification with the sinner. The identification was carefully introduced with the help of Peter, a "harmless" (not to say nominal) sinner. The authority of the God angle in the Lukan sinner triangle, commingled with the authorial opinion, has been utilized to recommend the attitude of the sinners and to dissociate the audience from that of the pious critics. In the Prodigal Son the audience was first invited to adopt the viewpoint of the sinner, and in the Pharisee and the Toll Collector Luke attempted a final disqualification of the Pharisaic viewpoint (as he saw it).

In the Zacchaeus episode Luke is not so much defending Jesus' acceptance of sinners as celebrating it, though verse 19:8 still carries a slightly apologetic overtone. The extravagant acts of restitution are meant to make the identification easier: they aim at reassuring the audience of the fact that they are to identify with a character who in spite of appearances is a moral person, not an immoral one. There is a jubilant atmosphere in the episode. This sinner is not immersed in self-blame like most of Luke's sinners before Zacchaeus (the exception is Levi; in this episode the neutral emotional atmosphere is carried over from Mark). Rather, Zacchaeus is joyfully and confidently beginning his new life. Jesus' final comment celebrates the salvation of Zacchaeus, a son of Abraham, and proclaims Jesus' mission of seeking the lost in a triumphant manner. An arch spanning from the Calling of Peter has closed. The sinners have been established as Jesus' faithful followers and models of identification for the audience.

Summary

The story of Zacchaeus is the climax of the Lukan theme of the repentance of toll collectors. This is the last time that toll collectors are mentioned in Luke-Acts. The conversion of a chief toll collector is a model one, with outstanding almsgiving and acts of restitution.

Luke's creative writing must have been very thoroughgoing. The problem with the view that only some sentences (19:8, 10) are Lukan additions is that the rest of the story is full of Lukan narrative features, theology and phraseology as well. Giving alms and donating one's property are Lukan virtues (Luke 3:11, 11:41, 12:33; Acts 2:44-45). There is the Lukan sinner triangle (Luke 5:7:36-50, 18:9-14, 15:1-3, 15:11-32). The emphasis of something marvellous happening "today" is Lukan (Luke 2:11, 4:21, 5:26, 19:5,9, 23:43), as are salvation as a noun (σωτηρία/ σωτήριον, Luke 1:69, 71, 77; 2:30; 3:6); Abraham (Luke 1:55,73, 13:16, 16:19-31) and the seeking of sinners as lost (Luke 15). Rejoicing and entertaining guests are also prominent in Luke (Luke 1, 5:29, 7:36, 10:38, 11:37, 14:1, chapter 15).

The story of Zacchaeus seems to reflect the Calling of Levi (Mark 2:13-17/Luke 5:27-32). Either the Markan story influenced a traditional Zacchaeus story that Luke then shaped to a considerable degree or Mark served as direct inspiration for Luke's own creative writing.

The incongruence of 19:8 in the flow of the story is noteworthy if the story is seen as one told very freely or created by Luke. Luke's tendency to "make a muddle" is nevertheless to be preferred to layers of tradition and redaction as all parts of the story seem Lukan in their style and content.

The details of the opening of the story may stem from tradition. Physical abnormality and the occupation of toll collector were objects of ridicule for the ancients. It could be that Luke wrote on the basis of a well-known personal legend.

In the rest of the chapter, I analyse the use of point of view in the story of Zacchaeus and the other sinner pericopes. The literary-critical model is taken from Boris Uspensky.

The story of Zacchaeus is unique among the Lukan sinner pericopes because it is written from the point of view of a sinner figure whose sin is of a concrete, social nature. Formally, this is a culmination point and climax in the Lukan sinner pericopes. In Luke 5:1-11, the author uses the point of view of Peter to call forth the theological ideal of identifying as a sinner on an abstract level. There is yet a big step to take into assuming the point of view of “real”, socially disreputable sinners. Luke 5:27-32 does not utilize the point of view of the toll collector at all. Similarly, in Luke 7:36-50 the point of view of the woman is absent. Her actions are described first from the point of view of the Pharisee and then from the point of view of Jesus, which is identical with that of Luke.

The Parables of the Lost (Luke 15) utilize the viewpoints of all the angles of the Lukan sinner triangle, namely the angles of the repentant sinner(s), the representative(s) of God and the righteous critic(s). The Sheep and the Coin are told from the point of view of the shepherd and the woman who represent the God angle. In the first half of the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-19), Luke for the first time utilizes the point of view of a sinful character connected with obvious immorality. From 15:20b onwards the viewpoints of the father and of the elder son alternate. The final vehicle for the authorial point of view is the father.

In the Pharisee and the Toll Collector (18:9-14) the author refutes the viewpoint of this Pharisee by making the audience first formally adopt it but caricaturing it so negatively as to render it impossible to adopt in a deeper sense. In the Criminals on the Cross (23:39-43), the scene is reported through the external viewpoint of the author though much favourable psychological information of the humble criminal is transmitted.

Zacchaeus is the only sinner who appears as the point-of-view character in the episode in which he appears. Luke's audience has finally been led into adopting the point of view of the sinner. The sinners have been established as Jesus' models of identification for the audience.

III 7 The Two Criminals (Luke 23:39-43)

In 23:39-43 Luke relates that one of the two criminals crucified with Jesus joined the revilers but was rebuked by the other one. This second criminal believed in Jesus' innocence and, apparently, in his Messiahship, as he asked Jesus to remember him when he should come into his kingdom. Jesus promised that they would be in Paradise together that very day.

Seeking to answer the question of to what extent Luke may have relied on tradition and his own creativity, I will first discuss the general probability of oral tradition underlying the expansion of information concerning the passion narrative and the tradition about the two criminals. Secondly I will handle what often has been seen as the cue for which parts are traditional and which are redactional, namely, the view on eschatology and the afterlife in the scene. I will then discuss what I see as indications of Luke's very active role as the shaper of the scene. These include Lukan theological terminology and the way the scene complements both the special emphases of the Lukan passion narrative and the Lukan sinner theology.⁴⁷⁶

Lukan theological terminology

There are expressions and theological concepts in the pericope that are best at home in the Lukan thought-world. "Fearing God" is a Lukan term for piety. It is practised by Cornelius (10:2,22) and by generations of the faithful (1:50) but abjured by the Unjust Judge (18:2,4); see also Acts 10:35 and 13:16 and 26 where this term is connected with Gentile converts. There are two other Lukan expressions in the second criminal's request, namely that Jesus would "remember him" in "his kingdom".⁴⁷⁷ In Luke 1:54 God remembers his mercy and in 1:72 he remembers his covenant. The prayers of Cornelius are remembered before God (Acts 10:31) whereas "remembering" in Heaven is an expression unused in the other Gospels. The only parallels in the New

⁴⁷⁶ Once more I leave the linguistic analysis out of my inquiry into the background of the pericope for reasons stated in ch. II 1.

⁴⁷⁷ Ellis (1965, 36 n.1) believes that Luke drew *μυνησκει* from his special traditional material.

Testament are Heb 2:6, 8:12, 10:17 and Apc 16:19. The use of “today” in proclamations of salvation is, of course, typical of the Gospel of Luke and especially of the Lukan special material (Luke 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 19:5, 9; 23:43).⁴⁷⁸

Afterlife imagery as the key to tradition and redaction

Many scholars have seen the solution to the problem of whether Luke here relies on a tradition or not in the ideas about eschatology and afterlife that the passage displays. Some have seen these as clearly differing from Luke’s own views on these matters while others claim that they fit Luke’s own theology perfectly.

The wide range of opinions is due partly to haziness in the pericope itself. It is far from evident what exactly is being said in it about eschatology and afterlife. Secondly, there is disagreement about which beliefs concerning the same topics are to be taken for Luke’s own theology.

