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ABSTRACT

DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY

Investigating the Slavery Metaphor in the Gospel of Mark

Edward Noble Kaneen

Slavery was ubiquitous in the ancient world and the metaphorical use of slaves and slavery was equally common. This is the case in the New Testament also where the use of slavery as a metaphor in the Pauline literature has been particularly well investigated. However, in the study of the gospels little attention has been paid to the metaphor of slavery and its role in creating a model for discipleship. This thesis will remedy this by considering both how such an investigation should be conducted and what the results would be in the Gospel of Mark. It will therefore pursue both a methodological and an exegetical course.

Building on careful use of metaphor theory, not previously employed in investigating this metaphor, the thesis will utilise Conceptual Blending Theory to argue that the historical reality of slavery is vital to the understanding of the metaphor. It will therefore pay equal attention to both Roman and Jewish sources to understand the reality of slavery and the ideology at work in these representations, as well as the ways in which writers could use this to imagine slavery and apply it as a metaphor. In doing so, it will show that the physical abuse of slaves is an important element of slavery – in reality and in metaphor – which is sometimes underplayed in NT scholarship.

On the basis of this investigation, the thesis will engage in close analysis of slavery texts in the Gospel of Mark, something not accomplished in this level of detail before. In reading the relevant sayings and parables in Mark, the study will show that they share a thematic

unity in their narrative contexts in this gospel, along with sharing the ideological values of slave owners. They emphasise, in particular, the expected suffering of discipleship, drawing on the physical costs of being a slave. It will be argued that, by this means, the metaphor DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY provided a conceptual framework for Mark's disciple-readers to interpret their particular setting in their world, and their response to it.

DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY

INVESTIGATING THE SLAVERY METAPHOR IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

EDWARD NOBLE KANEEN

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, all abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals and monograph series follow the forms indicated in *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*. 2nd ed. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

- CFJ* Mason, Steve, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*. Leiden: Brill, 1999-
- CIIP* *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palestinae*. Edited by Walter Ameling, Hannah M. Cotton, Leah di Segni, Werner Eck, et al. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010-
- DSSSE* García Martínez, Florentino and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997, 1998.
- GRS* Wiedemann, Thomas E.J. *Greek and Roman Slavery*. London: Routledge, 1981.
- WDSP Gropp, Douglas M. *Wadi Daliyeh II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh*. DJD 28. Oxford: Clarendon, 2001.

STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

DECLARATION

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to Durham University or in any other university for a degree.

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Finally, I record most grateful thanks to my wife and daughter for sticking with me through all this time. Their slim reward is that the phrase, 'When dad has finished his thesis...', may no longer be heard.

DEDICATION

To John and Penny, without whom this would not be possible.

1 – DISCIPLESHIP AS SLAVERY

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Judah says, ‘A person must recite three blessings every day: “Praised are you, O Lord, who has not made me a gentile,” “Praised are you, O Lord, who did not make me a boor,” and “Praised are you, O Lord, who did not make me a woman”’ [T. Ber. 6:18A].

R. Aha bar Jacob heard his son reciting the blessing, ‘Praised are you, O Lord, who did not make me a boor.’ He said to him, ‘Arrogance—to such an extent ...!’

He said to him, ‘Then what blessing should one say?’

‘... who has not made me a slave.’

‘But that is in the same category as a woman anyhow!’

A slave is worse. (b. Menah. 43b-44a [Neusner])¹

The alteration to ‘the three blessings’ advanced by the Amora R. Aha b. Jacob demonstrates two generally applicable points: that slavery exists as a category of persons so significant as to transgress other seemingly fundamental boundaries such as gender and religion, and that to be a slave is a bad thing. This sits well with modern sensibilities. From the debates in the British parliament in the late eighteenth century, to the outworking of decisions on the sugar plantations in the nineteenth century, to the arrests in my local area for slave offences,² the abhorrence of slavery is rightly a given today. What, then, are contemporary readers of the gospels to make of dominical calls to become ‘slave of all’ (Mark 10:44), or the implication that discipleship can be adequately illustrated by the behaviour of slaves (e.g. Mark 13:33-37)?

¹ Emphasis added. J. Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2011). For a discussion of this blessing and its history, see Y.H. Kahn, *The Three Blessings: Boundaries, Censorship, and Identity in Jewish Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. 19-26.

² E.g. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jun/30/four-men-arrested-south-wales-cardiff-slavery> (accessed 6th October 2014). That modern-day slavery is on the rise is indicated by the need for advertisements on buses which ask the viewer whether they would recognise the signs of slavery. <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/communities/2014/140203-slavery-human-trafficking/?lang=en> (accessed 6th October 2014).

Although these contemporary questions will not be our concern, they nevertheless provide an important motivation for the study. Instead, more fundamental issues will be addressed. They can be simply stated: What purpose does slavery serve as a metaphor for discipleship in the Gospel of Mark, and how can such a question be answered? Thus, this thesis has both an exegetical and a methodological interest. These two concerns give rise to three questions which shape the outline of the thesis: (1) What theoretical underpinning will help us to investigate the use of this metaphor? (2) What ideological understandings and experiences of slavery are necessary to understand this metaphor? (3) How is the metaphor expressed and used in the Gospel of Mark? These questions will be answered in the chapters that follow. As we shall see, metaphorical slaves, so moulded and directed in real life, can similarly serve different ends at the hands of their literary masters.

1.2 THE STORY OF SLAVERY STUDY

Since this is the first full and detailed investigation of the use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship in Mark, there are no immediately prior works to consider. However, a significant amount of research has been undertaken on slavery in the NT that provides a helpful path to this point, even though it is crooked at times. While commentaries offer some indications about the interpretation of texts relating to slavery, to be engaged with in later chapters, I will concentrate here on those works whose focus is on slavery, either as an institution or as a metaphor, which have developed the field of study. It is difficult to classify them, but in the works which follow, we will see that:

- The majority are only concerned with the Pauline writings, paying at best piecemeal attention to gospel texts.
- Some focus on one text or genre of texts (e.g. slavery in the parables), whereas others consider the whole NT and beyond.

- Some concentrate on the use of slavery as a metaphor, whereas others are more concerned with ‘actual’ slavery (e.g. attitudes to manumission).
- Some set the metaphor of slavery squarely against the social context of the wider Graeco-Roman world, whereas others turn only to the OT and other Jewish literature.

It is my contention that the methodologies represented by this compartmentalisation of approaches are unhelpful to understanding the metaphor of slavery in Mark’s Gospel. I intend to show the extent to which the metaphor of slavery can only properly be understood when the different contexts, both social and literary, are taken into consideration. Therefore, in the discussion that follows I will try to point out not just what is present in these works, but also what is *absent* on account of their chosen place in the above dichotomies. Although they will be presented largely chronologically, where it makes sense to group them around methodological approaches or literature studied, this will be done.

1.2.1 SLAVES FORGOTTEN: SLAVERY IN THEOLOGICAL LANGUAGE

The earliest works in the modern era of which I am aware are by M.D.R. Willink and Gerhard Sass.³ Since they are both solely concerned with Paul’s self-designation as slave of Christ, their conclusions need not detain us. However, we should note their respective methodologies. Both sought a background in the OT (although Willink also looks to the Roman Imperial household for support), both find slavery to be used in a special way by Paul (Willink for ‘men of action’, preeminent being the Servant of Isaiah 40-55;⁴ Sass through a supposed change of meaning of δούλος in LXX), and, as a consequence, both want to appeal to a definition of slavery that is quite distinct from that experienced

³ M.D.R. Willink, ‘Paul, A Slave of Jesus Christ’, *Theology* 16 (1928): 46-47; G. Sass, ‘Zur Bedeutung von *doulos* bei Paulus’, *ZNW* 40 (1941): 24-32.

⁴ Willink, ‘Paul, A Slave of Jesus Christ’, 47.

everyday by Paul's hearers. We might say that this is an attempt to see a religious use of slavery that is different from the social context of 'actual' slavery. In general, more recent scholarship has rejected this approach.

1.2.2 SLAVES REMEMBERED: SLAVERY IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

Following a hiatus of forty years or so,⁵ the book which initiated the recent trend in studying the actual social world of slavery in antiquity was the 1971 Harvard PhD thesis of S. Scott Bartchy on the interpretation of the notoriously difficult phrase, *μᾶλλον χρῆσαι*, in 1 Cor 7:21.⁶ His particular conclusion does not concern us, not least because it has failed to gain a consensus amongst commentators.⁷ However, what is very significant about this publication is the methodology adopted. Bartchy critiques those who have preceded him because they have *either* been satisfied with a generic picture of ancient slavery and not sought to understand the local socio-historical position in Corinth in the mid-first century, *or* they have ignored the context of the verse within 1 Corinthians as a whole.⁸ He remedies this with an extensive description of slavery in the first century, particularly as it might have been experienced in Corinth, and by applying this understanding to the conflicted situation in Corinth described by Paul's letter.

⁵ Bartchy himself notes the significance of this period, during which 'interest in social history among scholars of the New Testament had languished'. S.S. Bartchy, 'Response to Keith Bradley's Scholarship on Slavery', *BibInt* 21 (2013): 524-532 (524).

⁶ Subsequently published as S.S. Bartchy, *First-century Slavery and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:21* (SBLDS 11; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973).

⁷ Witness the difference in translations included in the main body text of two of the most popular Bible versions, neither of which follow Bartchy: 'Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you – although if you can gain your freedom, do so' (NIV, 2011); 'Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever' (NRSV, 1989). The criticisms by Harrill are germane. J.A. Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (HUT 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 101-102.

⁸ Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery*, 24-25.

His particular reconstruction can be criticised. For example, he relies too heavily on Roman and Greek laws pertaining to slavery, treating them uncritically as if, (a) they necessarily refer to the first century, and (b) they reflect social practice.⁹ Furthermore, he is overconfident in his description of Paul's own experience of slavery, which, Bartchy suggests, would have affected Paul's attitudes, language, and teaching.¹⁰ Finally, his portrayal of slavery as a largely benign institution in the first century goes too far beyond his own evidence which has led to a popular notion that Roman slavery, though regrettable, should not be confused with the transatlantic slavery with which modern readers are typically more familiar.¹¹ To some extent, this is true; the racial factor is by no means as prominent in Roman slavery. On the other hand, there are many more elements of comparison which should warn us against viewing ancient slavery any more positively. As evidence, Bartchy often mentions the large number of manumissions in this period.¹² However, even if the evidence is accepted,¹³ at face value this simply indicates that slavery was undesirable – slaves wanted to leave their status and experience behind. More subtly, the promise of manumission could be used to motivate obedience in the enslaved, as well as a convenient way of absolving the owner of responsibility for the care of an older and no longer useful slave, and so need not necessarily be a positive indication. However, these criticisms are, in part, in keeping with the period in which the thesis was written, and the accepted understanding of slavery at that time. Bartchy's contribution comes from his appropriation of recent research in ancient history to understand slavery, and his desire to read 1 Corinthians against a realistic reconstruction of the social context, without losing the text itself. This outline method, paying attention to the text in its contexts (both literary and social), will form the basis of this thesis also.

⁹ The same can be said about his appropriation of the Mishnah and Talmud.

¹⁰ Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery*, 50-55.

¹¹ E.g. Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery*, 46.

¹² Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery*, 83, 85, 88, 175.

¹³ How the evidence should be interpreted is debated. See T.E.J. Wiedemann, 'The Regularity of Manumission at Rome', *CQ* 35 (1985): 162-175.

1.2.3 SLAVES AS IMAGE: FIGURAL USE OF SLAVERY IN CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

An ideological successor of Bartchy is Dale Martin, although his focus is on the metaphorical use of slavery, particularly in Paul's self-designation as 'slave of Christ' and 'slave to all', rather than actual slavery.¹⁴ Martin's revised PhD thesis, published as *Slavery as Salvation*,¹⁵ has had a deservedly significant impact on NT scholarship. Again, using the work of ancient historians as well as original research, he sets out to challenge many established ideas about slavery in NT studies. For example, through judicious use of historical evidence and sociological reconstruction, he demonstrates that, for some slaves, life was far better in material terms than it was for the free poor, as they could have families, earn money, and own property. Unlike Bartchy, whose main sources are legal texts, Martin draws this conclusion in part from an extensive survey of funerary inscriptions. This is certainly a worthwhile addition to the data available, but we should question the extent to which it is representative of the majority of slaves of non-elite owners.¹⁶ It was only those families who were wealthy enough who would record the death of a favoured slave. This would be in keeping with Martin's general thesis, that slavery could be a means of 'upward mobility'. The idea is that a slave's status was derived from his or her owner, and thus, a slave in one position, who served well, could be given a greater responsibility, perhaps in a more important household, and ultimately gain freedom with wealth. There is certainly plenty of evidence of slaves holding high office. However, the picture that is painted sounds too much like the modern Western ideal.

¹⁴ D.B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 132-135.

¹⁵ Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*.

¹⁶ Combes and Byron further challenge the use of stylised language in such inscriptions as an unreliable source of social data, but it should also be recognised that we can only work with the sources we have, while acknowledging their limitations. I.A.H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church from the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (JSNTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 80; J. Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT II 162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 9-10.

Slavery certainly did not offer upward mobility to the majority of slaves,¹⁷ but even for the slaves of the elite, it was not within *their own power* to achieve this mobility.¹⁸ Rather, it was only through and by their owners that a slave could advance. This is a subtle, but important difference when characterising the institution of slavery: a slave is, at all times, the property of the owner, and the slave's life is determined by this relationship.

This is important because, when Martin argues that slavery could be used as a positive metaphor because it could be considered an attractive option, he neglects the fact that, for the majority at least, as far as we know, freedom was preferred, i.e. being one's own master. The frequent slave rebellions give support to this. No matter that manumitted slaves entered into patronal relationships with their former owners, these freed slaves were nevertheless self-determined in a way that they were not before. Martin explains this away by appeal to the complexity of slavery in the ancient world. This multifaceted picture enables him to find quite different, even opposing senses of δούλος in his chosen passage, 1 Corinthians 9.¹⁹ However, it also opens the door for alternative interpretations of the data, and leads to a mixture of contradictions. A fuller study of Paul's use of slave language in its literary context would have given stronger support to his use of it in particular instances.

Although Martin's focus is on Paul, he includes gospel parables in his broad sweep of slavery language in the NT. However, they seem to serve Martin's own agenda rather than creating their own. For example, to suggest that, 'The implicit analogy of this parable [of the Unmerciful Servant] is that the church is like a large, imperial household ... All the slaves, high and low, must recognize the derivative nature of their positions in the

¹⁷ As Martin acknowledges, focussing his attention on managerial slaves. *Slavery as Salvation*, 31-32, 48. See also the critique in R.A. Horsley, 'Paul and Slavery: A Critical Alternative to Recent Readings', *Semeia* 83/84 (1998): 153-200 (175-176).

¹⁸ Moreover, Millis points out that, within the freedmen of Corinth, there was, in practice, very little 'mobility'. B.W. Millis, 'The Local Magistrates and Elite of Roman Corinth', in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality* (eds. S.J. Friesen, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 38-53 (50-52).

¹⁹ Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 132-133. He describes this as 'paradox' (133).

household', is to find an interpretation that seems quite alien to the context.²⁰ In spite of a chapter devoted to Paul's metaphor of 'enslavement to all' in 1 Cor 9:19, the dominical statement in Mark 10:44 and pars. does not get a mention. However, Martin's valuable suggestion that the model of the populist leader or demagogue is at work in 1 Corinthians will be considered in relation to the Markan text.²¹

In a later paper, perhaps written in response to criticism about ignoring any Jewish context for the metaphors of slavery in the NT, Martin argues that, 'the slave structures of Jews in Palestine were not discernably [*sic*] different from the slave structures of other provincials in the eastern Mediterranean'.²² This is a valuable and important conclusion, if correct, as it places the Jewish social context in opposition to the Jewish religious context (i.e. the Torah which shows some opposition to Jewish slave-holding), although this tension is not investigated in the article. This also highlights the methodological dangers of prematurely limiting an investigation into the slavery metaphor to either the socio-historical or religious realms, as previously indicated. For, neither the religio-traditional nor the social context alone can give a complete picture of the functioning of slavery and its attendant metaphor. The danger particularly lies with those who prefer the former approach alone, as we cannot assume that religious communities necessarily embrace all their traditions as Martin demonstrates. Unlike his earlier work, he uses both inscriptions and papyri, as well as a re-reading of Josephus, to construct his picture of ancient Palestine and draw this conclusion. The relationship between this data and the gospels is mentioned, since some of the parables seem to support Martin's picture of slavery. This will be taken further in this thesis with respect to Mark's Gospel.

²⁰ Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 53.

²¹ See § 6.4.3.3.

²² D.B. Martin, 'Slavery and the Ancient Jewish Family', in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity* (ed. S.J.D. Cohen; BJS 289; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 113-132 (127).

Where Martin focuses primarily on one passage, Harris seeks a broader overview of the metaphor, *Slave of Christ*, throughout the NT.²³ However, he devotes only one page to a discussion of the significant gospel text in Mark 10:44. Unsurprisingly, therefore, his conclusion is limited: 'Jesus was teaching that greatness in the community of his followers is marked by humble, self-effacing servanthood or slavery, modelled on his own selfless devotion to the highest good of others.'²⁴ It is not at all clear that ancient slavery was perceived as a selfless institution (which seems to give it a high moral tone), and evidence is needed to support this. Moreover, this does not take into account the problematic aspect of slavery being used as a metaphor at all – either for modern or ancient readers, and does not take sufficient account of the realities of slave experience. This can be further seen in Harris' two-pronged construction of the NT metaphor of slavery from the twin images of Christ as the ideal master *and* the believer as one who offers willing service *voluntarily*.²⁵ The very nature of enslaved service to a master, whether ideal or not, is that it is *not* voluntary, no matter how willing. Even if it were, no explanation is given of what such willing service would look like. A generalised idea of mutual 'service' seems inadequate to describe this key aspect of Christian discipleship. In favour of Harris' methodology, however, is that he does not feel a need to choose between, 'Old Testament and Greco-Roman settings'.²⁶ Thus, irrespective of the ultimate success of this work, it marks a laudable attempt to understand NT slave metaphors through the prisms of the different contexts which impinge upon them.

This approach has not always been taken, however. For example, two British PhD theses seek to explain the metaphor of slavery, not with respect to the social context, but rather, the religio-traditional context. The first of them is a revised Cambridge PhD by Isobel

²³ M.J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 8; Leicester: Apollos, 1999).

²⁴ Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 102.

²⁵ Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 149-156.

²⁶ Harris, *Slave of Christ*, 131.

Combes in which she seeks to chart the development of slave metaphors, not just in the NT, but also in patristic writings, and surveys a number of different types of texts to show how the use of the metaphor changes from the first century to the later church.²⁷ In doing so, she attempts to demonstrate that, ‘because the metaphor [of slavery] pivots therefore not on the nature of secular authority but on the nature of the Christian kerygma, it is changes in the latter more than changes in the former that dictate the lifespan and nature of the metaphor’.²⁸ In other words, slavery metaphors take on a theological life of their own when used in the church, irrespective of how they might be practically realised in non-cultic social settings. While there may be some sense in which the former is true, it simply does not make sense, as we will see in the next chapter, that a metaphor be disconnected from the real world which it describes. Combes herself seems to tacitly acknowledge this by including a selective explanation of slavery in Greece and in the Ancient Near East. In spite of this, the main shortcoming of this work is thus the unexplained connection between this reality of the institution of slavery, and the metaphor that is supposedly tied to the Christian kerygma.²⁹ The blinkered methodological approach does not serve it well.

Her treatment of the metaphor in the Synoptic Gospels is cursory,³⁰ although she rightly notes the importance of slaves *as slaves* in the parables (i.e. they are not just any subaltern).³¹ This would be an opportunity to link the metaphor to the social reality of slavery, but she does not do so. However, as far as I am aware, she is the only recent author to link Paul’s self-enslavement to all in 1 Cor 9:19, to the practical discipleship

²⁷ Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery*.

²⁸ Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery*, 15.

²⁹ In this particular case, she is referring to the ‘kenosis of Christ’ (Phil 3:10-11). Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery*, 91-92.

³⁰ Although I’m sure the statement, ‘in all four Synoptic Gospels’, is a slip rather than an error of knowledge! Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery*, 91.

³¹ Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery*, 71.

teaching of the gospels. She asserts, rightly in my view, that the ‘slave of all’ teaching evidenced in the gospels had a prominent place in the Christian traditions of the time.³²

A Durham thesis, published in 2003, builds on Combes’ work, and extends it significantly.³³ In this important and surprisingly undervalued study,³⁴ John Byron determinedly investigates the background of the metaphor of slavery in Jewish literature (not just the OT, but also the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha), and then applies this study to Paul’s use of the metaphor, particularly ‘slave of Christ’. These two studies form quite separate halves of the book, the former being more useful for the present work. His investigation of the Jewish religious literature focuses on the response to slavery, whether slavery was threatened or experienced. In the case of ‘justified’ enslavement, which was divine punishment for disobedience, he sees a *sin-exile-return* model in operation; whereas in the case of ‘unjustified’ enslavement, which was not the result of disobedience, he views a *humiliation-obedience-exaltation* model to be dominant.³⁵ The former model is particularly associated with the expression of national identity, as the Jewish people can be God’s slaves alone and, therefore, slavery to another is an indication of how unfulfilled that identity has become. This continues into the NT period, Byron suggests, with the Zealots, although other expressions can be found in Josephus and Philo, for example, who are less concerned with the relationship between slavery and identity, tending towards the latter model. In this case, the *humiliation-obedience-exaltation* model can become an example to be followed, with figures such as Joseph acting as exemplars for those seeking exaltation

³² Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery*, 91.

³³ Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*.

³⁴ Harrill’s highly critical review hardly does justice to the breadth of this study of Jewish literature. J.A. Harrill, ‘Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity’, *Shofar* 23 (2005): 185-187.

³⁵ Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, 141.

through obedient submission.³⁶ This use of slavery as a paradigmatic model which can be followed hints at an important theme to be explored in this thesis also.

However, the danger of developing models like this is that they oversimplify what are, in fact, varied and complex data. For example, consideration should be given to whether attitudes to *national* enslavement can appropriately be applied to a metaphor concerning *individuals*, as Byron does in the second part of the book. Furthermore, a simple model can also be a straightjacket, and, at times, Byron's interpretation of Pauline texts seems to be moulded by the models he has previously established,³⁷ leading to the same kind of totalising reading that he criticises in those who look only to Graeco-Roman social structures as background.³⁸ At other points, the models seem to be dispensed with altogether, which suggests that the metaphor of slavery in Paul's usage cannot be so easily captured as might be hoped.³⁹ Although the second half of the book is less successful than the first, Byron does successfully demonstrate the development of the metaphor of slavery in Jewish writings, providing a useful basis for further exploration.

1.2.4 GOSPEL SLAVES: SLAVERY IN THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS

Each of the texts so far, although highly relevant to any study of slavery in the NT, both in terms of content and method, has focussed primarily on slavery in the Pauline texts. This is not surprising, since slavery forms such a regular feature of this literature. However, the focus of this work is on the use of the metaphor of discipleship as slavery in the Gospel of Mark. The only extensive consideration of the 'slave of all' text in the Synoptic Gospels is

³⁶ Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, 129-138.

³⁷ For example, his application of the *humiliation-obedience-exaltation* model to the whole of Philippians. Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, 177.

³⁸ This problem of 'treating the Jewish literature in a reductionist manner' is precisely the accusation that Byron seeks to avoid, contrary to those, he claims, who trace Paul's use of the metaphor *backwards* into the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish literature. Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, v.

³⁹ E.g. The discussion on 1 Corinthians. Byron, *Slavery Metaphors*, 234-257.

an MLitt thesis submitted to Durham University under the supervision of J.D.G. Dunn in 1987.⁴⁰ In this work, Jay McDermond presents a thorough source, form, and redaction critical analysis of the texts of Mark, Matthew and Luke. He concludes that Mark 10:43-44 is the most original form of the saying, but that Luke 22 represents an independent tradition, although it preserves the original setting (a meal). The *Sitze im Leben* are a little too confidently assumed,⁴¹ but methodologically, the texts would further benefit from a narrative-critical reading as there is too little appreciation of how the sayings function within the gospels as a whole.⁴²

However, it is not the textual analysis that is troubling, so much as the background out of which the texts are supposed to have developed. McDermond spends some time analysing the slave laws in the OT and rightly notes the significance of the rejection of the enslavement of fellow Hebrews as a way of expressing national identity. However, by virtue of a small handful of texts, he then seeks to project this same idea into the first century and reaches the out-of-date conclusion that there is little or no evidence for Jewish slavery in Palestine at the time of Jesus.⁴³ This demonstrates the danger of relying solely on the Apocrypha, Josephus and Philo, rather than less ideologically motivated sources like inscriptions, or a more general account of slavery in the wider Graeco-Roman world, and this thesis will seek to correct that.

⁴⁰ J.E. McDermond, "The slave of all": A Tradition-Historical Study of a Synoptic Saying' (MLitt, Durham University, 1987).

⁴¹ E.g. "The "slave of all" saying was used in Mk 9:33-7 as an authoritative saying of the Lord supporting the membership of slaves and servants in the Christian community.' McDermond, 'The slave of all', 214. This is a possible, even plausible reconstruction, but it cannot form a 'conclusion' due to insufficient evidence.

⁴² Kingsbury gives some indication of what this might look like for Mark's Gospel. J.D. Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 103-111.

⁴³ See, for example, C. Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Nevertheless, building on this reconstruction, McDermond further decides, on the basis of two debatable texts,⁴⁴ that Jesus was not a Jewish religious nationalist. This, he suggests, can then be seen in the way in which Jesus uses slavery metaphors in a positive way, against those nationalists who embraced anti-slavery as a badge of identity from the Torah. It is difficult to see that the evidence of slavery supports this, and McDermond does not offer an explanation for why Jesus should take this position resulting in a weak understanding of the role of the metaphor. In particular, the two ‘areas of application’ offered, that (1) it is ‘a rebuke of misdirected ambition,’⁴⁵ and (2) it is meant to be, ‘a general pattern for Christian relationships,’⁴⁶ do not take us much beyond a straightforward reading of the text, nor do they explain why these should be issues or what the disciple was supposed practically to do about them. So, while McDermond has laid a useful foundation for analysing the text, and rightly pays attention to the detail of the sayings, the work is held back by too narrow and simplistic an analysis of the socio-historical context.

This context, however, shifts dramatically in a unique hypothesis put forward by Winsome Munro.⁴⁷ She believes that there is strong evidence that Jesus was born of a slave woman, grew up as a slave in different situations, even rising to managerial authority, and eventually fled his servitude, becoming a renegade. Keys to this thesis are the description of Mary as δούλη (Luke 1:38), the presence of ‘insider’ descriptions of slavery in the parables, the period in the wilderness and the vagrancy corresponding to the life of a runaway slave, the attempts by Jesus’ household to recover him by force as would be done for a runaway, and the trial and crucifixion – the standard form of execution for a criminal

⁴⁴ The paying of tribute to Caesar, and ‘going the extra mile’ (Matt 5:41). Both of these texts are open to interpretations other than the socially conservative acceptance of the status quo.

⁴⁵ McDermond, ‘The slave of all’, 216.

⁴⁶ McDermond, ‘The slave of all’, 217.

⁴⁷ W. Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave: The Social and Economic Origins of Jesus’ Message* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 37; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1998).

slave. In addition, she sees Jesus' teaching as further support of his enslaved upbringing; for example, his teaching on the Sabbath reflects issues that might have been important to an enslaved group.⁴⁸ Having established this on the basis of the gospels (she suggests that John is an independent witness to this phenomenon), Munro goes on to explain how Jesus' status as a slave best explains material in the rest of the NT. To choose just one example, the Christ poem in Philippians 2 makes sense if Jesus were a literal δούλος.⁴⁹

It must be admitted that, although this hypothesis is attractive for its sheer innovation, it rests on circumstantial evidence which is open to other interpretations. It is more likely that a general familiarity with slavery, as well as Jewish tradition, explain this evidence than that Jesus was actually a slave. Even if it were the case, this thesis is not concerned with historical Jesus studies so much as the purpose that the metaphors serve within the Gospel of Mark. However, Munro is surely right to sense the proximity of slavery to the experience of Jesus and the first Christian writers. Hence, unlike some whom we will consider shortly, Munro is open to the possibility that the parables which feature slaves reflect actual social reality in first-century Palestine, drawn from Jesus' experience. However, her conclusion that they may provide, as she puts it, something of 'a slave's eye view', will be challenged in this work, as it has by others.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Munro's remarkable thesis serves to remind us of just how prevalent is the material concerned with slavery in the Synoptic Gospels.

⁴⁸ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 415-421.

⁴⁹ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 163-185, 666-667.

⁵⁰ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 322. See J.A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 127-128.

1.2.5 SLAVE STORIES: SLAVERY IN THE PARABLES

To turn to treatments of specific genres, Alfons Weiser and John Dominic Crossan have both studied the Synoptic parables which feature slaves.⁵¹ Their hermeneutical methods, however, are quite different. Weiser, as befits the period of research, takes a more traditional approach, based on source, form, and redaction criticism. On the basis of a study of the use of servant and slave language in ancient Judaism as well as in the Rabbinic period, he concludes that the metaphor of slavery was used in different ways, to refer to different people. Thus, they are allegorical stand-ins for leaders, for example. He sees this same practice going on in the slave parables of the gospels, which he attributes originally to Jesus. This allegorising tendency can be questioned, particularly in specific instances, but the general sense that slaves in the parables function as models (of behaviour) will be important in this study also.

The significance of methodology can be seen in the contrast between Weiser's analysis and Crossan's. Weiser suggests that, although these parables are related by the fact that they feature slaves, they cannot be grouped together on the basis of theme or intent. Crossan argues the complete opposite, using modern literary theory, and particularly structuralism as his methodology. Like Weiser, he makes assumptions about the parables' origins with the historical Jesus, and identifies 'servant parables' as those which feature a superior-subordinate relationship at a moment of 'critical reckoning' between them.⁵² In other words, a servant parable becomes not just one where servants and master play the major roles, but one where their relationship is the focus of the narrative. Indeed, for Crossan, the actors need not be slaves at all, but simply those in a subordinate relationship. While this establishes a 'thematic unity', it is not clear that the theme contributes anything to our

⁵¹ A. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse der synoptischen Evangelien* (SANT 29; Munich: Kösel, 1971); J.D. Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (London: Harper & Row, 1973, 1985), 94-117; J.D. Crossan, 'Servant Parables of Jesus', *Semeia* 1 (1974): 17-62.

⁵² Crossan, 'Servant Parables', 19.

understanding of the reason for using, at times, slaves *qua* slaves as the principal actors in these parables. Thus, while for Weiser the slaves' only purpose is as allegorical representations of others, for Crossan the slave disappears altogether, at least in so far as the actual social context of slavery is concerned. Nevertheless, both works make the same contribution to understanding which will be followed in this study also. Indeed, Weiser's conclusion could be derived from Crossan's work also: the slaves in the parables have *agency*, or in Crossan's terms, a decision to make. The implication of this is that the slaves of the parables are not simply stereotypes, although there is an element of this, but agents in their own right who face the challenge of decision making, for example, whether or not to obey. This demonstrates on the part of the parable creators an attempt to imagine the mental dilemmas of the slave, but by this means to provide a helpful model for the listening disciple whose own response may be in question.

1.2.6 MASTERED SLAVES: THE IDEOLOGY OF SLAVERY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In addition to these specific studies, in 2006 two comprehensive books on slavery in the NT were published. The first, *Slaves in the New Testament* by Albert Harrill, does not, as the title suggests, attempt to give an overview of all or even most NT passages. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate a number of parallels between selected slavery texts and Roman literature which indicate that NT writers continued to express the ideology of the culture of which they were a part.⁵³ This is perhaps the most important contribution of this book, as it first highlights the place of a *slaveholder ideology* which does not simply describe slavery 'as it happened', but represents a view of slavery from the perspective of those in power, in this case, the slave owner. For example, Harrill notes that the traditionally difficult *Haustafeln* express ideas, at least with respect to slavery, that are remarkably akin to Roman agricultural handbooks. In these, the *vilicus* or slave manager is addressed about

⁵³ This is something of a departure from his earlier, published doctoral thesis, in which he argued for a non-socially conservative reading of 1 Cor 7:21. Harrill, *Manumission*.

how best to treat the slaves under him. These texts become particularly popular in the first century CE with the development of *latifundia*.⁵⁴ The Christian addition in some of the *Haustafeln* is that slave owners are also addressed as those who have a Master, Christ, whose values are similar to those expressed in the agricultural handbooks. Thus, the ideology of slavery is being 're-inscribed' and re-expressed in models of Christian behaviour, as well as in theological reflection.

In the gospels, Harrill tackles only one text to any great extent, the notorious parable of the Dishonest Steward (Luke 16:1-8). He suggests that the mistake most commentators make is to look for a background in the real world of ancient Palestine. Rather, 'Luke crafted fictional slave characters to entertain and to exhort a Roman audience.'⁵⁵ He concludes this on the basis of comparison with Roman farce, in which the stock character of the *parasitus*, a dependent, snivelling minion, plays the role of the *servus callidus*, the wily slave who outwits his master. He is not the first to have made this kind of comparison; Mary Ann Beavis draws parallels between the dishonest steward and the *picaro*, the crafty slave, exemplified by Aesop.⁵⁶ Yet in either case, while acknowledging the similarities, we have to ask whether this is the most plausible background. Certainly, Plautus and Aesop represent, albeit in different ways, the ideology of slavery previously mentioned. To draw any stronger parallel than this is to go too far. There is a near consensus that this parable originated with the historical Jesus. To what extent would he have been familiar with the stock characters of Plautine comedy, for example? Rather, as we will go on to see, the parable shares the general ideology of slavery that emerges in other Greek and Roman literature.

⁵⁴ J.A. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2006), 120.

⁵⁵ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 83.

⁵⁶ M.A. Beavis, 'Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-8)', *JBL* 111 (1992): 37-54.

Harrill's choice of this particular parable raises further methodological questions. Unlike the many others which explicitly feature slaves, neither the word δούλος nor its cognates actually appear in this parable. Yet, in response to Jennifer Glancy who also notes this,⁵⁷ Harrill says,

Surely she would agree that it is not sufficient only to look at literal terms, as if biblical exegesis were simply a word study. We must also examine modes of argument, motifs, themes, topoi, and ideas.⁵⁸

This is certainly true, but has attendant risks that Harrill does not admit. Comparing, for example, courtiers with agricultural slaves, because they stand in the same relationship with their 'masters', may tell us something about power relationships, but does not tell us anything specific about the institution of slavery in either case, because their situations are different. The details are important if we are not to generalise those unnamed slaves whose lives already seem to have mattered little. As a further example of this, the only mention Harrill makes of Mark 10:43, is in a set of references to do with the 'slave of Christ'.⁵⁹ This is precisely *not* what this text is about. The words used to describe people matter and we shall return to this point below in considering which texts will feature in this thesis.

However, as already stated, Harrill is right to note the ways in which many of the texts of the NT reflect the ideology of the Graeco-Roman world and thus cannot be considered to be 'counter cultural'. His work has also highlighted the need for a broader understanding of the slave texts of the NT in their ancient Mediterranean context. This is particularly relevant to the epistolary literature of the NT, when considering it from the point of view of how its auditors would have understood it – yet this might equally be said of the gospels in their final forms, as will be explored with respect to Mark's Gospel in this thesis.

⁵⁷ J.A. Glancy, 'Slavery, Historiography, and Theology', *BibInt* 15 (2007): 200-211 (201).

⁵⁸ J.A. Harrill, 'The Slave Still Appears: A Historiographical Response to Jennifer Glancy', *BibInt* 15 (2007): 212-221 (218).

⁵⁹ It is possible that 10:44 was meant as this is where the δούλος language appears. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 103.

However, Harrill's criticism of scholars who do not sufficiently acknowledge the local applicability of Greek and Roman laws,⁶⁰ might also be directed at his own suggestion that Roman literary types form part of the construction of the parables.⁶¹ More needs to be done to demonstrate this, but it does not make the comparison invalid, and this thesis will also make use of it.

The other text published at the same time, with even broader aspirations than Harrill's, is *Slavery in Early Christianity* by Jennifer Glancy.⁶² Like Harrill, she is concerned to find parallels in Greek and Roman literature, although she also cautiously makes use of papyri. However, unlike Harrill, she is interested in *actual* slaves rather than with their representation in literature. This has led to a lively discussion between these scholars.⁶³ In particular, Glancy is interested in slaves as *bodies*, *σῶμα* being one of the Greek terms for a slave.⁶⁴ This distinctive contribution serves as an important reminder of the use (and at least as frequently, abuse) to which slaves were put as physical objects, or 'surrogate bodies' for their owners. With this viewpoint in mind, Glancy, again like Harrill, proceeds to show how the NT texts 're-inscribe' the ideology of slaves as bodies.⁶⁵ Most usefully for

⁶⁰ Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 11.

⁶¹ It is one thing to suggest that Roman comedy might provide an 'interpretative context' for Luke's gentile readers; however, it is another to say that we should 'contextualise the parable in [the comic mode of] farce', being used by Luke (and Jesus?). Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament*, 74, 78.

⁶² Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*. She has written widely on slavery, but many of the ideas in this book are updated in J.A. Glancy, 'Slavery and the Rise of Christianity', in *The Ancient Mediterranean World* (eds. K. Bradley and P. Cartledge; The Cambridge World History of Slavery; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 456-481. Some of the arguments are also summarised at a more popular level in J.A. Glancy, *Slavery as Moral Problem: In the Early Church and Today* (Facets; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).

⁶³ Glancy, 'Slavery, Historiography, and Theology'. Harrill, 'The Slave Still Appears: A Historiographical Response to Jennifer Glancy'. J.A. Glancy, 'Response to Harrill', *BibInt* 15 (2007): 222-224.

⁶⁴ See especially J.A. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁶⁵ E.g. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 103.

this project, this can be seen most clearly in her chapter on the sayings of Jesus, which focuses on the parables.⁶⁶

Glancy rightly points out the frequency with which slaves are answerable with their bodies in the Synoptic parables. For example, out of the six slave parables which she identifies in Matthew, five of them feature slaves whose bodies become the ‘site of abuse/discipline’.⁶⁷ There is no obvious cultural critique in these parabolic images, unless the sheer exposure of such brutality is intended to shock the reader in the light of the rest of the gospel, particularly Jesus’ own crucifixion – as the death of a slave. Glancy further argues, against Munro,⁶⁸ that the parables reflect the slave *owner’s* point of view rather than the slave’s. For example, commenting on the parable of the Doorkeeper (Mark 13:33-37 || Luke 12:35-38) and the parable of the Dutiful Servant (Luke 17:7-10), Glancy says,

What determines the difference between treatment of slaves in these two Lukan parables is not the conduct of the slaves, which in both cases conforms to the behaviour demanded of countless menial slaves in the ancient world. What determines the difference between the treatment of slaves in the two parables is rather the whim of the slaveholder.⁶⁹

This is an important observation, and both Glancy and Harrill’s works have played a fundamental role within NT studies in exposing the presence of the ideology of slavery in NT texts. What Glancy does not explore are the reasons why slaves should feature so prominently in the teaching of Jesus, nor why, if these parables reflect an owner’s viewpoint, they should focus their attention on the activities of the slaves to so great an extent. Glancy has helpfully pointed out the bodily realities that are ‘re-inscribed’ in the Christian texts, particularly showing that the parables can be used to understand the social situation of slavery, and vice versa. Furthermore, she has argued convincingly for a

⁶⁶ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 102-129. Cf. J.A. Glancy, ‘Slaves and Slavery in the Matthean Parables’, *JBL* 119 (2000): 67-90.

⁶⁷ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 113.

⁶⁸ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 355-356.

⁶⁹ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 110.

treatment of slave relationships separate from the patron-client structure of the Roman world, which is an important critique of those who might want to obscure the historical particularity of slavery by subsuming it within other authoritarian relationships. However, she has not gone on to consider why this metaphor was used and what it meant to its hearers. For example, does the brutal treatment of slaves serve a metaphorical purpose for the hearer? This thesis will argue that it does.

1.2.7 SOCIAL SLAVES: SLAVERY IN SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Thus far, we have seen contributions which have viewed slavery and slave metaphors in the NT from the perspective of Jewish tradition, Graeco-Roman social history, and the ideologies that motivated them. The remaining methodological component is advanced in a double-issue of *Semeia* which, in 1998, was dedicated to the topic of slavery and the NT.⁷⁰ Although there are diverse articles, the issue was chiefly an attempt to chide scholars for their unwillingness to examine slavery from a social-scientific perspective, in particular, the perspective advanced by Orlando Patterson in his landmark work, *Slavery and Social Death*.⁷¹ So, for example, with reference to many of the scholars already considered, we read,

Even though Patterson's comparative historical study received awards in fields such as sociology and political science soon after its publication, New Testament studies of slavery either ignored it (Petersen; Bartchy, 1992; Martin) or attempted to blunt its implications (Harrill; Combes).⁷²

Patterson's main aim is to offer a definition of slavery which encompasses the social dimensions of its effects. Thus, 'slavery is the permanent, violent domination of natively

⁷⁰ A.D. Callahan, et al., 'Slavery in Text and Interpretation', *Semeia* 83/84 (1998).

⁷¹ O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

⁷² Callahan, et al., 'Slavery in Text and Interpretation', 2.

alienated and generally dishonored persons'.⁷³ This is an important corrective to those treatments of slavery which too readily link it simply with superior/subordinate relationships in the ancient world, or those which treat it as a largely benign institution.⁷⁴ There was something essentially different about slavery; as Patterson puts it, 'with slaves, the master had power over all aspects of the slave's life'.⁷⁵ Although this definition has not been unanimously accepted,⁷⁶ these social elements also have explanatory power in the consideration of Mark's use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship. For example, was there contained within this teaching an attempt to redefine or relativise kinship relationships? Osiek, building on Patterson, notes that, 'In a dyadic society, personhood is granted by reason of embeddedness in kinship structures, the very thing denied to the slave in any legally recognized way.'⁷⁷ Given that this is so, did the 'slave of all' language and other slave metaphors seek to contribute to a fictive kinship structure within the early church? Certainly, we should not be found guilty of ignoring Patterson's contribution, and as well as the earlier methodological approaches, we also need to recognise the perspective of the social-sciences.

1.2.8 INVISIBLE SLAVES: THE RETURN OF THE ABSENCE OF SLAVERY

This final category simply observes that, in spite of the growing attention to slaves in their social, literary and ideological contexts, there are nevertheless current treatments of these passages which do not seem to take seriously the place of the slaves as slaves in them.

Three such examples based in the Synoptic Gospels are Cooper's study on discipleship in Matthew, *Incorporated Servanthood*, Santos' work on servanthood in Mark, titled *Slave of*

⁷³ Patterson, *Slavery*, 13.

⁷⁴ All too readily seen in NT scholarship. J. Byron, *Recent Research on Paul and Slavery* (Recent Research in Biblical Studies 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), 21-27.

⁷⁵ Patterson, *Slavery*, 24.

⁷⁶ E.g. D.M. Lewis, 'Greek Slavery in a Near Eastern Context: A Comparative Study of the Legal and Economic Distinctiveness of Greek Slave Systems' (PhD, Durham University, 2011), 131-134.

⁷⁷ C. Osiek, 'Slavery in the Second Testament World', *BTB* 22 (1992): 174-179 (174).

All, and Beers' monograph on how, in Luke, Jesus' offers a model for the disciples based on the Isaianic 'servant'.⁷⁸ Although each one provides considerable insight into the teaching of its chosen gospel, it is nevertheless troubling that they feel they can do so without reference to the significance of slaves and slavery in these texts. Already, slaves in antiquity are almost universally nameless, faceless, and voiceless in the history of humanity; NT scholarship should not be party to this oversight. More than this, though, it represents a failure to appreciate the significance of slavery as an institution, with its own set of unique experiences which shape the connotations created by its use in formative literature. The investigation of these experiences and connotations will be the aim of the rest of this thesis, that slaves should not be perceived to be absent from Mark's Gospel, as they are indeed not in the texts themselves, but that their significant presence in Mark's metaphor for discipleship should be both recognised and understood.

1.2.9 SUMMARY AND RESPONSE

Given this brief survey of literature relevant to the study of slavery as a model for discipleship, we can make the following comments on the categories drawn up at the beginning.

- The majority are only concerned with the Pauline writings, paying at best piecemeal attention to gospel texts.

It is entirely understandable, for the sake of space and convenience, that one corpus of literature should be the subject of study; this thesis will follow the same approach with the Gospel of Mark. Yet the primacy of Paul when it comes to slave metaphors has not been

⁷⁸ B. Cooper, *Incorporated Servanthood: Commitment and Discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew* (LNTS 490; London: T&T Clark, 2013); N.F. Santos, *Slave of All: The Paradox of Authority and Servanthood in the Gospel of Mark* (London: Sheffield Academic, 2003); H. Beers, *The Followers of Jesus as the 'Servant': Luke's Model from Isaiah for the Disciples in Luke-Acts* (LNTS 535; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015).

demonstrated, and the welter of publications on slavery in Paul possibly bears testimony to an attitude in NT studies that the Pauline literature is both theologically more significant and 'closer' to the Roman world in which slavery prospered so prevalently. Yet slavery will have been as much part of the lived experience of the audiences of the gospels as will have been the case for the letters. Moreover, the gospels contain arguably a greater concentration on slavery, especially metaphorically, than do the letters and the issues engaged by the metaphor are just as theologically significant, as we will see in the Gospel of Mark. Although it will not form part of this investigation, many of the slave metaphors are found in material that, if it can be discerned, derives from Jesus himself. These metaphors therefore form part of the earliest witness to the Jesus movement and emergent Christianity. It is consequently all the more surprising that so little attention has been paid to the use of the slave metaphors in the gospels as complete works. This thesis will aim to begin to remedy this for the earliest gospel.

- Some focus on one text or genre of texts (e.g. slavery in the parables), whereas others consider the whole NT and beyond.

It goes without saying that those who focus on only one text or group of texts do not offer a comprehensive picture of the use of slavery as a metaphor. On the other hand, too broad a compass can give an artificial sense of unity among texts, as the models of Byron or the four century survey of Combes might suggest. It is consequently surprising that no-one has yet chosen any of the gospels as their primary focus for an extended exploration of the slave metaphors therein. This thesis will explore the Gospel of Mark and not simply because this has not been done before. Rather, firstly, Mark is the earliest gospel and therefore the one on which the other Synoptic Gospels are built. This study then builds a platform for further investigation and comparison. Secondly, as the shortest gospel, it affords the opportunity to investigate the relevant texts in detail. Thirdly, the historical circumstances of the Gospel, while still debated, are relatively well accepted and therefore

enable the study of the metaphor within a *Sitz im Leben*, and consequent consideration of its possible purpose. Finally, although this would also apply to the study of any gospel, Mark's Gospel provides a set of comparable texts within a coherent narrative context. In other words, without presuming any particular unity between the texts other than their use of the slavery metaphor, the particular passages have nevertheless been chosen by the evangelist for his own purposes, with a view to the narrative whole. Therefore, we will have the opportunity to see what function the metaphors play within the narrative of the final form of this gospel.

- Some concentrate on the use of slavery as a metaphor, whereas others are more concerned with 'actual' slavery (e.g. attitudes to manumission).

Again, it is understandable that some of the scholars previously discussed would concentrate on either the metaphor of slavery, such as Combes, or its practice, such as Bartchy. Yet the risk of this distinction is that it artificially rules out, *a priori*, a link between the two. The metaphor makers, however, were living in a world of slaves. The intended audience for these metaphors may well have included slaves. Thus the 'imagined' and 'real' worlds influence each other, and it will be the contention of this thesis that slave metaphors cannot be properly understood without an understanding of actual slavery and its complementary ideology. We will consider this further in the next chapter.

- Some set the metaphor of slavery squarely against the social context of the wider Graeco-Roman world, whereas others turn only to the OT and other Jewish literature.

This final distinction has perhaps been the most prominent in the works we have examined. Broadly speaking, it seems that the majority of scholarship, with exceptions like Byron, is moving away from reading the metaphor of slavery against a Jewish background (especially one found solely in the literary traditions of the OT), and towards reading the metaphor in the light of the Graeco-Roman world: its literature, law, and social practice.

This, we might note, is in contradistinction to recent movements within Jesus studies which have sought to emphasise the continuity of Jesus and the gospels with Jewish tradition.⁷⁹ There are various reasons for this focus on non-Jewish texts, not least that there are many more sources describing slavery from a Graeco-Roman perspective than there are from a Jewish perspective.

However, it may be that the Jewish religious context remains necessary for understanding the slave metaphor in the gospels. For example, Matt 6:24 contains the famous declaration that one cannot serve two masters. This is universally considered to be a genuine logion of Jesus which at least roots the saying in a Jewish milieu.⁸⁰ Yet, as Bartchy rightly points out, the fact is, one *could* serve two masters, and this is confirmed in deeds of slave sales from Samaria.⁸¹ This would explain Luke's addition of the Synoptic *hapax oikéτης* to this saying (Luke 16:13, similarly in Gos. Thom. 47), because one could not serve two masters very easily as a *household* slave. How can this discrepancy be explained? It could be that Jesus simply made a mistake. If this is the case, then why has Matthew preserved it while Luke did not? Another alternative is that this is a typical exaggeration, presented in mutually exclusive terms, and what was really meant was that, 'one cannot serve two masters *well*'.⁸² However, a third possibility is that this statement made sense within the local context of Jesus and his hearers. In this case, that 'local context' is found represented in the OT expressions of exclusivity in God's 'ownership' of his people Israel, having freed them from Egypt for himself (e.g. Lev 25:42, 55). The gospel saying, then, is not a general statement about slavery but one quite specific, conceived through a conception of slavery within

⁷⁹ I am aware of the move towards abandoning much of what has become known as historical Jesus studies, and of the strength of the arguments. Nevertheless, this does not deny that the gospels are rooted in Jewish traditions and social reality.

⁸⁰ I point this out for the sake of this argument, not because the focus of this thesis will be on the identification of strata within the gospels.

⁸¹ Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery*, 39. See below, § 4.2.2.

⁸² W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 1:642. Emphasis added.

Jewish tradition. This, of course, is supported by the conclusion of the saying, where it becomes clear that God is indeed the master in mind. If this third interpretation is correct, then this indicates that no simple either/or explanation of the use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship will suffice. This should make us cautious about assuming, as some scholars seemingly do, that only one context, whether Graeco-Roman or Jewish, whether sociological or literary, can explain slave metaphors by the drawing of apparent parallels. Rather, it seems likely that the slavery metaphors of the gospels are formed at the intersection of a number of traditions, experiences and ideologies.

1.3 THESIS OUTLINE

Therefore, this thesis will provide the first comprehensive investigation into the purpose of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship in the Gospel of Mark. In doing so, it will build on previous studies, as outlined in this chapter, while also seeking to go beyond them in providing a secure methodological foundation for the study of the slavery metaphor. This will begin in chapter 2, where metaphor theory will be introduced, along with the particular methodological approach to be adopted, Conceptual Blending Theory. It will be seen that modern theories of metaphor acknowledge the link between the metaphor and experience. In our case, this means that the reality of slavery in the first century is significant to the study of the metaphor. Therefore, in chapter 3, Roman slavery will be introduced. This is likely to have formed the social context for at least some of Mark's readers, but more importantly establishes the general portrayal of slavery by slave owners. This will enable us to identify key aspects of the literary representation of slaves. Moreover, the metaphorical use of slavery by pagan writers indicates the ideological conventions of imagined slavery, and the ways in which slaves could be used as exemplars. However, we have also acknowledged the potential significance of Jewish traditions to the metaphor of slavery, not only for Jesus, but, as far as this thesis is concerned, for Mark and at least some of his readers. Therefore, chapter 4 will consider Jewish slavery. The chapter will

firstly consider whether slavery was any different among Jews than non-Jews, drawing on a large variety of evidence, since a different experience may be reflected in metaphorical usage. It will then move on to consider examples of slavery as a metaphor in Jewish traditions, both before and after the NT, to see how slavery could be imagined and used by other Jewish writers. Having established the ideological representation of slavery in Roman and Jewish texts and seen how slavery could be used as a metaphor within them, chapter 5 will establish the criteria for identifying relevant slave texts in the Synoptic Gospels. Finally, in chapter 6, we will turn to the Gospel of Mark to see how the slave texts fit into the context and content of this gospel and serve its purposes for the disciple-reader. The concluding chapter 7 will draw together the argument of the previous chapters, consider the success of this approach to the slavery metaphor in Mark's Gospel and indicate how this foundation could be taken further in the effectual history of both the Markan text and the metaphor of discipleship as slavery.

2 – SLAVERY METAPHORS IN THEORY

2.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THEORY OF METAPHOR

When Jesus speaks of disciples as slaves, both in the parables and the sayings traditions, he is speaking of one thing in terms of another. In common parlance, this would be considered a *metaphor*. Therefore, to appreciate the ways in which Mark uses this metaphor, and why, we need to understand something of the theory of metaphor. Surprisingly, previous researches explicitly investigating the use of slavery as a metaphor in early Christianity have not done so, and, in general NT studies, ‘methodological approaches ... are still largely missing’.¹

For example, Combes, in *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church* says,

I shall leave aside the more theoretical considerations of metaphorical language in favour of a simple and practical understanding.²

Such a ‘simple and practical understanding’ leads her to assume that there is *some* relationship between the slave metaphor and the reality of slavery in the ancient world at the time of these writings, without defining this relationship in an explicit way. Byron, in *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, claims to be following Combes’ methodology (!), but takes a very different view. He says,

Where a metaphor articulates theology effectively, only the basic knowledge of the reality it draws on is needed ... Apart from the most basic meaning needed for understanding, slavery metaphors could operate independently from any immediate expression in society.³

¹ ‘methodische Annäherungen ... noch weit gehend fehlen’, R. Zimmermann, ‘Metaphertheorie und biblische Bildersprache. Ein methodologischer Versuch’, *TZ* 56 (2000): 108-133 (133).

² I.A.H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church from the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (JSNTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 18.

In other words, given his argument that follows, by the time that Jesus or Paul were using slavery as a metaphor, the actual practice of slavery in society was potentially irrelevant to the interpretation of this metaphorical language. Notwithstanding this significant assumption, Byron goes on to describe the practice of slavery in the ancient world. Finally, Dale Martin takes the opposite position from Byron and to some extent Combes, but again, without theoretical underpinning. In the introduction to *Slavery as Salvation*, subtitled *The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity*, he writes,

I have hoped that the shortcomings of a book with such a narrow focus – one function of one metaphor as seen primarily in one text – will be compensated by the offering of a full social and rhetorical placement of the metaphor. Religious language is inextricably intertwined with social structures, ideological constructs, and rhetorical strategies of the society at large.⁴

In other words, here we find Martin explicitly locating an understanding of the metaphor of slavery in the social context of the day, and he goes on to look in depth at the institution of slavery in the Graeco-Roman world, constructing his own theories about the social practice to inform his understanding of its metaphorical use.

Without wishing to overstate the critique, these commentators began with what each presumably regarded to be a self-evident assumption, that the use of slavery as a metaphor either is, or is not, or perhaps might be, related to religious traditions and/or social context. In each case, these assumptions are understandable but present a problem: the assumptions about the relationship between the metaphor and the social and religious context determine, to a large extent, how the metaphor will be understood with respect to that context. Since none of the writers chose to use metaphor theory to explore their

³ J. Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT II 162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 16-17.

⁴ D.B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xiv.

assumptions, there exists the risk that their assumptions prejudiced unwarrantedly the direction of the studies that followed.⁵

There are, of course, at least two good reasons for choosing to ignore the theory of metaphor. At the pragmatic level, advocated by Combes, above, metaphor theory is both considerable and complex, combining as it does philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and, for our purposes, theology. Furthermore, much of the abstract, theoretical discussion is not of clear *practical* benefit for those who want to understand a metaphor's use. As we will see, however, some theories, particularly those drawn from linguistics, do offer useful descriptive tools for assessing the use of metaphorical language. A more methodological concern is raised over the use of modern approaches which ignore the rhetorical gap separating the writings of the NT from those in our own period. As Van der Watt puts it, 'an approach which follows a modern literary or linguistic theory which imposes a specific mode of interpretation onto the text, is not desirable'.⁶ This is clearly true, although at least the use of an identified theory makes explicit the approach to a text. Yet, the alternative suggestion, that a less anachronistic approach to ancient literature is to make use of ancient theories of metaphor, is not obviously superior. While we will shortly, for example, turn our attention to Aristotle in the history of metaphor theory, it is not evidently plain that a model of metaphor composed by a fourth century BCE Greek philosopher, even though it was important in Roman as well as Greek rhetoric, is necessarily much closer to

⁵ I am aware of only two writers who show any concern for metaphor theory with respect to the study of slave metaphors. However, as can be seen, their engagement with it is minimal. S. Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons: A New Rhetoric Analysis on Paul's Slave Metaphors in His Letter to the Galatians* (StBibLit 81; New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 30-33; E.J. Bridge, 'The Metaphoric Use of Slave Terms in the Hebrew Bible', *BBR* 23 (2013): 13-28 (14-16).

⁶ J.G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John* (BibInt 47; Leiden: Brill, 2000). His own approach seeks to investigate, in this case, the fourth evangelist's 'theory' of metaphor. However, to do this requires a 'minimum theory of metaphor', derived from modern theories (6-24). Since the end result is justified by John's consistency with other metaphor theories, it suggests that the use of modern metaphor theory to investigate ancient texts is entirely legitimate.

what is going in Mark's Gospel than a modern theory. Moreover, the critique fails to recognise that the use of metaphor is a naturally occurring feature of language, rather than always a predetermined and carefully considered rhetorical ploy. Therefore, a theory which offers the most explanatory power is to be preferred to one that is simply ancient. Recent advances in metaphor theory offer just such assistance.

2.1.1 KEY QUESTIONS ON THE USE OF SLAVERY AS A METAPHOR FOR DISCIPLESHIP

I see three preparatory questions in particular which need to be answered before we can begin to understand the use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship in Mark's Gospel. Each of these questions can only be answered by reference to the theory of metaphor.

1. Is the description of discipleship as slavery a metaphor, a simile or something else?
2. If it is a metaphor, is it a 'dead' one? In other words, has it become so commonplace in linguistic usage as to have become an idiom?

Only when we have been able to satisfactorily answer these first two questions, will we be able to answer the third, which is where, as we have seen, previous writers have begun.

3. Is there any justification for considering the social context of the Jesus movement, the first Christians and the Markan church as important in understanding this metaphor and its use? To put it another way, is it only the world of Jewish religious tradition that matters in interpreting the metaphor, or does the first-century social world of slavery shape its meaning?

As a first step towards answering these questions, I will briefly sketch what I consider to be the six broadly agreed advances in the theory of metaphor in recent years. Of course, there

are differences between competing theories, and alternatively nuanced approaches within each theory. However, the following six steps are representative of the consensus, and helpful foundations for our approach to the metaphor of slavery in this work.

2.1.2 A MOVE AWAY FROM A COMPARISON THEORY OF METAPHOR

From the time of Plato and Aristotle, metaphor has been a clearly indicated *trope*, and a source of considerable interest to philosophers. Aristotle, in his famous *Poetica*, viewed metaphor as the giving of a name to something which properly belonged to something else. Thus, the sentence

That lecturer is a dragon.

gives a lecturer the name of something that properly belongs to something else, a dragon. Although it is something of a caricature of the philosopher,⁷ this is generally considered to be a *substitutionary view* of metaphor, where a *metaphoric* term is substituted for a *literal* one. This approach has been taken up within NT studies.⁸ Thus, in the case of our example, we might suggest the original, ‘unsubstituted’ form would have been something like,

That lecturer is frightening and threatening.

Of course, this does not answer how we know that ‘frightening and threatening’ is a suitable substitution, as opposed to, ‘large and covered with scales’ or ‘mythological’. We will return to this below. However, while our supposedly original form may convey something of what the speaker intended, many would consider that it does not convey the whole of the idea – something is present in the metaphor that is lost in the ‘translation’.

⁷ J.M. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 25-26.

⁸ Zimmermann indicates that no less than Bultmann followed this approach. ‘Metapherntheorie’, 110.

The more literary the metaphor, the more difficult it is to accept the substitutionary view.⁹ Part of the problem is that the substitutionary theory considers metaphor to exist at the word level. Thus, the metaphor in the above example would be ‘dragon’. Yet we would be ill-advised to suggest that ‘lecturer’ and ‘dragon’ are synonyms! This oversimplification was soon replaced with the more sophisticated version of this theory known as the *comparison view*. This broadens the idea that a metaphor is simply a lexical substitution, to the phrasal, or even conceptual level. It conceives of a metaphor as a comparison of two things (in our case, a lecturer and a dragon), without making the comparison explicit. The metaphor is pointing to pre-existing similarities between ‘lecturer’ and ‘dragon’, which are known as the *ground* of the metaphor.

The comparison theory starts to founder when one considers the nature of the relationship implied by the comparison. For example, a literal comparison would imply a two-way correspondence. If *A* is *B*, then *B* is *A* should also be true. But,

That dragon is a lecturer.

would mean something quite different (and it is not entirely clear what). But there is a more fundamental problem: not all metaphors are of the form *A* is *B*. For example, ‘giddy brink’ is surely a metaphor, but what is the comparison between a ‘brink’ and ‘a thing that causes giddiness’? There are no obvious elements of comparison here, which suggests that something more complex is going on. And this is where the comparison theory ultimately fails. If all it is saying is that there is *some* relationship between metaphorical elements, then it is not really saying anything at all. As a theory it fails to explain our observations.

Yet the comparison theory does nevertheless form the starting point for more recent ideas, as can be seen in these two modern definitions of metaphor.

⁹ For example, ‘A persistent fever’ does not completely capture the poetic metaphor, ‘A stubborn and unconquerable flame creeps in his veins’. Soskice, *Metaphor*, 45.

[M]etaphor is that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another.¹⁰

The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.¹¹

2.1.3 A RECOGNITION OF METAPHOR AS MORE THAN SYNTACTIC FORM

It used to be taught that metaphors and similes can be distinguished on the basis of their grammatical construction. A metaphor is of the form, 'A is B' whereas a simile is of the form, 'A is *like* B'. While this is a distinction at the syntactic level, it is not a very helpful way of distinguishing simile from metaphor since it is not at all certain that this syntactic difference necessarily leads to a difference in meaning. So, in the following two examples we can see that the presence of 'like' does not seem to add anything to our understanding, assuming we treat the first sentence metaphorically.

God is a father.

God is like a father.

An alternative distinction between metaphor and simile has been drawn between the richness of metaphor and the sparseness of simile. However, Soskice's example from *Madame Bovary* shows the lie to this.

Human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we are longing to move the stars to pity.¹²

This syntactic simile has all the richness of poetic metaphor. Soskice goes on to say, 'In such cases, metaphor and simile, while textually different, are functionally the same.'¹³

¹⁰ Soskice, *Metaphor*, 15.

¹¹ G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

¹² Soskice, *Metaphor*, 58-59.

¹³ Soskice, *Metaphor*, 59.

Instead, she judges the distinction to be between metaphor and *illustrative simile*.

Illustrative similes are those which place a restriction on the comparison. For example,

The man worked like a horse.

Here, the relationship between the man and the horse is restricted to the area of work. It is quite different from, 'The man is a horse.' Similes like those of Flaubert, above, she calls *modelling similes* for reasons we will soon see, but they perform the same function as metaphors.

If syntax cannot highlight metaphors, what can? At one time it was suggested that semantics was the determining factor. To return to our example, 'That lecturer is a dragon', it may be metaphorically true, but it is literally false. By negating the sentence, 'That lecturer is *not* a dragon', we get something that is literally true. On this basis, Ricoeur, for example, considers metaphor to be a 'semantic impertinence' and finds it to be the *opposition* of literal and metaphoric interpretation that sustains the metaphor.¹⁴ This distinction between metaphorical language and literal language on the basis of truth-conditional semantics is initially attractive, and has spawned a number of so-called *anomaly theories*.¹⁵ However, it soon founders on the rock of actual usage. To take John Donne's famous example:

No man is an island.

We recognise this to be a metaphor, yet it is also literally true. This causes a problem for anomaly theories such as Ricoeur's. The problem is that the scope of semantics is the sentence-level and this level is insufficient to indicate metaphor. This is why it is now recognised that metaphor occurs at the pragmatic level, and may be understood with the

¹⁴ P. Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 53.

¹⁵ E.C. Way, *Knowledge Representation and Metaphor* (Studies in Cognitive Systems 7; Oxford: Intellect, 1994), 42-43.

help of extra-linguistic clues, not just linguistic. An actual recorded example is quoted by Lakoff and Johnson:¹⁶

Please sit in the apple juice seat.

This is nonsense, without an appropriate context. With that context, it presumably made sense to the hearer. As Lakoff and Johnson put it, ‘The meaning is not right there in the sentence – it matters a lot who is saying or listening to the sentence and what his social and political attitudes are.’¹⁷ Metaphor thus can be recognised, but understanding is often drawn from the pragmatic context in which the utterance is made. Consequently, in seeking to understand any metaphor, but particularly an unfamiliar metaphor like discipleship as slavery, it is not only advisable but essential that we seek to understand the context in which the metaphor occurs.

In our explanation so far, we have implicitly assumed the importance of distinguishing between metaphorical and literal language. This implies that metaphor is, to some extent, a deviance from the norm – the norm being *literal* usage. When considered from this point of view, there is a danger that metaphor is seen, at best, as an optional, ornamental addition to straightforward, common sense, literal usage. However, recent developments have tended to advance the idea that far more of our commonplace language is metaphorical than we had hitherto realised. Indeed, some would say that *all* language is metaphorical.

2.1.4 A MOVE TOWARDS A VIEW OF ALL LANGUAGE AS METAPHORICAL

The idea that most language is literal with the occasional metaphorical ornament led to the not unreasonable suggestion that actual neurological language processing involved two-

¹⁶ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 12.

¹⁷ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 12.

stages. Firstly, the brain processed an utterance for literal meaning. Only if this did not succeed would it then process the sentence for metaphors. Thus, it was assumed that literal language would take less time to process than metaphorical language. In experiments, this two-stage theory has been shown to be wrong since, given sufficient context, it takes subjects no longer to process non-literal text than literal. Hoffman draws the following conclusion from his survey of 'Recent Psycholinguistic Research on Figurative Language':

In ordinary contexts, figurative language takes no longer to comprehend than ordinary communication, because figurative language *is* ordinary communication.¹⁸

This counterintuitive conclusion has found support in the burgeoning field of cognitive linguistics. Lakoff and Johnson's book, *Metaphors We Live By*, demonstrated by way of a plethora of examples just how many everyday phrases are metaphorical. Their most celebrated example is the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. This can be seen in such sentences as:

I *beat* him in discussion.

I need to *marshall* a stronger argument.

I quickly *shot down* that *counterattack*.

Our proposal was easily *defeated*.

