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Joshua W. Jipp

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Date

Divine Visitations and Hospitality in Luke-Acts:  
An Interpretation of the Malta Episode in Acts 28:1-10

By

Joshua W. Jipp  
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion  
New Testament

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Luke Timothy Johnson  
Advisor

---

Walter T. Wilson  
Committee Member

---

Steven J. Kraftchick  
Committee Member

---

Cynthia Patterson  
Committee Member

Accepted:

---

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.

Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

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Joshua W. Jipp

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M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2005

B.A., Northwestern College, 2001

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An abstract of

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## Abstract

### Divine Visitations and Hospitality in Luke-Acts: An Interpretation of the Malta Episode in Acts 28:1-10

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This study presents a coherent interpretation of the Malta episode by arguing that Acts 28:1-10 narrates a *theoxeny*, that is, an account of unknowing hospitality to a god which results in the establishment of a fictive kinship relationship between the barbarians and Paul and his God. The scene in Acts 28:1-10 can be understood to unfold along the three lines which are constitutive of theoxenies. First, the barbarians show immediate hospitality to the stranger Paul, the powerful agent of God. Second, Paul's successful encounter with the viper reveals to the barbarians that Paul is a divine emissary. Third, the relationship between Paul and the barbarians is cemented through a ritualized form of hospitality. In light of the connection between hospitality and piety to the gods in the ancient Mediterranean, Luke ends his second volume in this manner to portray Gentile hospitality as the appropriate response to Paul's message of God's salvation.

Chapter one provides an introduction to the dissertation by reviewing previous scholarship and highlighting the significant components of the Malta episode. Chapter two sets forth a socio-cultural literary analysis of Acts 28:1-10 that draws attention to the main components of the text which call for further study, but primarily highlights the necessity of understanding the ancient Mediterranean cultural script of hospitality to strangers for understanding the Malta episode. Chapters three and four are, therefore, devoted to establishing the cultural script of hospitality to strangers through an examination of Greco-Roman and Jewish texts. Chapters five and six examine the role of hospitality in Luke-Acts. Chapter five serves as a micro-level exploration of the grammar, religious sanctions, and purposes of hospitality through four Lukan texts. Chapter six is a macro-level study of hospitality in the Lukan writings which gives a synthetic account of Luke-Acts as a story which centers upon God's visitation of his people and their (in)hospitable response to the divine visit. Finally, the seventh chapter returns to Acts 28:1-10 and answers the questions set forth at the beginning of the study.

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For Amber

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## **Chapter 1: The Episode at Malta (Acts 28:1-10): A Lukan Text ‘Full of the Viewpoint of Antiquity’**

Despite Henry Cadbury’s claim that “It would be difficult to find a scene more full of the viewpoint of antiquity” than the Malta episode, Acts 28:1-10 remains one of the few under-interpreted passages in all of Acts.<sup>1</sup> Part of the reason for this may be that the episode has been subordinated to the gripping account of the shipwreck in chapter 27 as well as to interpreters’ greater interest in the ending of Acts in 28:16-31. Further, the moral of the story has often seemed self-evident to many interpreters: Paul’s immunity to the snake demonstrates his innocence in a manner easily understandable to a pagan audience. He is not a murderer, as they suppose; he is, rather, innocent. Yet a story so “full of the viewpoint of antiquity” – a story containing the fulfillment of Paul’s prophecy of all his shipmates’ rescue from the powerful storm, an arrival on an exotic island peopled with potentially savage barbarians, a successful encounter with a deadly viper, the barbarians’ exclamation that they have witnessed an epiphany in the divine figure of Paul rather than the retributive justice of the goddess Δίκη, miraculous healings of the sick, and friendly displays of hospitality – suggests that a richer analysis may yet be offered.<sup>2</sup>

Three things are often missing in interpretations of Acts 28:1-10. First, there are too few interpretations of the episode that factor in all of the diverse elements of the scene at Malta and place them within a *Lukan* literary context. One interpreter may focus

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<sup>1</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955) 24. From a literary perspective on the Malta episode, G. W. Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography: Narratives of Retributive Justice* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2000) 83, writes: “The account of Paul’s sea journey from Caesarea to Rome, with its shipwreck on Malta, is probably the dramatic high point of Acts.”

<sup>2</sup> Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History*, 24-27.

upon what Luke means by “barbarians,” another on Paul’s immunity to the viper’s attack, some on the characterization of Paul with echoes of Jesus from Luke’s Gospel, and others on the hospitable barbarians. Rare is the interpreter who presents a convincing explanation that encompasses all of the aspects of its distinct “viewpoint of antiquity.” Even fewer interpreters ask what difference this passage makes in the overall literary structure of Luke-Acts. The Malta episode is indeed imbued with “the viewpoint of antiquity,” but it is also filled with distinctly Lukan theological grammar, such as: hospitality to strangers, Paul’s characterization as a powerful prophetic figure like Jesus, healings, sharing possessions, and successful encounters with vipers. Thus, there is a need for a coherent interpretation of Luke’s purpose in narrating these details, and an interpretation which situates them both within their historical-cultural and literary context. It needs to be asked, quite simply, what is Luke doing and what is he trying to accomplish with this enigmatic episode?

Second, since literary placement matters and has consequences for a narrative’s meaning, then we should explore why the penultimate scene of Acts (before Paul encounters the Romans Jews) portrays Paul and the Maltese engaging in remarkably positive hospitable relations. When the reader encounters Paul’s final words regarding the salvation of God going forth to the Gentiles who hear (Acts 28:28), is the reader perhaps meant to think of this scene in Malta? And when Paul utters a passage from Isaiah 6 in judgment against the Roman Jews, with its emphasis on their inability to see God’s salvation and thereby receive healing, is one meant to contrast this with the friendly Maltese barbarians who do see the divine at work in Paul and receive healing?

Third, and most important, interpreters have typically underestimated the extent to which this text operates according to the cultural script of hospitality to strangers, and more specifically *theoxenies* – i.e., divine visits and hospitality to strangers. Many commentators do not notice, or at the least do not mention, the motif. Others notice it, but leave untapped the potential this cultural script has for providing a coherent interpretation of the passage. That this should be ignored is all the more surprising given Luke’s use of the motif of hospitality in both of his volumes and its prevalence in ancient Mediterranean texts.<sup>3</sup>

## I. Illustrative Examples from the History of Interpretation of Acts 28:1-10

### A. Concerns with Historicity

For much earlier scholarship, the Malta scene raises a host of questions regarding the historicity of the episode. Most frequently discussed is the simple question: on what island, referred to by Luke as *Μελίτη*,<sup>4</sup> did Paul’s ship land?<sup>5</sup> While there is a strong consensus that the island was Malta, two alternative sites are sometimes suggested. Hans Warnecke argues that Paul’s ship ran aground off the west coast of Greece on the island Kephallenia,<sup>6</sup> while others have suggested the island Mljet which is in the Adriatic.<sup>7</sup> The traditional site of present-day Malta is held by most interpreters, however, largely

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<sup>3</sup> At least one commentator has used the motif of hospitality as an organizing principle for explicating the message of Luke’s Gospel. See Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke’s Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000). On Luke’s interest in hospitality and travel, see Henry J. Cadbury, “Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts: III: Luke’s Interest in Lodging,” *JBL* 45 (1926) 305-22.

<sup>4</sup> Complicating the search for the identity of the island, or perhaps evidence that there was ancient debate regarding the island, are the variant manuscript readings. Most manuscripts read *Μελίτη*, but a few (including B\*) read *Μελιτήνη*, and P74 reads *Μιλίτη*.

<sup>5</sup> The question arises from the fact that many small islands shared variants of this name. See J. Wehnert, “Gestrandet. Zu einer neuen These über den Schiffbruch des Apostels Paulus auf dem Wege nach Rom (Apg 27-28),” *ZTK* 87 (1990) 67-99.

<sup>6</sup> Heinz Warnecke, *Die tatsächliche Romfahrt des Apostels Paulus* (SBS 127; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> Angus Acworth, “Where was St. Paul Shipwrecked? A Re-examination of the Evidence,” *JTS* 24 (1973) 190-193.

because of its plausibility in light of the ship's travel route.<sup>8</sup> Other historical questions include the type of disease Publius' father had, whether the snake was actually poisonous, and whether Publius' villa can be identified. For example, Colin Hemer notes that the fever of Publius' father may well be that of "Malta fever", discovered in 1887 to be caused by an endemic micro-organism *Micrococcus melitensis*, which infected the milk of the Maltese goats,"<sup>9</sup> while Richard Bauckham asks whether Publius' estate can be identified.<sup>10</sup>

While such historical questions are entirely legitimate, they are largely unanswerable. More important, they are of lesser significance for understanding Luke's literary intentions. They are of little help in understanding the literary point of Acts 28:1-10. This study seeks to situate the Malta episode within its historical and social Mediterranean context, but it does not engage in historical reconstruction or discuss the historical plausibility of the Malta episode.

### B. The Viper Episode

The bulk of scholarship on the Malta episode has centered on verses 3-6 and Paul's immunity to the viper. Interpretations of the scene fall into three groupings.

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<sup>8</sup> For a summary of the debate and argumentation for the consensus view, see Brian M. Rapske, "Acts, Travel and Shipwreck," in *The Book of Acts in its Greco-Roman Setting* (eds. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; BIFCS 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 1-47, here, 33-37. Also, see Colin J. Hemer, "Euraquilo and Melita," *JTS* 26 (1975) 100-111; J. M. Gilchrist, "The Historicity of Paul's Shipwreck," *JSNT* 61 (1996) 29-51; Alfred Suhl, "Gestrandet! Bemerkungen zum Streit über die Romfahrt des Paulus," *ZTK* 88 (1991) 1-28.

<sup>9</sup> Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1989) 152-153. See also the illuminating exploration of this question by Craig Keener, "Fever and Dysentery in Acts 28:8 and Ancient Medicine," *BBR* 19 (2009) 393-402.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Bauckham, "The Estate of Publius on Malta (Acts 28:7)," in *History and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Dr. E. Earle Ellis* (ed. Sang-Won (Aaron) Son; London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2006) 73-87.

i. Paul as a *Theios Aner*

Typical of German scholarship, and an interpretation that commendably takes seriously the literary context, is the claim that Luke is embarrassed by the historical details of Paul's trial, and therefore engages in a glorification of Paul throughout Acts 27:1-28:10. Ernst Haenchen, for example, argues that Luke downplays Paul's status as prisoner and presents Paul as a "mighty superman who spreads blessings to everyone."<sup>11</sup> The viper-incident, as well as Paul's healing miracles, confirms how consistently Luke "can portray Paul as a θεῖος ἄνθρωπος."<sup>12</sup> It is noted that Paul's immunity from the snakebite fits well with other portrayals of charismatic figures.<sup>13</sup> Haenchen may have been influenced by Dibelius who also argued that the purpose of Acts 28:1-6 was the glorification of Paul and that the passage had no particular Christian viewpoint and was, therefore, "a completely secular anecdote."<sup>14</sup> According to Jürgen Roloff, Paul's failure to invoke the name of Jesus in the performance of the miracle confirms that Luke is only concerned with glorifying Paul as a hero.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Pervo claims that Luke does not want his readers to view Paul as a prisoner. In these verses Paul is a healer, immune from poisonous snakes, and thought to be a god. Thus, "comparisons to Apollonius of Tyana

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<sup>11</sup> Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971) 715-716, here 716. For a catalogue of sources pertaining to the so-called figure of the "divine man" which has exerted significant influence on scholarly portraits of the "divine man," see Ludwig Bieler, *ΘΕΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ: Das Bild des 'göttlichen Menschen' in Spätantike und Frühchristentum* (Erster Band: Wien, 1935).

<sup>12</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, 716; also, Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (trans. James Limburg et al; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 223.

<sup>13</sup> See, in particular, Rosa Söder, *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten und die romanhafte Literatur der Antike* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932) 95-99.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. M. Ling and P. Schubert; New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1956) 214, n. 16. Hans Conzelmann [*Acts of the Apostles*, 223] follows Dibelius in labeling this passage a secular anecdote.

<sup>15</sup> Jürgen Roloff [*Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1981) 365] is as explicit as any commentator for this view: "Das Wunder ist nicht Hinweis auf die Macht des Namens Jesu, der auf Glauben zielt, sondern Demonstration der übernatürlichen Macht des Wundertäters. Es scheint allein der persönlichen Verherrlichung des Paulus zu dienen, der hier geradezu Züge eines göttlichen Menschen annimmt (V. 6 10)."

are not unwarranted.”<sup>16</sup> And Dennis R. MacDonald argues that Luke directly portrays Paul against the backdrop of Odysseus in order to “exalt Paul and his God by comparison.”<sup>17</sup>

While the so-called category of “the divine man” has been thoroughly critiqued as a category for understanding the New Testament documents and has justifiably fallen out of scholarly favor,<sup>18</sup> these interpreters are rightly impressed by two elements of the passage: a) an emphasis on the miraculous and the lack of any mention of (christological) proclamation; and b) the characterization of Paul, not as a prisoner but, as a semi-divine agent who embodies the presence of God and extends divine blessings wherever he goes.<sup>19</sup> These elements, found throughout the ten verses of the Malta episode, will prove important for a coherent interpretation of the passage.

## ii. The Defeat of the Devil

While not antithetical to the view that Luke is presenting Paul as a *theios aner* or is preoccupied with glorifying Paul’s status, some have argued that the viper-episode portrays Paul as God’s agent who enacts the defeat of evil/the Devil. These interpretations typically argue that the scene recalls Luke 10:19 (where Jesus promises

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<sup>16</sup> Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 671; Though he does not make any claims regarding Paul as a *theios aner*, Joseph A. Fitzmyer [*The Acts of the Apostles* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998) 782] seems to fall in this category as he claims that the general purpose of the episode is that it “enhances the status of Paul.” Likewise, F. F. Bruce [*Commentary on the Book of the Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 523] claims that according to Luke, Paul “was no murderer pursued by divine justice, but a divine person, immune to mischances which would prove fatal to mortal men.”

<sup>17</sup> Dennis R. MacDonald, “The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul,” *NTS* 45 (1999) 88-107, here, 106.

<sup>18</sup> In particular, see Carl R. Holladay, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic-Judaism: A Critique of the Use of this Category in New Testament Christology* (SBLDS 40; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977). For a critique that Luke is presenting Paul as a *theios aner*, see C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2 (ICC 49; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 1218, 1224; Rudolph Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, V/2 (EKKNT 5.2; Zurich: Benzinger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986) 299.

<sup>19</sup> Also relevant is F. Scott Spencer, “Paul’s Odyssey in Acts: Status Struggles and Island Adventures,” *BTB* 28 (1998) 150-159, who argues that the Malta episode (as well as Paul’s adventure on Cyprus in Acts 13) functions to reestablish Paul’s status from that of a prisoner to that of a “dynamic leader and benefactor” who “fully regains his honor (28:10) and returns to active duty up to the end of Acts” (p. 158).

his 72 emissaries that nothing shall be able to harm them, including snakes and scorpions) as well as other texts which portray snakes as personifications of the Devil or evil. Luke Johnson represents this view as he argues that the viper-incident does not demonstrate that Paul is innocent, nor does it prove that he is divine.<sup>20</sup> Rather, the viper scene marks Paul as a prophetic character who conquers the powers of darkness wherever he goes. Paul's immunity to the snakebite shows that the resurrection power of Jesus is at work in Paul. The incident resembles earlier scenes where the gospel advances into new territories through exorcisms and healings (e.g., 8:14-24; 13:4-12; 19:11-10).<sup>21</sup> F. Scott Spencer also makes the connection between Paul's symbolic defeat of Satan and passages such as 13:9-11.<sup>22</sup> And Hans J. Klauck suggests that the reader knows Paul cannot be harmed since "Paul is guarded by the assurance in the logion of Jesus in Lk 10:19."<sup>23</sup> Likewise, Pervo suggests that Paul is depicted as a prophetic character, and that "Paul's immunity from the viper vividly depicted the defeat of death and the devil."<sup>24</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa aligns herself with those who understand the snake to recall Luke 10:17-20 and Paul's immunity from the wiles of Satan.<sup>25</sup> Interpreters who espouse this viewpoint are often more attuned to both the literary relationship of this episode to other portions of Luke-Acts (most notably Lk. 10:17-20) as well as Luke's characterization of Paul as a prophetic figure.

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<sup>20</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SPS 5; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 466-468.

<sup>21</sup> Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 466. Though she does not deal with this text, the scene fits well within the larger argument of Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

<sup>22</sup> F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004) 245-246.

<sup>23</sup> Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. Brian McNeil; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 114.

<sup>24</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 672; also see, Gerhard Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (II Teil; HTKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1982) 401.

<sup>25</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Acts* (ANTC; Abingdon, Nashville, 2003) 358.