To present the latter problem in a nutshell, Luke-Acts contains miscellaneous images of afterlife and eschatology.⁴⁷⁹ There are passages that presume some sort of judgement and afterlife straight after an individual’s death (Luke 12:16-21, 16:19-31, 23:39-43; Acts 7:55-60). On the other hand, other pericopes advocate the idea of a collective doomsday when the Son of Man returns to judge all people, both the quick and the dead (Luke 10:12-14, 11:31-32, 14:14, Acts 17:31, 24:15, 25). To make sense of this bewildering situation scholars have formed very different views of Luke’s own ideas concerning this question. A basic division can be made between those scholars who hold that only one of these conflicting ideas, either the individual or the collective judgement, may truly have been advocated by Luke himself, and those scholars who see Luke as flexible enough to have included them both in his own faith. Further, those who believe that Luke can

⁴⁷⁸ For this reason, some have claimed it as a feature that is typical of a pre-Lukan source. More plausibly, it is a favourite expression of Luke’s. To take it as deriving from a source every time one ought to believe in an extensive, unified L source that included passages as different as the two initial chapters, the Nazareth pericope, Zacchaeus, and the Two Criminals.

⁴⁷⁹ Dupont 1972, 4, 21; Lehtipuu 2007, 250-256.

only stand behind one of these alternatives must somehow explain the presence of the two different views in the Gospel. One option is to see some of the teachings as tradition that Luke took over and repeated, even though he actually had inner reservations about it.⁴⁸⁰ Another possibility is to see the differences as only apparent, not real. For example, many hold that even though the Two Criminals and the Lazarus pericope do seem to speak about bliss or punishment that the individual encounters straight after death, this is not what Luke really means. The Paradise that is promised to the criminal and the flames of torture in which the rich man finds himself are really to be understood as interim abodes, only temporary waiting places, before the final judgement that is to take place on the collective doomsday.⁴⁸¹

Considering that there is quite a wide range of opinions about what Luke really believed about judgement and afterlife, it is not surprising that whatever Luke 23:39-43 is taken to say about these topics there will still be different views on whether the theology of the pericope fits Luke's own thought-world or not. And the interpretation of the pericope itself presents several difficult questions.

One basic problem concerns the request made by the second criminal. It is partly about text criticism. In some manuscripts the criminal asks Jesus to remember him when he comes *into* his kingdom; in others, he asks Jesus to remember him when he comes *in* his kingdom. Both readings are backed up by some of the best manuscripts. It may be that this does not make much difference, as the difference of meaning of the two prepositions, εἰς and ἐν, was gradually becoming blurred in *koine*

⁴⁸⁰ Lohfink (1971, 237) and Maddox (1982, 104-105) both hold that Luke did not really agree with the eschatology of Lk 23:39-43. He only took this pericope over from tradition because it had another theological point that appealed to him, namely the forgiveness of a penitent. Lohfink actually discusses the question, when did the ascension of Jesus happen in Luke's view. Maddox applies the conclusion drawn by Lohfink, that Luke here accepted from tradition eschatology that is not his own, to collective and individual eschatology. Luke "has accepted, to a quite small extent, an alternative way of thinking that is set beside his statement of the traditional, apocalyptic eschatology". Coherently, Maddox does not believe that Luke really believed in the Lazarus pericope as a serious portrait of the afterlife (1982, 103).

⁴⁸¹ The discussion of whether the Paradise is to be understood as permanent or as temporary is summed up by Brown (1994, 1010-1011).

Greek so that these two could be used synonymously. But it is also possible to see the alternatives as carrying a different theological meaning.⁴⁸²

Now if “into your kingdom” is original the most natural interpretation is that the criminal is thinking of Heaven, an otherworldly realm that is entered in death and ruled by Jesus, and it follows that Jesus’ answer should be interpreted in the same line. Jesus indeed rules in Heaven, here called Paradise, and promises the criminal a place there even as requested. The question remains whether this Paradise is to be understood as the final Heaven or as an interim abode for the righteous, but in any case it belongs to the afterlife.

On the other hand there is the alternative that “when you come in your kingdom” is original and not to be understood as synonymous for “into your kingdom”. Some scholars take it that ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου should be translated “when you come in your kingly power” or “when you come as king”. The criminal would then be thinking of the Parousia and the time when Jesus establishes his kingdom here on earth.⁴⁸³ Some scholars who take this to be Luke's meaning have suggested that Jesus confronts the criminal's faith in Parousia and a kingdom of God that is to come here on earth with a faith in a Heaven that is attained by the righteous individual straight after death.⁴⁸⁴ Such an interpretation, however, seems odd unless we assume that Luke consciously and actively wanted to replace collective eschatology with an individual one.⁴⁸⁵ In that case it is difficult to understand why he transmitted so much material with collective eschatology uncriticized and unaltered.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸² The problem is discussed at length by Brown (1994, 1005-1008).

⁴⁸³ Dupont 1973, 45; Marshall 1978, 872. Certainly, manuscript D shows that some early Christians clearly understood the criminal's request as a reference to the Parousia: in it the criminal asks Jesus to remember him “in the day of your coming”.

⁴⁸⁴ Dupont 1973, 45.

⁴⁸⁵ Conzelmann 1964, 87-127.

⁴⁸⁶ To be sure, Dupont (1973, 46) does not draw this conclusion. As he sees it, Luke maintains both kinds of eschatology at the same time. He does not eliminate the traditional collective eschatology, but neither does he subordinate individual eschatology to it. He simply does not explicate how these two relate to each other.

If Paradise in this pericope is understood as a temporary waiting place for the righteous before the final end-time judgement, the discrepancy between collective and individual eschatology disappears. There would then be no tension within the various views in the Gospel of Luke, caused either by the clash between Luke's tradition and his own innermost beliefs or by various different beliefs all of which Luke sincerely, if inconsistently, embraced.⁴⁸⁷ The promised Paradise would then be an interim abode, a “sub-division of Sheol” located in the underworld as in 1 Enoch 22 and prepared for the righteous dead for a pleasant waiting room before the final judgement. This would be the place that Luke describes as Lazarus’ dwelling-place in 16:19-31.

Such an interpretation betrays an obvious tendency to create harmony in the conflicting afterlife imagery within the Gospel. Neither in 16:19-31 nor in 23:39-43 is there the slightest hint that the blissful Paradise or the place of torture is only temporary. If anything, the point of the Lazarus pericope seems to be that the fate of the rich man is sealed. The interpretation that bliss or punishment straight after death are for an interim only is possible in the light of some contemporary texts, but it is not suggested by the actual Lukan pericopes. Also, the complete evidence from roughly contemporary Jewish and Christian texts is quite mixed. Even if some of these embrace a belief in interim abodes before the final judgement, many do not, and there is really no consensus at all concerning what the afterlife is like.⁴⁸⁸

Of mixed ideas within the belief system of an individual, we have a remarkable case in the genuine letters of Paul. Paul is able to write, describing the Parousia in 1 Thess 4:13-18, that the “dead in Christ” will rise at the sound of the last trump. They will be caught up in the clouds together with Paul’s generation of Christians, who is still supposed to be among the living. In the air they will meet Christ, who

Yet interpreted in this way Luke 23:39-43 certainly seems to challenge collective eschatology in earnest.

⁴⁸⁷ E.g., Carroll 1988, 68-70; Goulder 1989, 767-768. Mattill also finds it most plausible that Luke understood Paradise here as an interim state, the happy side of Hades, even though he admits in principle that Jesus’ words may have had another meaning in the tradition before Luke, and that Luke may conceivably also have failed to work out a consistent eschatology (Mattill 1979, 33-34, 40).