It is important to note that none of these examples are what we might call literary or poetic metaphors. They are the everyday, commonplace language that, without reflection, we might not consider to be metaphorical at all. Indeed, perhaps Lakoff and Johnson's greatest contribution has been to bring everyday language into the discussion of metaphor. Their most fundamental class of metaphor, from which *structural* metaphors can be built, is the class consisting of *ontological* metaphors and *orientational* metaphors. Ontological metaphors enable us to conceive of non-physical ideas in concrete terms (e.g. 'my fear'

¹⁸ R.R. Hoffman, 'Recent Psycholinguistic Research on Figurative Language', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 433 (1984): 137-166 (154).

implies that fear is something that can be owned). Orientational metaphors involve a construal of an abstract, conceptual world in geo-spatial terms. ‘Keep your voice *down*’ is an example of this.

As the extent of this kind of metaphorical language was realised, the suggestion became increasingly persuasive that metaphor is not simply a figure of speech, but a way of structuring cognition. The strong claim of Lakoff, Johnson, and those who came after them is that we think in metaphors.

2.1.5 AN UNDERSTANDING OF METAPHOR AS A CONCEPTUAL PROCESS

Cognitive linguistics regards metaphor as beginning with a cognitive schema, which is only then realised in an utterance. Thus, the metaphorical relationship is essentially a cognitive one rather than a literary one. The metaphor, A IS B, is conceived as a target domain (A) which is comprehended through a source domain (B). The relationship between the two consists of a set of mappings from one domain to the other. To understand a metaphor is to know the mappings between the two domains.

So, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY can be realised in a number of ways:¹⁹

We aren’t going anywhere.

It’s been a bumpy road.

We’re at the crossroads.

We’ve made a lot of headway.

But in order for these utterances to make sense to us, we need to share with the speaker the following set of mappings between source and target domain.

¹⁹ Taken from Z. Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6-7.

Source: JOURNEY		Target: LOVE
the travellers	→	the lovers
the vehicle	→	the love relationship itself
the journey	→	events in the relationship
the distance covered	→	the progress made
the obstacles encountered	→	the difficulties experienced
decisions about which way to go	→	choices about what to do
the destination of the journey	→	the goal(s) of the relationship

The JOURNEY domain has *structured* the LOVE domain in such a way that the concept of loving is now understood through our concept of journeying. It should be noted that, in this case and in most cases, the source domain is more concrete than the target domain. This highlights the explanatory function of metaphor. A less tangible idea is being expressed in terms of one which will be more familiar in the experience of the speaker/hearer. Rather than domains, Soskice considers metaphor to produce a *model* which has explanatory power. This is a helpful image, particularly when allied with the notion of models in science (e.g. balls on a snooker table as a model for the movement of molecules in a gas). Such a model may be representative of a theory, which in turn explains the world, perhaps in a new way. In this thesis, the model under investigation is DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY, in that the source domain of slavery is being used to explain the target domain of discipleship.

It has been observed that a number of conceptual metaphors are universal. In other words, unrelated languages express the same metaphors in the same way. Examples include: ANGER IS A PRESSURISED CONTAINER ('I was so angry, I thought I was going to explode') and MORE IS UP ('prices are rising'). This, it is suggested, is not because of some innate knowledge of these metaphors, but rather because they are derived from common human experience. The latter example can be clearly seen in the everyday

experience of pouring more water into a cup and seeing the level rise, or of adding more clothes to a pile and seeing it get bigger. Thus, metaphors are, at the most fundamental level, tied in to our sensory experience of the world. It is also the case, however, that there is cultural variation within metaphor. This may be caused by differences in the physical environment, but can also be due to variations in concepts, propositions and explanations across cultures.²⁰ To put this another way, metaphors are related to our context – linguistic, conceptual, political, social, traditional, physical, geographical, etc. – where the context is universal, the metaphor will be universal, but where the context is specific, so will the metaphor be.

2.1.6 AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE CREATIVITY OF METAPHOR

With the substitution view, metaphor cannot create anything new since it simply replaces one word with another. The more sophisticated comparison theory also rejects the creativity of metaphor since it demands that there be an existing relationship between *tenor* and *vehicle* which the metaphor highlights. The cognitive theory, presented above, gives us a greater potential for the creation of new understandings through metaphor. For example, given the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, we can see that new information can be expressed by implication.

It's time for our marriage's 10,000 mile service.

This is a less conventional metaphor than those mentioned previously, yet clearly expresses an extension of the same conceptual metaphor. But can metaphor create new meaning? Max Black thinks so, and in an important paper presents an analogy for what is going on. He asks the question,

²⁰ Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 187.

Did the slow-motion appearance of a galloping horse exist before the invention of cinematography?²¹

By watching a horse galloping on a slowed-down film, the viewer is seeing something that has not been seen before. Yet the act of watching it means that it becomes part of the world of experience and conception. Just as the film camera enables the viewer to see something new, yet which had always existed, so the metaphor enables the hearer to find a new perspective on something pre-existing. This viewpoint, once grasped, then 'exists' in the corpus of descriptions of the world. The metaphor has thus created a new way of looking at an object of study – the model created by the metaphor extends, adapts, or creates the hearer's view of her world. In this respect, parables can be regarded as a kind of metaphor. They create a new view of the world. Robert Funk, following Ian Ramsey, calls them *disclosure models*, because they do not simply represent an existing idea (substitution/comparison view), but disclose a new perspective on the world.²²

We observed earlier that, 'That lecturer is a dragon' is somehow not the same as 'That lecturer is frightening and threatening'. We can see now why this is the case. The metaphorical form creates a new way of looking at this particular lecturer, which cannot be simply expressed in pre-existing terms. This creative aspect of metaphor both serves to create new meaning in the clash of 'lecturer' and 'dragon', but also results in the individual elements being seen in a new light (certainly 'lecturer' and possibly 'dragon!'). This creative power of metaphors has traditionally been a mark of metaphors that are 'living' as opposed to those which are 'dead', but, as we will now see, this distinction may no longer be as clear cut as it once seemed.

²¹ M. Black, 'More about Metaphor', in *Metaphor and Thought* (ed. A. Ortony; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19-41 (37).

²² R.W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic, and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 137.

2.1.7 A BLURRING OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN A METAPHOR'S LIFE AND DEATH

In general, metaphor theorists have been less interested in so-called 'dead' metaphors. These are those which have passed from the novel, creative phases, to being well-used, to becoming commonplace and idiomatic. Soskice refers to the lexicalised nature of such 'dead' metaphors, in that, unlike their living counterparts, they could, in principle, be looked up in a dictionary. The lexicon thus becomes the metaphor's graveyard, with the rallying call of those interested in metaphor being, 'why look for the living among the dead?'

However, empirical studies have suggested a number of conclusions that contradict the established view.²³ Firstly, the meaning of an idiom is *not* derived from the whole phrase as a lexeme, but is rather composed from the individual words (e.g. 'spill the beans' can be decomposed into words representing 'revelation' and 'a secret' respectively). Secondly, speakers have similar mental images for such 'dead' metaphors, composed of more basic conceptual metaphors (e.g. in the case of the above example: IDEAS ARE PHYSICAL ENTITIES). A literal paraphrase of the idiom or 'dead' metaphor (e.g. 'reveal the secret'), does not produce the same set of conceptual metaphors and entailments as might be suggested if it were just a lexeme. Finally, hearers' views about the appropriateness of an idiomatic phrase in a given context are predicated on the metaphorical relationship between the image created by the metaphor and the content of the discourse (e.g. 'bit his head off' could be regarded as an appropriate metaphor to be used in a story which described a person's anger being akin to a ferocious animal's). Thus, the content of the idiomatic phrase has meaning in and of itself.

²³ R.W. Gibbs, Jr., 'Making Sense of Tropes', in *Metaphor and Thought* (ed. A. Ortony; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 252-276 (271-275).

This implies that we should reject Soskice's second criterion for distinguishing such 'dead' from 'live' metaphors, as well as being mindful that in some circumstances, the third criterion may apply equally to all metaphors, no matter how 'close to death':²⁴

1. A tension exists in a living metaphor whereby the terms of the utterance do not seem appropriate to the topic. A dead metaphor generates no tension because we are accustomed to its juxtaposition of terms.
2. A dead metaphor can be easily paraphrased (the more dead it is, the easier it can be).
3. A vital metaphor calls to mind a model or models – 'so that when one says "the wind howled about the caves" there is a suggestion that the wind, like a dog or a madman, howls.'

Thus, assuming we can identify what is and what is not metaphorical, we can see that there is no real warrant for dismissing a metaphor as an 'idiom'. Some metaphors will tend towards being more *established*, while others will be more *novel*, but each continues to have creative power.²⁵

2.2 SLAVERY METAPHORS IN LIGHT OF METAPHOR THEORY

2.2.1 KEY QUESTIONS IN LIGHT OF METAPHOR THEORY

Given this brief description of some of the major advances in metaphor theory in recent years, what does this now enable us to say about slavery as a metaphor for discipleship?

²⁴ Soskice, *Metaphor*, 73.

²⁵ D.E. Cooper, *Metaphor* (Aristotelian Society Series 5; Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 134.

1. A move away from a comparison theory of metaphor.

It is not sufficient to simply equate discipleship and slavery – they are not synonyms. Some more complex relationship is being created.

2. A recognition of metaphor as more than syntactic form.

The pragmatic context in which the metaphors are found will be important, in particular, the intratextual references in Mark's Gospel. Intertextual references will also play a part. However, we cannot ignore the extra-linguistic features that contribute towards and are necessary for an understanding of metaphor. Thus, the political, religious, social, and economic contexts of the time will contribute to the metaphor's understanding. Furthermore, we should be cautious about treating parables and sayings differently, simply because they have a different form.

3. A move towards a view of all language as metaphorical.

If all, or most, language is metaphorical, then we cannot bracket out metaphors as mere ornament. Thus, if we want to understand what Mark's Gospel means by discipleship, then we need to understand in what way this metaphor provides a model for discipleship.

4. An understanding of metaphor as a conceptual process.

The chief enquiry is not ultimately a literary one, but rather an attempt to discover the conceptual metaphor that gives rise to the use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship in Mark's Gospel. However, it seems likely that it is a culture-specific metaphor, since we do not experience slavery today, and certainly not in the way it was experienced in the first century. Therefore, the majority of commentators have been rash to assume that they understood this metaphor on the basis of some universal knowledge of 'service'. An understanding of the culture that could give rise to this conceptual metaphor will be necessary to understand the metaphor.

5. An acceptance of the creativity of metaphor.

It is possible that the use of this metaphor created a new perspective on discipleship that had not been seen before. Certainly, the understanding of discipleship derived from the use of this metaphor is not bound to be restricted to pre-existing conceptions. However, it may be *extending* a series of existing metaphors like GOD IS A KING and PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS, so that when the phrase, 'God's people' is used in Israel's tradition, it implies an ownership relationship which might contribute to our later slavery metaphor. Moreover, we should also be open to the possibility that the metaphor may create a different perspective on slavery.

6. A blurring of the boundary between a metaphor's life and death.

Whether or not DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY should be considered to be an *established* metaphor, it still has metaphorical force and needs to be understood as a metaphor, not dismissed as an 'idiom'.

With these theory-derived statements about the slavery metaphor, we are now in a better position to answer the questions with which we started, answers which have been assumed by previous commentators.

1. Is the description of discipleship as slavery a metaphor, a simile or something else?

We now know that metaphor is not to be found in the syntactic form of an utterance. Rather, it is in the conceptual model or relational domain represented in the utterance. Certainly, an explicit comparison is invited between disciples and slaves – both in the parables and the sayings. Thus, a metaphoric relationship is being established and slavery can be called a metaphor for discipleship. However, it might be more strictly accurate to consider it to be an example of Soskice's *modelling similes*. For while slavery is not an *illustrative simile*, since there is no attempt to restrict the metaphoric relationship or define

the similarities between slavery and discipleship, yet the comparison between source and target domain *is* made explicit. Therefore, while we can confidently assert that a metaphoric relationship between slavery and discipleship is expressed in the gospels, and even call it metaphor (since the cognitive process is the same), a more accurate description would be that the gospels use slavery as a modelling simile for discipleship. This will not affect how we seek to understand it, given that the linguistic utterance of metaphor and modelling simile derives in both cases from the same conceptual metaphor, but it does at least provide here for terminological carefulness.

2. If it is a metaphor, is it a 'dead' one? In other words, has it become so commonplace in linguistic usage as to have become an idiom?

Metaphor theory has now informed us that it would be erroneous to suggest that slavery is an idiomatic expression for discipleship, entrenched in a linguistic context drawn from Israel's ancient traditions; such a supposedly 'dead' metaphor could justly say with Mark Twain, 'the rumours of my death have been greatly exaggerated'. Just because a metaphor has become established, does not mean that it has ceased to function metaphorically. Furthermore, we now have a question to help us determine how established the metaphor of slavery has become: does a tension exist whereby the terms of the utterance do not seem appropriate to the topic, or is it an accustomed juxtaposition of terms? While we can answer this question easily for ourselves as we approach the text (for us, there is a definite tension), it is more difficult to do so when looking back at an extinct culture. But we can break this down into two further questions that will give us a good indication of whether there would have been a tension for the original gospel audiences.

- i) Does the metaphor appear in a narrative context that is designed to shock and surprise? In other words, does a tension seem appropriate in the context?

- ii) Is there evidence that the metaphor was used frequently in the linguistic context, which might suggest that speakers were accustomed to its juxtaposition of terms? Alternatively, are there inter-textual tensions between this particular juxtaposition of terms, and the ways in which the terms are used elsewhere? This would suggest that this juxtaposition is a novel metaphor, creating a new perspective.

These two questions will be pursued in the rest of the thesis, by looking at the text in its immediate literary context, as well as the wider context of the use of slavery as a metaphor in the ancient world. This will be coupled with work deriving from our answer to our final question.

- iii) Is there any justification for considering the social context of the Jesus movement, the first Christians and the Markan church as important in understanding this metaphor and its use? To put it another way, is it only the world of Jewish religious tradition that matters in interpreting the metaphor, or does the first-century social world of slavery shape its meaning?

We have learned from the way in which metaphors are formed that there is every justification for considering the social context in which the slave metaphors were originally uttered, because metaphors are created and understood based on *experience*. At a simple level, we can see how this is true for the metaphor GOD IS A FATHER. For to be sure, by Jesus' day this was well established in the tradition of Israel. However, could we for a moment consider that those who used this metaphor did not understand it, at least on some level, as being related to the human activity of fatherhood, and by implication, what they knew about fatherhood from their own experience? To deny this is to assume that language can be hermetically sealed off from the effects of historical particularity. Yet, we know this is not the case. This is not to ignore the place of tradition, but to appeal to the

cognitive approach to metaphors as a necessary method for beginning to understand how these metaphors were used.

At the same time, we know that traditional usage was important, and may have contributed to the cultural stock of metaphors on which early Christians drew to explain their understanding and experiences. Soskice rightly points out that to explain the use of Christian metaphors for God, requires not just that we understand the metaphor, but also that we understand the Christian literary tradition. For example, our understanding of an expression like, 'God is a fountain', would not be complete if we only understood fountains.²⁶ We must also understand the tradition in which the metaphor had been used.

One could imagine that this is even the case where the metaphor has become detached from the tradition which spawned it. We use the metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS LIGHT in phrases like, 'I was enlightened by his ideas,' and, 'That was a most illuminating lecture.' It is easy to see how this metaphor is derived from our everyday experiences, since we are able to see more clearly when it is light than when it is dark. Since this is a universal experience, it is likely that it is a universal metaphor. We can see evidence for this in the ancient world, with Plato's famous illustration of the cave. Yet this image itself has shaped modern ideas of understanding and the pursuit of new truths. That most people do not know this is immaterial. The fact is that the conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS LIGHT can both be understood through present experience, and through historical, in this case philosophical, tradition. It is not a case of either/or, but both/and. This is the approach that should be taken to understanding the DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY metaphor also.

²⁶ Soskice, *Metaphor*, 185.

2.2.2 METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS – CONCEPTUAL BLENDING THEORY

We are now moving on from our theory-based enquiry into the nature of metaphor, to seek an understanding of how the metaphor was used. However, we should keep in mind that our ultimate aim is to discover what model the metaphor creates, or in other words, what did the metaphor actually mean? In this thesis, a useful tool from modern metaphor theory will be appropriated: ‘Conceptual Blending Theory’, which is one approach to the study of metaphor used in the field of Cognitive Linguistics.²⁷ The chief advantage is that it is descriptive, at least at the level at which we will use it, even to the point that some have accused it of not being a ‘theory’ at all, but rather a general descriptive framework.²⁸ This is not a problem in this instance, however, as this is precisely what is needed. In other words, Blending Theory will provide a language to describe our observations, without forcing those observations to ‘mean’ in a particular way. Furthermore, Blending Theory is a cognitive theory which has its roots, not in the historically shifting sands of literary convention, with the accompanying rhetorical distance between us and the ancient world alluded to earlier, but in the ways in which the human mind works, ultimately realised in language. There has been some use of this approach within biblical studies in general,²⁹ but the only extensive use within NT studies of which I am aware is by Kirsten Marie

²⁷ For the classic introduction, see G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, ‘Conceptual Integration Networks’, *Cognitive Science* 22 (1998): 133-187. For a broader introduction, which also includes critique, see S. Coulson and T. Oakley, ‘Blending Basics’, *Cognitive Linguistics* 11 (2001): 175-196. It should be noted that both of these introductions are nevertheless technical. More straightforward introductions can be found in the two theological accounts, in n. 29, below.

²⁸ J. Gibbs, Raymond W., ‘Making Good Psychology out of Blending Theory’, *Cognitive Linguistics* 11 (2001): 347-358 (349-350).

²⁹ P.J.P.V. Hecke, ‘Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor. Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hos 4,16’, in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. P.J.P.V. Hecke; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 215-231; H. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 73; Leiden: Brill, 2010).

Hartvigsen, who uses Blending Theory to analyse the Gospel of Mark as a whole.³⁰

However, apart from its novelty, it is useful in this instance because it allows us to reflect on the creativity of the interaction between discipleship and slavery.

Conceptual Blending Theory is a development of the cognitive approach associated with, in particular, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their ground-breaking work referred to above, *Metaphors We Live By*.³¹ As Gerard Steen put it, 'In the beginning was Aristotle. Then there were the Dark Ages, which lasted until 1980. And then there was Lakoff. There was a Johnson too.'³² Although this is artistic exaggeration, it does indicate something of the significance of the shift in thinking which occurred with this work. Conceptual Blending Theory extends Conceptual Metaphor Theory into a more powerful and generic model. The aim of analysis using Conceptual Blending Theory is to produce a Conceptual Integration Network.³³ As a whole, this would correspond to the kind of metaphorical model described earlier. In such a network, source and target domains are called *input spaces*, since they *both* contribute to the cognitive process. They can be seen on the left and right of Fig. 1. These two, or potentially more, input spaces lead, through a process of composition, to a *blended space*. As Turner says,

Roughly and intuitively, conceptual blending is the mental operation of combining two mental packets of meaning ... selectively and under constraints to create a third mental packet of meaning that has new, emergent meaning.³⁴

³⁰ K.M. Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World* (BZNW 180; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).

³¹ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

³² G. Steen, 'Metaphor and Language and Literature: A Cognitive Perspective', *Language and Literature* 9 (2000): 261-277 (261).

³³ See Fauconnier and Turner, 'Conceptual Integration Networks'.

³⁴ M. Turner, 'The Cognitive Study of Art, Language, and Literature', *Poetics Today* 23 (2002): 9-20 (10).

This is the key observation of this theory, that, as the name suggests, out of potentially disparate input spaces, new meaning is created in the blended space, which in turn sheds new light on the original input spaces. A metaphor is therefore not merely illustrative, but also creative.

A good example of a Conceptual Integration Network is offered by Hugo Lundhaug, who pictures the interpretation of the Eucharistic elements as the body and blood of Christ (see Fig. 1).³⁵

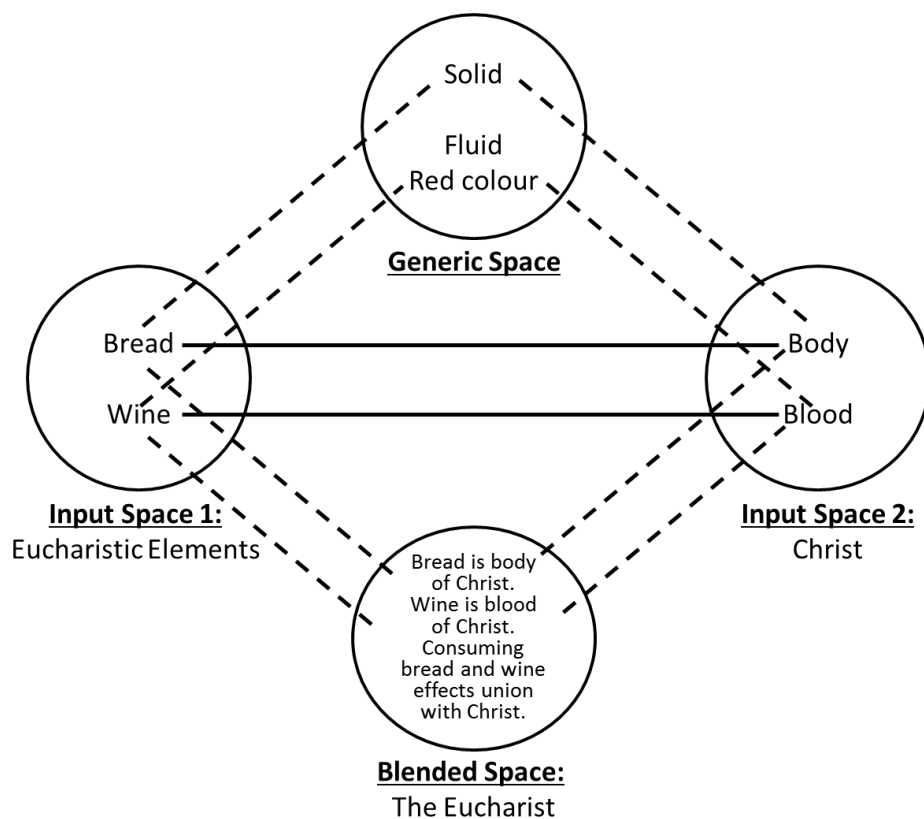


Figure 1 - Conceptual Integration Network of the Eucharist

The two input spaces are bread and wine, on the one hand, and the body and blood of Christ, on the other. Selected elements of these two spaces are projected into the blended space, where bread and wine are equated with the body and blood. It is only in the blended

³⁵ Lundhaug, *Images*, 32-33.

space that it becomes possible to speak about consuming the body and blood of Christ in any sensible way, which in turn implies union with Christ. Hence, the blended space contains more than simply the contribution of either input space: it creates new meaning through the metaphor. However, this newly created meaning may, in turn, result in the input spaces being viewed differently. For example, it is now possible to see bread and wine through a Eucharistic lens, and consequently, upon being confronted with a table on which is only bread and wine, a person who is aware of this blend may well find meaning in what they see, even if it is not intended.

There is a fourth space, represented at the top of the diagram: the *generic space*. This contains the features that are in common between the input spaces. In terms of the Eucharistic example, this might include 'solid', 'liquid' and 'red colour'. This is a less useful space for our purposes, and so will not be our focus to the same extent as the blended space, which is where the creative metaphor is formed.

Therefore, in order to create a model or Conceptual Integration Network of Mark's use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship, which I will call DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY,³⁶ it will be necessary to investigate slavery as an input space (i.e. both the existence of slavery in the world of the gospel, as well as the traditional metaphors and ideologies that may have been inherited) and discipleship as an input space (i.e. the elements of discipleship that are presented in the use of the metaphor in Mark). This, in turn, will enable us to see how these input spaces interact in the blend, thereby understanding better the use of the metaphor.

³⁶ Strictly speaking, this would be a title for a conceptual metaphor within the system developed by Lakoff and Johnson. Blending Theory allows a more complex relationship between input spaces. However, the label DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY captures well the essence of the metaphor, and communicates its dramatic force for the modern reader. Therefore, it will continue to be used in this thesis.

Of course, the metaphor enables the creator to express something that is perhaps not well understood in terms of something that is. For the first-century audience, slavery was well understood whereas discipleship was not (judging by Mark's disciples). For the modern reader, however, the reverse is true, as considerable scholarship has been undertaken to investigate discipleship and the disciples in Mark's Gospel whereas, as we saw in the previous chapter, the metaphor of slavery has not.³⁷ Therefore, this thesis will focus on slavery as an input space much more than discipleship. Moreover, the metaphor only engages with discipleship at the points where slaves and slavery appear in the text. Consequently, the significant particularities of discipleship will emerge through the exegetical process. Thus, discipleship will be discussed as an input space in the context of the discussion of Mark's Gospel.

The approach described here is akin to the 'catalogue of key questions for metaphor analysis' suggested by Zimmermann as a step towards the practical use of metaphor theory in regular exegesis.³⁸ Although not using Blending Theory, Zimmermann identifies eleven key questions which assist in the analysis of metaphor. In particular, these include the identification of metaphorical indicators, the investigation of source and target domains, the identification of prior traditions, the analysis of the points of interaction of domains, the effect and function of metaphor, and the impact on the receiving community.³⁹ Without being able to answer all these questions, the use of Conceptual Blending Theory will enable us to engage in a meaningful way with the pragmatic issues that Zimmermann raises, while also being rooted in the advances within this field, described earlier.

³⁷ See § 6.4.

³⁸ 'Katalog mit Leitfragen zur Metaphernanalyse'. Zimmermann, 'Metapherntheorie', 133.

³⁹ Zimmermann, 'Metapherntheorie', 130-133.

2.2.3 GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH IN THIS THESIS

In this chapter, we have looked at the developments in the study of metaphor and applied them to the task of this thesis. By understanding something of metaphor theory, we have been able to answer our three formative questions on the use of the slavery metaphor for discipleship, and avoid making assumptions that could have prematurely pruned fruitful lines of enquiry. We have also identified Conceptual Blending Theory as a modern theory of metaphor which will serve as a useful tool to describe and analyse the interaction of the metaphor DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY in the Gospel of Mark. On the basis of this theory, and our now-answered questions, we will pursue the following investigation in the rest of this thesis.

1. A socio-historical investigation. What was the social context which could give rise to the use and understanding of this metaphor? This is essentially a synchronic investigation into the metaphor, looking at texts which may use the metaphor in a similar or dissimilar way, as well as the actual practice of slavery which may have been experienced by the early Christians. It will be pursued with respect to slavery in the Roman world in general, and in Jewish communities in particular.
2. A tradition-historical investigation. In what ways did the religious tradition received by the first disciples use the metaphor and can a connection be seen between the way it was used in, for example, the Hebrew Bible and Mark's Gospel. This is a diachronic investigation of the metaphor.

These first two points will be covered in chapters 3 and 4. Then, using this knowledge of the input space, we will turn to the Gospel of Mark, to conduct:

3. A text-based investigation. In what literary contexts in Mark's Gospel does the metaphor appear, and do these contexts suggest a pattern to the use of the metaphor?

This will be the focus of chapters 5 and 6, where, in the latter, the discipleship input space will be discussed. Blending Theory will be used to create a Conceptual Integration Network to represent the ways in which slavery is used as a model of discipleship in Mark's Gospel. Chapter 7 will draw final conclusions on the method and its results, as well as considering how it might be applied to related texts.

3 – SLAVERY METAPHORS IN ROMAN PERSPECTIVE

Francis Lyall begins his study of legal metaphors in the Pauline corpus with the following observation: ‘A characteristic of the great communicator is the ability to present material in such a way that it is easily grasped by the audience. Often this is done through figures of speech, drawing upon familiar facts and circumstances, shared experiences, and the like.’¹ This is just as much true of Jesus and the evangelists as it was of Paul. Yet while the gospels’ first readers shared an understanding with their texts, we do not, especially when it comes to the subject of slavery. We are not ‘drawing upon familiar facts and circumstances, shared experiences, and the like’. Yet, in the previous chapter, we saw that the theory of metaphor indicates the importance of experience to the cognitive construction of metaphor. Therefore, an investigation into the metaphor of slavery in the Gospel of Mark demands an exploration of slavery as an ‘input space’. In this chapter we will be concerned with slavery from the perspective, primarily, of Roman writers, while the next chapter will look at slavery from a Jewish perspective, as these are the two domains influencing Mark and his readers. In this chapter we will build up a picture of the institution of slavery as practised in the Roman Empire of the 1st century CE.² Inevitably, this will be an imperfect picture, not least due to the limits of our sources; as Harrill says, ‘In the end, we find that none of our sources fulfils our expectations; together, they allow a reconstruction of slavery that few historians specializing in modern periods would find satisfactory.’³ However, as we will see, they do present a broadly consistent picture of the ideology of slavery, always presented from the slave owner’s perspective. This will give us sensitivity to the institution of slavery and sufficient canvas from which to become aware of

¹ F. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1984), 19.

² The standard collection of source texts in English on Greek and Roman Slavery is T.E.J. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (London: Routledge, 1981). This contains a number of the primary texts cited in this section, but not all, and is usually abbreviated: GARS.

³ J.A. Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (HUT 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 29.

possible features in the metaphor of slavery as discipleship. We will then turn to consider the slavery metaphor as used by Roman writers, the values expressed and the uses to which it was put. This will give us an idea of how, in light of the experience of slavery, slavery could then be re-imagined as metaphor.

We will begin by looking at slavery in the Roman Empire, although, on account of the specificity of the sources, this will mean focussing in practice on Rome itself and Italy, along with some papyri from Roman Egypt.⁴ Roman law will also be used as a source, although with caution, since it may not reflect actual practice, and there were regional variations.⁵ However, we begin by defining our subject.

⁴ Three of the best introductions to this subject, both in terms of readability and coverage are: S.R. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); K. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Key Themes in Ancient History; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); K. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* (Collection Latomus 185; Bruxelles: Latomus, 1984). These works will be drawn on particularly in this chapter. However, the reader should also bear in mind the critique of Bradley (and, by implication, Joshel, who follows a similar line), that he actually presents a polemic against slavery. In the history of scholarship, this has been a necessary corrective to the benign attitude towards slavery in earlier work. At present, and to my mind rightly, writing on slavery is still at Bradley's end of the pendulum swing. For the critique, see N. McKeown, *The Invention of Ancient Slavery?* (Duckworth Classical Essays; London: Duckworth, 2007), ch. 4, esp. p. 95. For views of slavery from the perspective of the Greek world, see: N.R.E. Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece* (Classical World Series; Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1993); Y. Garlan, *Slavery in Ancient Greece* (trans. J. Lloyd; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). For a recent helpful collection of relevant articles, including discussion of Jewish and Christian slavery, see K. Bradley and P. Cartledge eds, *The Ancient Mediterranean World (The Cambridge World History of Slavery)*; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁵ For the geographical variety, see W.L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 40; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955).

3.1 SLAVERY IN THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC AND THE EARLY EMPIRE

3.1.1 DEFINING SLAVERY

In this research, we are concerned with *chattel slavery*, as this is what is normally meant by slavery, at least in the Roman world. This is to distinguish it from *debt-bondage*, which is likewise common in the Bible. An accepted modern definition of the latter comes from the United Nations *Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices similar to Slavery* (1956). Debt-bondage is:

the status or condition resulting from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or those of a third person under his control as a security for a debt, where the value reasonably assessed of those services is not applied to the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of these services are not respectively limited and defined.⁶

The key element of this definition is that it is the worker's labour that is given in payment of a debt, rather than the person themselves.⁷ Slavery, on the other hand, involves the possession of the person, rather than simply the services they could offer. As Finley says, 'With slavery ... the *labourer himself* is the commodity.'⁸ So, the UN Convention defines chattel slavery as, 'the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised'.⁹ The essential part of this definition is that the slave is *owned* by someone else, which echoes the Roman jurist Florentinus who says that slavery is an institution 'by which a person is put into the ownership of somebody else' (*Dig.* 1.5.4.1 [Wiedemann, GARS 1]). This, then, is a *legal* definition of slavery.

⁶ Quoted in Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 4.

⁷ Debt-bondage was outlawed in Rome in 326 BCE, leaving the distinction between slave and 'free' a clearer one. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 54.

⁸ M.I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980), 68.

⁹ Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 5.

Sandra Joshel has used a helpful term to summarise what I regard to be a related, but distinct, *economic* definition of slavery: ‘fungibility’.¹⁰ This incorporates the important sense of saleability: a slave can be bought and sold as goods and *chattel*, and can be traded and passed on in a will. Aristotle famously describes the slave as ‘an animate piece of property’ (*Pol.* 1.2.4 [Wiedemann, GARS 2]), which is echoed by later practitioners like Varro who considers slaves to be articulate tools (*Rust.* 1.17.1). The slave as property has monetary value, and can be reckoned in this way, as does Cicero after his victory at Pindemissum in Cilicia in 51 BCE. He sells the captives as plunder and comments, ‘as I write, there is about 120,000 sesterces on the platform’ (*Att.* 5.20.5)¹¹ – the platform was the auction block upon which there must have been a reasonably large group of slaves, who did not merit even their individuality being numbered; all that mattered was their overall cash value.

The legal and economic definitions of slavery are derived from the perspective of the owner. In more recent times, an alternative, *social* definition of slavery has been offered, that of ‘social death’. Slavery has thus been defined by Orlando Patterson as, ‘the permanent, violent, domination of natively alienated and generally dishonoured persons’.¹² According to this definition, slaves cannot *expect* freedom, although they may receive it, and so will be enslaved until death;¹³ they will be recipients of violent abuse; they will be owned by one who has the power of life and death over them, and who determines their actions; they will be removed from their racial, geographical and kinship structures of birth; and may be treated as a sex object, along with many other ways of being dishonoured. Each of these aspects will be seen in the discussion of Roman slavery which

¹⁰ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 80-81.

¹¹ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 84.

¹² O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 13.

¹³ It also worth bearing in mind a further difference between slaves and wage labourers here: slaves were permanent, whereas most hired labour was for a temporary purpose, e.g. harvesting. M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Sather Classical Lectures 48; London: Hogarth, 1985), 73.

follows. However, while this definition is couched in modern, sociological terms, the ideas were not unknown in the ancient world. To take violence as one example, Demosthenes explains that the greatest difference between the slave and the free is that the former, 'is answerable with his body (*soma*) for all offences' (*Andr.* 22.55). Freeman, on the other hand, are usually able to satisfy the law with the payment of fines. In a similar way, Bradley echoes the language of dying, describing slavery as a 'state of living death'.¹⁴ This is based on a number of legal texts from the Digest which make precisely this equation, since, in the rationale of the time, an enemy captured on the battle-field (for a long time the main source of slaves in the Roman Empire, see below) deserves to die. If they are not executed but instead taken into slavery, they can nevertheless be considered to be dead.

There has been debate about which of these constitutes an adequate definition of chattel slavery, and attempts have been made to find examples which do not fit these definitions.¹⁵ However, there is no need to see them as mutually exclusive. Rather, the legal definition describes the status of the slave, the economic definition describes the value and usefulness, the 'worth', of the slave, whereas the social definition emphasises what it meant to be a slave.¹⁶ Hence, together, these definitions furnish us with a broader picture of

¹⁴ Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 25.

¹⁵ For example, Seneca likens a slave to a wage labourer (*mercennarius*) (*Ben.* 3.22.1), which seems to be because the labourer's activity was the same as that undertaken by a slave, but also, 'By selling his labor, the *mercennarius* sold himself ... [reducing] him to the state of something owned – an animal, inanimate object, a slave.' Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 166. For a Greek example, see the description of the *hektemoroi* in Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 15-16. Such examples point to the complexity of slavery as an actual institution, without necessarily reducing the value of the general definitions noted above.

¹⁶ It is worth noting that slaves are difficult to categorise even within these definitions of slavery. For example, legally, slaves can be classed along with property and yet are human; economically, some slaves were extremely valuable (e.g. those of imperial household) and had wealth and responsibility far above the freeborn; socially, slaves might be 'dead' but many were also part of the closest family.

slavery and slave existence.¹⁷ Albert Harrill describes the definitions as ‘hermeneutics’ through which the story of ancient slavery has been read.¹⁸ Since a given hermeneutic may obscure as much as it illuminates, it will be to our benefit to adopt each of these interpretative lenses in what follows.

3.1.2 IMAGINING SLAVERY

While slavery can be defined, it is much harder to speak of the experience of actual slaves, since we do not have sources in the slave’s voice. Acknowledging these problems, McKeown concludes his monograph, *The Invention of Ancient Slavery*, saying,

If we simply accept the silences in our sources, we will condemn ourselves to writing (so to speak) the history of the prison-camp guards rather than that of their victims. We must therefore use our imagination to see the other “plot lines”. Those plot lines, however, represent only *possible* readings of the evidence we have. They may be true, but they *need* not be.¹⁹

However, ‘imagination’ is also critical to the use of the metaphor of slavery, for the metaphorical slaves are not actual slaves, rather, they are imagined. We see this particularly in such texts as the parables, but all metaphor creation requires imagination. For us, we need to imagine actual slavery in order to see how metaphorical slavery could then be imagined. Therefore, accepting McKeown’s challenge, and caveat, we note that on October 1st of 54 BCE, Cicero writes from Rome to his friend Atticus about the awaited outcome of Caesar’s second campaign in Britain. He famously says, ‘it has been ascertained too that there is not a scrap of silver in the island, nor any hope of booty except from slaves; but I don’t fancy you will find any with literary or musical talents among them’ (*Att.*

¹⁷ Approximately the same combination is used by Peter Garnsey in *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (The W.B. Stanford Memorial Lectures; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1.

¹⁸ However, he only recognises two definitions, and consequently two hermeneutics: the ‘chattel’ hermeneutic (a combination of my legal and economic definitions) and the ‘social death’ hermeneutic. Harrill, *Manumission*, 17.

¹⁹ McKeown, *Invention*, 162-163.

4.17 [18] [Winstedt, LCL]). Having attained victory, Caesar did indeed take from Britain, ‘a great number of prisoners’ (*Bell. gall.* 5.23 [Edwards, LCL]). Strabo comments that slaves are one of the exports of Britain, and has himself seen them in Rome (*Geogr.* 4.5.2). With this in mind, let us imagine one slave’s story.²⁰

The fighting began just to the West of Canterbury.²¹ The opposition was strong but no match for Caesar’s Seventh Legion.²² This was only the first wave of battle that would ultimately see all the Kentish kings bow the knee to Caesar,²³ but it was the end for Segovax.²⁴ Named after one of those Kings,²⁵ the ten year-old knew little of life, but at least knew that he was a Briton. He was tall, like his father, with the same long, flaxen hair²⁶ and had lived, up until that point, in the fortified settlement which was now overrun.²⁷ The men fled, or were killed, or captured.²⁸ Segovax did not know what happened to either of his parents, but he was among those children who were dragged off as captives.²⁹ Before

²⁰ This entirely fictitious account is an attempt to represent various data about ancient slavery in narrative form, in order to give the reader an idea of the life of one slave. By doing so, this will hopefully increase our sensitivity to the slaves whom we will later encounter in Mark’s Gospel and other literature.

²¹ F.H. Thompson, ‘Excavations at Bigberry, near Canterbury, 1978-80’, *AntJ* 63 (1983): 237-78.

²² Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 5.9.

²³ Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 5.22.

²⁴ To keep what was likely a long story short, I have had Segovax captured in this first battle. Caesar’s account does not indicate that captives were taken in this battle. However, later on (*Bell. gall.* 5.18), he mentions questioning prisoners which suggests that Britons were taken captive in this early part of the campaign, although it is not mentioned. Moreover, gang-chains for binding slaves together at the neck have been found at Bigberry where the first battle took place. It is most likely that this is an indication of the pre-existing slave-trade from the edge of the Roman Empire to the central Mediterranean – slaves being taken in inter-tribal warfare (‘domesticum bellum’, Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 5.9). See Thompson, ‘Excavations at Bigberry’, 256-259. However, since the archaeology indicates that the fort was abandoned after the battle, it is possible that such chains were used by the Romans for their captives.

²⁵ Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 5.22.

²⁶ Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 5.14; Strabo, *Geogr.* 4.5.2.

²⁷ Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 5.9.

²⁸ This is the description of a later battle (Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 5.21).

²⁹ It is not clear in this account that British children were taken captive. However, earlier, Indutiomarus has to bring hostages to Caesar, which included his son and the rest of his relatives

long, he was with others he did not know, on board ship for France, guarded by legionaries.³⁰ At the port, it seemed that traders were waiting for them,³¹ as he saw money change hands as he was transferred to another ship with different guards.³² He was chained

(*Bell. gall.* 5.4); and only a little after the British campaign, we are given a description of Ambiorix who was grateful to Caesar because his son and nephew had been returned to him. They had been taken captive as slaves (*Bell. gall.* 5.27). Strabo, in describing the export of slaves from Britain, also mentions having seen in Rome British slaves who were ‘mere lads’ (ἀντίπαιδας) (*Geogr.* 4.5.2 [Jones, LCL]). As Gordon puts it, ‘The women and children of the enemy, and non-combatants generally, were normally enslaved, not butchered.’ M.L. Gordon, ‘The Nationality of Slaves under the Early Roman Empire’, *JRS* 14 (1924): 93-111 (103). Moreover, clearly children of this age were sold in the slave-trade (see the discussion of *P. Turner* 22, below), and were valuable because they were more malleable than adults (according to Polybius, Cato complained that young slave boys [‘pretty boys’, Paton, LCL] are more expensive than land, 31.25.5a; Horace gives an example of a slave dealer’s pitch for a young boy, describing him as ‘wet clay’, *Ep.* 2.2.8; cf. *Dig.* 21.1.37); and Josephus records that young men (at least, those who were ‘handsome of body’) were sent to Rome as part of Titus’ triumph (*B.J.* 7.5.3 [118]). As to the parents, they may have been killed or taken captive, but since there were so many captives it would be easy to be lost in the crowd (*Bell. gall.* 5.23). Cicero reports a brief note from Quintus and Caesar on the outcome of the British campaign. Apart from tribute being imposed, the only benefit was: ‘hostages taken’ (*Att.* 4.18 [Winstedt, LCL]).

³⁰ There were so many prisoners, Caesar had to make two trips to transport them (*Bell. gall.* 5.23).

³¹ It is clear from the description elsewhere of the army in Gaul that traders travelled with the legions and stayed outside the camp (Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 2.33; 6.37). As Finley puts it, ‘Normally preparations were made beforehand for booty disposal, and they consisted above all in seeing to it that a crowd of peddlers and merchants came along, equipped with ready cash and means of transport.’ M.I. Finley, *Aspects of Antiquity: Discoveries and Controversies* (London: Pelican, 1977), 160. See also, Livy, *Epon.* 39.42.1; 41.11.7-8. Bradley points out that traders do not appear in the sources much due to their low-status. Moreover, they may not be identified as *slave* traders, because slaves were just another commodity, such that a trader might deal in both wine and slaves (e.g. Trimalchio in Petronius, *Satyr.* 76.6). K. Bradley, ‘On the Roman Slave Supply and Slavebreeding’, in *Classical Slavery* (ed. M.I. Finley; London: Frank Cass, 1987), 53-81 (56-59).

³² It is this aspect of the slave’s story which is purely artistic license! In order to say something about sea travel, and the multiple markets through which a slave might pass before reaching their ultimate owner, I have depicted Segovax travelling from Gaul to North Africa. This is most unlikely, although the trade between North Africa and Rome was common. It would be typical for slaves from Gaul to travel overland, if their eventual destination was Italy. For example, Cicero, *Quinct.* 6.24, describes one Lucius Publicius who is met at the ‘fords of Volaterra’ (*Vada Volaterrana*), transporting slaves from Gaul to Rome. If this corresponds to modern-day Volterra, then this indicates an overland route. Cf. Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 46. However, it is also worth considering that the transport of goods by ship was considered a much faster and safer (and therefore cheaper) means of distribution (e.g. Philo, *Flacc.* 26), so the depiction in this story is not totally unreasonable.

below deck, and had very little food.³³ Some men talked about killing themselves rather than remain in this state.³⁴ One managed to escape, only to throw himself overboard, leaving his fate to the waves. The journey seemed to take forever, and Segovax only survived it because of the kindness of another captive, who spoke encouragingly and comforted him through the long nights. When they arrived at their destination, it seemed like another world. There were sand dunes, the likes of which he had never seen before, and strange animals, a heat that bore down upon them, and people with dark skins. Many people spoke but he did not understand a word they said. They were pushed and led to a market place, where crowds gathered round who pulled and prodded them. Segovax stood close to his friend from the ship, but was quickly separated from him when a buyer selected Segovax and money was paid. He never saw his friend again. Disorientated and confused, Segovax was led to yet another ship for the now familiar experience of sea travel. After another long period at sea, they berthed in a large port. He heard the sailors shout, 'Ostia' and presumed it was the name of their destination.³⁵ They were taken off the ship in chains. He was chained to men he did not recognise, and whose language he did not speak. They were made to walk from the port through the countryside. The chains bit into his neck and he had to be helped to carry them. When he fell, one of the overseers hit him to make him stand.³⁶ After a day of walking,³⁷ they arrived in the largest city Segovax had ever

³³ Bradley, 'Roman Slave Supply', 60. It is suggested that leg fetters were used for sea travel. F.H. Thompson, *The Archaeology of Greek and Roman Slavery* (Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London 66; London: Duckworth; The Society of Antiquaries of London, 2002), 227. For a detailed description of merchant ships, albeit without mentioning slaves as a common commodity, see L. Casson, *Ships and Seafaring in Ancient Times* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), 101-126.

³⁴ It was common enough for there to be legal provisions for such an eventuality (*Dig.* 14.2.2.5).

³⁵ Thompson notes that Ostia 'almost certainly' would have been a major slave centre with a market of its own, although the material evidence is lacking. *Archaeology*, 43.

³⁶ The tombstone of Aulus Capreilius Timotheus in Amphipolis, dating from around the turn of the eras, is significant in that Timotheus is described as a slave-dealer (*sômatenporos*). The bottom quarter of the stone depicts eight slaves walking in a line who are chained at the neck. They are guarded by a cloaked figure. It must be admitted that this picture also includes two women and two children who are unchained. However, from the size of the children, they are very young. Neck

seen – indeed, the only city he had ever seen. There were so many buildings, some small and crammed together, others, great, gleaming edifices. The noise, the smells, and the activity were overwhelming. They were led to a large marketplace.³⁸ Their overseers cut off his hair and put a strange ointment on his head.³⁹ His chains were removed and he was put on a block,⁴⁰ with chalk painted on his feet⁴¹ and a label tied around his neck.⁴² Many gathered round and stared, and again handled him like any other market goods.⁴³ He was made to strip naked,⁴⁴ and humiliated in ways he could not have imagined.⁴⁵ One man, wearing a tunic,⁴⁶ took him down from the block and led him away. His life as a Roman household slave had begun. In time, through schooling, he learned Latin, and to call his

chains have been found in different styles all over the empire. See Thompson, *Archaeology*, 222-227.

³⁷ Accounts from the antebellum South indicate that slave coffles covered approximately 20 miles per day. W. Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 50.

³⁸ The main slave market was in the Roman Forum, behind the Temple of Castor.

³⁹ Pliny describes a recipe for a depilatory used to increase the attractiveness of boys, and of the use of terebinth resin for making a slave look plumper, and therefore healthier (*Nat.* 32.135; 24.35). Clement of Alexandria says, ‘I pity the young boys belonging to the slave-dealers, dressed up so as best to excite lust.’ (*Paed.* 3.3.21 [Wood, FC]).

⁴⁰ A tombstone from Capua depicts a slave standing on a raised platform (*catasta*). Thompson, *Archaeology*, 44. Fig. 12.

⁴¹ Pliny explains that the chalk indicated newly imported slaves, presumably distinguishing them from those being sold locally (*Nat.* 35.199). Cf. Propertius, 4.5.52. Treggiari notes that the named slaves mentioned in Pliny’s description were probably ‘mere boys at the time’, who had arrived by ship from Antioch. *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 115.

⁴² Propertius, 4.5.51. This was a requirement of Roman law, in the Edict of the Aediles. The label needed to state any physical or character defects.

⁴³ Suetonius, *Cal.* 36.2.

⁴⁴ The gravestone from Capua depicts the slave naked (see above, n. 40). Seneca explains that the reason for this was to avoid the deceptions of the slave-dealers who ‘hide under some sort of finery any defect which may give offence’ (*Ep.* 80.9 [Gummere, LCL]). Cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 69.

⁴⁵ Propertius, 4.5.52. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 103-107.

⁴⁶ The standard clothing for a slave. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 132-136. However, it did not distinguish slaves from other workers, perhaps for fear that slaves would recognise their own strength as compared to the comparatively fewer masters (Seneca, *Clem.* 1.24).

master, '*Domine*'.⁴⁷ He was called 'Boy', just as all the male slaves in the household. He became familiar with household tasks, but seemed most useful to his master for his body. Just as he won the master's affection, so he learned to fear him – seeing the effects of his brutal rage when another slave displeased him, and as a consequence had his eye poked out with a pen.⁴⁸ The youngest children seemed to learn quickly from their father, and treated Segovax in the same way. Yet Segovax had long since forgotten that he had been called such, for now he was known as Fides.⁴⁹ Some of the slaves had cells in which to sleep. Not large enough to stretch out in, but some privacy. Fides had none, but slept wherever he could.⁵⁰ Some of the older slaves spoke of manumission and a supposed promise in the master's will. Fides did not know what to believe, although he had seen some freed in his time. If they had a relationship with a partner (they were not legally married), they were often allowed to go free with them, but they had to leave their children behind. Fides just tried to keep his head down, and hope that he might gain responsibility in the household, perhaps become a cook or learn some other trade, so that one day he might be entrusted with a *peculium*, perhaps take a wife, and eventually gain freedom for himself. But as the days went on, that dream seemed a very long way off.

⁴⁷ Varro, *Ling.* 8.6; Pliny, *Ep.* 7.27.13. Inscriptional evidence suggests that child slaves in households were given nurses, child-minders and teachers. Bradley, 'Roman Slave Supply', 71-72.

⁴⁸ An incident both witnessed by Galen, and reported by him of the action of the Emperor Hadrian (*Aff. Dig.* 4).

⁴⁹ Varro gives three different examples of names given to slaves: a name based on the seller's name; a name based on the region of sale; and a name based on the location of sale (*Ling.* 8.21). However, there were other reasons why slaves might be given particular names, and it is noteworthy that the actual nationality of the slave makes no difference to the given name. Notwithstanding this, in general, Latin names seem to have been given to slaves from the West, whereas Greek names were given to Eastern slaves. M.I. Finley, et al., *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 171-172.

⁵⁰ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 138-140.

The purpose of this story, created from a mass of historical *realia* but no doubt inaccurate in many respects, has been to help us imagine what it might have been like to be a slave, brought from the extremities of the empire to the heart of Rome. It has been necessary to create this story because of the quintessential problem in the study of ancient slavery: we do not have access to the voices of the slaves. In other words, for all the legal, literary, historical and archaeological data which tell us something of slavery in the ancient world, they do not tell it in the words of the slaves themselves. There may be an occasional inscription which gives voice to a slave's eye view (or, more likely, a former slave),⁵¹ or the unique philosophical writings of the ex-slave, Epictetus, or the fables of Phaedrus, but of the individual slave's perspective on the institution amidst the vast, unnumbered masses of slaves, we hear nothing. The consequence of this for what follows is that we are, by necessity, gaining the perspective of the elite, the powerful, and the slave owner on the institution of slavery. These are the views recorded for posterity, and with which we have to work. This is not to say that, by judicious use of imagination, perhaps supplemented by comparative studies, we cannot create a picture of ancient slavery as the slave might have seen it, but this can never be validated, as the necessary voices have long since fallen silent. However, this is not as bleak a realisation as it might at first sound. We do, at least, have access to the ideology of slavery, as expressed by those with the coercive power within the system, the slave owners. In a similar way, the Gospel of Mark, the subject of our present study, presents us with a picture of slavery which is rooted in the views, if not of the elite, then at least of the free. Apart from the occasional statement made by a slave, there is nothing to suggest that the gospel parables, for example, represent a slave's perspective on events. Nevertheless, in the investigation that follows of slavery as a domain for

⁵¹ For example, the following inscription indicates that slaves, if they shared a common language, might actually meet in the slave market whilst waiting to be sold: 'To Aulus Memmius Clarus. Aulus Memmius Urbanus to his fellow freedman and his dearest companion. I do not remember, my most virtuous fellow freedman, that there was ever any quarrel between you and me. By this epitaph, I call on the gods above and the gods below as witnesses that I met you in the slave market, that we were made free men together in the same household, and that nothing ever separated us except the day of your death.' (CIL 6.22355A)

metaphorical use, we should keep in mind the sources from which it is derived, and remember the consequent perspective that we gain. However, its origins in the views of slave owners do not invalidate it for our purposes.

In fact, there are plenty of starting points for such imaginative creations as that above.⁵²

For example, in the province of Pamphylia in 142 CE, P. Turner 22 describes Abaskantis, a ten year-old girl, originally from Galatia, who is sold to Pamphilos, a man from Alexandria, who, given his distance from home, was likely to be a slave dealer himself.⁵³

In the consulship of L. Cuspius Rufinus and L. Staius Quadratus, at Side, before L. Claudius Auspicatus, demiurge and priest of the goddess Roma, on 26 Loos. Pamphilos, otherwise known as Kanopos, son of Aigyptos, from Alexandria, has purchased in the marketplace from Artemidoros, son of Aristokles, the slave girl Abaskantis, or by whatever other name she may be known, a ten-year-old Galatian, for the sum of 280 silver denarii. M. Aelius Gavianus stands surety for and guarantees the sale. The girl is healthy, in accordance with the Edict of the Aediles... is free of liability in all respects, is prone neither to wandering nor running away, and is free of epilepsy.⁵⁴

This contract of sale emphasises the point, however, for it is written wholly from the new slave owner's point of view. In purchasing this young girl, Pamphilos has a guarantee that she is fit for purpose: there is nothing wrong with her that will prevent her from fulfilling her duties as a slave. This includes something of her past history, including where she is from. This is not so that she might maintain some distant affection for her homeland, but so that the buyer might determine the sort of person she was likely to be.⁵⁵ We are told her name, but even this is only loosely attached, as the contract says, 'or by whatever name she

⁵² In the rest of this section, I will try wherever possible to make use of sources that date from approximately the period in which Mark was composed, so I will concentrate on the first century CE.

⁵³ This, presumably, is how this slave sale contract ended up in Egypt. See S.R. Llewelyn and R.A. Kearsley, *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1980-81* (NewDocs 6; North Ryde, N.S.W.: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1992), 49-50.

⁵⁴ Tr. Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 2.

⁵⁵ According to Finley, such 'racism' was a common element in ancient slavery. *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 118-119.

may be known'. The buyer has paid 280 denarii, and presumably got what he came to market for. We can only imagine what the experience was like for Abaskantis.

This contract makes reference to the Edict of the Aediles, the Roman law which, in particular, regulated the sale of slaves. This is found in the Digest of Justinian 21.1. As the latter's name suggests, this was compiled in the reign of Justinian I (530-533 CE), many hundreds of years after the period in which we are interested. This has led some to question the appropriateness of the use of this for the study of slavery in the early empire,⁵⁶ much as the authenticity of the traditions in the Mishnah as evidence for Judaism prior to the fall of Jerusalem has been challenged,⁵⁷ but epigraphic evidence such as that given above suggests that at least some aspects of this edict were used in our period. However, it is a reminder not to rely on one form of evidence alone. Another aspect of Roman law is whether or not it reflected practice.⁵⁸ In other words, just because a law is made, it does not automatically mean that it reflects what was actually happening. There is enough evidence that Roman jurists were as much interested in unusual legal arguments as they were in legislating for common behaviour.⁵⁹ The consequence of this is that we can neither assume that laws which protected slaves, nor laws which gave license to their owners, necessarily describe the situation in reality. Nevertheless, where there is corroborating evidence, we can utilise such legislature as social description.⁶⁰ Moreover, even when we cannot corroborate the application of these laws, they nevertheless reflect a particular

⁵⁶ J. Byron, 'Paul and the Background of Slavery: The *Status Quaestionis* in New Testament Scholarship', *CBR* 3 (2004): 116-139 (131); J. Byron, *Recent Research on Paul and Slavery* (Recent Research in Biblical Studies 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), 138.

⁵⁷ See §§ 4.1 and 4.3.2.

⁵⁸ In his review of sources, Harrill says, 'one must always guard against mistaking law codes for social description'. *Manumission*, 24. Patterson says that attempts to define slavery in terms of Roman civil law 'confuse legal fiction with legal and sociological realism'. Patterson, *Slavery*, 32.

⁵⁹ Harrill says, 'The deliberations of the jurists were academic games having little to do with the practice of law.' J.A. Harrill, 'Using the Roman Jurists to Interpret Philemon: A Response to Peter Lampe', *ZNW* 90 (1999): 135-138 (137).

⁶⁰ S. Treggiari, *Roman Social History* (Classical Foundations; London: Routledge, 2002), 34.

ideology and pattern of thinking about slavery. From the point of view of the metaphorical use of the institution, this may be just as valuable to us. Finally, we must face the question of whether Roman law applied uniformly across the empire. We can answer this easily: it did not. However, we *do* know that, if it was applied anywhere, it was applied in Rome itself, then in the Roman colonies, and perhaps in the rest of the empire whenever the governor's court was convened in a locality.⁶¹ Apart from these occasions, individuals were subject to their own local legal systems. In other words, the Roman Empire was an example of 'legal pluralism'.⁶² Yet, if a writer such as Paul wanted to be understood in a number of different locales, it would make sense for him to communicate using as much of a *lingua franca* as he could. Roman law provided such a means, and indeed, Lyall indicates that some of Paul's metaphors were based solely on Roman law, not finding parallels in Greek or Jewish law of the time.⁶³ It remains to be seen whether this can be said about Mark's Gospel also, but it is a point in favour of using Roman law as one of our sources for understanding slavery in the early empire.⁶⁴

In what follows, literary, legal, epigraphic and archaeological sources will be used to describe the institution of slavery, as a way of beginning to explain what was important about slavery when understood metaphorically.

3.1.3 SOURCES OF SLAVES

Slavery was so commonplace that a constant supply of slaves was needed to meet the demand. When coupled with the high mortality rate, and perhaps also a high rate of

⁶¹ S.R. Llewelyn, *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published 1984-85* (NewDocs 8; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 42.

⁶² Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 23.

⁶³ F. Lyall, 'Roman Law in the Writings of Paul: Adoption', *JBL* 88 (1969): 458-466 (465-466).

⁶⁴ For summaries of the Roman legal positions on slaves and slavery see A. Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); J.F. Gardner, 'Slavery and Roman Law', in *The Ancient Mediterranean World* (eds. K. Bradley and P. Cartledge; The Cambridge World History of Slavery; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 414-437.

manumission, it has been estimated that more than 500,000 new slaves were needed to service the empire as a whole, *every year*.⁶⁵ The main source of slaves, at least in the late Republic, was through defeated enemies.⁶⁶ Indeed, the jurist Florentinus even suggests that slaves were so-called (*servi*) because they were saved (*servare*) by being sold rather than killed (*Dig.* 1.5.4.2). These captives might be given to soldiers as reward, or sold to traders who travelled with the legions, or returned to Rome as part of the military victor's triumph. The image below shows one such triumph, with the treasures from the temple in Jerusalem being paraded along with the captives. According to Josephus, 97,000 were taken captive from the defeat of Jerusalem and the rest of the campaign (*B.J.* 6.9.3 [420]),⁶⁷ with 700 young men appearing in the triumph of Vespasian and Titus (*B.J.* 7.5.3 [118]), on whose column this relief stands.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ W.V. Harris, 'Towards a Study of the Roman Slave Trade', *MAAR* 36 (1980): 117-140 (118).

⁶⁶ Harris, 'Towards a Study', 121-122.

⁶⁷ As Cohen helpfully puts it, 'Rewriting history often meant defining the indefinite. Josephus is particularly fond of inventing figures to fill gaps in the narrative and, as often as not, the figures are impossible exaggerations.' Even so, the scale of the relief indicates that this was nevertheless a sizeable triumph, with a corresponding large 'booty'. S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 8; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 38.

⁶⁸ See also G. Fuks, 'Where Have All the Freedmen Gone? On an Anomaly in the Jewish Grave-Inscriptions from Rome', *JJS* 36 (1985): 25-32 (28).



Figure 2 - Relief of the spoils from Jerusalem in 71CE. Arch of Titus, Rome

This was not the only source of slaves, however. If warfare brought slaves from without, reproduction produced slaves from within. Recalling that children born to enslaved parents belonged to the slave owner, it was entirely possible for owners to make a profit from ‘breeding’ a new generation of slaves. As Finley puts it, ‘The practical Columella, in the middle of the first century, was not motivated by sentiment when he exempted a mother of three children from work on his estates, and freed her if she produced further offspring (1.8.19).’⁶⁹ In other words, if the slave owner had four young slaves who could be sold, or trained up, why waste money on the upkeep of a woman who was likely to be physically exhausted by that stage, given the labour of both farm and pregnancy? It remains a source of scholarly debate quite how these two sources of slaves compare in their contribution to the total numbers of slaves, particularly after the reduction in large-scale military campaigns in the first two centuries CE. Some argue that the post-Augustan minor engagements continued to be a significant source of slaves,⁷⁰ others that reproduction

⁶⁹ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 86.

⁷⁰ Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 40-41.

accounted for the vast majority of slaves,⁷¹ and still others that further sources predominated.⁷² These other sources included piracy and kidnap, infant exposure, and self-sale. This debate illustrates how difficult it is to get quantitative evidence for slavery in the ancient world. Bradley may be right to suggest that a combined model best describes fluctuations between sources of slave supply.⁷³ However, for our purposes we should note that, while many slaves were genuine outsiders from the boundaries of the empire, there were also many who were born and raised in the heart of the empire. Such slaves (*vernae*) were apparently highly prized by owners, presumably because they had not faced the trials of warfare, and could be moulded more easily into the slaves they were required to be.⁷⁴ This leads us on to the actual work that slaves were expected to do.

3.1.4 AREAS OF WORK

Work, in general, and manual labour in particular, was seen in a negative light by the elite, as variously dirty, demeaning, dangerous, and even worthless (e.g. Cicero, *Off.* 1.150; Seneca, *Ep.* 47.2-8).⁷⁵ Therefore, all slavery, just as all paid employment, was looked down upon by the free elite. It is in this light that Finley points out that household servants, slaves with a *peculium*, and slaves working in chains on a large farm, 'all fell within a single juridical category'.⁷⁶ However, in practice, slaves were divided into two basic categories by their owners: city slaves (*familia urbana*) and country slaves (*familia rustica*). Although there seems to have been debate about whether the actual work done was a better means of categorisation than the location in which it was done (e.g. *Dig.* 32.1.99), for

⁷¹ W. Scheidel, 'Quantifying the Sources of Slaves in the Early Roman Empire', *JRS* 87 (1997): 156-169.

⁷² W.V. Harris, 'Demography, Geography and the Sources of Roman Slaves', *JRS* 89 (1999): 62-75. Cf. Harris, 'Towards a Study'.

⁷³ Bradley, 'Roman Slave Supply', 74.

⁷⁴ Horace, *Ep.* 2.2.8; *Dig.* 21.1.37; cf. Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 48.

⁷⁵ S.R. Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 11; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 63-69.

⁷⁶ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 64.

simplicity, we will follow this division. In preparation for our studies in Mark's Gospel, it is worth noting that both of these categories can be found in the parables.⁷⁷

3.1.4.1 *Country Slaves*

Bradley lists thirty-seven independent occupations for slaves on the farm, as described by Columella.⁷⁸ They vary from the 'overseer' (*monitor*) and 'bailiff' (*vilicus*) to the 'mower' (*faenisex*) and 'trencher' (*pastinator*). Even the bailiff's wife (*vilica*) is included as a named position. It would not be unusual for there to be hundreds of slaves operating these large estates owned by absentee landlords who were based in the cities. In this case, each slave was chosen on the basis of their physical characteristics for particular jobs.⁷⁹ However, the second-century CE novel *Daphnis and Chloe* depicts a much smaller farm, where, while there are still set roles, these are shared between a much smaller number of slaves. Some of the farms in the gospels seem to reflect this situation.⁸⁰ Yet, according to Columella, slavery was not the only option:

On far distant estates, however, which it is not easy for the owner to visit, it is better for every kind of land to be under free farmers than under slave overseers, but this is particularly true of grain land. To such land a tenant farmer can do no great harm, as he can to plantations of vines and trees, while slaves do it tremendous damage: they let out oxen for hire, and keep them and other animals poorly fed; they do not plough the ground carefully, and they charge up the sowing of far more seed than they have actually sown; what they have committed to the earth they do not so foster that it will make the proper growth; and when they have brought it to the threshing-floor, every day during the threshing they lessen the amount either by trickery or by carelessness. (*Rust.* 1.7.6 [Ash, LCL])

⁷⁷ I have ignored the third location of slave labour, the mines, because it is not a location that appears in the gospels.

⁷⁸ Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 60.

⁷⁹ Varro, *Rust.* 2.10.1-3; Columella, *Rust.* 1.9.

⁸⁰ E.g. The parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30); the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).

He expects that slaves will work badly as well as cheating him, and the reason is because he is unable to visit frequently to check up on them. Quite apart from the unlikely generalisation this represents, it also very much describes Columella's perspective as farm, and slave, owner. From our perspective, we might say that those whom he has exploited are taking their chance to exploit him. But from the slaves' point of view, it may simply be that utilising a portion of the crop to supplement their own diet was very necessary. Cato describes the typical food ration, which included bread, gruel, salt, oil, an olive relish and low-quality wine (*Agr.* 56-58).⁸¹ Such a carbohydrate rich diet required, at the very least, the addition of vegetables which would have been available on the farm. Columella's great concern seems to be for efficiency, which, as noted above, was assumed to be undermined by slaves if left unchecked. He considers slaves to be tools of production of the farm. Much of the detailed instructions in his manual are based on dispersing slave resistance and encouraging slave competition. Where that is not possible, some other means of keeping the slaves in order is needed.

In this department husbandry is less exacting in the matter of honesty than in the others, for the reason that the vine-dresser should do his work in company with others and under supervision, and because the unruly are for the most part possessed of quicker understanding, which is what the nature of this work requires. For it demands of the helper that he be not merely strong but also quick-witted; and on this account vineyards are commonly tended by slaves in fetters. (*Rust.* 1.9.4, [Ash, LCL])

This text illustrates the connection between an ideology about the psychology of slaves and the practical extension of that ideology into the means of control. This attitude continued to the accommodation also.

for those who are in chains there should be an underground prison [*subterraneum ergastulum*], as wholesome as possible, receiving light through a number of narrow windows built so high from the ground that they cannot be reached with the hand. (*Rust.* 1.6.3 [Ash, LCL])

⁸¹ See also U. Roth, 'To Have and To Be: Food, Status, and the Peculium of Agricultural Slaves', *JRA* 18 (2005): 278-292.