### iii. Paul's Innocence and Vindication

A third interpretation views the significance of Paul's immunity to the snakebite as proving, in a manner easily observable to a pagan audience, that Paul is innocent and that it is God's will that he arrive safely in Rome. This interpretation is the most prevalent in scholarly commentaries, becoming standard through two influential articles. In 1976 G. B. Miles and G. Trompf noted that the key to understanding the theological significance of the passage lay in uncovering stereotypical and common pagan beliefs regarding such concepts as shipwrecks, divine retributive justice, pollution, and snakes.<sup>26</sup> Ancient pagans believed that the gods meted out retributive justice against those guilty of great crimes, and that the guilty could pollute and infect those with whom they came into contact. Miles and Trompf point to a "little known passage" from Antiphon, the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Athenian orator, who was accused of a crime before the Areopagus.<sup>27</sup> In his defense, Antiphon maintains that all of his maritime voyages have been successful and carried out without any harm to the ship or his shipmates and that this is undeniable proof of his innocence.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the fact that Paul was saved from the sea and was himself instrumental in providing safety for his passengers demonstrates his innocence (cf. 27:44; 28:1). This provides the context for understanding the scene in Malta where the barbarians articulate the sentiment of most pagans: "this one is a murderer for certain, he who was saved from the sea – Justice will not allow him to live" (28:4). To quote Trompf: "The implication behind these words is that Paul's emergence unscathed from the sea would have been considered by the people there to be a clear sign of his

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<sup>26</sup> G. B. Miles and G. Trompf, "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27-28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution, and Shipwreck," *HTR* 69 (1976) 259-267.

<sup>27</sup> See also Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography*, 84.

<sup>28</sup> Miles and Trompf, "Luke and Antiphon," 262-263; Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography*, 84-85.

innocence of any crime, but that for a brief moment doubt had been cast over his worthiness.”<sup>29</sup> Paul’s survival of the snakebite proves that the barbarians’ initial claim is wrong, and that Paul is innocent. Luke was interested in demonstrating the innocence of the early Christians, and he accomplishes this one final time with Paul in a manner understandable to a pagan audience.<sup>30</sup> This also explains Luke’s failure to narrate Paul’s trial before Caesar: Paul had already been put to trial by far greater powers and been vindicated.<sup>31</sup>

David Ladouceur largely extends the argument of Miles and Trompf, but also engages in some critique. He agrees that Acts 27:1 – 28:16 has more to do with proving Paul’s innocence in light of popular pagan beliefs, than it does with enhancing Paul’s status.<sup>32</sup> Ladouceur notes that the mention of the insignia of the Dioskouroi on Paul’s ship from Malta to Rome, “patron saint of sailors” and “punishers of the perjured,” would also indicate Paul’s innocence to a pagan reader.<sup>33</sup> The emphasis is on Paul’s innocence as well as God’s providential accomplishment in bringing Paul safely to Rome. Ladouceur agrees that Paul’s immunity to the snakebite is introduced “not so much to glorify Paul as a divine man but rather to attest to his innocence.”<sup>34</sup> In agreement with Miles and Trompf, Ladouceur suggests that Acts 27:1-28:16 serves an apologetic function for the early Christians on behalf of Rome:

The realities and misjudgments of the Neronian period could well be passed over nor need they set a precedent for the Roman state’s current relationship

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<sup>29</sup> Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> Miles and Trompf, “Luke and Antiphon,” 267.

<sup>31</sup> Miles and Trompf, “Luke and Antiphon,” 265.

<sup>32</sup> David Ladouceur, “Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27-28,” *HTR* 73 (1980) 435-449, esp. 448.

<sup>33</sup> Ladouceur, “Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27-28,” 444-448.

<sup>34</sup> Ladouceur, “Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27-28,” 449.

with the church. Here then, one finds that peculiarly Lukan characteristic of allowing the history of the church in the apostolic age to serve as its own *apologia*.<sup>35</sup>

Other scholarship on Acts 28:1-10 often offers variants of this interpretation. Daniel Marguerat, for example, claims that the purpose of Acts 28:1-10 is to “present a chain of arguments attesting divine favour toward Paul” (italics his).<sup>36</sup> In addition to Paul’s immunity to the snakebite, Marguerat points to the insignia of the Dioskouroi as evidence that Luke is demonstrating Paul’s innocence through “a chain of signs adapted to the pagan world, but [which] is inappropriate for the dialogue with Judaism.”<sup>37</sup> Lynn Kauppi argues that pagan readers would have seen the serpent as a dispenser of justice against Paul, and that his immunity to the snake would demonstrate Paul is innocent, his message reliable, and the emperor’s verdict irrelevant.<sup>38</sup> Commentaries on Acts often cite obscure parallel texts to demonstrate this point, such as Statilius Flaccus, *Anthologia Graeca* 7.290:

Once, when a broken-down man had escaped from the storm and fury of the cruel sea, he lay not far from the swell of the sea, naked on the Libyan sand. Dull sleep lay heavy upon him, since the distress of shipwreck had exhausted his strength, when the poisonous viper bit him ... So he had wrestled with the waves, only to meet on land the death that was decreed for him.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Ladouceur, “Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27-28,” 449.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the ‘Acts of the Apostles’* (SNTSMS 121; trans. Ken McKinney, et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 218. Also, see Paul W. Walasky [*Acts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 239-240] who comments from the perspective of the barbarians: “Paul is no criminal. He is a god! No matter what judgment is rendered in Rome, the gods have spoken regarding Paul’s character.”

<sup>37</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 219.

<sup>38</sup> Lynn Allan Kauppi, *Foreign but Familiar Gods: Greco-Romans Read Religion in Acts* (LNTS 277; New York/London, 2006) 107-117. Lou Silberman [“Paul’s Viper: Acts 28:3-6,” *Forum* 8 (1992) 247-253] agrees with the received view, and he points out some additional Jewish texts which portray serpents as agents of divine justice. He draws the conclusion, therefore, that Jewish readers would read the passage similarly to pagans.

<sup>39</sup> Less frequently referenced is Antipatros of Thessalonica, *Anthologia Graeca* 9.269, a text which speaks of a seal who dispenses justice through a deadly bite upon a murderer.

The epigram describes a similar sequence of shipwreck, escape from the sea, and snake bite, but the point of the passage has nothing to do with retribution and is, rather, “an illustration of the inscrutability and inescapable character of destiny.”<sup>40</sup>

John Clabeaux, likewise, notes that Paul’s innocence is a major theme throughout Acts 21-26, and suggests that Luke’s allusions to Jesus’ passion in his description of Paul causes the reader to conclude that Paul, like Jesus, is also innocent.<sup>41</sup> Rick Strelan thinks that the viper is “the embodiment of Echidne” – the autochthonous goddess that Hesiod describes as half-nymph and half-snake.<sup>42</sup> The snake episode, then, presents a symbolic battle between Paul and Echidne, the goddess of the underworld, with Paul being portrayed as victorious and, thereby, demonstrating Paul’s innocence to Luke’s readers. Examples can be multiplied.<sup>43</sup> Jervell, for example, emphasizes that the snake-incident illustrates God’s providence, and that Paul must get to Rome: “Paulus muss nach Rom fahren. Nichts kann ihn daran hindern, auch nicht, dass er von einer Schlange gebissen wird. Denn Gott beschützt ihn und bestimmt allein seinen Weg.”<sup>44</sup>

An interesting variant of this interpretation of the viper-episode argues that by it Luke symbolically narrates Paul’s death and resurrection by lacing the scene with echoes

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<sup>40</sup>Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, 114. Cf. Kauppi, *Foreign but Familiar Gods*, 107-112. Pervo, *Acts*, 674, writes: “Since Wettstein, commentators have cited *Greek Anthology* 7.290, a pathetic story offering no condemnation of the victim.”

<sup>41</sup> John Clabeaux, “The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke’s Apology for Paul,” *CBQ* 67 (2005) 604-610.

<sup>42</sup> Rick Strelan, *Strange Acts: Studies in the Cultural World of the Acts of the Apostles* (BZNW 126; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 284-294, here 289.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. J. Bradley Chance, *Acts* (Smith and Helwys Publishing, 2007) 714-716; Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts* (PCNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 360-361; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroad, 1997) 221-225; Charles H. Talbert and J. H. Hayes, “A Theology of Sea Storms in Luke-Acts,” in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim upon Israel’s Legacy* (ed. David P. Moessner; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999) 267-283, here 274-275.

<sup>44</sup> Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KKNT 17; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 617. Also emphasizing God’s providence is Richard Longenecker [*The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 564] who says this episode demonstrates that Paul is “a heaven-protected man.”

from Luke's Passion Narrative, thereby characterizing Paul as a Jesus-figure.<sup>45</sup> With respect to 28:4-6, Pervo argues: "The scene evokes the passion and vindication of Jesus."<sup>46</sup> The barbarians, like the crowd at Jesus' trial, assume that Paul is guilty. They think Paul is, like Barabbas, a murderer (Lk. 23:29, 25). Similarly, whereas the centurion claims that Jesus was δίκαιος (Lk. 23:47), the barbarians think that the goddess ἡ δίκη will exact retribution against Paul (Acts 28:4b). In the Gospel, one of the criminals crucified with Jesus exclaims that Jesus had done nothing ἄτοπον (Lk. 23:41), and in Acts the barbarians change their mind when they see that nothing ἄτοπον happens to Paul (28:6). More generally, Acts 28:2-6 uses the language of "live" and "dead" which is similar to the angel's announcement that Jesus is among the "living" and not the "dead" in Luke 24:5. The events of Acts 28:1-6, then, are reminiscent of the Easter appearances as Paul is a divine-like figure who cannot be destroyed. According to Pervo, Paul's rescue from the snake "is his ultimate vindication by a heavenly court, analogous...to the vindication of Jesus, who had not been permitted to live by the machinery of justice, the verdict of which God reversed..."<sup>47</sup> John Clabeaux also argues that while there are allusions to the resurrection, the focus is on the symbolic narration of the death of Paul.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the parallels noted by Pervo, Clabeaux draws attention to the frequency

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<sup>45</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 671-675; Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 466; Clabeaux, "The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke's Apology for Paul.

<sup>46</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 675.

<sup>47</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 675; Johnson [*Acts of the Apostles*, 465-467] also notes many of the same parallels, but for him they prove that God's divine power is at work in Paul as it was in Jesus and prove that his ministry continues to manifest the presence of the resurrection of the Lord. Stefan Schreiber [*Paulus als Wundertäter: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte und den authentischen Paulusbriefen* (BZ NW 79; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996) 127-128] notes the parallels with Luke's Gospel and also argues that Acts 28:1-10 portrays a miracle of rescue from death.

<sup>48</sup> Clabeaux, "The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke's Apology for Paul," 607.

with which both figures are referred to as “innocent” (Lk. 23:4, 14, 22; Acts 23:29; 25:25; 26:31).<sup>49</sup>

The frequency with which one finds these three alternatives for interpreting the viper-incident suggests the plausibility of all three views.<sup>50</sup> While interpretations of Paul as a *theios aner* are now eschewed, these interpretations take full account of both the barbarians’ uncorrected claim that Paul is a god, as well as other signals in the text that suggest Paul is a carrier of the divine power. Likewise, interpreters’ instinct to connect this text with Lk. 10:19, as well as the other portions of Acts that narrate a conflict with the demonic, is justified despite the fact that this observation cannot account for all of the dynamics in 28:3-6.

The prevalence of the third interpretation, while rightly seeing that the text turns on the reversal of the barbarians’ opinion of Paul, is somewhat surprising. It is true that the innocence of Paul with respect to his Jewish faith is a theme in Acts 21-26, so that Luke would continue with this theme is plausible enough. This view, however, does not explain why Luke would narrate in a symbolic manner something that Luke’s readers already know – namely, Paul’s innocence.<sup>51</sup> For the reader of Acts, Paul’s innocence is simply never in doubt. In addition, it should be emphasized that on this reading one

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<sup>49</sup> Clabeaux, “The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke’s Apology for Paul,” 607.

<sup>50</sup> A unique interpretation of this passage comes from Annette Weissenrieder [“‘He is a God!’ Acts 28:1-9 in the Light of Iconographical and Textual Sources Related to Medicine,” in *Picturing the New Testament: Studies in Ancient Visual Images* (eds. Idem, Friederike Wendt, and Petra von Gemünden; WUNT 2/193; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005) 127-156] who attempts to account for both the snake-incident and Paul’s healings in vv. 7-10. She argues that the combination of snakes, healings, and the acclamation that Paul is divine fit well with conceptions of Asclepius. Just as Asclepius was portrayed as a wise man and a healer, so Luke portrays Paul as a wise healer and as the embodiment of this ancient doctor. I do not doubt that *for some readers* the episode may have conjured up resonances of the healing Asclepius. However, the snake functions here not as an assistant or healing agent but as something which Paul defeats through shaking it off his hand into the fire and through his immunity to its attack.

<sup>51</sup> So Johnson [*Acts of the Apostles*, 465-466] who notes that Paul’s innocence has never been in question for Luke’s readers. Susan Marie Praeder [“Acts 27:1-28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46 (1984) 683-706, esp. 703-704] is also highly critical of these interpretations.

would expect the barbarians to finally exclaim, “He is *innocent*” not “He is a God” (28:6). The focus of the text appears to lie rather in Paul as a divine agent of salvation rather than on demonstrating his innocence. The “little known” texts which are used to illustrate this reading are not fully convincing either. For example, based on the passage in Antiphon, one would expect that Paul’s innocence would be demonstrated through smooth sailing, not an adventure which results in the entire loss of the ship!<sup>52</sup> Further, the narrative has not presented Paul as being accused of murder and, therefore, there is no obvious need that Paul be proved innocent of this charge.<sup>53</sup> Those who advocate an apologetic reading of Acts 21-26 suggest that Luke is defending Paul’s orthodoxy with respect to *Judaism* – not that he is innocent of murder.<sup>54</sup> Third, these interpreters are usually confused by the barbarians’ exclamation “he is a god” in verse 6 and therefore make frequent comments regarding Luke’s sense of humor in narrating their acclamation. I will suggest that verse 6 is important for the logic of Acts 28:1-10, and scholarly claims that the barbarians are naïve and fickle fail to take the text seriously enough. Finally, the readings that center upon Paul’s innocence or vindication fail to include the entire episode and the text’s relationship to what comes before (28:1-2) and after (28:7-10).

### C. Paul’s Character as a Jesus-like-healer

A third line of interpretation of Acts 28:1-10 is Luke’s characterization of Paul with echoes of Jesus from Luke’s first volume. These echoes are clearest in Paul’s healing of Publius’ father in Acts 28:7-10, which recalls Jesus’ healing ministry, specifically his healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Lk. 4:38-41). Both Publius’ father and

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<sup>52</sup> Hence, Paul could not make the claim of Antiphon’s Helos: “For all those with whom I have sailed have enjoyed good voyages” (Antiphon, “Concerning the Murder of Herodes,” 82-83).

<sup>53</sup> So Gaventa, *Acts*, 358.

<sup>54</sup> For example, see Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 153-183.

Simon's mother-in-law are "hemmed in" by a great "fever" (Lk. 4:38; Acts 28:8).<sup>55</sup> The mention of "all the sick coming" (Acts 28:9) to Paul and Paul's "laying on hands" (Acts 28:8) likewise echo Jesus' healing ministry in Luke 4:40-41. According to Susan Marie Praeder, Acts 28:7-10 and Luke 4:38-41 "are the only NT passages that consist of two short miracle stories in succession."<sup>56</sup> Further, it is the only occurrence in Acts where a miracle occurs in tandem with both prayer and the laying on of hands.<sup>57</sup> Given the obvious nature of these parallels, they are regularly found in most commentaries.<sup>58</sup> Those who comment upon Luke's purpose for narrating this incident with echoes of Jesus' own healing ministry, however, are fewer. Richard Pervo suggests that Luke wanted the conclusion of Paul's ministry to echo the beginning of Jesus' healing ministry.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the story of God's work is not ending but is beginning anew. Further, Luke hereby shows that the movement which had begun in the backwoods of rural Galilee has now moved all the way to the island of Malta.<sup>60</sup> For some, Luke's frequent usage of patterns and types suggests that Luke portrays these events as symbolic and the personages as typical.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See W. Kirchschräger, "Fieberheilung in Apg 28 und Lk 4," in *Les Actes des Apôtres: traditions, rédaction, théologie* (ed. Jacob Kremer; BEThL 48; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979) 509-521.

<sup>56</sup> Susan Marie Praeder, "Miracle Worker and Missionary: Paul in the Acts of the Apostles," in *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers* (ed. Eugene Lovering; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983) 107-129, here 118.

<sup>57</sup> Chance, *Acts*, 516.

<sup>58</sup> For example, see Praeder, "Miracle Worker and Missionary: Paul in the Acts of the Apostles," 118-119; Gaventa, *Acts*, 359; Pervo, *Acts*, 675; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols.; Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986-1990) 2.341-342; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 245-246; Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 741; Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 366.

<sup>59</sup> Also Tannehill [*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.342] who states that the parallels demonstrate that "...Jesus healing ministry still continues through his witnesses, with benefit both to the host who receives the healer and to the whole community."