⁴⁸⁸ Lehtipuu 2007:148-154.

will descend from Heaven, and then the faithful will all, both the living and the dead, be with the Lord forever. The idea of an interim Paradise in which those who have died in Christ would already have spent time with Christ is absent. The dead are not in a weaker position than the living – but neither Paul nor the Thessalonians seem ever to have imagined that their lot might be better than that of the living. Yet Paul writes quite differently about death in Phil 1:21-24. For his own sake, he would rather “depart and be with Christ” as that would be far better for him, but he knows that it is better for his fellow Christians that he “remain in the flesh”. Here he does not envision being dead until the Parousia. Death, rather, would be for him the quicker way to the proximity of the Lord. So it seems that unless Paul changed his mind altogether, it was possible for him to think in two different ways of how and when exactly a dead Christian got to be with the Lord, whether straight after death or only at the Parousia. It would be quite in line with this if Luke had been able to harbour simultaneously a faith in the Parousia and a collective Judgement Day, and a faith in reward or punishment immediately after death.

If Luke, like Paul, accepted simultaneously various different ideas about the afterlife, it follows that different conceptions of eschatology and afterlife do not necessarily reflect different strata in tradition. Images of Parousia and collective judgement need not always be older than images of the individual meeting his or her final fate straight after death. Both of these ideas existed in the Hellenistic cultural milieu of Jews and Christians before Luke, and both may have been taken up and elaborated by Luke. Luke did not aim at constructing a systematic eschatological doctrine. He used miscellaneous afterlife imagery.⁴⁸⁹

The eschatology reflected in Luke 23:39-43 is ambiguous. The nature of Paradise and how it links with the Parousia are not made clear. However, it seems reasonable that Luke meant to depict Jesus as promising the criminal eternal bliss whether or not he conceived of it as beginning straight away or via a happy interim. Nothing less would be a satisfactory answer to the criminal’s request.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁹ Lehtipuu 2007, 264,303.

⁴⁹⁰ Brown 1994, 1011.

The story is conceivable both as a Lukan creation and as pre-Lukan tradition however its ideas about eschatology and afterlife are interpreted. Whether the criminal is thinking of the Parousia or of a realm in Heaven and whether Jesus promises him an intermediate or a final Paradise give little reliable information on the origin and development of the pericope. The only thing that it seems to tell is that the discussion as it stands now is better at home in Luke's day than at the time of the death of Jesus; it displays Christian reflection on the role of Jesus in the afterlife.⁴⁹¹

The general probability for oral tradition behind Luke 23:39-43

Some considerations are yet necessary for the estimation of how great a part Luke may have played in the forming of this scene. Several scholars, among them Marion Soards and Raymond Brown, have argued convincingly for the great general probability of oral tradition behind the passion narratives.

The passion narrative was told orally before, during and after the writing of the canonical Gospels.⁴⁹² Soards has summed up all the details in the four canonical Gospels and in the *Gospel of Peter* that only occur in one of these versions of the passion narrative. The bulk of special information, viewed as a whole, is massive. Put all together, it seems plausible all this expanding information betrays a wide general interest in and demand for new details in the passion narrative.⁴⁹³ The evangelists worked as participants in the wide network of early Christians who retold the story with varying details.⁴⁹⁴ Probably they

⁴⁹¹ Brown (1994, 1008) is of the opinion that whichever way the criminal's request is interpreted, it is better at home in Luke's day (AD 80-95) than at the time of the death of Jesus.

⁴⁹² Soards 1991, 335.

⁴⁹³ Soards 1991, 337-340.

⁴⁹⁴ Soards bases his view also on the fact that there are words of Jesus and other ideas that come up in remarkably different scenes in the Synoptics and John (Soards 1991, 340-345). In the different passion narratives, the same elements tend to turn up in different contexts so often that deliberate redactional change seems implausible as an explanation for the whole phenomenon. The point is the same that Brown makes in speaking of the "switching of details" of the canonical Gospels in the Gospel of Peter. (Brown 1994, 1334). For example, in Matt 27:19

made some additions and changes themselves and in some cases relied on earlier tradition, which itself reflected earlier additions and changes.

Analysing Luke 22, Soards has painted a convincing picture of how Luke worked in writing his passion narrative. He integrated into the Markan account both oral traditions and material that he had composed freely himself. Moreover, he blended all this together smoothly.⁴⁹⁵ Oral tradition is but seldom present as inflexible blocks of words.⁴⁹⁶ Rather, oral tradition influences Luke's handling of Mark's account, or Luke writes his own versions of oral traditions.⁴⁹⁷ Traditional material is not marked by visible seams or obviously non-Lukan language.

It follows that Luke participated in the creation of legend as well as oral transmitters before him. Any link in the chain, Luke but also earlier tradition, may in theory be responsible for a unique detail in his passion narrative. The exact extent of Luke's own creativity will therefore remain uncertain. However, as in the earlier sinner pericopes, the scene has so many Lukan features and fits the greater schemes in the Gospel of Luke so well that the evangelist must have shaped the scene very considerably if he did not create it altogether.

and John 19:13 Pilate sits on the βῆμα to judge Jesus, while in Gos. Pet. 3:7 Jesus is mocked by seating him on a καθέδρα and inviting him to judge righteously. According to John 19:33 Jesus' bones were not broken because he was already dead, whereas in Gos. Pet. "his" (the criminal's or Jesus') bones were not broken so as to torture him longer. The list of such "switching of details" is long. In Brown's words, "One might explain some as redactional preferences by the Gos. Pet. author who was deliberately changing the Gospels before him, but not such a multiplicity." Soards also presents references to the passion narrative in some twelve extra-canonical Christian writings of roughly the first two centuries, demonstrating that the variation and expansion of details was an ongoing process during all this period: it was normal (Soards 1991, 345-349).

⁴⁹⁵ Soards 1987, 118-119.

⁴⁹⁶ Some word-by-word agreements with Matthew, however, show that this was sometimes the case. As examples Soards gives "and he went out and wept bitterly" in Luke 22:62/ Matt 26:75 and "who is it that struck you" in Luke 22:64d/Matt 26:68 (1987, 101-102).

⁴⁹⁷ Soards 1987, 105-106. The blending of oral tradition and Mark may be seen in Lk 22.48 where Jesus apparently avoids the kiss by Judas. That Jesus heals the cut-off ear in 22.50 may be Luke's own version of an oral tradition.

The tradition of the two criminals

The two criminals who were crucified with Jesus came to attract quite a lot of interest among the Christians of the earliest centuries. However, it cannot be shown that they had been given separate roles or identities before Luke.

Old Latin manuscripts for Matt 27:38 and Luke 23:32 give us many names for them: Zoatham and Camma, Joathas and Maggattras, Capnatas and Gamatras. The existence of so many pairs of names seems to indicate that it was important for many to see the criminals as two separate personalities. In the *Acts of Pilate*, a writing originating possibly as early as the second century and preserved as the first part of the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, the Lukan story of the two criminals is retold with the addition that the good criminal has the name Dysmas; Coptic and Armenian manuscripts specify that Dysmas was the one on the right side and Gestas the one on the left.⁴⁹⁸ From our point of view the most interesting parallel for Luke 23:39-43 is in the *Gospel of Peter*, an apocryphal Gospel dating probably from the second century.⁴⁹⁹ The parallel in the Gospel of Peter runs as follows:

(10) They brought two malefactors and crucified the Lord in the middle of them. He was silent as if he felt no pain. (11) Erecting the cross they wrote on it: "This is the king of Israel". (12) They set down his clothes in front of him and divided them, casting lots over them. (13) One of those malefactors reproached them saying: "We are suffering for our bad deeds, but how did this man, who is the saviour of all people, wrong you?" (14) They were angry at him and ordered that his legs should not be broken so as to have him die in torment.