Not all slaves would have been housed in this way, the rest being accommodated in a dwelling above ground that was nevertheless separate from the main villa, providing a place of inside work when outside work was not possible.⁸² Moreover, concern was expressed about slaves leaving the estate and relating to others, whether as friends or enemies (Varro, *Rust.* 1.15.1). A strict ordering of their lives was therefore advised. However, it seems likely that the threat of abusive treatment was sufficient to ensure both compliance as well as a positive work rate. Such ‘management’ was expected of the *vilicus*, who would also have been a slave. However, the fact that Columella seeks, by visiting the farm himself, to strike fear into ordinary slaves and the *vilicus* alike suggests that the latter may not always have taken the owner’s side (*Rust.* 1.2.1). In the same way, the master’s return is often used as a threat in the gospel parables.⁸³ On the other hand, Columella also displays a benevolent paternalism towards his slaves. He advised owners to listen to complaints and involve slaves in decision-making, to attend to the quality of slaves’ food and clothing, and to reward ‘good’ (i.e. compliant) slaves and support those who are ill. While the purpose of this activity was to maximise production in the long run, there is nevertheless a balance to be struck between ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’. Whether the slaves saw it in that way is more difficult to judge, although there does not seem to be evidence of estate owner’s visits being welcomed.⁸⁴

Given the ambivalence towards the use of slave labour, expressed above, it is fair to say that slaves offered a straightforward way of importing a labour force into an area where the other forms of dependent labour were failing for some reason. While this may have been true of Italy, this was not so evidently the case everywhere else in the Roman world. This is particularly true of those areas which are described in the gospels. Finley remarks on the functioning system of peasantry and tenant farmers in the ANE, and says, ‘The

⁸² Thompson, *Archaeology*, 93-102; Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 173.

⁸³ E.g. Matt 21:40; 24:49; 25:19; Mark 13:35.

⁸⁴ Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 103-105. Columella considers the purpose of an owner’s visit to be to instil fear (*Rust.* 1.2.1).

consequence was that in Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt, slavery never became an important factor on the land.⁸⁵ The critical, though imprecise, word in this sentence is ‘important’. If the only evidence we had for farming in Palestine was that of the gospels, we could justifiably disagree in light of the predominance of parables which describe slaves working on rural farms. Almost certainly there was slave activity alongside tenant farming, although not on the same scale as the latifundia of Roman Italy. Yet this potential clash between reality and description further highlights the significance of slaves in these gospel stories. We will return to this point in subsequent chapters, keeping in mind that the readers of Mark’s Gospel are more likely to have encountered slavery in cities.

However we mentally picture the life of the farm from some of the descriptions above, we should not imagine a rural idyll. It was hard work for the slaves, with little hope of manumission. It is for this reason that being sent to work on a farm was considered a punishment for city slaves. It is little wonder that Bradley, writing about the lot of rural slaves, can say, with more than a hint of understatement, ‘They can have had little community of interest with the slaves of the emperor.’⁸⁶ Understandings of slavery based primarily on elite slaves are therefore limited, at best. This can be further seen as we turn now to consider those not-so-privileged slaves who worked in less important households.

3.1.4.2 City Slaves

On the basis of inscriptions in Rome, the occupations of those who were based in the large households of the city included: teachers, architects, masseurs, room servants, secretaries, caretakers, and social organisers.⁸⁷ As in the rural setting, some were in charge of other slaves. Joshel notes, on the basis of epitaphs and dedications from Rome, ‘Interestingly,

⁸⁵ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 70-71.

⁸⁶ Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 72.

⁸⁷ Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status*, 75. Cf. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 183.

work in the urban household seems to have been important to the slaves themselves.⁸⁸ Of course, it is possible that the work was equally important to those slaves who worked in the countryside, but they either did not live long enough to gain their freedom, or did not earn enough money to be able to afford a suitable epitaph. However, for some, at least, the activity undertaken as a slave *was* their identity. This was the case in large households, but again, like in the countryside, there could be small dwellings with only a few slaves. Bradley refers to P. Oxy. 3510 which, elsewhere in the empire, describes the deaths of two slaves, who were ‘without a trade’.⁸⁹ This means they had not been trained for any particular role, and the likelihood is that they were in a poor household in which they had to perform multiple roles.⁹⁰ This is reminiscent of the parable of the Dutiful Slave in Luke 17:7-10.

Outside the household, slaves might work in bakeries, fulleries (cloth laundries) and baths, or in small shops, bars and brothels. In the case of artisans, the statistics suggest that they were less often slaves than freedmen, perhaps indicating that this was a possible avenue for those slaves who were manumitted, continuing in the trade they had learned while in servitude.⁹¹ However, in distinction to these typical slaves, there were also slaves who, perhaps only by virtue of good fortune in the marketplace, lived a life of importance and luxury, as the following inscription shows.

To Musicus Scurranus, slave of the emperor Tiberius Caesar Augustus, treasurer at the treasury of Gaul in the province of Lugdunensis, a well-deserving man, from his slaves who were with him in Rome when he died: Venustus, business agent; Decimianus, household treasurer; Dicaeus, secretary; Mutatus, secretary; Creticus, secretary; Agathopus, doctor; Epaphra, silver caretaker; Primio, caretaker of clothing; Communis, bedchamber servant; Pothus, attendant; Tiasus, cook; Facilis, attendant; Anthus, silver caretaker; Hedyllus, bedchamber servant; Firmus, cook; Secunda (CIL 6.5197, Rome)

⁸⁸ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 179.

⁸⁹ Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 57.

⁹⁰ See also Aelius Aristides, *Eis Romem* 71.

⁹¹ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 211-213.

This Scurranus was one of the rare imperial slaves who performed an administrative function in the running of the empire. It seems likely that he would have moved up through a 'career structure',⁹² achieving promotion to the role he held when he died. This clearly brought with it wealth, represented by the number of slaves which he had, only a portion of his household being mentioned since they were with him when he died. This list may also indicate the kinds of roles through which a slave might progress. However, it illustrates too that the majority of roles for these slaves were quite menial. Like their rural counterparts, household slaves lived in cells if they were fortunate, or slept where they could, if not.⁹³ In elite households, they were subjected to the extremes of behaviour expected of this class, and those slaves who served at the meal table might particularly encounter the vulgarities of Roman high social life (Seneca, *Ep.* 47). It was here, too, that the importance of having the 'right' slaves became apparent, because they were a status symbol (as the abovementioned epitaph also shows). If they did not look right (were too old or unattractive) or did not serve well, then this reflected on their owner (Cicero, *Pis.* 67).

Such differentiation could also be used as a social weapon, however. Clients and unimportant guests might well find themselves being served by the less attractive slaves, and thus the household slaves acted as 'middlemen' in their owners' relationships with others. This was not to their benefit; as Joshel says, 'Poor clients visited their frustration on slaves and avoided a direct confrontation with their social betters, whom they could not afford to alienate. All the tensions in the unequal relations of rich and poor were directed toward the servant.'⁹⁴ Although the context is different, this description is reminiscent of the parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1-9 and pars.), which we will consider later. Moreover, the parable of the Doorkeeper (Mark 13:34-36 and par.) is repeated time and

⁹² Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 69.

⁹³ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 138-140.

⁹⁴ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 185.

again in the houses of the elite as slaves act as ‘living barriers to access to the master’.⁹⁵ Indeed, even the owner’s strange behaviour in this parable, criticised by commentators for its unlikelihood since it would be dangerous to travel at night,⁹⁶ is mirrored in the behaviour of Sextus Papinius, as one example, who goes for a drive at two o’clock in the morning (Seneca, *Ep.* 122.15). Slaves thus have a value as a commodity greater than simply the role that they fulfil; they also extend the influence of the owner to others, serving as representatives both formally and informally, and are therefore the means by which others will make judgements about the master.

Being proximate to their masters brought both benefits and detriments to the slave. They might be well-treated if they were in the affections of the slave owner, although this might bring with it unwanted sexual attention, for both boys and women. However, the slaves were also closer to the whip. In one extreme example from the fourth century CE, Ammianus Marcellinus describes owners in his day having slaves beaten three hundred times for as little as being slow to bring in hot water (Amm. Marc. 28.4.16). Similarly, in the first century, Martial’s epigrams express common attitudes towards the abuse of slaves. Two instances of the treatment of cooks, household slaves to wealthy owners, serve as indicative examples.

You say the hare is underdone, and call for a whip.

You prefer, Rufus, cutting up your cook rather than your hare. (*Epigr.* 3.94 [Ker, LCL])

I appear to you cruel and over gluttonous because, on account of the dinner, Rusticus, I lash my cook. If that seem to you a slight reason for a beating, for what reason, then, do you wish a cook to be flogged? (*Epigr.* 8.23 [Ker, LCL])

⁹⁵ A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 39.

⁹⁶ E.g. Jeremias says that ‘nocturnal return is improbable’. J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1972), 54; J. Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27A; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 922.

Both of these literary creations convey the regularity and simplicity of the abuse of slaves.⁹⁷ If they come short of the expectations of the role by which they are defined by their owner, they receive violence, in the same way in which a brute beast might have been ‘taught’ to obey. This highlights again the significance of the slaves as projections of their owners’ wishes and desires.

3.1.5 RELATIONS WITH MASTERS

The question of how the relationship between slaves and masters fared cannot be answered in any general sense. It obviously depended on the characters of both slaves and masters, their context, and the particular circumstances of the slave’s behaviour at any given instant (this is certainly seen in the gospel parables). What is more, as we have said, we are limited to the perspective of the slave owners. However, there are a number of examples that are illustrative of the kinds of thinking that were inherent in such relationships, and they often betray conflicting attitudes, or can be placed at opposite extremes of a spectrum.

Firstly, we should note that there could be good relationships between the master and slave, at least as far as the owner perceived it. Two early inscriptions (third century BCE), quoted by Harrill, even suggest this is how the slave might perceive it: ‘I am yours, master, even in Hades’, and, ‘To you even now under the earth, yes master, I remain as faithful as before’, although it seems likely that these words were erected by the former owner.⁹⁸ Such examples are not typical, however, and there are other inscriptions which express the contrary view (i.e. that in death they are now free). Moreover, the suggestion that they

⁹⁷ For further, see Bradley, *Slaves and Masters*, 113-119.

⁹⁸ Harrill, *Manumission*, 22. Cf. J. Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man* (Blackwell’s Classical Studies; Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 131 n. 9. Here, Vogt quotes an epitaph that more obviously expresses the owner’s rather than the slave’s perspective: ‘Here lies Lucilius’ slave Metrophanes, at no time disloyal to his master, nor insignificant as a pillar of the household.’ While Vogt is right that this does express ‘approval’ of the slave Metrophanes, it also reflects well on Lucilius, the owner, who can be viewed by the reader as the exemplary master, who gave his slave no reason to be unfaithful.

represent a good relationship between slave and master is by no means the only interpretation that could be put on these epitaphs. We are on firmer ground when we look at the relationship from the slaveholder's point of view.

Pliny the Younger, for example, shows concern for his slaves. For instance, he writes to his friend Septicus about his journey which was uneventful apart from his slave, Encolpius, becoming ill. Pliny expresses his worry that his slave might be unable to continue his literary services, saying, 'Where, in that event, shall I find one to read, and love, my works as he does; or whose voice will be so grateful to my ears?' (*Ep.* 8.1 [Melmoth, LCL]). Pliny passes Encolpius on to the care of the doctors, and afterwards allows him to rest in the hope of his recovery. It should not be denied that this is a compassionate action on the part of the slave owner, similar to the Roman Centurion who approaches Jesus on behalf of his slave (Matt 8:5 || Luke 7:3). However, we might question how much this compassion is directed to the person of Encolpius, for Pliny's main concern seems to be the possible loss of a good functionary.⁹⁹ It is what Encolpius can do for Pliny that matters, rather than the personal relationship between them. Moreover, we might question whether Encolpius would describe his work in the way in which Pliny does. It has the sound of an egotistical author who glories in the praise of acolytes, indicating again how much our sources present the view from above, as well as the implicit assumption that a slave's being is found in the relationship to the owner, and in particular, in pleasing that owner.

Elsewhere, Pliny reveals something of his attitude to slaves in general (note the distinction, he was previously writing about a personal slave). He writes to Acilius about the gruesome murder of Larcus Macedo by some of his slaves. Larcus' own father had been a slave, which, according to Pliny, provided an explanation for the severity of his treatment of his own slaves (*Ep.* 3.14.1). This maltreatment is almost offered as a motive for the crime, yet

⁹⁹ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 188-190; S.R. Joshel, 'Slavery and Roman Literary Culture', in *The Ancient Mediterranean World* (eds. K. Bradley and P. Cartledge; The Cambridge World History of Slavery; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 214-240 (235).

it becomes clear in the quotation, below, that this is not really the case. Rather, slaves are intrinsically dangerous. Pliny is able to distinguish the murderous slaves from Larcus' more 'trustworthy servants' (*servi fideliores*), as if to point out that not all slaves are bad (much as the parable of the Talents features the 'faithful servant', Matt 25:21, 23).

However, the real consequence for Pliny and his recipient is a reminder of the risks of keeping slaves:

Thus you see to what indignities, outrages, and dangers we are exposed. Nor is lenity and good treatment any security from the villainies of your servants; for it is malice, and not reflection that arms such ruffians against their masters. (*Ep.* 3.14.5 [Melmoth, LCL])

In other words, although not all slaves took part in the murder, yet, all slaves are capable of such violence to their owners, and this is intrinsic to the slave 'mentality' rather than a response to the behaviour of owners. And yet, it becomes clear that the chosen response by slaveholders to the fear of 'malice' was the use of violence to inculcate fear in their slaves.¹⁰⁰

Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in Pseudo-Plutarch's expression of the difference between the free and slaves (as well as the equation of slaves with children):

children ought to be led to honourable practices by means of encouragement and reasoning, and most certainly not by blows or ill-treatment, for it surely is agreed that these are fitting rather for slaves than for the free-born; for so they grow numb and shudder at their tasks, partly from the pain of the blows, partly from the degradation. (Plut., *De Lib.* 8f [Babbitt, LCL])

This attitude is even encoded in those relationships between slave and master that are celebrated as good. For example, Tiro was the famous slave secretary of Cicero. The whole family clearly had great affection for Tiro, and Marcus Tullius' brother Quintus writes that he preferred Tiro to be the family's friend, rather than slave (*Fam.* 16.6). Moreover, as Bradley points out, he can speak of his own son and Tiro simultaneously.¹⁰¹ Tiro was

¹⁰⁰ This fear included the very common concern that slaves will steal from their owners. For example, Pliny the Elder complains that even food and wine need to be locked up (*Nat.* 33.26).

¹⁰¹ Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 1.

manumitted in 54 BCE but continued to work for his former owner until Cicero's death in 43 BCE.¹⁰² However, in 44 BCE, after a whole decade as a freedman, Quintus could begin a letter to Tiro by saying, literally:

I have just given you a thrashing (so far as I could with the strong but inaudible language of thought), because this is now the second packet that has reached me without a letter from you. That is an offence for which you cannot escape punishment (Cicero, *Fam.* 16.26.1 [Williams, LCL])

This seems to be intended as a joke, yet it encodes the reality of Tiro's former life, a good one by slave standards, and the common assumptions of the institution of slavery.¹⁰³ Thus, even for those slaves who were undeniably treated well, with a relationship with their master that equated to being considered as a member of the family, violence against their person was part of the institutional nature of the slavery of which they were a part.¹⁰⁴ This is confirmed by a quite different source, as Celsus comments on slaves' better ability to be treated for a number of serious diseases than freemen, on account of the cure itself, 'since it demands hunger, thirst, and a thousand other troublesome treatments and prolonged endurance, it is easier to help those who are easily constrained than those who have an unserviceable freedom' (*Med.* 3.21.2 [Spencer, LCL]). In other words, slaves are used to living with privation and violence and therefore bear suffering more easily. This no doubt reflected the reality of a slave's existence but also reflects an ideology about the appropriateness of violence to slaves, as well as the comforting thought for owners that slaves deal with suffering better than they would do themselves; hence, they should not reflect their own qualms about violence and the appropriate treatment of citizens onto their dealings with their slaves.

¹⁰² Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 1.

¹⁰³ See further, M. Beard, 'Ciceronian Correspondences: Making a Book Out of Letters', in *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome* (ed. T.P. Wiseman; British Academy Centenary Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 103-144.

¹⁰⁴ For the following example, see Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 11-12.

Again, this ideology can be seen expressed in the well-known, but atypical, letter of Seneca. It is perhaps the plainest advocacy of a more humane attitude towards slaves on the part of their owners.

‘They are slaves,’ people declare. Nay, rather they are men. ‘Slaves!’ No, comrades. ‘Slaves!’ No, they are unpretentious friends. ‘Slaves!’ No, they are our fellow-slaves, if one reflects that Fortune has equal rights over slaves and free men alike. (*Ep.* 47.1 [Gummere, LCL])

we maltreat them, not as if they were men but beasts of burden. (*Ep.* 47.5 [Gummere, LCL])

he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives, and dies. (*Ep.* 47.10 [Gummere, LCL])

to discuss the treatment of slaves, towards whom we Romans are excessively haughty, cruel, and insulting [*in quos superbissimi, crudelissimi, contumeliosissimi sumus*] (*Ep.* 47.11 [Gummere, LCL])

In these words, Seneca attacks both the traditional understanding of who slaves are and the treatment they receive from their masters. By so doing, he connects ideology with activity, a feature we have already observed. He goes on to laud the former days when slaves sat down at table to share a meal with their owner and conversed with him, rather than keeping silent. This was a time when slaves were known as ‘members of the household’, of which their owner was ‘father’ (*Ep.* 47.14), and respected (*colere*) their owners (which meant ‘loved’ [*amare*] for Seneca) rather than feared them (*Ep.* 47.18). Such slaves would keep their owner’s secrets, even under torture (*Ep.* 47.4). Clearly, Seneca is painting a rosy picture of the past. However, we must make the simple observation that Seneca is here advocating and encouraging much more positive relationships between slaves and masters than are seen elsewhere.

Yet his epistolary rhetoric also reveals the exceptional nature of his argument, indicating what might be considered the more ‘normal’ view, as he puts words in the mouths of his opponents. They, it seems, do consider that slaves may be treated as ‘beasts of burden’ and

related to in 'a haughty, cruel, and insulting' manner. He also gives us perhaps the most oft-quoted maxim on Roman slavery:

Finally, the saying, in allusion to this same highhanded treatment, becomes current: 'As many enemies as you have slaves.' They are not enemies when we acquire them; we make them enemies. (*Ep.* 47.5 [Gummere, LCL])

The saying quoted here would have little rhetorical force if it were not well-known to Seneca's readers, and that it was therefore well-used suggests a generally negative attitude towards the potential of slaves, close as they were to their owners. This was perhaps justified in the light of former slave rebellions. Seneca goes on to say:

Associate with your slave on kindly, even on affable, terms; let him talk with you, plan with you, live with you. I know that at this point all the exquisites will cry out against me in a body; they will say: 'There is nothing more debasing, more disgraceful, than this.' (*Ep.* 47.13 [Gummere, LCL])

Joshel describes such talk as 'paternalism', pointing out that this was a way in which the elite wanted to see themselves, offering a masterly benevolence to those beneath them, which in fact strengthens such unequal power relationships and slavery in particular.¹⁰⁵ However, again it would be churlish to deny that the putting into practice of such sentiments would have improved the lot of the typical slave. Yet, again, Seneca reveals the more common view which rejects such an ideal as 'debasing' and 'disgraceful'. Hence, while in particular instances attitudes might be modified in the light of personal relationships, nevertheless, it was possible to speak of slaves in generally negative terms, and such views were commonly held. The language used is the language of an ideology that would take more than a letter to shift, which meant that for many slaves their only hope of relief was through death or manumission.

¹⁰⁵ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 127.

3.1.6 FREEDOM AND PUNISHMENT

The slave's engagement with Roman authorities was likely to be either very positive or very negative. On the positive side, as a reward for a period of loyal service or a special, meritorious act, or else in a master's will, a slave might be manumitted, normally becoming a Roman citizen, although with restricted privileges.¹⁰⁶ It apparently became so common in Rome that Augustus promulgated laws to restrict manumission to certain circumstances (*Lex Fufia Caninia*, c. 2 BCE, and *Lex Aelia Sentia*, c. 3 CE).¹⁰⁷ For example, Pliny freed many of his slaves. Writing to Paternus, he expresses his consternation that a number of his domestic slaves have recently died in their prime of life, and continues:

I have always very readily manumitted my slaves (for their death does not seem altogether immature, if they have lived long enough to receive their freedom) (*Ep.* 8.16 [Melmoth, LCL])

Though no doubt this was something wished for by the slaves, it was not altogether a benevolent act on the part of the owner, as freedmen still owed their loyalty and labour to their previous owners, becoming their clients under the patronage system.¹⁰⁸ This behaviour was known as *obsequium*, the proper response to the owner's *beneficium*, and brought with it certain limits on the freedman's rights, such as the restriction on taking

¹⁰⁶ On manumission in Rome, see T.E.J. Wiedemann, 'The Regularity of Manumission at Rome', *CQ* 35 (1985): 162-175. He suggests that manumission may not have been as common as is typically assumed. For another reading of the legal evidence which suggests that it should not be taken at face value, particularly with regard to the slave's *peculium*, see U. Roth, 'Peculium, Freedom, Citizenship: Golden Triangle or Vicious Circle? An Act in Two Parts', in *By the Sweat of your Brow: Roman Slavery in its Socio-Economic Setting* (ed. U. Roth; Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 109; London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2010), 91-120.

¹⁰⁷ Gaius, *Inst.* 1.8-55 lists the different 'levels' of freedom to which a slave could attain, as well as various laws on manumission. However, for the problems of interpreting this evidence, see Wiedemann, 'Regularity of Manumission'.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, *Dig.* 37.14.19.

legal action against the former owner.¹⁰⁹ The promise of freedom could in and of itself be a subjugating condition, demanding the obedience of the slave until such time as the promise should be fulfilled. Moreover, manumission could be used as a means of avoiding the cost of caring for a sick or elderly slave.¹¹⁰ Thus, manumission, as Hopkins points out, was actually a way of reinforcing the system of slavery.¹¹¹ Yet even so, Joshel says, 'As far as we can determine, rural slaves ... could not expect their freedom, nor could urban slaves in lowly positions.'¹¹² This would therefore describe the experience of the majority.

On the other hand, if slaves encountered the authorities because they were accused of some crime, then their experience would be altogether different. Peter Garnsey has investigated the legal punishments meted out to slaves and notes, in the first place, that 'judges and juries ... were prepared to believe the worst of low-status defendants ... [who] received harsher penalties than high-status individuals on the same charges'.¹¹³ With respect to the penalties themselves, slaves could stand outside the honour system, being subject to their own particular terrors which would not be visited upon a Roman citizen. Roman punishment was typically brutal, but in our period, as Garnsey says, 'Torture traditionally was reserved for slaves'.¹¹⁴ Indeed, this was the normal way of extracting testimony from a slave (*Dig.* 48.18.1.23), whether they were implicated in a crime or not. Yet where a slave was sentenced to death, 'Crucifixion was the standing form of execution for slaves';¹¹⁵ as Garnsey says, 'it is safe to regard crucifixion, whatever form it took, as traditionally a slave

¹⁰⁹ Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 44-47.

¹¹⁰ Cato, *Agr.* 2.7; Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.

¹¹¹ K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Sociological Studies in Roman History 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 118.

¹¹² Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 129.

¹¹³ P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 100. Cf. P. Garnsey, 'Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire', *Past & Present* (1968): 3-24 (esp. 19-24).

¹¹⁴ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 127.

¹¹⁵ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 127.

penalty'.¹¹⁶ We will need to bear this in mind when considering the significant role that crucifixion plays in the storyline and symbolic world of Mark's Gospel.

3.1.7 POSITION AND 'STATUS' OF SLAVES

The previous discussion about punishment raises an important issue, in that, under the law and in its outworking, slaves were treated differently from others in Roman society. However, as with other aspects of slavery, the question of a slave's 'position' in society is not as straightforward as it might at first appear. Finley gives the example of Trimalchio who is a character in Petronius' first-century novel, *The Satyricon*.¹¹⁷ Trimalchio is an ex-slave, a freedman, but of great wealth, equivalent to those of the senatorial order. In extravagance of activity, he certainly ranks with these elite of Roman society, and yet certain activities were legally denied him, as a freedman, and certain social circles were likewise closed to him.¹¹⁸ It is difficult to know how much such a fictional character is to be considered representative – in a sense, his role in the novel is precisely that he is not representative because it is so exaggerated. However, the depiction of social structuring seems realistic enough and serves as a reminder that Roman society was *not* simply divided along the lines of slave and free.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the *ordo libertinum* acted as an invisible brand to the ex-slave, who, no matter what they might achieve in life, could not completely escape their past.¹²⁰ Finley suggests that the word 'status' – 'an admirably vague word'¹²¹ –

¹¹⁶ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 129.

¹¹⁷ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 50-51.

¹¹⁸ P. Garnsey and R.P. Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 115.

¹¹⁹ Harrill demonstrates that the fictional depiction of Trimalchio is, in certain respects, validated by Seneca's portrayal of an actual freedman, Calvisius Sabinus (*Ep.* 27.5-8). *Manumission*, 29.

¹²⁰ An exception to this may be the father of Claudius Etruscus who, having been born around the turn of the millennia, was a slave in the household of the emperor Tiberius. He was freed and probably promoted under Claudius and Nero to a provincial financial post, eventually becoming the secretary in charge of Vespasian's accounts who promoted him to the rank of *eques*, a status which continued in his children. Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 69-70.

¹²¹ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 51.

may be useful in describing this distinction, which crosses economic, legal, and social boundaries. However, this very vagueness in fact lessens the term's usefulness when it comes to the description of slavery, at least as it is usually used by commentators on the NT (slaves are typically described as being of 'low status').

Let us consider to what aspects of a slave's existence the description 'status' might refer. Certainly, there was a legal distinction between slave and free in the Roman Empire, as well as other societies. There were rights and privileges available to the Roman citizen which were denied to the slave, and slaves could be treated in ways which were dishonouring to citizens. Then there was a social distinction, to do with expectations of the roles that slaves might fulfil (e.g. they should not speak at meal times; they should be perpetually bound to their masters). Yet this distinction did not always exist, as we can assume that slaves in high office operated in much the same way as free citizens in the same role. Similarly, while there would have been an economic distinction between the wealthy free and the slaves of say, rural farms, the elite slaves of Rome would in many cases exhibit the same economic status indicators as freemen in equivalent positions, with their own wealth in property and personnel. They could even attain some measure of 'upward mobility', an opportunity denied to the majority of the freeborn.¹²² Those in such an economically powerful position had the potential of political influence also, much to the consternation of some among the free elite (e.g. Pliny, *Ep.* 7.29; Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.26-27), whereas the majority of slaves had no political influence, thereby resorting to slave revolts from time to time. This contrast is played upon in the parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:23-34). The status of a slave as the lowest in the order of the family can be seen in the following quotation, where slaves are clearly and deliberately placed last:

how a man must bear himself in his relations with the gods, with his parents, with his elders, with the laws, with strangers, with those in authority, with friends, with women, with children, with servants [οἰκέταις]; that one ought to reverence the gods, to honour

¹²² Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 123-124.

one's parents, to respect one's elders, to be obedient to the laws, to yield to those in authority, to love one's friends, to be chaste with women, to be affectionate with children, and not to be overbearing with slaves (Plut., *Lib. Ed.* 7e [Babbitt, LCL])

And yet, slaves were responsible for the education and upbringing of children, for which we should also read 'punishment'. Slaves were often the mistresses of their masters, and though this was frowned upon, the lovers of their mistresses.¹²³ The status hierarchy within the household is therefore not as clear as it might at first appear.

What this description illustrates is that there is no unidimensional variable which can describe the status of the slave. It is for reason of this complexity and ill-definition that Stegemann and Stegemann reject the use of the term 'status' altogether,¹²⁴ but this is not to be recommended as the term does carry some meaning, but suffers from a lack of precision. Rohrbaugh's analysis is more helpful in separating 'class' (which typically relates to economic issues, and is more concerned with a macro view of society) from 'status' (which is formed from a complex social matrix and is often more concerned with the view of society at the micro-level).¹²⁵ However, we would not want to exclude economic factors from the description of a slave's status. Meeks' definition of status, which includes power, occupational prestige, income or wealth, education and knowledge, religious and ritual purity, family and ethnic-group position, and local-community status may be the most accurate; however, it seems too unwieldy in practice.¹²⁶ The kind of multidimensional matrix needed to describe the status of the slave would not seem to yield a helpful general

¹²³ See R.P. Saller, 'Symbols of Gender and Status Hierarchies in the Roman Household', in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations* (eds. S.R. Joshel and S. Murnaghan; London: Routledge, 1998), 85-91 (88-89).

¹²⁴ E. Stegemann and W. Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 58-59.

¹²⁵ R.L. Rohrbaugh, 'Methodological Considerations in the Debate over the Social Class Status of the Early Christians', *JAAR* 52 (1984): 519-546 (esp. 538).

¹²⁶ W.A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 54. We should also bear in mind that some of these elements, perhaps especially 'ethnic-group position', are not unproblematic in the description of slaves, due to the deracination of slavery itself.

picture, beyond acknowledging that there was no general picture, since any individual slave might appear almost anywhere in such a matrix. What this means is that we must not simply *assume* that whenever the word 'slave' appears in a text, it is automatically referring to a person of 'low status', whatever that might mean in context. Hence, it will be necessary to treat each text on its own merits, and not to import a particular view of the status of slaves as a given, but rather examine any status indicators which the texts may offer.

Yet the day-to-day realities of the life of the slave, with the concomitant problems for defining slave status, does not mean that free masters did not uniformly conceive of slaves as different and other than themselves. Slaves like Trimalchio demonstrate the problems of status inconsistency precisely because rank and riches, in his case, did not match social expectation.¹²⁷ The most painfully symbolic representation of this is found in the Compitalia, the annual festival in which, 'woollen balls and male and female woollen dolls were hung in the cross-roads – one ball for each slave in the household, and one doll for each free member (Festus 272L)'.¹²⁸ Whatever the differences precisely represented between these symbols of slave and free, there clearly was a difference, and one which seems to represent the slaves as inherently less than the free. This is an essential element of the ideology of slavery.

Indeed, in practical terms, as Garnsey and Saller point out, the situation of the typical freed slave 'presented no awkward contradiction between rank and status'.¹²⁹ Most freed slaves were not like Trimalchio. For the many who did not even attain their freedom, their lives were short because of the hardness of the roles they fulfilled, and they lived and died

¹²⁷ Lenski helpfully describes the way in which status inconsistency functions: 'an individual with inconsistent statuses or ranks has a natural tendency to think of himself in terms of that status or rank which is highest, and to expect others to do the same. Meanwhile others, who come in contact with him, have a vested interest in doing just the opposite, that is, in treating him in terms of his lowest status or rank'. G.E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (McGraw-Hill Series in Sociology; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 87.

¹²⁸ Saller, 'Symbols of Gender and Status Hierarchies in the Roman Household', 87.

¹²⁹ Garnsey and Saller, *Empire*, 120.

owning nothing themselves, not even the traditional markers of identity like nationality and family, but being wholly owned by, and identified with, their masters. In spite of the complexities of status, for the many, the ideology no doubt came close to the reality.

3.1.8 SUMMARY

In this section we have focussed predominantly on the historical fact of chattel slavery, while recognising that this reality is filtered to us through the ideology of the slave owner. The sources tell different and even competing stories about the plight of slaves. On the one hand, slaves were owned by another who had the power to determine even their very existence, they typically had no ties to their original family group or nation, they were considered valuable for what they could do, but also expendable, and they suffered physical abuse as a regular part of their lives, without legal hope of redress, and little hope of relief. On the other hand, there were slaves who *seem* to have had good relationships with masters who were concerned for their wellbeing, who could expect to be freed, perhaps with their partner and children, who might be promoted to an important role, and consequently become wealthy and demonstrate the trappings of wealth, including having slaves of their own. For this reason, the question of 'status' with respect to the group of slaves as a whole is a problematic one. While it is true that slaves were not citizens of Rome and consequently were distinguished in law from the free and freed, yet the other indicators of status could be commensurate with a person of importance and influence, as we have seen. However, this was only really the case for city slaves; those who made up the *familia rustica* did not have the possibility of privilege (at best, they might become a *vilicus*), and so the context in which a slave lived is important for determining their social standing, and we should be sensitive to status indicators in the descriptions of slaves and slavery in Mark's Gospel. Any of these various factors could, in principle, be taken up and used in the metaphor of slavery and we are now more attuned to the range of possibilities.

In this broad sweep of the institution of slavery, we have seen little to challenge the definition of slavery either as ‘fungibility’ or as ‘social death’, and these continued to apply to all slaves – whether they were a general labourer on a small-holding or a treasurer for the emperor. All were property, with a value, and could be passed on or disposed of at the owner’s whim, and the lives of all shared an equivalence with death, at least with respect to a sense of self derived from kinship, culture, and self-determination. Yet we have also seen that slaves acted as representatives of their owners, both literally, as those who acted as intermediaries, carrying messages or dealing with visitors, and symbolically, as indicators of the economic status of their owner. In this respect, slaves were both very much ‘other’ than their free owners, while also being a part of the owner’s identity. It is possible that this representative role made slavery particularly suitable for metaphorical exploration, as it provided the free metaphor makers with a means of viewing their own world, yet at a distance of separation, by allowing slaves to encode and represent their own values and ideas.

We turn now to consider slavery, not as an actual institution, but slavery as it could be imagined – a necessary precursor to the slavery of the metaphors.

3.2 SLAVERY AS METAPHOR IN ROMAN LITERATURE

3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

In seeking to understand slavery as an ‘input space’ for the metaphor of slavery, we have, broadly speaking, so far considered the ‘hard evidence’ for slavery. In particular, this has included archaeological finds, inscriptions and papyrological remains. Some literary evidence has also been adduced, in so far as it clearly represents attitudes concerning slaves and slavery as well as occasional anecdotes that reveal commonly held reflections on ‘reality’ (as the slave owner perceived it). This is not the only source of data on slavery,

however. There is a great deal of other evidence, so-called ‘soft’ historical material,¹³⁰ that, to ignore it, would be to close our eyes to a very important perspective on slavery: fictional evidence. As Joshel says, ‘social historians concerned with slaves cannot avoid the discourse of slavery in Roman authors’.¹³¹ This is of particular significance for this project, as slave metaphors are necessarily *imagined*, in the same way that these works are products of the imagination. However, the objection may be immediately raised that the fictional nature of such literature is of no value precisely because of the unboundedness of the imagination. The same imagination that can bring forth fantastic beasts, mythological settings, good and bad gods, men of virtue and women of dishonour, can equally invent any number of implausible slave characters with implausible characteristics. Such literature, therefore, has little value in understanding the lives of actual slaves. The force of this argument should not be underestimated, and attempts to derive evidence of actual slavery from fictional literature rest on a shaky evidential foundation.¹³² In particular, in spite of the slave characters whose words we hear in some of this literature, almost nothing can be derived about the ideas and attitudes of actual slaves in these cases because the creators are slave owners, who represent their own hopes and fears in the ideals and exemplars of their imagined slaves. As Finley says, writers used ‘slaves as instruments through which to discuss human behaviour and human nature ... What is surprising is that modern

¹³⁰ Wherein it is difficult to establish ‘the normative or factual value of the source’. R. Alston, ‘Rereading Ancient Slavery’, in *Reading Ancient Slavery* (eds. R. Alston, et al.; London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 1-33 (1).

¹³¹ Joshel, ‘Slavery and Roman Literary Culture’, 240.

¹³² This point has been strongly made by Moses Finley. For example, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 119. See also W. Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Roman Literature and its Contexts; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8. For a partial response, both positive and negative, see Alston, ‘Rereading’, 13, 23. Cf. in the same volume, E. Hall, ‘Playing Ball with Zeus: Strategies in Reading Ancient Slavery through Dreams’, in *Reading Ancient Slavery* (eds. R. Alston, et al.; London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), 204-228.

commentators ... inconsistently accept it [this evidence] as valid information about the psychology of real slaves'.¹³³ This is clearly to be avoided.¹³⁴

However, what such readings can tell us is how slaves were represented or *imagined*. Or to put it another way, they tell us more about the ideology of slavery among the free writers and readers than we have yet seen, as this shared culture was necessary for these imaginings to be successfully communicated.¹³⁵ As Hopkins boldly puts it, 'the social history which can be squeezed from "real histories" and from fiction may be broadly similar, and that, for the *interpretation of culture*, there is little justification for privileging one above the other', and, 'it does not matter so much whether these stories were true. It matters more that they were told and retold' (my emphasis).¹³⁶

Within the Gospel of Mark, with only two exceptions, slaves are also imagined, and therefore share in this same discourse.¹³⁷ By comparison, we will see that Mark operates in a similar vein to other literary texts, which 'not only mirrored social realities; they actively framed and shaped attitudes and meanings, operating ideologically to naturalise and mask social realities'.¹³⁸ Two scholars within the field of NT studies who have shown some cognisance of this are Albert Harrill and Mary Ann Beavis. Harrill identified Rhoda in Acts 12:13-16 as a type of 'running slave' found in Roman and New Comedy;¹³⁹ Beavis noted the lack of parallels with Aesop's fables in some of the slave parables of the gospels.¹⁴⁰ These

¹³³ Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, 119.

¹³⁴ Possible exceptions to this are the fables of Aesop and the dreams of slaves. See K. Bradley, 'Animalizing the Slave: The Truth of Fiction', *JRS* 90 (2000): 110-125; Hall, 'Playing Ball'.

¹³⁵ Alston, 'Rereading', 12.

¹³⁶ K. Hopkins, 'Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery', *Past & Present* (1993): 3-27 (4, 8).

¹³⁷ Indeed, some of these 'actual' slaves, both in Mark and the other gospels, may also be imagined, although they are not presented in this way.

¹³⁸ Joshel, 'Slavery and Roman Literary Culture', 214.

¹³⁹ J.A. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social and Moral Dimensions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2006), 59-66.

¹⁴⁰ M.A. Beavis, 'Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-8)', *JBL* 111 (1992): 37-54.

valuable studies lend support to the use of fictional literature in the study of slavery in the NT. However, while they sought to draw fairly direct parallels, I do not. Indeed, I will not be attempting to say that the gospel genre has borrowed from these writings, nor that there is any sense of literary dependency, nor even that there are ‘parallels’ between them, but simply that these fictional writings may help us to expose a little of the ideology of ancient slavery, and thereby enable us to see whether the Gospel of Mark shares in this, or modifies it in some way.

So, we will examine two different examples of ancient literature, each of which imagine slaves, and which consequently bear some resemblance to the gospel metaphors. The first is the plays of Plautus. These picturesque and entertaining plays give a popular portrait of slaves and their relationships. In so far as they set the imagined slaves in a narrative framework, they provide some similarities with the parables which, while not performed by actors, nevertheless are publicly ‘performed’. Moreover, recent work has observed the performance nature of the gospels as a whole.¹⁴¹ The second example text will be *The Memorable Words and Deeds* of Valerius Maximus. Although only a small section focuses on slaves, it is significant in painting slaves in a very positive light (at least, that is the intention; we will see that the ideology may say otherwise). The likely purpose of these texts was to give moral teaching, and in this respect they share a common purpose with much of the gospel material.

¹⁴¹ See, for example, W.T. Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003); R.A. Horsley, *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q* (SBLSS 60; Leiden: Brill, 2006); R.A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, and Performance* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2008).

3.2.2 PLAUTUS AND NEW COMEDY

Titus Maccius Plautus, as he was known, was, ‘without any doubt ... the most *successful* comic poet in the ancient world’.¹⁴² He wrote a significant number of plays (the exact number is debated in ancient sources) only twenty-one of which are still extant in whole or part. These comedies built on the Greek tradition of New Comedy for a Latin audience and, while it is difficult to judge how much he imported directly from Greek originals, his reshaping of this tradition and his original contributions earn him the epithet of the earliest Latin author.¹⁴³ While the dates of most plays are approximate, there is evidence of two plays being performed in 200 and 191 BCE, while Plautus himself lived c. 254-184 BCE.¹⁴⁴ This is considerably before our period, of course, although it is not evident that the values contained within his plays changed significantly during the intervening time.¹⁴⁵ However, the point is rather that the plays give an insight into the ways in which slavery could be imagined; they represent examples of the relationship between the imagination of slavery, the ideology of slavery, and the actuality of slavery.

The significance of this corpus for our purposes can be seen from the way in which slaves play such important roles within the plots; in three cases even having the plays named after them: Epidicus, Pseudolus, and Stichus.¹⁴⁶ There are forty slave characters throughout the plays and no Comedy without one.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, as Stace says, there are ‘Incidental slaves ... too numerous to mention.’¹⁴⁸ Slaves provide almost half of the monologue in the

¹⁴² E. Segal, *Roman Laughter: The Comedy of Plautus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 1.

¹⁴³ Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 5.

¹⁴⁴ W.D.C. de Melo, *Plautus* (LCL 60, 61, 163, 260, 328; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), xv-xvii; A. Rei, ‘Villains, Wives, and Slaves in the Comedies of Plautus’, in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations* (eds. S.R. Joshel and S. Murnaghan; London: Routledge, 1998), 92-108 (92).

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination*, 12.

¹⁴⁶ de Melo, *Plautus*, xxviii.

¹⁴⁷ C. Stace, ‘The Slaves of Plautus’, *Greece & Rome* 15 (1968): 64-77 (65-66).

¹⁴⁸ Stace, ‘The Slaves of Plautus’, 66 n. 1.

plays,¹⁴⁹ ‘almost twice as much monologue as any character’.¹⁵⁰ This statistic provides a good example of the ill-defined link between fiction and reality: it would be foolish indeed to assume from this that slaves typically did half the talking. But the reason for this high representation is not immediately obvious. As McCarthy points out, the plays were not written or performed *for* slaves, but rather for masters.¹⁵¹ The performances were funded by the *aediles* (i.e. by the free) and their popularity suggests that it is ‘improbable that it [the plays’ message] expressed viewpoints at odds with those accepted as mainstream’.¹⁵² One explanation for this is offered by Holt Parker: that the large influx of slaves during Plautus’ day gave rise to fears of slave uprisings (there were at least four during his life), and that comedies are made of those things that trouble us.¹⁵³ Plautus’ plays thus provided a way for slave owners to reflect on their hopes and fears in a safe environment. This would then be an example of literature being shaped by reality, though not directly, but also providing a way of reflecting on, understanding and thereby shaping a view of reality. In the discussion which follows, categories of particular relevance to the presentation of slaves and slavery in the Gospel of Mark will be considered.

3.2.2.1 *Reversal*

One of the themes of comedy in general, and Plautine comedy is no exception, is reversal.¹⁵⁴ Segal explores this in depth, suggesting that the plays represent a kind of Saturnalian ‘holiday’ from the everyday norms, with a reversal (even suspension) of

¹⁴⁹ G.E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy: A Study in Popular Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1952), 106.

¹⁵⁰ Stace, ‘The Slaves of Plautus’, 70.

¹⁵¹ K. McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), ix.

¹⁵² McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy*, 17 n. 7

¹⁵³ H. Parker, ‘Crucially Funny or Tranio on the Couch: The Servus Callidus and Jokes about Torture’, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-) 119 (1989): 233-246 (235-7).

¹⁵⁴ Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 99-100.

values.¹⁵⁵ However, it is not necessary to adopt a Freudian explanation of the purpose of comedy to recognise the significance of this theme in Plautus.¹⁵⁶ One of the clearest examples is the slave Pseudolus in the play by the same name. As ever, the witless young master will lose the girl without the intervention of the *servus callidus*, the trickster slave. This trickster, Pseudolus, designs a clever plan whereby a further trickster scams the pimp out of the girl, the object of the original affections. The boy's father, Pseudolus' original master, attempts to stop the plot, but ends up paying dearly, being bested by his slave who even styles himself as victor over him: 'woe to the losers', he proclaims jestingly (1317).¹⁵⁷

In some respects, Pseudolus is the standard trickster slave writ large, and therefore a particularly clear example. He is wise, clever and cunning, understanding people and the ways to achieve his ends through them, manipulating those who would otherwise command him. He is generally confident in his abilities, and successful, at one stage describing his actions as those of a commander leading legions against a town (578-91), causing Anderson to describe him as a 'heroic rogue' and 'an exemplar of heroic badness'.¹⁵⁸ He is eloquent, in a way that the free men are not, using language to direct situations. Pseudolus is unquestionably the main figure of the play, being on stage for nearly two-thirds of the action. This dominance of appearance and activity makes him 'the controlling figure'.¹⁵⁹ Apart from the simple reversal of abilities, where the slave is demonstrably more capable than the owner (being described as *magister* in the play:

¹⁵⁵ Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 32-33.

¹⁵⁶ See Parker, 'Crucially Funny'.

¹⁵⁷ For an excellent discussion of Pseudolus in this play see R. Stewart, 'Who's Tricked: Models of Slave Behavior in Plautus's Pseudolus', in *Role Models in the Roman World: Identity and Assimilation* (eds. S. Bell and I.L. Hansen; Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome Supplementary Volume 7; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 69-96.

¹⁵⁸ W.S. Anderson, *Barbarian Play: Plautus' Roman Comedy* (The Robson Classical Lectures 1; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 92, 101.

¹⁵⁹ Stace, 'The Slaves of Plautus', 67.

933),¹⁶⁰ Segal identifies two further aspects. The first occurs at the start of the play, as the young master puts his hopes in his slave because of 'love';¹⁶¹ the second is more significant, and arises when the slave, in order to serve his young master, must go against an older generation of elite slave owners who are unwilling to acknowledge a reversal, and so needs to use guile and cunning to achieve his ends.¹⁶² Thus, the slave is represented as one who can be relied upon, but also a heroic risk-taker who can challenge social convention and win.

There is thus some merit in Segal's suggestion that Plautus 'ennobles' his slaves, raising them to a 'temporary aristocracy' based on wit rather than birth.¹⁶³ Yet while this element of reversal cannot be denied, it should be remembered that Pseudolus remains a slave. Moreover, his wit and guile are all put at the service of his young master, thus fulfilling his owner's wishes and agenda, rather than his own. In this sense, while it is true that 'badness' becomes 'goodness' in Plautine comedy,¹⁶⁴ such badness is nevertheless constrained by the institution of slavery itself, and any reversal is both temporary and limited. Within *Pseudolus*, the play wherein the slave is perhaps given the most 'free reign', this is perhaps best emphasised by the nameless young slave's monologue in the middle of the play which opens Act III (767-789). His description of the sexual abuse he will suffer out of the necessity of providing a birthday present for his master serves to reinforce the master-slave relationship which is being played-with, but by no means abandoned, elsewhere in the play.

¹⁶⁰ For examples in other plays, including slaves being described by their owners as *patronus* and *pater*, see Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 131.

¹⁶¹ Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 111.

¹⁶² Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 116.

¹⁶³ Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 104.

¹⁶⁴ Anderson, *Barbarian Play*, 92.

3.2.2.2 *Relationships to Masters*

These observations about the nature of the ‘reversal’ in Plautine comedy can be carried through into a description of the master-slave relationship in general in these plays. There is a risk in some analysis that the significance of the identities of the characters disappears. Much like Crossan’s study of the ‘servant’ parables,¹⁶⁵ those analyses of Plautus which are most concerned with power relationships and generic ideas of mastery similarly allow the slave to ‘disappear’.¹⁶⁶ But these plays are more than simply explorations of relationships, at least for those who, like the characters within them, are slaves and masters. In particular, the Plautine characters indicate something of the symbiotic relationship between slave and owner. In spite of the antagonism, the ideology of the literature is that neither can do without the other.¹⁶⁷ Fitzgerald illustrates with a quotation from *The Persian*, where the slave Sagaristio says:

A slave who wants to serve his master well should place many things in his breast which he thinks will please his master when he’s present as well as when he’s absent. As for me, I don’t enjoy being a slave and I’m not sufficiently the way master would want me to be, but nevertheless my master can’t keep his hand away from me, as from a sore eye: so he gives me orders and uses me as support for his activities (*Persa* 7-12 [de Melo, LCL]).

Fitzgerald comments, ‘The slave is as essential as an eye and as irritating and inconsequential as an itch, and this paradoxical form of intimacy results in a paradoxical response, just as the hand that rubs the eye only aggravates the symptoms it is trying to alleviate.’¹⁶⁸ This graphic illustration highlights the truism of slavery: just as it cannot exist without slaves, so it also cannot exist without masters, and a full understanding of the slave requires an understanding also of the master. In Plautus, as we have seen, even the

¹⁶⁵ J.D. Crossan, ‘Servant Parables of Jesus’, *Semeia* 1 (1974): 17-62. See § 5.2.

¹⁶⁶ Although this is not representative of her work as a whole, this could be said of McCarthy’s analysis at times. McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy*, e.g. 32.

¹⁶⁷ Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination*, 24.

¹⁶⁸ Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination*, 24.

trickster slaves act out of loyalty to their masters,¹⁶⁹ with the comic element arising from the confusion caused by multiple mastery, and the necessity for the slave to choose whom will be obeyed. Nonetheless, there is no question that *someone* must be obeyed. Pseudolus, again, is depicted as a playwright, writing the plot for the audience (401-5).¹⁷⁰ Yet he also reminds the audience, through the dialogue with his own master, ‘who has the ultimate power to write the script’.¹⁷¹ Thus, while a mutual dependency is depicted between slave and master, and slaves are at times lauded for their abilities, even apparently ‘in charge’, yet the whip remains in the owner’s hand and safety is provided for the free audience by the control exercised through the repeated threat of punishment, itself a source of humour.¹⁷²

3.2.2.3 *Plautine Punishments*

Threats of punishment are rife in Plautus, and there is much more about torture, crucifixion and other brutality to slaves here than in other comedy.¹⁷³ *The Pot of Gold*, for example, opens with Euclio beating his elderly house-keeper Staphyla (42). She, in a responsive aside, wishes that she could commit suicide so that she would no longer have to be a slave in this way (50-51). When she moves away from Euclio, he says,

I'll tear out those eyes of yours, you criminal, so that you can't observe what I'm doing ... if you leave your place by just a finger's or a nail's breadth or if you look back before I've told you, I'll immediately put you on the cross, and that'll teach you a lesson. (54-60 [de Melo, LCL])

¹⁶⁹ Stace, ‘The Slaves of Plautus’, 73.

¹⁷⁰ Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination*, 44-47.

¹⁷¹ Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination*, 47.

¹⁷² Parker, ‘Crucially Funny’, 246.

¹⁷³ ‘There is a certain amount of slave beating in Old Comedy, but nothing approaching the frequency, variety, and detailed vocabulary of torture that Plautus shows.’ Parker, ‘Crucially Funny’, 233.; *contra* Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy*, 288.

This is clearly over the top – the kind of exaggerated and empty threat that a parent might make to a child – but it nevertheless represents an extreme language of violence which is found throughout Plautus. The very corporeality of a slave’s existence is highlighted elsewhere in this play, when the master Argyrippus refers to his slaves *by their potential punishments*: ‘O whipping-post’ (*verbero*), ‘O gallows-bird’ (*carnufex*) (669, 697).¹⁷⁴ This physical vulnerability as an essence of the slave’s nature is strikingly illustrated in *The Merchant* with a ‘job description’ for a female slave (397-399 [de Melo, LCL]; emphasis added):

DEMIPHO: She [the slave girl] isn’t of any use for us and she won’t do.

CHARINUS: How come?

DEMIPHO: *(awkwardly)* Because – because she doesn’t have the kind of appearance suitable for our house. We only need a maid to weave, to grind meal, to cut wood, to do her stint of spinning, to sweep the house, *to get a beating*, to have the daily food for the family ready. She won’t be able to do any of these things.

Thus, as Fitzgerald puts it, ‘being beaten is one of the most important things that literary slaves do’, or Segal, ‘By Plautine standards, a slave is “he who gets whipped.”’¹⁷⁵ And yet, a curious feature of these plays with their obsession for cruelty is that it is rarely meted out. Indeed, Plautine slaves ‘get away with it’; their punishment, though so often threatened, is not delivered.¹⁷⁶ At face value, this seems to contradict the slaveholder ideology of these plays which, as we have seen, explores fantasies but nevertheless keeps the fictional slaves within behavioural bounds. However, perhaps this unacted violence serves to prevent precisely what Fitzgerald and Hopkins think it enables: the identification of the audience

¹⁷⁴ Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 107.

¹⁷⁵ Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination*, 32; Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 140.

¹⁷⁶ P.P. Spranger, *Historische Untersuchungen zu den Sklavenfiguren des Plautus und Terenz* (Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei 17; Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1984), 47-51; Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 155.

*with the slave.*¹⁷⁷ For a tongue lashing is one thing, and can be taken to comic, almost cartoon-like, extremes, without evoking feelings of pity. It is less clear that physical representation of the same would avoid this, and Plautus wants to uphold rather than challenge the system of domination. This much is clear from two examples which seem to affirm the resumption of normal activity following the close of the play. Thus, the slave Tranio in the final lines of *The Ghost* observes that he can be punished for his misdemeanours ‘tomorrow’ (i.e. when the play is over, 1178-9).¹⁷⁸ Likewise, Pseudolus, in the closing lines says to his former master, ‘Why are you threatening me? I have a back’ (*Pseud.* 1325 [de Melo, LCL]). In other words, the normal practice is not verbal threats but physical punishment (i.e. a back for beating), and thus confirmation of the norm that will shortly be resumed.

‘The crucifixion jokes, therefore, confirm the Roman audience in its sense of superiority and power. They serve to remind the audience of the servile nature of the characters, as well as the actors who perform them, and of the absolute and everyday nature of the power that the audience wields over them.’¹⁷⁹ Moreover, the verbal rather than visual representation of this prevents a move from comedy to sympathy, and ensures the ‘happy’ preservation of the status quo *post eventum*.

3.2.2.4 *Slave Characteristics*

As we have seen, it is not so simple, as some have done, to seek to separate out the slaves in Plautus as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, for even the ‘bad’ slaves (e.g. the *servi callidi*) are nevertheless ‘good’, for they achieve their ends through doubtful means *on behalf of* their masters. Nonetheless, Plautus does present a range of negative characteristics, with slaves who are: talkative, conceited, insolent, deceitful, lazy, sensual, gluttonous, faithless, liars, sordid,

¹⁷⁷ Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination*, 34.

¹⁷⁸ Segal, *Roman Laughter*, 159.

¹⁷⁹ Parker, ‘Crucially Funny’, 240.

and selfish.¹⁸⁰ This corresponds to other literature, where, for example, ‘bad’ slaves are likewise described as fickle, wanton, slothful, sluggish, idle, tardy, timorous, greedy, quick-tempered, frivolous, superstitious and obstinate (*Digest* 21.1).¹⁸¹ As we have said, the issue is not that this is an accurate description of slaves (although some slaves no doubt displayed some of these characteristics some of the time), but rather, that this represents how elite slave owners imagined them. Thus it reveals something of the slaveholding ideology.¹⁸²

Yet it is not only ‘bad’ slaves who are described in literature, good slaves are loyal, hard-working, diligent and vigilant (*Digest* 21.1).¹⁸³ Elements of this are seen in such ‘bad’ characters as Pseudolus. However, there is also one slave in Plautus who is a more explicitly ‘good’ slave. Stace describes Tyndarus in *The Captives* as, ‘quite sui generis, in that he is unfailingly loving, faithful, and honest. In fact he is in every way too good to be true ... He even risks his life for his master – a most refreshing change after the normal Plautine slave’.¹⁸⁴ Leaving aside the question of whether a slave could act in this way, this behaviour appears in the plot when the slave Tyndarus agrees to remain in captivity in Philocrates’ place, suffering undeservedly, even to death, for his master’s sake (e.g. 229-230, 682-688). Such ‘noble’ behaviour is potentially of great significance, as this is the only play to take slavery as its central theme.¹⁸⁵ It is very possible that the ‘good slave’ image was one which was intended to offer slaves a model of proper behaviour (see below for further discussion with respect to the *exemplum* literature).

¹⁸⁰ Stace, ‘The Slaves of Plautus’, 72; H.E. Barber, ‘Plautus and the Sentimental Ideal of the Roman Family’ (PhD, Durham University, 2011), 174.

¹⁸¹ Joshel, ‘Slavery and Roman Literary Culture’, 217.

¹⁸² Hopkins makes the same point about Aesop’s fables, saying, ‘The appropriate question is not “Did slaves really talk like that to their masters?”, but rather “Did many slave-owners in some way fear that they might?”’ Hopkins, ‘Novel Evidence’, 22.

¹⁸³ Joshel, ‘Slavery and Roman Literary Culture’, 217.

¹⁸⁴ Stace, ‘The Slaves of Plautus’, 67.

¹⁸⁵ W.G. Thalmann, ‘Versions of Slavery in the *Captivi* of Plautus’, *Ramus* 25 (1996): 112-145 (112-113).

There is a problem with this picture, however. For, at the dénouement, the slave Tyndarus turns out not to be a 'true' slave at all. Rather, he is a long-lost son (1010-14) who is finally restored to his father, to freedom, and to his rightful position. In which case, it suggests that the tension caused by the 'good slave' image (i.e. that a slave should display such *fides*) which runs through the play is finally resolved by pointing out that the slave was really a son. Recognising that, within the household, slaves and sons were brought up similarly but ultimately needed to be distinguished from one another,¹⁸⁶ this final revelation goes some way to drawing out this distinction for the audience. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the presence of the slave who originally 'snatched Tyndarus away' from his father. He is put in chains instead of Tyndarus (1027-28) to be passed over for execution (1019), and he is seemingly accepting of the rightness of this turn of events (1028).¹⁸⁷ Thus, while the character of Tyndarus may have provided some aspirational value for slaves who wished to be acknowledged as 'part of the family', it seems that, once again, Plautus has presented a comic plot containing slaves and masters which does not ultimately challenge the established social script at all; rather it confirms that everyone has their proper place. Thus, the slave owner ideology remains intact, and is actually affirmed by the slave characters in these plays.

Therefore, in this brief consideration of Plautine comedy, we have observed that imagined slaves feature significantly in the telling of the story, just as they do in the gospels. These slaves exhibit a range of positive and negative characteristics, including some measure of reversal as they outwit their owners. However, this is always bounded by the ideology of slavery itself, as the undergirding motivation for such 'bad-good' behaviour is obedience to the master's wishes. Their threatened punishment is graphic and plentiful, indicating the

¹⁸⁶ Parker, 'Crucially Funny', 245.

¹⁸⁷ For alternative interpretations, see Thalmann, 'Versions of Slavery'; Barber, 'Plautus', 172-203.

very corporeality and vulnerability of the slave as a body, but the accepted legitimacy of these autocratic measures is to keep unwanted behaviour in check. Yet the threats are not carried out in the play itself, perhaps for the sake of keeping the ideology intact and preventing an undermining sympathy with the recipient, but there are pointers to the ‘resumption of normal service’ at the close of proceedings. Finally, we have seen that the symbiotic relationships of slave to master and master to slave is highlighted, although, in different ways, the plays ensure the careful preservation of distinctions between master and slave, and slave and free. These imagined slave relationships bear some striking similarities to those found in Mark’s Gospel, as we will see. It is less clear, however, that the Plautine plays were to serve primarily as models of behaviour, but rather as the means of exploring the hopes and fears of the largely free audiences. We finally turn, therefore, to an underexplored example of the fictional slave, where the aim is precisely to provide a model for behaviour: the ideal slaves of *exemplum* literature.¹⁸⁸

3.2.3 THE EXEMPLUM LITERATURE

[H]ow admirable the fidelity of Urbinius Panapio’s slave! Learning that soldiers apprised by household informers had arrived at the country house near Reate to kill his proscribed master, he changed clothes with him, exchanged rings too, and let him secretly out by the back door. The slave then retired to the bedroom and the bed, and let himself be killed as Panapio. (V. Max. 6.8.6 [Shackleton Bailey, LCL])

This striking story, striking in its own right but also for its resonances with some Christian theology, is one of the most popular of the *exemplum* literature. Here, it is told by Valerius Maximus, but it appears frequently elsewhere.¹⁸⁹ Such *exempla* are brief stories which

¹⁸⁸ Glancy points out the relevance of these texts to the idea of the ‘faithful slave’, following Vogt, but devotes less than a page to them. However, she does not relate the examples to model behaviour. J.A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 117. Cf. Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man*, 136-140.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Appian, *Civil War* 4.44; Seneca, *Ben.* 3.25.1; Macrobius 1.11.16; Cassius Dio 47.10.2-4’. H. Parker, ‘Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives: The Crisis of the Outsider-Within and Roman *exemplum*

illustrate cultural values and are repeatedly told as a means of perpetuating moral standards. They are often found in collections of stories in our period.¹⁹⁰ Thus, *Exempla* serve as guides to the cognitive map of Rome, to the shared norms, values, and symbols that made up Roman culture.¹⁹¹ Significant within these stories of noble men and women, are slaves. This is striking even to the storytellers themselves: Valerius finds it ‘unexpected’ that there should be praiseworthy tales of slaves to be told (6.8.1). Yet he is able to glory in the aforementioned example of Urbinius Panapio’s slave, finding it no small matter that, ‘one man chose to die for another’ (6.8.6), and is at pains to point out that his death is marked by a monument and inscription. This might suggest that the story has value as entertainment; in the likely setting of the dinner party, elite men would enjoy hearing such unlikely tales.¹⁹² However, Clive Skidmore argues that the *exempla* are much more significant than this and serve a purpose which seems close to the slavery metaphors of Mark’s Gospel, as we will see: to encourage hearers to imitate the examples given so that they might attain the same glory as the individuals described.¹⁹³ Such stories, ‘were the basic means of moral instruction in the ancient world from the earliest times’¹⁹⁴ and provided the opportunity to perpetuate key values to those who, as far as their masters were concerned, needed to live by them, in this case, slaves.¹⁹⁵ *Exempla* had a particular value, since, ‘The persuasive efficacy of historical examples is superior to that of precepts alone and therefore they are a more effective form of moral guidance.’¹⁹⁶ Such a motivation may also be reflected in the gospels where we find, just as in the *exemplum* literature,

Literature’, in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations* (eds. S.R. Joshel and S. Murnaghan; London: Routledge, 1998), 152-173 (158).

¹⁹⁰ R.P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time 25; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 109.

¹⁹¹ Parker, ‘Loyal Slaves’, 152.

¹⁹² C. Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen: The Work of Valerius Maximus* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 109.

¹⁹³ Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, xvi.

¹⁹⁴ Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 3.

¹⁹⁵ Parker, ‘Loyal Slaves’, 153.

¹⁹⁶ Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 83.

parables that were exaggerated and fictionalised to make a point, and which contain both positive and negative examples.¹⁹⁷

This can be seen in the collection of Valerius Maximus, written during the reign of Tiberius (14-37 CE),¹⁹⁸ in its section dedicated to the 'Fidelity of Slaves' (6.8). This concern for the demonstration of 'loyalty' (*fides*) is found throughout the section. For example, a young slave who had not reached puberty volunteers to endure many tortures as part of the defence of his master, and speaks no ill of him in spite of the horrors (6.8.1). In another example, slaves refuse to give up the whereabouts of their owner, again in spite of torture. However, in a reversal, their master, Plancus, gives himself up on their behalf since he 'could not bear that slaves so faithful and exemplary be tormented further' (6.8.5 [Shackleton Bailey, LCL]). Valerius' final example is of a slave who had been chained and punished by being branded on the face, yet who rescues his owner from arrest and from the plundering of the rest of his enslaved household. Thus, this slave's praiseworthy actions (which include killing an old man as a surrogate for his master) indicate not just the capacity to forgive his master but 'affection' for him (*caritas*; 6.8.7).

It is noticeable that in all the examples cited, just as in Plautus and the expressions of actual slavery, physical punishment and suffering feature significantly. Indeed, it would be fair to say that for the slave in Valerius, *fides* is expressed, not just in spite of, but through suffering. It is by such suffering that the slave demonstrates a connection to the master. So, Valerius can speak of the slave in the final example as one 'who was nothing but the shadow and semblance of his punishments, saw his greatest profit in the life of one who had chastised him so severely' (6.8.7 [Shackleton Bailey, LCL]). Here, there is no criticism

¹⁹⁷ Vogt makes this connection between the *exemplum* literature and the gospels, particularly the parables which feature the 'good and faithful slave'. As will be discussed, however, the reason for this is not so simple as he suggests, that slaves can be 'ennobled' through faithfulness. Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man*, 141-142, 145.

¹⁹⁸ Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, xv.

of the severe punishment he had received; rather, the affection of the slave for the master seems to indicate all the more that his suffering was justified, because it was by this means that the slave came to truly appreciate his master's worth. When taken with the fact that the masters are named in every case, whereas the slaves are only named once, it seems that the stories are told at least as much for the sake of the master as for the slave. Indeed, Joshel argues that these *exempla*, 'provide a blueprint for readers to categorise the daily acts and behaviours of slaves: literature, that is, provides a metanarrative in which individual slave owners might make sense of the daily, mundane actions of their slaves'.¹⁹⁹ This would suggest that they were written for masters, which would be unsurprising given that they were no doubt written and purchased by members of the elite, slave owners themselves. But this cannot be the whole story. For, however hard it may be to imagine the means by which slaves received these stories, their function seems to go beyond simply reassuring slave owners in their judgments; rather they explore what an ideal master-slave relationship would be like. When taking into account the prominent role that the master plays in these stories with respect to the slave's actions, Parker rightly points out, 'The tales of loyalty thus resolve a disturbing paradox, for the noble slave is like the noble master. In times of crisis, he begins to act like his master. In many of the stories he literally imitates his master or takes his place.'²⁰⁰ Therefore, while these stories serve to establish the role and authority of the master as the true *exemplum* for their slaves to follow, nevertheless, these slaves provide a model to invoke similar behaviour in their peers who hear their story. 'The loyal slave served both as a source of psychological comfort and honor for his master *and* as powerful model to invoke obedience in other slaves.'²⁰¹

Skidmore supports this notion by providing evidence that the *exemplum* literature was used not just by the elite but by those of low status. Citing Horace's description of his

¹⁹⁹ Joshel, 'Slavery and Roman Literary Culture', 223.

²⁰⁰ Parker, 'Loyal Slaves', 162. Emphasis added.

²⁰¹ Parker, 'Loyal Slaves', 163.

father's instruction, who was himself a freed slave, Skidmore says, 'Here we see the typical Roman attitude that if reasons are needed, Horace can go to the philosophers, for his father, it is enough to use examples; instruction by examples was a more effective means of moral education than reasoned argument.'²⁰² The implication is that those with limited education, in particular, can learn by examples. Such a pattern is evident in the gospels also with the likely original audiences for Jesus' teaching. When taken with the other characteristics of the *exemplum* literature, including the 'good and bad' slaves, the preponderance of suffering, the occasional element of reversal, and their function in modelling the values of a culture, we can see that the gospels do not so much stand alone, but are part of a discourse in the Roman world wherein slaves could be used to communicate values and behaviour. Indeed, since they form part of this discourse (whether or not the evangelists or their readers were aware of these Greek and Roman *exempla*), the comparison of the gospel slaves with the actual and imagined slaves of this chapter is all the more valuable.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Having established in chapter two the interconnectedness between metaphor and reality, in this chapter we have, firstly, explored something of the reality of slavery in the Roman world. We have seen that, for the vast majority, slavery was a menial existence which robbed the slave of their familial, cultural and individual identity. Such a 'social death' was made complete as they became assimilated into the existence and identity of their owners, as representative and extension of their master's ideals, desires and activities. Yet slaves could also be described in general terms by those owners, as a group who generally threatened the well-being and prosperity of household and business, in spite of their equal necessity to that functioning. In contrast, there were slaves who had considerable responsibility and wealth, even owning slaves themselves. However, even those slaves were

²⁰² Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 19.

subject to the threat of physical violence, a frequent reference and an assumed part of slave existence, even down to the physiological makeup of slaves who supposedly responded better to such brutality than did the free. We saw that slaves could apparently have positive relationships with their masters, and no doubt this was true. However, we also saw in these instances that the relationship was nevertheless viewed through the eyes of the master, and any benefits flowing to the slave were ultimately for the owner's benefit.