<sup>60</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 675-676; Similarly, see Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 366.

<sup>61</sup> See especially, Michael D. Goulder, *Type and History* (London: SPCK, 1964) 106-107; Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (SBLMS 20; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974); with respect to Acts 28:16-31, see Charles B. Puskas, *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts: The Significance of Acts 28:16-31* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009) 1-32.

Reinhard von Bendemann also notes the connection between Luke 4 and Acts 28 and argues that the “emphasis is on the power of Paul, who is portrayed as victorious over fever.”<sup>62</sup> Luke thereby demonstrates that the power of the kingdom of God has been preserved “without being compromised on the way to the presence of the readers.”<sup>63</sup> Luke portrays Paul as a divine physician and, therefore, the barbarians are right in their perception that the power of God is at work in Paul’s healing ministry. Like von Bendemann, Luke Johnson also relates the parallels to the snake-bite episode. Both demonstrate that the “prophetic power of the resurrected one” is operative within Paul’s ministry.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, F. Scott Spencer notes that Paul’s miracles function so as to portray him “very much like a ‘god’ or at least a chief client/broker of an invincible Heavenly Patron....”<sup>65</sup> Johnson argues that coupled with the viper-incident, the healings in 28:7-10 resemble earlier scenes in Luke where exorcisms and healings are signs of the kingdom breaking into new territory. The divine power is not Paul’s but belongs to that of the resurrected Lord. While the recognition of the Jesus/Paul parallels is a significant component of the episode, the question remains: to what purpose did Luke characterize Paul with echoes of Jesus’ healing ministry in Luke 4?

#### D. The Literary Relationship between the Malta Episode and the Conclusion of Acts

For five full chapters (chs. 22-26) Luke has with unrelenting intensity focused his narrative on the trials of Paul, all the while making it clear that it is the will of God for him to stand before Caesar in Rome (e.g., 23:11; 25:11, 12, 25; 26:32). And yet at

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<sup>62</sup> Reinhard von Bendemann, “‘Many-Coloured Illnesses’ (Mark 1.34): On the Significance of Illnesses in the New Testament Narratives,” in *Wonders Never Cease: The Purpose of Narrating Miracle Stories in the New Testament and its Religious Environment* (eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte; LNTS 288; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2006) 100-124, here 114.

<sup>63</sup> Von Bendemann, “‘Many-Coloured Illnesses’ (Mark 1.34),” 114.

<sup>64</sup> Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 466.

<sup>65</sup> “Paul’s Odyssey in Acts: Status Struggles and Island Adventures,” 157.

precisely the moment the reader expects to hear of Paul's arrival in the capital city, Luke inserts a lengthy voyage narrative that results in a climactic shipwreck and the encounter on Malta. As Marguerat says, "Considering the strategic position of this narrative...the voyage to Rome has a delaying effect, which must have a specific function with regard to the reader's expectation."<sup>66</sup>

A brief comparison between Acts 28:1-10 and 28:16-31 suggests that the literary function of the Malta scene may have some real significance. While most of the scholarly literature does not comment upon or note any relationship between the two passages, there are some exceptions.<sup>67</sup> Robert Tannehill perceptively draws attention to the repeated "salvation" language in Acts 27 and suggests it finds its completion in Acts 28:28 where Paul refers to the "salvation of God" going forth to the Gentiles.<sup>68</sup> Yet his claim that Luke's purpose in recounting Acts 28:1-10 is to demonstrate that Christians can have cooperative and peaceful relationships with pagan society is not convincing.<sup>69</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa notices that the reciprocity between Paul and the islanders may hint at Luke's concern to emphasize a continuing positive relationship between Paul and the Gentiles.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Rudolf Pesch notes: "Bevor Paulus abschliessend mit den Juden Roms konfrontiert wird (28, 17-31), hat Lukas gezeigt, welche Ehrungen er von den

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<sup>66</sup> Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 216.

<sup>67</sup> For example, in his excellent study of Acts 28:16-31, Charles B. Puskas [*The Conclusion of Luke-Acts*] does not mention any role for Acts 28:1-10 in understanding the conclusion of Acts.

<sup>68</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.336-338, 348-349.

<sup>69</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.330-343, esp. 340-341; similarly, see Ben Witherington III [*The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 782] who says: "The focus is not on missionary preaching but on the generally positive way Paul was being received in the pagan world, perhaps as a signal to Luke's audience that such cooperation and kindness were still possible when this document was written."

<sup>70</sup> Gaventa, *Acts*, 362. Also see, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "Traditions in Conversation and Collision: Reflections on Multiculturalism in the Acts of the Apostles," in *Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship* (eds. Brian K. Blount and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) 30-41.

Heiden auf Malta empfangen hat.”<sup>71</sup> Luke Johnson emphasizes that the barbarians’ hospitable reception of Paul, their openness to the power of God at work in Paul, and their sharing of possessions indicate that Luke is offering one more indication of the Gentiles’ openness to the gospel.<sup>72</sup>

Loveday Alexander and Daniel Marguerat have made strong cases for including Acts 27:1-28:10 within Luke’s conclusion. Alexander writes: “I would designate the last two chapters of Acts (27-28) as a narrative epilogue, culminating in a final scene in Rome and topped off by a two-verse summary (28.30-31).”<sup>73</sup> Despite her claim, due to space constraints, she is unable to focus much on the scene at Malta. She notes that the open-ended claim of Acts 28:28 may cause readers to think of the kind barbarians in Acts 28:1-10. In fact, Paul’s use of the uncommon phrase τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ in relation to the Gentiles in Acts 28:28 “sets up multiple intertextual links with a cluster of texts which speak of the ‘knowledge of God’s salvation to the Gentiles’ (Ps. 66:3 LXX; 97:3 LXX; Isa. 49:6 in Acts 13:47; Isa. 42:7 in Acts 26:18; Lk. 2:30-32; Isa. 40:5 in Lk. 3:6).”<sup>74</sup>

Daniel Marguerat also argues that the last two chapters of Acts are organized according to a two-part scheme – “the tableau of Acts 27.1-28.10, devoted to the Gentiles, finds its counterpart in the scene of Acts 28.17-31, devoted to the relation with Judaism.”<sup>75</sup> Marguerat, however, sees the significance more in terms of proving Paul’s innocence to the pagan world than a symbolic representation of the openness of the Gentiles to the gospel. “Luke transforms the journey to Rome into a providential

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<sup>71</sup> Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Apg 13-28)*, 299-300

<sup>72</sup> Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 467.

<sup>73</sup> Loveday Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (LNTS 288; London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2005) 212.

<sup>74</sup> Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 221; also, see David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2.130; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), esp. 102-109.

<sup>75</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 217.

manifestation of Paul's innocence in the eyes of the pagan world, which the Maltese ratify with their barbaric naivety."<sup>76</sup> Marguerat notes that in Acts 28:17-28 Paul's quotation of Isa. 6:9-10 reorients salvation history away from Judaism and to the Gentiles.<sup>77</sup>

The significance of Luke's quoting Isaiah 6:9-10 cannot be emphasized too strongly given that he has, unlike the other Gospel authors, delayed its full citation by transposing it to the end of his volume (cf. Lk. 8:10), has extended the quotation by including the first line of Isa. 6:9, and has prefaced it with the climactic announcement of Paul's ῥῆμα ἐν (28:25).<sup>78</sup> Thus, it is a bit odd that Acts 28:1-10 plays little role for Marguerat in understanding the conclusion of Acts, as this scene more than hints at the receptivity of the Gentiles and the healthy functioning of their visual senses. Too few interpretations of the ending of Acts account adequately for the significance of the Isa. 6 quotation in 28:25-28 and its relationship to Acts 28:1-10. There are, in fact, some important connections between Acts 28:1-10 and 28:16-31, many of them related to the Isa. 6:9-10 quotation, which need to be set forth. To note a few examples, the barbarians "see" (28:6) the divine activity in Paul whereas the Roman Jews have eyes "but do not see" (28:26), and whereas Paul heals the barbarian islanders (28:7-10) the Roman Jews reject God's healing (28:27). Further, whereas the barbarians show hospitality to Paul (28:1-2, 9-10), the Jews receive Paul's hospitality (28:23) but reject him and his message (28:24-25). I suggest, again, that while *some* interpreters have rightly recognized the

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<sup>76</sup> Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 219.

<sup>77</sup> Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 221-225.

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Günter Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte – Heil für die Welt: eine narrativ-exegetische Studie zur Theologie des Lukas* (BZNW 92; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998) 98-108, esp. 98-99; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 105; Francois Bovon, "'Schön hat der heilige Geist durch den Propheten Jesaja zu euren Vätern gesprochen' (Act 28, 25)." *ZNW* 75 (1984) 224-232; Puskas, *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts*, 78-81.

importance of Acts 28:1-10 for one's understanding of the conclusion of Acts and the delayed transposition of the Isaiah quotation, further research needs to attend to this aspect of the text.

#### E. The Significance of the Barbarians

Although the barbarians are rarely a focal point of interpretation, it is important to note how interpreters characterize them. Most interpreters note that the word βάρβαρος indicates that they could not speak Greek.<sup>79</sup> And it is true that the Maltese were known to have spoken a Punic language.<sup>80</sup> For some interpreters, the inability of Paul and the barbarians to communicate verbally is important as it indicates why Paul does not correct their claim that he is divine (28:6). If this is the case, however, it is surprising to find the “first man of the island” with the Roman sounding name of Publius (28:7)!

Others in my view, however, are hostile toward the barbarians beyond what the text actually justifies. The ancient stereotype that barbarians were gullible and stupid is perpetuated in the one-sided scholarly claim that Luke is mocking the barbarians.<sup>81</sup> Tannehill says that their acclamation of Paul as a god “simply continues the portrait of the natives as ignorant and prone to mistaken views.”<sup>82</sup> Luke feels no need to correct the barbarians' claim since the reader knows that “these natives were not reliable theologians.”<sup>83</sup> Gaventa refers to them as “fickle” given that they change their mind from

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<sup>79</sup> Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History*, 25; Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 782-783; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 461; Gaventa, *Acts*, 357; Guy G. Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy: The Religious Revolution of Early Christianity* (WUNT 112; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999) 57-84. See such texts as Herodotus, *Histories* 2:57; Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 6, 3, 7; and 1 Cor 14:11.

<sup>80</sup> See Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, 152.

<sup>81</sup> On scholarship unfairly constructing negative cultural and religious stereotypes, but with regard to the rural Lycaonians in Acts 14, see Amy L. Wordelman, “The Gods Have Come Down: Images of Historical Lycaonia and the Literary Construction of Acts 14,” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1994).

<sup>82</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.340-341.

<sup>83</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.341.

thinking Paul is a murderer to thinking he is a god.<sup>84</sup> I. H. Marshall thinks Luke is poking fun at the superstition of the islanders.<sup>85</sup> The Maltese barbarians do not fit comfortably within Christoph Stenschke's larger study devoted to Luke's critique of Gentile religiosity and their bondage to sin. Thus, he notes the positive traits of the barbarians and their hospitality, but then claims that these positive traits "occur in a context of spiritual failure."<sup>86</sup> The context is "spiritual failure" given the fact that "neither Publius nor other islanders became Christians."<sup>87</sup> Stenschke claims that the Maltese have "spiritual blindness."<sup>88</sup> No one, he asserts, should think of this episode as presenting the crown of Paul's Gentile mission or as a positive portrait of Paul's claim in Acts 28:28.

Some interpreters, however, suggest that in this scene Luke may be undercutting the stereotype of the barbarians as savage, xenophobic, and inhospitable by portraying the Maltese against the background of "friendly barbarians."<sup>89</sup> While positive examples of friendly barbarians can be found in pagan literature, it is more common to find examples of a fear of barbarians and an assumption that they will treat shipwrecked sailors savagely. The refrain of the wandering Odysseus to a foreign land is, after all, "Alas, to the land of what mortals have I now come? Are they cruel and wild and unjust? Or are

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<sup>84</sup> Gaventa, *Acts*, 357, 361-362.

<sup>85</sup> I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992) 417; similarly, Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, 523; William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 152-153; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 245-246; Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 65.

<sup>86</sup> Christoph W. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT 2.108; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999) 236.

<sup>87</sup> Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*, 237.

<sup>88</sup> Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*, 237.

<sup>89</sup> E.g., Xenophon, *The Ephesians* 2,2,4; Petronius, *Satyricon* 114; Lucian, *True Story* 1:28-29; 2:46. See the comments of Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 461; Pervo, *Acts*, 673 n. 31; Gaventa, *Acts*, 356; Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 618.

they kind to strangers and fear the gods?” (*Od.* 6.119-121; 9.175ff).<sup>90</sup> Commenting on the Maltese “barbarians,” Cadbury notes that the narrative expectations of the passage forebode “to any Greek unfriendly treatment, especially to shipwrecked strangers.”<sup>91</sup> It was thought that the custom of hospitality was the virtue which separated the civilized Greeks from the savage barbarians.<sup>92</sup> Few develop this suggestion in any detail, but there is an abundance of information that the term “barbarian” often indicated more than the inability to speak Greek but was, rather, a derogatory term that carried strong cultural stereotypes of ignorance, superstition, and especially savagery and xenophobia.<sup>93</sup>

Each of the suggestions listed above contains some insight into the characterization of the barbarians, but a coherent interpretation of why Luke should end his portrait of the Gentiles with these barbarians is lacking. Those who emphasize their fickleness and spiritual failure discern one possible aspect of their characterization – they are polytheistic Gentiles. Scholars’ inability, however, to account for Luke’s simultaneously characterizing them as hospitable, philanthropic, and Luke’s decision to leave uncorrected their remark in v. 6, suggests that their interpretations are one-sided.

#### F. Hospitality to Strangers

Hospitality, according to Bruce Malina, may be defined as the “process by means of which an outsider’s status is changed from stranger to guest... [and] differs from

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<sup>90</sup> This will be examined in more detail in the following chapter. For more references, see Gustav Stählin, “ἕνεος,” *TDNT* V, 1-36, here 4-5; Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and The Acts of Andrew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 80-81.

<sup>91</sup> Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History*, 25.

<sup>92</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 369; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 416; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, 113; Stählin [“ἕνεος,” 4] claims: “One of the distinguishing marks between Gks. and barbarians is that the former are kind to strangers...”

<sup>93</sup> This sentiment is stated well by Dean Philip Bechard [*Paul Outside the Walls: A Study of Luke’s Socio-Geographical Universalism in Acts 14:8-20* (AB 143; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2000) 149-150]: “[T]he linguistic barrier that separates Paul from the natives of Malta (Acts 28:1-6) cannot be separated from the cultural implications of their ethnographic designation as βάρβαροι (Acts 28:2).”

entertaining family and friends.”<sup>94</sup> It is a set of social instructions such as providing food and lodging which are to be applied to outsiders, such that potential enemies are transformed into allies, or outsiders into insiders. Malina’s claim that hospitality “differs from entertaining family and friends” rightly attempts to distance the ancient practice from contemporary notions of hospitality; however, as this study will seek to demonstrate, hospitality is a social set of instructions (often including the bestowal of lodging and food) for receiving any outsider, stranger, or person who is not part of one’s own social (-kinship) network. Adelbert Denaux expresses this well when he states:

Given that the reference group can be understood in various ways and can point to such different things as family, kinship, members of the household, social group, city, country, race, religion, culture, accordingly the notions of “outsider” and of “hospitality” can have a more or less strict meaning. The outsider can be known or unknown, a friend, a family member or a stranger.<sup>95</sup>

The primary activity of the Maltese is hospitality: they “receive” Paul and his shipmates “with no uncommon humanity” by building them a fire (28:2), later Publius “welcomes” them into his home where he shows “very kind hospitality” (28:7), and the story concludes with the Maltese bestowing upon them “many honors and the possessions needed” for their voyage (28:10). Despite the clear description of the practice of hospitality in Acts 28:1-10, it is surprising how few comment upon this aspect of the passage. Recognition of the motif is either non-existent or negligible, for example, in many of the best commentaries on Acts. This is an odd state of affairs given John Koenig’s accurate remark that “the sheer quantity of evidence for our author’s regular

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<sup>94</sup> Bruce J. Malina, “The Received View and What It Cannot Do: III John and Hospitality,” *Semeia* 35 (1986) 171-189, here 181-182. Malina is influenced by Julian Pitt-Rivers, “The Stranger, the Guest and the Hostile Host,” in *Contributions to Mediterranean Sociology* (ed. J. G. Peristiany; The Hague: Mouton, 1968) 13-28.

<sup>95</sup> Adelbert Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ed. J. Verheyden, BETL 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999) 255-279, here 256-257.

accentuation of guest and host roles in his two-volume work suggests that the whole matter is more than peripheral to his concerns.”<sup>96</sup> A coherent interpretation of this passage is not possible apart from an understanding of the trope of hospitality to strangers given its significance within the Malta episode, its importance within the ancient Mediterranean world, and within Luke’s larger literary project.