There has been much discussion on how the *Gospel of Peter* and the canonical Gospels are connected.⁵⁰⁰ This writing was in circulation in the second century,⁵⁰¹ though its actual age remains obscure. Following

⁴⁹⁸ *Gos. Nic.* 10:1-2. Hennecke 1963, 459 n. 1.

⁴⁹⁹ Brown 1994, 1322-1326. Crossan takes *the Gospel of Peter* to be earlier than the Synoptics (1991, 427-434).

⁵⁰⁰ For a summary of some thirty scholars, see Brown 1994, 1332, notes 21, 22.

⁵⁰¹ Maurer 1963, 180; Brown 1994, 1317-1318.

the analysis of Raymond Brown I take it that the *Gospel of Peter* is dependent on all the canonical Gospels, but indirectly.⁵⁰²

Common themes with the *Gospel of Peter* and Luke are that Herod condemns Jesus; that there are two crucified malefactors, one of whom sides with Jesus; and that the people mourn after the death of Jesus.⁵⁰³ Even in these topics there are clear differences, for instance, that in the *Gospel of Peter* Herod's role is more dominant than Pilate's and that the malefactor addresses Jews, not his companion. The *Gospel of Peter* lacks the greatest part of the peculiarly Lukan material, such as Jesus' address to the daughters of Jerusalem and all words spoken by the Lukan Jesus on the cross, as well as all the unique patterns of Luke's sequence.⁵⁰⁴ Common vocabulary is extremely scant. All this considered, it is likely that Luke was known to the author of the *Gospel of Peter* by hearsay only. He might have listened to preachers who quoted Luke from memory.⁵⁰⁵

For these reasons one cannot take the parallel in the *Gospel of Peter* as evidence for a pre-Lukan tradition about a co-crucified malefactor who was friendly to Jesus. It may well be that Luke was the first to cast the two criminals in different roles; at least there is no proof of an earlier tradition here, beyond the fact that a general process of embellishment

⁵⁰²According to Brown, the writing is closest to the Gospel of Matthew, but there are links to the distinctive details of all the canonical Gospels. However, these links are scattered in quite a haphazard way in the *Gospel of Peter*, and the writer follows no canonical Gospel's sequence, though he comes closest to the Markan-Matthean one. Brown builds mostly on the argument of sequence in his conclusion that the *Gospel of Peter* draws on all the canonical Gospels, but the links cannot be caused by direct literary dependence. The vocabulary is remarkably different: the *Gospel of Peter* very seldom agrees with any of the canonical Gospels in more than two or three consecutive words (Brown 1994, 1322-1326). Matthew seems to be the canonical Gospel that the author of the *Gospel of Peter* knows best even though the two Gospels are infinitely further from each other in sequence and vocabulary than either Matthew or Luke is from Mark. Brown's conclusion is that the writer of the *Gospel of Peter* seems to have read or heard the Gospel of Matthew several times, but he does not have it at his disposal. The connection to other canonical Gospels is even more distant. (Brown 1994, 1334-1335).

⁵⁰³ Brown 1994, 1323.

⁵⁰⁴ Brown 1994, 1330.

⁵⁰⁵ Brown 1994, 1335.

of the passion narratives was going on and that probably many people contributed to it.⁵⁰⁶

The parallel in the *Gospel of Peter* is interesting especially in showing that linguistic and theological features need not have been at all stable in oral Jesus tradition. The common factors with Luke are evident. One of the crucified criminals confesses that he and the other crucified suffer for their crimes, but claims that Jesus does not and expresses faith in the divine significance of Jesus. All of this is expressed in the *Gospel of Peter* without the peculiarly Lukan language that is prominent in the Lukan parallel. Nor is there much trace of the peculiarly Lukan theological or stylistic features, to which we shall return below. There are no Lukan theological concepts like fearing God, Jesus' kingdom, or divine remembering; no tension is created by contrasting the two criminals; and there is no interest whatsoever in afterlife, even though this is the culmination point in Luke's parallel. The criminal's confession of his own culpability and recognition of Jesus' innocence, however, are central for Luke, the first for the Lukan sinner theology and the second for the larger scheme in the Lukan passion narrative. These two features are, in my view, the weightiest reason for seeing *Gos. Pet.* 10-14 as reflecting Lukan influence rather than an independent tradition. Without these features this parallel would rather prove that traditional motifs can appear draped in quite various theological points, style and vocabulary, be stripped of them again and put on others, which would rather point in the direction that Luke may be inspired by tradition, after all, in spite of the deeply Lukan nature of his scene. But the very idea that the criminal confesses his guilt and defends the innocence of Jesus is Lukan.

The scene in the context of the Lukan passion narrative

I claimed above that the criminal's confession of his own culpability is deeply embedded in the Lukan theology of the repentance of sinners and that his recognition of Jesus' innocence is connected to larger schemes in the Lukan passion narrative. Let us turn to the first point.

⁵⁰⁶ Goulder (1989, 766-769) and Kiilunen (1992, 115) see the scene as a Lukan creation.

It is distinctive of the Lukan passion narrative that there is a line of witnesses to the *innocence* of Jesus. Pilate thinks Jesus innocent, as he does in all the canonical Gospels (Luke 23:4, 14-15, 20, 22 par.). Luke is the only one of the four evangelists who brings Herod to the scene (23:7-15). His Herod mocks Jesus, but does not find him guilty of anything (23:14-15). The Lukan centurion does not proclaim that Jesus was truly the Son of God, as he does in Mark and Matthew; in the Lukan version the centurion proclaims Jesus certainly innocent (Mark 15:39, Matt 27:54, Luke 23:47). The words of the second criminal, asserting that Jesus has done nothing wrong, bear therefore a specially Lukan stamp.

The idea of Pilate as a witness to the innocence of Jesus came to Luke from tradition, and so did the idea of a testimony from the centurion supervising the crucifixion. Likewise the possibility cannot be ruled out that Luke may have had some tradition about Herod and the second criminal, but it seems more than plausible that the unified outlook in the testimonies is due to Luke's reworking of tradition. In the *Gospel of Peter* the Lukan interest in neutral testimony of Jesus' innocence fades again, and the criminal presents a creed, claiming that Jesus is "the Saviour of all people" (σωτήρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων). An allusion to the Lukan theme of innocence remains in the question, "how did this man wrong you?"

The faith of the criminal also suits the Lukan passion narrative in its evident tendency for softening the cruel atmosphere that reigns in the Markan and Matthean versions.⁵⁰⁷ There is less torture, as Luke has left out the flogging and the mockery by the soldiers (Mark 15:15-20, Matt 27:26-31). There is also less loneliness. Whereas according Mark and Matthew anonymous passers-by rail at the crucified Jesus (Mark 15:29, Matt 27:39-40), Luke's crowd is rather on the side of Jesus. On the road to the cross many women weep and lament for Jesus (Luke 23:27), and at the actual crucifixion no mention is made of mockery by the crowd: the people are only watching (23:35). After the death of Jesus, the crowds return to the city beating their breasts (23:48). Also, there is no despair in the behaviour of Jesus, evident in the Markan-Matthean Jesus' "My God, my God" his wordless cry, which may be

⁵⁰⁷ Scaer 2005:90-92.

simply a screech of pain (Mark 15:34-37, Matt 27:46-50). The Lukan Jesus is all gentle serenity, trust in God, and peace. He prays for his Father to forgive the crucifiers (23:34, if this line be authentic); he promises the sympathetic criminal a place in Paradise; and dying, he commends his spirit into his Father's hands (23:46). That Luke balances the mockery at the cross with a defence fits therefore two characteristics of the Lukan passion narrative, the emphasis on Jesus' innocence and Luke's tendency to cushion the atrocity of the passion narrative.