In the second section of this chapter, we turned from actual slavery to metaphorical slavery. The distinction between these constructions has been rarely noted by NT commentators, nor are the sources used typically explored. However, this focus enabled the further exploration of the ideology of slavery, but also of how slaves and their experiences could be imagined, a necessary part in the creation of metaphor. A number of literary sources could have been investigated, such as the use of slavery in philosophical writings. However, rather than focussing on the *nature* of slavery, as such writings typically do, we instead examined two sources of slave *activity*, since this is the emphasis in the gospel metaphors also. In the plays of Plautus as well as the *exemplum* literature, we observed that imagined slaves are common. Indeed, they share a number of features:

- i. There are 'good' and 'bad' slaves. Slaves are presented as either 'good' or 'bad' slaves, based on their behaviour, with the distinction clearly drawn. There is the expression of a certain amount of surprise at the existence of 'good' slaves.
- ii. Slaves model values. 'Good' and 'bad' slaves both inform and invite the judgement of the audience or reader. They serve to perpetuate cultural values and, in particular, the ideological norms of slavery from the slave owner's perspective. Thus, they serve as educational vehicles both for masters and slaves, for both high-status and low-status groups.
- iii. Slaves experience suffering. In every instance, slaves experience either the threat or the reality of violence against their person. This is accepted by both the imagined

slave and master alike, and is used both as a means of control and a means by which the slave can exhibit loyalty.

- iv. Slaves are judged by their relationship with their owners. Not only does the master-slave relationship provide a means of definition and identity for the slave (a slave cannot be such without a master), but the imagined ideal of the slave is the one who both expresses the values and desires of the master, and becomes *like* the master, even to the point of identification.
- v. Slave stories can demonstrate reversal. This relationship can be played with, however, as slaves can 'become' the master, whether that be through exhibiting masterly characteristics and behaviour or else by assuming the role through trickster behaviour. Masters, too, can become more like slaves, either for noble reasons, or by being outwitted. Such reversal does not change the system of master-slave relationships, as this is necessary for the reversal to operate; however, it does expose the fragile balance of power and the hopes and fears that go with it.

Each of these features of fictional slaves and imagined slavery is consistent with the ideology expressed through the evidence for actual slavery found in the first part of this chapter. This gives us, therefore, further support for the connection between reality and metaphor established earlier. The five features also offer an informed pattern for the consideration of the metaphors of slavery in the Gospel of Mark. However, before doing so we need to examine the practice of slavery and the use of imagined slaves in Jewish sources. This will help us to nuance our understanding of slavery when we come to the Gospel, and to avoid the unqualified assumptions either that the general picture of Roman slavery is necessarily mirrored among the Jews, or that Jewish ideas and practices were necessarily different from the shaping cultures around them.

4 – SLAVERY METAPHORS IN JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

4.1 DIFFICULTIES IN DETERMINING ‘JEWISH’ SLAVERY

In chapter two, the importance of the relationship between slavery as a metaphor and the actual practice of slavery was established. This was confirmed in the previous chapter, as the ideological concerns of owners found in the imagined slaves of Roman literature were seen to both mirror and caricature the evidence of slave practices in the Roman Empire. This provides the general backdrop before which the gospels were both written and read. However, before turning to the Gospel of Mark, we need to consider slavery from a Jewish perspective, since this was the more immediate context within which the seeds of the gospels grew. While such an approach to the gospels is not uncommon, it can be questioned with respect to slavery. Firstly, is there any reason to assume there will be anything distinctive or even different about Jewish attitudes to and practices of slavery, given that Jews were part of the Roman Empire and Hellenised like many other peoples?¹ Secondly, given the well-documented varieties of Judaism in this period, is there evidence to suggest that there was a common ‘Jewish’ understanding at all? Thirdly, given the nature of our sources, do we actually have sufficient *reliable* material to reconstruct a picture of Jewish slavery in the first century? These methodological concerns will be addressed before engaging with the sources themselves.

¹ Harrill, commenting on Byron’s published thesis, suggests that it uses a ‘totalizing interpretative framework that sets up an artificial cultural dichotomy between “Judaism” and “Hellenism” as code words masquerading as historical entities. The aim of this kind of scholarship, as Wayne A. Meeks writes, is to urge the distinctiveness of Christianity against its “pagan” environment, a distinctiveness that it allegedly shared with ancient Israel’. Needless to say, this is not the aim of this thesis (nor, I suspect, Byron’s). This chapter seeks to examine the relationship between, it must be admitted, a distinctive Jewish identity, represented by literature, traditions, and practices, not to mention ethnicity, and the wider social context, without prejudging the nature of that relationship. J.A. Harrill, ‘Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity’, *Shofar* 23 (2005): 185-187 (186).

With respect to the relationship between Judaism and the wider Roman world, Wright asserts that, 'Jews, in Palestine and in the diaspora, were well acquainted with Hellenistic-Roman slavery'.² This is certainly the case. However, Hezser's statement warrants reflection: 'The phenomenon of slavery shows how and to what extent Jews were part of Greco-Roman society while at the same time maintaining their biblical roots.'³ Hezser is right to point to two of the factors which influenced slavery in Jewish culture: the practices of the wider contemporary society and the specific inherited religious traditions. The tendency in older scholarship is to underplay how much Jewish attitudes and practices were influenced by their place in the Greek and Roman empires.⁴ Indeed, based on a number of papyri and inscriptions, Martin concludes that, 'slavery among Jewish families differed little if at all from slavery among those non-Jewish families surrounding them'.⁵ Nevertheless, this evidence comes largely from the Diaspora and it might therefore be suggested that the strong sense of Jewish identity in first century Galilee, for example, to some extent rejecting of gentile influences, may have resulted in a distinctive approach to slavery.⁶ Given that this is the milieu from which the Jesus movement emerges, there is a need to consider whether there are differences within Palestinian Jewish traditions and practices which are, in turn, reflected in the gospels themselves. This leads us to our second question.

² B.G. Wright, III, 'Ebed/Doulos: Terms and Social Status in the Meeting of Hebrew Biblical and Hellenistic Roman Culture', *Semeia* 83-84 (1998): 83-111 (88).

³ C. Hezser, 'Slavery and the Jews', in *The Ancient Mediterranean World* (eds. K. Bradley and P. Cartledge; The Cambridge World History of Slavery; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 438-455 (438).

⁴ E.E. Urbach, *The Laws Regarding Slavery: As a Source for Social History of the Period of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and Talmud* (Annual of Jewish Studies; London: The Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, 1964); S. Zeitlin, 'Slavery during the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaitic Period', *JQR* 53 (1963): 185-218.

⁵ D.B. Martin, 'Slavery and the Ancient Jewish Family', in *The Jewish Family in Antiquity* (ed. S.J.D. Cohen; BJS 289; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 113-132 (126).

⁶ See, for example: M.A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (SNTSMS 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); M.A. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (SNTSMS 134; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); R.A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995).

This second question, concerning the multiple expressions of Judaism in the first century, also has some justification. Indeed, we will see in due course that some Jewish groups were considered distinctive precisely because of their attitudes to slavery, among other things, and this marked them out both from gentiles and other Jews. These different groups, found within Palestine as well as the Diaspora, had differences of belief and practice which should not be glossed over. However, while we should be sensitive to differences, it is an open question whether this diversity within Judaism is salient to the investigation of slavery, given that approaches will be influenced both by local contextual factors and shared elements of tradition.

The third question, concerning the existence of relevant sources and the reliability thereof, is shared with all study of slavery in the ancient world. As was expressed above, one of the biggest problems is that slaves did not write accounts of their own experiences. Therefore, we are reliant on sources drawn almost certainly from slave owners, whether they be legislators or literati. However, this gives us the opportunity to discern the ideology of slavery in such social strata. The problem becomes more acute with respect to Judaism, however, because the sources are so limited. For the first century, Philo and Josephus provide the majority of literary evidence, for the Diaspora and Palestine respectively. They make a considerable number of statements about slavery, both as an institution and as historically practised. However, we cannot always guarantee that such statements are not shaped by the genre of the literature (e.g. philosophical treatise, in the case of Philo) or by the expectations of the audience (e.g. high ranking Romans, in the case of Josephus). Where possible, therefore, we will use comparative material to weigh their evidence (e.g. DSS). Then there is the NT itself, which we can only use as a source with some caution since it is the object of our study, but should not be ignored for the additional information contained beyond the gospels themselves. There are also a few non-literary sources from the first century and we will encounter some of these.

Of potential significance as a source of both ideology and practice in the first century is some of the rabbinic material, which may well preserve traditions going back into this period and even earlier. However, what once was a straightforward matter of determining the dates of *halakhot* from their named rabbinic originator, is no longer methodologically sound, and the determination of approximate dating is now highly problematic.⁷ This need not imply, therefore, that we dismiss the use of rabbinic material altogether, since, with due caution, we can see in these sources lines of thinking which *could* be reflective of thinking in the first century also, without needing to suggest a continuous tradition linking the two. More particularly, we find in these texts the closest parallels to the gospels' use of slaves in parables. Therefore, in considering these legal texts, we do not want to view them as 'background' to the gospels, but rather, suggestive of the kinds of ideas which might also be reflected in the NT writings.

Finally, as further sources, we have the Hebrew Bible, and Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. The apocryphal and pseudepigraphical texts do not explicitly demonstrate an influence on the gospels, but being comparatively close in time to their production, may reflect something of the thought world from which the slave metaphors in Mark were created, and we should therefore pay attention to those few remarks on the history and philosophy of slavery contained therein.

There is thus justification for looking at Jewish material separately from the Roman sources, although we should not necessarily expect to find anything distinctive within it. In the same way, although the documentary and literary sources need to be treated with caution, they do represent a source of ideas, an ideology about slavery, any of which might find counterparts within the gospels. As in the previous chapter, we will consider actual slaves and slavery to begin with, seeing how Jewish writers expressed this ideology. This

⁷ For a summary of the current state of the field, see G. Stemberger, 'Dating Rabbinic Traditions', in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (ed. R. Bieringer; JSJSup 136; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 79-96. Unfortunately, it raises more questions than answers, which is itself illustrative of the problem.

will follow a broadly chronological outline. We will then turn to the ways in which slavery is imagined, through its use as a metaphor in key Jewish sources.

4.2 THE IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICES OF JEWISH SLAVERY

4.2.1 SLAVERY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Like in the NT, slaves and slavery are very present in the OT, although apparently, like the best ‘servants’, rarely visible, judging by the comparatively little scholarly literature on the subject. However, we do not need to read far into the Hebrew Bible to encounter slavery: Canaan’s curse is to serve his brothers as a slave (Gen 9:25), the patriarchs own slaves as a sign of wealth and blessing (e.g. Gen 24:34-5; 26:14; 30:43; 32:5), and Genesis finishes with the story of Joseph and his sale into slavery (37:25-28). Implicit in the first and last incidents is the understanding that slavery is a terrible fate, but better than death (Gen 37:21). There is little apparent awareness of the contradiction this understanding presents with the ownership of slaves by the patriarchs, although the story of Hagar the Egyptian slave (Genesis 16 and 21) shows remarkable self-awareness of the slave’s plight, including the possibilities of flight, perhaps most dramatically represented in Abram’s statement to his wife: “Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please.” Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her’ (Gen 16:6).

This ambiguity continues into Exodus, with the enslavement of the Israelites to the Egyptians (Ex 2:23). Their redemption is wrought by God whom, we later learn, has ‘bought’ them (קנה, Ex 15:16). Yet while this experience dwells deep in the consciousness of Israel, shaping their identity (e.g. Ex 20:2), this does little to eradicate slavery from Israel’s history. In 1 Kgs 9:20-21, we read:

²⁰ All the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the people of Israel – ²¹ their descendants who were still left

in the land, whom the Israelites were unable to destroy completely – these Solomon conscripted for slave labour, and so they are to this day.

Here we have the same kind of state slavery that the Exodus story records Israel as having suffered at the hands of Egypt, conscripted likewise for building projects. However, these verses are also intended as an apologetic for the presence of these other peoples in the land, whom the LORD had commanded should be utterly destroyed (Deut 7:1-2). We can see this especially with the insertion of the explanatory clause, ‘whom the Israelites were unable to destroy completely’ (9:21b). In other words, as in Genesis, the idea of slavery being a fate only marginally better than death continues here (‘Although we did not completely destroy these people, we have done the next best [or worst] thing: we have made them our slaves’). This negative image of slavery can be seen in Israel’s own fear of national enslavement, where Judah’s punishment for unfaithfulness to God is described as deliverance into slavery to another nation in 2 Chr 12:8 (cf. Jer 5:19). Yet this verse also contrasts enslavement to other nations with enslavement to God, the latter clearly intended as a positive. Thus, we find again that while slavery to human owners is viewed as a negative experience, slavery as an institution is not questioned.

This same paradox between owning slaves, while yet regarding slavery negatively, can be seen in the development of the laws surrounding slaves in the Pentateuch which, significantly, appear three times.⁸ The oldest form of the biblical slavery laws is found at the beginning of the Covenant Code (Ex 21:2-11). This text gives instructions on how a male ‘Hebrew’ slave should be treated, and what to do if he wants to be permanently enslaved to the family. There remains considerable debate about the meaning of the word ‘Hebrew’ in this text. Most scholars do not consider it to be an ethnic identifier but rather a social description, in which case the term refers to someone of low social standing who is

⁸ For a full treatment of this topic, see G. Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup 141; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993). See also E.N. Kaneen, ‘Slavery, Story, and the Shaping of Identity: The Exodus and the Expression of Identity in the Debt-Slavery Legislation of Ancient Israel’ (paper presented at Religion and Identity in the Ancient World. Durham, 2010).

sold into slavery, most probably because of debt, although the text does not explicitly say this (cf. Ex 21:2).⁹ In the Sabbath year, the slave should be freed but has the option of becoming permanently enslaved to his owner in a ceremony that has echoes of the Passover story (by which the blood on the lintel offered protection and marked out the Israelites, Ex 12:27). It is notable that the reason given for such a choice is love for ‘master, wife and children’ (Ex 21:5). This exhibits the classic assumption of the slave owner that we have already seen, that it is their benevolent mastery that would be the primary motivation for a slave to remain; we will encounter this again in the rabbinic parables. However, since any wife and children gained during the period of slavery remain as slaves to the owner, it is surely love for them that is more likely to determine the decision, and shows how even the potential of manumission can bring with it painful choices for the slave. Apart from this option to refuse freedom, unique in ANE law, the command then limits the number of years that the slave can serve. This element *is* found in other law codes. For example, the older Code of Hammurabi contains a similar injunction that debt-slaves should serve for no more than three years.¹⁰ Daughters who are sold by their fathers are treated differently (Ex 21:7-11), but in both cases, it is evident that enslavement was sufficiently part of normal experience for there to be legislation concerning it, and,

⁹ V.H. Matthews, ‘The Anthropology of Slavery in the Covenant Code’, in *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development* (ed. B.M. Levinson; JSOTSup 181; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 119-135; N.P. Lemche, ‘The “Hebrew Slave”: Comments on the Slave Law Ex. XXI 2-11’, *VT* 25 (1975): 129-144; O. Loretz, *Habiru-Hebräer: eine sozio-linguistische Studie über die Herkunft des Gentiliziums ‘ibrî vom Appellativum habiru* (BZAW 160; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1984). However, it must also be acknowledged that the term *became* an ethnic identifier, as can be seen in Deut 15:12. See N. Na’aman, ‘“abiru and Hebrews: The Transfer of a Social Term to the Literary Sphere’, *JNES* 45 (1986): 271-288.

¹⁰ J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 170 [117]. There is an argument that the limitation of the period of bondage means that these laws, and those subject to them, are not concerned with slavery proper which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, describes the *permanent* domination of persons. However, in so far as the temporary enslavement may become permanent, and there is no indication that the treatment of these male slaves will be any different than for other slaves, it seems unreasonable to exclude these laws from consideration.

moreover, it was felt necessary that slave owners should be addressed by the law in such a way as to limit their rights over the slaves whom they have purchased.

The Deuteronomic version of this law (Deut 15:12-18) extends the Exodus provision for limited service to female slaves.¹¹ It uses kinship language to raise the social status of the slave from simply a 'Hebrew' to a 'brother [or sister]' (Deut 15:12). This time, the slave does not simply go debt-free, but with a liberal gift of produce. And the slave owner is encouraged to view the release of the slave after six years without 'hardship' (Deut 15:18). However, perhaps the most significant difference is that the law is now given a theological justification. It is to be practised because, 'you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you' (Deut 15:15).¹² With these modifications to the Covenant Code prescriptions – the kinship language, the costly gift, and the theological justification – the writers of Deuteronomy seem to be trying to discourage slavery, at least of fellow Israelites, from happening at all. If this was indeed their intent, then, as we might expect from the pervasiveness of slavery in the ancient world, they failed in this endeavour.

This much can be seen from Jer 34:8-17 where it seems that, in practice, there were slave owners who *did* consider the freedom-after-six-years rule a hardship. In chapter 34, Jeremiah prophesies that Jerusalem will be overthrown, and then the redactor gives an example of the kind of unfaithfulness that led to this turn of events: a failure to keep the laws on slavery, since fellow Hebrew slaves (identified as 'Judeans', 34:9) were being re-enslaved when their owners 'turned around' (שׁוּב, 34:11, 16). This was a breach of covenant, not just the covenant of Hezekiah to free the slaves but God's covenant, and this

¹¹ B.M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 144-157.

¹² Of course, the hearers had *not* been slaves in Egypt, but this demonstrates the power of the Exodus tradition in shaping Israelite identity. It also suggests that there was an expectation that the readers would be able to identify with such enslavement. See H.P. Nasuti, 'Identity, Identification, and Imitation: The Narrative Hermeneutics of Biblical Law', *Journal of Law and Religion* 4 (1986): 9-23.

breach is described as having been mirrored by their ancestors. This clear statement of the authorities' view on the enslavement of fellow Judeans is supported by an understanding of the slaves' perspective: 'whom you had set free according to *their* desire' (לְנַפְשָׁם, 34:16).¹³ This passage, then, tells us three things. Firstly, whatever else these laws may have been, they were intended to be practically kept. However, it shows secondly that there could be a resistance to them. Furthermore, thirdly, the very presence of this prophetic text indicates that the attitude of owners towards their slaves could be considered an element of faithful covenant keeping. The slave owners were not just law-breakers, but covenant-breakers, failing to accept their identity as those who had been freed from Egypt in terms of the Exodus tradition. As Nasuti puts it, 'one's actions towards these classes [of Hebrew slaves] are a part of preserving the proper memory of who one is'.¹⁴ This is confirmed in the final version of the slavery laws, in Leviticus.

The link between the laws of the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy which we have just looked at, and the Holiness Code of Leviticus (25:35-55), is unclear. It continues the theological justification of the law found in Deuteronomy, contradicts the Covenant Code by allowing the slave to go free *with* his children, and drops the term 'Hebrew' so that it now refers only to 'brothers' (who are later termed 'Israelites', Lev 25:46). Bernard Levinson's reconstruction of the relationship seems plausible, suggesting that Leviticus shows textual agreement with both of the other codes, but also modifies them to reflect a Deuteronomistic agenda, while yet going beyond their legislation.¹⁵ This would mean that the Levitical laws on slavery were produced at the time of Israel's exile in Babylon, or else after the return to the land, thereby representing the latest versions and after Jeremiah. The most telling difference from our point of view is that the writer is at pains to point out

¹³ W.L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 242.

¹⁴ Nasuti, 'Identity, Identification, and Imitation', 14.

¹⁵ B.M. Levinson, 'The Birth of the Lemma: The Restrictive Reinterpretation of the Covenant Code's Manumission Law by the Holiness Code (Leviticus 25:44-46)', *JBL* 124 (2005): 617-639.

that this is no longer a text about someone who becomes a slave (עבד, 25:39), but rather about one whose poverty results in being taken on as a hired labourer (שכיר, 25:40) or being treated like an alien (תושב, 25:40). Yet even these now hired hands no longer have a fixed term of service, as in Exodus and Deuteronomy, but will only be freed at the bicentennial year of Jubilee (25:40). This is not necessarily as disadvantageous to the servant as it might seem. As Milgrom points out, the brother who becomes a hired worker could potentially buy his freedom when he had saved enough of his wages, or else be freed by the year of Jubilee, whichever came sooner.¹⁶

There are two reasons given for this law, one practical and one theological. The practical reason is that patrimonial land should not pass out of the hands of families (suggested by Lev 25:41 and the broader context: e.g. 25:13, 18, 25), which was a concern for a post-exilic community and an indication of a ‘social death’ understanding of slavery: a permanent loss of land corresponding with a permanent loss of independent identity. The theological reason is quite different, however. Unlike the Deuteronomic law in which slave owners should imitate the redemptive activity of God in Egypt, now the sons of Israel cannot be enslaved because they are ‘my slaves’ says the LORD (עבדי, Lev 25:42, 38). Thus, the argument is either that ‘no slave can serve two masters’ (Luke 16:13; cf. Matt 6:24), and since the Israelites already belong to God they cannot be enslaved again, or else that God is simply unwilling for his slaves to serve another master, choosing not to allow them to be sold (25:42). In this later law we see what has not been spelt out earlier, that redemption from slavery in Egypt meant purchase *for* God, effectively passing from one owner to another.¹⁷ Slavery, therefore, pervades this ideal understanding of Israelite society: with distinction being made between Israelites and the *goyim*; the latter may become the

¹⁶ J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27* (AB 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2216, 2253.

¹⁷ The same idea of release from one form of slavery (to sin) into slavery to God is found in NT in, for example, Rom 6:16-22. For a recent discussion of this passage, see J.K. Goodrich, ‘From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God: Reconsidering the Origin of Paul’s Slavery Metaphor in Romans 6’, *BBR* 23 (2013): 509-530. Another example of slavery to God is found in Jos., *B.J.* 7.323.

‘property’ (אֲחֻזָּה, Lev 25:41) of Israelites, the former may only be hired for they are already slaves of God. We will see some of these ideas emerging again in metaphorical form. However, in practice, as we have seen in Jeremiah, ideals do not often reflect reality. Indeed, the power of the ideal comes from the contrast with reality. As we turn now to the Second Temple period, we see that the enslavement of both Jews and non-Jews was common.

4.2.2 SLAVERY IN THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

In the fifth to the third centuries BCE, material evidence emerges for slave sales by, and of, people with Yahwistic names.¹⁸ The Wadi Daliyeh papyri from 14 km north of Jericho in Samaria, represent a collection of legal documents written in the fourth century BCE which probably belonged to those who rebelled against Alexander and subsequently fled Samaria in the face of advancing Greek forces.¹⁹ A great deal of reconstruction is necessary, but it reveals that many of the papyri follow a standard form as they are deeds of slave sales (WDSP 1-13, 18-22). Although these texts are considered Samaritan (not yet Samaritan), they nevertheless represent the approach of one post-exilic community which shares history and law with the people of Israel.²⁰ Most names are Hebrew and Yahwistic, both of the slaves themselves and of the buyers and sellers.²¹ It might be assumed that the slave names are given by the owners, but the fact that, unusually, certain slaves are described with a patronymic stands against this as it suggests a desire to correctly identify the slaves

¹⁸ J. Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyeh et la Samaraie vers 450-332 av. J.-C.* (CHANE 30; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 490-491.

¹⁹ D.M. Gropp, *Wadi Daliyeh II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh* (DJD 28; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 3-4; M. Marciak, ‘Discoveries in Wadi Daliyeh. Some Remarks on Historical Conclusions based on the Interpretation of the Samaria Papyri and their Bullae’, *QC* 17 (2009): 31-49 (35); Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens*, 606.

²⁰ In this period, the close relationship between the temples at Gerazim and Jerusalem is evident (cf. Neh 13:28), and Samaria is part of the same administrative unit as the rest of Palestine. Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens*, 603, 599.

²¹ Gropp, *WDSP*, 6; Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens*, 490-491.

with respect to their families of origin. This might be related to the kind of concern for patrimonial land expressed in Leviticus 25. Certainly, that the patronymic is known at all suggests that the slaves were formerly free-born, but were reduced to slavery due to poverty.²² This is the kind of situation envisaged by the biblical laws we have just looked at. Dušek is of the view that the majority of the slaves came from Judea and Samaria.²³

Such a ready supply of Yahwistic slaves might well come from Syria-Palestine itself, as evidenced by the trade described in the Zenon Papyri.²⁴ This is confirmed by Josephus' description of Jerusalemites who were in slavery in Egypt under the rule of Ptolemy Soter around this same period (*Ant.* 12:11), even if his number of 120,000 is untestable. Joint ownership of slaves is not uncommon in the deeds, indicating that, in this period at least, Luke 16:13 (cf. Matt 6:24) did not apply legally.²⁵ Perhaps most significantly, with respect to OT laws, the sale of these slaves is *not* intended to be temporary (brought to an end by the Sabbath or Jubilee year), but permanent, with slaves being sold 'in perpetuity' (e.g. WDSP 1 4). Gropp believes that, 'The clause labelled here "Ownership in Perpetuity" seems to come directly from Palestinian Jewish legal tradition'²⁶ (e.g. Gen 9:26; Deut 6:21; 15:17; 1 Sam 8:17), which makes the determination of these slaves all the more surprising in light of the Law.

Therefore, just as Jeremiah 34 witnesses to a failure to keep the laws on slavery, so this papyri collection does likewise. Firstly, the evidence of the names indicates that Jewish or Samaritan slaves were being bought and sold by their 'brothers and sisters'. Secondly, while the use of the patronymic may suggest a concern for the law of release, the deeds show that

²² Gropp, *WDSP*, 7.

²³ Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens*, 491.

²⁴ D. Sperber, 'Objects of Trade between Palestine and Egypt in Roman Times', *JESHO* 19 (1976): 113-147.

²⁵ WDSP 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 19, 20.

²⁶ Gropp, *WDSP*, 31.

the slave is sold in perpetuity, ‘a slave for life’²⁷ as they are committed to the buyer’s descendants. This is similar to Gen 13:15; 17:7-8 and especially Josh 14:9,²⁸ but, as Gropp points out, the papyri ‘directly contradict the injunction’ of Lev 25:39-47, especially ‘they shall not be sold as slaves’ (cf. Jer 34:8-17).²⁹ Finally, the sales witness to an ongoing trade to which new slaves had to be added to meet demand.

This discussion of slavery in documentary sources demonstrates that a different attitude to slavery than that found in the Law was present at this time.

Non-canonical writings bear witness to the same kind of slaveholder ideology seen in Roman texts. For example,

Do not abuse slaves who work faithfully [*ἀληθεία*], or hired labourers who devote themselves to their task. (Sirach 7:20)

This is not very different from the agricultural manuals of, say, Columella, and indicates, not so much a liberal form of slavery as a practical response to the assumed lack of devotion to duty, or ‘unfaithfulness’ of slaves. Here is the slaveholder ideology at work, and it should be noted that ‘abuse’ (*κακώω*) is the expected response to slaves at their work (whether they work well or not). Once more we see that the common description of the slave’s experience is to associate it with physical punishment. Such is the expected practice of the slave owner, lest he ‘lose face’ as the following verse suggests.

¹ ... Of the following things do not be ashamed, and do not sin to save face: ... ⁵ of profit from dealing with merchants, and of frequent disciplining of children, and of drawing blood from the back of a wicked slave. (Sirach 42:1, 5)³⁰

²⁷ Gropp, *WDSP*, 39.

²⁸ Gropp, *WDSP*, 31 n. 83.

²⁹ Gropp, *WDSP*, 39.

³⁰ The Geniza fragment MS B XIv does not contain reference to the slave, although the Masada scroll column IV does (‘or of a servant, wicked and limping from beatings’, tr. E. Reymond).

Here we see that failing to ferociously punish a slave is equated with failing to gain a profit from deal making – apparently a sure sign in both cases that the slave owner is losing out.

Similar ideas are found in an extended passage on slave treatment in Sirach:

Fodder and a stick and burdens for a donkey; bread and discipline and work for a slave.²⁶
Set your slave to work, and you will find rest; leave his hands idle, and he will seek liberty.²⁷
Yoke and thong will bow the neck, and for a wicked slave there are racks and tortures.²⁸
Put him to work, in order that he may not be idle,²⁹ for idleness teaches much evil.³⁰ Set him to work, as is fitting for him, and if he does not obey, make his fetters heavy. Do not be overbearing toward anyone, and do nothing unjust. (Sirach 33:25-30)³¹

It is noteworthy that the final sentence does not ‘undercut’ the previous advice on physical oppression, as John J. Collins suggests,³² but rather makes the point that treating slaves in this way is neither to be considered ‘overbearing’ nor ‘unjust’, confirming slave owners in their brutality. However, this passage is immediately followed by a complementary passage which suggests a different course of action with slaves.

If you have but one slave, treat him like yourself, because you have bought him with blood. If you have but one slave, treat him like a brother, for you will need him as you need your life.³² If you ill-treat him, and he leaves you and runs away,³³ which way will you go to seek him? (Sirach 33:31-33)

It is very difficult to know what it might mean to have bought the slave ‘with blood’,³³ unless it is a euphemism for the essentials of life which a person who could only afford one slave might well have had to expend in order to obtain one. Here, we have the command to treat the slave well, ‘as a brother’, which might refer to a fellow-Jew, but, more likely in the broader context, to a family member (33:20). This finds possible echoes in Paul’s command

³¹ Although a very incomplete text, the reconstruction of Geniza fragment MS E Iv suggests that 33:26 (‘he will seek liberty’) is here translated ‘he will act treacherously’ ([אס נשא ראשן יבגד] transcription M.G. Abegg, tr. B.H. Parker and M.G. Abegg), thus offering an even more negative view of the typical response of an ‘idle’ slave.

³² J.J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 73; J.J. Collins, ‘Ecclesiasticus, or The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach’, in *The Apocrypha* (ed. M. Goodman; Oxford Bible Commentary; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 68-112 (98).

³³ Sadly, the phrase in Geniza MS E Iv is a lacuna.

to Philemon to treat the slave Onesimus ‘no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother’ (Phlm 16).³⁴ However, we should note that the reason for this positive behaviour is self-interest; the owner will be lost without the one slave, so treating the slave well is the wisest course of action, as seen also in the agricultural handbooks.

This passage in Sirach demonstrates an awareness of different situations in which slaves might be found, whether on a large estate (as the ‘donkey’, ‘yoke’ and ‘fettters’ suggest, 33:35, 27, 30), or as the lone slave of a small household or smallholding. Both of these settings can be found in the gospel parables. Elsewhere, the fictional book of Judith, likely reflective of the Hasmonean period,³⁵ offers support for the distinction between hired workers and slaves, both categories familiar from the gospels, and that their presence can coincide.

They and their wives and their children and their cattle and every resident alien and hired labourer and purchased slave – they all put sackcloth around their waists. (Judith 4:10)³⁶

It is notable that this verse can picture the slaves, wherever they might have come from originally, as embracing the same values and responses as their owners – since the fate of Israel and their owners determines also the fate of the slaves. While, therefore, a pragmatic response, we also have an idealised portrait, as ever from the slave owner’s perspective, of the sympathy of slaves for their owners. Yet the motivation for this national humbling, among other things, was the great fear of families being broken up and taken into slavery

³⁴ The traditional explanation for Onesimus’ meeting with Paul is likewise that he has run away – although, surprisingly, it is more usual for commentators to assume this to be because of the fault of Onesimus (e.g. stealing; cf. Phm 18), rather than that of Philemon (e.g. mistreatment).

³⁵ G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 109. ‘[N]obody can doubt that the background for the book of Judith is the important phase of Judean history in the second century BCE’, B. Otzen, *Tobit and Judith* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 134.

³⁶ Clearly, Jewish writers were quite capable of using language to distinguish between slaves and hired-labourers, *contra* Jeremias. See n. 71.

(4:12). This same disjunction between the fear of slavery and the treatment of those who are currently enslaved can be seen in other literature of the period. For example, the books of Maccabees record a number of experiences of significant enslavement of Jewish people. Under the repressive reign of Antiochus:

Within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting, and as many were sold into slavery as were killed. (2 Macc 5:14)

Then later, Nicanor is sent by Ptolemy to ‘wipe out’ (2 Macc 8:9, NRSV; ἐξῆραι) the Jews. This he does, not through their deaths but by capturing them for sale as slaves (2 Macc 8:10; cf. 1 Macc 3:41). He sells ninety slaves for a talent (8:11), which would result in a low price of 67 drachmas per slave³⁷ and, given that Nicanor’s intention was to raise two thousand talents, would mean a captured slave body of 180,000.³⁸ Although numerically exaggerated,³⁹ these descriptions, symbolic of the treatment of the Jews which led to the Maccabean revolts, make the link between slavery and death that we saw in the previous chapter. Judith makes the same link, but here we see slavery is to be preferred.

For it would be better for us to be captured by them. We shall indeed become slaves, but our lives will be spared, and we shall not witness our little ones dying before our eyes, and our wives and children drawing their last breath. (Judith 7:27)

If this represents a foundational understanding of slavery, both amongst Jews here and amongst Romans – that it can be regarded as a substitute for death – then perhaps the disjunction between a fear of slavery and the treatment of slaves can be understood, for the slaves are *as good as* dead, and whatever their treatment they are, at least, not actually dead.

³⁷ D.R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (CEJL; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 333.

³⁸ While it might be something of an exaggeration to describe 2 Maccabees as a ‘firm foundation for the construction of history for the period with which it deals’, nevertheless, the accounts are illustrative of the kinds of activity and fears that were faced, as well as of the desired responses, thus giving us ‘a good opportunity to look into the world of Hellenistic Jews’. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 44, 55.

³⁹ Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 80.

Just as these texts speak of slavery as an unwanted consequence of events, so Philo also indicates that slaves become so by ‘fortune’ (τύχη) rather than ‘nature’ (φύσις) (*Spec.* 3.137). In this, he denies the ‘natural slavery’ of Aristotle and does so explicitly elsewhere: ‘For slaves are free by nature, no man being naturally a slave’ (*Spec.* 2.69 [Colson, LCL]). These arguments seem to be motivated by the Stoic notion that slavery is a property of the mind and emotion, rather than the body (cf. *Prob.* 17-18; 37),⁴⁰ and hence, since slavery is essentially a moral issue, no-one is innately a physical slave.⁴¹ Yet we should not get carried away with the notion that Philo has, therefore, a ‘higher’ view of slavery (but see his description of the Therapeutae, below). In Garnsey’s view, he contradicts himself elsewhere by affirming natural slavery. For example,

Once again, of Jacob and Esau, when still in the womb, God declares that one is a ruler and leader and master but that Esau is a subject and slave. For God the maker of living beings knows well the different pieces of his own handiwork, *even before he has thoroughly chiselled and consummated them ... For in God’s judgment, that which is base and irrational is by nature a slave* (*Leg.* 3.88-9).⁴²

Yet the subtle difference, for a Jewish audience, is that it is *God* who determines the person’s state and fate.⁴³ Therefore, it seems that Philo can both acknowledge a ‘natural’ freedom, which can nevertheless be superseded by God’s prevenient will. The same idea is found in Judith, where their enslavement to their enemies is not because of any innate nature, but rather a consequence of God’s own choice – to sell his own people: ‘For now we have no one to help us; God has sold [πιπράσκω] us into their hands’ (Jdt 7:25).

⁴⁰ Cf. Dio 15.29 (2 *Serv. Lib.* 29).

⁴¹ P. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (The W.B. Stanford Memorial Lectures; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 163. However, in an earlier article, Garnsey points out that Philo is the first to express this idea, later taken up by Seneca and Epictetus. P. Garnsey, ‘Philo Judaeus and Slave Theory’, *SCI* 13 (1994): 30-45 (34-35).

⁴² Garnsey, *Ideas*, 165. Emphasis original.

⁴³ However, this could also be understood in a Stoic context. C.E. Manning, ‘Stoicism and Slavery in the Roman Empire’, *ANRW* 2 (1989): 1518-1543 (1530-1531).

Philo can, however, portray elements of a more humane approach to slavery. For example, in describing the implementation of the Sabbath laws, he can say:

[God/Moses] not only requires the free men to abstain from work on the Sabbath, but gives the same permission to menservants and handmaids, and sends them a message of security and almost of freedom after every six days, to teach both masters and men an admirable lesson. (*Spec.* 2.66 [Colson, LCL])⁴⁴

Doering suggests that this passage is particularly referring to Jewish servants.⁴⁵ There seems little reason not to consider them slaves, however, which would support the view that Jews did own fellow Jews in this period.⁴⁶ The rather curious lesson for masters is that they might not lose the ability to do menial tasks, in the event that the ‘vicissitudes of human affairs’ might require it of them (2.66-68). The lesson for slaves is that, if they ‘continue to serve well and loyally’, freedom such as they have partially experienced on the Sabbath might one day ensue (2.67). Although Philo can describe this as a ‘step forward in human conduct towards the perfection of virtue’ (2.68), building on Stoic and Cynic

⁴⁴ Cf. *Mos.* 2.21-22. We also see a similar command in the Damascus Document which enjoins followers that, ‘No-one should press [מרא] his servant [עבד] or his maidservant or his employee on the Sabbath’ (CD XI 12, [*DSSSE*]). Neither of these texts says anything about the master undertaking the slave’s work, however.

⁴⁵ L. Doering, *Schabbat: Sabbathalacha und -praxis im antiken Judentum und Urchristentum* (TSAJ 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 337. Doering argues that Jewish ‘debt-slaves’ (‘Schuld knechten’), like those of the Mosaic laws, are in view in this passage, rather than slaves in general. However, while it is true that *δοῦλος* is not here used, but instead *θεράπων* and *οἰκέτης*, this does not necessarily mean that slaves are not in view. In particular, when Philo is drawing a distinction between the ‘hired servant’ and ‘home-bred or purchased slave’ (*Spec.* 1.123-127 [126-127]), he uses precisely these terms for the slaves (in addition to *δοῦλος*).

⁴⁶ Doering suggests that the passage ultimately has general applicability, since Philo does not strongly mark the distinction between Jewish and gentile slaves elsewhere. *Schabbat*, 338. If it is the case, as Reinhartz believes, that Philo is addressing concerns in his own Jewish community, then this would underline the issue being not about the ethnic origin of slaves but the way in which they were treated (with respect to the Sabbath). A. Reinhartz, ‘Philo’s *Exposition of the Law* and Social History: Methodological Considerations’, in *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria* (ed. T. Seland; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 180-199 (188).

ideas,⁴⁷ in practice, this reinforces the perspective of the owner; for this temporary Saturnalia-Sabbath⁴⁸ is framed in terms of the benefit to *masters* facing an uncertain future, while also reinforcing the loyal obedience of slaves by the carrot of freedom. Doering may be right that typical slave activities, such as washing up or table service are not banned activities on the Sabbath; what is banned is having a slave to do the chore on the master's behalf.⁴⁹ If so, then we have a teaching 'unique' in Jewish Sabbath practice,⁵⁰ but which nevertheless still echoes the ideology of slave ownership.⁵¹ On the other hand, since masters were subject to the same command of Sabbath observance as the slaves, it may be that Philo is presenting something of an ideal view of Judaism and its Law, rather than actual practice.⁵² As Hezser says, "These considerations must be considered exegetical, however, and cannot be taken as reflections of actual practice in Philo's times."⁵³

⁴⁷ Doering, *Schabbat*, 340. See also, G.E. Sterling, "The Jewish Philosophy": Reading Moses via Hellenistic Philosophy according to Philo', in *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria* (ed. T. Seland; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 129-154 (141-142).

⁴⁸ However, it is not clear from Philo that the master actually serves the slave in a full reversal of roles, but simply that the slave does not work for the master on the Sabbath. Doering seeks to draw a distinction between Saturnalia and Sabbath, suggesting that Saturnalia is merely an 'interlude' ('Intermezzo') for the slave, whereas Sabbath is a 'foretaste of release' ('der Vorgeschmack der Freilassung'). *Schabbat*, 340. It is possible that this is how a Jewish slave owner like Philo (*Spec.* 1.127; 4.68) viewed it, but the function of reinforcing the master's authority through a vision of freedom for the slave seems the same, the key difference being only one of frequency.

⁴⁹ Doering, *Schabbat*, 336-337.

⁵⁰ Doering, *Schabbat*, 339.

⁵¹ Something similar can be seen in *Spec.* 1.123-28, where Philo berates masters for keeping 'sacred' food from their slaves, as this encourages them to steal. While there may be practical wisdom in this teaching, it nevertheless employs the familiar trope of slaves being those who steal. Thus, Philo, in writing about slavery, cannot escape the ideology of mastery we have seen in other literature.

⁵² This would be in keeping with his veneration of the Therapeutae.

⁵³ C. Hezser, 'Slaves and Slavery in Roman and Rabbinic Law', in *Rabbinic Law in its Roman and Near Eastern Context* (ed. C. Hezser; TSAJ 97; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 133-176 (163). Doering adds that, 'Thereby, he [Philo] interlocked the underlying halachic purpose and his interpretation closely' ('Er verzahnt dabei die zugrundeliegende halachische Bestimmung und seine Interpretation eng miteinander'); *Schabbat*, 335. Thus, it is difficult to discern where the exegesis ends and the social history begins; Reinhartz, 'Philo's *Exposition*', 182.

A clearer view may perhaps be gained from Philo's reflection on the law that the land should remain fallow during the Sabbath year (Ex 23:11; Lev 25:2-7). Here, he indicates the importance that owners 'cease from imposing upon their slaves severe and scarcely enduring orders, which break down their bodies' (*Spec.* 2.90 [Colson, LCL]). In this respect, there is some concern to ameliorate the hardship and punishment of slaves. However, as ever, the argument for this behaviour is not for the slaves' benefit, but for the owners', who will 'enjoy proper attention' from slaves who will last much longer, prolonging their youth (2.91). A later discussion still enjoins that 'masters should not make excessive use of their authority over slaves by showing arrogance and contempt and savage cruelty' (3.137 [Colson, LCL]). Yet this is not quite the positive statement that it at first appears, when it is clear that it is referring to an owner who brings about the death of a slave through punishment. Philo notes that if a slave who, 'under the lash' (3.142), has survived for a day or two and only then dies, the master should no longer be held responsible (cf. Ex 21:20-21). As he goes on to say, 'anyone who kills a slave injures himself far more, as he deprives himself of the service which he receives from him when alive and loses his value as a piece of property' (3.143 [Colson, LCL]). Such apparently positive statements,⁵⁴ then, are written from the perspective of the slave owner, and seem little different from similar statements encountered in Roman literature in the previous chapter.⁵⁵

Hence, in the practices and writings of the Second Temple period, we find evidence of the enslavement and potential enslavement of Jews, but also of how slaves should be treated.

⁵⁴ To which we might add Ps.-Phoc. 223-227 and the household codes of the New Testament.

⁵⁵ See Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 151-153.

Thus, there is a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, slavery is part of the cultural memory that shapes Jewish identity, both from the account of the exodus, as well as in more recent experience reflected in the deuterocanonical literature. This powerful notion is different from the ideology of Rome, as Hezser points out.⁵⁶ Yet the practical consequences of this are much more difficult to see, for the ways in which slavery is discussed and described, and presumably practised, is scarcely any different from what has been seen in the pagan world. Indeed, even those supposedly identity shaping texts which command a different practice, especially with regard to the enslavement of fellow Jews, seem not to have been enacted. The only area where there may have been difference is on the Sabbath, where Jews were known to be different anyway. Yet the scant evidence for this is not sufficiently without exegetical and philosophical purpose for it to be regarded as reliable social history, and, even if it was, it was not a widespread practice. We turn, therefore, to the specific history of Palestine in the first century to see if we can clarify these views.

4.2.3 SLAVERY IN FIRST CENTURY PALESTINE

As we move into the period of Jesus and the gospels, there is, unfortunately, almost no evidence for slavery in Palestine beyond that found in the gospels themselves.⁵⁷ Indeed, of all the inscriptional evidence thus far published in CIIP, only one funerary inscription from the turn of the eras *possibly* refers to a slave (CIIP 363), if the inscribed name can be correctly translated as the Greek *Threptos*. Such a name could refer to a slave brought up

⁵⁶ Hezser, 'Slavery and the Jews', 453.

⁵⁷ Harris says, 'Archaeologists have discovered in Jerusalem a stone dating from [the first century CE] on which both Jewish and non-Jewish slaves were displayed for auction.' He bases this on Jeremias who does not explicitly say that it is an *archaeological* discovery, although it is not unreasonable to make this assumption. However, the original source of the reference in Krauss indicates that it is rooted in rabbinic texts rather than material finds. M.J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 8; Leicester: Apollos, 1999), 30; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1969), 36; S. Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie* (Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1911), 2:362 and n. 347.

in the master's house⁵⁸ and such an interpretation would be supported by the translation of the only other word as 'one who was taken captive'. However, this is hardly evidence for widespread slavery in the Palestine of Jesus' day. Nonetheless, absence of evidence is not the same as evidence of absence, and the general assumption of economists and historians is that slavery was an aspect of life in Palestine.⁵⁹

There is indirect evidence to extend this view beyond wealthy elite slaveholders in cities, even to the villages of the gospel narratives. Although the consensus among biblical scholars has typically been that the Galilee of Jesus was populated with poor peasants,⁶⁰ there has been a growing view, based on archaeology, that 'villages in the Galilee were not poor'.⁶¹ Sharon Mattila has shown that at least some residents in the Capernaum of Jesus' day had large houses with courtyards and luxury items and that trade was a significant

⁵⁸ Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 129-132. She also notes two dedication inscriptions in the synagogue in Hammat Tiberias which mention 'Severus, the *threptos* of the illustrious patriarchs' as a donor. However, this is much later than our period in the third century CE (103-4).

⁵⁹ E.g. Z. Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* (London: Routledge, 1994), 231, 248, 334, 395; S. Freyne, *Galilee, from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity 5; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 139; K.C. Hanson and D.E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 3; F.M. Heichelheim, 'Roman Syria', in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* (ed. T. Frank; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 121-255 (158); W. Stegemann, 'Background III: The Social and Political Climate in which Jesus of Nazareth Preached', in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (eds. T. Holmâen and S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2291-2314 (2304, 2306).

⁶⁰ See, as one leading example, R.A. Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996). For example, 'Most Galilean families lived on the edge of subsistence' (74).

⁶¹ M. Aviam, 'People, Land, Economy, and Belief in First-Century Galilee and Its Origins: A Comprehensive Archaeological Synthesis', in *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus* (eds. D.A. Fiensy and R.K. Hawkins; ECL 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 5-48 (43). See also, D.E. Oakman and J.A. Overman, 'Debate: Was the Galilean Economy Oppressive or Prosperous?', in *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods* (eds. D.A. Fiensy and J.R. Strange; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 346-365.

feature of economic life.⁶² There is no archaeological evidence for slavery, but this is not surprising given that household slaves do not leave their mark.⁶³ However, such relative wealth would support some of the pictures of household slavery in the parables, and this evidence leads Peter Richardson, in a study of ‘Q’ passages, to conclude that the ‘Q’ passages are consistent with the household material record, including its depiction of slaveholding.⁶⁴ If comparative evidence of villages in Roman Egypt is admissible,⁶⁵ then Bagnall says, ‘the character of the evidence for slaves belonging to village families of moderate means suggests that ownership of a small number of slaves – one to four – was not remarkable. The economic importance of slavery in such households was perhaps not so marginal as has been thought by almost everyone.’⁶⁶ In other words, even to families with a slight surplus in a small village, there would be value in having a small number of slaves, confirming Luke’s portrayal of a rural household with one slave (Luke 17:7-8). Similarly, if the means of production of olive oil for export in Palestine, as seen in the archaeological evidence,⁶⁷ may be at all compared with the developments in the Western

⁶² S.L. Mattila, ‘Revisiting Jesus’ Capernaum: A Village of Only Subsistence-Level Fishers and Farmers?’, in *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus* (eds. D.A. Fiensy and R.K. Hawkins; ECL 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 75-138.

⁶³ The presence of slave accommodation, although described in ancient literature (e.g. Columella, *Rust.* 1.6.3), is much debated in the archaeological record since the space can be described as ‘store rooms’. This leads Joshel to say, ‘Slaves, like goods and animals, occupied the same marginal space.’ S.R. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 136-140 (140); F.H. Thompson, *The Archaeology of Greek and Roman Slavery* (Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London 66; London: Duckworth; The Society of Antiquaries of London, 2002), 93-102.

⁶⁴ P. Richardson, *Building Jewish in the Roman East* (JSJSup 92; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 85.

⁶⁵ Although Bagnall’s evidence dates from after our period, the description of rural life is remarkably similar to that of first-century Palestine. R.S. Bagnall, ‘Slavery and Society in Late Roman Egypt’, in *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (eds. B. Halpern and D.W. Hobson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 220-240 (229-230).

⁶⁶ Bagnall, ‘Slavery’, 229.

⁶⁷ S.L. Mattila, ‘Jesus and the “Middle Peasants”? Problematizing a Social-Scientific Concept’, *CBQ* 72 (2010): 291-313.

empire,⁶⁸ then it is likely that slaves were a part of the agricultural workforce, as seen in the parables also. Writing of the fate of the large estates immediately following the first Jewish War, Hezser says, 'Jewish landholders would have considered the use of cheap Jewish slaves economically advantageous. And they may have considered the enslavement a just fate imposed on those who were rebellious.'⁶⁹ What was sustained in the aftermath of 70 CE would have necessarily existed prior to the conflict.

Thus, without needing to take sides in the arguments about whether the 'peasant' model is appropriate or not for rural Galilee,⁷⁰ in spite of the scarcity of the documentary and material evidence for slaves in Palestine, we can say that the indirect evidence supports the likely presence of domestic and agricultural slavery, as seen in Mark's Gospel.⁷¹ Consequently, the inhabitants of the places described in the gospels would not need to draw on their historical and literary imaginations to conjure up slave metaphors, since they would likely have encountered slaves on a regular basis. Hence, like much Greek and Roman literature, the depictions of slaves in Mark can be rooted in, and influenced by, Jesus' and the evangelist's experiences of slaves and slaveholders, as well as by the ideologies which surrounded them.

This depiction of slavery in Palestine is backed up by Josephus. He records a number of instances of many thousands of Jews becoming slaves under the initial conquest of

⁶⁸ R.B. Hitchner, 'Olive Production and the Roman Economy: The Case for Intensive Growth in the Roman Empire', in *The Ancient Economy* (eds. W. Scheidel and S. Von Reden; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 71-83.

⁶⁹ Hezser, 'Slavery and the Jews', 440.

⁷⁰ Against the general idea, see, for example, Mattila, 'Jesus and the "Middle Peasants"?' In response, see, D.E. Oakman, 'Execrating? or Execrable Peasants!', in *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus* (eds. D.A. Fiensy and R.K. Hawkins; ECL 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 139-164.

⁷¹ Jeremias' remarkable statement that, 'The impression we get from ... New Testament evidence ... is that slave ownership played no great part in the rural economy', flies in the face of this evidence. He bases it on the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matt 20:1-16), making the unwarranted assumption that the slaves of the rest of the parables are similarly hired labourers, in spite of the fact that they are not once referred to using slave language in this parable. *Jerusalem*, 110 and n. 5.

Palestine and the subsequent 'Jewish wars' (e.g. *Ant.* 14.275; *B.J.* 3.540; 6.420). Hezser suggests that not all of these slaves will have been sent to Rome but may well have been sold to local slavemarkets.⁷² While this is plausible since it is cheaper and easier to transport money rather than people, the actual evidence for this is slim.⁷³ However, the descriptions of markets or 'fairs' in rabbinic literature suggest that these practices may have occurred in the first century also (t. *Abod. Zar.* 1:8; y. *Abod. Zar.* 39b). One explanation for the presence of slavery in Palestine may have been the high taxation introduced by the Romans. This could lead people into debt slavery, as can be seen from the first action of the Jewish revolt being to burn the debt records in Jerusalem (*Jos., B. J.* 2.427).⁷⁴ Josephus can certainly describe the purchase of slaves by Jews, including no less than by the Hasmonean leader Hyrcanus, who is recorded as buying one hundred educated boys 'in the prime of youth' (*ἀκμαιοτάτους, Ant.* 12.209 [Marcus, LCL]), as well as girls, for a talent apiece. This was clearly viewed as an ideal gift for the king and his courtiers on his birthday (*Ant.* 12.219). It is not so much the historical accuracy of this account that is significant, as the fact that Josephus can conceive of this as a typical activity of a Jew in the royal court. Elsewhere, he describes Herod's court and the practice of extracting testimony from slaves under torture, just as we have seen in Roman sources (*Ant.* 17.64-65).

Where torture is not available, Josephus is apparently aware of the common legal practice of excluding slaves (along with women) from bearing testimony, again much as in Roman courts (*Ant.* 4.219). This suggests the extent to which Jewish attitudes and practices of the time concerning slaves reflected those of their gentile contemporaries. It also indicates an awareness of the fear that slaves lived under but also the same ideological concern shared with Roman slave owners, that slaves were fundamentally unreliable beings, who were

⁷² Hezser, 'Slavery and the Jews', 440.

⁷³ Hezser cites Jerome, *Ad Jer.* 31.15.6, but the reference to 'Terebinth markets' at which many people were sold is inconclusive, not to mention the late date of this text compared to our period. 'Slavery and the Jews', 440.

⁷⁴ Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 239.

always 'on the make' and incapable of the same standards of character as their free counterparts. Later rabbinic laws continued to share this concern (e.g. m. Rosh. Hash. 1:8; b. Qam. 1:3). Evidence of the same ideology can be seen in the description of the chief horror of Gaius' rule: that slaves were allowed to accuse their masters, and who, 'in a great measure, ruled them' (*Ant.* 19.12-14, cf. 19.131). Similarly, just as Galen assumes slaves to be physiologically more able to withstand pain than their owners, so Josephus indicates that the bodies of slaves differed from the free because of their strength and robustness (*σκληρός*, *B.J.* 2.107). In all these ways, Josephus demonstrates a shared ideology of slavery with pagan writers.

Yet it is not the case that Josephus is unable to imagine differences between Jewish and Roman attitudes to slavery. For example, in speaking about how 'kind' the Mosaic Law is, particularly towards weaker parties like prisoners of war, women and animals (*Ap.* 2.212-214), Josephus also indicates that this kindness extends to slaves:

The penalty for most transgressors is death, whether a man commits adultery, or rapes a girl, or dares to make a sexual assault on a male, or submits to the assault as the passive partner. Even in the case of slaves, the law is similarly inexorable. (*Ap.* 2.215 [Barclay, CFJ])

In context (perhaps also bearing in mind the concerns of Ex 21:10), Barclay is surely right to suggest that this means that slaves should no more be recipients of sexual abuse either.⁷⁵ Given the general practices in the Graeco-Roman world,⁷⁶ this is a remarkable statement, suggesting that the followers of the Jewish law have higher standards with respect to slaves than their neighbours. Certainly, this is part of rhetorical hyperbole to demonstrate the superiority of the Jewish Law and hence the acceptability of the Jewish people, but that

⁷⁵ J.M.G. Barclay, *Against Apion* (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary; vol. 10; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 295 and n. 874.

⁷⁶ E.g. P. duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), 104-105; J. Andreau and R. Descat, *The Slave in Greece and Rome* (Wisconsin Studies in Classics; trans. M. Leopold; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 108.

slaves should be included in this is at least indicative of some awareness of the inappropriateness of their typical treatment, and a desire that the inheritors of the Law should be identifiably different.

Moreover, Josephus also occasionally shows awareness of the distinction between Jewish and gentile slaves. For example, he expresses concern for a law of Herod which allowed thieves to be sold into slavery to ‘foreigners’ (*ἀλλόφυλοι*, *Ant.* 16.2) perpetually. This, he records, was in contradiction to the Mosaic laws which required temporary enslavement to fellow Israelites, as we have seen above. Josephus records this as unlawful, arrogant tyranny by Herod, and part of the reason for his unpopularity (16.4-5).

Finally, Josephus is under no illusion that, for those who are not yet slaves, slavery is to be avoided at all costs. For example, he regards as honourable the men of Ptolemais who kill their wives and children rather than become slaves (*Ant.* 13.363; cf. *Ant.* 14.429; *B.J.* 7.334;). He similarly describes the speech of Eleazar in the face of Rome’s siege of Jerusalem, who says, ‘we preferred death to slavery’ (*B.J.* 7.336 [Thackeray, LCL]), and any who do not are cowards (*B.J.* 7.382). Although this was no doubt designed to appeal to a Roman audience and to demonstrate the ‘noble deaths’ of even the Jewish rebels, it is marked the extent to which Josephus emphasises the importance of freedom in this speech:

while those hands are free and grasp the sword, let them render an honourable service. Unenslaved by the foe let us die, as free men with our children and wives let us quit this life altogether! (*B.J.* 7.386 [Thackeray, LCL])

Thus, we see that Josephus confirms the existence of slavery in Palestine, expressing no surprise that Jews should be involved – either as slaves or masters. He shares with Roman writers the ideology of slaves as those who are untrustworthy, and provides similar evidence for the physical punishments that await them. Yet he is also conscious of the threat of slavery itself, as we saw also in Judith, and aware of the ideals advanced in the Mosaic Law about the treatment of slaves in general, and of the distinction between Jewish

and non-Jewish slaves in particular. Such consciousness may also be represented in Josephus' famous description of slave-free Jewish groups, as we will now see – although it should be remembered that their refusal to have slaves was an indication of exceptional behaviour, amongst Jews or otherwise.

4.2.4 NON-SLAVERY IN JEWISH GROUPS

As is well known, Josephus famously reports that the Essenes rejected slavery, saying, 'They neither bring wives into the community nor do they own slaves, since they believe that the latter practice contributes to injustice [*ἀδικίαν*]' (*Ant.* 18.21 [Feldman, LCL]). This is confirmed by Philo who goes further to say,

Not a single slave is to be found among them, but all are free, exchanging services with each other, and they denounce the owners of slaves, not merely for their injustice in outraging the law of equality, but also for their impiety in annulling the statute of Nature, who mother-like has born and reared all men alike, and created them genuine brothers, not in mere name, but in very reality, though this kinship has been put to confusion by the triumph of malignant covetousness ... (*Prob.* 79 [Colson, LCL])

That the evidence for this rejection of slavery is found in independent sources, lends support to this being an actual practice.⁷⁷ It also potentially stands against the Qumran-Essene hypothesis, since the DSS explicitly give directions for the restriction of the use of slaves on the Sabbath (*CD* XI 12).⁷⁸ Yet, elsewhere, Philo can report that,

⁷⁷ S. Mason, 'The Historical Problem of the Essenes', in *Celebrating the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Canadian Contribution* (eds. P.W. Flint, et al.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 201-251 (244).

⁷⁸ In this regard, it is notable for the discussion that follows that the presence of slaves at Qumran is supported by '[a]n ostrakon inscription in which a certain Honi seems to donate his property, including a slave, to the Qumran community upon entering it'. This would support my reading of Philo, *Hypoth.* 11.4. C. Hezser, 'The Social Status of Slaves in the Talmud Yerushalmi and in Graeco-Roman Society', in *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture* (ed. P. Schäfer; TSAJ 79; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 91-137 (99 n. 50).

None by any means continues to possess [ὑπομένει κτήσασθαι] his own things altogether – neither a house, nor a slave, nor a plot of land, nor herds (of cattle or sheep), nor anything other provided and furnished by wealth – but all things are placed publicly in common at once, everyone reaping the benefits. (*Hypoth.* 11. 4)⁷⁹

It is worth noting that this philosophically attractive and idealised picture of the eschewal of the personal trappings of wealth describes all things being held in common (cf. *Jos., Ant.* 18.20; *B.J.* 2.122), but not the rejection of the things themselves. Thus, just as the Essenes who are later described as labouring on the land, and working as ‘herdsmen’ (11.8), require both ‘a plot of land’ and ‘herds’, so it may be that the depiction of absent slaves is not as complete as is usually assumed. However, they are not the only slave-less Jewish group described by Philo.

The Therapeutae⁸⁰ are likewise depicted as rejecting slavery.

They do not have slaves to wait upon them as they consider that the ownership of servants is entirely against nature. For nature has borne all men to be free, but the wrongful and covetous acts of some who pursued that source of evil, inequality, have imposed their yoke and invested the stronger with power over the weaker. In this sacred banquet there is as I have said no slave, but the services are rendered by free men who perform their tasks as attendants not under compulsion nor yet waiting for orders, but with deliberate good will anticipating eagerly and zealously the demands that may be made. (*Contempl.* 70-71 [Colson, LCL])

It is interesting that, in spite of Philo’s clear protestations of equality and freedom, there are yet required to be junior members of the community who support the elders in the role

⁷⁹ Translation in J.E. Taylor, ‘Philo of Alexandria on the Essenes: A Case Study on the Use of Classical Sources in Discussions of the Qumran-Essene Hypothesis’, *SPhiloA* 19 (2007): 1-28 (20). This translation of ὑπομένει κτήσασθαι as ‘continues to possess’ seems preferable to Colson’s ‘allows himself to have’ (LCL), but ‘continues to acquire’ might be better still.

⁸⁰ J. Riaud, ‘Les Thérapeutes d’Alexandrie dans la tradition et dans la recherche critique jusqu’aux découvertes de Qumran’, *ANRW* 2 (1987): 1189-1295; V. Nikiprowetzky, ‘Quelques observations sur la répudiation de l’esclavage par les thérapeutes et les esséniens d’après les notices de Philon et de Flavius Josèphe’, in *Études philoniennes* (ed. V. Nikiprowetzky; Paris: CERF, 1996); J.E. Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo’s ‘Therapeutae’ Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

that slaves would normally occupy.⁸¹ Nevertheless, this repudiation of slavery is being held up by Philo as both remarkable, and a Jewish ideal. This raises questions about whether or not the Therapeutae actually existed. Engberg-Peterson describes the account as, ‘utopian fantasy done for a serious purpose’, that purpose being to show what the Jewish people are aspiring to.⁸² Taylor, acknowledging the idealising tendency and rhetorical design in Philo’s description, instead argues that the presentation of the Therapeutae is ‘shaped truth’, and, relying on a version of the criterion of embarrassment, suggests that, ‘[o]ne would not invent a group with features one then had to explain away’, such as the role of the women.⁸³ The existence of a group *a little bit* like the Therapeutae seems at least plausible, given the Essene descriptions, in which case there were some Jews who adopted a vision and practice which distinguished them from others,⁸⁴ not least because of their attitude to slavery.

However, this does not obscure the fact that both the accounts of the Essenes and of the Therapeutae are ‘idealised’,⁸⁵ and this idealised vision is based, not on the fulfilment of the Law which is not even mentioned, but on ‘their philosophical commitments and moral excellence’.⁸⁶ In the context of Philo’s Stoic treatise *De Vita Contemplativa*, this indicates not

⁸¹ ‘[I]n order to support the elders in a life of philosophy that would usually be the preserve of elite males, the juniors would take the positions that normally in Greco-Roman society would belong to slaves (males and females), tenant farmers (males and females), and women in the household.’ J.E. Taylor and P.R. Davies, ‘The So-Called Therapeutae of “De Vita Contemplativa”: Identity and Character’, *HTR* 91 (1998): 3-24 (23).

⁸² T. Engberg-Pedersen, ‘Philo’s *De Vita Contemplativa* as a Philosopher’s Dream’, *JSJ* 30 (1999): 40-64 (43, 46).

⁸³ Taylor, *Jewish Women*, 8, 11.

⁸⁴ This includes Philo himself, who can write about the reason the Law allows slaves being, ‘For the course of life contains a vast number of circumstances which demand the ministrations of slaves’ (*Spec.* 2.123 [Colson, LCL]). Garnsey suggests that in this statement, ‘Philo implicitly distances himself from the Essenes (and the mysterious Therapeutae)’. ‘Philo’, 43.

⁸⁵ Engberg-Pedersen, ‘Philo’s *De Vita Contemplativa*’, 48; K.-G. Sandelin, ‘Philo as a Jew’, in *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria* (ed. T. Seland; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 19-46 (45).

⁸⁶ E.L. Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosphorus Kingdom* (TSAJ 75, 1999), 73.

so much a unique Jewish vision, as a Jewish instantiation of a more general vision. The same kind of idealised picture can be found in the Sibylline Oracles. Neutel observes that,

The absence of slavery, or an end to the distinction slave-free was a part of the depiction of the Golden Age, as well as of Jewish prophecy, and of strands of utopian thought, all of which come together in Jewish thought on an ideal community or time when there would be no slaves.⁸⁷

Neutel's point is that the same can be seen in Paul's claim that there is, 'no longer ... slave or free' (Gal 3:28). In which case, there exists a Jewish vision of the ideal, nevertheless consistent with pagan utopian thinking,⁸⁸ which imagines a time when slavery is no more. Some groups, notably the Essenes and Therapeutae, were reputed to have implemented such an ideal, although the evidence is not clear cut.

The Pauline literature shares this ideal, but at the same time takes a pragmatic (realistic?) approach to slavery, with no apparent expectation of its abolition. Rather, in contradistinction to these ideal descriptions, we should acknowledge Christians as a further first-century mixed Jewish-gentile group who very evidently had slaves within their number (as they are directly addressed in Christian writings, e.g. 1 Cor 7:21; Eph 6:5; 1 Pet 2:18), and feature instructions to slaves and owners on how to relate to one another (e.g. the *Haustafeln*). At no point is an appeal made to the Law concerning ethnic restrictions on slavery, nor is concern raised about the keeping of slaves at all. If we entertain the recent argument⁸⁹ that the *Haustafeln* of the NT may have more of a 'Jewish intellectual

⁸⁷ K.B. Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal: Paul's Declaration 'Neither Jew Nor Greek, Neither Slave Nor Free, Nor Male and Female' in the Context of First-Century Thought* (LNTS 513, 2015), 181.

⁸⁸ Mendels argues that Jews such as the Essenes used the classical utopias as a framework for developing their own. D. Mendels, 'Hellenistic Utopia and the Essenes', *HTR* 72 (1979): 207-222 (209).

⁸⁹ See, for example, B. Wold, 'Family Ethics in *4QInstruction* and the New Testament', *NovT* 50 (2008): 286-300; L.T. Stuckenbruck, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament', in *Qumran and the Bible: Studying the Jewish and Christian Scriptures in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. N. Dávid and A. Lange; CBET; Leuven: Peeters, 2010); J.-S. Rey, 'Family Relationships in

history than is currently acknowledged' (and by this is meant particularly Palestinian Judaism),⁹⁰ then this would offer further support to the acceptance of slaves within Jewish households as the norm. More than this, the NT examples might suggest some support for the enslavement of fellow Israelites due to the explicit use of the kinship terminology between masters and slaves: 'brother' (e.g. 1 Tim 6:2), language that was typical of fellow-Jews.⁹¹ Thus, as we have seen, ideals are quite distinct from normal practice.