There are, however, some exceptions. Pervo suggestively notes that at the exact point that the reader expects to find a correction of the barbarians (v. 6), one instead finds a text redolent with descriptions of benefaction, patronage, and hospitality – “the lubricants of Greco-Roman urban society.”<sup>97</sup> Despite this perceptive comment, he leaves untapped the potential this motif has for explaining the text. Ben Witherington says that the text is about “one of the most highly regarded virtues of antiquity, hospitality, being a tale of ‘the kindness of strangers.’...”<sup>98</sup> Though he is not commenting upon the Malta scene, Ronald F. Hock notes the connection between ancient conceptions of hospitality and the language of φιλανθρωπία in the Greek novels and the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37).<sup>99</sup> The significance of this claim is evident when one recognizes that Luke describes the hospitality of the Maltese in a similar manner (οἱ τε βάρβαροι παρείχον οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῖν, Acts 28:2). I have had occasion to mention Johnson’s recognition of the motif, as he suggests that Luke demonstrates the openness of the Gentiles to the gospel through his use of “Luke’s

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<sup>96</sup> John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 85-86.

<sup>97</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 672.

<sup>98</sup> Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 777.

<sup>99</sup> Ronald F. Hock, “Why New Testament Scholars Should Read Ancient Novels,” in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (eds. Ronald F. Hock and J. Bradley Chance; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 121-138.

lexicon of symbols” such as hospitality and the sharing of possessions.<sup>100</sup> Like Johnson, Mikeal Parsons offers an informed discussion of the motif of hospitality in Greek and Jewish literature, and he notes that it is an important practice in both Luke and Acts.<sup>101</sup> While Parsons is one of the few who develops and expands upon the motif of hospitality, he does not examine why Luke should present the barbarians as hospitable, nor does he suggest how this motif fits with the viper-incident (vv. 3-6).

Likewise, Andrew Arterbury’s work is significant in its recognition of this motif in Acts 28 as well as in Luke-Acts.<sup>102</sup> Arterbury identifies many of the most important texts in his examination of hospitality in the ancient world and is unrelenting in his search for the motif throughout the NT. It is his decision, however, to comment on every text within the NT that has a relationship to the motif of hospitality that is both the strength and the limitation of his work, for it precludes him from doing much more than summarizing the contents of a text and then commenting upon how the text contains hospitality.<sup>103</sup> And while he devotes more attention to hospitality in Acts 10-11,<sup>104</sup> he does not ask questions regarding *why* Luke utilizes this motif in his climactic portrait of Gentile inclusion, nor is he concerned with the literary function of the Lukan texts which utilize the hospitality motif. Thus, the questions need to be asked: What does hospitality contribute to the author’s goals? And, why is hospitality such a significant cultural script in the ancient Mediterranean world? This study offers a more robust analysis, from a

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<sup>100</sup> Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 466-467.

<sup>101</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 367-370.

<sup>102</sup> Andrew Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (NTM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005) 150-152.

<sup>103</sup> Though it is filled with useful information on the theme of hospitality in the ancient world and the NT, many of the same criticisms apply to John Bell Matthews, *Hospitality and the New Testament Church: An Historical and Exegetical Study* (Princeton Theological Seminary, ThD. 1965; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms). The scope of Matthews’ work is very broad as he attempts to comment upon every text relevant to the theme of hospitality and provides a discussion of its contemporary relevance.

<sup>104</sup> Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 135-162.

socio-cultural and literary perspective, of the narrative purposes of hospitality both in the Malta episode and the ancient Mediterranean texts.

Despite these criticisms, which are primarily due to the self-imposed limitations to his project, Arterbury's work is a thoroughly researched treasure trove of information on hospitality both within the NT and the ancient world and is a significant dialogue partner for my study. With respect to the Malta scene, Arterbury demonstrates that the text is operating according to the logic of hospitality to strangers, and he briefly notes that the text shows awareness of "the tradition that gods sometimes appear as strangers in need of hospitality."<sup>105</sup> Scholarly progress in providing a coherent interpretation of the Malta scene can ill-afford to underestimate the extent to which it is structured according to customs of hospitality to strangers. Much of my study is devoted to proving this claim.

## II. Summary of Remaining Questions about the Malta Episode

This review of scholarship on Acts 28:1-10 surfaces several issues which merit further study. I have attempted to show that the most pressing need is to present a coherent interpretation of the passage which can explain the diverse elements of the text. I see at least four questions which need to be answered. First, while scholars have made progress in identifying various significant literary elements of Acts 28:1-10 such as the Jesus/Paul parallels, the symbolic significance of the viper episode, the reference to the islanders as "barbarians", and the strong emphasis on hospitality at the beginning and end of the passage, there has been little, if any, attempt at a sustained exegesis of the text

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<sup>105</sup> Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 151. See also, Denaux, "The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts," 264. Denaux's article is excellent, and in a few respects he anticipates my own work. He recognizes the importance of hospitality to Luke-Acts; he rightly notices that the theme of hospitality belongs together with that of divine visits; he points to many "background texts" which form the cultural script of hospitality to strangers; and he makes some helpful suggestions as to how divine visits and hospitality permeate the Gospel of Luke.

which would account for the purpose and function of these diverse elements. A successful interpretation of the Malta episode needs to provide a coherent explanation for each element of the passage which makes sense of the *entire episode*.

Second, a significant challenge of the text is answering why Paul allows the barbarians' claim – “he is a god” – to go uncorrected, given that the “denial that the apostles and evangelists are anything other than human is another Lucan theme.”<sup>106</sup> Further, the claim in Acts 28:6 appears to be at odds with Acts 14:8-20 as well as with Luke's antipathy to polytheism. Some have tried to get around this by claiming that the barbarians spoke a different language than Paul so Paul never knew they made this comment, or by claiming that Luke corrects this claim implicitly by portraying Paul praying to the true God in verse 8, or by suggesting that Paul is simply poking fun at these fickle, superstitious, unreliable theologians. Yet these suggestions all falter, either in terms of their subtlety or their contradiction by the text itself. I do not see any justification within the text for the view that Paul is mocking these barbarians. Having a good laugh at the “barbarian” does not quite seem to fit with Luke's typical concern for “the other”! The reader, to be sure, knows that their claim in 28:6 is not quite right, but nevertheless has merit. These barbarians recognize the power of God when they see it! Luke leaves their judgment of Paul standing precisely because it demonstrates a fundamentally correct recognition of Paul's identity. Further, outside of Cornelius and Lydia, one would be hard-pressed to find a more positive portrayal of Gentiles within the entire narrative of Acts. Not only do they recognize God's power at work in Paul, but, as

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<sup>106</sup> Barrett, *Acts*, 1.665. Bechard [*Paul Outside the Walls*, 417 n. 140] notes that Luke attempts to “counter paganizing trends in the Christianity of his day” through correcting “false theophanies” such as what occurs in Acts 12:20-23; 14:8-20; and Acts 28:1-6. The problem here is that Luke never corrects the barbarians' acclamation in Acts 28:6.

we will see, they subvert the stereotype of barbarians as inhospitable xenophobes and even share their possessions with Paul.

Third, what is the literary function of the Malta episode? Specifically, what is its relationship to Acts 28:16-31 and the ending of Acts? A few scholars have had the hunch that this episode is critical for the logic of the conclusion to Luke's work, and that its significance may be bound up in Paul's final words: "This salvation of God has been sent forth to the Gentiles – They will hear" (28:28). Can this hunch be sustained by a more detailed and probing examination of the Malta episode and its relationship to the ending of Acts? Given that this is Luke's final narration of Paul encountering Gentiles, and that Luke has not portrayed Paul working with Gentile churches since Acts 20, the text merits further attention for what it may say about the topic of Paul and the Gentiles. The text's marginalization in treatments of studies regarding "Luke and the Gentiles" or "Luke and paganism" warrants further attention.<sup>107</sup>

Fourth, it is surprising how few interpreters comment on the role which the practice of hospitality to strangers plays in Acts 28. The passage is structured in such a way that it begins (vv. 1-2) and ends (vv. 7-10) with references to this practice. Sandwiched in between is a "recognition scene" (vv. 3-6) where the barbarians recognize the identity of the stranger. While some have commented upon the presence of this theme, its function within the narrative remains unexplored. This is all the more surprising given prevalence of hospitality throughout both Luke and Acts. It must be of some significance that Luke's final portrait of the Gentiles ends with these hospitable barbarians.

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<sup>107</sup> The text is not treated, for example, in either the fine study by C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); or in S. G. Wilson, *Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

To summarize briefly the unsolved questions contained in Acts 28:1-10: 1) Can one provide a coherent interpretation of all the various interesting elements that make up Acts 28:1-10, such as the Jesus/Paul parallelisms, the symbolic defeat of the Devil in the viper scene, and the reference to hospitable barbarians? 2) Why is the acclamation that Paul is divine uncorrected? 3) What is the relationship between Acts 28:1-10 and 28:16-31, and what are the implications for the ending of Acts? 4) Why does Luke emphasize the role of hospitality in his portrait of Paul's final interaction with non-Jews? What are the elements of this cultural script? What is its larger literary function within Luke-Acts?

### III. The Argument and Plan of the Study

#### A. The Argument

In this study I argue that Acts 28:1-10 is a *theoxeny*, that is, an account of unknowing hospitality to a god – in this case the emissary of God – which results in the establishment of a fictive kinship relationship between the barbarians and Paul and his God. Broadly speaking, there are typically three major components of any theoxeny: a) hospitality or inhospitality unwittingly bestowed by the host upon the divine guest, b) an epiphany or recognition scene where the identity of the god is revealed to the host, and c) attendant rewards or retribution for the host based on their treatment of the god.

The scene in Acts 28:1-10 can be understood to unfold along these three lines. First, the barbarians show immediate hospitality to the stranger Paul – the powerful prophetic agent of God (vv. 1-2). The “barbarians” thereby subvert the stereotype of barbarians as uncivilized and inhospitable savages through their admirable execution of hospitality to Paul. It is characteristic of theoxenies that the human, which the god comes to test, shows hospitality unknowingly to the divine figure given that the god's identity is disguised or hidden.

Second, the viper-incident reveals that Paul is the emissary of God (vv. 3-6). The barbarians' claim that Paul must be a god (28:6b) is not corrected by Luke precisely because, as God's chosen emissary, there is much truth in it. That the "recognition scene" occurs after the barbarians have shown hospitality to Paul is significant given that responses to divine visits are often expressed through hospitality in the ancient world.

Finally, the relationship between Paul and the barbarians is cemented through a ritualized form of hospitality. In light of ancient notions of ritualized friendship whereby kinship relations are ritually established between two different groups, it may be that Luke intends the reader to view this scene as a symbolic account of the salvation and inclusion of the pagans into the people of God. In the ancient Mediterranean it was understood that guest-friendship was an inheritable relationship which functioned to bring strangers into a familial/insider relationship with the host. In other words, Luke demonstrates the ritualized integration of two disparate groups of people – an act which formally integrates these barbarian outsiders into the people of God. In light of the frequent connection between hospitality and piety to the gods in the ancient Mediterranean, Luke ends his second volume in this manner in order to portray Gentile hospitality as the appropriate response to Paul's message of God's salvation extending unto "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8b; 28:28). In fact, the Malta episode is more fully understood when it is seen as the counterpart to the Roman Jews' inability to "see" and failure to accept God's salvation (Acts 28:25-27).

This reading gains further plausibility through an examination of the literary function of hospitality in Luke and Acts. In his first volume, Luke presents hospitality as one of the defining features of a positive response to the message of God's visitation in

Jesus. In fact, Luke presents Jesus as a traveling prophet, especially in the Lukan Travel Narrative, who tests people's response to him – often through the test of hospitality. Attention to this motif makes further sense of the recognition scene in Luke 24 where Jesus reveals himself in a context of hospitality. In his second volume, Luke frequently presents hospitality as the positive response of Gentiles to God's (second) visitation embodied in the apostles and their proclamation of the "Word" which functions to incorporate Gentiles into the people of God. Conversely, inhospitality often defines the Jews and the opponents of the Way and defines them as outsiders with respect to the people of God.

#### B. The Plan of the Study

I begin with a socio-cultural literary analysis of Acts 28:1-10 that will account for its diverse elements as well as relate its constituent parts to the broader narrative of Luke-Acts. Specifically, I will examine five components of the Malta episode: its literary structure, the barbarians, the claim that Paul is a god, the characterization of Paul as a healer-like-Jesus, and hospitality. My examination of these five components of the text will raise questions that will guide research into this symbolic world.

The third chapter will be devoted to examining the theme of hospitality in the Greco-Roman world with special attention to Homer's *Odyssey*, but also examines such authors as Aeschylus, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Seneca, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, and Dio Chrysostom. The fourth chapter will examine the theme in Jewish writings, devoting significant attention to texts related to Genesis 18-19, but also examining the book of Judges, legislation concerning the "alien" in the Torah, *Testament of Abraham*, Josephus, and Philo. These chapters will demonstrate: the specific language

and cultural expressions used in hospitality settings, the literary structure of theoxenies, the literary symbolization of theoxenies whereby they manifest pious and impious responses to the gods, how hospitality to strangers *may* be elevated to ritualized friendship where the two parties are perpetually united to one another in a fictive kinship relationship, and how the ancient world evaluated pious and impious individuals based on their execution of the hospitality laws.

Chapters 5-7 comprise the heart of the study as I examine the role of hospitality in the Lukan writings. First, in the fifth chapter, I establish that Luke is at home within the world of ancient Mediterranean hospitality and uses the practice for multiple purposes by examining four Lukan texts in detail: the story of Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman (Lk. 7:36-50), Jesus' instructions to the 72 emissaries who enact the divine visit (Lk. 10:1-24), Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to his disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35), and the story of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-11:18). These four texts serve as a micro-level examination into the grammar, religious sanctions, and purposes of hospitality in Luke-Acts. The sixth chapter is a structural, macro-level examination of hospitality in the Lukan writings which gives a synthetic account of Luke-Acts as a story which centers upon God's (twofold) visit of his people and their (in)hospitable response to the agents of the divine visit. Having examined the cultural script of hospitality both within the ancient Mediterranean and Luke's larger literary project, I will return in the seventh chapter to Acts 28:1-10 in order to answer the questions set forth at the beginning of the study – in particular the literary function served by the Malta incident at the conclusion of Luke's two-volume work.

## **Chapter 2: Placing the Episode at Malta: A Preliminary Examination of Acts 28:1-10 within its Literary Context**

In this chapter, I provide a “first reading” of the Malta episode staying at the level of literary analysis and the recognition of motifs. The primary goal of this chapter is to observe what is in the text, note the way in which the literary context (i.e., the Sea Voyage in chapter 27) of Acts 28:1-10 produces meaning, and raise the right questions about the passage – questions which will drive the remainder of this study and will not be answered fully until the concluding chapter. Convincing answers to these questions will require sustained examinations of the cultural and religious scripts upon which Luke relies as well as a broader investigation of portions of his entire literary project in both his Gospel and in Acts.<sup>1</sup> Before examining the Malta episode and the questions it raises, it is necessary to situate the text within its preceding context.

### I. The Significance of the Sea-Voyage: (Acts 27:1-44)

Acts 28:1-10 is situated strategically between Paul’s sea-voyage (27:1-44) and his arrival in Rome (28:16-31) which the reader has been anticipating at least since Acts 19:21 (“after I have been there [Jerusalem] it is necessary for me to see Rome.”). An examination of the passage preceding the Malta episode yields important questions and will make stronger the ones posed by my initial examination of Acts 28:1-10.

Acts 27 contains a host of questions. Does the reappearance of the “we”-narrator indicate the possibility of an eyewitness account or the use of a travel diary of one of

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<sup>1</sup> I assume and will implicitly argue for the literary unity of Luke-Acts. On recent challenges to the unity of Luke-Acts, see Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); also see, C. Kavin Rowe, “Literary Unity and Reception History: Reading Luke-Acts as Luke and Acts,” *JSNT* 29 (2007) 449-457.

Paul's companions?<sup>2</sup> What is the reason for the length of the account which causes a strong delaying effect?<sup>3</sup> Is Luke symbolically portraying Paul's death and resurrection?<sup>4</sup> Is the account literarily dependent upon or influenced by other shipwreck narratives?<sup>5</sup> These are just a few of the interesting problems this text poses.<sup>6</sup> The present discussion can bracket these questions since I am concerned with establishing how the motifs, plot, and characterization of Paul in Acts 27 contribute to the meaning of the Malta episode.

### A. The Hellenistic Narrative Setting

Before Paul's voyage to Rome, Luke devotes (from Acts 21:18 until 26:32) a little less than six chapters to recounting an intra-Jewish debate regarding Paul's orthodoxy with respect to his Jewish faith and whether he "stirs up insurrection" (κινουῦντα στάσεις, Acts 24:5). In these chapters Paul is a prisoner under Roman custody.<sup>7</sup> In this lengthy portion of the narrative, the Apostle to the Gentiles has had no interaction with Gentile churches, has had no occasion to offer God's salvation to the Gentiles through

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<sup>2</sup> For a good review of the various positions on the matter, see J. Wehnert, *Die Wir-Passagen der Apostelgeschichte: Ein lukanisches Stilmittel aus jüdischer Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989); also, see Susan Marie Praeder, "The Problem of First Person Narration in Acts," *NovT* 29 (1987) 193-218.