The faith of the criminal restores Jesus to his status as Saviour, which the sarcasm of the leaders has called into question; the supposed Saviour of others cannot save himself (23:35). The exchange of words between Jesus and the second criminal proves to the Christian reader that even though Jesus has chosen not to save himself, he is still the ultimate saviour of others.⁵⁰⁸

A contrasting pair as Lukan depiction of characters in 23:39-43

To juxtapose a pair of characters that obviously represent opposite qualities or act in very different ways is on the whole more typical of Luke than it is of Mark, Matthew or Q. Mark does not use it at all. In Q material and Matthew's special material there are some cases, but fewer than in Luke. The Q material contains the Two Builders (Luke

⁵⁰⁸ Several scholars have pointed this out, stressing that the discussion between the three crucified men brings a threefold mockery to a suitable close. Sometimes this has been used as an argument for Lukan creation of the pericope. However, the threefold mockery is not something specially Lukan, and so I fail to see why the idea of a sympathetic criminal should be seen as fitting the Lukan structure in a quite special way. That the mockery is threefold is a structure of both the Markan and the Matthean crucifixion scenes. They have it that the derision comes from passers-by, from the chief priests and scribes, and from the crucified robbers (Mark 15:27-32, Matt 27:38-43). Luke, wishing to give the crowd a neutral role, has left out the passers-by, replacing them with soldiers (Luke 23:35-38). Actually, in Luke the mockery is, if anything, less clearly threefold in its structure, as Luke is the only one who introduces the inscription on the cross, in 23:38, between the scoffing by the soldiers and that by the first criminal. The inscription, "This is the king of the Jews", presents the mockery of soldiers one more time and could actually be seen as the fourth occasion of mockery.

6:47-49/ Matt 7:24-27) and the Wise and the Wicked Servant (Luke 12: 42-46/ Matt 24:45-51). Matthew has the Two Sons in his special material (Matt 21:28-32).⁵⁰⁹ In the Lukan special material there are Martha and Mary, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Pharisee and the Toll Collector in the Temple (Luke 10:38-42, 16:19-31, 18:9-14).⁵¹⁰

Of the Lukan pairs mentioned, Martha and Mary come perhaps closest to the Two Criminals in the depiction of the characters. In both pericopes, two real-life figures (that is, not characters of parables) act in opposite ways; also in both, liveliness is added by letting the characters speak for themselves. The characters are sketched with a few simple lines. Martha is dutiful, hard working, bossy, and possibly envious of her sister, but Mary is rather a cardboard figure, her only obvious characteristics being piety and other-worldliness.

In Luke 23:39-43, the first criminal is even less of an individual character than Mary is. He does not differ from the Markan bandits, of whom we know only that they “also taunted him” (15:32). He simply echoes the derision of the leaders in Luke (23:35) and of the passers-by and chief priests in Mark (Mark 15:29-32). The second criminal, with his more substantial lines, stands out as a figure of more interest, but he cannot be called a three-dimensional character either. Rather, he is a paradigmatic stock character whose function is to illustrate desirable behaviour. He is resigned even to the point of accepting what is utterly insufferable. He is humble, demanding nothing and blaming no one, neither his fellow humans nor God. From the society’s point of view he is the ideal sufferer of the death sentence. He is also the ideal Christian, unshaken in his faith when all other disciples either have fled or keep silent.

⁵⁰⁹ Matthew comes close to this device in using two contrasting groups in the Virgins (Matt 25:1-12) and in the Sheep and Goats (Matt 25:31-46), but this is, nevertheless, another matter.

⁵¹⁰ Brown (1994, 1002) also mentions the two brothers in the Prodigal Son and the sinful woman and the Pharisee Simon. In my view the Sinful Woman and the Prodigal Son are problematic in this reckoning because they are based on triangles, not pairs. There certainly is a strong contrast between the Pharisee and the woman, but Jesus and the Pharisee are likewise played against each other in their behaviour towards the woman. Similarly, the prodigal and his brother form a deliberate contrast, but so do the father and the elder brother.

The Criminals on the Cross and the Lukan repentance theology

Besides being the ideal condemned man and the ideal follower of Jesus, the second criminal is also the ideal Lukan sinner, humbly admitting his guilt, steering clear of self-righteousness, and putting his trust in Jesus. Here he links up with the repentance theology of the rest of the Gospel. The unifying theme is sinfulness and the acceptance of sinners.

This pericope has traditionally borne the name of “Penitent Criminal” or “Penitent Robber”, which has raised criticism.⁵¹¹ Some scholars have remarked that the point is really not penitence at all, but rather, piety and faith in Christ.⁵¹² I do not see the fact that the pericope has a Christological message as an alternative to the fact that it links with the theology of the repentance of sinners. Most the Lukan sinner pericopes actually have strong Christological implications. Why else would Peter throw himself at Jesus’ feet? He is drawing the Christological conclusion that Jesus represents God, even though it is not spelled out (Luke 5:1-11). The Sinful Woman loves Jesus as her forgiver, which the Pharisee fails to do, not seeing Jesus Christologically enough, even as the representative of God (Luke 7:36-50). In the Calling of Levi (Luke 5:27-32) and in Luke 15 the Pharisees ought to understand that the fact that Jesus eats with toll collectors and sinners implies that they are being restored back to health, back to the original unity of God’s people, back to God – the foundation of which conclusion is, again, faith in Jesus as the representative of God. Of course the pericope is about who Jesus is; and of course, it is also about the sinners and repentance.

While in most of the sinner pericopes the sinners are accepted by Jesus into his own proximity, and one, the toll collector in the Temple, is accepted by God, the second criminal is accepted into Paradise with Jesus. He is finally and ultimately accepted, even more definitely than

⁵¹¹ “Robber” is a term of Mark and Matthew, while Luke speaks of malefactors or criminals (κακούργος).

⁵¹² E.g., Evans (1990, 872): “It is not the moral attitudes of penitence and forgiveness that are prominent, but the religious attitude of piety and faith.”

any of the previous sinners. This corresponds to his situation, which is infinitely more hopeless than that of the other sinners.

It would be a tempting answer to say that this acceptance is based on nothing but absolute grace. The crucified criminal, in certain ways, is very empty-handed. Whatever his own aims may have been, he must have failed in them utterly. Luke does not see him as an innocent victim of the Romans; he has committed serious crimes, as he himself admits. He has no possibility to redeem his past by future uprightness or acts of restitution, as those baptized by John do (3:10-14) and as Zacchaeus does (19:8). He appears to have nothing except the wistful humble desire to be remembered by Jesus in his Kingdom.

However, compared to the first criminal the second one has quite a lot to recommend him. He has professed his faith in God. He has exhibited a moral sense, capability for self-criticism and admission of guilt while insisting on the innocence of another. He is as pious and upright as a person facing immediate death could possibly be. If Zacchaeus is the ideal repentant with time and means for restitution, the second criminal is the ideal repentant without them. He even expresses a Christian faith in a sovereign Jesus who will finally reign in his kingdom, be that in Heaven or in the future Parousia. The very intimacy of addressing Jesus by his name only, with no reverential epithet, is unique in the Gospel, and apparently meant to convey an impression of sincerity and simple trust.⁵¹³ Spiritually, the second criminal is not so empty-handed at all. Had the first criminal been saved, then that would indeed have been absolute grace.