4.2.5 SLAVERY IN TANNAITIC LITERATURE

As we would expect, when we move into the second century we continue to find evidence of the ownership of slaves by Jews. There is, for example, a record of the sale of a girl called 'Sambatis', most likely so-called because her owners observed the Sabbath (CPJ 490). This is supported extensively by the rabbinic material of the Tannaim. We turn to this material, finally, *not* because it provides a window back into the first century, but rather because it serves as a bookend to our period. Given the general scarcity of non-biblical evidence for Palestine in the first century, where we see ideas in Second Temple literature continuing with the rabbis it is not unreasonable to assume that this represents a common set of attitudes to slaves by Jewish writers, which may, therefore, have been followed by the gospel writers also.

With respect to the distinction in biblical law between Jewish and non-Jewish slaves, there is considerable evidence in rabbinic literature that this distinction was known and

4QInstruction and in Eph 5:21-6:4', in *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament* (ed. F. Garc a Mart inez; STDJ 85; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 231-255.

⁹⁰ Wold, 'Family Ethics', 286.

⁹¹ E.g. Acts 1:16; 2:29. Philemon seems to stand against this possibility, as in this letter, the gentile, Philemon, is told to treat his slave as a 'beloved brother' (15). Clearly, the language can extend to non-Jewish master-slave relationships also (we have no way of knowing whether Onesimus was a Jew or not). Yet this only serves to underline the way that kinship and household language could be intertwined, with there being no clear evidence that the former trumped the latter. Indeed, what remains clear is that slavery was the acceptable norm.

discussed, but not actually enacted. As Flesher puts it, ‘The Scriptural distinction of native and foreigner does not define the categories of slavery in the Mishnah’s main system of slavery.’⁹² With Hezser, we can then interpret this to mean that, ‘The distinction between slave and freedman seems to have been much more important to the rabbis of the Mishnah than the slave’s ethnic origin’,⁹³ with the distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish slaves becoming ‘blurred’.⁹⁴ Thus, Martin can say, ‘the Mishnah’s framers spoke of Hebrew and Canaanite slaves only in order to remain true to the scriptural categories and not because those categories reflected any actual social structures of their own time’.⁹⁵ Hence, by the time of the collation of the Mishnah, Jewish law has caught up with what seems to have been the typical practice; any slave, from whatever background, becomes ‘denationalised’ upon entering slavery. Although a legal distinction may still theoretically exist at some points,⁹⁶ in reality, a slave no longer has a kinship group or a tradition, but has joined the great, uniform mass of those who are not-free.

Similar distinctions between biblical and rabbinic law can be seen in the permission given to the poor for self-sale into slavery. While the Holiness Code made clear that such sales were temporary (Lev 25:39-40), the Tosefta indicates that one in such a position will remain a slave (t. Arak. 5:8), perhaps to prevent fraud against the purchaser.⁹⁷ Such permanent enslavement seems not to have been troubled by the biblical commands for manumission in the seventh and Jubilee years (e.g. Ex 21:2; Lev 25:40-41, 54). Although these laws are familiar to the rabbis, they seem not to have been practised, probably

⁹² P.V.M. Flesher, *Oxen, Women, or Citizens? Slaves in the System of the Mishnah* (BJS 143; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988), 36.

⁹³ Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 33. See also, Hezser, ‘Rabbinic Law’, 155; Hezser, ‘Social Status’, 107.

⁹⁴ Hezser, ‘Rabbinic Law’, 176.

⁹⁵ Martin, ‘Slavery and the Ancient Jewish Family’, 116.

⁹⁶ There are still vestiges of Jew/non-Jew distinctions in the Mishnah, but they come when points of law are being discussed which require such a distinction. Flesher, *Oxen*, 58.

⁹⁷ Hezser, ‘Rabbinic Law’, 140-141.

because there was no means by which they could be enforced.⁹⁸ Similarly, the rabbinic discussion of the biblical injunction that a slave who is injured in the tooth or eye should be set free (Ex 21:26), leads to the limitation of this law in favour of the slave owner.⁹⁹ For example, if an owner's testimony contradicts that of the slave, the owner cannot be held liable (m. Shebu. 5:5). Moreover, if the physical action has not directly hit the eye or tooth, but perhaps the face next to it, then the owner is again not guilty (t. B. Qam. 9:26). This latter ruling references the already familiar experience of the slave being on the receiving end of physical punishment. Hezser describes the regulation of corporal punishment as 'rather contradictory' in the Mishnah and Tosefta.¹⁰⁰ While the slave owner is often freed from all responsibility for injuring his slave, there are other times when prosecution is, at least theoretically, possible. This is no different from Roman law and may similarly reflect a less-than-practical ideal, given the suspicion of slave testimony.

When it comes to the activities of slaves described in Tannaitic literature, they follow the patterns we have already seen in Roman slavery but are almost exclusively household rather than rural activities. This is different from many of the slaves encountered in the gospels. It may represent a move away from the rural economy after the first century and an increasing focus on towns and cities as centres of rabbinic study.¹⁰¹ Perhaps the cost-benefit of having large numbers of slaves, as opposed to hiring day-labourers had shifted,¹⁰² and all that remained were rural households with one or two slaves. We can see examples of all these models in the gospels, which probably signifies a changing economic landscape at the time of Jesus.

⁹⁸ Hezser suggests that perhaps it was 'rarely' practised. Hezser, 'Rabbinic Law', 171.

⁹⁹ Hezser, 'Rabbinic Law', 165.

¹⁰⁰ Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 208.

¹⁰¹ Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 301-302.

¹⁰² Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 249.

This discussion of slaves in the legal texts of the Tannaim confirms what we have already seen. There was little, if any, distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish slaves, and there was no criticism of the ownership of slaves; indeed, it was assumed. Although there was some encouragement to slave owners not to treat their slaves badly, this was very much tempered by laws in favour of the owner. The ideology of slaves and masters is present, as we would expect, including fear and suspicion of slave behaviour which leads to the requirement for the owner to protect himself. Essentially, although the language may have been unfamiliar, there is nothing in rabbinic law which would be found particularly strange to a Roman lawyer. Indeed, Hezser points out that Roman laws and rabbinic laws on slaves were very similar. This is not surprising since, ‘one can assume that both Jewish and Roman slave-owners were confronted with much the same problems’.¹⁰³ As we have seen time and again, the practice of slavery seems to take precedence over ideals.

4.2.6 SUMMARY

In this survey of the ways in which slaves and slavery were described and practised in Jewish literature and contexts, both of which played at least a theoretical part in shaping Jewish identity, we have found the presence of ideals. Jewish law on slaves looks back to the exodus story as an ideal when God set his people free (to be his own slaves). Visions of the future, and idealised portraits of the present, depicted times, places and groups which did not practise slavery, such as the Essenes, the Therapeutae and possibly Paul’s eschatological vision.¹⁰⁴ Yet while these utopian ideals are found in the literature of our period, both Jewish and pagan, and are thus perhaps used as means of expressing the pinnacle of Jewish behaviour for non-Jews, they do not seem to have affected Jewish

¹⁰³ Hezser, ‘Rabbinic Law’, 133.

¹⁰⁴ Gal 3:28. Whatever the exact intention behind this verse, unlike the other groups, Paul’s vision does not obviously seem to have had practical implications for slavery since Paul expects slaves to remain as slaves, rather than seek freedom (1 Cor 7:17, 20-24), in the period until the Parousia (1 Cor 7:26, 29, 31). I consider this the most likely interpretation of this passage.

practice in the present. This is surprising, but reflects the power of social and cultural norms and expectations over philosophical and religious ideals.

Thus, the legal distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish slaves, while familiar, is not enacted. Nor is the biblical stipulation on setting Jewish slaves free after a certain period. Given that the Law does not ban slavery, and the Jubilee was practically unenforceable, there was no persuasive reason for Jews *not* to have slaves. Rather, the laws provided a means of inter-Jewish critique (e.g. Jeremiah, Josephus' critique of Herod), but the occurrences are rare and any practical outcome appears limited. Slaves of Jewish owners seem to be treated in just the same way as slaves of pagan owners, and no doubt with the same variety. This certainly included the physical punishment of slaves. There is some evidence of concern to ameliorate the brutal behaviour of slave owners. Yet, this is no different from what we have already seen in Roman writers where, likewise, perhaps pragmatically, the arguments are couched in terms of benefit to the slave owner. The same slaveholder ideology is found in Jewish texts, with corresponding suspicion of slaves and justified fears of enslavement.

There is comparatively little evidence for actual slavery in Palestine during the first century but what there is confirms what has been seen in other sources, and the economic reconstruction would certainly allow for it. At this stage, the depictions of slavery in Mark fit well into this socio-geographical context.

Perhaps the only difference in Jewish writings, compared to gentile texts, is that slavery is part of the experience of the Jewish people, both historically (e.g. Exodus, Judith) and in the living memory of first century writers. No attempt is made to soften this depiction of slavery, as it is always feared and can be compared to death. However, the ultimate cause of such enslavement is often put at God's door. This theological move shows how readily actual slavery can be interpreted through the lens of metaphorical slavery, and vice versa,

as duBois puts it, ‘Metaphorical enslavement of the faithful to the god himself echoes the literal enslavement of other human beings in the Hebrew community.’¹⁰⁵ It is to this metaphorical enslavement that we now turn.

4.3 SLAVERY AS METAPHOR IN JEWISH LITERATURE

The two examples of the use of slavery as a metaphor in Jewish writings that we will consider come from before and after the NT period. Given the frequency with which the gospel writers quote from and allude to the OT, we might expect to find common cause in the use of slavery as a metaphor, and certainly, the term עֶבֶד is very widespread and used in different ways.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, the rabbinic parables share many similarities with the Synoptic parables, including the use of slavery. While they cannot be considered to have influenced the gospel teaching, they nevertheless provide evidence of ways in which Jewish writers imagined slavery, and used it to express different ideas. Thus, we will see that, with Combes,

Slavery is one of the main metaphors that has been used in the description of the relationship between the human and the divine. It is also an exceptionally adaptable one¹⁰⁷

4.3.1 SLAVERY METAPHORS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Throughout the OT, it is clear that slavery can be used in a metaphorical sense in a polite term of address. This is the main sense in which it occurs in the Pentateuch (e.g. Gen

¹⁰⁵ P. duBois, *Slavery: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (Ancients and Moderns; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 54.

¹⁰⁶ Since עֶבֶד is by far the most common term, only this will be considered. However, for terms relating to female slaves, metaphorical and actual, see E.J. Bridge, ‘Female Slave vs Female Slave: אִמָּה and אִמָּהָ in the HB’, *JHebS* 12 (2012): art. 2.

¹⁰⁷ I.A.H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church from the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (JSNTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 42.

32:18).¹⁰⁸ However, it also takes a theological turn as a means of expressing the relationship between God and certain individuals and groups designated as עבדים. For example, within Genesis we find God saying to Isaac:

And that very night the LORD appeared to him and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you and make your offspring numerous for my servant [עבדי] Abraham's sake.' (Gen 26:24)¹⁰⁹

The notion of belonging to God in a special relationship is here clearly expressed, while maintaining a distinct sense of power and status differential between the two parties. The same can be seen in the explicit title 'slave of God' and 'slave of YHWH'.

4.3.1.1 *'Slave of God'*

The actual phrases 'slave of God' and 'slave of YHWH' appear rarely, and are only used as titles to describe third-parties in the following cases.¹¹⁰ The table includes the LXX translations, where available.

¹⁰⁸ For analysis of this encounter, and the slave language within it, see E.J. Bridge, 'The "Slave" is the "Master": Jacob's Servile Language to Esau in Genesis 33.1-17', *JSOT* 38 (2014): 263-278.

¹⁰⁹ LXX replaces 'my servant' with 'your father', repeating the appellation from the start of the speech.

¹¹⁰ For consideration of this theme in later Jewish literature, see J. Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination* (WUNT II 162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), chs. 4-6.

Referent	‘Slave of God’ (עַבְדַּי הַאֱלֹהִים)	‘Slave of YHWH’ (עַבְדַּי יְהוָה)
Moses	Josh 14:7 LXX (παῖς τοῦ θεοῦ) 1 Chr 6:49 (παῖς τοῦ θεοῦ; 6:34 LXX); 2 Chr 24:6 LXX (ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ); 24:9 (παῖς τοῦ θεοῦ); Neh 10:29 (δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ; 10:30 LXX); Dan 9:11 (παῖς τοῦ θεοῦ / δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ; OG / TH) ¹¹¹	Deut 34:5 (οἰκέτης κυρίου); Josh 1:1 (not in LXX); 1:13 (παῖς κυρίου); 1:15 (not in LXX); 8:31, 33 (θεράπων κυρίου; 9:2b, 2d LXX); 11:12 (παῖς κυρίου); 12:6 (παῖς κυρίου); 13:8 (παῖς κυρίου); 14:7 (παῖς τοῦ θεοῦ); 18:7 (παῖς κυρίου); 22:2 (παῖς κυρίου); 22:4 (not in LXX); 22:5 (παῖς κυρίου); 2 Kgs 18:12 (δοῦλος κυρίου); 2 Chron 1:3 (παῖς κυρίου); 24:6 (ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ)
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego	Dan 3:26 (παῖδες τοῦ θεοῦ / δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ; 3:93 OG / TH)	
Daniel	Dan 6:21 MT (δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ; 6:21 LXX)	
Joshua		Josh 24:29 (δοῦλος κυρίου); Judg 2:8 (δοῦλος κυρίου)
David		Ps 18:1 (παῖς κυρίου; 17:1 LXX); 36:1 (παῖς κυρίου; 35:1 LXX)
‘God’s People’		Ps 113:1 (παῖδες κυρίου; 112:1 LXX); 134:1 (δοῦλοι κυρίου; 133:1 LXX); 135:1 (δοῦλοι κυρίου; 134:1 LXX)
‘Servant(s)’	Isa 42:19 LXX (δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ)	Isa 42:19 MT

A number of observations can be made about this data. Firstly, it is clear that the phrases are most frequently applied to Moses.¹¹² In general, they occur in contexts which are either describing his leadership of the people of Israel, or else, most often, his role as giver of the Law (and therefore the need to obey the commandments). In this respect, Moses had a unique relationship with God, and can consequently be known by this title, in spite of

¹¹¹ This includes a further qualifier (‘most high’, ‘living’ God)

¹¹² Moses is also described as ‘slave of God’ in NT (Rev 15:3), along with the Roman ruler (Rom 13:4).

others also being God's 'servants'. The phrase therefore communicates something of this close relationship with God, as his slave, as well as the particular responsibilities which came to Moses, as his master's representative, the one who was uniquely able to interpret his master's will. The slave metaphor enables Moses to be identified closely with God, since he has been chosen to be God's representative, but also makes use of the typical expectation that the slave will understand, internalise and express the will of the owner, in this case through the giving of the Law.

Secondly, just as Moses' role is significant and high status, so it is with the others to whom the term is applied. All are significant, either leading God's people or representing God. The terms mark them out as distinct from others, as those who might particularly be referred to in this way. Thus, to be known as God's slave is a high status term. This is not because slavery is being valued differently, however, but because they are slaves *to God*. Thus, the master's status reflects on those who are his slaves, who derive their status from him. At the same time, however, we should acknowledge that the use of slavery as a metaphor in this case reminds us of the status distinction between master and slave. The terms emphasise the separation between God and his representatives. Thus, while the terms emphasise closeness to God, favour with God and, therefore, distinction between God's 'servants' and others,¹¹³ they nevertheless maintain distance and separation between these 'servants' and the master. Status is, therefore, relative.

Together, these points stress that, metaphorically at least, the OT does not view being identified as a slave as necessarily negative.

Thirdly, the table shows that there is no consistency in the Greek translations. This is true between books, but also within books. Thus, Joshua has the most references but these are

¹¹³ This is true also of the 'anonymous' psalm and Isaiah references.

not consistent throughout.¹¹⁴ This supports Wright's general view that, 'during the Hellenistic period, the several different terms for slaves began to be used more often as synonyms'.¹¹⁵

In addition to those already mentioned, many either describe themselves or are described by others (including by God), as God's slaves through the use of different possessive pronouns. The list grows to include, for example, Samson (Judg 15:18), the prophets (e.g. 2 Kgs 21:10; Amos 3:7); the 'elders of the Jews' (Ezra 5:11); Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:16);¹¹⁶ Job (e.g. Job 1:8); Isaiah (Isa 20:3); Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 43:10); and Zerubbabel (Hag 2:23).¹¹⁷ There is no obvious pattern to this group, save that all, in some sense, are used for God's purposes, thus embodying God's will, the ideal role for the slave from the master's perspective. The other aspect they share, through the use of the possessives, is that of belonging to and identification with the master – in other words, ownership.

This emphasis on the role of the master is found in many OT metaphorical slave texts, often painting a positive picture of God's behaviour towards his 'slaves'. As a good master, he will have compassion on his slaves (e.g. Ps 135:14), provide for them (e.g. Isa 65:13), be near them (e.g. Isa 41:8-10) and act mercifully towards them, discouraging fear through the offer of protection (Jer 30:10). Understandably, the metaphor of slavery enables the writers to paint an ideal picture of God as master. However, there are other aspects of slave

¹¹⁴ Also noted by L.J. Greenspoon, 'Iesous', in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (eds. A. Pietersma and B.G. Wright; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 174-194 (174).

¹¹⁵ Wright, 'Ebed/Doulos', 89.

¹¹⁶ As Bridge observes, it is noteworthy that David and Hezekiah are the only two kings described in this way, both of whom are 'portrayed as exceptionally devoted to God. By doing this, the Hebrew Bible goes somewhat against the wider ancient Near East, in which kings regularly viewed or promoted themselves as the servant of the chief national deity.' E.J. Bridge, 'The Metaphoric Use of Slave Terms in the Hebrew Bible', *BBR* 23 (2013): 13-28 (24).

¹¹⁷ In the NT, Paul (Tit 1:1) and James (Jas 1:1) introduce their letters by identifying themselves as *δοῦλος θεοῦ*. In James, the 'Lord Jesus Christ' is included along with 'God' as master. See further, L. Doering, *Ancient Jewish Letters and the Beginnings of Christian Epistolography* (WUNT 298; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 397-399.

ownership which, while entirely acceptable from the master's perspective, may not have been so well received by the slaves. For example, like other owners we have seen, God will give a new name to his slaves (Isa 65:15), which emphasises the master's total control over his slaves in shaping their identity. Then we find the idealistic notion that the close presence of the master should result in the slaves being unafraid. This seems unlikely when, in the same breath, God declares, 'I will chastise you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished' (Jer 46:28). Yet the assumption is that the slaves will have so imbibed the ideology of the slaveholder that they could agree with the necessity of punishment as a sign of their master's care. Such 'care' is expressed through 'harsh slavery' (Isa 14:3), through the threat of being sent to other slaveholders (Deut 28:47-48), and, ultimately, the threat of destruction (Isa 65:8). All of these activities fit within the understandings of slavery we have previously seen, but clearly demonstrate a slaveholder's perspective.

In response to God's mastery, there are two particular expectations of the slave: obedience and loyalty. A third element, suffering, although not an expectation, is nevertheless a consequence of being God's slave and needs to be considered separately. Obedience is the attitude required that leads to those actions that fulfil the will of the owner. Bridge calls this 'work' (based on the meaning of the verb עבד),¹¹⁸ but it is only that which expresses the will of the owner that counts. Although familiar throughout the OT, this can be seen most clearly in those foreigners who choose to become God's slaves. While their identity is found in their new master, this is expressed through those particular activities that represent God's will.

And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant ... (Isa 56:6)

¹¹⁸ E.g. Bridge, 'Metaphoric Use', 16, 23.

However, from the slaveholder's ideal perspective, it is not obedience for its own sake that is sought, rather it is obedience that springs from love for and loyalty towards the owner. Loyalty is a common theme in the OT, which makes clear that a metaphorical slave can serve only one master (e.g. Josh 24:14-18). The argument in this text and others for such exclusive service is again based in the relationship with the owner – God – who has done 'great things' for his people (e.g. 1 Sam 12:24). Once again, the slaves are expected to adopt the owner's perspective on this. There are occasions, however, especially in the Psalms, where God's self-identified 'servant' can use this to their advantage. For example, 'Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you.' (Ps 86:2). Here, the supplicant seeks to use loyalty as a means of persuading God to act, essentially identifying himself as fulfilling the master's expectations of a good slave.¹¹⁹

Any attempt to 'serve' multiple masters is interpreted as disloyalty, and punished, as the following text indicates, linking metaphorical and actual slavery.

And when your people say, 'Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us?' you shall say to them, 'As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve strangers in a land that is not yours.' (Jer 5:19)

The aspect of punishment for failing in either of these aspects is unsurprising, based on what we already know of slavery and its link to metaphorical usage. However, what is surprising is the idea of suffering as a form of obedience, seen in the so-called 'servant

¹¹⁹ See further in E.J. Bridge, 'Loyalty, Dependency and Status with YHWH: The Use of *bd* in the Psalms', *VT* 59 (2009): 360-378 (372-374). Space does not permit the investigation here, but it would be interesting to consider the extent to which the Psalms provide a metaphorical slave's perspective, rather than a master's. Bridge's article heads in this direction, but does not quite express this distinction (378).

songs' of Isaiah.¹²⁰ Bridge rightly considers this 'a special case', but it is all the more significant for that, both within Isaiah and in the NT.¹²¹ We learn of the 'servant',

I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. (Isa 50:6)

This action is taken in obedience to the master, to God, and is a consequence of the faithful proclamation of the message (Isa 50:5). Thus, the songs count the cost of obedience, but, more than this, like the Roman *Exemplum* literature of the previous chapter, express loyalty *through* suffering rather than in spite of it. This suffering is given particular focus as the slave is described as 'beyond human semblance' (Isa 52:14), 'a man of suffering' (Isa 53:3), who is 'wounded', 'crushed' (Isa 53:5) and ultimately 'cut off from the land of the living' (Isa 53:8). Yet, we discover, 'it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain' (Isa 53:10). Thus, we see the metaphor of slavery being used again to indicate that the slave's body is the site of violence. Moreover, there is no embarrassment that it is the owner – God – who purposes this, for the slave as a body belongs to the owner. Nevertheless, this deployment of the metaphor features a slave who willingly suffers on behalf of the master and, though this may be small comfort to the slave, the suffering has a greater purpose (Isa 53:5). This purpose, however, is the master's own intent, and therefore this modification of the typical description of violence towards slaves (that the threat of violence is a means of persuading slaves to obey), nevertheless serves to further the will of the owner. This is a point to which we will return in Mark's Gospel.

4.3.1.2 *The Purpose of the Slavery Metaphor in the Old Testament*

The slave metaphors of the OT have largely been built from the same aspects of slavery we have seen elsewhere. In particular, obedience and loyalty have been stressed, both of which

¹²⁰ J. Goldingay, 'Servant of Yahweh', in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets* (eds. M.J. Boda and J.G. McConville; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 700-707 (703-704).

¹²¹ E.J. Bridge, 'The Use of עֶבֶד in Prophetic Literature', *AusBR* 60 (2012) (35).

are portrayed almost exclusively from the master's perspective. Indeed, the ideology of slaveholding is found in the description of activities of the master, God, and it is in the exploration of this aspect of the relationship that most of the texts lie. Hence, the focus of many of the OT metaphors is more on the master than the slave. The two aspects that differ from the typical application of the metaphor are that slavery can be a positive indication of status, given that 'servant of God' is a title reserved for those few in special relationship with God (and this includes the people of Israel), and that physical suffering can be a mark of obedience as well as disobedience, and have a beneficial purpose in fulfilling the will of the master. However, although the exemplary slave, including the suffering slave, may not be common uses of the metaphor, they are nevertheless similar to examples we have seen in Roman literature.

In all the cases considered, the use of the metaphor is descriptive and therefore informative rather than ethical. In the most general sense, the 'slave of God' is to obey, but no metaphorical examples are given to make this any more specific. There are rare exceptions to this, however, which begin to approach the metaphorical teaching of the gospels by using slavery as a model for behaviour. Two examples will suffice. Ps 123:2 uses the attentiveness of 'slaves trained to watch for the smallest gesture'¹²² of their owner to mirror how the believer looks to God.¹²³ The other verse is designed to encourage particular behaviour using the model of slaves and their masters:

A son honours his father, and servants [עֲבָדִים] their master. If then I am a father, where is the honour due me? And if I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. (Mal 1:6)

¹²² Bridge, 'Loyalty', 362.

¹²³ 'As the eyes of servants [עֲבָדִים] look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid [שִׁפְחָה] to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until he has mercy upon us.' (Ps 123:2)

This builds on the common acceptance and understanding of slavery, in this case emphasising the status difference between master and slave, with the corresponding expectation of honour. Such rare exceptions should not obscure the fact that, in spite of the prevalence of slave language in the OT, it is rarely used as a teaching tool. This changes as we move into the NT period and beyond, as we will now see in the early rabbinic slave parables.

4.3.2 SLAVE PARABLES IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

Amongst post-biblical Jewish literature, particularly of the Tannaim, the genre of the parable has perhaps been most studied.¹²⁴ As far as I am aware, there are only two corpora which seek to ‘present all the parables found in Tannaitic literature’,¹²⁵ and to provide translations of them. For a long time, the only source was an unpublished thesis by Robert Johnston,¹²⁶ but a further collection has recently been published.¹²⁷ In spite of the claims of comprehensiveness, the two corpora are far from identical.¹²⁸ The Appendix gives a statistical list of differences. In Johnston’s work he identifies 325 *meshalim*,¹²⁹ a significant number which indicates the popularity of the genre within rabbinic literature to just as great an extent as is found in the Synoptic Gospels. Of these 325, I count 34¹³⁰ which directly refer to slave characters (i.e. עבדים or equivalent), and a further 16 which refer to

¹²⁴ R.S. Notley and Z. Safrai, *Parables of the Sages: Jewish Wisdom from Jesus to Rav Ashi* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2011).

¹²⁵ Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 2.

¹²⁶ R.M. Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations Attributed to Tannaim’ (PhD, Hartford Seminary, 1977).

¹²⁷ Notley and Safrai, *Parables*.

¹²⁸ Unfortunately, the comparison process between these two collections is made all the more difficult because of the differences in referencing used. In part, this is due to the choice of different textual versions to work from, but, in Johnston’s case at least, also due to some typographical mistakes.

¹²⁹ This does not quite correspond to the numbering sequence for the reason given in Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations’, 213 n. 1, 466 n. 3.

¹³⁰ In one case, t. Nid. 3:5, the text is corrupt and the reconstruction of ‘slave’ questionable.

typical slave roles, such as ‘pedagogue’ tutors, wet-nurses, and keepers of an orchard.¹³¹ In Notley and Safrai’s corpus, there are 417 parables, of which I count 54 referring explicitly to slaves, and 9 others. These significant distinctions are caused primarily by the texts chosen in each corpus as Tannaitic, but also by differences in what is regarded as a parable. However, the relative numbers show that ‘slave parables’ constitute a significant percentage of the total number of rabbinic *meshalim* and demonstrate an interest in using the metaphor of slavery as a means of thinking about other things.¹³² This is consistent with the parables in the gospels.¹³³ Hezser recognises the value that a detailed study of these parables would offer,¹³⁴ particularly when coupled with the NT parables as a ‘thematic unity’.¹³⁵ Indeed, that only the rabbinic literature shares this particular interest in parables with the NT makes them worthy of study.¹³⁶

It is well-known that a number of the NT parables have similar counterparts among the rabbinic corpus, in terms of plot arrangement and themes. Evans, for example, lists many comparisons, including six of the slave parables.¹³⁷ However, Zimmermann is correct to criticise a tendency to see a ‘close and simple continuity’ between NT parables and their rabbinic counterparts, in light of the significant historical distance between them. ‘In contrast, examinations that instead synchronically point out parallels between the rabbinical parables and the parables of Jesus in terms of genre, motif, subject and style are

¹³¹ In the case of the wet-nurse, the link with slavery is, on the one hand, made explicit, but on the other hand, shown not to be universal. ‘R. Simeon b. Yohai said: In the custom of the world, when a man has a son he hands him over to a slave to nurse him, and if he has no servant to a [wet] nurse’ (Deut. Rab. 7:12). Thus, as seen in actual nursing contracts (e.g. *CPJ* 146), a nurse might be a slave or a contracted worker (see also *GRS* 129). The same might be said about the other ‘typical slave roles’, and so due caution should be observed when considering these.

¹³² Of the Tannaitic rabbinic works which contain slave parables, between 12-16% of the total parables are slave parables. See the Appendix.

¹³³ See § 5.2.

¹³⁴ Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 362.

¹³⁵ Here quoting Crossan. Hezser, *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, 346.

¹³⁶ Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 6-7.

¹³⁷ C.A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 418-420.

more helpful.¹³⁸ This is the intention here. For the difficulty of dating should not rule out the rabbinic parables from consideration.

All of this serves to indicate that the parables featuring slaves in the Synoptic Gospels stand within a tradition which grew and developed among Jewish teachers, but which maintained many common elements which are relevant to this study.¹³⁹ In particular, the varied discussion about the identity of the king in the so-called king parables similarly highlights the connection between the metaphorical slaves in the parables, and the real world of slavery from which they are drawn, that has been emphasised in this thesis from the start.¹⁴⁰ To quote Stern, who is arguing against Ziegler's majestic study of the king-parable:

Ziegler himself seemed to believe that most meshalim derived from specific, in theory identifiable, historical incidents. This conclusion is mistaken. The meshalim are fictional narratives that do not make even a rhetorical claim to be historically true. But the many references in the meshalim to the larger world in which the Rabbis lived certainly show how profoundly familiar the sages were with that world and its culture, and how creatively they were able to turn that knowledge into material for their imaginative narrative compositions.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ R. Zimmermann, 'How to Understand the Parables of Jesus. A Paradigm Shift in Parable Exegesis', *AcT* 29 (2009): 157-182 (165). See also C. Hezser, 'Rabbinische Gleichnisse und ihre Vergleichbarkeit mit neutestamentlichen Gleichnissen', in *Hermeneutik der Gleichnisse Jesu: Methodische Neuansätze zum Verstehen urchristlicher Parabeltexte* (eds. R. Zimmermann and G. Kern; WUNT 231; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 217-237 (234).

¹³⁹ An example of the development of the tradition is the formal features (e.g. conventional introductions), which were apparently regularised after the Tannaitic period.

¹⁴⁰ There are at least four possibilities: (i) the king represents the contemporary Roman emperor; (ii) the king represents God; (iii) the king represents an unidentified or generic 'Eastern' king; (iv) the king is simply a fictional creation. Although all the positions are held, the current consensus is probably to be found in the first option. See D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 19. For a combined approach, see A. Appelbaum, "'I clothed you in purple": The Rabbinic King-Parables of the Third-Century Roman Empire' (PhD, Yale University, 2007), 39-52.

¹⁴¹ Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 20.

In other words, the parables which feature slaves are reflective of a contemporary experience of slavery, and, therefore, an understanding of one world informs the other. Yet the link is not simply found in the description of historical events, but rather in the imaginative construction of slaves and slave experience, which draws on contemporary ideologies of slavery. We therefore now turn to the content of these rabbinic slave parables.

4.3.2.1 *Slaves in the Tannaitic Parables*

Slaves are among the common characters of the parables, and are ‘common enough to be called standard’.¹⁴² However, as we will see, their ‘significations are ad hoc and varied’.¹⁴³ Thus, while slaves are common, their significance varies showing the general applicability of the metaphor. We encounter many different slaves in the parables: male and female slaves; household and rural slaves; slaves engaged in different activities, from going to market, to running an administrative region; and both high status slaves with their own homes (typically slaves of the king)¹⁴⁴ and those who have very little. While these slave characters represent imagined slavery – and the situations are often fantastic, shaped directly by the intended application – nevertheless, as will be shown below, the attitudes and experiences are consistent with the ideology of slavery we have already seen. Only occasionally do religious issues play a part in these parables, which is perhaps surprising given the frequent concerns of rabbinic writers. However, this may point to the rather general way in which the slavery metaphor was conceived – religious affiliation and observance was not a significant element of the metaphor of slavery. An exception to this can be seen in the following parable:

¹⁴² Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations’, 589-590.

¹⁴³ Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations’, 590.

¹⁴⁴ It would be possible to assume that such slaves are courtiers; however, as stated before, there is no reason to assume they are not also slaves. Moreover, there are often indications that these עבדים are slaves.

A parable. [To what may the matter be compared?] To the servant [עבד] of a priest who ran from his master. He said, “I will flee among the tombs, where my master can not follow me.” His master said to him, “I have many servants [בניית]¹⁴⁵ similar to you.” Thus said Jonah, “I will go outside of the land [of Israel], where the Divine Presence does not reveal itself.” ... The Holy One blessed be He said to him, “I have emissaries similar to you.” (Mek. Pisha Bo Parasha 1)¹⁴⁶

We can see in this parable that the *mashal* is shaped by the *nimshal* concerning Jonah. Nevertheless, the parable utilises two particular aspects of imagined slaves: the runaway slave and the wily slave. No reason is given for the slave running away, it is simply accepted that such happens; but the cunning of the wily slave can be seen in his attempt to evade capture by his priestly owner by running to the tombs, where the priest could not follow due to the risk of impurity. However, in this instance, the master bests the slave (and this is generally the case in the rabbinic parables, presumably because the master typically represents God), by pointing out how easily replaceable he is. The slave is therefore reminded that he is expendable, without value as an individual, another feature of slavery. There is no concern that a priest should take this approach, or have ‘many’ gentile slaves in the first place. In other words, even though the parable itself revolves around a Jewish religious issue, it actually encodes the same kinds of understandings of slavery on the part of the master that we have seen elsewhere.

In addition to the occasional mention of gentile slaves, there are rare occasions when we see Jewish slaves (or at least, slaves engaging in Jewish practices), such as those who compete to be the greatest at reading Scripture and Mishnah (S. Eli. Rab. 18).¹⁴⁷ Such slaves are clearly exemplary for the Jewish readers of the parable, particularly as the master judges them on the basis of their reading, rather than their household duties. In many such cases, the slaves represent the congregation of Israel. However, even within this Jewish

¹⁴⁵ The meaning of this term is unclear, but one MS (Munich Codex) has ‘Canaanites’ (בנענים), which is plausible.

¹⁴⁶ #32. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 91. Where possible, I have used the translations from this parable corpus.

¹⁴⁷ #321. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 248-249.

context, the parable functions on the general principle of slaves doing their best to please their master. This involves anticipating his will, since this is the determiner of good slave behaviour rather than ‘common sense’ (e.g. fulfilling the household responsibilities). Hence, even when a parable addresses an explicit Jewish context, the aspects of the metaphor of slavery utilised are not specific to that context.

Therefore, given that even those rabbinic slave parables which engage with Jewish concerns build on a generalised picture of slavery, we will now consider those common aspects of slavery upon which the parables build.

4.3.2.1.1 Obedience and Disobedience

Obedience and disobedience are most clearly seen in the many parables where two slaves are contrasted. For example, the well-known comparison between written and oral law (S. Eli. Zut. 2)¹⁴⁸ produces a parable which contrasts the actions of two beloved slaves that is reminiscent of the parable of the Talents.¹⁴⁹ Both slaves are given wheat and flax. The wise one produces a loaf of bread and a tablecloth from what he has been given, while the foolish one does nothing. When they are both invited to present to the king what he had given them, the foolish slave is ‘shamed’ and ‘disgraced’, in spite of the fact that he has not, strictly, been disobedient. This repeated idea, that obedience is more than simply fulfilling the immediate command but requires anticipating the will of the owner, is found also in the parables of the Synoptic Gospels.

There are probably more examples of disobedient slaves than obedient. In the following example, we see the extent to which obedience can be expected of the slave, even when he is unable to comply.

¹⁴⁸ #351. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 351-352.

¹⁴⁹ Matt 25:14-30 || Luke 19:12-27 (parable of the Minas).

A parable is told, to what may the matter be compared? To a mortal king who said to his servant [עבד], “Cook a dish for me,” but he had never before cooked. In the end, he burnt the food and irritated his master. [Or he instructed his servant] to change his shirt, but he had never before changed a shirt. In the end, he soiled the shirt and irritated his master. (t. Ber. 6:18)¹⁵⁰

Johnston calls this the parable of ‘The Inept Servant’;¹⁵¹ however, it would seem more appropriate to call it ‘The Inept Master’, since it is clearly foolish to ask a slave to do something he cannot do. This is not entertained as a concern of this parable; however, the master can instead be ‘irritated’ (or ‘provoked’)¹⁵² by the slave’s behaviour. The application of the parable seems to be that those who do not learn the Torah cannot fulfil its commands. Thus, the implication of the parable would be that a slave *should* know how to do such things as cooking and changing a shirt. This further illuminates the expectations of slave activity.

In addition to disobedience, we also find examples of the standard tropes of slaves being untrustworthy thieves. A parable of R. Nathan (Sem. R. Hiyya 3:3)¹⁵³ describes male and female slaves [שפחות and עבדים] who ‘rob, steal and plunder from each other’. That the metaphor of slavery has been chosen to express this is telling, indicating similar attitudes in rabbinic writings to those we have seen in other literature.

4.3.2.1.2 Reward and Punishment

A simple example of reward, reminiscent of the parable of the Minas (Luke 19:11-27), is shown in the following parable.

A parable. To what may the matter be compared? To a king who called for his household servants. One ran [*ratz*] and stood before him. The king made him in charge [over his

¹⁵⁰ #9. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 77-78.

¹⁵¹ Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations’, 326.

¹⁵² Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations’, 326.

¹⁵³ #412. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 319-320.

household]. Thus, the Holy One blessed be He called to all the inhabitants of the world, and the earth [*eretz*] ran [*ratzah*] and stood before him. (ARN B 43)¹⁵⁴

Here, the most willing slave is the one who is rewarded. However, the reward is additional responsibility. Thus, the slave does not, by obedience, attain to freedom, but rather to further opportunities for obedience. In another parable (S. Eli. Rab. 4),¹⁵⁵ a king orders his disobedient son to be killed by his slave who is chief slave of the household (עבד שר הבית). The slave, however, keeps the son in secret, revealing him after the period of mourning is complete and the king's heart has changed. This is a challenging example since, strictly speaking, the slave is disobedient to the king. However, as we have seen earlier, the slave has correctly anticipated the will of his master. For this, the king places a golden crown on the head of the slave. Thus, while the body is often the location for the punishment of the slave, it can also be the site of reward. In neither case, however, is the reward chosen by the slave, but rather by the owner.

A parable on the difference between love and fear (S. Eli. Rab. 26)¹⁵⁶ describes two slaves of a king, one of whom 'loved the king and feared him', while the other 'feared the king but did not love him'. While the king travels to 'a faraway country', the one who loves him plants gardens and produces fruit, while the other does nothing. The returning king is pleased with the first slave, which makes him 'satisfied'. However, the king is not pleased with the second slave who, 'trembled because he realized the consequences of the king's displeasure'. This parable assumes that both slaves will fear their master, but that this on its own is insufficient, there is also a further expectation of love.¹⁵⁷ This love gives

¹⁵⁴ #407. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 314.

¹⁵⁵ #297. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 228-229.

¹⁵⁶ #338. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 261-263.

¹⁵⁷ We saw in § 3.1.5 that Seneca's idealised picture of slavery, driven by his Stoic concern for freedom, also expected love from slaves, but this time in place of fear (*Ep.* 47.18). As a consequence, slaves should be lashed 'merely with the tongue' (*Ep.* 47.19). It may be that this represents a difference between how slavery might be imagined in Jewish sources, perhaps due to the link with 'the fear of the LORD', and in Seneca. However, Seneca is at pains to point out that even in his

expression to what we have already seen, that the good slave acts in a way that pleases the owner, anticipating his will. The pleasure of the master's satisfaction is reward enough in this parable, although one cannot but wonder whether it is rather the avoidance of his displeasure which would satisfy, given the response of the second slave who, after all, had not done anything against his owner's will. Thus, what may be interpreted by the master as love, may be closely intertwined with fear, as this parable suggests.

Just as we saw in the depiction of slaves in the plays of Plautus, so the rabbinic parables also bear witness to the extremes of physical punishment with which slaves are threatened, sometimes to comedic effect. For example,

A parable. To what may the matter be compared? To one who said to his servant [עבד], "Go out and bring me a fish from the market." He went out and brought him a rotten fish from the market. He said to [the servant], "I swear, either eat the fish, receive a hundred lashes or pay me a hundred *maneh*." [The servant] replied, "I will eat it." He began to eat, but could not finish it completely. So, he said, "I will take the lashes." After sixty [lashes] he was unable to finish. So, he said, "I will give you a hundred *maneh*." [In the end] he ate the fish, received the lashes and paid the hundred *maneh*. So, it happened to Egypt. They were plagued, they released Israel and their wealth was taken from them. (Mek. Veyahi Beshallah Parasha 1)¹⁵⁸

The parable offers no option wherein the slave does not suffer disproportionately to the 'crime'. While the parable invites the readers to take pleasure in the extraordinary fate of the slave, it also encodes the normality of slave suffering. A similar extreme can be seen in a popular parable which appears in a number of sources (e.g. Sifre Deut. 48).¹⁵⁹ In sum, the slave is threatened with death if he fails to look after a bird for the king's son, in spite of

clearly exceptional suggestions, he is not seeking to upset the institution of slavery but maintain the distinction between slave and master (e.g. *Ep.* 47.18). Moreover, although the metaphor may be different, the ultimate aim is similar, to bend the slave to reflect the master and his wishes; he says to Lucilius of his relationship with his slaves, 'Good material often stands idle for want of an artist' (*Ep.* 47.16 [Gummere, LCL]).

¹⁵⁸ A parallel version of this parable, with a similar *nimshal*, can be found in MRS 14:5.

¹⁵⁹ #183. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 186-187.

the acknowledgement that the bird's value is very little. This, in turn, communicates again that the value of the slave's life, although high to the slave, is expendable to the master.

One of the most graphic examples of violent punishment of a slave can be seen in the following parable:

As it is said, "For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line..." (Isa 28:10). I did not find satisfaction in you [before the temple], and I did not find satisfaction in you [after the temple]. What will your reward be from me? A parable is told, to what may the matter be compared? To a mortal king who was angry at his servant [עבד], and he gave orders that he be put in chains. Next [he ordered] that the chain be pulled from behind him to cause [the servant] to fall upon his face; and then to kick him in his face and his stomach. (S. Eli. Rab. 4)¹⁶⁰

Notley and Safrai comment that, "The repeated expression, "precept upon precept," reminds the interpreter of a chain."¹⁶¹ Here we see both the totally accepted violence meted out to slaves, but also that it is so commonplace that it is not, in itself the point of comparison. Nevertheless, the connection between slavery and violence is necessary for the point to be made.

In a final example, we see that a slave's physical suffering is not always associated with punishment, but may be a sign of obedience:

To what may Israel be compared in this world in relation to their father in heaven? To a mortal king who had two servants [עבדים]. He gave them both wood and said to them, "Bring me fire." The one who [was willing to] suffer distress in his body for the sake of the king brought fire to him. The one who [was not willing to] suffer distress in his body for the sake of the king did not bring fire to him. (S. Eli. Rab. 28)¹⁶²

In this parable, although it is not made explicit, we see the familiar pattern of a good slave appearing first, and the bad slave second. The good slave is willing to suffer physically for

¹⁶⁰ #298. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 229.

¹⁶¹ Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 229.

¹⁶² #345. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 268-269.

the sake of his master while the second is not. This provides an illustration of the extent of the master's ownership of the slaves' bodies, and that the body itself becomes the site where true ownership is established – whether that be through reward, such as being crowned, above, through punishment, such as being chained, or in this case, through the apparently willing suffering of the slave for the master's desire. That the second slave is the more sensible is not a consideration, because being owned as a slave meant being owned bodily. This is confirmed in the way that, in all the examples we have seen, suffering, whether or not as punishment, is simply an expected part of the slave's experience, and that reward is to the master's benefit.

4.3.2.1.3 Ownership and Identity

The relationship between expected violence and ownership can be seen in the following parable:

And R. Simeon b. Halaftha said: It is like one who was selling a maidservant in the bazaar, and one passed by and saw her and said: She is mine. He said to him: Reprimand her; if she trembles, she is yours; if not, she is not yours. (Pesiq. Rab Kah. 10:7)¹⁶³

The assumption that what most demonstrates ownership is the response to threats of violence indicates how much violence was associated with the slave state. Moreover, that the slave should not be fearful at the threats of someone other than her owner shows the power of the master-slave relationship, or at least, the imagined expectations of it.

The relationship between ownership and identity is expressed in one parable where the king sends out an administrator, whom he subsequently describes as his slave [עבד] (Sifre Num. 103).¹⁶⁴ This slave is spoken against by the people, to whom the king replies, 'You have not spoken against my servant, but you have spoken against me. If you say that I do

¹⁶³ #235. Johnston, 'Parabolic Interpretations', 426.

¹⁶⁴ #125. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 150.

not recognize his deeds, this [statement] is [even] more harsh than the first.’ In other words, we encounter the understanding that the slave is the owner’s representative, acting on his behalf – an offence against the slave is therefore, by implication, against the owner. The identity of the slave is hence derived from the owner’s identity. Yet this also has a consequence for the owner whose reputation is affected by the behaviour of his slave. He must, therefore, keep watch over his slaves. However, it is noticeable that those who are opposing the slave are distinguishing between the slave’s activity and the master’s, and hence, while the king is fearful of the criticism of being a bad master, he could apparently claim that he had not been paying sufficient attention to the behaviour of a bad slave, and therefore has some means of reputational protection. As in the previous section, the parables portray slavery to the owner’s advantage.

4.3.2.1.4 Sexual Relationships

Finally, a topic that appears in Greek and Roman descriptions of slavery, as we have seen, is sex with slaves. There is comparatively little in the rabbinic parables about this, though what there is suggests concern about sex with slaves, at least when the wife of the master is thought to have engaged in it. For example, a parable about divorce following a wife’s misbehaviour (t. B. Qam 7:4) is elaborated upon in Deut. Rab. 3:17. Here it becomes a parable wherein the king’s wife is sent away for becoming ‘overfamiliar’ with one of the slaves.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, we possibly gain a different gender perspective where the master is concerned in the following parable:

A parable. [To what may the matter be compared?] To a mortal king who was sitting upon his throne and his servants [עבדיו] were standing before him. When he set his eyes on the one that he loved, [the king] took him by the hand and led him to his inner chambers. Thus it is said, “Draw me after you, let us make haste” (Cant 1:4). (S. Eli. Rab. 7)¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ It is notable that the reason given for her behaviour is that ‘she was brought up among the servants’. Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations’, 469.

¹⁶⁶ #302. Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 232.

This parable, commenting on the significance of Jer 1:2 reading ‘everlasting love’, is said by Notley and Safrai to be, in context, about ‘the study of mysteries’. ‘The phrase “inner chambers” is a clear reference to the study of Jewish mysticism’.¹⁶⁷ However, it is hard to escape the idea, from the slave perspective, that the king is here choosing his beloved slave for a sexual relationship. This would certainly fit with what we already know about the ways in which masters used slaves. When coupled with the reference to the Song of Songs, this conclusion seems all the more likely. It is intriguing that this relationship can then be applied to God and Israel. Admittedly, the focus is on the fact that Israel has been chosen to be brought into ‘his inner chambers’ over any other nation, but nevertheless there is such an acceptance of the validity of the relationship described in the parable, that it can also be used to depict divine relationships. Therefore, as we have seen earlier, the parables encode the expectations that male masters had of relationships with their slaves.

4.3.2.2 *The Purpose of Slave Parables*

We have seen that, in spite of the very different situations in which slaves find themselves in the rabbinic slave parables, there are a number of common elements, common to the ways in which slavery has been imagined in other literature. In particular, the parables are written from the perspective of the slaveowner. However, what purpose does the slave metaphor serve? At one level, the metaphor shows its great versatility based on the number of issues it can be called on to explain. Johnston describes the parables as ‘an admixture of allegory with parable’, and the corresponding referents of the slave characters are manifold.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, although the representation of slaves is generally consistent through the parables, what the slaves represent is not.

¹⁶⁷ Notley and Safrai, *Parables*, 232.

¹⁶⁸ Johnston lists at least eighteen different possible referents across the parables, from ‘Israel’s poor’ to Moses to heaven to the gentiles. Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations’, 590.

However, Alan Appelbaum suggests that the subset of rabbinic parables known as the king parables (i.e. those that feature ‘a king of flesh and blood’ as the main actor) can be read as resistance literature.¹⁶⁹ He makes use of Scott’s distinction between public and hidden transcripts, whereby oppressed people say one thing ‘in public’ about their relationship to those who dominate them, and something else ‘offstage’.¹⁷⁰ The public transcript describes ‘how the dominant group would wish things to appear’,¹⁷¹ whereas the hidden transcript takes place out of earshot of the powerful, and therefore within a different dynamic of power; it may consequently express a different attitude to the relationship of dominated to dominant. Appelbaum suggests that, taking the rabbinic parables as a whole, they contain both public and hidden transcripts.¹⁷² Thus, those parables that are particularly praiseworthy of the king are not simply adopting imperial values, but are public transcripts.¹⁷³ Given that the rabbis were, to some extent at least, dominated by the Romans, those parables that exhibit criticism of the king are part of the hidden transcript. Some parables combine both transcripts (e.g. Mek. Shira Beshallah Parasha 1). This would mean that at least some of the slave parables could be read in the same way. For example, the parable described above where the representative of the king is spoken against by the people (Sifre Num. 103) would be an example of both a public and hidden transcript. For while it records the king’s response that such behaviour is ultimately against him (thereby quelling his opponents – a public transcript), there is also the implied suggestion that the king, like his representative slave, is not doing a very good job (a hidden transcript). In some circumstances, as in this parable, the slaves of the king might represent the agents of

¹⁶⁹ A. Appelbaum, ‘Hidden Transcripts in King-Parables: Windows on Rabbinic Resistance to Rome’, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 17 (2010): 287-301; Appelbaum, “I clothed you in purple”.

¹⁷⁰ J.C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 4.

¹⁷¹ Scott, *Domination*, 4-5.

¹⁷² Appelbaum, ‘Hidden Transcripts’, 298.

¹⁷³ Appelbaum takes the view that the kings in the hundred or so parables he uses represent the Roman emperor. Appelbaum, ‘Hidden Transcripts’, 288-289 n. 5. He considers this to be the ‘current consensus’, but see Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 9-23.

authority, but in others they might be part of the metaphorical resistance to oppressive power.

There are questions about this approach, such as how those parables in which the king clearly represents God fit, and whether it is methodologically sound to treat a body of parables in this way, essentially ignoring their immediate literary contexts. Nevertheless, Appelbaum opens up the possibility of understanding the NT parables similarly.

Thus, this examination of the Tannaitic slave parables indicates that they contain essentially the same features as other literary representations of slavery. This in turn reflects, as far as we can tell, the experiences of actual slaves but also the ideologies of slave owners. However, it is not so much that the parables represent reality, as that they offer the means of interpreting reality to the reader by using the metaphor of slavery. In spite of the many and varied ways in which this metaphor is used, it may also offer us ways of thinking about the interaction between oppressor and oppressed.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Given the importance of understanding the metaphor of slavery in the light of actual slavery previously established, in this chapter we have examined actual and metaphorical slavery in Jewish history and literature. Having acknowledged the possible problems of this enterprise, in the first part we saw that actual slavery is represented in ideals and practice, which differ from each other. Thus, both the legal 'ideals' of the Torah, as well as the idealised presentations of such groups as the Essenes and Therapeutae, reflect a desire to limit slavery in some way, either by ethnic identifiers, period of enslavement or altogether. However, in practice, slavery seems to have continued amongst Jews in much the same ways as it did amongst others in the Roman world. In particular, the distinction between Jewish and gentile slaves does not seem to have been maintained, if it ever was, nor was

there the expectation of freedom after a fixed period. Indeed, since the Law allowed for slavery, it seems that the idealised aspect was lost in face of the cultural normativity and utility of slavery. Even those who apparently embraced the ideal, like Philo, did not allow this to affect their actual use and possession of slaves. Although the evidence for slavery in Palestine at the time of Jesus is limited, we saw nothing to suggest that the experience of slaves and slavery was uncommon, and the gospels reflect this. Within this picture of slavery in Jewish sources, slavery is viewed negatively (i.e. is to be avoided), which is consistent with what we have seen elsewhere. At least one reason for this, which is different from the Roman perception of slavery, is that Jewish tradition includes the enslavement of Israel. However, this does not seem to have resulted in Jewish slave owners questioning the institution any more than non-Jewish owners did. This acceptance of slavery no doubt created the context for the corresponding metaphor.

In the second part of this chapter, we looked at the use of slavery as a metaphor in the OT and the early rabbinic slave parables, and saw that the use of the metaphor reflects the actual practice of slavery rather than the ideals. Although the historical contexts are quite different, as are the forms in which the metaphor is expressed, there are a number of similarities between OT and rabbinic examples. The most notable similarity is that the metaphors are expressed from the master's perspective. Thus, slaves act as extensions of their master's identity and will, and their success in interpreting and fulfilling this will is the means by which they are judged. There is, correspondingly, no explicit critique of the master. This can be explained by the frequent common referent for the master in these slave metaphors: God. Moreover, this connection accounts for the general focus on the master, more than the slave. Given that the relationship being described is typically with God, then slavery is often viewed positively, and can attribute a relatively high and exclusive status to the slave, especially in the case of OT figures. Nevertheless, both sets of metaphors operate with the same ideological concerns, about, for example, disobedient slaves and the necessity of physical punishment. However, we have also seen that suffering

can be a consequence of obedience, allowing loyalty to the master to be expressed through the suffering of the slave. Ultimately, with both OT and rabbinic sources, we have seen that the metaphor of slavery is very versatile. For example, while there is some overlap in the referents of the slave metaphor, there is far more variation. This indicates the ubiquity and general usefulness of the slavery metaphor to express all manner of ideas.

While there is thus much in common between these two sources, there is also a significant shift from the OT use of the slavery metaphor to the rabbinic parables, in that the metaphor becomes an explicit and common means of providing example behaviour – whether good or bad. Thus, the metaphor becomes more of a teaching tool within Jewish writings through the NT and early rabbinic period.

With respect to what we saw in Roman literature in the previous chapter, we can affirm that the metaphor of slavery in Jewish writings shares many, but not all, of the same characteristics.

- i. There are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ slaves. While this is certainly the case in the OT, it becomes a much more explicit feature of the slave parables.
- ii. Slaves model values. In particular, the metaphorical slaves of Jewish sources model the ideological concerns of the master which, when the master is God, explains their usefulness as a means of conveying religious ideas.
- iii. Slaves experience suffering. It is accepted without question that slaves will experience both threats of, and actual, physical violence, including death. At times, just as in the *Exemplum* literature, this can be an expression of loyalty in fulfilling the wider purposes of the owner.
- iv. Slaves are judged by their relationship with their owners. The measure which determines the difference between a ‘good’ and ‘bad’ slave is the extent to which the slave anticipates, interprets, represents, and embodies the will of the owner. This

requires close identification with the owner, by which means the slave becomes an extension of the owner's will.

- v. Slave stories do *not* typically demonstrate reversal. This is one area where the slave stories of Roman literature differ from their Jewish counterparts. Slaves do not become as masters, nor do masters become as slaves. This suggests that Jewish writers felt unable to 'play' with the slave metaphor in the way that some Roman writers did. This can be explained simply by the 'master' frequently representing God, and the corresponding need to maintain the status distinction. It is also an indication, however, that it is the established 'normal' slave relationship that was felt to be most instructive by Jewish writers. This can be seen in the way that disobedience, for example, does not lead to the slave's advantage, but to punishment.

Thus, although the metaphor of slavery is expressed in distinctively Jewish contexts and used to express distinctively Jewish concerns, the fundamental understanding of the metaphor is shared with Roman constructions of slavery. When we consider that, as we have seen, actual Jewish slavery differed little from Roman slavery, this gives added support to the notion that the metaphorical understanding of slavery is related to the actual experience of slavery. To put this another way, masters, whether Roman or Jewish, constructed their relationship with their slaves in similar ways, and this is re-expressed and re-inscribed in the imagined slaves and metaphorical slavery of Roman and Jewish literature.

We turn now to consider the metaphor of the slavery in the Gospel of Mark. In doing so, we build on the investigations of this and the previous chapter to see in what ways the metaphor is used, and what aspects of slavery are expressed. This will be analysed in the light of the metaphor theory described in chapter two. In order to do so, we will first specify the means of determining the passages for consideration.

5 – SLAVERY TERMINOLOGY AND TEXTS

In the previous two chapters, the examination of slavery and its accompanying ideology in Roman and Jewish contexts has led to the conclusion that there is little difference between the two. We should, therefore, be unsurprised to find this state of affairs in Mark's Gospel also. In this chapter, we will examine the language of slavery in the Synoptic Gospels, observing the standard slave-terminology used.¹ This survey will provide a basis for establishing the passages which will be included for consideration in the remainder of this thesis.

5.1 TERMS FOR SLAVES AND SLAVERY IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

One of the most highly regarded writers on classical slavery, Moses Finley, wrote that, 'The Greek language had an astonishing range of vocabulary for slaves, unparalleled in my knowledge,² to which Fisher adds that the range of terms is, 'bafflingly complex'.³ The breadth of terms represents the various functions performed by slaves; the different locations in which they served; the variety of causes of their enslavement; and the particular socio-legal statuses which the slaves enjoyed. The terms also varied according to the register of language being used by the speaker.⁴ Gschnitzer identifies four main groups of terms in his consideration of slave terminology in Greek: δούλος, οικήτης, ἀνδράποδον, and

¹ To aid comparison, the discussion in this chapter includes the gospels of Matthew and Luke. However, the analysis in the subsequent chapter will focus on Mark.

² M.I. Finley, et al., *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 98.

³ N.R.E. Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece* (Classical World Series; Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1993), 6. See also K.L. Wrenhaven, *Reconstructing the Slave: The Image of the Slave in Ancient Greece* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 9-21.

⁴ For example, J. Modrzejewski suggests that a different range of terminology for slaves was used in official, public, legal proceedings from that used in the home, as seen in private letters. J.A. Straus, 'La terminologie de l'esclavage dans les papyrus Grecs d'époque Romaine trouvés en Egypte' (paper presented at Colloque sur l'esclavage 1973. Besançon, France, 1976), 347.

θεράπων.⁵ Wrenhaven's list of 'the four primary words for slave' is similar but not identical: δοῦλος, οἰκέτης, ἀνδράποδον, and παῖς.⁶ To this primary list we can add σῶμα, ἀκόλουθος, κοράσιον, and even ἄνθρωπος.⁷ However, there is no basis for assuming that ἄνθρωπος refers to a slave without other contextual indicators. This term will not, therefore, be included for consideration in the survey of slave terminology in the gospels, although we note its presence. On the other hand, διάκονος should be added to the list for it may refer to a slave, as we will go on to see.⁸ Based on this list, then, the distribution of terms used in the Synoptic Gospels can be seen in the following table, where the numbers indicate their frequencies of occurrence.⁹ Words from the above list which are not included in the table do not appear in the Synoptic Gospels, or do not refer to slaves.¹⁰

⁵ F. Gschnitzer, *Studien zur griechischen Terminologie der Sklaverei. 1. Grundzüge des vorhellenistischen Sprachgebrauchs* (Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 13; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1963).

⁶ Wrenhaven, *Reconstructing*, 10.

⁷ Fisher, *Slavery in Classical Greece*, 6-7; C. Spicq, 'Le vocabulaire de l'esclavage dans le nouveau testament', *RB* 85 (1978): 201-226 (216-225). Cf. Gschnitzer, *Studien*, 1285 (5).

⁸ Spicq, 'Le vocabulaire', 204. Moreover, writing c. 200 CE Athenaeus describes Kleitarkhos' *Dictionary* as including διάκονος in a list of words for slaves (*Deipn.* 6.267c [GRS 80]). See further, below.

⁹ These statistics have been calculated on the basis of lemma searches of the NA²⁷ text in *Bibleworks 8*.

¹⁰ For the sake of completeness, the term θεράπων is not uncommon in the LXX; however it only appears once in the NT, in a reference to Moses (Heb 3:5), perhaps thereby deliberately echoing LXX vocabulary. The term ἀνδράποδον appears only once in LXX (3 Macc 7:5) and not at all in the NT. However, a similar word is used to include the slave-dealer in an NT vice list (ἀνδραποδιστής; 1 Tim 1:10). While the word σῶμα is common in the NT, it only refers to slaves once (Rev 18:13), in a list of goods which will no longer be traded at the fall of Babylon. Like παῖς, κοράσιον can also refer to a 'little girl', which it does in every instance where it appears in the NT (in the gospels: Matt 9:24-25; 14:11; Mark 5:41-42; 6:22, 28), a feature shared with the LXX. The term ἀκόλουθος does not appear in the NT and only twice in LXX, where it does not refer to a slave. The verb, of course, is common in the gospels but there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that this implies metaphorical slavery. For ἄνθρωπος, see the previous discussion.

Slave Term	Matthew	Mark	Luke
δοῦλος	30	5	26
δούλη	0	0	2
σύνδουλος	5	0	0
δουλεύω	1	0	2
παῖς ¹¹	5	0	5
παιδίσκη	1	2	2
οἰκέτης	0	0	1
οἰκετεία	1	0	0
διάκονος	3	2	0
διακονία	0	0	1
διακονέω	6	5	8

Before considering the words themselves, a brief explanation is necessary. For what this table might misleadingly be thought to imply is that a word which is found in multiple gospels is to be found in *parallel* passages. This is not necessarily the case. For example, it might be assumed that Matthew and Luke both use *παῖς* in double-tradition material, given the five occurrences of the term in each gospel. This, however, is not so. Indeed, in this particular example, only one occurrence of *παῖς* is drawn from double-tradition material. In other words, the gospel writers have not always used the same terms in their shared material, although the reasons for this are seldom clear.¹²

The table, therefore, only shows the frequencies of occurrence of each word found in the gospels. Most of the words occur very few times, to the point of statistical insignificance as they represent only a very low percentage of verses which contain these words. However,

¹¹ This omits those instances where *παῖς* clearly refers to a child or children.

¹² Rather like the variety of usage of slave terms in LXX. See § 4.3.1.1.

this raw statistic should not be taken to imply that the theme of slavery itself is unimportant to the gospel writers or insignificant in their works. Rather, we will only be able to determine the actual significance of the theme of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship when we have examined the significance of the verses and pericopae containing these words, with respect to their place in the gospel narratives.

Therefore, the purpose of having identified this subset of slave-words which occur in the Synoptic Gospels is to lead us to those passages which use slavery as a model for discipleship. Before beginning this examination, however, we need to consider briefly what the words in this subset actually mean, since some of them have been contested in recent scholarship.

5.1.1 *DOULOS* AND RELATED WORDS

There is little question that δούλος, and the feminine δούλη, mean ‘slave’, as opposed to free.¹³ Σύνδουλος correspondingly means ‘fellow slave’,¹⁴ and δουλεύω ‘to be a slave’ (in contrast to δουλῶ, ‘to make someone a slave’). Finley affirms that, ‘*doulos* remained the basic word, so to speak, all through Greek history’,¹⁵ and this is clearly the case in the Synoptic Gospels, since the incidence of the noun δούλος is significantly higher than any other term. However, this was not always the case in biblical literature. In Benjamin Wright’s study of the changing use of slave terms in Second Temple literature, he notes

¹³ The preference of modern Bible versions for the translation ‘servant’, rather than ‘slave’, is not only wrong, but has sadly blinded the majority of readers to the prevalence of slavery within biblical texts. It may have been done with the best of intentions, such as an attempt to make the Bible speak to a supposedly post-slave world, but the practice should now be abandoned for the sake of honest and accurate translation.

¹⁴ However, we should also acknowledge that it may refer to other roles. For example, the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt 18:23-35) uses δούλος and σύνδουλος to refer either to slaves, or, in BDAG’s words, ‘a relationship between an oriental court official and the ruler’, 966.

¹⁵ Finley, et al., *Economy and Society*, 98.

that the word δούλος is hardly found at all in the Pentateuch of the LXX.¹⁶ For example, at no point is the ‘servant of God’ described using δούλος. Where it is used, Zimmerli suggests it is indicative of, ‘especially severe bondage’.¹⁷ The situation changes in the later books of the LXX, where δούλος becomes much more frequently used. However, it is not uniformly used across these later books, but seems to reflect the preferences of the translators.¹⁸ In all of these cases, δούλος is used both for literal chattel slaves, as well as for metaphorical slaves (e.g. those usually translated ‘servants’ in English Bibles) and subordinates of those in authority (e.g. 3 Kgdms 1:9; Neh 2:10). This is in keeping with the broad usage of עֶבֶד.

When we turn to Josephus, whose linguistic context is much closer to that of the gospels, we find that he uses a broader vocabulary for slaves than is found in the LXX.¹⁹ However, δούλος is his preferred term for chattel slave, and he seems to have substituted it for other terms used in the LXX when he is referring to, or otherwise making use of, biblical passages.²⁰ However, it was not a precise term since it sometimes needed to be qualified by other terms for slaves. Therefore, although we should expect to find this majority term for slaves being used for such in the gospels, we should also be aware of the ways in which the meaning is constructed and modified by the context in which it is found.

5.1.2 PAIS AND RELATED WORDS

Παῖς and its feminine diminutive, παιδίσκη, have three senses according to BDAG. Firstly, they can refer to a young boy or girl, secondly, to one’s own children, and thirdly, to a

¹⁶ B.G. Wright, III, ‘*Ebed/Doulos: Terms and Social Status in the Meeting of Hebrew Biblical and Hellenistic Roman Culture*’, *Semeia* 83-84 (1998): 83-111 (90-93).

¹⁷ W. Zimmerli, ‘παις θεου’, in *TDNT* (eds. G. Kittel, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 654-677 (654).

¹⁸ For example, 1 and 2 Kings show a marked preference for δούλος over παῖς, whereas in 1 and 2 Chronicles, the situation is reversed.

¹⁹ Wright, ‘*Ebed/Doulos*’, 98.

²⁰ J.G. Gibbs and L.H. Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Vocabulary for Slavery’, *JQR* 76 (1986): 281-310 (297-299).

male or female slave or servant. As we have said, these different senses can present the translator with a problem, since it is not always obvious whether the word is being used to refer to a child or to a slave. This is a particular difficulty in religious and metaphorical contexts. For example, *παῖς κυρίου* presents a problem in general, but particularly in Wis 2:13 and 12:7. Should it be ‘child of the Lord’ or ‘slave/servant of the Lord’? Because of this potential confusion between senses, Straus indicates that, in the Roman period, *παῖς* and its derivatives were only really used in personal letters, where the recipient would know to whom the term referred.²¹ When the term does rarely appear in the papyri, it is qualified by an explanatory adjective, for example, *δουλικόν παιδίον*. By the time of the late Second Temple period, Josephus is using the term comparatively rarely, seemingly preferring the unambiguous *δοῦλος*.²² This pattern is reflected in the gospel writings also.