<sup>3</sup> See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SPS 5; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 450; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 644.

<sup>4</sup> Glenn R. Jacobson, "Paul in Luke-Acts: The Savior Who is Present," *SBLSP* 1983 (ed. Kent H. Richards; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) 131-146; Michael D. Goulder, *Type and History* (London: SPCK, 1964) 36-40; Pervo, *Acts*, 659-667; against this type of symbolic reading, see Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 457.

<sup>5</sup> On Acts 27 and its relationship to other ancient sea-voyage accounts see, for example, Peter Pokorny, "Die Romfahrt des Paulus und der antike Roman," *ZNW* 64 (1973) 233-244; Eckhard Plümacher, "Wirklichkeitserfahrung und Geschichtsschreibung bei Lukas: Erwägungen zu den Wir-Stücken der Apostelgeschichte," *ZNW* 68 (1977) 2-22; Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 50-54.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis R. MacDonald ["The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul," *NTS* 45 (1999) 88-107] argues that Luke is consciously imitating Homer's *Odyssey*. Some have argued that Jonah is an important literary precedent for Acts 27: see Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1981) 360. An older but still popular suggestion is that Luke has inserted a "secular" sea-voyage account into his narrative and inserted Paul into it: cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 216-221.

<sup>7</sup> On this, see Matthew L. Skinner, *Locating Paul: Places of Custody as Narrative Settings in Acts 21-28* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2003).

preaching or healing, and is characterized more like a philosopher standing on trial or a rhetorician giving forensic speeches than an apostle or prophet of God.<sup>8</sup> And though in his defense speeches Paul has declared that God has commissioned him “to proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles” (26:23b; also 22:21; 26:20), Luke’s reader has seen no interaction between Paul and the Gentiles since the Miletus episode (20:17-35). The narrative presents Paul as making no Gentile converts during his imprisonment, and this is a significant shift in the portrayal of Paul.<sup>9</sup> Thus, for Luke to hasten to describe Paul’s unsuccessful meeting with the Roman Jews as the final scene in his story would further run the risk of marginalizing one of Luke’s narrative goals: *to describe and depict the salvation of God going forth to the Gentiles*. To state things a bit more colloquially, when the reader encounters Paul’s final words in the narrative, “this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles” (Acts 28:28), the closest narrative example she would have at hand to remind her of this fact would be Paul’s final encounter with the elders of Ephesus – all the way back in Acts 20:17-35. Thus, one of the first things the reader of Acts 27-28 notices is that whereas 28:17-31 is devoted to Paul’s relationship with Judaism, 27:1-28:16 is dominated by a Gentile setting and Gentile characters.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> That Luke has arranged Paul’s speeches in Acts 22-26 according to the structure of forensic speeches is argued persuasively by Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Forensic Defense Speech and Paul’s Trial Speeches in Acts 22-26,” in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar* (ed. Charles H. Talbert; New York: Crossroad, 1984) 210-224.

<sup>9</sup> This is also noted by F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 240.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the ‘Acts of the Apostles’* (SNTSMS 121; trans. Ken McKinney et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 217.

In ch. 27 the reader enters into the Hellenistic territory of sea-travel adventures, storms, and shipwrecks.<sup>11</sup> As is well-known, with Homer's *Odyssey* as the archetype and Vergil's *Aeneid* following in suit, accounts of sea-voyages were a favorite topos of Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman authors.<sup>12</sup> As Daniel Marguerat nicely demonstrates, Greek and Roman authors used sea-voyages symbolically to present the hero's quest for identity.<sup>13</sup> The genre was flexible and adaptable enough, indeed, for "authors to employ the situation of a sea voyage to interpret many situations in life."<sup>14</sup> Despite the influence of Hellenism in first-century Judaism, one can nevertheless justifiably claim that ancient Israelite and Jewish culture had no great love for sea-voyages.<sup>15</sup> One need only think of the Seer's symbolic use of the sea to represent evil (Rev. 21:1), Isaiah's description of the sea as the home of Leviathan and Behemoth (Isa. 27:1; 51:9-10; cf. Ex. 15:1-8), or the Prophet Jonah's horrendous and ill-advised sea-voyage (Jonah 1-2). In contrast, however, the Mediterranean Sea was foundational to the culture and commerce of the Greeks and Romans.<sup>16</sup> Loveday Alexander has shown that in Greek literature contemporary with Acts, particularly in the Greek novels, the Mediterranean Sea was

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<sup>11</sup> On the relation between Acts 27 and other accounts of sea voyages, see Susan Marie Praeder, "Acts 27:1 – 28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts," *CBQ* 46 (1984) 683-706.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Lucian, *Toxaris* 19-20; Achilles Tatius, *Clitophon and Leucippe* 3.1-5; Petronius, *Satyrikon* 114-115; Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 3.3; Josephus, *Life* 3.13-16. Juvenal (*Satires* 12.17-82) and Lucian (*On Salaried Posts in Great Houses* 1-2) mock the ubiquity of the literary convention of the storms and shipwrecks. For a list of ancient travelogues, see Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 450; Praeder, "Acts 27:1 – 28:16, 687; Charles H. Talbert and J. H. Hayes, "A Theology of Sea Storms in Luke-Acts," in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy* (ed. David P. Moessner; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999) 267-283.

<sup>13</sup> Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 231-256.

<sup>14</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, "By Land by Sea: The We-passages and Ancient Sea-Voyages," in *Sea Voyages and Beyond: Emerging Strategies in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 14; Edmonds, WA: Deo Publishing, 2010) 47-81, here 54.

<sup>15</sup> So Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 450; Loveday Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (LNTS 288; London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2005) 84.

<sup>16</sup> See Lionel Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton, NJ, 1971); Robbins, "By Land by Sea: The We-passages and Ancient Sea-Voyages," 76-79.

often viewed simply as “the Greek Sea.”<sup>17</sup> It was the cultural territory, therefore, of the Greeks, the place where Greeks felt at home and asserted their power.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Luke’s decision to devote 44 verses to Paul’s Mediterranean sea-voyage marks a dramatic and intentional shift in the narrative setting – a shift into a setting which is markedly Hellenistic and Gentile oriented. As every commentary notes, chapter 27 is dominated by nautical terminology, made clear by the usage of various forms of πλέω (“to set sail,” Acts 27:2, 6, and 24), the phrase ἐπέκειλαν τὴν ναῦν (“they beached the ship,” Acts 27:41; *Odyssey* 9.148, 546; 13.113-114), and titles of the specific kinds of storms such as ὁ καλούμενος εὐρακύλων (“the wind called Euraquilo,” Acts 27:14) – terminology lacking in Paul’s own descriptions of his travel (e.g., Rom. 15; 2 Cor. 11:25) but prevalent in Hellenistic accounts of voyages.<sup>19</sup> Both the theme of Mediterranean sea-travel as well as the specific vocabulary signal that the reader is in Gentile territory.

#### B. The Roman Centurion’s Kindness to Paul

It is unsurprising, therefore, that the first character the reader meets is another of Luke’s Roman centurions, this time “Julius of the Augustan cohort” (Ἰουλίῳ σπειρήσ Σεβαστῆς, 27:1). The characterization of Julius is strikingly positive as he allows Paul to receive refreshment and fellowship from his friends and thereby earns Luke’s glowing remark that “Julius demonstrated *philanthropy* to Paul” (φιλανθρωπῶς τε ὁ Ἰούλιος τῷ Παύλῳ χρησάμενος, 27:3). The term φιλανθρωπῶς occurs in a wide array of

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 80-85; also, see Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts* (PCNT; Baker, 2008) 352-353.

<sup>18</sup> The sea is above all shown to be the rightful sphere for the apostles. So Vernon K. Robbins, “Luke-Acts: A Mixed Population Seeks a Home in the Roman Empire,” in *Images of Empire* (ed. Loveday C. A. Alexander; JSOTSup 122; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 202-221.

<sup>19</sup> See Robbins, “By Land by Sea: The We-passages and Ancient Sea-Voyages,” 47-81; Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 80-85; with special attention to Homer’s *Odyssey*, see MacDonald, “The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul,” 94-95.

contexts but is typically used to describe the Hellenistic virtue of civic humanity, benevolent kindness, or hospitality.<sup>20</sup> Although Julius does not accept Paul's prophecy regarding the dangers of continuing the journey (27:9-11), one could hardly blame the centurion for heeding the advice of the captain and owner of the ship. He does show kindness to Paul again by saving his life from the soldiers who plan to kill the prisoners when the ship runs aground (27:43). Julius enables the fulfillment of God's promise to grant safety to all those sailing with Paul (27:24). Thus, Luke foregrounds Julius as a favorable example of a Gentile who demonstrates kindness to Paul.

### C. Paul as Prophet like Jesus

The ship's journey from Caesarea to Rome is filled with struggle and hardship. On three occasions Luke presents Paul as intervening with prophecies, exhortations, and encouragements. In doing so, Luke shapes Paul's character towards that of Jesus.

In Paul's first intervention, while they are staying at Fair Havens (27:8) "Paul admonishes" (v. 9) the leaders of the ship to cease from continuing the journey because it will result in great destruction to the provisions, the ship, and the lives of those on board (v. 10). Luke shows Paul's prophecy being fulfilled when the ship encounters the typhoon *Eraquilo* and the sailors are forced to throw their provisions overboard (vv. 18-19). Luke's description of the storm and the hostile oceanic environment is vivid, and the overwhelming darkness is bleak: "neither sun nor stars gave any light for many days" (μήτε δὲ ἡλίου μέτε ἀστρων ἐπιφαινόντων ἐπὶ πλείονας ἡμέρας, 27:20a).<sup>21</sup> The situation is so ghastly that Luke tells the readers that "all hope that we should be saved was taken away" (λοιπὸν περιηρεῖτο ἐλπίς πάσα τοῦ σωζέσθαι ἡμᾶς, 27:20b). But

<sup>20</sup> More on this semantic domain and use of this term is forthcoming in the following chapters.

<sup>21</sup> So Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 243.

before the sailors' despair gets the better of them, Paul comes to their aid with another prophetic word – this time a divine word of encouragement. Yes, they should have listened to Paul's first prophetic word which, they are reminded, has now been fulfilled (27:21) as their ship has suffered great "damage and loss" (cf. 27:10), but now Paul exhorts them to be of good cheer (καὶ τὰ νῦν παραινῶ ὑμᾶς εὐθυμεῖν, 27:22). An angel of God, that is, the God to whom Paul belongs and whom he worships (v. 23), has visited Paul and promised that not one of those on board the ship will lose their life. Paul must appear before Caesar in Rome, and the angel has promised that "God will give to you all those who are sailing with you" (κεχάρισταί σοι ὁ θεὸς πάντας τοὺς πλείοντας μετὰ σοῦ, v. 24b).<sup>22</sup> As God's prophet, Paul declares that everything will turn out as he has said (v. 25). Paul adds, however, one more prophecy and declares that they must (δεῖ) run aground on an island (v. 26).<sup>23</sup>

On a third occasion, Paul exhorts (vv. 33-34) everyone to withhold from their fasting and nourish themselves with food for their own salvation (v. 34). Paul's breaking of bread is reminiscent of the meal-scenes in Luke's Gospel as well as the practice of the early church in Acts (2:42-47; 4:32-35). And then, quoting a word from Luke's Jesus (Lk. 21:18), Paul makes the promise that "not a hair from your head shall perish" (οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑμῶν θριξὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀπολείπεται, v. 34ba). Based on this summary of Paul's three speaking interventions we can claim that Luke characterizes

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<sup>22</sup> MacDonald ["The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul," 99-101] argues that Luke is literarily dependent here upon Homer's *Odyssey* (5.338-375) where the angel Ino appears to Odysseus and promises him safety from the wrath of Poseidon. Odysseus distrusts Ino, however, and tries in vain to stay with his raft and is forced to swim to shore. While I do not doubt the possibility that Homer had (whether directly or indirectly) influenced Luke, there are some significant dissimilarities between the two passages (e.g., Paul trusts with complete confidence the angel of God, but Odysseus distrusts Ino the goddess) which make me reticent to endorse MacDonald's direct explanation for the similarities: "Luke imitated Homer" (p. 101).

<sup>23</sup> The language of "necessity" is reminiscent of Jesus' frequent prediction to his disciples that "it is necessary" for him to suffer, be killed, and raised on the third day (e.g., Lk. 9:22; 17:25; 24:7, 26, 44). On Luke's use of δεῖ, see Charles H. Cosgrove, "The Divine δεῖ in Luke-Acts," *NovT* 26 (1984) 168-190.

Paul as a prophet.<sup>24</sup> He makes prophecies which come to fulfillment (v. 10-11, 21; v. 26; 28:1); he receives messages from God's angel and thereby speaks on God's behalf (vv. 21-26); he quotes the words of Jesus the prophet (v. 34); he provides encouragement to his shipmates (vv. 33-37); and at no point does he appear distressed for he trusts in his God's providential ordering of circumstances (vv. 25-26).<sup>25</sup>

#### D. The Salvation of the Gentiles

In Paul's prophetic role he functions as an agent of God's salvation for his Gentile shipmates. The attentive reader of Acts 27 cannot help but be impressed with the frequent references to salvation throughout the sea-voyage. In fact, six times rescue from the sea is characterized as salvation. As we have seen, the narrator notes that during the storm, "all hope that we should be saved (πάσα τοῦ σωζέσθαι ἡμᾶς) was finally taken from us" (27:20b). When some of the sailors attempted to escape by leaving the ship, Paul warns the centurion: "if these men do not remain in the boat, you cannot be saved" (ἐὰν οὗτοι μείνωσιν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ, ὑμεῖς σωθῆναι οὐ δύνασθε, v. 31b). Paul's encouragement to his shipmates that they should eat is, Paul declares, "for the purpose of your salvation" (πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας σωτηρίας ὑπάρχει, v. 34). The centurion's

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<sup>24</sup> Commentators frequently see a connection to the story of Jonah who also experienced a shipwreck, was safely delivered, and then continued his mission to the Gentiles. The most detailed examination is by Jens Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch: Zur lukanischen Verwendung eines literarischen Topos in Apostelgeschichte 27,1-28,6* (WUNT 2.274; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010) 183-209. He notes, for example, the similar language used to describe the crew's decision to throw their cargo overboard (Jon. 1:5a; Acts 27:18) as well as their similar characterization as worshippers of the one God of the Hebrews (Jon. 1:9; Acts 27:23). The details are not exact, however, as Jonah functions to pollute the ship whereas Paul's presence ensures the safety of his shipmates. See Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 84-85; Pervo, *Acts*, 652.

<sup>25</sup> On Paul as a prophet, see Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 459; Spencer [*Journeying through Acts*, 240] argues that Paul is characterized in this scene as "a dynamic prophet and servant in the mold of Jesus." Ernst Haenchen [*The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971) 709-710] notes that Paul is portrayed as a prophet as well, though he emphasizes that Luke has constructed Paul as a Hellenistic *theios aner*. For a rejection of the view that Luke depicts Paul as a *theios aner* with special attention to Acts 27, see C. K. Barrett, "Paul Shipwrecked," in *Scripture: Meaning and Method: Essays Presented to Anthony Tyrell Hanson for his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Barry P. Thompson; Hull: Hull University Press, 1987) 51-64, here 56-59.

decision to let the potentially escaping prisoners live is due to his desire “to save Paul” (διασωᾶσαι τὸν Παῦλον, v. 43a). And Paul’s prophecy comes true when the ship runs aground safely on the island, and so the narrator adds: “and thus it happened that all were saved onto the land” (καὶ οὕτως ἐγένετο πάντας διασωθῆναι ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, v. 44b). The Malta episode begins with a literary tie back to the salvation of the ship and all of Paul’s shipmates: “So having been saved (διασωθέντες τότε) we recognized that the island was called Malta” (28:1). While these texts are often translated with the word “safety” and while some ancient sea-voyage narratives do use σωᾶζω and σωτηρία to refer to the ship’s safety, I suggest that the distinctly Lukan force of these words should be allowed to come through fully and should be translated, therefore, as salvation.<sup>26</sup>

One of the goals of Luke’s larger literary project is to describe the coming of God’s salvation into the world and to trace its journey throughout the Mediterranean world.<sup>27</sup> The reader sees that God’s salvation for his people is identified with the figure of Jesus (Lk. 2:30; 3:4-6; Acts 4:12; 13:47).<sup>28</sup> Distinctive to Luke’s articulation of God’s salvation is its universal scope. God’s salvation is for *all*. The significance of this theme for Luke is indicated by the inclusio of Isaianic quotations he uses to bookend his narrative. Thus, preceding Jesus’ ministry, John the Baptist quotes Isa. 40:5 which states that “*all flesh* will see God’s salvation” (ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ,

<sup>26</sup> So Praeder, “Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 692; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986-1990) 2.336-337.