The second criminal resembles the sinful woman, the prodigal son and the toll collector in the Temple in certain important respects. All these figures are deeply conscious of their own unworthiness, and all of them come to the right address, either to Jesus or to God. And all of them, of course, are so perfect in their remorse that it would take rather an inhuman reader not to take their side. Luke, in all probability wishing to preach something very like unmerited grace, has nevertheless taken care to polish his sinners until they are rather spick and span in their self-criticism and utter humility. It is as if Luke did not trust his readers

⁵¹³ Brown 1994, 1005.

quite all the way to accept unmerited grace. It is unmerited as regards the past morality of the recipients, but it is not unmerited as regards their present attitude. In spite of their evil reputation, the Lukan penitents are no villains but actually heroes in disguise.

If there is much congruence between Luke 23:39-43 and the sinner pericopes, there is also dissimilarity. Compared with the rest, this passage has very little display of feeling. The depiction is minimalistic rather than sentimental. Compared with several other sinner pericopes, this one is also very short. The reason may be that Luke did not want to interrupt the flow of the passion narrative with a more detailed description. This is not the time for independent short stories.

Another significant difference is that the Lukan triangle structure of the repentant sinner, the pious critic, and the representative of God is here broken, as the critic is missing. Here, too, tension is created among three characters, but the triangle is formed by an unrepentant sinner, a repenting one and the representative of God. Whereas the earlier triangles most often display quite a lot of interest in the third party, the critic, here the unrepentant criminal only serves to introduce the action between the other two. Very little happens between the first criminal and Jesus. The criminal scoffs at Jesus, but the situation between these two does not develop in any way. What matters is the second criminal, what he says about Jesus and himself, and his acceptance by Jesus.

Compared with the earlier sinner pericopes, it is something new that the horizon of acceptance is widened into postmortal reality. So far salvation has been about acceptance here and now, mostly into the company of the living Jesus. Now it is about getting into Jesus' kingdom, Paradise, after death.

Summary

Many scholars have pursued the origin of the pericope by analysing its ideas of eschatology and afterlife. There are two main questions. The first is whether the criminal asks Jesus to remember him in a postmortal Heaven or in the Parousia. The second is whether the Paradise that Jesus promises to the criminal, is to be understood as the final one or as an interim abode only. I do not believe that these

questions ultimately lead us to information on tradition and redaction in this scene. Luke and his early Christian predecessors alike seem to have embraced several different, even conflicting ideas about eschatology and afterlife. Consequently, these ideas cannot be used as clues to older and younger layers of tradition, or layers of tradition and Lukan redaction.

The general probability of oral tradition behind the passion narratives is great and should be taken into account. The possibility, therefore, cannot altogether be ruled out that Luke perhaps reworked an earlier tradition in which the two criminals were cast in differing roles or in which one of them occurred in a sympathetic light. However, there is no special evidence for a tradition behind this pericope and it suits Lukan interests extremely well.

A comparison between Luke 23:39-43 and its parallel in the *Gospel of Peter* (10-14) makes the flexibility of oral tradition in the passion narrative very evident. As this writing is younger than the Gospel of Luke and distantly dependent on it, the parallel does not prove that the tradition of the second criminal is necessarily older than Luke; Luke could be the first to initiate a criminal who was sympathetic to Jesus into the passion narrative. However, *Gos. Pet.* 10-14 indicates once again that motifs in oral Jesus tradition were easily moulded into new retellings to fit new theological interests and style. For this reason Luke's own literary style and theological interests cannot prove beyond reasonable doubt that Luke could not have worked on a tradition in this scene. Nevertheless it is clear that there is a very strong Lukan colouring in this scene and it is evident that as it stands now it is basically a Lukan creation.

The strong Lukan colouring manifests itself in several links between Luke 23:39-43 and the rest of the Gospel. On the level of terminology there are Lukan theological expressions such as "fearing God", being "remembered" by a divine agent, salvation "today" and the Kingdom as belonging to Jesus. A pair of characters contrasting each other is also characteristic of Luke.

There are two strong links to the Lukan passion narrative. Firstly, it is in line with the general softening of Jesus' lonely suffering in the Lukan

passion narrative as compared to that of Mark. The second link to the Lukan passion narrative is the stress on the innocence of Jesus.

The scene is obviously linked to the sinner pericopes and the Lukan theology of the repentance of sinners. A unifying theme is the acceptance of a sinner, as in the other sinner pericopes. The confession that the two criminals deserve their punishment is in line with other Lukan sinner pericopes that emphasize humility and remorse, especially the Sinful Fisherman, the Sinful Woman, the Prodigal Son and the Pharisee and the Toll Collector. The signs of true repentance in the Gospel of Luke include humility, remorse, and a resolve for better conduct in the future. The change of conduct is no longer possible for the dying criminal, but his attitude suffices for complete repentance in the eyes of Jesus.

IV Conclusion

In this study the Lukan sinner pericopes mostly emerge as creations by the evangelist. Even though they may have some basis in pre-Lukan traditions, Luke's role must have been quite crucial in the shaping of the pericopes as they stand now. The conviction that is still being expressed in many works on the historical Jesus, namely, that Jesus paid much attention to toll collectors and sinners and saw himself as having a special "mission" with them, lies on a narrower basis than many have assumed. Its firmest historical foundations are Luke 7:34/Matt 11:19 and Mark 2:15-17. The Lukan material, such as the Prodigal Son, the Sinful Woman, the Pharisee and the Toll collector, and Zacchaeus, had better be bracketed as sources for reliable historical information. The age and extent of the possible traditions behind the Lukan sinner texts are unknown, whereas the strong theological interest on the part of the evangelist and a thoroughgoing reshaping by him are evident.

The main argument of this book, that Luke made great use of his creativity in writing his sinner texts, is in line with the views of Michael Goulder, David Neale and Jarmo Kiilunen. These scholars have all maintained that the author of the Third Gospel had a crucial role in making generations of Christians see Jesus as a friend of sinners. Luke made this a central feature in Jesus' life, using his considerable powers of creative writing; he dressed his theological convictions in the garb of historical drama. The pioneering works here are Goulder's *Luke – A New Paradigm* (1989), Neale's *None but the Sinners* (1991) and Kiilunen's Finnish article "Sanoma kääntymyksestä – Luukkaan toimintaohjelma kirkolle" (1992).

This view, however, is far from being universally accepted. It has not penetrated the scholarship on the historical Jesus, and quite different views have later been presented among Lukan scholars. Kim Paffenroth has argued that all the central Lukan sinner texts came to Luke from an early written source, L (*The Story of Jesus according to L*, 1997). In Hans Klein's view, Luke is not so much a creative writer as a careful compiler of traditions; for him, too, the Lukan sinner texts are

material from an L source to which Luke has presumably made but minor alterations (*Lukasstudien*, 2005). Guy Nave (*The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts*, 2002) avoids all questions of the origin of the text, and his silence leaves the impression that the Lukan sinner scenes are historical. Fernando Méndez-Moratalla (*The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke*, 2004) takes them to be historical. For these reasons, a new investigation seemed called for.

My aim was to deal with both the horizontal and the vertical aspect of the texts in a balanced way. I have sought to form a critical, comprehensive view of the Lukan sinner texts, one that would combine a well-argued theory of their origin and development, critical discussion of their historical tenability, an analysis of Luke's theology in these texts, a theory of the ecclesiastic context of Luke's message, and some analysis of how the texts function on the literary level. This has meant combining and appraising the work of very different scholars.

As one task I analysed some methods in which the study of language has been used to decide whether Luke used written sources or whether he relied on his free creativity in his special passages. I came to the conclusion that these methods, irrespective of whether they end up pointing to the use of sources or to the use of free invention, have elements of circularity and seem to produce predictable results. The most valuable information to be achieved by the study of language is that words, expressions and structures which are typical of the Gospel as a whole are as abundant in the sinner texts as elsewhere in the Gospel, cover every pericope, and are best attributed to the evangelist. This strengthens the view that even where the influence of older traditions is conceivable Luke will have told the story in his own way, choosing his words freely. It follows that traditions are difficult to trace by linguistic analysis. On the other hand, it also follows that typically Lukan language is no certain proof of the total lack of traditions or sources. For this reason I have mostly concentrated on questions other than language in trying to distinguish between Lukan invention and the possible influence of a tradition; but unlike many scholars who have likewise moved away from the study of language, I have spelled out my reasons for this decision. Naturally, my stance meant a departure

from Paffenroth and Klein, and also from a great part of Goulder's work, namely, his analysis of Luke's language.