5.1.3 *OIKETĒS*

Οἰκέτης is typically translated ‘household servant’ or ‘domestic’, as opposed to a slave who works in the fields or mines, for example. The collective noun, *οἰκετεία*, then means the group of household slaves. These glosses are understandable when we consider the close association with *οἶκος* / *οἰκία*. However, this understanding of the word group needs to be modified slightly, as can be seen in the description of Canaan in the LXX, who will become the *οἰκέτης* of his brothers (Gen 9:25-6), and Jacob, whose brothers were to become his *οἰκέται* (Gen 27:37). As Spicq points out, it is the close familial relationship between them that seems to be determining the use of the term (i.e. *οἰκία*).²³ However, we should bear in mind that in the late Second Temple period, as we have seen, terminology for slaves was interchangeable, so distinctions between our small corpus of terms should not be pressed except on those occasions when the particular context warrants it.

²¹ Straus, ‘La terminologie’, 338.

²² Gibbs and Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Vocabulary for Slavery’, 296.

²³ Spicq, ‘Le vocabulaire’, 219.

5.1.4 *DIAKONOS* AND RELATED WORDS

Διάκονος and its cognate terms, although not terms for a slave *per se*,²⁴ are nevertheless associated with slavery in its traditional definition of ‘waiting at table’. However, of all the terms included in the corpus above, it is the meaning of *διάκονος* which has faced the greatest change in its understanding in the last few decades. John N. Collins, and, more recently, Anni Hentschel discovered, by an extensive comparison of Classical sources, that *διακονία* does not necessarily imply either table-service or lowly status.²⁵ Rather, it is a term which refers to ‘activity of an in-between kind.’²⁶ Therefore, the *διάκονος* is a ‘go-between’, whose particular task is dependent on the role which has been assigned. Given that the terms appear a number of times in our corpus in synonymous parallelism with unambiguous terminology for slaves, it will be important for us to consider them in their syntagmatic relations to other terms in the same pericope.

5.1.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has so far identified the main terms for slaves found in the Synoptic Gospels which will determine the passages to be considered in the pages which follow. Two issues have been raised. Firstly, there is considerable overlap between the different terms used for slaves in this period and, provisionally, we can see that this is reflected in the gospels too. In saying this, we are agreeing with Wright that,

²⁴ Although, as previously mentioned, Athenaeus describes Kleitarkhos’ *Dictionary* as including *διάκονος* in a list of words for slaves (*Deipn.* 6.267c [GRS 80]).

²⁵ J.N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); A. Hentschel, *Diakonia im Neuen Testament: Studien zur Semantik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rolle von Frauen* (WUNT II 226; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). For a helpful summary, see P. Gooder, ‘Diakonia in the New Testament: A Dialogue with John N. Collins’, *Ecclesiology* 3 (2006): 33-56.

²⁶ Collins, *Diakonia*, 335.

Second Temple Jewish literature uses the language of Hellenistic-Roman slave systems and thus reflects the socio-cultural realities of slavery in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean rather than those of ancient Israel.²⁷

This is no great surprise, and echoes the arguments of the previous chapters in which we have seen that evidence for slavery among Jews, and attitudes to slavery among Jewish writers, share the same concerns and values as the rest of the Roman world. Moreover, we have suggested that the metaphor of slavery needs to be understood in the light of its contemporary linguistic and social context, and the verbal data supports this, as we have seen. At the same time, this overview has also pointed to the importance of understanding these terms in the specific narrative contexts in which they are found. While we now have an idea of the range of meanings for these terms, it will be only by examining their actual usage that we will be able to see how these senses can be narrowed down.

5.2 DEFINING THE 'SLAVE' TEXTS

Before turning to the Gospel of Mark, we need to consider which passages will be examined. Based on the lexical study just undertaken, relevant pericopae can be determined by the terminology used within them. In short, wherever we find references to slaves in sayings, parables, or other forms of gospel texts, these will be included for consideration. These key slave terms, then, determine a corpus of passages to be examined, some of which describe actual slaves in each gospel, others of which feature metaphorical slaves or slavery, and will provide the basis for our study of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship.

While this straightforward and easily applied lexical criterion is form-free in its application, the approach has been questioned when it comes to the parables. Indeed, scholars have produced a range of different sets of parables which fall under the general category of 'slave

²⁷ Wright, 'Ebed/Doulos', 84.

parables'. In the remainder of this section, we will consider the alternatives and justify the approach taken in this thesis. The range of alternative parable corpora is represented in the following table.

Name	Reference	Weiser ²⁸	Crossan ²⁹	Scott ³⁰	Beavis ³¹	Kaneen
Wheat and Tares	Matt 13:24-30					✓
Unmerciful Servant	Matt 18:23-35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vineyard Workers	Matt 20:1-13		✓	✓	✓	
Sheep and Goats	Matt 25:31-46					✓
Two Debtors	Luke 7:41-43			✓		
Barren Fig Tree	Luke 13:6-9				✓	
Prodigal Son	Luke 15:11-32					✓
Dishonest Steward	Luke 16:1-8		✓	✓	✓	
Dutiful Servant	Luke 17:7-10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Throne Claimant	Luke 19:12b, 14-15a, 27		✓		✓	
Tenants in the Vineyard	Mark 12:1-12 & pars.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Wise and Foolish Virgins	Matt 22:1-14 & pars.	✓				✓
Doorkeeper	Mark 13:33-37 & pars.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Faithful Servant	Matt 24:45-51 & pars.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Talents	Mark 13:34 & pars.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

²⁸ A. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse der synoptischen Evangelien* (SANT 29; Munich: Kösel, 1971).

²⁹ J.D. Crossan, 'Servant Parables of Jesus', *Semeia* 1 (1974): 17-62. This, in turn, was based on a section of *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (London: Harper & Row, 1973, 1985), 94-117.

³⁰ B.B. Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 205-300.

³¹ M.A. Beavis, 'Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-8)', *JBL* 111 (1992): 37-54.

The earliest categorisation is found in Alfons Weiser's published thesis. In his work he identifies seven parables, based on thematic (i.e. include a master-slave relationship) and lexical (i.e. include *δοῦλος*) grounds. He excludes from his study those parables which feature slaves as ancillary actors. Crossan rightly criticises this approach as a poor means of establishing a thematic unity (although it may yet be a reasonable means of classification, see below). He seeks to establish such a thematic unity himself in the most well-known categorisation, published in the first edition of *Semeia*. This is also the work that takes most seriously the criteria for inclusion. Making assumptions about the parables' origins with the historical Jesus, Crossan identifies 'servant parables' as those which feature a superior-subordinate relationship at a moment of 'critical reckoning' between them.³² In other words, a servant parable is not just one where servants and master play the major roles, but where their relationship is the focus of the narrative. Indeed for Crossan, the actors need not be slaves at all, but simply those in a subordinate relationship (e.g. the vineyard workers in Matt 20:1-13). This leads him to a set of nine parables, excluding some of Weiser's and including others. Crossan's structuralist approach identifies aspects of the literary structure of these parables, but is little concerned with, and hence tells us little, about the social settings of the characters themselves, particularly slaves.

This is in contrast to Scott, whose extensive treatment of Jesus' parables as a whole divides the parables into three social 'locations', one of which is 'Masters and Servants'.³³ Unlike Crossan, the criterion used for inclusion in this group is a fit with the 'patron-client' model of Mediterranean society.³⁴ By this criterion, Scott identifies nine parables, again a grouping that overlaps but is distinct from Crossan's. The patron-client relationship is similar to the master-slave relationship in that it is one of superior and subordinate. However, the similarity stops there and Glancy is right to criticise Scott for using this

³² Crossan, 'Servant Parables', 19.

³³ Scott, *Hear*, 205-300.

³⁴ E.g. B.J. Malina, *The New Testament world : insights from cultural anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 95-97.

model.³⁵ In general, clients enter freely into a relationship with a patron, whereas the slave precisely does not, and is legally defined by this lack of freedom. This critical distinction, represented also in the social definition of slavery,³⁶ means that a patron-client model might be a loose approximation to some of the power dynamics of masters and slaves, but is incapable of telling us anything about slavery itself, since it does not include the crucial aspect of enslavement.

The final collection of parables is offered by Beavis who is less clear about her criteria of choice than the previous interpreters. She adds two parables to Crossan's list, seemingly on the basis that slaves appear in them.³⁷ This may be a pragmatic decision but it is unprincipled, ignoring as it does the distinction that Crossan himself makes between parables which function as servant parables, and those which simply feature servants/slaves.

What this brief survey indicates is that there is a lack of agreement about how the corpus of slave parables should be made up. Some have used literary criteria, some sociological criteria, and some a combination of either of the former plus lexical criteria. My proposal is that the group of parables should be formed on lexical criteria alone. This is partly because we are seeking information about *slaves* in the parables, rather than about parables themselves. Thus, only those parables which feature slaves will be included. Secondly, lexical criteria require the least prejudgment of the sources. For example, both Crossan's literary approach and Scott's sociological approach require a certain prior judgement about the texts, that there *is* a unity of texts which will fit either a modern literary or sociological model. Lexical criteria, on the other hand, select texts on the basis of the language that we

³⁵ J.A. Glancy, 'Slaves and Slavery in the Matthean Parables', *JBL* 119 (2000): 67-90 (69-70); *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 115.

³⁶ O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 38. See § 3.1.1.

³⁷ The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9) and the Waiting Servants (Luke 12:35-38).

know was used at the time, without forming an opinion about whether or not there was any deliberate, planned, connection between them.

Crossan rejects this simple lexical categorisation on the grounds that lexical change occurs in oral tradition, so what may have been a slave parable at one stage of development, may not be by the time it is written down. Furthermore, redactional changes may obscure parables from being included on the basis of lexical criteria alone.³⁸ Both of these criticisms have some validity. However, firstly, if there is any terminological shift at all in the transmission of a slave parable in oral tradition, it seems reasonable to expect the shift to be from a more specific term (e.g. οἰκέτης) to a more generic term (e.g. δοῦλος), as the parable becomes known to, and passed on by, more and more audiences. In fact, when we look at the parables, we find this is indeed the case. In the table below, the first nine parables can be selected purely on the basis of forms of δοῦλος alone. This suggests that the parables have become more general in the course of transmission, and that the generic terminology described above is helpful for identifying appropriate texts. Secondly, for all the benefits of tradition criticism, the results of seeking earlier forms are only ever speculative. The only fixed text we have from which to draw our corpus is that of the gospels themselves. Therefore, we are obliged to live with any redactional changes made by the evangelists (although redaction criticism may also shed light on how the slave parables were being interpreted). So, there are good reasons to use lexical criteria alone to draw up a corpus of slave parables, and the objections do not stand up to scrutiny.

Selecting parables purely on the basis of our existing word groups, described at the start of this chapter, gives us ten parables across all the Synoptic Gospels.³⁹ Using this clear lexical criterion, we arrive at the set of parables listed in the table below.

³⁸ Crossan, 'Servant Parables', 19.

³⁹ As previously mentioned, the first nine parables can be selected on the basis of the forms of δοῦλος alone.

No.	Parable	Matthew	Mark	Luke	§ ⁴⁰
1	Wheat and Tares	13:24-30			127
2	Unmerciful Servant	18:23-35			173
3	Prodigal Son			15:11-32	221
4	Dutiful Servant			17:7-10	232
5	Tenants in the Vineyard	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19	278
6	Wedding Banquet	22:1-14		14:15-24	279
7	Doorkeeper		13:33-37	12:35-38 ⁴¹	294
8	Faithful Servant	24:45-51		12:42-46 ⁴²	297
9	Talents	25:14-30	(13:34) ⁴³	19:11-27 ⁴⁴	299
10	Sheep and the Goats	25:31-46 ⁴⁵			300

⁴⁰ This column refers to the pericope number in *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*.

⁴¹ It should be noted that there is debate about whether the parable of the Doorkeeper in Mark and the parable of the Waiting Servants in Luke are parallels. They certainly both communicate a similar idea and feature the same characters and plot. However, Luke has a significant additional element of reversal where the master serves the slaves. Hence, while they are included together here, it should not be taken as a conclusion on the matter. See C.L. Blomberg, 'When is a Parallel Really a Parallel? A Test Case: The Lucan Parables', *WTJ* 46 (1984): 78-103 (83-85). Note that there is an error in the table on p. 81 of this article which reads 'Matt' when it should read 'Mark' with respect to this parable.

⁴² The two verses which follow the parable in Luke also speak of slaves. Nolland considers 12:47-48a to be 'the mini-parable of the knowledgeable and ignorant servants'. However, I favour the majority view that regards them as sayings attached to the main parable, rather than a separate parable in itself. J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34* (WBC 35B; Dallas: Word, 1993), 700.

⁴³ There is debate over whether this verse forms a parallel with the double-tradition parable of the Talents. However, since the verse is part of the larger Markan parable of the Doorkeeper, which will itself be examined, the verse will be considered as part of this larger context.

⁴⁴ Luke's parable of the Minas is quite different in the detail of its context from the parable of the Talents, although it communicates the same message via the same plot. It may well have been a pre-Synoptic tradition which has diverged into these two parables, or else they may be independent but similar parables. Snodgrass finds the former 'compelling' but the latter 'more likely'. K. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 523, 531.

In percentage terms, this means that ‘slave’ parables make up approximately 32% of Matthew’s parables, 33% of Mark’s parables, and 23% of Luke’s parables.⁴⁶ In each case this is higher than the approximately 14% of rabbinic parables that could be regarded as ‘slave’ parables,⁴⁷ indicating the importance of the metaphor in the parables of the Synoptic Gospels. Moreover, the slaves are generally important to those parables, as Munro puts it, ‘In most instances the slaves are so central that nothing happens without them.’⁴⁸ Our corpus includes single-tradition material, with three parables from Special Matthew (M) and two from Special Luke (L); three parables come from double-tradition material; one parable is found in Mark and Luke, and can be described as ‘not quite triple tradition’ material;⁴⁹ and there is one triple-tradition parable. Therefore, there is no one source which contains all the parables that refer to slaves, which indicates their popularity and pervasiveness in early Christian tradition. As Beavis puts it, this shows ‘that “servanthood” is a leading motif of this early Christian literary type’.⁵⁰ However, it also shows that this lexical approach is an effective means of selecting a range of material. Therefore, in this study, we will be focussing on not just the aforementioned parables in Mark’s Gospel, but also the other slave material that can be identified using our lexical criterion.

⁴⁵ It is very debateable that this parable should be included in the list, since it only contains one occurrence of the verb διακονέω (Matt 25:44). Thus, it does not feature slaves as actors, or, specifically, slavery. However, the way in which this verb is used suggests a particular understanding of the characteristic ‘slave-like’ behaviour of the disciple, and thus it has been retained.

⁴⁶ It is notoriously difficult to know how many parables are in each gospel since the classifications of parables vary. These figures are based on the list of parables in Snodgrass, as the total numbers lie somewhere in-between the extremes. *Stories*, 23. Taking an average of the figures gives a result similar to Munro’s 29.7% for all the parables which gives some confidence in the values. W. Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave: The Social and Economic Origins of Jesus’ Message* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 37; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1998), 329.

⁴⁷ Taking an average of the figures in the Appendix.

⁴⁸ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 329.

⁴⁹ M.S. Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (London: T&T Clark International, 2001), 48-50.

⁵⁰ Beavis, ‘Ancient Slavery’, 37.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has surveyed the range of slave terminology found in the Synoptic Gospels, and noted that the range of vocabulary used is smaller than the total corpus of slave language. This may simply represent the limits of our sources, however, and we have seen that some of the most prominent terms are used. These terms indicate that the evangelists were using common language for slaves to refer to them, and thus, just as we have seen with respect to the understanding and practice of slavery among Jews, there is no terminological evidence for there being any difference between slave-language among Jewish and Roman writers. It will be important, however, to consider how these common terms are used in each particular narrative context. Using this survey of terms, we then set out the lexical criterion that will be used to identify slave passages for consideration in Mark's Gospel. Although there is scholarly debate with respect to the parables, this approach produces a fair and straightforward corpus of slave parables. Moreover, this lexical criterion identifies a range of material of different forms to study, including sayings and parables. This will be the task of the next chapter, as we turn to the material in the Gospel of Mark.

6 – DISCIPLESHIP AS SLAVERY IN MARK

Having seen the key elements of slavery and the associated ideology in previous chapters, in the last chapter, we defined the means by which passages featuring slaves and slavery will be identified. In this chapter, we will examine the metaphorical use of slavery as a model for discipleship in the Gospel of Mark. We will first of all consider the gospel as a whole: its authorship, provenance and structure to see how our investigation fits in with the interests of the gospel writer and readers. Then we will introduce discipleship as the other ‘input space’ to slavery, noting that this topic is fundamental to the gospel, and that the passages which feature slave imagery significantly shape the direction of the gospel as a whole and its perspective on the mission of Christ and his disciples. Thus, the understanding of this metaphor is important for the understanding of Mark. Finally, we will examine the key texts themselves, to develop a conceptual integration network for Mark’s Gospel of the metaphorical relationship DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY.

6.1 THE GOSPEL OF MARK

6.1.1 AUTHORSHIP

The authorship of the second gospel will always be a challenge to consider, given its own determined anonymity¹ and the universal attribution of it to Mark in later Christian writings.² Hengel’s argument that, even if the gospels were originally anonymous, they would need labels (titles or attributions) to distinguish them once two or more were in circulation and in the possession of individual churches, is reasonable if unproven.³ Yet the

¹ There are no ‘hints’ like John 21:24.

² For an indicative list, see W. Telford, *Mark* (T&T Clark Study Guides; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 16. For a detailed examination, see C.C. Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic Interpreter* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 77-191.

³ M. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM, 1985), 74-81.

‘earliest’ actual evidence we have identifying the author (or ‘interpreter’, ‘translator’, ‘middleman’) comes from the second century, among the fragments of Papias, who in turn reports the testimony of ‘the elder’.⁴ In this excerpt, Mark is connected with Peter, as he is in subsequent writings. We should note, however, that this is not necessarily the John Mark of the NT (Mark being a common Roman name), and Papias may not be referring to the *gospel* of Mark at all.⁵

Yet how do we account for this tradition that the second gospel becomes associated with ‘Mark’, as opposed to anyone else? Is it not likely, as Marcus suggests, that ‘the relative insignificance of this person is one reason for thinking that the gospel was actually written by a Mark’?⁶ Boring rightly points out that this argument is not made for the noncanonical gospels.⁷ Rather, the tradition could have originated with Papias. He, in turn, could have based it on 1 Peter 5:13 which is no less historically secure, since many find questionable the authorship of that letter,⁸ and the NT generally witnesses to the relationship between Mark and Paul, rather than Peter.⁹ This can be seen in the relationship between the contents of the gospel and the Pauline literature.¹⁰ For example, Marcus has argued for much more than a similar presentation in Paul and Mark of the meaning of the cross due

⁴ This, of course, is found in the work of the fourth-century historian, Eusebius. For consideration of the implications of this, as well as translation issues, see Black, *Mark*, 82-94.

⁵ Black, *Mark*, 90.

⁶ J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 18.

⁷ M.E. Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 20.

⁸ For a rejoinder (‘nonsense!’), see Hengel, *Studies*, 150 n. 56.

⁹ See n. 14.

¹⁰ See, for example, W. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 164-169; J. Marcus, ‘Mark – Interpreter of Paul’, *NTS* 46 (2000): 473-487. Bird even suggests that the gospel represents an attempt to synthesize *both* Petrine tradition *and* Pauline theological perspectives. While an intriguing and, in some ways attractive thesis, it also shows the difficulty of attributing ‘influences’ and ‘perspectives’ to particular individuals, when the evidence itself is unattributed and unspecific. M.F. Bird, ‘Mark: Interpreter of Peter and Disciple of Paul’, in *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts and Convergences* (eds. M.F. Bird and J. Willitts; LNTS 411; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 30-61.

to common early Christian teaching. Rather, he suggests a direct influence of Pauline teaching on Mark's Gospel.¹¹ Considering the nature of this influence he suggests that, 'a Pauline disciple might have had plausible reasons for doing what Paul did *not* do, namely incorporating the Jesus tradition into his kerygma'.¹² Strangely, Marcus does not draw out the possible implications of this in his commentary.¹³ For, while he accepts authorship of the gospel by a 'Mark', a direct link between Pauline teaching and the gospel would seem to re-open the possibility of it being John Mark himself. If the Pauline letters and Acts are anything to go by, John Mark might be the very 'Pauline disciple' suggested above.¹⁴ Where better for Pauline 'influence' to be derived, than by direct contact between the two?

Naturally, there has not been universal acceptance of the relationship between the perspectives found in the Gospel of Mark and the Pauline letters, nor on the necessity of similarities implying influence. A range of further studies have failed to reach firm conclusions.¹⁵ Yet, it is noteworthy that one comparable area which has gone unexplored (and which will remain so here) is the use of slavery as a metaphor. In both Mark and Paul there are similarities of both presentation and usage which might be suggestive of relationship and merit investigation.¹⁶

¹¹ Marcus, 'Mark – Interpreter of Paul'. For completeness, Crossley suggests that Paul could rather have been influenced by Mark's Gospel, assuming a very early date, although he also recognises that even with such an early date, Paul could still be the source of the influence. J.G. Crossley, 'Mark, Paul and the Question of Influences', in *Paul and the Gospels: Christologies, Conflicts and Convergences* (eds. M.F. Bird and J. Willitts; LNTS 411; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 10-29 (11-12).

¹² Marcus, 'Mark – Interpreter of Paul', 477.

¹³ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 73-75.

¹⁴ See: Acts 12:25; 15:37, 39; evidence is found in all strands of the Pauline corpus: Phm 24; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11.

¹⁵ See, in particular, O. Wischmeyer, et al. eds, *Paul and Mark: Comparative Essays. Part I Two Authors at the Beginnings of Christianity* (BZNTW 198; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014); E.-M. Becker, et al. eds, *Mark and Paul: Comparative Essays. Part II For and Against Pauline Influence on Mark* (BZNTW 199; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

¹⁶ Compare, for example, the similarity in metaphorical language of slavery in Mark 10:44 and 1 Cor 9:19; 2 Cor 4:5; Gal 5:13; Col 3:22.

Given the uncertainty, it seems unwise to draw firm conclusions on the authorship of the second gospel. Moreover, whether John Mark, an unknown Mark, or a completely unidentified individual or group produced the gospel does not obviously affect its interpretation.

6.1.2 AUDIENCE¹⁷

The traditional location for the writing of Mark, found in two second-century sources, is Rome. This is, strictly, independent of any particular identification of the gospel's authorship.¹⁸ Nevertheless, as Black points out, in those second-century sources the gospel is located in Rome only ever in the context of its relationship with Peter.¹⁹ Thus, if the relationship with Peter in these sources is questionable (see above), so may be the relationship with Rome. From this starting point, alternatives to Rome have been suggested, the most popular being Syria.²⁰ As Winn says, 'Though it does not seem Syria has eclipsed Rome in answer to this debate, it does seem to be the location *du jour* for a

¹⁷ There is a question whether the gospels do indeed have only one audience in mind (a 'community'), following the publication of R. Bauckham, *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998). From the economic perspective alone, it seems reasonable to suppose that gospels would be shared between churches and this was the original intention. For an example of the costs of writing a lengthy letter like Romans, shorter than any of the gospels, see, E.R. Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 51-52, 91. Nevertheless, writers write with a particular known audience in mind, consciously or not, and this will be reflected in their style and subjects. This is what this section will investigate regarding the Gospel of Mark.

¹⁸ See B.J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel* (BibInt 65; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 103-105. However, his suggestion that sources like Papias and Irenaeus, which do not mention Rome but do mention Peter, 'assume' their readers would 'immediately think of Rome' is overly confident (104).

¹⁹ C.C. Black, 'Was Mark a Roman Gospel?', *The Expository Times* 105 (1993): 36-40 (36); Black, *Mark*, 225. Cf. 1 Pet 5:13.

²⁰ See, for example, H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (NTL; London: SCM, 1977), 100-105; G. Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 235-249; J. Marcus, 'The Jewish War and the Sitz im Leben of Mark', *JBL* 111 (1992): 441-462.

growing number of Markan interpreters.²¹ These two locations, therefore, will be considered, and referred to as West and East, since to describe the former as the ‘traditional’ location tends to suggest, prematurely, that it has been justifiably superseded. Although scholars such as Hengel have made much of the external evidence,²² it is the internal evidence that is more decisive (not least because there is no direct external evidence for the Syrian locale) and the main points will be examined here.

6.1.2.1 ‘Latinisms’

Mark’s so-called ‘Latinisms’ (i.e. Latin loan-words) are well-known. From *κῆνσος* (‘tax’; 12:14) to *σπεκουλάτωρ* (‘executioner’; 6:27), for example, Mark has been said to contain more Latinisms than ‘any other original Greek literary text’.²³ These are supposedly indicative of a more Latin-speaking milieu, such as Rome. However, Roman terms could be found anywhere in the Roman world and, as Marcus and Theissen point out, some of Mark’s most significant ‘Latinisms’ need not point in a Western direction. For example, Mark’s surprising explanation in 12:42 of the relationship between the Greek coin *λεπτόν* and its Roman equivalent *κοδράντης* need not be understood as a currency conversion for a Western audience, familiar only with the *quadrans*, but rather a clarification of the imprecise value of the *λεπτόν*.²⁴ Similarly, the designation of the woman in 7:26 as ‘*Συροφοινικισσα τω γένει*’ does not necessarily imply an ethnic distinctive familiar in Rome but ‘nonsensical’ in Syria.²⁵ Rather, it may be a description that *originated* in Syria to

²¹ A. Winn, *The Purpose of Mark’s Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda* (WUNT II 245; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 77.

²² Hengel, *Studies*, 1-6.

²³ Hengel, *Studies*, 29. See also A.R. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 148. For an extensive list of words see R.H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 1041-1045.

²⁴ Marcus, ‘Jewish War’, 444-445.

²⁵ Hengel, *Studies*, 29.

distinguish between North and South.²⁶ Yet, while these studies have shown that these and other ‘Latinisms’ do not rule out an Eastern location for the gospel’s creation, they do not account for the presence of Latin grammatical constructions in Mark’s Greek which are typically changed by Matthew and Luke.²⁷ According to Winn, this evidence ‘demonstrates that Mark’s writing, much more so than that of authors of Matthew and Luke, was influenced by Latin syntax’.²⁸ Taken together, the weight of the evidence favours a Western location, due to the more obvious use of the language and coinage.²⁹

6.1.2.2 ‘Local Colour’

Theissen considers that the examination of the ‘local colour’³⁰ included in Mark’s narrative reveals the gospel’s place of origin. He notes the frequent use of rural vocabulary, the agrarian world of the parables and the ‘neighborhood expressions’ which indicate Mark’s focus on the rural areas surrounding towns and cities.³¹ He says, ‘If the world of the narrative reflects something about the world of the narrators, it is hard to imagine the author of Mark’s Gospel in the largest metropolis of the first-century world.’³² The more likely alternative, in his view, is somewhere in rural Syria. Yet the evidence that we have of the development of early Christianity from the letters, supported by Acts, is of an urban movement, centred around the more important cities.³³ Moreover, we should surely not be surprised to find rural imagery in a story which describes events that take place in the

²⁶ Theissen, *Context*, 245-247; Marcus, ‘Jewish War’, 446.

²⁷ E.g. *ἴνα* used in the same way as *ut* following verbs of speaking. B.M.F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (JSNTSup 164; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 34-35.

²⁸ Winn, *Purpose*, 82.

²⁹ Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 98.

³⁰ ‘Lokalkolorit’ being the first word of the German title of Theissen’s *The Gospels in Context*.

³¹ American spelling in Theissen, *Context*, 238-239.

³² Theissen, *Context*, 238-239.

³³ As pointed out by Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 67.

countryside. Indeed, given the likelihood of a community made up of low-status workers,³⁴ many of whom have come to Rome from rural areas to find work, or as slaves, the gospel may have a reassuring familiarity. Moreover, when the narrative moves from the more comfortable rural³⁵ to the urban as the location for Jesus' suffering and the disciples' failings, this may play a symbolic role in the understanding of an urban readership facing persecution that would be lost on country residents. Given the familiarity with both the rural and urban environment, as well as Aramaic, the writer of Mark has very possibly made this move from the former to the latter himself.³⁶ Thus, while the setting of the gospel is clearly rural, this need not determine an Eastern setting, and indeed, a Western setting may well have offered more dynamic possibilities for interpretation.

6.1.2.3 *Place of Persecution*

'Persecution' is a clear Markan theme.³⁷ Most clearly, in 10:30 it is included in the list of 'rewards' for those who leave all for Jesus' sake, and is noticeably absent from the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke (Matt 19:29; Luke 18:30). These 'persecutions' are being received 'now'.³⁸ It is most likely that the emphasis on suffering in both contents and structure³⁹ reflects the fact that the Gospel of Mark is an 'address to a persecuted community' since 'the significance of the book is most pregnant in an actual situation of

³⁴ R.L. Rohrbaugh, 'The Social Location of the Markan Audience', *Int* 47 (1993): 380-395; Black, 'Roman Gospel?'

³⁵ Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel*, 90-91.

³⁶ The geographical 'puzzles' in Mark do not seem to be indicative of either a Western or Eastern provenance. Theissen shows they can be explained in other ways than as simple mistakes. *Context*, 242-245.

³⁷ B.M.F. van Iersel, 'The Gospel According to St Mark - Written for a Persecuted Community?', *NedTTs* 34 (1980): 15-36; Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 28-29. It should be noted that the word 'persecution' need not imply the kind of empire-wide, prolonged persecution of later generations, but rather, the sporadic and localised, yet no less fear-inducing, opposition and violence suggested and described in the rest of the NT, and implied in Mark.

³⁸ The $\nu\nu$ appears only in Mark, and Marcus suggests this is not simply an apocalyptic reference to the present age but an indication of the present reality. *Mark 1-8*, 29.

³⁹ Chapter 4 parallels chapter 13. See, van Iersel, 'Persecuted Community?', 17-19.

persecution'.⁴⁰ The question is which situation, and commentators turn to the detail of chapter 13 for, as Marcus says, 'it seems likely that the prophecies of false messiahs, war, persecution, and betrayal in vv. 6-13 (cf. vv. 21-22) are part of the present experience of Mark's community'.⁴¹ We should certainly be cautious about the potential obscurity of the apocalyptic imagery and not leap to this conclusion, but Mark's aside to the reader in 13:14 does point in this direction.

In terms of an Eastern setting for the gospel, Theissen considers that 'Mark's Gospel is marked by the proximity of war'.⁴² This is the activity leading up to the destruction of the Temple and its aftermath. In particular, he notes that the messianic pretenders of 13:6, 21-22 fit well with Vespasian's propaganda aimed at the people of Syro-Palestine which legitimated his rule with signs and miracles.⁴³ The possible threat of the Romans setting up a pagan cult on the site of the Temple (13:14) would support such opposition to the authorities.⁴⁴ An alternative option is set forth by Marcus, who suggests that these 'false Christs' may be found among the Jewish revolutionaries, who had prompted the war in such close proximity to a Syrian church.⁴⁵ The 'abomination of desolation' was rather the Zealot Eleazor occupying the Temple prior to the siege of Jerusalem.⁴⁶ In both cases, the concerns about oppression, trials, familial betrayal, and the universal mission (13:9-13) are interpreted against the backdrop of the church in Syria. Theissen notes, for example, that 'the son of the "chief magistrate of the Jews" in Antioch denounced his father for allegedly having plotted to burn down the city' and, as a result, the father, along with other Jews, were burned to death in the theatre.⁴⁷ A general antipathy towards Jews, of which this is

⁴⁰ Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, 29, the latter quote coming from van Iersel.

⁴¹ Marcus, 'Jewish War', 447.

⁴² Theissen, *Context*, 271.

⁴³ Theissen, *Context*, 266-268.

⁴⁴ Theissen, *Context*, 263.

⁴⁵ Marcus, 'Jewish War', 448.

⁴⁶ Marcus, 'Jewish War', 454.

⁴⁷ Theissen, *Context*, 269.

one example, would have included the Christians. Alternatively, according to Marcus, the Christians may have suffered at the hands of revolutionary Jews, for their acceptance of gentiles, a theme in Mark's Gospel.⁴⁸

These two quite different interpretations of the data indicate the speculative nature of the enterprise, particularly when taken with Theissen's telling statement, 'although we have no evidence of the persecution of Christians in Syria ...'.⁴⁹ While the context of the Jewish War in general makes sense, this does not guarantee an Eastern locale. Carter, for example, demonstrates that 'vividness' is no guarantee of 'geographical proximity' by comparing Mark 13 with the way that the news of Gaius' threat to the Temple in c. 40 CE is received by Philo in Puteoli, described in the *Embassy to Gaius*.⁵⁰ There, feelings and emotions run equally high, despite the great distance between the recipients of the news and the events themselves. Thus, a Western provenance cannot be ruled out. Indeed, some of Theissen's arguments about opposition to Roman authorities would seem to point at least as well to a Western locale.

This is because the theory of a Roman origin interprets Mark 13 against the background of Nero's persecution of Christians⁵¹ in 64 CE (or perhaps a few years later).⁵² A number of elements emerge. Based on Tacitus' description of the events (*Ann.* 15.44), the Christians were arrested, betrayed one another, and large numbers were convicted for their 'hatred of the human race'. Here we potentially find the oppression, trials, and familial betrayal of 13:9-13, with even the lexical similarity of the, presumably mutual, hatred 'by all' (13:13).⁵³

⁴⁸ J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Studies of the New Testament and its World; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 117-118, 201; Marcus, 'Jewish War', 461-462.

⁴⁹ Theissen, *Context*, 268.

⁵⁰ W. Carter, 'Mark and Syria? An Assessment', *ExpTim* 125 (2014): 531-537 (534-536).

⁵¹ Although it is perhaps not quite so 'obvious' as Hengel suggests. Hengel, *Studies*, 23.

⁵² J.R. Donahue, 'Windows and Mirrors: The Setting of Mark's Gospel', *CBQ* 57 (1995): 1-26 (22 and n. 79).

⁵³ Donahue, 'Windows', 20-23.

The punishment for these ‘crimes’, according to Tacitus, included crucifixion. Incigneri suggests that the real fear of Mark’s community is also of literal crucifixion, and therefore execution by legal authorities – the Romans.⁵⁴ Apart from the explicit mention in 8:34, he also points to the trial description which leads to *θανατώω* (13:12), a word which ‘always relates to an execution by legal authorities’.⁵⁵ This need not, however, exclude an Eastern origin in the way that he imagines, as the response to the Jewish uprising in Galilee brought a Roman response from Syria.⁵⁶ There might well have been fears of reprisals against any who were associated with that area, as Mark and his community could have been. However, it does indicate that the living memory of Nero’s persecutions in Rome would fit well with the anxious concerns of chapter 13, particularly as there were no doubt lingering suspicions both within and without the church following these events, as well as guilt and recriminations over failure and betrayal.⁵⁷ The reports of the Jewish War in the East perhaps heightened concerns of a Nero *redivivus*, and the potential repeat of past trouble.⁵⁸ The general context of upheaval in the Roman empire is acknowledged by Theissen as the possible root of some of the fears: ‘When Jesus immediately afterward in the dialogue about Beelzebub, says that a “kingdom” divided against itself cannot stand, readers probably thought of the Roman Empire, disrupted in 68-69 by civil wars ... a reminder of those wars in 13:8’.⁵⁹ Such thoughts could, of course, occur anywhere in the empire, but might most naturally be expected to take place in Rome, where the political significance of ‘the year of the four emperors’ was played out.

⁵⁴ Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 90-92.

⁵⁵ Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*, 91.

⁵⁶ Jos. *BJ*. 2:289.

⁵⁷ 1 Clement seems to witness to internal division. Donahue, ‘Windows’, 23. The same can be seen in the letter to the Romans (e.g. Rom 14). This leads Black to say, ‘The interaction of Roman Christians with other social groups in the first century appears to have been dissonant: engaged with a culture in which they felt marginalised; nurtured in, but increasingly divorced from, Judaism; striving to achieve critical stability within an empire with which they were in confrontation; struggling toward Christian solidarity among themselves.’ *Mark*, 239.

⁵⁸ Theissen, *Context*, 265-266; Hengel, *Studies*, 25-28.

⁵⁹ Theissen, *Context*, 261.

In addition to persecution, the further aspect of universal mission, ‘and the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations’ (13:10), *could* make sense in an Eastern setting,⁶⁰ but surely makes more sense at the heart of the empire, to which and from which all roads lead. Thus, although the evidence is not absolutely determinative, there at least is evidence of persecution of Christians in Rome, probably in recent memory,⁶¹ and it can be seen to fit the contents of Mark’s Gospel, providing a suitable context in which the text might be understood.

In this brief investigation of the potential provenance of Mark’s Gospel, much more could be said, such as the likely mixed community of readers, the place of the Gentile mission and the purpose of Mark’s rhetoric.⁶² However, the most important elements have been discussed and, in my view, both the ‘Latinisms’ and the concrete context of persecution point more towards a Western origin, while the ‘local colour’ does not count against it. Many scholars are commendably cautious about reaching a firm conclusion. Black, for example, refuses to ‘cut the Gordian knot, [and] vindicate the majority patristic opinion’.⁶³ However, as Winn says, ‘there is no significant internal evidence against locating Mark’s composition in Rome’,⁶⁴ and Black is at least able to affirm a ‘congruity’ between the Second Gospel and what we know of Christianity in the first century in Rome.⁶⁵ In a

⁶⁰ Theissen, *Context*, 270-271.

⁶¹ Incigneri suggests the ongoing nature of the troubles. *Gospel to the Romans*, 156-252.

⁶² On the latter, see especially the following, all of which read Mark against a background in Rome: D. Senior, “‘With Swords and Clubs ...’ — The Setting of Mark’s Community and His Critique of Abusive Power’, *BTB* 17 (1987): 10-20; Donahue, ‘Windows’; Incigneri, *Gospel to the Romans*; Winn, *Purpose*. Rohrbaugh reaches a different conclusion, but starts from the assumption of a rural, Eastern setting (380). His twin dilemmas (392) of (i) division between Jew and Gentile on the grounds of purity, and (ii) payment of taxes, could both still have meaning in a Western setting. Rohrbaugh, ‘Social Location’.

⁶³ Black, ‘Roman Gospel?’, 39.

⁶⁴ Winn, *Purpose*, 83.

⁶⁵ Black, *Mark*, 237.

similar fashion, Carter concludes an article assessing the argument for the Gospel of Mark's Syrian provenance by indicating that it 'does not make a convincing case'.⁶⁶ He says much the same thing about locating it in Rome in a more recent introductory book on the gospels.⁶⁷ Even so, following this discussion he has a final section titled 'Pick One? Rome' in which he says,

I am going to choose one location – the city of Rome – ... not because I am persuaded the Gospel was *written* there – I don't know – but because we can be fairly sure that it was, at least, *read* there.⁶⁸

In other words, the pull of the evidence for some association between the Gospel of Mark and Rome is too strong to ignore. For this reason, as well as the weight of the evidence, I am going to do the same in what follows – assume a Roman context for the gospel.

This decision helps to situate the gospel in a more concrete context of slaves and slavery. Quite apart from the general recognition of the extensive presence of slaves in Rome, seen in chapter 3, Black observes that,

From the second century B.C. onward a substantial portion of Rome's population consisted of non-Romans who, as enslaved war captives, had been imported from their homelands in the Hellenized East ... Eleven of the twenty-six persons in Romans 16 bear names that are held by slaves⁶⁹

Hence, we have evidence that, among the Roman Christians not so very long before the writing of Mark's Gospel, there was a considerable number of slaves or former slaves who were sufficiently well-known and important to early Christianity (perhaps as letter

⁶⁶ Carter, 'Mark and Syria', 537.

⁶⁷ W. Carter, *Telling Tales: An Introduction to the New Testament Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 78-79.

⁶⁸ Carter, *Telling Tales*, 80.

⁶⁹ Black, *Mark*, 226. For detailed consideration of this, suggesting that two-thirds of the names have slave origins (183), see P. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 170-183.

carriers?) that Paul can greet them. They may even have been congregation leaders.⁷⁰

Therefore, if the Gospel of Mark were to be received by such a group, any teaching which connected slavery and discipleship would not be of simply academic interest, but engage with the very identity of those slaves struggling to follow Christ in difficult times.

Having said this, however, it is important to note that none of the exegetical conclusions of this chapter depend on a Roman provenance. As previous chapters have shown, slaves were everywhere in the Roman empire, even where the presence of particular individuals can no longer be distinguished.

6.1.3 DATING

It will have become clear from the preceding discussion, that I think the most likely date for the Gospel of Mark will be:

(i) in fairly recent memory of the Neronian persecution – this places the gospel after 64 CE.

(ii) during the period of tumult following the death of Nero – this places the gospel after 68 CE.

(iii) during the apocalyptic fervour of the Jewish War (66-70 CE) very possibly shortly after the destruction of the Temple due to the consequent fear such an event would produce – this would place the gospel around 70 CE.

Thus, a date of 70 CE would allow time for the development of the church in Rome, as well as the traditions of Jesus. A Jewish disciple or disciples most likely moved from Jerusalem to Rome, bringing with them a knowledge of Aramaic traditions, but also becoming

⁷⁰ R. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 950-953.

embedded in a divided community of Greek-speaking Jewish and gentile Christians living in the shadow of persecution and political upheaval, as well as the climactic events in Jerusalem and Palestine. The continued relationship of Roman Christians with the rest of this 'diaspora' can be seen in the use to which Mark's Gospel is subsequently put in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, probably produced in the East and West respectively.⁷¹ Thus, to be clear, it will be assumed that Mark was the first canonical gospel to be written, and serves as one of the sources for the other Synoptic Gospels.

6.1.4 STRUCTURE

It is valuable to be able to situate the relevant texts within the structure of Mark's Gospel. However, identifying this structure has proven to be a challenging proposition with many different variations proposed.⁷² Yet few would go so far as Gundry in suggesting that the gospel is a 'a collage, not a diptych or a triptych or any other carefully segmented portrayal of Jesus'.⁷³ Instead, as Larsen points out, 'the differences in proposed outlines seem to be in the details of the structure rather than in the broad picture.'⁷⁴ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie caution that the stylistic devices used in oral storytelling mean 'it is really not possible to make a linear outline of Mark's story'.⁷⁵ Certainly, individual episodes are linked through repetition.⁷⁶ This need not necessarily mean, however, that there is no overall structure, nor that, if there is one, it must have been consciously crafted and intended. It may be that a structure simply emerged through the telling of Mark's story which the reader now perceives. Larsen indicates that commentators have identified structure on the basis of

⁷¹ See, for example, Theissen, *Context*, 290-291.

⁷² For a helpful summary and critique, see K.W. Larsen, 'The Structure of Mark's Gospel: Current Proposals', *Currents in Research* 3 (2004): 140-160.

⁷³ Gundry, *Mark*, 1049.

⁷⁴ Larsen, 'Structure', 141.

⁷⁵ D.M. Rhoads, et al., *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 48.

⁷⁶ A well-known illustration of this, coupled with a source critical explanation, can be seen in P.J. Achtemeier, 'Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenaes', *JBL* 89 (1970): 265-291.

geographical, theological, and literary grounds, as well as the potential *Sitz im Leben* of the recipients.⁷⁷ These features need not be mutually exclusive.⁷⁸

The simplest structure is to divide the gospel into two halves, around the recognition of Christ from 8:27 onwards. This has a lot in its favour. After this point there are changes of vocabulary, characters, and the presentation of Christ's mission.⁷⁹ As Larsen puts it, 'if the gospel had stopped at 8.26, Jesus would be a great prophet, teacher, healer, but he would not have been the crucified Messiah'.⁸⁰ Other factors include the geographical shift from Galilee towards Jerusalem, and the confusion of the disciples progressing from a 'lack of understanding to misunderstanding' at the 'midpoint'.⁸¹

Yet these features of geography and discipleship point to a slightly more complex tripartite structure which includes a 'central section', focussing on teaching in and around Galilee but 'on the way', where the demands of discipleship are laid out in accompaniment to Christ's own demanding future. As will be explored in more detail, below, this section is carefully structured, being demarcated at each end by healings of blind men, and including the triple passion predictions. The majority of the rest of the material in this section, although difficult to structure, comes under the common themes of Jesus' true identity and authority, and the role of the disciples in response to this.

Taking this central section into account gives the Gospel of Mark a structure as follows:⁸²

- i) Prologue and Introductory Section (Mark 1:1-13).
- ii) Major Section 1 – Galilean ministry of miracles and teaching (Mark 1:14-8:21).

⁷⁷ Larsen, 'Structure'.

⁷⁸ Telford, *Mark*, 102.

⁷⁹ Larsen, 'Structure', 142.

⁸⁰ Larsen, 'Structure', 142.

⁸¹ Rhoads, et al., *Mark*, 126.

⁸² This is similar, but not identical, to the structures found in J.R. Donahue and D.J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (SP 2; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 23-25; Boring, *Mark*, 4-6.

- iii) Hinge 1 – First healing of blind man (Mark 8:22-26).
- iv) Major Section 2 – Central Section featuring passion predictions and discipleship discourse (Mark 8:27-10:45).
- v) Hinge 2 – Second healing of blind man, Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52).
- vi) Major Section 3 – Jerusalem ministry of opposition, death and resurrection (Mark 11:1-16:8).

In the above presentation, items (iii) and (v) represent ‘hinges’, pericopae which serve both to conclude the preceding sections and introduce those that follow. The lack of symmetry resulting from the absent concluding section⁸³ is part of Mark’s artistry, leaving the reader to provide their own conclusion. Thus, the thread that runs from the question ‘Who do you say that I am?’ (8:29), as Abbott says, ‘implies a follow-up question: “What are you going to do about it?”’ From this perspective, Mark’s gospel is nothing less than an invitation to discipleship.⁸⁴ If so, then it is significant that the particular texts we are interested in, featuring the metaphorical use of slavery, are only found in the second ‘half’ of the gospel, appearing after Peter’s declaration of Christ, in major sections two and three. The consequence of this is that they feature alongside the steadily increasing tensions of opposition and the expectation of the cross. They are also accompanied by the growing misunderstanding of the disciples. Thus, the structure of the gospel suggests that these texts will be associated both with Christ’s suffering (as opposed to miraculous deliverance in the first ‘half’), as well as attempts to explain the relationship between discipleship (of both gospel characters and the reader) and Christ’s passion and beyond. As we will see, this is indeed the case.

⁸³ I do not consider 16:1-8 to be a clearly separate ‘epilogue’ as some do, as the section is not clearly demarcated and the attribution implies more of a sense of conclusion than the text provides; for example, F.J. Moloney, *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 54; E. Adams, *Parallel Lives of Jesus: Four Gospels, One Story* (SPCK, 2011), 46-47.

⁸⁴ W. Abbott, ‘Discipleship in Mark: Two Unlikely Models’, *Landas* 13 (1999): 59-80 (77).

However, before turning to these texts which link slavery with discipleship, we will look at the other, more familiar, ‘input space’ of this metaphorical partnership: discipleship and the disciples in Mark.

6.2 DISCIPLESHIP

6.2.1 DEFINING DISCIPLESHIP

In Classical Greek, Wilkins identifies a ‘general’ and a ‘technical’ usage of the word μαθητής (‘disciple’): either ‘learner’, in the former case, or ‘adherent’, in the latter.⁸⁵ Typically, commentators assume this more general sense prevails in the gospels also.⁸⁶ However, Wilkins observes the shift to the more technical sense in Hellenistic writings, where it ultimately becomes a *terminus technicus* for ‘adherent’ in the post-NT period.⁸⁷ This is the case in Mark’s Gospel where, as Kingsbury says, ‘the disciple is, in effect, one who is a committed follower of Jesus’.⁸⁸ This is not to say, *contra* Wilkins, that learning is no longer an element in the usage of the word, for ‘disciple’ continues to be used frequently in association with Jesus role as ‘teacher’;⁸⁹ however, it does alert us to the particular discipleship relationship with Jesus which extends beyond the body of his teaching alone.

⁸⁵ There is also a restricted sense of an ‘institutional pupil’ of the Sophists, but this is less common. M.J. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 11-42. See also, K.H. Rengstorff, ‘Μανθάνω, Καταμανθάνω, Μαθητής, Συμμαθητής, Μαθήτρια, Μαθητεύω’, in *TDNT* (eds. G. Kittel, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 390-461 (417-418).

⁸⁶ E.g. R. Riesner, ‘From the Messianic Teacher to the Gospels of Jesus Christ’, in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (eds. T. Holmén and S.E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 405-446 (414); Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 29; J.R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 110; B. Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 151.

⁸⁷ Wilkins, *Discipleship*, 42.

⁸⁸ J.D. Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 91.

⁸⁹ S. Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher: Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the Matthean Community* (ConBNT 24; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), 222.

There have been frequent attempts to compare Jesus' 'model' with others. For example, Perkins identifies four models of teaching in the ancient world: philosopher-teachers (e.g. Epicurus), sages and teachers of wisdom (e.g. Yeshua ben Sira), teachers of the Law: scribes, Pharisees and rabbis (e.g. Hillel). and prophets and visionaries (e.g. John the Baptist).⁹⁰ There are decided differences between these groups as they do not all have an educative aim in the traditional sense, for example. However, they do indicate, at a general level, different kinds of master-disciple relationship. Thus, Wilkins can say that, 'Jesus took a commonly occurring phenomenon – a master with his disciples – and used it as an expression of the kind of relationship he would develop with his followers'.⁹¹

Jesus does not fit easily into any of the models identified elsewhere but develops a distinctive approach⁹² which focuses on the relationship with him, as much as on his teaching, where disciples are called to follow perpetually, and with 'dimensions of discipleship' including 'spiritual', 'ethical' and 'community life' (see further, below).⁹³ It is hard to see this approach being influenced by the philosophical schools since,⁹⁴ as Hezser suggests, Jewish education in Palestine, at least as reflected in the rabbinic literature,

⁹⁰ P. Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1990), 3-22.

⁹¹ M.J. Wilkins, 'Disciples and Discipleship', in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. J.B. Green; Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 202-212 (203).

⁹² I hesitate to use the word 'unique', found frequently in Wilkins, as it claims too much given the limited evidence. For example, 'Disciples and Discipleship', 203, 205. Shiner uses the same description, but of the multiple teacher-disciple relationships she discusses: 'Each portrait of a teacher and his followers examined in this study is unique in many ways.' In other words, individuals are individual. W.T. Shiner, *Follow me! Disciples in Markan Rhetoric* (SBLDS 145; Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 289.

⁹³ M.J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 134-141.

⁹⁴ We should acknowledge that there are some similarities between philosophical schools and what is represented of Jesus' teaching in the Gospel of Mark, as well as the way it is represented, but this need not imply historical influence. See V.K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). For criticism, see Shiner, *Follow*, 22-28.

constituted an ‘indigenous’ education which ‘competed’ against the Hellenistic schools.⁹⁵ Besides, formal education was for the minority.⁹⁶ Consequently, the most likely educational influence upon Jesus was the synagogue.⁹⁷ Even so, as we will see, Jesus does not rely on existing authorities or established structures, but instead develops a ‘charismatic’ following.⁹⁸

6.2.2 JESUS THE TEACHER

The *Testimonium Flavianum* famously describes Jesus as a ‘teacher’ (διδάσκαλος; *Jos. Ant.* 18.63). Mark’s Gospel is only second behind Luke in the number of times that Jesus is directly addressed as ‘teacher’ (διδάσκαλος), by friend and enemy alike.⁹⁹ He is also addressed as ‘rabbi’ (רַבִּי, ῥαββί; Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45), an address used for teachers in first-century Palestine.¹⁰⁰ The reasonable question to ask, therefore, is how does Jesus teach?

Riesner points out that, although Jesus is depicted as teaching in synagogues, the typical location for his teaching is outdoors, before large crowds.¹⁰¹ Thus, his teaching is not and cannot be easily restricted to a select group (although there are clearly examples of this –

⁹⁵ C. Hezser, ‘The Torah Versus Homer: Jewish and Greco-Roman Education in Late Roman Palestine’, in *Ancient Education and Early Christianity* (eds. M.R. Hauge and A.W. Pitts; LNTS 533; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 5-24 (5-6).

⁹⁶ Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher*, 21.

⁹⁷ R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer: eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* (WUNT II 7; Tübingen: Mohr, 1984), 123-152, 222-227, 244-245.

⁹⁸ Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher*, 23-26.

⁹⁹ Ten times in Mark, as opposed to eleven times in Luke. The latter removes the term from the lips of the disciples. See R. Riesner, ‘Jesus as Preacher and Teacher’, in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (ed. H. Wansbrough; JSNTSup 64; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 185-210 (187).

¹⁰⁰ Riesner, ‘Messianic Teacher’, 415. As Hengel rightly points out, this should not be misunderstood to imply the later ‘office’ of rabbi in Judaism: ‘to his contemporaries Jesus was not at all like a scribe of the rabbinical stamp’. M. Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and his Followers* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 42.

¹⁰¹ Riesner, ‘Jesus as Preacher’, 192.

including some of the passages we will look at in Mark), but is offered to ‘all’ in the manner of the prophetic teaching of the OT which is addressed to ‘Israel’.¹⁰² It has an untutored authority, recognised by the crowds (Mark 1:22), which derives from the person of Jesus himself, setting his teaching apart from that which is reliant on prior traditions since Jesus’ authority alone is sufficient.¹⁰³ His teaching has a ‘vivid style’, making use of strong contrasts and hyperbole, wit and wordplay, riddle and paradox.¹⁰⁴ The consequence is that his teaching style is impressive and understandable, catching the attention and explaining with familiar imagery.¹⁰⁵ It is possible that these features made Jesus’ teaching ‘memorable’ – it certainly made it memorable.¹⁰⁶

The form of Jesus’ teaching can be broadly divided into two categories: sayings and parables (or ‘proverbs and parables’),¹⁰⁷ or ‘aphoristic’ and ‘narrative meshalim’.¹⁰⁸ In the former category, parallelism is common (found in around 80% of cases), demonstrating both a link with traditional wisdom sayings as well as facilitating recall.¹⁰⁹ Most obviously in the parabolic material, but also in the sayings teaching, the use of metaphorical imagery – where something is understood by means of something else – is common, whether that be apocalyptic or agricultural imagery, for example.¹¹⁰ This feature is so ‘obvious’ as to often go without mention. Yet this does not make it any less worthy of study.

¹⁰² Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher*, 30-32. Nevertheless, with Byrskog we should remember that Jesus is ‘first of all the teacher of his own group of followers’. Byrskog, *Jesus*, 222.

¹⁰³ Riesner, ‘Jesus as Preacher’, 208-209.

¹⁰⁴ Riesner, ‘Jesus as Preacher’, 201.

¹⁰⁵ Riesner, ‘Jesus as Preacher’, 192-193.

¹⁰⁶ Riesner, ‘Jesus as Preacher’, 193. He considers his notion that Jesus’ words were intended for ‘learning by heart’ to have been ‘the least persuasive part of my reconstruction’, ‘Jesus as Preacher’, 203. For the detail, see Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 392-404.

¹⁰⁷ Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher*, 42.

¹⁰⁸ B. Gerhardsson, ‘The Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels’, *NTS* 34 (1988): 339-363 (341).

¹⁰⁹ Riesner, ‘Messianic Teacher’, 417-418; Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 392-404.

¹¹⁰ For example, Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher*, 42-60.

The passages to be explored in Mark's Gospel which illustrate the teaching on discipleship by means of the metaphor of slavery are therefore highly characteristic of Jesus' teaching: they are found in both saying and parable forms; the sayings demonstrate parallelism; and they use vivid imagery to communicate in an understandable way, making use of strong contrasts and paradox. However, it is not only Jesus' teaching that is distinctive in Mark, the disciples are also.

6.2.3 THE MARKAN DISCIPLES

While Mark's Gospel, as we have seen, portrays Jesus as a teacher and puts discipleship issues to the fore (as Donahue and Harrington say, 'Every major section begins with a discipleship pericope'),¹¹¹ Mark is also the gospel where the challenges of discipleship are most clearly spelled out through the misunderstandings and failures of the Twelve. Telford suggests that the case against them,¹¹²

when filled out, it becomes almost damning: the disciples bar others (9.39; 10.13-14); they are status conscious (9.33-37; 10.28-31, 35-45); they are fearful, afraid, cowardly (4.40-41; 6.50-51; 9.6, 32; 10.32; 14.50); they fail to take up their cross like true disciples (8.34-38); they are exhorted to have faith but admonished for the lack of it (4.40; 9.19; 11.22); they are unable to perform miracles (9.18, 19, 23); they are unable to keep watch but betray, forsake, and deny Jesus (ch. 14); they are unaware of the true identity of Jesus (namely the suffering Son of God); they fail to comprehend, in the first part of the Gospel, this secret, and positively misunderstand its implications in the second half.

Explanations of this phenomenon are well known, and will not be rehearsed here in any detail, suffice to say that they are often divided into 'polemical' and 'pastoral' (or 'pedagogic' or 'parenetic') explanations.¹¹³ In the first case, emphasis is placed on Mark's critique of the disciples. For example, Weeden goes so far as to say that, 'Mark is

¹¹¹ Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 30.

¹¹² Telford, *Mark*, 109-110.

¹¹³ Telford, *Mark*, 142. See also J.S. Hanson, 'The Disciples in Mark's Gospel: Beyond the Pastoral/Polemical Debate', *HBT* 20 (1998): 128-155.

assiduously involved in a vendetta against the disciples'.¹¹⁴ In this case, readers are supposed to distance themselves from the disciples and repudiate their particular beliefs (e.g. a triumphalist Christology). The alternate view also lays emphasis on the disciples' failures, but only because they both serve to highlight the distinctiveness of Jesus' person and teaching, and are typical of discipleship in general and Mark's readers in particular. So, for example, Best can say, 'While Mark pictures the historical disciples as challenged to journey after Jesus it is not his primary purpose to record how they reacted but to summon his own community to enter more seriously on the same journey.'¹¹⁵ Elsewhere, he says, 'the Christian can identify with [the disciples] in their failure and in their faithfulness'.¹¹⁶ Thus, opposite to the polemical view, the reader is supposed to identify with the Twelve in the pastoral explanation. Black has noted the incongruity of these two quite different explanations arising from the same data, laying the blame primarily with redaction criticism as an interpretative method.¹¹⁷

More recent narrative critical readings have tended to focus more on the reader's identification with the disciples. Powell shows that this arises from 'realistic empathy' (as opposed to 'idealistic empathy'), since the disciples 'are characterized by traits likely to be shared by the reader'.¹¹⁸ These approaches have pointed to how the reader might be expected to react in light of the direction of narrative flow. Kingsbury, for example, suggests that the narrative anticipates that the disciples will be reconciled to Jesus after his

¹¹⁴ T.J. Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 50.

¹¹⁵ E. Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup 4; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 1981), 246.

¹¹⁶ E. Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Studies of the New Testament and its World; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983), 83.

¹¹⁷ It is 'radically if not fatally flawed'. In addition to Best and Weeden, Black also compares the work of Mayes whose approach he describes as 'conservative'. C.C. Black, *The Disciples According to Mark: Markan Redaction in Current Debate* (JSNTSup 27; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 203.

¹¹⁸ M.A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship New Testament Series; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 56-57.

resurrection, when they will eventually understand his teaching fully.¹¹⁹ Rhoads, Dewey and Michie are more cautious, recognising the genuine openness of the ending. Nevertheless, they see the narrative as encouraging the reader to identify with the disciples, and bringing hope that, just as Jesus could promise to ‘go ahead of’ the disciples after their failure (16:7), so there can be new beginnings for the reader also.¹²⁰ Danove, similarly, recognises that the negative evaluation that the reader makes of the disciples’ failures is a cause for self-reflection.¹²¹ At the end of the gospel, ‘The disciples are narratively constrained from undertaking the required [corrective] action, but the real audience is not.’¹²² Finally, Hanson suggests that the disciples are so bound up with the gospel itself, that their ultimate success (and that of the audience) is necessary to justify God’s character and power. ‘Without a future for the disciples, there is no good news, only failure and darkness; if the disciples’ future is closed, there can be no future for the audience either.’¹²³

Hence, we see that there is a general move towards something akin to the ‘pastoral’ purpose as an explanation for the actions of the Twelve. This is either a very conscious intention on Mark’s part, or else a consequence of the story being told in this way. Either way, it results in a connection between the discipleship of the gospel and the discipleship of the reader, which is what the use of the slavery metaphor would suggest also. We can, therefore, now turn to consider the ‘input space’ that would represent discipleship in the conceptual blend.

¹¹⁹ Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 112-117.

¹²⁰ Rhoads, et al., *Mark*, 130.

¹²¹ This is put particularly clearly by R.C. Tannehill, ‘The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role’, in *The Interpretation of Mark* (ed. W. Telford; Studies in New Testament Interpretation; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 169-195 (178-179). Article first published in 1977.

¹²² P. Danove, ‘The Narrative Rhetoric of Mark’s Ambiguous Characterization of the Disciples’, *JSNT* 70 (1998): 21-38 (37).

¹²³ Hanson, ‘The Disciples in Mark’, 21.

6.2.4 DISCIPLESHIP AS AN ‘INPUT SPACE’

Wilkins identifies a number of features that he considers, together, describe Jesus’ distinctive approach to discipleship. We can categorise them into ‘call’ and ‘response’; in other words, that which is initiated by Jesus, and that which is enacted by the disciples.¹²⁴

‘Call’	‘Response’
<p><u>Called to follow</u>: unlike the rabbis and philosophers, whose students choose them, Jesus apparently chooses those who will follow (at least, those who become part of the ‘inner circle’).¹²⁵</p>	<p><u>Attachment to Jesus</u>: Disciples are pictured as literally following Jesus wherever he goes. Such imitation links the disciple to the person of Jesus as much as to his teachings. The expectation is not that disciples will ultimately become masters (although they will ‘make disciples’), but rather that they will continue to ‘follow Jesus’ even after he is no longer around.</p>
<p><u>Counting the cost</u>: for many, but not all, being called involves giving up wealth, social status, livelihood and home. Itinerant discipleship is the predominant, although not the only, model.¹²⁶</p>	<p><u>Continuing to count the cost</u>: the challenge to ‘deny oneself’, expressed in terms of bearing the cross, is an ongoing characteristic of discipleship.</p>

¹²⁴ The following table is based on Wilkins, ‘Disciples and Discipleship’, 205-207. For a similar list, with more explanation but less clear delineation, see the earlier Wilkins, *Following*, 100-111.

¹²⁵ See the discussion in Rengstorf, ‘Μανθάνω’, 444-445. Also, Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and his Followers*, 50-57.

¹²⁶ This is particularly the case in Mark. For a sociological model which holds together the ‘wandering charismatics’ and ‘settled supporters’, but noting the primacy of the first group in the gospel traditions, see G. Theissen, *The First Followers of Jesus: A Sociological Analysis of the Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1978), 8-27.

'Call'	'Response'
<p><u>Breakdown of barriers (status, religion, gender, nationalism):</u> Jesus chooses those to join his group who were unexpected by his opponents.¹²⁷ 'A decisive factor in his form of discipleship is that Jesus called to himself those who, in the eyes of sectarians, did not seem to enjoy the necessary qualifications for fellowship with him (Mt 9:9-13; Mk 2:13-17).'¹²⁸</p>	<p><u>Becoming like Jesus:</u>¹²⁹ becoming like the 'master' includes adopting the same message and ministry, sharing the same socio-religious traditions, exercising the same servanthood, and experiencing the same suffering. The disciples pictured in the gospels both fail at this, as well as growing.</p>

In terms of an 'input space' for the metaphorical blend, this gives a clear indication of the kinds of elements we might expect to see, especially as they are all present in Mark's Gospel. If we were to express this 'space' descriptively rather than in tabular form, we might say that:

Discipleship of Jesus meant that anyone could be called by Jesus. The relationship of the disciples to their former life and status was unimportant compared to their new relationship with Jesus. Indeed, the new relationship supplanted the old, often requiring the sacrifice of wealth, family, and home. The new disciple followed Jesus literally and metaphorically, sharing in the blessings, but more typically the sacrifices and privations, of his life – and even beyond his life. The disciple aimed to become like the master in life and death, but disciples never graduated beyond this to mastery of their own.

While this gives a general picture, the 'input space' will need to be refined in light of the actual features of discipleship encountered in the relevant texts.

Considering what we have seen of slavery in previous chapters, it is not difficult to see how such a description of discipleship can be metaphorically connected to slavery. For example, slavery is no respecter of ethnicity or status and a slave hardly ever chooses to become a

¹²⁷ See J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1992), 70-72.

¹²⁸ Wilkins, 'Disciples and Discipleship', 206.

¹²⁹ Rengstorf uses the memorable and evocative phrase, 'Whereas the תְּלָמִיד־הַקָּבֵץ hopes in some sense to master the Torah, it is the business of the μαθητής of Jesus to be stamped and fashioned by Him.' Rengstorf, 'Μανθάνω', 449.

slave. Becoming a slave involves great personal loss, marking a shift in identity. Slaves could serve in different social settings, but were nevertheless always slaves, unless freed. The fate of the slave was in the hands of the master, and slaveholder ideology meant owners expected that the slave would not only act in a like-manner to the master but even come to internalise the master's views and attitudes. Finally, the slave would daily bear the threat, if not the actual experience, of violence against his or her person. Of course, there are differences too, but amongst a readership who almost certainly included slaves, we should not be surprised to find an understanding of these particular expectations of discipleship. More conclusively, as we will see, the understanding of slavery common throughout the ancient world provided an ideal vehicle for communicating certain aspects of Jesus' vision of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark.

6.2.5 SUMMARY

In terms of the Gospel of Mark in general, we have seen that the evidence is insufficiently strong to attribute any particular author to the text, but there is a stronger case for placing its writing in Rome, shortly after the Neronian persecutions and around the time of the destruction of the Temple. The readership is a mixed group of Jewish and gentile Christians, who are divided and almost certainly include slaves in their number. They are living in the chaos of the empire following Nero's death, and living with the fear of the return of persecution and the consequences of past failure. This is reflected also in the structure of the gospel, whose tripartite arrangement moves the reader steadily towards identification with the disciples and Christ's way of the cross. This structure also emphasises the importance of discipleship, which is adherence to the person of Christ. Jesus' distinctive teaching which is vividly expressed through metaphor, is matched by Mark's distinctive presentation of the Twelve. Their failures both clarify Christ's teaching as well as inviting the reader's own reflection – particularly fitting in with the *Sitz im*

Leben previously described.¹³⁰ The investigation of the metaphor of discipleship as slavery therefore engages with many of the core issues of the gospel – from the content to the context.

With this in place, we turn now to consider the relevant passages in the Gospel of Mark. As the shortest gospel, it has correspondingly less material featuring slaves and slavery than the others. However, this does not make the material any less significant. For example, Wilkins suggests that at the heart of Mark's Gospel, 'The pivotal pronouncement of servanthood in Mark 10:45 declares the essence of Jesus' ministry ... By comprehending this, the disciples will grasp the essence of discipleship'.¹³¹ Yet, in order to 'grasp the essence of discipleship', the would-be disciple must also grasp something of the 'essence' of slavery, since it is through this metaphor that Jesus' teaching is here expressed. Thus, it would not be too much to say that in order to understand Jesus in Mark's Gospel, the reader must understand the slavery metaphor. In the conviction, stated earlier, that the representation of slavery in metaphor is related to the actual experience and understanding of slavery, we will begin by surveying the references to actual slaves as characters in the gospel, before moving on to the metaphorical use of slavery, in Mark's central section and in two of his parables. This comprehensive review of the relevant passages will enable us to gain an overall picture of whether these texts describe a consistent theme of discipleship as slavery in Mark's Gospel.