<sup>27</sup> Numerous works emphasize Luke’s interest in salvation. See, for example, Jacques Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles: Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. John Keating; New York: Paulist Press, 1979); W. C. van Unnik, “‘The Book of Acts,’ The Confirmation of the Gospel,” *NovT* 4 (1960) 26-59; I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970) 77-215.

<sup>28</sup> In Luke-Acts the title σωτήρ is used four times (Lk. 1:47; 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23); the noun σωτηρία occurs ten times (Lk. 1:69, 71, 77; 19:9; Acts 4:12; 7:25; 13:26, 47; 16:17; 27:34); the adjective σωτήριον occurs three times (Lk. 2:30; 3:6; Acts 28:28); the verb σωᾶζω occurs twenty-eight times (Lk. 6:9; 7:50; 8:12, 36, 48, 50; 9:24; 13:23; 17:19; 18:26; 18:42; 19:10; 23:35, 37, 39; Acts 2:21, 40, 47; 4:9, 12; 11:14; 14:9; 15:1, 11; 16:30, 31; 27:20, 31).

Lk. 3:6). And Paul's final words in Acts are resoundingly similar and follow on the heels of the Isaiah 6 quotation: "this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles" (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπεστάλη τούτο τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, Acts 28:28).<sup>29</sup> This framing technique suggests that the reader may read everything in between as related to the process whereby God's salvation goes to all peoples.

Note that Acts 27 also places an emphasis on the universality of salvation for "everyone" or "all persons" aboard the ship.<sup>30</sup> Most important is the promise God makes to Paul that he "will freely give to you [Paul] all those sailing (πάντας τοὺς πλέοντας) with you" (27:24). God's rescue of the ship through Paul is a metaphor for Gentile salvation. The salvation is God's, but Paul is the agent on whose behalf God acts and through whom God mediates this salvation. We have seen this to be the case already in Paul's prophetic interventions. This claim is further established, however, through the meal-scene in 27:33-38 where Paul exhorts his shipmates to eat food for their nourishment. Note that Paul exhorts "everyone" to partake in the meal (παρεκάλει ὁ Παῦλος ἅπαντας μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς, 27:33). Quoting Luke 21:18, Paul promises that "none (οὐδενός) of your hair from your head shall perish" (27:34b). Again, in verse 35 Luke emphasizes that all are present and everyone partakes in eating the meal: "when [Paul] said these things, and had taken the bread he gave thanks to God before everyone (ἐνώπιον πάντων) and breaking it he began to eat." The narrator adds that "everyone" was encouraged by the meal (εὐθυμοὶ δὲ γενόμενοι πάντες, v. 36a), and that

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<sup>29</sup> On this, see Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 220-221; Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles*, 13-19.

<sup>30</sup> Tannehill [*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.332-333] notes: "If the narrator were simply interested in bringing Paul to Rome under divine protection, it would be an unnecessary complication to refer to the rescue of all, especially as this requires correction of Paul's previous warning." So Praeder, "Acts 27:1 – 28:16," 698; Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 216-217

“everyone” in the ship numbered 276 persons (ἡμεθα δὲ αἱ πᾶσαι ψυχὰι ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ διακόσμαι ἑβδομήκοντα ἕξ, v. 37). This reference to the exact number of “souls” evokes earlier scenes in Acts where Luke recounts the number of “souls” who were converted (Acts 2:41; cf. 4:4).<sup>31</sup>

The meal-scene is also striking in its portrayal of Paul as an agent of God’s salvation. While Acts 27:33-38 does not portray the Lord’s Supper, interpreters are right to notice its sacramental overtones.<sup>32</sup> In these verses the word “nourishment” (τροφή) is repeated four times and evokes the meal-scenes from Luke’s Gospel. Pervo is correct that the question is not whether Luke depicts Paul and the pagans celebrating a “proper Eucharist aboard the ship” but whether Luke intends to “evoke the sacrament” which he surely does.<sup>33</sup> Paul does exactly what Jesus does in terms of his taking the bread (λαβὼν ἄρτον; cf. Lk. 9:16; 22:19), giving thanks to God (εὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ, cf. Lk. 9:16; 22:17, 19), breaking the bread (κλάσας, cf. Lk. 9:16; 22:19), and eating together (ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν) (cf. Lk. 22:15).<sup>34</sup> Tannehill rightly states the importance of these similarities: “The narrative invites us to picture Paul doing what Jesus did and what the church does: give thanks to God by breaking bread and eating.”<sup>35</sup> But the meal also recalls the depiction of the Jerusalem community which engaged in “breaking the bread” (τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου, 2:42), and when eating “received nourishment (μετελάμβανον

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<sup>31</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 665.

<sup>32</sup> See the classic treatment by Bo Reicke, “Die Mahlzeit mit Paulus auf den Wellen des Mittelmeers Act 27,33-38,” *ThZ* 4 (1948) 401-410; see also Philippe-Henri Menoud, “The Acts of the Apostles and the Eucharist,” in *Jesus Christ and the Faith: A Collection of Studies* (trans. E. M. Paul; PTMS 18; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978) 84-106, esp. 95-97; Barrett, “Paul Shipwrecked,” 59-63; John P. Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts: An Audience-Oriented Approach* (SBLMS 52; Atlanta: SBL, 1999) 293-305.

<sup>33</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 664 n. 207; also Praeder, “Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 699.

<sup>34</sup> Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 244. One should not forget the references within Acts that depict the early Christians’ breaking bread together (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11).

<sup>35</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.335.

τροφῆς) with joy and sincerity of heart” (2:46). Within Acts 27:33-38 Luke uses four variations of the phrase “to receive nourishment” (μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς, 27:33, 34, 36, 38) suggesting he intends Paul’s meal to recall the early church’s foundational act of breaking bread together. As the early church formed an inclusive kinship group through sharing meals, so Paul and the prisoners are bound together as a community through sharing food in remembrance of Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

In sum, the similarity to these sacramental meal-scenes in Luke’s Gospel, the reference to salvation in verse 34, the portrayal of Paul as a prophet and agent of God’s salvation, and the positive effect which the meal has on the passengers suggests that Paul’s meal with these Gentiles should be seen as a literary symbolization of Gentile salvation and inclusion within God’s people. Paul allows the Gentiles to taste God’s salvation through their Eucharistic-like meal, and thereby Luke symbolically portrays these Gentiles as being included within the people of God.<sup>37</sup> Philippe-Henri Menoud rightly states: “In short, the apostle makes his companions on the ship partakers in a prefiguration of the eucharist, in order to prepare them for the faith which is destined to be theirs.”<sup>38</sup> The similarity to the Malta episode is significant in that the Lukan grammar for salvation is abundantly *present*, but the direct description of conversions, baptism, and christological proclamation is notably *absent*.

Before Luke concludes his narrative with Paul’s final encounter with the Roman Jews and before he lands Paul on Malta, he gives his readers a few final reminders. First,

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<sup>36</sup> Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts*, 294-296; Reta Halteman Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 240. Menoud [“The Acts of the Apostles and the Eucharist,” 96] states: “But by the words he pronounced and by his actions, he created between the passengers and himself a bond which, to all appearances, intentionally recalls the Christian communion....”

<sup>37</sup> Also, see Praeder, “Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 697.

<sup>38</sup> Menoud, “The Acts of the Apostles and the Eucharist,” 96.

Paul is God's powerful prophet who embodies and continues the ministry of Jesus. Second, Paul is sent to the Gentiles as God's agent who mediates divine salvation. Luke's presentation of Gentile salvation is symbolically portrayed through the storm-scene. There is no preaching and no making of converts, but Luke's repetition of the shipmates' salvation as well as the necessity that "all" must be saved suggests that the reader should interpret this scene as a metaphorical depiction of Gentile salvation. In commenting upon the meal which Paul shares with the Gentiles, Menoud suggested that Luke intended to evoke "a symbolic prediction of the success which the mission of evangelism will have in the West."<sup>39</sup> And there is good reason to agree that the narrative leads one's expectations to hopeful encounters between Paul and the Gentiles. My analysis of the Sea-Voyage has, however, produced a significant question: why has Luke included an abundance of Lukan grammar for the salvation of the Gentiles but withheld direct narration of conversions or christological proclamation? Why, in other words, is Gentile salvation depicted in a symbolic manner instead of directly?

## II. The Questions Raised by the Episode at Malta

There are five primary questions raised by the Malta episode which center upon the following features: the literary structure of the episode, the "barbarians," the acclamation that Paul is a god, the absence of direct christological proclamation but presence of healings, and the motif of hospitality to strangers.

### A. The Literary Structure of the Malta Episode

Perhaps the least interesting and most obvious, but nevertheless crucial, observation to make is that the Malta episode comprises ten verses clearly demarcated by

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<sup>39</sup> Menoud, "The Acts of the Apostles and the Eucharist," 96.

Luke. The passage begins with Acts 28:1 when the crew wrecks on “the island called Malta” (Μελίτη ἡ νῆσος καλεῖται, v. 1b) and a new scene begins in 28:11 when the crew, after a three-month stay on Malta, departs from the island in an Alexandrian ship (Μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς μῆνας ἀνήχθημεν, v. 11a). The section of Acts 28:11-16 is a narrative chain-link which connects the end of the sea-voyage with the final scene in Rome.<sup>40</sup> There is, then, good reason to examine Acts 28:1-10 as a distinct episode. I emphasize this relatively obvious point, because many interpreters make a break between 28:1-6 and 28:7-10 and interpret them in relative isolation from one another, a practice that often leads to an excessive foregrounding of the viper-incident and a marginalization of the hospitality relations in vv. 7-10.<sup>41</sup> Throughout, however, the setting remains the “island” (vv. 1, 7, and 9), Paul is the primary character whose deeds mimic the powerful and prophetic ministry of Jesus, Paul neither preaches nor makes converts, and hospitality is emphasized. These internal connections demand that vv. 1-6 and vv. 7-10 be treated as parts of one single “episode.”<sup>42</sup>

The episode comprises three basic scenes: a) Paul (and the crew) receives an extraordinarily hospitable reception by the barbarians (vv. 1-2); b) the barbarians think Paul is a god due to his immunity from the viper (vv. 3-6); and c) Paul and the islanders engage in hospitality relations as Paul heals their sick and the islanders give honors to Paul and share their possessions with him (vv. 7-10). Further support for interpreting these three scenes together is found in the literary alteration between the first person

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<sup>40</sup> So Jacques Dupont, “La conclusion des Actes et son rapport à l’ensemble de l’ouvrage de Luc,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: traditions, rédaction, théologie* (ed. J. Kremer; BETL 48 ; Leuven : Leuven University Press, 1978) 359-404.

<sup>41</sup> The most recent example is Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*.

<sup>42</sup> The section of Acts 28:11-16 is a travelogue which forms the epilogue to the entire section of 27:1 – 28:16. See Susan Marie Praeder, “Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 685-689.

plural and third person narration of the events.<sup>43</sup> Vv. 1-2 are narrated according to the first personal plural: “we recognized (ἐπέγνωμεν) that the island was called Malta” (v. 1); “the barbarians showed no small humanity to us (ἡμῖν)” (v. 2a); “they lit a fire and welcomed all of us (πάντας ἡμᾶς)” (v. 2b). As Luke moves to the description of Paul and the snake, however, the first person plural disappears and events are described from a third person view: “when the barbarians saw (εἶδον) the beast hanging from his hand (ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ), they said to one another.... (πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔλεγον)” (v. 4). But when Luke returns to verses 7-10 the first person plural reappears: Publius “received us (ἀναδεξάμενος ἡμᾶς) and showed us hospitality for three days” (v. 7); and “they honored us (ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς) with many honors” (v. 10). The alternation between first person (vv. 1-2 and 7-10) and third person (vv. 3-6) narrative description supports the proposition that Acts 28:1-10 should be treated together as one episode.<sup>44</sup>

To say, however, that these verses should be read together does not by itself reveal any obvious unifying element which could lend coherence to the passage. What common thread, then, if there is one, binds these three scenes together into a single episode? Does Luke have a coherent literary strategy or purpose for narrating all of the seemingly diverse and bizarre details of the Malta episode? Are the three scenes related to each other in any meaningful way?

## B. The Barbarians

Many interpreters do not comment upon Luke’s characterization of the islanders as βάρβαροι despite the fact that Luke’s only use of the term is found twice in the Malta

<sup>43</sup> Only a few interpreters note that vv. 3-6 are interpreted from the perspective of the Maltese: Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:340-41; Praeder, “Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 702.

<sup>44</sup> So also, Praeder, “Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 701-704; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 459-465; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.340-343.

episode (28:2, 4).<sup>45</sup> Pervo notes that the barbarians “spring onto the scene without development,” leaving the reader perplexed and intrigued as to why Luke should characterize them as such.<sup>46</sup> Luke typically employs the term τὰ ἔθνη for non-Jews (e.g., Lk. 2:32; 24:27; Acts 10:45; 11:1, 18; 13:46-48), so the term “barbarians” in the Malta episode is odd.

Cadbury observes that βάρβαρος is “the exact term by which the ancient Greeks distinguished all people outside their own circle.”<sup>47</sup> The word reveals Luke’s Hellenistic outlook, given that it was employed by Greeks to describe the babbling “bar-bar” noises made by non-Greek speakers (Herodotus, *Histories* 2.57; Ovid, *Tristia* 5.10.37).<sup>48</sup> In 1 Cor. 14:11, Paul uses it to describe linguistic unintelligibility: if he does not understand the speech of the fellow-worshipper, then “I will be a barbarian to the one speaking and the one speaking will be a barbarian to me” (ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος).<sup>49</sup> Given that βάρβαρος is used by Greeks to distinguish themselves from non-Greeks, the word is not honorific.<sup>50</sup> Paul claims that he is obligated to “both Hellenes and barbarians, both the wise and to the foolish” (Ἑλλησίν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις, Rom. 1:14) with the second pairing attaching

<sup>45</sup> But see, however, Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*, 403-406.

<sup>46</sup> Richard I. Pervo, *Acts* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 673.

<sup>47</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955) 32.

<sup>48</sup> See Hans Windisch, “βάρβαρος,” *TWNT* (1933) 544-551. Luke Timothy Johnson [*The Acts of the Apostles* (SPS 5; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 461] says that the term “marks the distinctively Hellenistic outlook” of Luke. On the onomatopoeic background to the word, see Strabo, *Geography*, 14.2.28.

<sup>49</sup> That the term describes one who cannot speak Greek is noted by Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History*, 25; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998) 782-783; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 461; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Acts* (ANTC; Abingdon, Nashville, 2003) 357; Guy G. Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy: The Religious Revolution of Early Christianity* (WUNT 112; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999) 57-84. See such texts as Herodotus, *Histories* 2:57; Chariton, *Chareas and Callirhoe* 6, 3, 7; and 1 Cor 14:11.

<sup>50</sup> Some commentators argue that the term is not intrinsically pejorative based on the fact that there are numerous examples of “noble barbarians.” See below.

“foolish” to non-Greeks. Paul’s only other usage of “barbarian” occurs in Colossians 3:11 where it is followed by “Scythian”, a people stereotyped as crude and uncivilized (e.g., Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.269; 2 Macc. 4:47; 3 Macc. 7:5).<sup>51</sup> Usage of the term almost always indicated an inability to speak Greek, a lack of knowledge of Greek customs, and uncivilized and uncultured manners of behavior.<sup>52</sup>

After the Persian invasion in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. numerous Greek texts began to portray the barbarian stereotypically as the opposite of the ideal Greek, in respect to language, religion, intellect, and cultural customs. This “other-ing” of the barbarian was the result of a heightened collective consciousness of the Greeks after the Persian invasion.<sup>53</sup> Thucydides suggests that the word “barbarian” is absent from the Homeric epics since at that time there was no concept of “the Hellene” (*Histories* 1.3.3). Edith Hall has demonstrated that after the Persian War the Greek Tragedians cemented the connection between “Persian” and “barbarian.”<sup>54</sup> The inability of the barbarian to speak Greek is emphasized as the Tragedians pepper the Persians’ speeches with cacophony, foreign words, repetitive noises, and excessive cries and moans (e.g., Aeschylus, *The Suppliants* 825, 858-64, 890-02, 900-02).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 225-226. On the “Scythians” in Herodotus’ *Histories*, see F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* (trans. J. Lloyd; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). On “Scythian savagery,” see Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 709-14; Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 702-03.

<sup>52</sup> G. W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 30, states it well: “The παιδεία of the Greeks distinguished them from everyone else, and everyone else was called a barbarian.” Also, Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*, 404.

<sup>53</sup> For example, see Paul A. Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 13, 38-39.

<sup>54</sup> Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); see also Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002) 172-189.

<sup>55</sup> Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 113-121.