Goulder has been a great source of inspiration for me but certainly not a guide to be followed everywhere. His ruthless application of Ockham's razor – why postulate a lost source or lost tradition if Luke could have created it all – drove me to the study of oral tradition. That expedition convinced me of the impossibility of reconstructing any tradition behind a Gospel scene, as well as of the great significance of variation in all oral tradition and presumably in Jesus tradition too. Finally, contra Goulder, of the fact that for these reasons pre-Lukan traditions may have existed and influenced Lukan texts even where their influence or existence cannot be proved beyond reasonable doubt and even when their actual contents remain shadowy. There is no reason to assume that Jesus tradition in Luke's day was limited to Mark and Q; in all probability, when the Gospel of Luke was written it was still circulating and Luke did have access to traditions outside these books.

Oral tradition as constant variation then brought me to another topic related to authorial creativity: the use of invention as a common method in ancient historiography. There the creative expansion of historical subject matter was the norm. Additional information was created in harmony with previous tradition. In many ways Luke took pains to present the Christian story as history, partly in biblical, partly in Hellenistic in style, and it is more than likely that he was acquainted with contemporary historical works. Yet as far as I know, the knowledge of invention as an ancient method of historiography has not yet been applied to the study of the Gospel of Luke, even though Acts has been investigated in the light of ancient historiography. Eckhard Plümacher's study of the dramatic episode in Hellenistic historians and in Acts (1972), contending that Luke constructed whole scenes in Acts to illustrate his theological message, I have found inspiring and illuminative also for the Gospel of Luke. To imagine a strictly different attitude regarding the use of invention in the two works of Luke is artificial. Luke transformed his central theology into drama, and this dramatizing of his own crucial theology with the help of free creative writing was an essential part of his working method, presumably also

in his Gospel, not only in Acts. This is compatible with the current view of the use of invention in ancient historical works.

These two parts of my study helped me take a stance close to, but not identical with that of Goulder. We certainly cannot and need not deny the existence of L traditions as Luke's inspiration, as Goulder does, even if we cannot know much about them. However, it is only to be supposed that Luke may have used his traditions very freely. The use of invention would have been called for in a historical work, too. For both of these reasons I assume that the sinner texts will reflect Luke's own creativity and inventiveness to a great extent, even if some basis in traditions probably existed.

Goulder's analysis of the Lukan story-telling style is fascinating, and I have applied it in my analysis, although with much pruning. I have carried over to my work only those arguments that I find convincing, for it is typical of Goulder to heap up lavish evidence, some of which is strong indeed and some much weaker. Mark Goodacre's evaluation of Goulder's work (*Goulder and the Gospels*, 1996) has been a great help and source of stimulation in appraising the maze of Goulder's argumentation. Notwithstanding my critical stance here, however, my work confirms one central claim of Goulder's, as far as the Lukan sinner texts are concerned: that they do indeed betray Luke's hand as a story-teller and author. Their very contents and message, as well as the literary means by which these are conveyed, reflect Lukan predilections. This means that the shaping and moulding of traditional stories and teachings by Luke must have been very deep and thoroughgoing; it was not a question of rephrasing only.

Neale and Kiilunen I have generally found very sound. It is seldom that I have seen cause to disagree with them. Rather, my work complements theirs. Kiilunen's twenty-page article offers the basic outline of a highly insightful and well-grounded theory of the message and origin of the Lukan sinner texts, but its limited scope allows but little discussion with scholarly literature; Neale, for his part, lacks a thorough inquiry into the origin and development of the sinner texts. He does not discuss the questions of whether or not, and to what extent, the sinner texts reflect traditions or a source, or what exactly the role of the evangelist in their creation was. I perceive this as a deficiency. A comprehensive

exegesis on these texts should contain a discussion on how they came about. First, the question is highly interesting in its own right. Second, the scholars' assumptions on the background and development of a given text tend to influence the way the scholar approaches the text even when these assumptions are not spelled out; open argumentation on the subject is much better.

Neale confirms E. P. Sanders' claim that the role given by Luke to the Pharisees in the sinner controversy cannot be historical. However, Neale parts ways with Sanders in that he finds no reasonable way to implant the "sinners" in the Palestinian society of Jesus' day. Sanders claimed that Jesus consorted with Torah-breakers whom everybody, not only the Pharisees, labelled sinners; this theory I find on the whole exaggerated and implausible. Neale contends that both Pharisees and "sinners" in the Third Gospel are ideologically coloured, stereotypical characters. They reflect the religious worldview with its strong tendency to think in polarized, black-and-white categories, and are informed by theology rather than by the socio-historical reality of Jesus' lifetime. I argue in line with Neale that the plotting and the characterization of the Gospel of Luke do serve literary and religious aims in the first place, not historical description. According to Neale, Luke's motive in creating this polarized drama is simply the need to create contrast and conflict; a good story needs a hero and villains. Luke certainly manages to create this kind of tension, so Neale's explanation is justified as far as it goes. However, I think we may complement Neale's view here. Luke may have had another, perhaps even more pressing motive in the legitimation of Gentile Christianity. We shall return to this below.

The "sinners" appear in the Synoptic Gospels as if they were a group with some concrete meaning, as if there really had been people in Jesus' society whom everybody knew to be sinners. Scholarly attempts to spell out this concrete meaning are unsatisfactory. As the followers of the historical Jesus, toll collectors are the only concrete group of undesirables mentioned in the earliest sources, Mark and Q. If there were any other disreputable people among Jesus' followers, their presence was not constant or significant enough to leave a lasting imprint in the earliest Jesus tradition. With Luke, Jesus' alleged "sinful" followers have been turned into paragons of idealized true Christianity,

which includes a humble identification as a repentant sinner. Here Luke actually brings something new into the thought-world of the canonical Gospels. It is Luke who makes identification as a sinner a Christian virtue.

Pharisaism, on the contrary, is portrayed for the greatest part as arrogant self-righteousness, the contrasting counterpart of the humble self-identification as a repentant sinner. It is strongly caricatured so as to present the obviously wrong choice. This reflects Christian anti-Pharisaic polemic, which is often very harsh in Luke and which is informed by Luke's views of Christianity versus Judaism.

Like Neale, Jarmo Kiilunen has seen the Lukan portrait of Jesus as the great friend of sinners as informed by Luke's theology rather than by actual episodes in Jesus' life. In his convincing, though very condensed, analysis Kiilunen claims that the Lukan sinner texts reflect Luke's own theology of repentance and conversion, which is expressed most clearly in the sermons of Acts. This makes it probable that Luke wrote the sinner texts so as to dramatize and illustrate his own vision of the focal content of Christianity. Kiilunen's thesis is easy to combine with Goulder's view that Luke created his special material, and with Neale's thesis that the Lukan sinner texts reflect the author's theological message and vision rather than reliable historical information. It is also compatible with my theory of invention as one of Luke's probable methods. I part with Kiilunen in taking rather more seriously the possibility of special traditions behind the sinner texts. However, the practical difference between assuming quite free invention and assuming some free invention and some strong reworking of traditions that quite probably were there, but cannot be reconstructed, is not very great. We share the same keynote, seeing these texts as they now are as vitally Lukan creations. It may be added that it was Kiilunen's article that made me see the connection between the Criminals on the Cross and those Lukan texts that deal with "sinners".