6.3 ACTUAL SLAVES AND 'SERVANTS'

On the basis of the slave terminology established in the previous chapter, we find it being used in connection with a number of actual characters in the gospel. These can be divided into two groups: those who are explicitly called slaves, and those who serve.

¹³⁰ Donahue and Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 34.

¹³¹ Wilkins, 'Disciples and Discipleship', 209.

The two slaves who appear in Mark's Gospel are both slaves of the high priest, confirming Josephus' description of the high priest's ownership of slaves (*Ant.* 20.181). The first is the unfortunate δούλος who has his ear cut off by one of the disciples at the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (14:47). He was one of the crowd sent from the high priests, scribes, and elders (14:43). That he is singled out for attack may well indicate that he had a leading role in directing the mob, which would be in keeping with the status of his owner (as well as the description in Josephus). Slaves in Mark, therefore, can play significant roles on behalf of their owners, as we have seen in wider society. However, this incident also shows that it would be the slave representative of the high priest who would be in harm's way, rather than the official himself. Nevertheless, if slaves act as surrogate bodies for their owners,¹³² then Mark, in making the point that the slave is not simply a slave but 'of the high priest' (14:43), is suggesting that the act of violence was an act of violence against the high priest himself.¹³³ In other words, the slave then disappears from view as merely the medium for the opposition that will shortly continue in words, face to face, between Jesus and the disciples, and the Jewish authorities. The sparsity with which this attack is disinterestedly described in Mark seems to be addressed by the other evangelists.¹³⁴ Yet, in Mark, the slave is no more than the site for physical violence, a characteristic of slaves as a whole.

The other slave is she who encounters Peter in the courtyard, following Jesus' arrest. She too is a slave (παιδίσκη) of the high priest (14:66).¹³⁵ In Mark's account, she is aware of something of the Jesus movement, as she recognises Peter as one of Jesus' disciples. How she might have come by this knowledge is not explored by the text – perhaps it assumes

¹³² J.A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 3.

¹³³ There seems no reason to follow Daube, who suggests that the cutting off of the slave's ear was a means of rendering him unfit for Temple service, as there is no evidence that he was a Levite. D. Daube, 'Three Notes having to do with Johanan Ben Zaccai', *JTS* XI (1960): 53-b-62 (61).

¹³⁴ John even names the slave, 'Malchus' (John 18:10).

¹³⁵ Again, John supplies more detail, introducing her as the doorkeeper (θυρωρός; John 18:16-17).

her role took her beyond the high priest's dwelling, or, like the expectations of most household slaves, she overheard the discussions of her master. Whatever the case, like a good slave, she seems to embody the values and attitudes of her owner. The construction of the narrative suggests that her accusatory identification of Peter mirrors the high priest's identification of Jesus as the Messiah (14:61-64). Thus, just like the slave whose ear was cut off, this female slave provides the means for the high priest's 'reach' to extend beyond his own body through his slaves as representatives. Therefore, in these two vignettes in the passion narrative, Mark pictures two slaves, both of whose identities are to be found in the person of their owner, they are both slaves *of the high priest*.

There are three instances of people serving others (*διακονέω*) in Mark's Gospel.¹³⁶ The first example is the angels, who serve Jesus in the wilderness (1:13); the second is Simon's mother-in-law who serves Jesus and the disciples following her healing (1:31); and the third is the women at the cross who had come from Galilee where they served Jesus (15:41). In the first two cases, it seems reasonable to assume that the kind of service envisioned, in spite of J.N. Collins' broader argument outlined in the previous chapter,¹³⁷ is precisely the traditional image of table-service.¹³⁸ It is not determinable in the third case.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Watts attempts to argue that, at least in Mark, but also in the NT as a whole, *διακονέω* may be synonymous 'or at least contiguous' with *δουλεύω*. This is not entirely convincing, due mainly to it resting primarily on observations about Isaiah and Mark 10:43-45, but nevertheless worth noting that we should not omit the former term simply because it does not explicitly address slavery. R.E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark* (WUNT II 88, 1997), 273-274. See also § 5.1.4.

¹³⁷ See § 5.1.4.

¹³⁸ Munro argues that the angels' 'serving' should be seen in connection with Ps 91:11-12, the passage referred to by Matthew and Luke in their extended versions of the temptation narrative. However, there is no reason to assume this in *Mark*. Rather, if we take into account the concern for food in the other accounts, with the associated first temptation, then it seems at least as plausible that the angels are meeting this very practical need. This would be in keeping with the miraculous provision of food in other wilderness places in Mark's Gospel (6:35; 8:4). Moreover, the Wisdom of Solomon refers to the manna as *ἀγγέλων τροφή*, given to God's people (Wis 16:20), and the Elijah cycle describes such angelic provision for the sustenance of the prophet in the wilderness (1 Kgs 19:5-7). Therefore, it seems most likely that the angels are being described as giving Jesus

Furthermore, although this activity may have a low-status, there is nevertheless an honorific value in this serving in Mark that comes, not from the activity itself, but rather from the person being served (i.e. Jesus). Much has been made of the fact that it is only women who serve in Mark's Gospel,¹⁴⁰ and their programmatic function as exemplar disciples may well correspond to the importance of *διακονία* in the early church.¹⁴¹ It is indeed the case that their service 'brackets' most of the gospel account. However, as we have seen, angels also serve. Yet, in terms of how we should understand service in Mark, we can see that it implies provision for the needs of others and can be undertaken by those who are not slaves (none of them are described as such), and need not be low-status individuals (e.g. the angels). These three examples also establish that Jesus, contrary to the literal sense of the verse we will shortly consider, did need to be served, thus implying a mutuality of service in Mark.

Finally, in view of the passage featuring James and John to be examined below, it is noteworthy that Mark is the only gospel writer to describe the personnel employed by the fishing business run by Zebedee with his sons. When James and John are called to follow Jesus, they leave behind with their father his *μισθωτοί*. These are not slaves, the point of the term is that they work for 'reward', in other words, they are paid labourers. However, as we have seen in Philo, the practical difference between a *μισθωτός* and a *δοῦλος* may be small.¹⁴² For the purposes of what follows, Mark, unlike the other evangelists, wants to show James

something akin to table-service. For the contrary view, see W. Munro, 'Women Disciples in Mark', *CBQ* 44 (1982): 225-241 (233-234).

¹³⁹ On the basis of only the other two references in Mark, it seems hard to justify Gundry's conclusion that, 'the women's waiting on Jesus probably consisted in serving him food'. R.H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 979. In fact, if the women of Luke 8:3 are illustrative, then it is more likely that the provision was economic, a possibility entirely consistent with J.N. Collins' work on *διακονία* (see § 5.1.4). E.g. J.N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹⁴⁰ E.g. E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1995), 315-323.

¹⁴¹ Munro, 'Women Disciples in Mark', 237.

¹⁴² E.g. *Leg.* 2.79-85

and John as those who have had authority over people who, although not described as slaves, might be treated similarly.¹⁴³ With this preparation in mind, we turn now to the main section of teaching on slavery as a metaphor for discipleship, in the central section of Mark's Gospel.

6.4 MARK'S CENTRAL SECTION

The most explicit teaching to make use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship can be found in Mark's central section (8:27-10:45), which has a particular focus on discipleship.¹⁴⁴ The reference (10:44) occurs in a paradoxical saying, in response to the disciples' misunderstandings about their own status, power, and authority, and invokes a dialectic between discipleship and slavery using δοῦλος language. However, since this statement is linked with the three passion predictions, and mirrors a very similar prior statement which uses διάκονος language (9:35), it will be considered as part of the whole.

The central section may be broken down conservatively as follows:¹⁴⁵

Markan Passage	Description
8:27-9:1	First Passion Prediction
9:2-13	The Transfiguration
9:14-29	Deliverance of Boy with Unclean Spirit
9:30-37	Second Passion Prediction

¹⁴³ Bearing in mind Philo's description, it is possible that the use of this term indicates fellow-Israelites, rather than gentiles, in Zebedee's employ, but there is no way of verifying this.

¹⁴⁴ Indeed, the section can be known in German as 'die Jüngerunterweisung'. K. Weiss, 'Ekklesiologie, Tradition und Geschichte in der Jüngerunterweisung Mark 8,27-10,52', in *Der historische Jesus und die kerygmatische Christus: Beiträge zum Christusverständnis in Forschung und Verkündigung* (eds. H. Ristow and K. Mattiae; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960), 414-438.

¹⁴⁵ Although this does not follow any particular commentary, it is consistent with the common picture, including breaks. The key area in which it differs is keeping the actual passion predictions associated with their narrative context, for reasons that will become clear, below.

9:38-50	Extreme Measures for Avoiding Sin
10:1-12	Teaching on Divorce
10:13-16	Teaching on Children
10:17-31	Teaching on Riches
10:32-45	Third Passion Prediction

The most obvious unifying elements of this section are the three passion predictions in which Jesus, following his recognition as the Christ (8:29), gives ever more revealing, programmatic indications of what will happen in the passion of the Son of Man. In each case, the sayings are followed by various failures on the part of the disciples. These failures give Jesus the opportunity to offer some enigmatic and paradoxical teaching, whether about gaining and losing life, or about being first and last. However, while these passages provide a clear structure to the section as a whole, the same cannot be said for the pericopae that lie between them. In particular, while there is evidence of Markan redaction and some connection to the passion predictions as we will see, on the whole, the intervening pericopae seem to be organised on the basis of catchwords.¹⁴⁶ These pericopae, while continuing the general theme of discipleship, serve as ‘intervals’ between the main events: the passion predictions themselves, the disciples’ failures, and the corresponding teachings from Jesus. These will be the focus of our study.

It is the teaching which follows the third passion prediction in which we are particularly interested, since it is this which explicitly ties together the activity of the disciple-in-community with the slavery metaphor (10:44). However, due to the connected nature of the three predictions, we cannot consider the latter without also considering the first two. In preparation for doing so, we should mention the other connecting feature of these passages which is the named disciples who appear in them. The first prediction is brought

¹⁴⁶ So, for example, J. Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27A; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 671. *Contra* H.T. Fledderman, ‘The Discipleship Discourse (Mark 9:33-50)’, *CBQ* 43 (1981): 57-75.

about in response to Peter's declaration of Jesus as Messiah (8:29). His failure to accept Christ's statement about his death is met with rebuke. This is immediately followed by the Transfiguration, in which Peter, James and John are taken up the mountain and receive a revelation of Jesus' divine sonship. At this point, Peter alone of these privileged three has been shown to be a failure, so it would be natural to assume that James and John are now the pre-eminent disciples. They seem to assume as much themselves, as they seek the positions of honour at the side of Jesus following the third passion prediction (10:37), showing that they too have failed to understand or accept the significance of Jesus' message about his own suffering and the true nature of discipleship. Their failure provides the opportunity for the apothegm about discipleship as slavery. For good measure, the second, and shortest, passion prediction shows that the Twelve as a whole have failed to appreciate the purpose of Jesus' teaching (9:34), and, 'were afraid to ask him' about it (9:32). Thus, the failure in understanding of the disciples is a connecting theme between the three passion prediction passages, but, in particular, the named characters are explicitly shown to be failures at the start and end of this section. It is this response of the disciples which throws into relief the metaphor of slavery and discipleship. Hence, although it will take some time to get to the specific text in 10:44, the interconnectedness of the passages means that we need to take this more circuitous route in the discussion that follows.

6.4.1 TEACHING OF THE FIRST PASSION PREDICTION (MARK 8:34-35)

In the first passion prediction, Jesus begins to teach that he must suffer and be rejected by the chief priests, the elders and the scribes. This is the same group, albeit listed in a different order, which sends the mob to arrest Jesus in 14:43. Peter, however, who seemingly grasps this 'plain speaking' (8:32), disagrees that this will happen to Jesus which earns him a severe rebuke. As if as an explanation of this, Jesus offers the following, far more cryptic, apothegm:

Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι.³⁵ ὅς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὅς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσει τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου σώσει αὐτήν (Mark 8:34-35)¹⁴⁷

And calling the crowd with his disciples, he said to them, 'If someone wishes to follow after me, [he must] deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.³⁵ For whoever wishes to save his life will destroy it, but whoever will destroy his life on account of me and the gospel will save it.' (Mark 8:34-35)¹⁴⁸

These sayings begin with the rather clumsy addition of the crowd to the disciples with whom Jesus had been speaking. This is omitted by Matthew and Luke but suggests that Mark is trying to generalise the saying to include all disciples. The two sayings were probably independent originally, although they appear together twice in Matthew, and once together and once separately in Luke (Matt 10:38-39; 16:24-25; and Luke 9:23-24; 14:27; 17:33), suggesting that they were joined in the tradition.¹⁴⁹ This connection can be explained by the structural parallel between the *follow-deny-follow* sequence in the first saying, and the *save-destroy-save* sequence in the second.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Evans argues against the compilers of NA^{27/28} in favour of the textual variant in which ἐμοῦ καὶ is absent from 8:35, suggesting that the current text is a scribal accommodation to the parallels in Matthew and Luke. However, the person of Jesus has particular significance at this point in Mark's Gospel, and right from the beginning of the gospel, Mark has sought to keep Jesus Christ and his 'gospel' together (1:1). C.A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20* (WBC 34B; Dallas: Word, 2001), 26.

¹⁴⁸ From this point onwards, all translations of gospel passages will be my own, unless noted otherwise.

¹⁴⁹ There is also a remarkable parallel of thought between Mark 8:31-38 and John 12:23-26. See the table and commentary in Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 617.

¹⁵⁰ Most follow Bultmann in accepting that the second saying, in its basic paradoxical form, goes back to the historical Jesus. R.K. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), 105. However, there is debate over whether the saying in 8:34 is composed by Mark or is, in fact historical. The argument concerns the presence of σταυρός ('cross'), the first time the word appears in the gospel. Those who consider it a Markan composition argue that the word is clearly intended to foreshadow the passion. A.Y. Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 407. On the other hand, those who argue for the historicity of the phrase, point out that Jesus did not, in fact, carry his own cross, Simon of Cyrene did (15:21). Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 25. An alternative approach has been advocated by Herbert Bassler who argues, on the basis of *Gen. Rab.* 56 to Gen 22:6, that cross-taking was a known idiom, and did not, therefore, imply a reference to Jesus' crucifixion. H.W. Bassler, *The Mind Behind the Gospels: A*

The presence of *σταυρός* is noteworthy since, although it was not mentioned in the preceding passion prediction, nevertheless the reader is invited to make the connection between Jesus' own death and the way of discipleship. Thus, the example of Jesus' suffering is significant to the appropriate attitude and activities of the disciple. The mention of the cross is also important, however, because, as we have seen, it was the characteristic, final punishment for slaves.¹⁵¹ As Garnsey puts it, 'Crucifixion was the standing form of execution for slaves', and, 'it is safe to regard crucifixion, whatever form it took, as traditionally a slave penalty'.¹⁵² Of course, it was also the punishment for other criminals too, including those Jews who would fight against Rome, so we should avoid pushing the significance too far.¹⁵³ Yet it is likely to be this threat of death that gives the sayings their *Sitze im Leben*. Far from encouraging a 'spiritualisation' of these texts (as Luke 9:23 does with the addition of 'daily'), Mark pictures a literal suffering for the sake of Jesus and the gospel.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Middleton points out that there is no evidence of this being a metaphorical idea in the first century, apart from in Luke.¹⁵⁵ If many scholars are right to

Commentary to Matthew 1-14 (Reference Library of Jewish Intellectual History; Boston: Academic Studies, 2009), 258. However, the haggadic reading is not as clear as he suggests, and the Markan context indicates that Jesus' crucifixion is most definitely in view. Therefore, given the careful structuring of this section, the former option of Markan composition seems more likely.

¹⁵¹ M. Hengel, *Crucifixion: In the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 51-63. It is possible that Paul also makes this connection in his 'Christ-hymn', where Christ, having taken on 'the form of a slave', 'became obedient to ... death on a cross' (Phil 2:7-8). The introduction to the hymn (Phil 2:5) commands the readers to think in the same way as Christ who acts like this. It is therefore suggestive that this metaphorical linking was widespread in early Christian discourse.

¹⁵² P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 127, 129.

¹⁵³ Munro is guilty of doing precisely this by deriving from Jesus' crucifixion an indication that he was a runaway slave. *Jesus, Born of a Slave: The Social and Economic Origins of Jesus' Message* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 37; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1998).

¹⁵⁴ C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 246-247.

¹⁵⁵ P. Middleton, *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity* (LNTS 307; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 149. Presumably, however, this could also have included some other form of *summum supplicium*. Cf. with reference to Christians in Rome, Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.

situate Mark's community in Rome at the time of the Neronian persecution,¹⁵⁶ then these early Christians would have been all too familiar with the condemned carrying their crosses on the way to the place of execution.¹⁵⁷ The language of denial (8:34) suggests arrest and trial (cf. 14:30-31, 71-72; also 13:11) in which readers face the option of denying Jesus,¹⁵⁸ or denying themselves, thereby losing their lives in Jesus' terms.¹⁵⁹ From a political perspective, as Myers points out, following Jesus means resisting the state's power: 'the threat to punish by death'.¹⁶⁰ Although this might superficially be interpreted militarily,¹⁶¹ the point is that it undercuts traditional images by seeking 'victory' through voluntary suffering, as we will see more clearly with the third passion prediction and its associated teaching.¹⁶² This may also explain the reason why the metaphor of the soldier is not used for discipleship, but rather the slave, in spite of the two metaphorical fields sharing many similar features (cf. the centurion's slave; Matt 8:5-13 and par.). If there was any doubt that Jesus was speaking literally, at the end of this short section he speaks about those who, 'will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power' (9:1).¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ '[T]he majority of scholars concur with the early tradition in guardedly assigning Mark's Gospel to Rome'. R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC 34A; Dallas: Word, 1989), xxix. This being said, a number of more recent commentaries have opted for a Syrian provenance. For a discussion, see W. Carter, 'Mark and Syria? An Assessment', *ExpTim* 125 (2014): 531-537.

¹⁵⁷ For this suggestion, see B.M.F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (JSNTSup 164; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 288.

¹⁵⁸ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 624.

¹⁵⁹ Although from a later period, there are similarities with Pliny's famous letter to Trajan (*Ep.* 10.96-97), and Tacitus indicates that the punishment for some Christians under Nero was crucifixion (*Ann.* 15.44).

¹⁶⁰ Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 247.

¹⁶¹ Marcus also makes the association with a militaristic interpretation of Jesus' messiahship. *Mark 8-16*, 624.

¹⁶² Marcus suggests a link between these sayings and 'pep talks' of ancient generals. Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 626. However, in these rousing speeches, generals were encouraging their troops to go to war, since fighting was the best way of gaining victory and therefore staying alive, whereas Jesus is encouraging the exact opposite: it is only through dying that life will be found.

¹⁶³ Yarbro Collins offers a plausible explanation for the disciples' inability/unwillingness to understand Jesus' call to discipleship, which supports this literal interpretation of the suffering: 'If he [Jesus] is handed over and killed, the same could happen to them ... So their lack of understanding is closely related to the instinct of self-preservation.' *Mark*, 441.

Mark thus seems to be characterising discipleship as a voluntary life of suffering, leading to death for some, which emulates the example of Jesus in his passion and uses the suggestive image of cross-carrying for this purpose.¹⁶⁴

Yet the suffering is not necessarily only physical, for a further significance is the echo between, 'if someone wishes to follow me' (8:34) and the original call of the disciples.¹⁶⁵ In each of the call accounts (1:16-18, 19-20; 2:14), the disciples' response to Jesus is that they follow (*ἀκολουθέω*) him. In these cases, the disciples Simon and Andrew, James and John, and Levi leave behind family and livelihood to go on the way with Jesus (a point made later in this section, 10:28). Therefore, although the explicit emphasis of these verses is physical suffering unto death, the reader has also been prepared for the implicit link between these other 'losses' which the true disciple will experience if they wish to follow Jesus and gain their 'life'.

Therefore, this first brief teaching, which follows the first passion prediction, links the reader with both the start and end of the gospel. In the light of Jesus' own passion, the disciple who wants to follow Jesus must likewise be ready to go the way of suffering, and lose their own life. However, in the light of the example of the disciples, this denial of self may also be expressed in terms of family and livelihood, both essential elements of life and status in the culture of the ancient world. Although we have yet to encounter slavery, these elements of physical suffering (including crucifixion), and loss of self and of family ('social death') are all familiar pictures of the slave experience.

¹⁶⁴ There may, therefore, be some warrant for seeing a play on words with the use of *ψυχή* alternating between 'life' as physical life, and 'soul' as eternal life (i.e. 'Whoever wishes to save his [physical] life will destroy it [his soul/eternal life], but whoever will destroy his [physical] life on account of me and the gospel, will save it [his soul/eternal life]'). See Collins, *Mark*, 409.

¹⁶⁵ Collins, *Mark*, 408.

6.4.2 TEACHING OF THE SECOND PASSION PREDICTION (MARK 9:35)

The second passion prediction (9:31) takes place as Jesus and his disciples are passing through Galilee (9:30), where they fail to understand his prediction (9:32). As if to exemplify this, on the journey the disciples have been discussing ‘who is the greatest’ (τίς μείζων; 9:34). The secrecy motif is particularly strong (9:28, 30), and, unlike in the first passage we have just seen, Jesus directs the paradoxical teaching which follows to the Twelve alone (9:35). However, the passion prediction itself is both the shortest of the three and strangely lacking in detail compared to the other two predictions. The teaching which follows in 9:35 is also reminiscent of both the first teaching and the third in structure and language. This similarity means that the teaching of this second passion prediction does not add much, if anything, to the sayings which follow the other two predictions. The reason for this may be found in the lack of named disciples in this section. The first and third predictions, as we have already said, serve as opportunities to display the lack of understanding of Simon, and James and John respectively. This might be considered appropriate lest the reader were to mistakenly consider these disciples’ place at the Transfiguration (9:2) as marking them out as superior to the other disciples. However, equally, the exposure and ‘downfall’ of these three named disciples might inadvertently exalt the remaining nine. Therefore, Mark has added this brief, second passage to show that the rest of the Twelve were not any better than these leading disciples.¹⁶⁶ It also fits into his frequent preference for groups of three.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ It is generally accepted that the second passion prediction and immediately following teaching is a Markan creation, but I have not come across this reasoning for it. See, for example, E. Best, ‘Mark’s Preservation of the Tradition’, in *L’Evangile selon Marc: tradition et rédaction* (ed. M. Sabbe; BETL 39; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 21-34. More specifically, Fledderman suggests that the narrative about the ‘greatest’ and the teaching which follows (9:35) are simply a redaction and generalisation of the James and John story. ‘The Discipleship Discourse’, 59. There is much to commend this view, particularly the use of Markan styles and themes. On the other hand, the catchword structuring of the section might suggest a pre-Markan tradition. Marcus, *Mark 8-16*,

In response to the disciples' discussion about greatness, Jesus offers the proclamation saying we are interested in, which, according to Fledderman, is, 'the topic sentence of the discourse'.¹⁶⁸

καὶ καθίσας ἐφώνησεν τοὺς δώδεκα καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· εἴ τις θέλει πρῶτος εἶναι, ἔσται πάντων ἔσχατος καὶ πάντων διάκονος. (Mark 9:35)

And after sitting down, he called the Twelve and says to them, 'If someone wishes to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.' (Mark 9:35)¹⁶⁹

The basic version of this paradoxical saying appears in a number of different contexts in the gospels, including in Mark (e.g. 10:31). Yet, in this instance, while it exhibits antithetical parallelism between 'first' and 'last', it has no thesis corresponding to the 'servant of all' antithesis. Bultmann suggests that the two parts of the apodosis indicate that it was originally a 'double saying', much like 10:43-44.¹⁷⁰ If so, it has lost something like, 'whoever wants to be greatest' (cf. 10:43). However, given the diverse contexts in

673. However, while the supposed parallel between 9:34 and Gos. *Thom.* 12 would support this ('We know that you will depart from us. Who is to be our leader?'), it is actually unconvincing, as it suggests an understanding of Jesus' passion predictions by the disciples which Mark is keen to deny.¹⁶⁷ Such as the three 'callings' of the disciples (1:16-20; 2:14; 3:13-19), Peter's three denials (14:66-72), the three groups who mock Jesus on the cross (15:29-30, 31-32), the groups of chief priests, scribes, and elders (e.g. 11:27), etc.

¹⁶⁸ Fledderman, 'The Discipleship Discourse', 59.

¹⁶⁹ It would be possible to translate this as a simple future, an issue not noted by most commentators. This would give, 'If someone wishes to be first, he *will be* last of all and servant of all.' This is the translation preferred by Gundry, *Mark*, 509. The implication would then become that those who strive to be first, as the disciples were presumably doing, will in fact end up being last of all. This is precisely the sense of 10:31. However, in the context of this section, Jesus has just demonstrated his superiority to the disciples, by doing what they could not (9:18, 28). Therefore, Jesus himself is 'first' among them. Since Jesus is the one to be followed, those who would likewise be first 'must' follow his lead in being servant of all. The same problem of translation occurs in the parallel saying of 10:43-44. However, Mark's addition of 10:45 makes it especially clear in that case, again *contra* Gundry, that a volitive sense of the future indicative is intended, since, 'the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve' (i.e. it is only by doing the apodosis, that is following the servant example of Jesus, that the protasis of pre-eminence will be realised. Thus, there is a relationship of necessity between the two, captured by the verb). See BDF § 361 where this verse is cited as an example of 'The Future Indicative for Volitive Expressions'.

¹⁷⁰ Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 143.

which it appears elsewhere,¹⁷¹ it seems more likely that Mark has added ‘and servant of all’ (διάκονος), to make clear the purpose of the saying at *this* point, indicating the importance of the theme of ‘servanthood’ in this central section. Given this expression of deliberate intent, the question then becomes what Mark means by διάκονος in this case.¹⁷²

First of all, it is worth noting that some consider this discussion to take place in the house of Simon’s mother-in-law (1:21, 29), since it takes place in a house in Capernaum.¹⁷³ This would be convenient, if correct, as she is the only human in the gospel so far who has served others (διακονέω; 1:31); therefore it would be an appropriate location for such a saying and imply the same kind of meaning for service encountered earlier (i.e. table-service, or providing for the needs of others). However, there are no other indications that it is this particular house, so we should not press it too far. Nevertheless, it may point towards the ‘household/family theme’, which Donahue identifies in this section, although his insistence that διάκονος refers to the family sphere is overplayed.¹⁷⁴ Secondly, there is the association between διάκονος, and πρῶτος and ἔσχατος. The only prior occasion in which Mark has used πρῶτος in a non-temporal sense is to describe the ‘leading men of Galilee’ (τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς Γαλιλαίας; 6:21). Apart from in the parallel saying (10:31), Mark uses ἔσχατος in a temporal sense everywhere else. Nevertheless, there seems little doubt that these are status terms.¹⁷⁵ Such terms are necessary to qualify διάκονος since, as J.N. Collins

¹⁷¹ E.g. Matthew uses the saying with respect to ‘time served’ (Matt 20:12-16), and Luke with respect to the difficulty of salvation (Luke 13:24-30).

¹⁷² Some later MSS replace διάκονος with δοῦλος, but this is very likely to be a scribal accommodation to 10:44.

¹⁷³ See especially Marcus who also makes the connection with διακονέω. *Mark 8-16*, 677. There is no need to assume, with Yarbrow Collins, that it is Jesus’ own home since Mark 2:1 on which she bases this only specifies that Jesus is ἐν οἴκῳ, which does not necessarily imply ownership. *Mark*, 444.

¹⁷⁴ J.R. Donahue, *The Theology and Setting of Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (The 1983 Père Marquette Theology Lecture; Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1983), 48.

¹⁷⁵ Marcus links the saying with Matt 23:12 and Luke 14:11; 18:14, all of which are to do with humility, suggesting that the saying embodies the common idea that, ‘humility is the best policy.’ However, Mark’s addition of ‘and servant of all’ takes the saying beyond this popular wisdom to a statement about Christian discipleship. *Mark 8-16*, 674.

points out, against the traditional assertion that the *διακον*- word group implies lowly status, “The words speak of a mode of activity rather than of the status of the person performing the activity.”¹⁷⁶ The same could be said about slave language, since slaves, as we have seen, can perform almost any function with corresponding responsibility, and their status is determined in part by this activity as well as by the status of their owner.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, it would seem that Mark is here associating with the status of the person who is *ἔσχατος*, an activity or activities commensurate with that status. Quite what this activity might be is not explained at this point. However, there is a third aspect which contributes to our understanding of *διάκονος* here, which will lead into the further exploration of the term in the third passion prediction passage to follow.

In the verse immediately following 9:35, the third word which comes after *διάκονος* is *παιδίον*. We saw in the previous chapter that this term can be used interchangeably with *δοῦλος*. Black suggests that this represents an Aramaic play on words, based on *ܣܝܠܘ*, which can mean both ‘servant’ (the basis of *διάκονος*) and ‘child’ (the basis of *παιδίον*).¹⁷⁸ He even goes so far as to suggest that the *παιδίον* of 9:36 is not a child at all, but a slave.¹⁷⁹ It is certainly the case that this verse completes the section, so there is no need to associate *παιδίον* with the passages about children which follow. This can best be considered to be suggestive, rather than definite, however, since earlier in this section Mark has clearly referred to a demon-possessed *child* as *παιδίον* (9:24). Furthermore, it seems unlikely (though not impossible) that Jesus would ‘take in his arms’ (*ἐναγκαλίζομαι*; 9:36) a slave.

However, it is not necessary to assume either an Aramaic original or an actual slave in order to identify this link. The Greek reader of Mark could also recognise this slave

¹⁷⁶ Collins, *Diakonia*, 335.

¹⁷⁷ See § 3.1.7.

¹⁷⁸ M. Black, ‘The Marcan Parable of the Child in the Midst’, *ExpTim* 59 (1947): 14-16. However, see also the criticism offered by Fledderman, ‘The Discipleship Discourse’, 64 n. 35.

¹⁷⁹ Black, ‘The Marcan Parable of the Child in the Midst’, 16.

terminology and therefore connect the two sayings (i.e. 9:35 and 9:36-37).¹⁸⁰ Indeed, without this catchword linking it is difficult to see why the two sayings are associated by Mark. If this is so, it implies that, for the reader, the *διάκονος* in 9:35 may be associated with slavery, or, more specifically, with the activities associated with slavery.¹⁸¹ This would make sense if, as is likely, this section of the discipleship discourse is a redaction of 10:35-45, where slavery is explicitly mentioned.¹⁸² A further link can be seen in the repeated presence of *πάντων* in 9:35, which breaks up the parallelism of the saying. Why has this been introduced? Presumably to accommodate the saying to 10:44, where *πρῶτος* is linked with *πάντων δοῦλος*. This would again suggest a connection between *διάκονος* and *δοῦλος* for Mark at this point.

This will be considered further, below, but, before doing so, the question of to whom *πάντων* refers should be raised. The most natural reading, out of context, is that it refers to everyone. Hence the person who wishes to be first, must be the last of all (least?), and be everyone's servant/slave. Clearly, this would be impossible, unless we are to read into this phrase the kind of theological view of Jesus' death which is present in 10:45. However, there is no strong reason for doing so here. In which case, either it should be read as generalising hyperbole, emphasising the principle of serving others in a way that does not suggest high status; or else *πάντων* refers to something else. In context, the most plausible referent would be the Twelve, who have just been introduced by Mark (i.e. 'servant of all [of you]'). If this is so, then the saying may not be establishing a general principle, or referring to the rewards of the eschatological kingdom, but is more likely to be practical teaching for the life of the first disciples, and, by implication, the early church.¹⁸³ After all,

¹⁸⁰ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 378.

¹⁸¹ Watts even goes so far as to suggest that, 'διάκονος and δοῦλος are closely related and might in some cases be regarded as synonyms'. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*, 273. See § 5.1.4.

¹⁸² See above; Fledderman, 'The Discipleship Discourse', 59.

¹⁸³ Yarbrow Collins points out that there is little evidence that the Twelve ever went on to be leaders in the early church. Therefore, they are intended to represent Christian leaders in general. *Mark*, 444.

the Markan saying is offered as a response to an inner-group problem discovered by Jesus. We see this theme emerging again following the third passion prediction.

In this second passage, we have, therefore, a paradoxical saying in which, as far as Mark is concerned, the person who wants to be of high status in the eyes of Jesus and within the church must act in a way that is fitting for someone of low status. While the specific activities are not outlined, there are plenty of slave activities that could meet this criterion. The connection with 'slavery' to fellow disciples, both in the verse which immediately follows and in the teaching of the third passion prediction from which the current passage is created, suggests that we should be particularly sensitive to activities undertaken by slaves in Mark's Gospel, especially those who are symbolic in some way.

6.4.3 TEACHING OF THE THIRD PASSION PREDICTION (MARK 10:43-44)

The teaching which follows the third passion prediction has close similarities to that found in the previous texts. However, it is the only passage of the three explicitly to mention slavery, so we will spend more time discussing this section as a whole (10:32-45).¹⁸⁴ The preceding section concludes with the paradoxical saying (10:31), a version of which we have just discussed. Thus, 10:31 forms an *inclusio* with 9:35, clearly demarcating that

¹⁸⁴ There have been various attempts to demonstrate that most of this passage (10:35-45) was a pre-existing unit. Kuhn argues that this section was part of a tradition with the teaching on marriage (10:2-12) and wealth (10:17-31) because of their similarity in form, and common elements of community problems. Mark wanted to include 10:35-45 because of the criticism of the disciples, he suggests, but it was only out of a conservative respect for his source that Mark included the former passages. H.-W. Kuhn, *Ältere Sammlungen im Markusevangelium* (SUNT 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 146-191. On the other hand, Casey has argued for an Aramaic substratum to our current section, suggesting that 10:35-45 was originally a unity. M. Casey, *Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel* (SNTSMS 102; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 193-218. So also, Gundry, *Mark*, 581-582. However, neither of these approaches are convincing, as the signs of Markan redaction in Greek and of the independent circulation of some verses (e.g. 10:42b-45a) are too great to be ignored.

section. Our present passage can then be broken down into three interconnected subsections, each of which we will consider in turn:

- i) The third passion prediction (10:32-34).
- ii) The request of James and John (10:35-40).
- iii) Jesus' teaching, including discipleship as slavery (10:41-45).

6.4.3.1 *The Third Passion Prediction (10:32-34)*

Our passage begins with a Markan statement about Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem. This is the first time that Jerusalem has been mentioned as the destination of the travellers.¹⁸⁵ This may be thematic for the rest of the section, for, apart from a reference to the crowds who followed John and Jesus into Galilee from Jerusalem and other places (1:5; 3:8), the other previous occurrences of Jerusalem describe the place from which Jesus' opponents, the scribes, came (3:22; 7:1). In light of the repeated statement that Jerusalem is the destination in the passion prediction which follows (10:33), where Jesus will be handed over to his opponents, Jerusalem represents the place of oppressive power. That Jesus is in the lead on this journey, with the disciples following, suggests that the journey itself is symbolic of the journey for all who would follow Jesus.¹⁸⁶ This is emphasised by the presence of others than just the Twelve.¹⁸⁷ They too will encounter the power of opposition, if they are true disciples. This theme is significant in the dialogue and teaching which follows.

¹⁸⁵ M.E. Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 299.

¹⁸⁶ Collins, *Mark*, 484.

¹⁸⁷ Best suggests that, by this means, and the presence of ὑμῶν in 10:43, Mark has extended this teaching to all disciples. E. Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup 4; Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 1981), 120.

The passion prediction itself (10:33-34) is the most detailed of the three, and it has even been suggested that it is partly an early hymn which influences Mark's subsequent presentation of the passion account itself.¹⁸⁸ Certainly, the parallels between the two are striking, although not all the details match perfectly.¹⁸⁹ This prediction emphasises the suffering of the 'Son of Man', with four successive verbs indicating the violence which will be done to him (10:34). Thus, the suffering is very much of a physical nature, in the same way as slaves might suffer. However, the significant detail that appears in this prediction, over against the other two, is that Jesus will be 'handed over to the gentiles' (παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; 10:33). The striking introduction of the gentiles at this point prepares the reader for the reintroduction of the gentiles and their rulers in 10:42, a point to which we will return. As with the other predictions, it concludes with a statement about the resurrection.

6.4.3.2 *The Request of James and John (10:35-40)*

In narrative terms, the dialogue with James and John seems disconnected from the passion prediction which precedes it. The brothers would be particularly insensitive to approach Jesus with such a request if he had just been speaking so plainly about his suffering! However, it is just possible that the link is with the final part of the prediction, that the Son of Man will rise after three days. In which case, their dialogue could be prompted by this sign that, at last, the kingdom will come. Whatever the motivating factor hidden behind the narrative, it is the sons of Zebedee who approach Jesus. As Kaminouchi points out, James and John are the only disciples repeatedly named with a patronymic (1:19; 3:17; 10:35).¹⁹⁰ This brings to mind their father, inviting the reader to recall the brothers' initial

¹⁸⁸ R. McKinnis, 'An Analysis of Mark X 32-34', *NovT* 18 (1976): 6-100 (91).

¹⁸⁹ Most importantly, the Jewish leaders do not explicitly condemn Jesus to death – that is precisely why he is handed over to Pilate and the 'gentiles' (15:1).

¹⁹⁰ A.D.M. Kaminouchi, *"But it is not so Among You": Echoes of Power in Mark 10.32-45* (JSNTSup 249; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 93.

response to Jesus (1:20), when they left their father in the boat with the hired hands (μισθωτοί). As mentioned above, James and John have had others working for them. Unlike many of Jesus' followers, they are not absolutely poor, but have had some economic status and power, and may, therefore, be used by Mark as representative leaders with privileged positions of responsibility, compared to others.¹⁹¹ Their question to Jesus reflects this, for, as Kaminouchi suggests, they are approaching a man in power who is able to grant favours.¹⁹² Effectively, the brothers request 'a signed blank cheque'.¹⁹³ Jesus responds, typically, with a question of his own. It is not obvious that this is an adversative response since Jesus uses the almost identical question later apparently sympathetically (10:51).¹⁹⁴ However, this later occurrence with the exemplary disciple Bartimaeus is likely to direct the reader to the inappropriateness of the brothers' question: 'Grant to us that one [of us] might sit at your right and one at your left in your glory' (10:37). This was a clear seeking of positions of pre-eminence, such as they enjoyed with their father.¹⁹⁵ Jesus' response, that the positions are not his to give (10:40), alerts the reader to the ironical nature of their request, for the positions at Jesus' right and left in fact come to be occupied by the thieves on the cross (15:27). The right and left, at least as far as the journey to Jerusalem goes, are

¹⁹¹ In terms of Longenecker's 'Economic Scale' of the Graeco-Roman world (following Friesen), we might position the brothers and their father at ES5, who would be in a minority in Jesus' ministry and the early church compared to the many at ES6, and possibly ES7. B.W. Longenecker, 'Socio-Economic Profiling of the First Urban Christians', in *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (eds. T.D. Still and D.G. Horrell; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 36-59 (44).

¹⁹² The link with Herod's similar statement at his birthday party (6:22) is not as close a parallel as Kaminouchi would have us believe, however, as the statement is there made by Herod, rather than put to him by his subjects. In other words, that dialogue begins and continues on a completely different footing from this one. Kaminouchi, *Echoes of Power*, 94-95. There is also some suggestion that James and John might be cousins of Jesus, and are therefore requesting special privilege on the basis of family membership. This relationship is far from certain, however, and cannot be established on the basis of Mark alone. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 118.

¹⁹³ Gundry, *Mark*, 577.

¹⁹⁴ *Contra* Kaminouchi, *Echoes of Power*, 95.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Jos. *Ant.* 6.235 where he interprets 1 Sam 20:25 to imply positions at the left and right-hand side of the king, in spite of the biblical text saying nothing of the kind.

places of suffering.¹⁹⁶ This is how true ‘glory’ is to be attained, not through the status of exalted position.¹⁹⁷

There are many different possibilities for exactly where these positions of glory might be found and what the cup and baptism to which Jesus refers might represent.¹⁹⁸ These debates are not necessary for our discussion. However, what matters is that they certainly do refer, in some sense, to ‘paradigmatic suffering’,¹⁹⁹ which James and John will indeed experience (10:39).²⁰⁰ The brothers’ confident response, ‘We are able’ (*δυνάμεθα*; 10:39), is reminiscent of Peter’s ill-fated promise in 14:29, 31. It indicates that they still have not yet grasped the significance of Jesus’ passion predictions, or of the journey to Jerusalem.

However, because of what follows, it is worth pointing out, against those who want to see a radical anti-hierarchical polemic being advanced by Mark in this passage,²⁰¹ that Jesus does not deny that there are positions of power and authority in his ‘glory’, it is just that it is not up to him to whom they belong. This was not an uncommon idea in Second Temple Judaism.²⁰² In the same way, Jesus will shortly give a ‘plan’ for those who want to be ‘great’. Thus, there is no criticism implied in hierarchy *per se*, just a reconfiguring of the way that it operates compared to the society with which they were familiar. This does not challenge

¹⁹⁶ Kaminouchi, *Echoes of Power*, 98.

¹⁹⁷ Boring even suggests that this is a polemical rejection of the double-tradition saying about eschatological thrones for the Twelve, found in Matt 19:28 and Luke 22:30. *Mark*, 300.

¹⁹⁸ For a good overview, see Kaminouchi, *Echoes of Power*, 98-109. For the location of the ‘seats of power’ he lists a revolutionary government in Jerusalem, the Messianic banquet, the positions currently occupied by Elijah and Moses, and the eschatological judgment. For the meaning of the ‘cup and baptism’, he includes cleansing, communion, judgment, and martyrdom.

¹⁹⁹ D. Seeley, ‘Rulership and Service in Mark 10:41-45’, *NovT* 35 (1993): 234-250 (248). Dschulnigg is very clear that the reference is to martyrdom. P. Dschulnigg, *Das Markusevangelium* (Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2007), 285.

²⁰⁰ It is not clear that this is a *vaticinium ex eventu* (so Bultmann, *History*, 38-9). While there is certainly biblical support for James’ martyrdom (Acts 12:2), there is little reliable evidence of this fate for John, and some contrary evidence. For the details, see Kaminouchi, *Echoes of Power*, 111-112.

²⁰¹ E.g. Best, *Following Jesus*.

²⁰² E.g. 1QSa 2:11-13.

the use of slavery as a metaphor since, as we have seen, there could be hierarchy within the working structures of both household and agricultural slaves.

6.4.3.3 *Jesus' Teaching, including Discipleship as Slavery (10:41-45)*

The final section begins with the remaining ten disciples being 'indignant' (*ἀγανακτέω*; 10:41) with James and John, an editorial addition by Mark to link it with the previous section. Their indignation is presumably because they wanted these positions for themselves, and, in spite of Jesus' intervention, had not yet resolved their previous discussion on the way (9:34). Jesus' response to this is given a typical Markan introduction (*καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς*; Mark 10:42), but is an atypical challenge to the gentiles and their rulers. Boring offers the following translation of 10:42:

You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the gentiles lord it over [*κατακυριεύω*] them, and their great ones enforce their authority over [*κατεξουσιάζω*] them.²⁰³

James and John might 'not know' for what they were asking (10:38), but they and the rest of the disciples do 'know' the model of gentile leadership.²⁰⁴ The question is whether the verbs *κατακυριεύω* and *κατεξουσιάζω* imply any negative judgment, as this translation clearly suggests. Yarbro Collins says not, indicating that the statement begins with *οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν τῶν ἐθνῶν* (often translated, 'those who seem to be rulers of the gentiles'), the whole of which, 'is a term of honour and contains no hint of deprecation'.²⁰⁵ A similar point is expressed by Clark who argues for a positive reading of the first of these verbs in Greek literature.²⁰⁶ However, Marcus lists many references in the LXX where *κατακυριεύω* indicates violence, aggressive conquest, and oppression,²⁰⁷ and Gundry is right to point out

²⁰³ Boring, *Mark*, 298.

²⁰⁴ Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 279.

²⁰⁵ Collins, *Mark*, 499. For a contrary view, see Kaminouchi, *Echoes of Power*, 120-123.

²⁰⁶ K.W. Clark, 'The Meaning of (Kata)Kyrieyein', in *The Gentile Bias and Other Essays* (eds. K.W. Clark and J.L. Sharpe; NovTSup 54; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 202-211.

²⁰⁷ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 748.

that Luke, significantly, removes the *κατα-* prefix from these verbs when he wants to present them in a more gentile-friendly light (Luke 22:25).²⁰⁸ Myers even speculates that the rare intensive form *κατεξουσιάζω*, which he translates as ‘tyrannize’, may have been invented by Jesus to express his disapproval of their activity in the strongest terms.²⁰⁹ Therefore, on balance, it seems that we *should* take this as a criticism of gentile rulers. Yet it is not clear why it should be gentile rather than Jewish rulers, who, as Mark 6:17-28 indicates, could be just as oppressive. One suggestion is that the gentile kings of Dan 7 lie behind this.²¹⁰ However, a more immediate reference seems more likely. Jesus is referring back to 10:33, where it is precisely the gentile (ruler) Pilate to whom Jesus will be ‘handed over’ (*παραδίδωμι*; 10:33 and 15:1). For those who know the story previewed in this passion prediction, he will commit Jesus to be crucified (15:15; cf. 10:45), by other gentiles, thus acting in the manner of a violent oppressor. Taking these two elements together, the gentile rulers are characterised as those who conduct their oppressive leadership with particular violence (against God’s people?). This is a striking danger, then, that the disciples, in their striving for position, are, in fact, striving to become like those who ultimately kill Jesus.²¹¹ The next verse makes clear that the disciples are not supposed to imitate their behaviour.

²⁰⁸ Gundry, *Mark*, 579.

²⁰⁹ Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 278-279.

²¹⁰ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 755.

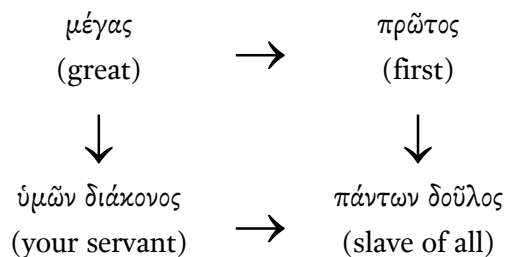
²¹¹ If this context in the passion is indeed relevant, then it might not be too great a step to see an opposition between gentile rulers and ‘the King of the Jews’, so prevalent in Mark 15.

οὐχ οὕτως δὲ ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ὅς ἂν θέλῃ μέγας γενέσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος, ⁴⁴ καὶ ὅς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος. (Mark 10:43-44)

and it is not so among you! But whoever wishes to become great among you, he must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first must be slave of all. (Mark 10:43-44)²¹²

At last we come to the teaching which explicitly mentions slave terminology. The opening statement ‘it is not so among you’ is clearly untrue, for it is precisely this kind of recognition as leaders that the disciples have been seeking in this, and the previous, episode. Many MSS replace ἐστὶν with ἔσται to deal with the problem.²¹³ However, Myers is probably right to see the statement as sarcasm.²¹⁴ Bultmann describes the teaching which follows as ‘church rules’ or ‘community rules’ which, ‘were also in some measure prescriptions for the new community’.²¹⁵

The sayings do not stand in isolation but contain echoes of the preceding verse, with μέγας appearing again, and δοῦλος standing in opposition to κατακυριεύω (κύριος).²¹⁶ Moreover, as we have already seen, the teaching here shares a similar structure and language to 9:35, although the former is likely to be the more original due to the complete structure of two antithetical aphorisms in synonymous parallelism, as shown below:²¹⁷



²¹² See n. 169, above, and BDF § 362 for the reasons for translating the future indicative as a volitive.

²¹³ A C³ K N f.¹³ 28. 565. 579. 892. 1241. 1424. 2542 ℣ q bo^{ms} are listed in NA²⁸. However, ἐστὶν is clearly the harder reading, and ἔσται is likely to be an assimilation to the same verb form in the following verse.

²¹⁴ Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 279.

²¹⁵ Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 138.

²¹⁶ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 376.

²¹⁷ Horizontal arrows are lines of correspondence, and vertical arrows are lines of antithesis.

Yet there does seem to be an intensification from the first saying to the second. ‘First’, is a more specific advance on ‘great’, and ‘slave of all’, while also more specific than ‘your servant’, seems to imply a greater debasement through being everyone’s slave. Martin, although he does not apply the argument to this passage, suggests that the model of the populist leader, the demagogue, lies behind Paul’s self-identification as being ‘enslaved to all’ (πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα; 1 Cor 9:19).²¹⁸ Such leaders are typified by an appeal to those of low status, through a deliberate attempt to accommodate themselves to, and identify with, those who will be led, by speaking and appearing as one who is low status. This ‘populist model’ of leadership is found in Greek literature, as well as Cynic philosophy, although it would need to be explained how such a philosophical expression of leadership would be known to Jesus and Mark. The same concern can be raised about Seeley’s presentation on this passage.²¹⁹ However, independently, Weinfeld also looks at the topos.²²⁰ He likewise finds evidence for it in Hellenistic philosophy, but also in the OT, where he notes the reciprocity of the relationship.²²¹ When we consider, in particular, the contrast between ‘slave of all’ and the practices of the ‘gentile rulers’ (who, in Martin’s terms, would represent the alternative leadership model),²²² this does seem to be a potentially helpful way of understanding what is going on,²²³ and certainly takes us beyond

²¹⁸ D.B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 86-135.

²¹⁹ Seeley, ‘Rulership and Service’. This is not to say that there are no similarities – there are a number – but this may simply illustrate the flexibility and usefulness of the slave metaphor, rather than that Mark ‘was probably influenced by the [Hellenistic ruler] tradition’ (239) mediated via ‘Cynic appropriation’ (250). Wischmeyer goes so far as to suggest that Seeley ‘suppresses’ (‘unterdrücken’) the relevance of the early Jewish texts. O. Wischmeyer, ‘Herrschen als Dienen — Mk 10,41—45’, *ZNW* 90 (1999): 28-44 (35). Glancy is similarly critical, noting issues with Seeley’s translation of Dio. However, this not give warrant to therefore conclude that, ‘Jesus’ interpretation of leadership as service and the leader as a slave is an innovation’. *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 106.

²²⁰ M. Weinfeld, ‘The King as the Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea’, *JJS* 33 (1982): 189-194.

²²¹ Esp. 1 Kings 12:7, ‘If you will be a servant [עבד] to this people today and serve [עבד] them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants [עבד] forever.’ 3 Kgdms 12:7 confirms that עבד was interpreted as δούλος.

²²² Although they were not so much ‘benevolent patriarchs’! Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 88-91.

the simplistic assumption that Jesus is here calling disciples not to seek positions of high status.²²⁴ Moreover, it demonstrates that slavery could be used as a way of describing leadership, and that slavery was a fertile metaphor. However, while initially appealing, the model does not seem to fit when we consider that the singular criticism is of gentile leaders and their behaviour.²²⁵ Moreover, Christ, in his ‘example’, does not ‘appeal to the masses’, but rather is abandoned by his disciples in Mark (14:50), and he does not need to appear ‘low status’, since this is the group from which he comes (6:3).²²⁶ Moreover, when we read these sayings in the context of the verse which follows, we note that this slavery ‘to all’, which Christ ultimately fulfils, is not reciprocal in any way but deliberately one-sided in Christ’s self-giving, and finds its fullest expression, as has been said already, in suffering unto death. This, certainly, is not the glorification intended by those who adopted a populist approach.

Rather, what this points us towards is that the focus of these sayings is not so much directed against the *status* of the leader, but rather against the *style* of leadership.²²⁷ After all, with respect to James’ and John’s request, we saw that Jesus did not dismiss the notion of hierarchy or positions of pre-eminence. As Wischmeyer puts it, ‘The command does not do away with rule, nor makes it obsolete, but interprets it’.²²⁸ In this case, with such positions went particular suffering. Moreover, when the discourse moved on to gentile rulers, they were criticised, not for being rulers, or for being gentile, but for the way in

²²³ Best makes the point that the pattern of leadership of the gentile rulers is replaced with another secular word, *διάκονος*, with no real background in the LXX. *Following Jesus*, 126. Therefore, a similarly secular context for Jesus’ alternative model might be envisioned.

²²⁴ E.g. Best, *Following Jesus*, 126.

²²⁵ Wischmeyer, ‘Herrschen als Dienen’, 39.

²²⁶ D.E. Oakman, ‘Was Jesus a Peasant?’, in *Jesus and the Peasants* (ed. D.E. Oakman; Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 164-180.

²²⁷ Best suggests that the verse, ‘indicates the nature of the work that one who is important in the church must be doing, work which would normally be accounted proper for a slave’. *Following Jesus*, 127.

²²⁸ ‘Die Regel hebt nicht Herrschaft auf oder macht sie obsolete, sondern interpretiert sie’. Wischmeyer, ‘Herrschen als Dienen’, 29.

which they conducted their leadership with violent oppression. Their high status was attained by the wrong means, associating with it the wrong activities, and it is not, therefore, recognised as high status by Jesus ('*their* great ones'; 10:42). Through these sayings, then, Jesus is calling for a reevaluation of those activities that determine high status. We see this more clearly as we turn to the last verse of the section which functions as an explanation of these sayings.

This verse (10:45) provides, as Dschulnigg puts it, 'the authoritative model for all ... in the community'.²²⁹ Before engaging with it in some detail, we should briefly address the question of the connection with Isa 53:10-11 LXX. While it is true that there are considerable linguistic differences (most notably *λύτρον*),²³⁰ it is also the case that there are similarities between these verses, both in terms of ideas and related vocabulary (particularly *δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς* [Isa 53:11 LXX] and *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν* [Mark 10:45] coupled with *πάντων δοῦλος* [Mark 10:44]).²³¹ This latter connection suggests there is likely to be at least an echo of the Isaianic portrait in Mark. However, from our perspective, this is neither resolvable nor important since the depictions of slavery in both Isaiah and Mark repeat standard literary portrayals of slaves, particularly as those who suffer. Moreover, even the notion of suffering as a consequence of obedience and signifier of loyalty, present in both passages, can be found, as we have seen, in such literature as the *Exemplum*. Thus, the reader of Mark does not need to make the likely connection with Isaiah in order to understand the logion; rather, they just need to be familiar with the common slave tropes that we have seen in both Roman and Jewish texts.

²²⁹ '[I]st er maßgebendes Vorbild aller DienerInnen in der Gemeinde'. He has already established that 'all' should be 'servants'. Dschulnigg, *Das Markusevangelium*, 286.

²³⁰ M.D. Hooker, 'Isaiah in Mark's Gospel', in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (eds. S. Moyise and M.J.J. Menken; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 35-49 (48-49). Cf. M.D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1959), 74-79.

²³¹ Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*, 258-286.

Mark 10:45 forms a fitting conclusion to the teaching on discipleship in Mark's central section because it links the two themes which we have seen are so prevalent: Jesus' suffering death and the response of self-giving/serving. It also concludes this pericope, linking back to the passion prediction, and also to the two sayings in the immediately preceding verses.²³² In its final form in this passage, the first half of 10:45 is linked to the apodosis of the first saying (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) through the verb διακονέω. The Son of Man, despite being 'great' in the kingdom,²³³ does not demonstrate his status by being served, but rather by serving. The emphasis is, once again, on the *activity* of service and links, both by vocabulary and theme, with the teaching following the second passion prediction (9:35). The second half of the verse links with the apodosis of the second saying (πάντων δοῦλος) through the word λύτρον, which surely *in this context* refers to the price paid to release a person from slavery,²³⁴ although there may also be a reference to the martyr's death.²³⁵ This ransoming is achieved through the giving of the Son of Man's pre-eminent life, which refers back to the suffering of the baptism and the cup, as well as to the passion prediction. Again, it is an *activity* which brings benefit to many, but in the broader context of the discipleship discourse, and the gospel as a whole, refers to crucifixion. This connects back to the teaching following the first passion prediction about cross carrying as a means of giving up one's life in order to save it (8:34-35). This, as we have said, was a typical punishment for slaves, and therefore the 'slave of all' ultimately suffers the fate of a slave. However, it was the most shameful of deaths.²³⁶ Therefore, rather than the focus being on the individual disciple-leader being ascribed with low status, it is on the activity of self-giving that would be accorded with low status. However, a revaluation occurs since,

²³² For further arguments in favour of this connection, see Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 120.

²³³ Βασιλεία is mentioned five times in this chapter, more than any other in the gospel.

²³⁴ There is no need to ask the question to whom the ransom is paid, as does Marcus (*Mark 8-16*, 757), much less how does it work, for this is to push the metaphor too far. The focus is not on the payment, but on the means used to achieve the result. Nevertheless, see also the discussion about ways to relate λύτρον to propitiation via the LXX and Hellenistic sources in Collins, *Mark*, 500-504.

²³⁵ Cf. 2 Macc 7:37-38; 4 Macc 17:21.

²³⁶ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 103-131.

through this low status activity, the many are set free. The interrelationships between this verse and the sayings which precede it can be shown on the following diagram, where the chiasmus that operates between 10:45a-b and 10:45c-d is clear.

Verse	Pre-Eminent Status	←	Serving Activity
10:43	ὃς ἂν θέλῃ μέγας γενέσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν, (whoever wishes to become great among you)	←	ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος (he must be your servant)
10:44	καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι πρῶτος (whoever wishes to be first)	←	ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος (must be slave of all)
10:45a-b	καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (For the son of man)	←	οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι (did not come to be served but to serve)
10:45c-d	λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν ([as] a ransom for many)	←	καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ (and give his life)

That which is ‘first’ is the ‘ransom for many’ which is achieved by the giving of the life of the ‘slave of all’. Thus, slavery becomes associated with ‘serving’ activity, and pre-eminence is accorded to those who give themselves for others, a low status activity but one which carries a new valuation in Jesus’ teaching.²³⁷ Thus, activity determines status, which is consistent with J.N. Collins’ conclusions on *διακονία*, above. It is also consistent with our observations and with Martin’s argument that slavery did not automatically imply low status, and it need not do so here.²³⁸ However, *δοῦλος* is set in opposition to the high status gentile rulers, not simply on the basis of worth but because the self-giving activity itself – the kind of suffering experienced by a slave – is commensurate with low status activity.

²³⁷ Note that this is now different from Paul’s use of the metaphor in Phil 2:5-11. It is not that a disciple *having served* attains exaltation or high status but that the act of service itself confers high status, in Jesus’ valuation. Cf. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 130. Best makes the same point about the possible relation to Dan 7:27. *Following Jesus*, 129. However, we will see something more akin to this in the use of Ps 118:22-23 to explain the parable in Mark 12:1-12, below.

²³⁸ Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 1-49.

Therefore, the expendability of slaves paradoxically provides a means of teaching about the actions that disciples should value.

What of those ‘served’? Martin rightly asserts that a slave’s status is determined by the status of the owner.²³⁹ In this teaching, the slave’s ‘owner’ becomes *πάντες*. This is a deliberately contradictory metaphor because, at least as far as the gospels are concerned, a slave cannot be owned by more than one person (cf. the double-tradition saying in Matt 6:24 || Luke 16:13),²⁴⁰ which may echo the exclusive mastery of God in OT.²⁴¹ It is likely, however, that, as with 9:35, *πάντες* here refers to the group of other disciples (it is parallel to *ὑμῶν διάκονος*; 10:43), or, for the readers, the church.²⁴² Since 10:45 suggests that the giving of Christ’s life, which brings benefit to many, is the equivalent of becoming the slave of all, this implies that a disciple becomes a slave to those whom are benefitted. This is the nature of slaves – they benefit those other than themselves.²⁴³ Thus, the example of the gentile rulers should not be followed because they do not benefit those whom they violently oppress. But Jesus, who willingly receives violence at the hands of gentile rulers, thereby benefits many and can be considered a slave to all. Indeed, as this model slave, Christ’s own suffering is put in perspective and shown to be part of his servile identity, based on the shared experience of slaves. This, therefore, counteracts surprise at Christ’s suffering or fears that it was a mistake or failure, instead highlighting the expectation, even necessity, of the passion, a theme in Mark’s Gospel as a whole and particularly the central

²³⁹ Martin, *Slavery as Salvation*, 56-57.

²⁴⁰ We can perhaps get something of the bizarre force of this statement if we imagine it read, ‘whoever wants to be first will be *husband* of all’. Donahue and Harrington are right to identify the paradoxical nature of the statement but too benign when they suggest, ‘By recommending that his disciples become the “slave of all” Jesus underlines his ideal of universal service towards others.’ J.R. Donahue and D.J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (SP 2; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 313.

²⁴¹ See § 4.3.1.1, above.

²⁴² Certainly, this is Matthew’s interpretation (Matt 20:27).

²⁴³ This is Seneca’s point in *Ben.* 3.18-28, where he describes slaves who act in this way as virtuous. The concern of Seneca’s interlocutor, in response to this, is that by benefitting an owner, the owner would then be in the slave’s debt. This concern is not raised in Mark’s use of the metaphor, however.

section as we have seen.²⁴⁴ This idea, then, expressed here through the slave metaphor, neatly brackets the whole section when coupled with the significant revelation of Christ's identity and its relationship with suffering in 8:27-35.

The practical implication of this for the reader might mean that those disciple-leaders who imitate Jesus' example should be willing to suffer persecution unto death for the sake of their fledgling communities, not seeking to save their own life (perhaps by denying Jesus), but being the recipients of violence such as a slave might be.²⁴⁵ Thus, the high status of the early Christian leaders within their communities is to be attained through imitating the activities of Jesus.²⁴⁶ Such discipleship included being willing to leave behind family or livelihood, as we saw with the teaching following the first passion prediction, but also being prepared to face suffering and death for the sake of others. Slavery, then, can be used as a metaphor in these passages because the existence of the slave included, not just the possibility, but the expectation of such activities, all of which was to benefit the owner (in this case 'many' / 'all'). Hence, the experience of the slave could become a model for the experience of the disciple.

In the light of this challenging conclusion, Hurtado is right to say,

In sum, the whole of 8:22-10:52 is concerned with discipleship. Through a combination of didactic narrative episodes and Jesus' sayings, this central section of Mark's Gospel

²⁴⁴ W. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 38, 155.

²⁴⁵ It is coincidental, but nevertheless illustrative, that the first Christian leaders recorded as suffering torture for their faith outside Christian literature are actual female slaves. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96-97.

²⁴⁶ Just to be clear, as Lee-Pollard puts it, 'There is no theology here of Jesus' suffering and death standing over against disciples who are now, through Jesus' work, exempt from such suffering.' D.A. Lee-Pollard, 'Powerlessness as Power: A Key Emphasis in the Gospel of Mark', *SJT* 40 (1987): 173-188 (181). I am less sure, however, that the imitation of discipleship necessarily includes participation in Christ's redemptive suffering (i.e. 10:45), so much as a willingness to suffer because that is the likely outcome of those who follow his way. K. Brower, 'We are able': Cross-bearing Discipleship and the Way of the Lord in Mark', *HBT* 29 (2007): 177-201.

emphasizes (1) that discipleship is shaped by Jesus himself, his death being the benchmark of commitment, his self-sacrificing service the pattern, and allegiance to his name the marker of the fellowship of his disciples²⁴⁷

For, just as the final passion prediction is given in greater, starker detail than it had been before, so these sayings emphasise the full consequence of Jesus' teaching about community life and leadership. The teaching on discipleship emphasises the twin themes of suffering and service, both of which were part of the life of slaves, as well as the life of Jesus. We turn now to the slave parables in Mark's Gospel, to see how the metaphor of discipleship as slavery is expressed, and whether these themes continue.

6.5 MARK'S SLAVE PARABLES

The parables in which slaves appear as actors implicitly further the more explicit teaching already seen on slavery as a metaphor for discipleship in Mark's gospel. The simple observation is that the slave characters are used to provide good and bad examples of discipleship. To put it another way, given the connection between discipleship and service and slavery in the gospel so far, the disciple-reader is predisposed to identify with the slaves in the parables, both of which come after the central section. This does not mean that the parables must be read allegorically.²⁴⁸ However, as we will see in our parables, the Markan redaction expects the reader to make this identification. This would be in keeping with the general theme of persecution already seen, and potentially fit these slave parables into Appelbaum's category of resistance literature, where 'allegory' is common.²⁴⁹ The

²⁴⁷ L. Hurtado, 'Following Jesus in the Gospel of Mark - and Beyond', in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed. R.N. Longenecker; McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 9-29 (14).

²⁴⁸ However, there is an increasing acknowledgement that Jülicher's total disavowal of allegory took things too far, the problem rather being *allegorising*. See K. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 6, 15-17.

²⁴⁹ A. Appelbaum, 'Hidden Transcripts in King-Parables: Windows on Rabbinic Resistance to Rome', *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 17 (2010): 287-301 (300 and n. 76). However, while both of the

sayings traditions and the parable traditions are not typically put together in this way.

However, Mark has done so, and so we are justified in reading his gospel in its final form as a didactic whole, without being overly concerned for the origins of his sources, while remaining sensitive to any disunity in the material he has chosen to use.

6.5.1 THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS IN THE VINEYARD (MARK 12:1-12)

We saw, above, that the activity of Jesus and of those disciples who follow him is associated with slave terminology in Mark's central section. In the context of suffering, those who would follow Jesus were told to turn away from conventional status seeking and instead adopt activities typical of a slave, which would benefit others in the church. Having thus been told that they should be 'slaves' (10:44), the would-be disciple would naturally have been interested in the implications of this teaching. Therefore, when we come to this parable we should remember, unlike many commentators, that it is not just Jesus and salvation-history that the reader is interested in, but also discipleship. Snodgrass rightly points out that, 'This is one of the most significant, most discussed, and most complicated of all the parables.'²⁵⁰ However, we will avoid most of this complexity by focussing on the final form of the text and the ways in which Mark uses it.

In the broader context, we should note that this, and the parable which follows, are not part of Mark's 'parable section' in chapters 2 to 4. They are the only parables to feature in the second half of the gospel,²⁵¹ and, significantly, appear at the point of reflection between the end of the journey to Jerusalem, and the passion narrative proper. Hence, they are read

parables feature slave owners, neither of them are kings, so cannot be interpreted allegorically as the current Roman emperor, as Appelbaum does with the rabbinic parables. Indeed, if the masters are representative of characters in the gospel, as seems probable, then these would be God and Christ respectively.

²⁵⁰ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 276.

²⁵¹ We might also include the story of the cursing of the fig-tree (11:13-21) as an enacted parable, although not in parabolic form. M.A. Beavis, *Mark* (Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 170-171.

in the context of the pregnant expectation of what is yet to happen. The setting for this parable is Jesus' third visit to the Temple (11:27). Prior to this, he has 'cleansed' the Temple and provoked a fateful response from the chief priests and scribes (11:15-18), to whom are later added the elders (11:27). He has also cursed the fig tree which, interpreted in the light of this incident, implies a judgment on the Temple.²⁵² It is in the midst of a conflict story, which begins in 11:27 and concludes in 12:12, that Jesus tells the parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard. Therefore, this Markan 'sandwich' suggests that the parable will have something to do with the ongoing conflict with the Temple authorities and rulers of Jerusalem.