The barbarian is identified with that which the Greeks viewed as opposite of, or contrary to, their perception of Greek virtue. The Greeks are truthful and keep their promises, whereas the “barbarized” Trojan Paris violates Zeus’ guest-friendship laws and abducts Helen (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 399-402, 699-708; Euripides, *Trojan Women* 865-66; Herodotus, *Histories* 2.115).<sup>56</sup> Medea demonstrates the opposite of self-control as her enslavement to uncontrolled passions results in murder – something which, Jason says, “no Greek woman” would ever do (Euripides, *Medea* 103-104, 1339-40). The Greek leader Pausanius refuses to impale the murderer of his uncle, for this act “is more fitting for barbarians than Greeks, and we blame them for it” (Herodotus, *Histories* 9.79). Barbarians are simply impervious to common Greek laws regarding such basic matters as marriage to one wife and the prohibition of murder (Euripides, *Andromache* 168-78).

A familiar topos is that of the uncivilized and inhospitable barbarian. Whether it be the Cyclopes from Homer’s *Odyssey* who eats guests (9.105-564), the Persian King Xerxes’ command to his troops to lie in wait to kill shipwrecked Greeks (Aeschylus, *Persians* 447-450), or the Tauric barbarians who make human sacrifices out of the shipwrecked (Herodotus, *Histories* 4.103), the Greeks often criticized barbarians as lacking the “Greek” value of hospitality. In rebuke to the Thracian Polymestor, Agamemnon declares that to kill a guest-friend “is something we Greeks consider disgraceful” (Euripides, *Hecuba* 1247-48). And Xenophon of Ephesus presents Phoenicia as a “barbarian land” which contains “lustful pirates” (*An Ephesian Tale* 2.1).

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<sup>56</sup> After the Persian war the Greek Tragedians “barbarized” many mythical heroes – the most notable examples being the Trojans. See Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 56-159; F. Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece* (trans. Janet Lloyd; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001) 81-82.

With respect to rule, the Persian leader is despotic, tyrannical, and hubristic, whereas the Greek *polis* presents a public space for the political deliberation of the people (Aeschylus, *Persians* 226-46; Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 4.150-51).<sup>57</sup> Nothing demonstrates the barbarian ruler's famous hubris and lack of self-control as well as Xerxes' foolish attempt to control the Hellespont (Aeschylus, *Persians* 745-748). The barbarian is given to luxury and effeminacy instead of manliness and moderation (Aeschylus, *Persians* 134-137, 537-45). The Persian ruler is a slave of pleasure and excess and cannot find the will to obey the law (Aeschylus, *Persians*; Herodotus, *Histories* 9.1-8-13).<sup>58</sup>

These negative stereotypes of "barbarians" did not come to an end with the Greek Tragedians.<sup>59</sup> Aristotle, for example, perpetuated the negative stereotype of non-Greeks as "deficient in intelligence and craft knowledge" and others as "endowed with intelligence and craft knowledge but lacking in spirit" (*Politics* 1327b; also Plato, *Laws* 6.394c-696a).<sup>60</sup> Given that Rome accepted virtually all of the standards of Hellenistic culture, the same attitude towards barbarians is found in authors writing under Roman rule. Plutarch reports that Aristotle once advised his pupil Alexander the Great to be a leader of the Greeks but a master of the barbarians, and to govern the latter as one would treat animals and plants (*On the Fortune of Alexander* 329b).<sup>61</sup> And Diogenes Laertius remarks that Thales once gave thanksgiving to the gods for the fact that he "was born

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<sup>57</sup> Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus*, 85-86.

<sup>58</sup> Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus*, 86-87.

<sup>59</sup> That the stereotype continued well into Roman rule is demonstrated by Martin Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians: Aspects of the Hellenization of Judaism in the pre-Christian Period* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 55-66. Also see Katell Berthelot, "Greek and Roman Stereotypes of the Egyptians by Hellenistic Jewish Apologists, with special reference to Josephus' *Against Apion*," in *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Aarhus 1999* (ed. Jürgen U. Kalms; Münsteraner Judaistische Studien; Münster: Verlag, 2000) 185-221.

<sup>60</sup> It was this type of ethnic construction that allowed Aristotle to justify slavery of non-Greeks given that they were "naturally servile." See Cartledge, *The Greeks*, 40-42, 118-151.

<sup>61</sup> See Erich S. Gruen, "Greeks and Non-Greeks," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World* (ed. Glenn R. Bugh; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 295-313, here 296.

human and not an animal, a man not a woman, and a Greek not a barbarian” (*Lives of the Philosophers* I.3).<sup>62</sup> According to the Roman historian Livy, Philip of Macedon claimed: “There is, and always will be, eternal war between the barbarians and all the Greeks. They are enemies because of their unchanging nature” (*Roman History* 31.29.15). Dionysius of Halicarnassus appears to think a barbarian can inherit Greek-ness based on their character rather than ethnicity:

I would distinguish Greeks from barbarians...by their intelligence and their predilection for decent behavior, and particularly by their indulging in no inhuman treatment of one another. All in whose nature these qualities predominated I believe ought to be called Greeks, but those of whom the opposite was true, barbarians” (*Roman Antiquities Excerpts* 14.6.5).<sup>63</sup>

The cultural and ethnic privileging of Greeks over non-Greeks is evident.<sup>64</sup> Cicero refers to Jews and Syrians as races born for slavery (*De Provinciis Consularibus* 5.10; also Livy, *Roman History*, 30.39.8). Tacitus’ description of the Germanic barbarians is based on the logic that they are the opposite of Romans. Therefore, the German barbarians are lazy and spend too much time eating, drinking, and sleeping (Tacitus, *Germanicus* 15.1). Their economy is thereby underdeveloped (*Germanicus*, 5-6). Political order is absent, and abundance of private violence is present (*Germanicus* 13.1 and 14).

One should be wary, however, of overemphasizing a consistently negative cultural stereotype of “the barbarians,” for there are more than a few examples of Greeks

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<sup>62</sup> Text and translations are from *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (LCL; vol.1; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

<sup>63</sup> Dionysius’ defining of Greek ethnicity as an “intelligence” and “behavior” takes its cue from Isocrates’ famous claim: “...the name ‘Hellenes’ suggests no longer a race but an intelligence and that the title ‘Hellenes’ is applied rather to those who share our culture (τοὺς τῆς παιδείσεως...μετέχοντας) than to those who share a common blood” (Isocrates, *Paneg.* 50).

<sup>64</sup> It is not the case, then, as Rick Strelan [*Strange Acts: Studies in the Cultural World of the Acts of the Apostles* (BZNW 126; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 287] claims that the term barbarian “is not a derogatory or insulting term.” Martin Hengel [*Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, 55] is closer to the truth when he writes: “They [i.e. the barbarians] were regarded as uneducated and even bestial, hostile to strangers, despotic or enslaved, superstitious, cruel, cowardly and faithless.”

praising aspects of “barbarian” culture, wisdom, and virtues.<sup>65</sup> For example, Erich Gruen, while recognizing the Greek negative stereotypes of “barbarian” cultures, has noted numerous instances wherein Greeks produced elaborate mythological genealogies which attempted to establish connections between Greek culture and history to noble barbarian cultures.<sup>66</sup> One need only think of the multiple stories which Greek authors produced in order to set the success of Rome within a Greek or Hellenistic context.<sup>67</sup> In the *Education of Cyrus*, Xenophon presents the Persian King Cyrus as an ideal ruler and one worthy of imitation.<sup>68</sup> And it is not difficult to find depictions of friendly barbarians who counter the topos of the inhospitable, uncivilized, barbaric Cyclopes (e.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Oration 7.5*; Petronius, *Satyricon* 114). Even in the Greek Tragedians there are examples of noble barbarians who outperform or “out-Greek” the Greek characters. One need only compare the barbarian Trojan Cassandra with the vile Clytemnestra – murderer of her own husband Agamemnon.<sup>69</sup> Thus, while the term “barbarian” is *most frequently* used to characterize the “other”, the non-Greek, in stereotypically negative terms, on occasion one finds an appreciation and admiration for certain aspects of non-Greek “barbarian” culture. It is, then, not yet entirely clear what specific resonances Luke intends to communicate through his description of the Maltese as barbarians. Does Luke intend for his reader to understand that they could not speak Greek? Is the simple

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<sup>65</sup> On this, see, Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy*; see also, Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 48-53;

<sup>66</sup> Erich S. Gruen, “Greeks and Non-Greeks,” 295-313. See also, Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Martin Classical Lectures; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) 223-252. This strategy was particularly popular during the Second Sophistic. On which, see Laura S. Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Second Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 21-50.

<sup>67</sup> See Gruen, “Greeks and Non-Greeks,” 300-302.

<sup>68</sup> Cartledge, *The Greeks*, 49-50.

<sup>69</sup> Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 211-223; Hall, *Hellenicity*, 180; Strelan [*Strange Acts*, 287] points to Dromichaetes who Plutarch calls “a barbarous Thracian” who gave his captive “a treatment so humane and royal” (Plutarch, *Demetrius* 52.6.3).

explanation for why Paul does not preach that he does not know their language?<sup>70</sup> Does Luke ethnically profile them as “barbarian” so the reader will know that their evaluation of Paul is incorrect? Or, are they an example of noble barbarians, those non-Greeks who overturn the stereotype of villainous inhospitable barbarians?

As we have seen in chapter 1, to the extent that interpreters comment upon the “barbarians” in the Malta episode, it is typically to criticize their superstition, fickleness, and bad theology – criticism that extends beyond what the text itself warrants.<sup>71</sup> But rarely do interpreters ask why Luke refers to the Maltese as barbarians, nor is there much sustained investigation of what the term evokes for ancient Mediterranean readers. Is Luke tapping into a cultural script of uneducated and superstitious barbarians? Or, conversely, is he drawing upon a cultural script of friendly, hospitable barbarians?

### C. The Barbarians think Paul is a God

A third element of the Malta episode which demands investigation is the barbarians’ acclamation of Paul as a god and Luke’s decision to leave their remark uncorrected. The barbarians, to be sure, are quick to see the divine world as intersecting with their own, for in observing Paul’s immunity to the snakebite they quickly change their mind about Paul’s identity.<sup>72</sup> No longer do they suppose him to be a murderer, but rather Luke tells us that “they changed their mind and declared him to be a god” (μεταβαλλόμενοι ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν, 28:6b). But neither Paul the character, nor Luke the narrator, do anything to correct the remark. In fact, Luke’s decision to proceed

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<sup>70</sup> Archaeological evidence suggests that they spoke Punic. See Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1989) 152-153; Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*, 404-405.

<sup>71</sup> See, in particular, Christoph W. Stenschke, *Luke’s Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT 2.108; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999) 236-37.

<sup>72</sup> The quickness with which interpreters construe this as “superstitious” may reflect more on their own socio-historical location than it does the actual text of Acts.

immediately to portray Paul healing Publius' father-in-law (28:7), as well as the rest of the sick and diseased islanders, does little to help disprove the islanders' assumption! The account stands in tension with the Lystran episode where, after Paul and Barnabas perform a miracle, the crowd declares that "the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men" (οἱ θεοὶ ὁμοιωθέντες ἀνθρώποις κατέβησαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, 14:11b) and then attempts to make sacrifices to them (14:13b). In response, Paul and Barnabas run into the midst of the crowd, tear their garments, and attempt to persuade the Lystrans of the futility of their polytheistic impulses (14:14-18).<sup>73</sup> Paul's indignation toward the religious response of the Lystrans, and his rejection of it, stands in contrast to the uncorrected claim of the Maltese barbarians. What accounts for this difference?

Some scholars have suggested that by now the reader so clearly knows that the barbarians' acclamation is false, that the narrator has no need to waste time by correcting them.<sup>74</sup> Others, assuming an equation between "barbarian" and "superstitious," stress the inferior intellectual faculties of the barbarians.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps Luke intends a bit of humor at the barbarians' expense.<sup>76</sup> Some scholars emphasize that 28:3-6 is told from the perspective of the Maltese and that Paul may not have even known of their acclamation.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> For an analysis and situation of the scene within its Greco-Roman religious context, see C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 18-24; also see Cilliers Breytenbach, "Zeus und der lebendige Gott: Anmerkungen zu Apostelgeschichte 14.11-17," *NTS* 39 (1993) 396-413.

<sup>74</sup> Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KKNT 17; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 616.

<sup>75</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles* (ICC 49; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 2.1224.

<sup>76</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992) 417.

<sup>77</sup> Dean Philip Bechard [*Paul Outside the Walls: A Study of Luke's Socio-Geographical Universalism in Acts 14:8-20* (AB 143; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2000) 147-48] suggests that verbal communication was impossible since the barbarians spoke Punic and not Greek. Ben Witherington III [*The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 778-79] suggests that there is no correction here because, unlike the crowd in Lystra, there is no attempt to worship or make sacrifices to Paul.

Here is a case where pressing too quickly to a solution is a mistake. It is absolutely correct that the barbarians' understanding of Paul's identity is not entirely theologically accurate. This is not in doubt. Nevertheless, as we have seen, in chapter 27 Paul has just been characterized as God's prophet, the agent of God's visitation. Paul is a mediating agent of God's salvation to the Gentiles (27:10-12, 21-26, 31). He mediates salvation as well as the divine power (27:33-38), and this characterization of Paul as prophetic carrier of God's power continues in 28:1-10.<sup>78</sup>

While many interpreters see Paul's immunity to the snake-bite as a demonstration of his innocence, it is more likely that Luke intends his readers to view this scene as a symbolic depiction of Paul – as God's emissary – conquering the forces of evil. The deadly “viper” (ἔχιδνα, v. 3) or the “beast” (τὸ θηρίον, vv. 4 and 5) which fastens upon Paul's hand conjures up symbolic associations of evil forces and the demonic. While interpreters have been quick to find obscure texts which depict snakes as dispensers of justice,<sup>79</sup> in Jewish literature and the NT they are more frequently associated with images of evil and the demonic (cf. Lk. 3:7).<sup>80</sup> One need only think of LXX Ps. 90:13, a text with which Luke was certainly aware (cf. Lk. 4:9-11) and which may have formed the background to Lk. 10:19: “You shall tread upon the lion and the serpent. The young lion

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<sup>78</sup> Witherington [*The Acts of the Apostles*, 778] rightly states that Paul is “portrayed as one through whom God works and speaks, doing miracles and offering prophecies.” His conversion takes the form of a prophetic call (Acts 9:15-16; 26:17-18), he performs miracles (14:8-9), gives powerful speeches (13:13-41), and is rejected by his people.

<sup>79</sup> For example, Rick Strelan [*Strange Acts*, 289-290] thinks that the Maltese thought that the viper was the embodiment of Echidne – the autochthonous goddess, half-nymph and half snake, who eats flesh and does not die or grow old. Also, see Lynn Allan Kauppi, *Foreign but Familiar Gods: Greco-Romans Read Religion in Acts* (LNTS 277; New York/London, 2006) 107-117. Praeder [“Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 704] comments sagely: “Neither their interpretation [i.e., the Maltese belief that Justice is exacting retribution against Paul] nor anything in 27:9 – 28:10, however, offers unambiguous evidence of Paul's innocence. Divine favor is demonstrated by calm seas, not by a storm and shipwreck.”

<sup>80</sup> E.g., Rev. 9:3, 10; 12:7-12; 20:2; *Testament of Job* 43:8; *Testament of Simeon* 6:6; *Testament of Levi* 18:12; *Testament of Zebulon* 9:8.

and the viper you shall trample underfoot” (ἐπ’ ἀσπίδα καὶ βασιλίσκον ἐπιβήσῃ καὶ καταπατήσεις λέοντα καὶ δράκοντα).

And in fact, staying within Luke’s narrative, Paul’s immunity to the deadly viper almost certainly recalls Luke 10:17-20, particularly Jesus’ promise to his 72 disciples in verse 19: “Behold I have given to you the authority to trample over snakes and scorpions and over every power of the enemy, and he shall not be able to take vengeance upon you” (οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ).<sup>81</sup> Thus, within Luke’s narrative snakes are explicitly symbolic of “the power of the enemy” (cf. Mk. 16:18; Lk. 11:11-12).<sup>82</sup> The context for this promised immunity to the evil one is that after their ministry of healing, preaching, and exorcising demons, the emissaries of Jesus return and proclaim to him that “even the demons are subject to us in your name” (Lk. 10:17b).

Jesus responds with the cryptic saying: “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning” (ἑθεώρουν τὸν σατανᾶν ὡς ἀστραπήν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεσόντα, 10:18).<sup>83</sup> While the debate on Lk. 10:18 is too unwieldy to detail here, it appears that

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<sup>81</sup> Those who see a connection between Acts 28:3-6 and Luke 10:19 include, Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 466; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. Brian McNeil; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 114; Gaventa, *Acts*, 358; Pervo, *Acts*, 672; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 779.