Heikki Räisänen's article "The Prodigal Gentile and his Jewish Christian Brother" (1992) convinced me of the fact that the Prodigal Son is connected with the controversy between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. It gave me the insight that the vital motive that made Luke embellish the sinner theme in his Gospel may have been

that he saw the sinners as forerunners of those Gentiles who converted to Christianity. This was why Luke took pains to present the identification as a sinner as admirable, virtuous, advantageous, and even necessary for anyone who would not wish to resemble his self-righteous and merciless Pharisees. Luke used his sinners to symbolize true Christian piety in general, but he also covertly hinted, or at least paved way for the idea, that identification as a sinner belonged especially to Gentile Christians and was particularly their virtue. Luke wished to confirm once more the legitimacy of Gentile Christianity, as well as to recommend the mutual reconciliation of the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. This hypothesis is compatible with Neale's and Kiilunen's central insights of Luke's theological motivation and message, even though the two scholars do not give consideration to this possibility. Moreover, it is in line with the analysis of Robert Maddox (*The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, 1982). In Maddox's view Luke sought to convince his audience that Jewish Christians, rather than Gentile Christians, had caused the schism. I see Luke as arguing for peace and reconciliation, but doing this from a strongly Gentile Christian point of view; Luke saw the Jewish Christians, not the Gentile Christians, as those who ought to change their attitude and practice. Drawing these lines together certainly takes our scholarly understanding of Luke's method and purpose in creating his sinner texts a step forward.

Guy Nave and Fernando Méndez-Moratalla have not discussed critically the origin or the historical tenability of the Lukan portrayal of Jesus, the sinners and the Pharisees. Nave ignores this question altogether; Méndez-Moratalla is conscious of the questions raised by E. P. Sanders and David Neale, but answers them by equating the Lukan story-world with historical reality in a way that in my view can only be called uncritical. Both solutions are lamentable because of the fact that the sinner texts, in which the Pharisees appear unfairly as a negative foil to Jesus, have all too often been taken to convey reliable information on the respective characters of Christianity and Judaism. To distinguish critically between the story-world and the actual social circumstances in Jesus' day is necessary – in the first place because it makes better social history, but also because it produces interpretations that do not have so much anti-Jewish potential.

Notwithstanding this, reading the work of these scholars has given me some valuable insights. Nave's main idea is that Luke strongly emphasizes the necessity of economic and social-ethical reform. This is true, but Nave exaggerates in making this the very essence of Lukan repentance. Méndez-Moratalla is nearer to the mark in shifting the emphasis onto religious conversion. Conversion has its ethical and economic aspects, but these are, all the same, less important for Luke than is faith in Jesus as the Christ. This interpretation sits much more easily with Acts, in which the conversion to Christianity is the main point, advocated consistently all through the book, while the sharing of property and caring for the poor are forgotten after the description of the initial community in Jerusalem. Méndez-Moratalla's observations have confirmed my impression that faith in Jesus as the Christ of the Christians is deeply embedded in the whole of the Lukan sinner theology. The logic of all the texts implies the conviction that Jesus represents God. We may perhaps not draw the same conclusions from that. For me, this is all the more reason for seeing the Lukan sinner texts as illustrations of later Christian convictions; for Méndez-Moratalla they are, mostly, episodes out of Jesus' life.

We may conclude that Jesus probably was, to some extent, a friend of sinners, but that Luke certainly was *the* great friend of sinners who finally and firmly imprinted this image of Jesus in all subsequent Christian consciousness. Luke took up this traditional motif, embellished, repeated, and varied it, and worked it up to an unforgettable work of art. He introduced the theme carefully and led his audience step by step into identification with his “sinful” characters. The outcome is an appealing Cinderella story that makes the audience, including present readers, inevitably feel with the “sinners” and listen to the story from their point of view.

One of Luke's concerns in doing this was to keep it clear that Jesus' acceptance of sinners did not mean encouragement of sin. For this reason Luke's sinners are actually very harmless; they are good people in unfortunate circumstances, or at least they become good people when they repent. Jesus is depicted as the forgiver and defender of *repentant* sinners.

The Lukan sinner triangle is repeated six times in the Gospel of Luke, and may justly be called the heart of the Lukan sinner theology. There is a repentant sinner or sinners, there is a representative of God – either an allegorical figure or Jesus – and there is a third party, the pious critic. The sinner longs for forgiveness and the proximity of the representative of God; the criticizing figure heightens the tension by trying to separate these two; the climax is reached when the representative of God justifies the advances of the repentant sinner, teaching the critic a lesson.

To have the true Christian spirit, for Luke, is to identify with the sinner longing for the presence of God, and not to act like the pious critic. Here Luke created a powerful drama of true and false religiosity. To be sure, it was not fair on the historical Pharisees, and most likely it was not fair on the Jews and Jewish Christians that Luke may have had in mind either. One should not take real, live human beings, or real groups, either, to represent such categorical wrong. Luke's Pharisees and humble sinners, that is, true and false religiosity, are rather two opposite directions in which we may go; they are two inclinations, two possibilities within ourselves. Luke's own great wisdom and insight, and his simultaneous human blindness to his own prejudice and partiality, is proof enough that they exist in us side by side.

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Abstract

Anni Pesonen: *Luke, The Friend of Sinners*

This dissertation examines the portrayal of Jesus as a friend of toll collectors and sinners in the Third Gospel. It aims at a comprehensive view on the Lukan sinner texts, combining questions of the origin and development of these texts with the questions of Luke's theological message, of how the text functions as literature, and of the social-historical setting(s) behind the texts.

Part I, the Introduction, is an inquiry into how Jesus' relationship to toll collectors and sinners has been seen within New Testament scholarship specialized on the historical Jesus and on the Gospel of Luke. Mostly researchers on the historical Jesus still hold that a special mission to toll collectors and sinners was a crucial part of Jesus' public activity. Within Lukan studies, M. Goulder, J. Kiilunen and D. Neale have claimed that this picture is due to Luke's theological vision and the liberties he took as an author. Their view is disputed by other researchers on Luke.

Part II first discusses certain methods that scholars have used to isolate the typical language of Luke's alleged written sources, or to argue for the source-free creation of the text by Luke himself. This study claims that the analysis of Luke's language does not help us to track down the origin of the Lukan pericopes. Secondly, the possibility of oral traditions is discussed. It is argued that Luke quite plausibly had access to special traditions, but the nature of oral tradition does not allow reconstruction. Thirdly the possibility of free creativity on Luke's part is examined in the light of the invention technique in ancient historiography. The use of invention was an essential part of all ancient historical writing and therefore quite probably Luke used it, too.

In Part III, Luke 5:1-11; 5:27-32; 7:36-50; 15:1-32; 18:9-14; 19:1-10; 23:39-43 are analyzed. In most of these some underlying special tradition is found possible though far from certain. However, it becomes evident that Luke's reshaping must have been so thorough

that the pericopes as they now stand must be considered as decidedly Lukan creations. This is indicated by the characteristic Lukan storytelling style as well as by the strongly unified Lukan theology of the pericopes. Luke's sinners and Pharisees do not fit in the social-historical context of Jesus' day. The story-world is one of polarized right and wrong; the sinners appear in a favourable light while the Pharisees are negatively caricatured. That Jesus is the Christ, representative of God, is an intrinsic part of the story-world. Luke wrote a theological drama inspired by tradition. He persuades his audience to identify as (repenting) sinners. Luke's motive was that he saw the sinners in Jesus' company as forerunners of Gentile Christianity. In his portrayal of the sinners Luke championed the cause of the Gentile Christians in the controversy with Jewish Christians.