Bultmann considers the parable to be an allegory,²⁵³ and because of the context, it is certainly more pointed in its allegorical elements than most of the parables. It begins with a clear allusion to the LXX version of the Song of the Vineyard (Isa 5:1), which is an explicit allegory itself.²⁵⁴ The version of the parable in the Gospel of Thomas (65) does not contain this allusion and is consequently less allegorical, and shorter. Jeremias therefore considered it to be an earlier version (likewise Luke 20:9-19).²⁵⁵ However, Evans argues that the version in Thomas exemplifies the weakening of links to Jewish tradition as time went on.²⁵⁶ The latter view seems the more likely, especially when the Targum of Isa 5:1-7 is considered, as this specifically begins with a parabolic comparison and describes the vineyard in terms of a 'high hill' (i.e. the Temple mount), a 'sanctuary' and an 'altar'.²⁵⁷

²⁵² W. Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition* (JSNTSup 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 49, 59.

²⁵³ Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 177.

²⁵⁴ The MT does not have the vineyard owner building a wall around it whereas the LXX does, although expressing it in a different way than Mark. See Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 802.

²⁵⁵ J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 70-72.

²⁵⁶ C.A. Evans, 'God's Vineyard and its Caretakers', in *Jesus and his Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (AGJU 25; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 381-406 (405).

²⁵⁷ Evans, 'God's Vineyard and its Caretakers', 397-398.

Hence, the link between the Temple and the vineyard that we see in Mark's parable is consistent with other Jewish sources, and therefore traditional.

Following the planting and establishing of the vineyard, the owner goes away and leases the vineyard to tenants. This was a typical scenario in Palestine and does not cause any surprise.²⁵⁸ Nor does the sending of a slave to collect the owner's percentage, 'at the opportune time' (τῷ καιρῷ; 12:2). Καιρός links together a number of important passages in Mark. It occurs in the central section on discipleship in the context of receiving more in the present time than had been given up in order to follow Jesus (10:30); in the unfruitfulness of the fig tree, due to the time of year (11:13); and in the parable which we will shortly consider (13:33). It also marks the first words that Jesus speaks in the gospel ('The time has been fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news'; 1:15). This suggests that the timing of the sending of the slave may not be insignificant or random but be supposed to draw the reader's attention to the time of the gospel itself, since the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. We will see the significance of this, below.

However, in spite of representing the owner of the vineyard, the slave does not meet with a positive reception. Instead, he is beaten (δέρω; 12:3), experiencing the common fate of slaves. Yet encountering violence in this particular circumstance may have been unsurprising to Mark's first readers. Hengel demonstrated the many links between this parable and the Zenon papyri, and Kloppenborg completed an exhaustive treatment more recently.²⁵⁹ These papyri consist of an archive of letters from the 3rd century BCE, which describe the activities of Zenon son of Agreophon, who worked for Apollonius, a high

²⁵⁸ M. Hengel, 'Das Gleichnis von den Weingärtnern MC 12 1-12 im Lichte der Zenonpapyri und der rabbinischen Gleichnisse', *ZNW* 59 (1968): 1-39 (21-23).

²⁵⁹ Hengel, 'Das Gleichnis von den Weingärtnern'; J.S. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (WUNT 195; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

minister in Ptolemy II's government. Amongst other things, Zenon oversaw the management of various orchards and vineyards owned by Apollonius in Palestine, including one in Beth Anath in Galilee. Although it is nearly three hundred years prior to the setting of the gospel parable, many of the issues encountered by Zenon shed light on the parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard. For example, recorded in the letters are distant owners, lease arrangements, elaborate care for vineyards and wine production, tensions with groups of tenants, and repeated requests for justice.²⁶⁰ In one letter, Zenon's agent, Alexandros, writes to a colleague to explain why he has been unable to collect a debt from a tenant:

I happened to be unwell as a result of taking some medicine, so I sent a young man, a servant of mine ... and wrote a letter to Jeddous [the tenant]. When they returned they said that he had taken no notice of my letter, but had attacked them and thrown them out of the village.²⁶¹

Clearly, it was not unknown for slaves to be treated with violence in this circumstance. However, exactly the same word (*δέρω*) is also used a little later in Mark to describe the fate of the disciples in the synagogues (13:9), the only other time the word appears outside this parable. Therefore, there seems to be a link between the suffering of the slave sent out by his owner in the parable, and the experience of the disciples-as-slaves sent out in their world.

The second slave has no better experience, because he is 'struck on the head' (*κεφαλιάω*; 12:4), a word for which the meaning is uncertain.²⁶² However, it is possible that it may be an allusion to the beheading of John the Baptist.²⁶³ In addition to violence, he was treated with disrespect (*ἀτιμόω*; 12:4), which is a status term implying dealing with the slave as if

²⁶⁰ Snodgrass, *Stories*, 284.

²⁶¹ *CPJL*, 6. Cf. Evans, 'God's Vineyard and its Caretakers', 388-389.

²⁶² For a consideration of the meanings of the various treatments meted out to the slaves, see A. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse der synoptischen Evangelien* (SANT 29; Munich: Kösel, 1971), 53-55.

²⁶³ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 802. There are also similarities to Jesus' own treatment in 15:19.

he were of low status, irrespective of the fact that he has been sent by the owner. The third slave, the tenants killed (12:5). As if this was not enough, it turns out there were others, undistinguished, who were beaten and killed. This horrifying addition to the standard parabolic pattern of three may suggest that Mark is making a point about his own time, when members of his own community suffer like the ‘many others’ (πολλοὺς ἄλλους; 12:5). Finally, the owner sends his beloved son (υἰὸν ἀγαπητόν; 12:6). This phrase has been used of Jesus twice in the gospel already, at the baptism (1:11) and transfiguration (9:7), so that the reader cannot miss the link. However, it was also used in the paradigmatic story of Abraham and Isaac, again in the context of violent death (Gen 22:2, 12, 16). This is what meets the son when he gets to the vineyard (12:8), after which his body is cast outside.²⁶⁴

Multiple slaves have now experienced violence at the hands of the tenants. This was not atypical, as we have said. Yet allegorically, most commentators assume that these slaves represent the prophets.²⁶⁵ For example, Amos 3:7 LXX refers to τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ τοὺς προφήτας (‘his [God’s] slaves the prophets’).²⁶⁶ In the light of the connection with the prophecy of Isa 5:1-7, this may be a possibility. However, I suspect that many commentators are being influenced by the discussion about the killing of the prophets at the end of Matthew’s parallel section to this one (Matt 23:29-37), an idea that is notably absent from Mark. Rather, in Mark’s Gospel, we already have suitable referents, so long as

²⁶⁴ Glancy suggests that this parable ‘relies on the contrast between the dishonored bodies of slaves and the honorable body of the son ... The murder of his son excites the wrath of the vineyard owner as the abuse and murder of slaves did not’. *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 105. There is certainly some truth to this which presumes a particular reaction on the part of Mark’s readers. However, the effect of the parable is, in fact, the opposite of this; it makes the point that the son shares in the same fate as the slaves and is therefore united with the slaves. In terms of message, the parable is therefore similar to Matt 10:25, where the slave (disciple) who becomes ‘like’ (ὡς) the master (Jesus) suffers the same opposition as he does.

²⁶⁵ E.g. Collins, *Mark*, 546; Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 811-812; Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 55. The list includes Munro who generally looks for a contemporary relevance for the slaves in the parables. *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 347. Boring even chooses to translate δούλος as ‘servant’ here, rather than ‘slave’, ‘to make the association with the traditional biblical phrase that identifies the “servants” as “prophets”’. *Mark*, 327 n. (a).

²⁶⁶ Collins, *Mark*, 546.

we do not insist that every character has a specific referent, or that the ordering of appearance of the characters has to match historical sequence, given that this is not a full allegory but a parable.²⁶⁷ Firstly, the slaves may suggest to the reader the followers of Jesus, who are told to become like slaves, and are instructed that they will suffer the same kind of violence as do the slaves in this story. This can be seen in the connection between these abuses and those described in the third passion prediction (10:34), which we have already seen gives some substance to the link between slavery and discipleship. The receipt of violence by Jesus' followers can also be seen in the description of the post-Easter community in the Little Apocalypse, where those disciples who are faithful will likewise be beaten and killed but their suffering endurance will be rewarded (13:9, 12-13). The experience of the slaves may also allude to John the Baptist, who is beheaded, and the telling of the parable itself has been prompted by agonistic discussion of his ministry (11:30). These suffering characters in Mark's Gospel may well have had their counterparts in Mark's community, especially if it was written in Rome during the Neronian persecutions. When we add to this the plain fact that the beloved son was meant to represent Jesus,²⁶⁸ and that the religious leaders assume that they are the tenants (12:12), then it becomes even more clear that the primary referents of the characters of the parable are to be found within the gospel itself, and, by implication, amongst Mark's readers. This is all but guaranteed if *καιρός* does point to the present time (i.e. the time of Jesus' ministry and beyond). However, *if* the reference to the prophets is intended by Mark then I suggest

²⁶⁷ In other words, we should not expect that those represented by the slaves must necessarily suffer prior to the beloved son (i.e. Jesus). Rather, the sequence in the parable represents pre-eminence – with the one closest to the owner being sent last. Without this, there would no sense of dramatic tension, of the plot moving towards a climax. Yet narrative parables consistently display this progress of plotting, and where they vary, this marks a significant narrative purpose (e.g. the incomplete plot of the final scene with the older brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son).

²⁶⁸ Stern's view that the beloved son is John the Baptist does not make sense in the context of Mark's Gospel as a whole. *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 193-194.

it is a secondary allusion, designed to show his readers that they stand in the same tradition as did the prophets themselves.

Given this identification of the slaves with the disciples, we find that the parable encodes the same teaching as we found earlier. Following a journey, Jesus will suffer and die at the hands of those to whom he has been sent. However, this suffering is in response to loyal obedience on the part of the son. Indeed, the suffering becomes the sign of obedience and the means of demonstrating a connection to God the master. In just the same way, the slaves (i.e. disciples) are sent from the same owner (i.e. they are part of the same 'household'), on the same journey, with the same purpose, and meet the same end. In not every case do they experience death but then the gospel does not say they will. However, it does say that they will suffer, in exactly the same way that the slaves in the parable do. This link with the teaching of the rest of the gospel is further heightened by the use of Ps 118:22-23 (Mark 12:10-11). Jesus, the one who is rejected, becomes the capstone. This, according to Marcus, suggests a raised keystone, representing the resurrection.²⁶⁹ In this case, we have a reference to the passion in a way that includes the resurrection, just as did each of the earlier passion predictions. Moreover, it encapsulates the kind of revaluation seen earlier. That what might suffer rejection, since it is of little value, in fact comes to be regarded as of pre-eminent value by God (12:10). In other words, the kind of low status activity undertaken by slaves in this parable, and then by the son, in fact leads to exaltation. This echoes the teaching that was found in the sayings tradition.

Therefore, in Mark's parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard we have seen slaves used to represent, most likely, the disciples. These slaves are very typical of the constructed slaves we have seen in other literature, in that they represent their owner, obey (apparently) without question as they are sent on his behalf, and suffer violence, for the sake of the owner. Just like the picture of slavery encountered earlier, these slaves are expendable since

²⁶⁹ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 808-809.

there are always others to fill their place, with an owner who is quite prepared to endure the ill-treatment of many of his slaves before he gets the message. Shocking as this is to the modern reader, it may not have been so surprising to Mark's audience (the climactic moment is the sending and treatment of the son), and therefore the parable uses slavery to reinforce the expected experience of those who would follow Jesus – that they too will face suffering as they are sent, but that this is no different from the experience of the beloved son and is a sign of obedience. This is consistent with the teaching found earlier in the gospel. Since the connection between the sayings tradition and the parable tradition seems evident from this comparison, there is therefore some justification for suggesting that slavery as a metaphor for discipleship, and particularly discipleship in the face of suffering, is a theme in Mark's Gospel. However, there is yet one more parable to be considered.

6.5.2 THE PARABLE OF THE DOORKEEPER (MARK 13:33-37)

The parable of the Doorkeeper (sometimes called the parable of a Man Going on a Journey),²⁷⁰ occurs at the end of the Little Apocalypse (Mark 13:5-32). It serves as a concluding application of the teaching which precedes it. As such, we have a clear example of how the church is supposed to live in the light of the coming 'time' (*καιρός*; 13:33). As noted above, this links together a number of key passages in the gospel, including this parable with the previous one and the prior discipleship teaching. Jesus has left the Temple for the last time (13:1), and brings this discourse to Peter, James, John, and Andrew, in private (13:3).²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Scott uses this description for both the Markan and Lukan parable. B.B. Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 212.

²⁷¹ This is the first mention of Andrew since the list of disciples in 3:16-19. There, he also appears fourth in the list, following Peter, and James and John, despite being Simon's brother (1:16, 29). This indicates his lesser importance in the group, and again suggests that Jesus' disciples were not an anti-hierarchical group, which Mark does not dispute.

The parable itself is found in a quite different form and location in Mark than in Luke (12:35-38), though it has a similar meaning in each gospel.²⁷² Matthew does not include it,²⁷³ perhaps choosing the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins instead.²⁷⁴ Apart from this parable, it has affinities with others, including the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Faithful Servant, and the Talents, indicating that the ideas of waiting and watching, and responsibility and reward were common threads within the parable tradition.

In Mark, as already mentioned, the broader context is the linking section between the journey to Jerusalem and the passion narrative. Therefore, we should keep in mind that the 'shadow of the cross' falls on this passage, even if the evidence for this is less obvious than in the previous parable. The parable is linked to the preceding section via the editorial introduction (13:33). 'Watch out' has been the repeated command during the apocalyptic discourse (βλέπετε; 13:5, 9, 23, 33), and introduces the parable, along with the rare NT verb 'stay awake / be vigilant' (ἀγρυπνέω; 13:33).²⁷⁵ Whereas 'watch out' links the parable backwards to the preceding discourse, the idea of 'staying awake' looks forward to the parable itself.

²⁷² For the view that they are the same parable, see C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1961), 120-122. For the view that they are independent parables, see C.L. Blomberg, 'When is a Parallel Really a Parallel? A Test Case: The Lucan Parables', *WTJ* 46 (1984): 78-103 (83-85). Note that there is an error in the table on p. 81 of this article which reads 'Matt' when it should read 'Mark' with respect to this parable. It is also possible that Mark and Luke share an original parable but have each modified it for their own purposes. So Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 174-175.

²⁷³ Although Weiser sees Matt 24:42 as a remnant of this parable, thereby assigning it to 'Q'. *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 181-183.

²⁷⁴ I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1978), 533.

²⁷⁵ It is curious that Mark has chosen to use ἀγρυπνέω, since the rest of the parable expresses the same idea with γρηγορέω ('stay awake / be watchful'; 13:34, 35, 37). Indeed, the generalising conclusion (13:37), also assumed to be Markan, uses this latter verb. Therefore, there is likely to be some complicated tradition history being represented in these few verses, and, when taken with the shift to 'you do not know' (οὐκ οἴδατε) in 13:35, Bultmann is probably right to see the original parable as being only 13:34. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 174.

In a reversal of the previous parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard, this parable pictures a man who is simply ‘going away’ (13:34), and assigns tasks to his slaves who remain while he is absent.²⁷⁶ Among these responsibilities is watching for his return so that the door might be opened for him. He consequently tells the doorkeeper to stay alert. Crossan notes the strangeness of this command since the doorkeeper’s job is to do exactly that!²⁷⁷ However, it serves the narrative purpose of bringing to the foreground the point of the parable, which is that the reader might perform this action themselves, that is, staying awake and alert. It is often pointed out that the doorkeeper’s role was both one of admission and refusal, depending on the visitor (e.g. Jos. *Ant.* 17:90; John 10:1-3). When it is dark, the slave needs to be more attentive as it is difficult to recognise those who approach the door. It is likely that this links back to the false messiahs and prophets (13:5b-6, 21-23).²⁷⁸ However, it is the uncertainty of the time and date of the owner’s return (identified as ‘the Lord’ in 13:35) that provides the requirement for watching, and the increasing difficulty of staying awake the longer he is away. As Glancy points out, ‘Like a slave whose body is unable to rest at night, the follower of Jesus is obliged to remain ever vigilant.’²⁷⁹

Marcus ponders why the master will return at night, since ancient people were unlikely to travel after dark due to fears for their safety.²⁸⁰ The obvious reason, suggested by the

²⁷⁶ Weiser expresses concern with the meaning of ἐξουσία, that the slaves are given ‘authority’ (‘Souveränität’), and instead prefers ‘warrant’ (‘Befugnis’). *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 134. Likewise, Jeremias says that ‘the transfer of authority is out of place’. J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1972), 54. However, slaves clearly could have authority to carry out a task, but the authority was derived from their owner.

²⁷⁷ J.D. Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (London: Harper & Row, 1973, 1985), 96. Cf. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 134. On the other hand, if the typical expectation of slaves is that they will be ‘fickle, wanton, slothful, sluggish, idle, tardy, [etc.]’ (*Digest* 21.1), then the explicit command is perhaps to be expected, confirming the ideological concerns of the slave-holder. See § 3.2.2.4.

²⁷⁸ Collins, *Mark*, 618.

²⁷⁹ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 105.

²⁸⁰ Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 922. Cf. Jeremias, *Parables*, 54.

narrative itself, is that we find it harder to stay awake at night; as van Iersel says, ‘To stay awake in the daytime is not usually a problem.’²⁸¹ In the context of slavery, it would be a poor slave indeed who was asleep during the day, and laziness on the part of slaves is punished elsewhere in the parables (e.g. the parable of the Talents), but not here, which may be in keeping with the parable’s addressees: four senior disciples, and the context of Gethsemane which we will explore shortly. However, the reference to night surely has an eschatological reference also. Although this is a traditional element,²⁸² it also finds meaning in the immediately preceding narrative where Jesus tells the disciples that, ‘in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light’ (13:24). It is a picture of the darkest night prior to the return of the Son of Man, but also connects the interpretation of the parable to the time of Jesus and, by implication, Mark’s readers.²⁸³

However, this is not the only link to the rest of the gospel. R.H. Lightfoot observes that the four watches of the night described in 13:35 could correspond to four movements in the passion narrative (I have added some detail to clarify his suggestion):²⁸⁴

1. Evening (ὀψέ): this (ὄψις) is when Jesus comes (ἔρχεται) to eat the Last Supper with the Twelve (14:17).

²⁸¹ van Iersel, *Mark*, 411.

²⁸² Cf. 1 Thess 5:2.

²⁸³ I am aware that there are different readings of Mark 13 other than the traditional eschatological ‘second coming’. See, for example, N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 341-343. However, I find the ‘traditional’ view more persuasive; see E. Adams, ‘The Coming of the Son of Man in Mark’s Gospel’, *TynBul* 56 (2005): 39-61; D.C. Allison, ‘Jesus and the Victory of Apoclyptic’, in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N. T. Wright’s Jesus and the Victory of God* (ed. C.C. Newman; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 126-141. Nevertheless, it is not significant to the argument of this chapter whether the events of Mark 13 refer to the near or distant horizon, indeed, as Middleton says, ‘Jesus’ words about the destabilization of heavenly phenomena could well refer both to events on the historical horizon and to his final coming’. J.R. Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 183.

²⁸⁴ R.H. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 53. Cf. also Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, 347.

2. Midnight (μεσονύκτιον): Gethsemane and the trial take place at night (νύξ). It is also the hour (ώρα; 14:35; cf. 13:32) when Peter, James and John are commanded to keep watch (γρηγορεῖτε; 14:34, 38; cf. 13:35, 37), but are found sleeping (καθεύδοντας; 14:37; cf. 13:36).
3. The ‘cock crow’ (ἀλεκτοροφωνία): the specific time (ἀλέκτωρ) of Peter’s denial (14:30).
4. Dawn (πρωί): when Jesus was handed over to the Romans (πρωί; 15:1).

It is suggested that these four watches correspond to the Roman system (cf. Mark 6:48).²⁸⁵ This is the case,²⁸⁶ but it does not mean they cannot have a wider significance with respect to the gospel narrative. Lightfoot adds, ‘it is very noticeable that in the passion narrative of this gospel the last hours of the Lord’s life are reckoned at three-hour intervals (14:68,72, 15:1,25,33,42), which is also the method adopted in 13:35 – an exactness of temporal reckoning to which St. Mark is usually indeed a stranger’.²⁸⁷

It must be admitted that the details are not wholly convincing, especially the second period. However, the other ‘watches’ do seem to correspond to significant moments in the passion account.²⁸⁸ Moreover, this correspondence seems to be confirmed by the links with the Gethsemane story. As we have said, γρηγορέω (‘stay awake / be watchful’) is repeated three times in this parable passage (13:34, 35, 37). It is possibly a Markan word, judging by the way that Luke modifies it (Luke 12:35-40). However, the only other time the verb appears in Mark’s Gospel is in the Gethsemane account. There, the verb once again appears three times (14:34, 37, 38), and, like here, is addressed to a named disciple, Peter. Like the parable, the incident takes place at night, only this time, the disciples do fail at their assigned task and fall asleep, being unprepared when Jesus is handed over, just as the

²⁸⁵ C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 412.

²⁸⁶ It was also adopted by Jews in Palestine. Marcus, *Mark 8-16*, 920.

²⁸⁷ Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark*, 53. To avoid confusion, superscript verse numbers in the original quotation have been converted to normal type.

²⁸⁸ Boring says without equivocation, ‘As the suffering predicted for the disciples already anticipates the story of Jesus’ passion that is about to begin, these four watches will be reflected in the way the story of Jesus’ last night is depicted.’ *Mark*, 377.

passion predictions had foretold (*παραδίδομι*; 14:41-42 and 9:31; 10:33). This correspondence with the passion and Gethsemane thus situates the parable within the general orbit of the Markan teaching we have seen this far: suffering, failure of the disciples, and Jesus' self-giving. Furthermore, the verse which immediately follows the parable explanation connects the account with Jesus' death (giving the first narratorial mention of the fateful intentions of Jesus' opponents) and the Passover (14:1). We should perhaps not, therefore, consider the gap between the end of chapter 13 and the start of chapter 14 to be quite so much of a chasm as is often the case.²⁸⁹ Hence, many of the connections seen in the previous teaching about discipleship as slavery in Mark can be seen in this passage also, suggesting that it may form part of the same thematic element in the gospel.

With respect to our particular interest, we can see that this parable, like the last, features slaves who are intended to be representative of the disciples. As Munro puts it, 'At every stage ... the hearer/reader is called upon to learn about discipleship from slave experience'.²⁹⁰ The 'you sleeping' of 13:36 (*ὕμᾶς καθεύδοντας*) makes this clear, as does Mark's generalising conclusion addressed to all the church (*πᾶσιν λέγω*; 13:37). These slaves are part of one household and it may be that this unity is designed to contrast with the earlier description of fractured family relationships in 13:12. Just as slaves take on a new identity in their new household, with an expectation of loyalty to this identity, so, for the disciples, actual kinship ties are not only less important than loyalty to Christ and his 'household' of the church, but positively dangerous in threatening times (cf. 10:29-30). Thus, slavery can be used to stress the shift of identity that being a disciple brings.

Moreover, these slave-disciples are given tasks by the owner, who, in the context of the parable, is the Son of Man. However, it is possible that τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ in 13:34 should be

²⁸⁹ Cf. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark*, 50-51.

²⁹⁰ Munro, *Jesus, Born of a Slave*, 345.

translated, not so much as the individual tasks assigned to each slave, but rather to the singular work of the owner (i.e. the owner assigns *his* work to the slaves). The implication would then be that the disciples are given the task of continuing Christ's work in his absence. This would fit in with the instructions in the prior discourse to preach the good news and endure persecution (13:9-13), precisely what Jesus has been doing in the rest of the gospel. The slave's role as an extension of the master's activity would therefore be in view.

The role of the doorkeeper is more specific, as it was a role singled out for instruction by the householder (13:34). In spite of being the first port of call for visitors, doorkeeping was a relatively low-status activity, as it removed the slave from the centre of the household. They were often chained to prevent them running away and were therefore described as mere 'guard dogs'.²⁹¹ Yet, in this parable, we again encounter a revaluation of activity, since it is highlighted as a role of high importance in the eyes of the owner, and one which the disciples should keep doing even though it may seem insignificant. It seems likely that, in the context of the wider passage, Mark was addressing at least one of the named disciples (13:3), and, by implication, leaders in the church. However, Mark concludes the parable by indicating that this responsibility is for all disciples, not just the leaders. As Snodgrass puts it, the exhortation to watch 'is a metaphor for active and diligent service', and we therefore see the metaphor of slavery being applied to all disciples.²⁹² The lack of resolution in the parable (Did the owner come home? Did the doorkeeper fall asleep?) leaves room for the appropriate response to be made by the reader. In the possibility of the doorkeeper's sleep, the narrative creates the imagined possibility, not just of the slave's failure to the householder but of the consequences which might follow. These are not spelt out but

²⁹¹ E.g. Suet., *Rhet.* 3; Ovid, *Amor.* 1.6.1. See S.R. Joshel and L.H. Peterson, *The Material Life of Roman Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 41, 98.

²⁹² Snodgrass, *Stories*, 493-494.

assume a general knowledge of slaves and their relationships with their masters; the implication being that the consequences would not be good for the slave.²⁹³

This parable, then, confirms and extends the ideas expressed previously.²⁹⁴ In particular, the disciples are portrayed as slaves who have responsibilities exercised through activities. These activities may be regarded as extensions of the owner's activity, confirming the expectation that slaves will fulfil the will of the owner. In the interpretation of this parable, the leading disciples are given an apparently menial role, to open the door, but this role is singled out as being regarded as of high importance by the householder, Christ. The connections to the passion echo the previous links between the passion predictions and the teaching on discipleship as slavery, and the correspondence with the Garden scene further reminds the reader of the failure of the disciples with respect to Jesus' teaching (and of the consequences). In effect, all these instances serve to highlight the importance of correctly understanding and acting upon the discipleship-as-slavery motif in Mark's Gospel. In the immediate context, the disciples are reminded of the persecution that awaits them, at times due to family ties, and the parable therefore emphasises the new identity that is to be found within the household of the Son of Man and the corresponding expectation of loyalty. This adds a new element to the use of slavery as a metaphor but is consistent with the general picture already established. These ideas would fit well with a Markan community facing persecution, and the open ending of the parable invites the response of all would-be slave-disciples.

²⁹³ There is a distinct similarity in 13:35-36 to the old-fashioned threat to children, 'Just wait till your father gets home!'

²⁹⁴ Gundry is right to say that we should not 'import' the previous teaching into our understanding of the parable, but he is wrong to assume that there is no connection with it. *Mark*, 799.

6.6 THE METAPHOR DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Having looked at all the texts that refer to slaves and slavery in Mark, we are in a position to draw together a number of observations, firstly about slavery and secondly about discipleship. Regarding slavery, we have seen that none of the slaves in Mark challenge or subvert the ideology of slavery; indeed, there is nothing remarkable about the way in which slaves are described in comparison with constructions of the metaphor in other literature. In particular, in all the passages considered we have seen evidence of both actual and metaphorical slaves representing their masters, serving as extensions of both their ideas and activities. We have seen the regular connection between slaves and violence, particularly in the parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard, but also by the association between the passion predictions and their corresponding sayings, especially Mark 10:44-45. Even in the parable of the Doorkeeper, violence, although not mentioned, lies behind the implied threat of the master's return. Indeed, for the metaphor to be useful in Mark's gospel narrative, as we will see, it is *necessary* for slaves to suffer. To a less obvious extent, we have also observed the association, in the discipleship teachings as well as in the parable of the Doorkeeper, between slaves and the new identity that is formed as a slave who is part of a household, with attendant loyalty to the new group over against the family of origin. This loyalty, in turn, is expressed ultimately through obedient suffering on behalf of the owner, thus tying the concepts together. Therefore, Mark makes use of a range of features that would have been familiar to slaves in the ancient world, whether they be Jewish or gentile, including their expendability.

Where owners appear in the parables, Mark also encodes their failings, whether that be the owner who repeatedly sends his slaves to be maltreated in the parable of the Tenants, or the master who goes away, risking the household to the care of slaves in the parable of the

Doorkeeper. Yet this presentation is not likely to be a ‘hidden transcript’²⁹⁵ for there is no implied criticism of the slave owner in either parable. Indeed, in the parable of the Tenants, it is not ultimately the owner who suffers the violence, which demonstrates the wisdom, from his perspective, of sending slaves. Nor in the parable of the Doorkeeper is the owner left without recourse in the event of the slave’s failure. Rather, the parable represents the idealised assumption of slave owners that their slaves will be sufficiently trustworthy to represent and carry out their wishes, since this is a defining characteristic of the good slave. As with the use of the slave metaphor in other Jewish writings, this lack of critique is likely to be because the reader is invited to see the master in the parable of the Tenants as God, and certainly the master in the parable of the Doorkeeper can be considered to be Christ. However, even without this observation, we have seen that Mark is content simply to use the slaveholder ideology without modification. This is consistent with other Jewish and non-Jewish uses of the metaphor which emphasise the master’s perspective, and might, therefore, be regarded as necessary for Mark’s metaphor to be communicable. This might suggest that the metaphor is, in fact, established.²⁹⁶ Yet because Mark is using familiar imagery to communicate novel ideas about Christ’s suffering and that of the disciple, the metaphor is very much alive in his creative vision.

With respect to discipleship, we saw at the start of the chapter a general picture of discipleship which included the reshaping of the disciple’s attitudes and behaviour according to the words, actions and person of Christ. Such *imitatio Christi* was particularly expressed in Mark as cross-bearing – following Jesus’ way of suffering – and fundamental to both Mark’s picture of Christ, as well the message of his gospel. This ongoing, post-call ‘counting the cost’ was a mark of Christian discipleship, and, moreover, such discipleship does not result in mastery but continuing discipleship. This generalised picture can be refined in light of the specific texts we have considered. We have noted the importance of

²⁹⁵ See § 4.3.2.2.

²⁹⁶ See the discussions in §§ 2.1.7 and 2.2.1.

following Christ's example, which is described particularly as leading to voluntary suffering for others. Moreover, we have seen that disciple-leaders are not to adopt the oppressive violence of the gentile rulers but instead to be on the receiving end of suffering, as is Christ, and to adopt activities which may be regarded as low-status. However, due to Christ's revaluation, such activities become the mark of the pre-eminent disciple. Thus, status in and of itself has not been the issue so much as the status implied by the activities undertaken by the disciple. This discipleship, even in the master's absence, is to be carried out as if he were present, thus indicating the ongoing sense of discipleship.

If we seek to represent how these different 'input spaces' contribute to the metaphor DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY, then this can be seen in the Conceptual Integration Network, below. The significance of Christ's passion has been highlighted by representing this as a separate input space.

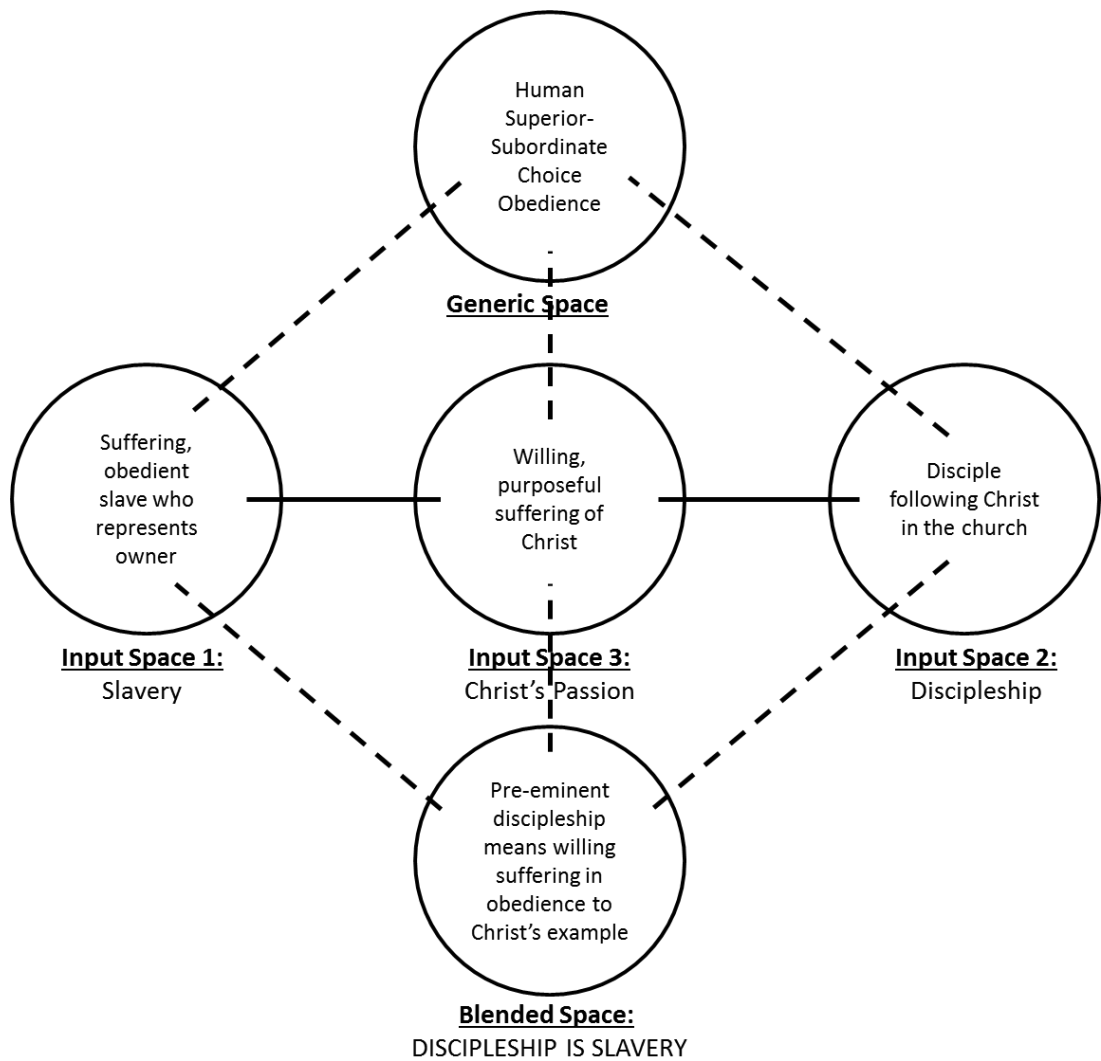


Figure 3 - Conceptual Integration Network of DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY in Mark

Although, due to space, not every aspect can be fully represented, nevertheless, this captures the key aspects of the metaphor in Mark. In particular, the slave-disciple seeks to embody literally the example of Christ through suffering even to death, and other apparently low-status activity. This serves the master, whether that be God or Christ, but also the church, the new community to which familial loyalty is owed. The blended space also shows that, while the follower of Jesus should expect suffering, as does a slave, this is now an outcome of faithful obedience to the master, demonstrating their connectedness, even though the violence is meted out by other apparent authorities. Moreover, unlike slavery, this discipleship relationship is voluntarily and willingly entered into. Hence, the

blended space provides an identity for the disciple derived from the owner/example, Christ, by expressing his attitudes and activities, according to his valuation, which in turn serves the household of the church. Within this identity, violence and abuse is characteristic, if not actually the norm. This combination is an emergent property of the creative blend, for none of the individual input spaces suggest this by themselves.

This makes sense in the likely historical context of a Markan church facing persecution, not least because the majority of Christians, like the majority of slaves, presumably had little option other than bearing it.²⁹⁷ In such a case, Markan Christians now had good reason to persevere: suffering was part of what it meant to be a disciple. Although it might seem that it was those opposed to the believers who held power and wielded it oppressively, the slave metaphor enabled them to conceive of their suffering as purposeful suffering, serving a greater purpose in fulfilment of the master's will in and on behalf of the master's household. If, as we have seen, some of the passages are aimed particularly at leaders of the church, then the metaphor would act as an encouragement to them to endure suffering as an example to the church, just as Christ had set them an example. Thus, unexpectedly, the metaphor of slavery gives some measure of power back to the church, at least conceptually, in their understanding of their suffering. Moreover, the paradox of the saying in 10:44 is maintained in the blend, for with the particular suffering which arises from faithful obedience comes a corresponding exaltation of status. In other words, those who are most valued within the Christian community, according to Mark, are those who are willing to suffer for their faithfulness, in the manner in which Jesus did.²⁹⁸

However, Conceptual Blending Theory suggests that the metaphor, represented by the blended space, may give new insight to the input spaces. Certainly, it gives clarity to how Mark understands discipleship, and without the contribution of slavery, it is difficult to see

²⁹⁷ Although fleeing and recanting were clearly alternatives. Perhaps the latter was a real concern for Mark, explaining his message about enduring persecution.

²⁹⁸ Something of this can be seen in later Christianity in Ign., *Rom.* 4.3.

how enduring suffering could be seen as normative. Moreover, it shows that Christ's passion is also exemplary suffering. Given that he is the one 'who came to serve', and that the slavery metaphor therefore interprets his ransoming death, so it can be seen as no failure or accident, but an essential element of his service and indicator of loyalty to his master's purposes, an important argument of Mark's theology.²⁹⁹ However, the question is whether we gain a new insight into slavery. We find confirmed in Mark the shared ideology of violence against slaves, along with the corresponding understanding that slaves did not have physical security of their bodies, not least because they were the site of the outworking of the owner's will. However, by mixing this ideology with that of voluntary obedience, and by using this combination as a model for discipleship, Mark is effectively sanctioning this suffering in religious terms. To some extent, this may exalt the slave in the congregation, and perhaps give purpose to their suffering as a slave, but it also does nothing to lessen it. Something very similar may be seen in 1 Peter 2:18-21, where the three 'input spaces' of discipleship, slavery, and the exemplary sufferings of Christ again come together. This time, however, it is not the disciple who suffers as a disciple, but the slave who suffers as a slave, and it is considered to be discipleship (cf. 1 Peter 3:17-18; 4:1). This indicates how widespread this Christian version of the slave ideology became, and the cost of the slavery metaphor.

6.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have considered the provenance of Mark's Gospel, noting, in particular, the likely setting in Rome, in the context of suffering, uncertainty and fear following the Neronian persecution and around the time of the Temple's destruction. The mixed Christian community of Jews and gentiles almost certainly included slaves, thus keeping the metaphorical 'input space' of slavery ever before the readers. In turn, we examined the other 'input space' of discipleship, noting the general characteristics of Jesus' call to

²⁹⁹ E.g. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, 38, 155.

anyone, the necessity of 'counting the cost' and following Christ, particularly on the way of suffering, and the objective of continuing discipleship rather than mastery – all of which fit neatly with the ideology of slavery seen in previous chapters. Since the structure of Mark suggests the twin themes of the identity of Christ and discipleship are to be found in key texts which use the slavery metaphor, it was seen that understanding the metaphor is crucial to understanding the gospel.

Then, we looked at those passages in Mark's Gospel which feature slaves and slavery. The main division fell between the teaching which follows the passion predictions in the central section, and two subsequent parables which feature slaves as actors. Each can be interpreted in the light of the other and find meaning in their narrative context in the gospel. These passages indicated that there is justification in seeing a common theme of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship in Mark. Hence, in the earliest gospel we find evidence of slavery being used, not simply metaphorically, as is common in OT, but as a teaching exemplum, in extended narrative form, which quite possibly goes back to Jesus himself.

Mark has emphasised the element of physical suffering which is attendant on the experience of the slave, and correspondingly expected of the pre-eminent disciple. This is rooted in the aspect of slave identity whereby slaves embody the will and activity of their owner. Disciples, likewise, embody the example and teaching of Christ, including his revaluation of activities. All this is done in the context of the Christian community which becomes the new 'household' to which loyalty is owed, in place of the family of origin, just as is the experience of slaves. This makes sense in the context of a Markan church seeking to endure in the face of persecution, and therefore experiencing increased group identity and cohesion. In this respect, we could regard the metaphor as a form of 'resistance', in so far as it serves as a response to opposition. However, while there is explicit critique of gentile oppressors and of those who would act in a similar way, this does not find a

correspondence within the slave metaphor, where there is no critique of slave owners or their activities, but instead a simple acceptance of, and dependence on, the master-slave relationship. Thus, these passages do not seem to serve as ‘hidden transcripts’ for Mark’s readers.³⁰⁰ Nevertheless, just as we saw with the rabbinic slave parables, the metaphor is not simply based in the reality and ideology of slavery, shown in the way that Mark represents actual slaves, but is also used to provide a means of interpreting reality for Mark’s readers. The use of the metaphor DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY distances their present experience from the readers, enabling them to reflect upon it. As a result, their suffering as ‘slaves’ is given purpose, since it can be the result of obedience and the expression of loyalty to the master, his will and his household. This new perspective on the situation of the Markan Christians enables them to regain some power, at least conceptually, from their oppressors, as their involuntary suffering becomes voluntary service.

While these aspects of slavery used by Mark could be derived from the OT usage of the metaphor, there is nothing definite to indicate this particular background, and the very generality of the features is more suggestive of a common understanding of slavery in the ancient Mediterranean context. However, with respect to the five characteristics of metaphorical slavery encountered in Roman and Jewish writings developed in previous chapters, we see both similarities with the usage in Mark and differences:

- i. There are only ‘good’ slaves. Unlike the rabbinic slave parables and the Roman comedies, and unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark only features ‘good’ slaves. In other words, all of the slaves featured serve as positive examples for the reader, although the possibility of disobedience, and hence a negative example, is entertained in the parable of the Doorkeeper. The contrast is not so much between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ slaves, but rather between being a metaphorical slave and not. The consequence of

³⁰⁰ Appelbaum, ‘Hidden Transcripts’. See § 4.3.2.2.

this is a rather idealised and one-sided portrayal of slavery. It is not possible to know whether this is simply because of the particular uses to which Mark puts the metaphor in our limited examples, or whether it might suggest a generally positive view of slaves.

- ii. Slaves model values. As has been said, the slaves in Mark represent positive values for the reader, whether that be, for example, obedient attention to tasks given or wilful suffering for the master. Although, like the expressions of the slave metaphor in Jewish writings, Mark's use of the metaphor models the ideological concerns of the owner, there is not the same focus on the master. Rather, attention is particularly given to the slave as example. Nevertheless, the values that the slave metaphor communicates are the key values that Mark wishes his readers to perpetuate, as we have seen in Jewish and Roman texts.
- iii. Slaves experience suffering. Just as in Jewish and Roman literature, slaves are depicted as being threatened by, and receiving, physical violence. However, just as in some Roman and Jewish examples, this suffering can be a consequence of obedience and an expression of loyalty.
- iv. Slaves are judged by their relationship with their owners. This is most clear in the parable of the Doorkeeper, where the slave is expected to enact actively the owner's will – or else. However, it is just as much present in the sayings tradition, as the adequacy of the slave is determined by the extent to which the owners (in 10:44-45 'all') benefit from the service. By means of suffering, whether on behalf of God, Christ, or the church, the slave-disciple literally embodies the owner's will, following Christ's example.
- v. Slave stories demonstrate reversal. At least, this is true to some extent, most notably in the identification of Christ as both the ideal slave (10:44-45), and as the master (13:26, 36). However, like the Jewish examples we have seen, masters remain masters in the parables. This can be accounted for by the 'master' in these

cases representing God/Christ. On the other hand, we have seen frequent evidence of what I have called the revaluation of slaves and their activities. Thus, in Jesus' paradoxical saying of 10:43-44, leaders, especially, are characterised as slaves. The apparently humble activities of such slaves are given prominence in Christ's teaching and thereby greater significance within the church. Those who act accordingly as such 'slaves' are those to whom high status is rendered. While they are not quite described as masters, perhaps because of the aforementioned hesitancy to usurp the place of God/Christ, there is nevertheless a creative use of the slave metaphor in Mark that corresponds with some of the examples seen in Roman literature.

Hence, Mark's use of the slavery metaphor is in keeping both with the Jewish tradition in which he stands, as well as the possible expectations of gentile readers. Like other writers, he is willing to use slaves as a teaching tool and make particular use of their suffering as an example. Slavery is only used positively which may partly explain why, in spite of some creative 'revaluing' of slaves and their activity, Mark's metaphorical usage does not upset the slave-master relationship.

Finally, the Conceptual Integration Network of this metaphor DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY shows that it is only through the combination of the different input spaces of slavery, discipleship, and the passion of Christ that Mark's particular concerns can be expressed. Thus, while Mark shares in the standard ideology of slavery, this does actively contribute to his understanding and creative presentation of discipleship. However, it has the unfortunate potential corollary of legitimating the abuse of slaves, even though, by this means, the slave-disciple might become 'great' in the kingdom of God.

7 – CONCLUSION

Slavery could be encountered in many ways in the ancient world: through contact with slaves and masters, through the fear of enslavement by foreign powers, through the canons of entertainment, philosophy and instruction, through religious devotion or simply through the common use of slavery as a metaphor in discourse. This thesis has investigated the metaphor of slavery in the Gospel of Mark and other ancient texts. It has shown the importance of understanding the historical reality of slavery, along with its consequent ideology, for understanding the metaphor – with broader implications for investigating any metaphor. By making use of metaphor theory, the thesis has shown how the different ‘input spaces’ interact to shape the metaphor and must therefore be examined. Accordingly, it has explored slavery in the Roman world with particular sensitivity to the physical cost to the slave – in reality and in metaphor – which is sometimes underplayed in NT scholarship. It has also examined slavery in Jewish law and literature, thus giving equal attention to both Graeco-Roman and Jewish contexts, as is rarely done in treatments of slavery. This has shown the similarities between the ideologies and metaphorical expressions of slavery in these contexts. On the basis of these results, it has conducted a close analysis of slavery texts in the Gospel of Mark, something not accomplished in this level of detail before. In reading the relevant sayings and parables in Mark, the study has shown that they share a thematic unity in their narrative contexts in this gospel, along with sharing the ideological values of slave owners. They emphasise, in particular, the expected suffering of discipleship, drawing on the physical costs of being a slave. By this means, the metaphor DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY provided a conceptual framework for Mark’s readers to interpret their particular setting in Rome post-Nero, and their response to it as disciples. In reaching this conclusion, the thesis has demonstrated the value of its method of approach which could be used to pursue this metaphor in related texts.

After establishing the scope of the project in chapter 1 and the space for this work within the scholarly landscape, in chapter 2 we considered the development of the theory of metaphor. As a result, we adopted Conceptual Blending Theory as a useful descriptive tool for analysing the metaphorical texts in Mark's Gospel. In particular, this and related modern theories of metaphor argue for a strong connection between the conceptual world and the actual world as it is experienced. The claim of this thesis, therefore, is that the metaphors of slavery in Mark and related texts were shaped, whether consciously or subconsciously, by the contemporary experience of slavery rather than being merely traditional imagery. However, to establish this, the thesis has conducted a socio-historical, tradition-historical and textual investigation into slavery and its metaphorical counterpart. Consequently, in order to understand the 'input space' of slavery which contributes to the metaphorical blend, we first examined slavery in the Roman world, in chapter 3.

In this chapter we first encountered evidence of actual slaves and slavery and then metaphorical uses of slavery. This showed the ways in which slave experience, as far as the evidence can indicate, is mirrored in the metaphorical uses of slaves. More particularly, given that these examples of 'imagined' slaves are presented from the slave owners' perspective, we therefore gained evidence for the ideology of slavery, a common, constructed perception of slaves and slavery by those with the power of ownership. These examples, sometimes in seldom considered texts, showed that pagan writers could use slaves as exemplars who, through their behaviour, embodied important values, such as loyalty. They might be 'good' or 'bad' examples, and either way might suffer violence, either as punishment from their masters for perceived misdeeds, or else as demonstrations of their allegiance to their master's will. This variety provided space for Roman writers to play creatively with the slavery metaphor, even to the extent of the reversal of the master-slave relationship at times.

In chapter 4, we conducted a similar analysis of slaves and slavery in Jewish literature and experience, with a view to establishing whether Jewish attitudes towards, and practices of, slavery differed substantially from their non-Jewish counterparts, and to consider how slavery was used in traditional Jewish imagery. We saw that slavery seems to have been common among Jews, notwithstanding earlier scholarship's contrasting claims, and there is good reason to suppose this was also the case in first-century Palestine. In spite of commandments in the Torah to the contrary, and the significance of the exodus experience in social memory, we saw that the practice of slavery did not obviously differ within Jewish households from their pagan neighbours. Indeed, while Jewish writers could imagine the minimisation of slavery, and applaud the eschewal of slavery, these idealised portrayals do not seem to have affected general practice. The metaphorical use of slavery in Jewish writings pre- and post-dating the NT is consistent with this practice, rather than the ideal. However, the key transition from the OT to the Tannaitic texts is the development of slavery as a teaching tool, through the rabbinic slave parables. These parables, as an overlapping subset of the so-called king parables, are often reflective of their contemporary context, thereby providing a means of interpreting that context in light of the metaphor. The Jewish metaphorical examples share the same ideological values and concerns as the non-Jewish examples. The main difference, apart from the forms in which the metaphor is presented, is that reversal is uncommon, most likely due to God being represented as the master.

Chapter 5 identified the means by which the relevant texts in Mark would be selected. In contradistinction to other approaches, particularly to the parables, the criteria for selection chosen was lexical: where a character was identified as a slave using a slave-word, or slavery itself was mentioned, then this text would be a candidate for consideration. This approach built on the previously established observations of the relationship between actual slavery and metaphor, indicating that the choice of specific slave language was not

merely coincidental. This avoided the risk of some other means of classification which minimise the presence and significance of slaves and slavery in gospel texts.

The final chapter, chapter 6, set out the provenance of Mark's Gospel as a text written in Rome following Nero's persecutions, with a mixed community of Jewish and gentile Christians fearing repercussions and facing their failure. The readers almost certainly included slaves for whom the slavery metaphor would have been particularly significant. The chapter also looked at discipleship as an 'input space', observing how significant it was to this gospel, and that the slavery metaphor was part of the key texts needed to understand Mark's message. Thus, this investigation is pertinent to the understanding of the gospel as a whole. We then studied the selected passages, which in form were taken from both the saying and parable traditions. One of these was the pivotal text in Mark which relates Jesus' own self-giving with discipleship, via the metaphor of slavery (10:43-45). Through the related texts in Mark's central section, we saw that activities associated with slavery are revalued and given significance in the service of Christian leadership, but that this included willing physical suffering on behalf of others (most likely the Christian community). The parables further emphasised this connection with suffering, making it purposeful in the light of the master's will and demonstrating the connectedness with the master. The parables also illustrated the revaluation of apparently insignificant service on behalf of the master's household. This emphasis on activity reflects the use of the metaphor as a means of defining characteristic activities of the slave-disciple and communicating key values. In the context of a Markan readership facing opposition and even persecution, the emphasis on the suffering element of slave experience created a means of emphasising the expectedness of suffering for the disciple. While we cannot consider these texts to be 'hidden transcripts' of resistance, they do enable the reader to distance their present experience through the slavery metaphor and thereby reflect upon it. The result is a reframing of the readers' experiences in light of willing service to God/Christ.

Although slaves and slavery are only used positively in Mark, they otherwise reflect the slaveholder ideology of Roman and Jewish texts. As we would expect, the Markan examples share some similarities with Jewish texts, namely, the forms in which the metaphors appear; the way in which the parable of the Tenants, in context, uses the master figure as representative of God; and the pattern of positive slave suffering being reflective of the Isaianic servant. However, in terms of the elements of the metaphor used, there is nothing to indicate an affinity with Jewish uses over non-Jewish. This, no doubt, was part of its attractiveness, since it could not only be used in many and varied applications, but could communicate to both a Jewish and gentile audience. This would affirm Tsang's observation that, 'One common technique of persuasion is to use metaphors to connect with the audience.'¹ In this respect, the metaphor itself can be regarded as established, in that it would be familiar to Mark's audience; the surprising elements come more from its particular usage (e.g. that Christ should be an ideal slave). However, this does not mean that there are not creative elements within the blended space of the metaphor.

Conceptual Blending Theory showed the interaction of the different 'input spaces' in Mark's Gospel: slavery, discipleship, and the willing suffering of Christ. This demonstrated the necessity of slavery to the blended space in order to convey Mark's intended purpose, and therefore the deliberate choice of slavery as a metaphor in the gospel. However, the theory also pointed to the new perspectives that the metaphor created on the input spaces. As has already been said, in terms of discipleship in Mark, the metaphor particularly emphasised that those who were most valued within the Christian community were those who were willing to suffer in loyalty and fulfilment of God's will on behalf of others, in the manner in which Jesus did. However, the metaphor also emphasised that, in spite of the expectation of Jesus as master (present in the parable of the Doorkeeper), Jesus as slave pointed to the essentialness of Jesus' own suffering, which was not necessarily a sign of

¹ S. Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons: A New Rhetoric Analysis on Paul's Slave Metaphors in His Letter to the Galatians* (StBibLit 81; New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 2.

failure, but an expression of loyalty to God and his purposes. At the same time, Mark's use of the metaphor also gave a different perspective on slavery. While the revaluation of slave activity may have given slaves a positive status within the Christian community, it also served to enshrine the normality of their suffering and the need to endure it. This confirms what Jean Kim said in another setting, 'Metaphors originate in a sociocultural context, and reinforce the status quo of the established order of the society.'²

Hence, this thesis has shown that Mark, like other ancient writers, used slavery as a metaphor to depict other things; he, like they, found slavery 'good to think with', creating new meaning in the process.³

7.1 WIRKUNGSGESCHICHTE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although Mark is one of the earliest examples of Jewish writers making use of slavery as a teaching tool, he is by no means the last. The most obvious next step in this research would be to apply the same method to those gospels which are directly dependent on Mark's narrative.

Matthew shares a number of similarities with Mark, in particular in the use of the slavery metaphor as a teaching tool about discipleship. However, there are also differences. Within Matthew's special material we see a different element of the metaphor emerging. Although suffering discipleship is still a part of it, status and identity are more important for Matthew. Like the rabbinic parables, there is an emphasis on the master at least as much as the slave, and no element of reversal. Indeed, some of the texts specifically seek to keep

² J.K. Kim, "Uncovering Her Wickedness": An Inter(con)textual Reading of Revelation 17 From a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective', *JSNT* 21 (1999): 61-81 (70).

³ This idea is oft repeated, for example, T.E.J. Wiedemann, *Slavery* (Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 19; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 11. It comes originally, I think, from Lévi-Strauss' observations about totemism: that the animals are chosen, 'not because they are "good to eat" but because they are "good to think"'. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (trans. R. Needham; London: Merlin, 1964), 89.

slaves 'in their place'. Christ is depicted as an exalted figure, both as the perfect slave extending God's purposes, as well as the head of the household of his followers. It is in this latter role that he suffers, which is a different image than in Mark.

Luke both further reduces the effect of Mark's 'slave of all' saying by largely replacing the reference to slavery with a reference to age (Luke 22:26), perhaps because it is less 'offensive to hearers'.⁴ He also more clearly takes a slave owner perspective, addressing his hearers in the parable of the Dutiful Slave as those 'having a slave' (δοῦλον ἔχων; 17:7).

The Gospel of John would make an interesting comparison with Mark's Gospel, since, unlike Mark, the Fourth Gospel's treatment of slavery is almost always negative. The best example of this is in the farewell discourse, where Jesus says,

No longer do I call you slaves [δοῦλοι], because the slave does not know what his master is doing; but you, I have called friends, because all things I have heard from my father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)

Given the growing acceptance of the possibility that John was aware of Mark's Gospel,⁵ if not the other Synoptics, then this statement could stand as potential criticism of his use of slavery as a metaphor for discipleship.⁶

⁴ Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 106.

⁵ P.N. Anderson, 'Why This Study is Needed, and Why it is Needed Now', in *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 1: Critical Appraisals of Critical Views* (eds. P.N. Anderson, et al.; SBL Symposium Series 44; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 13-70 (43-45). The most plausible argument is that John is aware of Mark's Gospel without being dependent on it. Such 'autonomy, rather than isolation' (45) gives space for John to be responding to ideas in Mark, such as the use of the slavery metaphor, without needing to follow his example. See also D.M. Smith, *John among the Gospels* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001); J.D.G. Dunn, 'John and the Synoptics as a Theological Question', in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (eds. R.A. Culpepper and C.C. Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 301-313.

⁶ See, for example, A.T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St John* (BNTC 4; London: Continuum, 2005), 26-39.

While further investigation into the other gospels would, at least to some extent, be a study of the effectual history of Mark's metaphors, further fruitful work could be done on the effectual history of the slave metaphor itself in Christian tradition. We might call this, with Ruben Zimmermann, 'Reception within the linguistic community'.⁷ Thus, the metaphor of slavery found in Paul as well as the gospels was also taken up elsewhere in early Christianity. One example of this is in Ignatius' letter to the Romans. Speaking of his intended martyrdom, and warning the churches against preventing it, he writes:

Then I will truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ ...³ I do not give you orders like Peter and Paul: they were apostles, I am a convict; they were free, but I am even now still a slave [δοῦλος]. But if I suffer [πάσχω], I will be a freedman of Jesus Christ and will rise up free in him. (Ign. *Rom.* 4.2-3 [Holmes])⁸

This is a similarly paradoxical statement to Mark 10:43-45, except here, slavery and suffering are brought together in the context of true freedom; for Ignatius, this is true discipleship.⁹ Whether or not the letter is genuine, this would seem to suggest that the kind of metaphorical reflection on discipleship that we have encountered in Mark continued, contributing to reflection on martyrdom at an early stage. It is perhaps not entirely coincidental, then, that some of the most well-known martyr texts feature slaves,¹⁰ such as Felicitas, and, a few years earlier if Eusebius is correct, Blandina. Ironically, in light of Mark's use of the metaphor, when she faced wild beasts, 'Since she seemed to be hanging in the form of a cross, ... she inspired the combatants with great zeal, as they

⁷ This is one of Zimmermann's eleven steps in analysing parables, described in § 2.2.2. 'Rezeption innerhalb der Sprachgemeinschaft', R. Zimmermann, 'Metapherntheorie und biblische Bildersprache. Ein methodologischer Versuch', *TZ* 56 (2000): 108-133 (133).

⁸ M.W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 229.

⁹ For discussion of quite what δοῦλος might mean in this case, see I.A.H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church from the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (JSNTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 139-140.

¹⁰ Middleton notes the 'quite extraordinary feature of early Christian martyrology; a relatively high proportion of the martyr acts involve women'. *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity* (LNTS 307; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 89 n. 143. Perhaps the same could also be said about slaves. Cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96.

looked on during the contest and with their outward eyes saw through their sister Him who was crucified for them' (5.1.41 [Deferrari, FC]). Thus, the death of this slave becomes itself an exalted model and patterned image of the death of Christ.¹¹

Apart from the slavery metaphor, a similar study could be made with other 'metaphors of inequality'. Another hierarchical metaphor that may be used in a similar way in the gospels (and indeed, the other writings of the NT) is that of the family. Fathers and sons also feature in the parables, and are also used as examples of good and bad discipleship. God is identified as a father just as also a master, and familial imagery and fictive kinship language is used of the church. A similar analysis of this metaphorical language to produce a set of conceptual integration networks would prove a valuable means of comparing the uses of these important metaphors.

A final area for valuable hermeneutical research would be to study the reception of the metaphor of slavery today. For while there have been many treatments of the NT teaching on slavery with respect to ethics, the problems of describing discipleship using the metaphor of slavery should be just as acute for modern theology. George Caird, in his classic book on the subject of metaphorical (or nonliteral) language in the Bible, rightly points to the loss, to the imagination at least, resulting from excising unpalatable metaphors from the biblical text.

There are many today who would prefer to dispense altogether with the language of sacrifice and of warfare, the first because of squeamishness and unfamiliarity, the second because it is all too familiar and demonstrably too easy to take with a literalness that negates its true intention. But religion and morality are not best served by those who play safe, particularly when playing safe entails the disregard of powerful human impulses which by a bold use of metaphor may be tamed and harnessed.¹²

¹¹ See J.A. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56-61.

¹² G.B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1980), 18.

However, should not our contemporary horror at actual slavery extend also to the use of the metaphor in positive ecclesial teaching? Is it not problematic that the metaphor demands the equation of God with a slaveholder who expresses his will through direct and violent punishment of his slaves? Is the 'cost' of the consequences of this popular metaphor too high a price to pay? This task is related to the whole hermeneutic enterprise, raising questions not only about how ancient ideas translate into contemporary contexts, but, in the light of metaphor theory, whether they can do so without destroying the creativity of the blended space.

Yet Caird's is an unfortunate choice of words in the light of our study on the metaphor DISCIPLESHIP IS SLAVERY in the Gospel of Mark. While the evangelist's intention was not to address actual slavery, the metaphorical associations meant this could not be avoided. The metaphorical encoding of slaves' deracination, subjection and suffering does no more than acknowledge their plight, before removing it to the abstract level of a theological model for others. Sadly, this 'bold use of metaphor' seems not to have 'tamed and harnessed' the human impulse to enslave others, and has therefore brought little benefit to those who, metaphorically and actually, were themselves 'tamed' and 'harnessed': slaves.

APPENDIX – COMPARISON OF TWO COLLECTIONS OF TANNAITIC PARABLES

The following table offers a statistical comparison of two collections of rabbinic parables dated to the time of the Tannaim (c. 100-220 CE). These collections are the unpublished PhD thesis of Robert Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations Attributed to Tannaim’,¹ and the *Parables of the Sages* of Steven Notley and Ze’ev Safrai.² The table only includes works which contain slave parables. This means that the total number of parables in each collection is larger than that represented in the table, although these numbers are given in the first row. The table identifies (1) the total number of parables in each rabbinic work, (2) those parables which explicitly feature slave characters (based on עבדים or equivalent), and (3) those parables which feature characters who might typically be slaves (e.g. ‘pedagogue’ tutors, wet-nurses, and keepers of an orchard).

It will be noted that there are considerable differences between the numbers. This is mainly because each has chosen different rabbinic works to include in their corpus of Tannaïtic material. Where one collection does not contain the same work as the other, the columns are greyed out. However, even when the same works have been chosen, the numbers are different. This may be caused by the collectors using different versions of the rabbinic works, treating different texts as parables, and, unfortunately, by mistakes. Notes are provided to explain specific differences found. However, in each case the conclusion is approximately similar, that, of the Tannaïtic rabbinic works which contain slave parables, between 12-16% of the total parables are slave parables. Thus, as with the Synoptic Gospels, parables featuring slaves form a significant proportion of the total parable corpus.

¹ R.M. Johnston, ‘Parabolic Interpretations Attributed to Tannaim’ (PhD, Hartford Seminary, 1977).

² R.S. Notley and Z. Safrai, *Parables of the Sages: Jewish Wisdom from Jesus to Rav Ashi* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2011).

Rabbinic Work ³	Johnston Corpus			Notley & Safrai Corpus		
	Parables in work					
	(1) Total	(2) Slaves	(3) Others	(1) Total	(2) Slaves	(3) Others
Total Parables in Corpus	325			417		
Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael + Mekilta de Simeon b. Yohai ⁴	32	2	1	34 + 32 ⁵	2 + 3 = 4 ⁶	1
Sifra	11	1	0	13 ⁷	1	1 ⁸
Sifre on Numbers	25	3	2	30	3 ⁹	2
Sifre Zuta ¹⁰	-	-	-	17	2	1
Sifre on Deuteronomy	43	5	2	62	7 ¹¹	2
The Mishnah	10 ¹²	1	0	7	1 ¹³	0
Tosefta	24	3	0	24	3 ¹⁴	0

³ Omitted from this list but included in Johnson are: The Jerusalem Talmud, Minor Tractates, Pesikta Rabbati, Genesis Rabbah, Numbers Rabbah, Ruth Rabbah, Lamentations Rabbah, Esther Rabbah, Midrash on Psalms, Midrash Samuel, Pirke de R. Eliezer and Midrash Tannaim on Deut. Omitted from this list but included in Notley and Safrai are: Midrash Tannaim on Deuteronomy and Tractate Semahot.

⁴ Johnston ignores MRS because it is 'dependent on' Mek. (217).

⁵ Although many of these parables in the two texts are parallels, they are listed separately here as Notley and Safrai give them separate entries.

⁶ This mathematically problematic equation arises due to there being a parallel parable in the two versions, and thus four separate parables in total. This is a more useful number for our purposes.

⁷ There are not only two different parables between the corpora, as the numbers might suggest, but actually four different parables. The total number of parables in Sifra is therefore 14.

⁸ This parable is not found in Johnston.

⁹ The statistics might suggest that the same slave parables are found in each collection. However, in each corpus there is one slave parable present that is not in the other. Hence, in reality, there are four slave parables in Sifre Num.

¹⁰ Not included by Johnston because he deemed it a later collection (72).

¹¹ One of these parables (Sifre Deut. 38; Notley and Safrai 177), lacks the standard introduction, but has been included as it is sufficiently similar to the normally identified parables.

¹² Both Johnston (317) and Notley and Safrai (73-74) acknowledge that not all of these entries are strictly parables in the definition of the *mashal*, but nevertheless are comparisons.

¹³ Notley and Safrai include a further entry which describes slaves who should work for no reward because of fear 'of Heaven' (m. Avot 1:3; Notley and Safrai 3). However, it is not counted here as it is not strictly a parable. Nevertheless, the saying *is* later explained by means of a parable in ARN B 10 (Notley and Safrai 396).

Rabbinic Work ³	Johnston Corpus			Notley & Safrai Corpus		
	Parables in work					
	(1) Total	(2) Slaves	(3) Others	(1) Total	(2) Slaves	(3) Others
The Babylonian Talmud ¹⁵	36	11	0			
Aboth de R. Nathan A + B	32 ¹⁶	1		43	2 ¹⁷	1
Pesikta de Rab Kahane	15	2	5	-	-	-
Exodus Rabbah	6	0	2	-	-	-
Leviticus Rabbah	16	0	2	-	-	-
Deuteronomy Rabbah	6	2	1	-	-	-
Song of Songs Rabbah	12	2	1	-	-	-
Ecclesiastes Rabbah	12	1	0	-	-	-
Tanna debe Eliyahu	-	-	-	76	30	0
Semahot of Rabbi Hiyya	-	-	-	8	1	1
Total parables in works containing slave parables	280	34	16	346	54	9
Slaves parables as a percentage of total	-	12%	6%	-	16%	3%

¹⁴ Although the numbers do not suggest this, there is one difference between the slave parables identified here. Although Johnston references the same text (t. Sotah 11:3), he quotes a completely different parable from Notley and Safrai (and Neusner), which should, in fact, be a slave parable. At the same time, Johnston suggests that a corrupt and ambiguous text (t. Niddah 3:5) may be about a slave, while Notley and Safrai instead reconstruct and translate the slave as ‘a witness’ (Neusner does both!).

¹⁵ This is not included in Notley and Safrai because it is not a Tannaitic text. Johnston considers that the parables included are Tannaitic based on their attribution. Notley and Safrai reject this approach, except where the parable has a parallel in clearly Tannaitic material (8-14, esp. 11).

¹⁶ Johnston only deals with ARN A, adding versions from ARN B where relevant.

¹⁷ All the slave parables in Notley and Safrai are found in ARN B. They do not include the parallel passage to one of these parables found in ARN A, which is noted by Johnston.

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