<sup>82</sup> While it is true that many Greek and Roman texts depict serpents positively, within Luke’s literary context serpents consistently convey negative and demonic valences. For a detailed treatment which emphasizes their positive connotations, see James H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized* (AYBRL; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2010) 125-187. Also, see Annette Weissenrieder [“‘He is a God!’ Acts 28:1-9 in the Light of Iconographical and Textual Sources Related to Medicine,” in *Picturing the New Testament: Studies in Ancient Visual Images* (eds. idem, Friederike Wendt, and Petra von Gemünden; WUNT 2.193; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005) 127-156] who suggests that Luke is portraying Paul as a doctor like Asclepius. There are numerous reasons, however, for interpreting the viper in Acts 28:1-6 as a negative symbol of the demonic: the fact that Luke has already associated “snakes and scorpions” with the “power of the enemy” (Lk. 10:19), the OT background, particularly Ps. 90:13 (LXX), to Lk. 10:19, and the likelihood that Acts 28:1-10 depicts both healings and victory over the demonic as signs of the kingdom of God.

<sup>83</sup> Jesus’ “I was watching” (ἑθεώρουν) may indicate that the fall of Satan was occurring simultaneously with the ministry of the 72. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (AB 28A; Garden City, NY: 1985) 2:860; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 428-429. The verb may also be used, however, to refer to a prophetic vision of events still to come. Susan

Jesus' response indicates that the defeat of the evil one is being embodied *proleptically* in the healing of the sick, the exorcising of the demonic, and the proclamation of the kingdom of God.<sup>84</sup> Given that most scholars see the ministry of the 72 in Luke 10:1-16 as prefiguring the post-resurrection ministry of Jesus' followers in Acts, there is good reason to regard Jesus' vision of the fall of Satan as a proleptic pointer towards the defeat of Satan and the demonic in Acts.<sup>85</sup> And there are further indications that Jesus' words in Luke 10:17-20 are not to be understood as only retrospective but pertain to the future ministry of his emissaries.<sup>86</sup> The demons are *now presently* submissive (ὑποτάσσεται) to the disciples (10:17 and 20). Jesus promises that the Enemy *will not be able* to harm them (οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ, 10:19). It makes sense, then, to read Acts expecting to find Jesus' emissaries having victorious engagements with the demonic world. And the battle between the apostles and the forces of the Enemy are found throughout Acts, often where the gospel is breaking into new territory: one need only think of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11), Simon Magus (8:14-25), Simon Bar-Jesus (13:4-13), the Philippian mantic slave-girl (16:16-18), and the encounters in Ephesus (19:11-20).<sup>87</sup>

In the Malta episode, the reader knows that Paul cannot be harmed by the power of Satan, symbolized through snakes and scorpions, precisely because he is guarded by

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R. Garrett [*The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989)] writes: "...it may be that Luke has Jesus mention Satan's fall here, not because it was simultaneous with the missionaries' casting out of demons, but because the *envisioned* fall will be related in some other way to the missionaries' exorcisms." For a good introduction to the history of the interpretation of this verse, see Simon Gathercole, "Jesus' Eschatological Vision of the Fall of Satan: Luke 10,18 Reconsidered," *ZNW* 94 (2003) 143-163.

<sup>84</sup> Joel B. Green [*The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 419] states this nicely: "The decisive fall of Satan is anticipated in the future, but it is already becoming manifest through the mission of Jesus and, by extension, through the ministry of his envoys."

<sup>85</sup> Also, see Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil*, 46-57.

<sup>86</sup> Again, see Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil*, 49-50.

<sup>87</sup> On these texts, see Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil*; also see, Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 245-246; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 466.

this promise of Jesus. The barbarians' reference to the goddess "Justice" (ἡ δίκη) who will "not allow Paul to live" (ζῆν οὐκ εἴασεν) recalls Jesus' promise that no one will be able to take vengeance (οὐδὲν ὑμῶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ, Lk. 10:19) on Jesus' emissaries. Further, given the symbolically demonic import of the viper, the fact that Paul "suffers nothing evil" (ἔπαθεν οὐδὲν κακόν, 28:5) from the viper, and that he immediately proceeds to heal all the sick suggests that this scene may be understood as demonstrating the gospel's victory over the forces of the demonic in a new territory.

That Paul *is* an emissary of Jesus, and further evidence that Luke has characterized Paul as a prophet and Jesus-like figure, is clear from the fact that Paul's actions recall those of Jesus from Luke's Gospel. Immediately after the viper-incident, Paul heals the father-in-law of Publius "who was oppressed with fever and dysentery" (πυρετοῖς καὶ δυσεντερίῳ συνεχόμενον κατακεῖσθαι, 28:8a). As most interpreters note, the situation recalls the healing of Peter's mother-in-law from a fever in Luke's Gospel (πενθερὰ δὲ τοῦ Σίμωνος ἦν συνεχομένη πυρετῷ μεγάλῳ, Lk. 4:38).<sup>88</sup> As Jesus proceeds to heal a multitude of sick and perform exorcisms (Lk. 4:40-41), so does Paul heal a multitude of the islanders (Acts 28:9). Given that Luke tells us that Jesus "laid his hands upon" all those who were sick (τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιτιθείς, Lk. 4:40), and that the Malta episode is the only occurrence in Acts where a miracle occurs in tandem with prayer *and* the laying on of hands (προσευξάμενος ἐπιθείς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ, Acts 28:9), Luke's intention to characterize Paul with echoes of Jesus cannot be doubted.

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<sup>88</sup> W. Kirchschräger, "Fieberheilung in Apg 28 und Lk 4," In *Les Actes des Apôtres: traditions, rédaction, théologie* (ed. Jacob Kremer; BETL 48; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979) 509-521; Susan Marie Praeder, "Miracle Worker and Missionary: Paul in the Acts of the Apostles," in *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers* (ed. Eugene Lovering; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983) 107-129; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2341-342; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 245-246; Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 741; Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 366; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 780.

So we have seen that while the barbarians' claim that Paul is a god is incorrect, Luke may have construed the scene in such a way that their insight has some genuine theological legitimacy.<sup>89</sup> Paul's immunity to the snake *does* demonstrate that he is protected by God. The literary connections to Lk. 10:17-20 suggest that the Malta episode is one more demonstration of God's victory over the Enemy. Paul's healings indicate that he embodies God's power in a manner like Jesus. And so the barbarians may not be as entirely foolish as some interpreters have supposed. They rightly see that the power of God is at work in Paul! But Paul is not a god, and so we are still left with the questions: Why did Luke leave this remark uncorrected? Is the reader intended to reject it or maintain a more complicated stance toward their claim? And what is the purpose behind Luke's unrelenting characterization of Paul as the carrier of God's power, both here in the Malta episode (28:1-10) and in the Sea Voyage narrative (ch. 27)?

#### D. The Absence of Christological Proclamation//The Presence of Healing

The Malta episode is striking for its absence of christological proclamation, calls for faith or repentance, salvation language, baptism, or attempts to make converts. Given Luke's literary artistry and that this is the penultimate scene of his two-volume work, it strains credulity to suppose that Luke was unintentional in its construction. But an obvious explanation for why Paul does not proclaim is not immediately forthcoming. Further, while christological proclamation and conversions are conspicuously absent, Lukan grammar for salvation and the kingdom of God is directly present in the narration of Paul's healings (28:7-9) and his victorious encounter over the viper (28:3-6).

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<sup>89</sup> So Johnson [*The Acts of the Apostles*, 462] who states: "Once more the logic is sound enough once the premise is granted: if someone can withstand deadly serpents, then some divine *dynamis* must be at work in him (compare Mark 16:18)." Also, Pervo, *Acts*, 674. Interpreters who deride the barbarians' "fickleness" often fail to keep in mind that in Luke-Acts there is a positive relationship between the mighty works of Jesus and his followers, whether healings or exorcisms, and the production of faith in individuals.

It is rarely asked in the scholarly literature whether Luke had a purpose for constructing the scene without reference to preaching or conversions. And those who do ask the question give less than fully satisfying answers. For example, both Tannehill and Witherington rightly notice the oddity but suggest that the generally positive way Paul is being received by these Gentiles is a signal to Luke's readers that good and cooperative relationships with pagans is possible and even likely.<sup>90</sup> Pervo says that the scene "suggests not only that the Christian movement has something to offer the general culture...but also that these gifts may also be shared with unbelievers....Paul is an agent of *gratia universalis*."<sup>91</sup> Some have followed John Chrysostom's suggestion that their three-month stay with the Maltese presumes that "they also received the word of the preaching; for it is not to be supposed, that during an entire three months they would have had all this kindness shown to them, had these persons not believed strongly, and exhibited the fruits of their conversion" (*Hom. Acts 55*).<sup>92</sup> But the reader needs to take seriously the absence of proclamation and conversion, especially given the extent to which Paul's christological proclamation is foregrounded in the conclusion of Acts (28:23, 30-31). Further, Luke presents Paul and the early Christian movement as disrupting "the general culture" much more frequently than engaging in "cooperative relationships" with unbelievers.<sup>93</sup> But more importantly, Luke's portrait of Paul as a

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<sup>90</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.330-343, esp. 340-341; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 782.

<sup>91</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 676.

<sup>92</sup> *Homilies in the Acts of the Apostles*. Pages 1 – 328 in vol. 11 of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Translated by Henry Browne. Edited by Philip Schaff. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1851.

<sup>93</sup> This is emphasized by Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 17-51; also Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*.

healing prophet like Jesus (along with the barbarians' show of hospitality and sharing possessions) suggests that a richer analysis of the issue is required.

Luke characterizes Paul as God's prophet by lacing Paul's actions with allusions to Jesus' ministry from Luke's Gospel. I have noted that the viper incident alludes to Luke 10:17-20 in order to demonstrate that as Jesus' emissary, Paul is protected by God and conquers the forces of evil wherever he goes. We have seen that Paul's healing of Publius' father-in-law (Acts 28:8) echoes the beginning of Jesus' healing ministry where he heals Peter's mother-in-law (Lk. 4:38). Paul prays and places his hands on the man (Acts 28:8) as Jesus himself places his hands on the sick for healing (Lk. 4:40). In Acts the result is that Paul "healed him" (ἰάσατο αὐτόν, 28:8b), and as with Jesus, a throng of those with sicknesses come to Paul for healing (οἱ λοιποὶ ... ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας προσήρχοντο καὶ ἔθεραπεύοντο, 28:9). Why is Paul portrayed so strongly as a healer-like-Jesus in this penultimate scene of Acts? And what, then, is the overall significance of healings within the Lukan narrative?

In Luke-Acts healings are frequently associated with an encounter, and subsequent defeat of, demonic forces. In Jesus' sermon in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-30) he programmatically declares that an essential component to his ministry is to bring "release to the captives" (ἀίχμαλώτοις ἄφειν, v. 18) and "release to those who are oppressed" (τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει, v. 18).<sup>94</sup> The means for such "release" is typically healings or exorcisms. But who is the oppressor or captive-taker of which Jesus speaks? Luke makes it clear that the release which Jesus brings is liberation from Satan and the realm

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<sup>94</sup> On Luke 4:16-30 as programmatic for the rest of Luke-Acts, see Ulrich Busse, *Das Nazareth-Manifest Jesu: Eine Einführung in das lukanische Jesusbild nach Lk 4,16-30* (Stuttgart Bibelstudien 91; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977); Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS 39; Missoula, MT: 1977) 90-96; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.60-73.

of the demonic.<sup>95</sup> It is telling that Jesus' first action after his sermon is an exorcism of a "man having an unclean demonic spirit" (ἄνθρωπος ἔχων πνεῦμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου, 4:33). In performing the exorcism Jesus "rebukes it" (ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ, 4:35) which is the same language Luke uses to describe Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law where Jesus "rebuked the fever and it left her" (ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πυρετῷ καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν, 4:39). The obvious conclusion, which the rest of the narrative bears out, is that Luke's Jesus views sicknesses and diseases as expressions of the demonic. By placing an exorcism and a healing immediately after Jesus' inaugural sermon, Luke makes it clear that exorcisms and healings are constituents of Jesus' good news of salvation (4:18-19).<sup>96</sup> That the power of Satan is being broken through Jesus' healings is further indicated in the story of the bent woman of whom, after she is healed, Jesus tells the synagogue ruler: "this daughter of Abraham who has been bound by Satan, behold for eighteen years! – was it not necessary to release her from this bond on this Sabbath day? (13:16).<sup>97</sup> That Jesus' healings are directed against the forces of Satan is further indicated in Peter's single sentence summary of Jesus' ministry: "Jesus the Nazarene, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, went about doing good and healing

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<sup>95</sup> Ulrich Busse, *Die Wunder des Propheten Jesus: Die Rezeption, Komposition und Interpretation der Wundertradition im Evangelium des Lukas* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Stuttgart : Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1979) 433.

<sup>96</sup> So Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 95; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.82-86. Paul S. Minear [*To Heal and to Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation According to Luke* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976) 113] puts it this way: "There [Capernaum] the Spirit-propelled good news to the poor took the form of releasing men from demons and from debilitating fevers (4:31-41).

<sup>97</sup> See Joel B. Green, "Jesus and a Daughter of Abraham (Luke 13:10-17): Test Case for a Lucan Perspective on Jesus' Miracles," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 643-654; idem. *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 78. Titles such as "daughter/son of Abraham" occur in Lk. 1:54-55; 3:7-9; 16:22-31; 19:1-10.

all those oppressed by the devil (ἰώμενος πάντας τοὺς καταδυναστευομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου), for God was with him” (Acts 10:38; cf. Acts 2:22).<sup>98</sup>

As Jesus’ healings and exorcisms encroach upon and defeat the authority of the devil, they are seen as manifestations of God’s salvation for humanity and as signs of the inauguration of God’s kingdom.<sup>99</sup> The language of “salvation” is often used in relationship to Jesus’ healings (Lk. 6:9; 8:36, 48, 50; 17:19; 18:42).<sup>100</sup> And when Jesus sends out the 72 he tells them, “Heal the sick there and say to them, ‘the Kingdom of God has come near to you’” (Lk. 10:9; cf. 10:11). Jesus’ healings and exorcisms demonstrate that God’s kingdom has come, that God’s salvation for humanity is present, and that the power of Satan is being defeated.<sup>101</sup>

One of the appropriate human responses to Jesus’ healings and exorcisms is the recognition that Jesus is God’s prophet and agent of his visitation of his people.<sup>102</sup> Most telling in this regard is the crowds’ exclamation after Jesus raises the widow’s dead son: “Fear came upon everyone and they gave glory to God saying, ‘a great prophet has been raised up among us and God has visited (ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεός) his people’ ” (Lk 7:16; cf. 1:68; 19:44). Cleopas declares that Jesus was a “prophet powerful in word and deed before God and the people” (Lk. 24:19). The reader is repeatedly told that the source of Jesus’ healings is God himself (Lk. 5:25-26; 9:43; 13:13; 17:15, 18; 18:43). Jesus as the

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<sup>98</sup> Acts 10:38 summarizes Jesus’ Lukan ministry and refers back to the Nazareth Sermon (Lk. 4:16-30). So Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.140.

<sup>99</sup> A constituent part of this salvation includes social restoration and healing. See Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 96-97; John J. Pilch, “Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts,” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, MA: 1991) 181-209.

<sup>100</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.87.

<sup>101</sup> Numerous passages bear out these points (e.g. Lk. 6:17-20; 7:20-23; 9:1-11).

<sup>102</sup> On which, see Kindalee Pfremer De Long, *Surprised by God: Praise Responses in the Narrative of Luke-Acts* (BZNW 166; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

agent of God's visitation is mighty in word and in his great acts of healing, but he is ultimately rejected by the people (cf. Lk. 4:25-27; 7:16-17; 13:33-34; Acts 3:18-26).<sup>103</sup>

Jesus' healings and exorcisms establish the pattern for the disciples in Acts as the disciples take up Jesus' prophetic mantle and continue to enact God's visitation of his people through healing and exorcisms. That Luke constructs the heroes of Acts – Peter, Stephen, Barnabas, and Paul – according to this prophet-like-Jesus pattern is evident in that they too are strong in word, perform healings, have victorious encounters with the realm of Satan, and suffer rejection (e.g. Acts 3:12-26; 6:8-7:60; 8:4-25; 14:8-20).<sup>104</sup> The healings which these “prophets-like Jesus” perform are done through the power of the exalted Christ (Acts 3:12-16; 8:12) and are conquests over Satan's power (8:7-11, 23; 13:6-11). God is again visiting his people through these Jesus-like apostles.

Returning to the Malta episode, we have seen that in Acts 28:1-10, as in chapter 27, Paul is characterized as the carrier of God's prophetic power. Further, we have seen that the combination of healings (28:8-9) *and* victory over the realm of the demonic (28:3-6) resonates strongly with the rest of Luke-Acts where healings and exorcisms are manifestations of God's salvation, signs of the presence of God's kingdom, and evidence that the realm of Satan is being overwrought.<sup>105</sup> But this makes the absence of Paul's preaching, references to salvation, and any attempt to make converts all the more striking. If such significant Lukan symbols of God's salvation are present within the Malta episode (and we will see others shortly), what accounts for this strange absence? To state

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<sup>103</sup> On this pattern, see Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*; Minear, 102-147; also, Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.96-99.

<sup>104</sup> Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions*, 38-69.

<sup>105</sup> Commenting on Paul's rescue from the sea and immunity to the snake, Praeder [“Acts 27:1 – 28:16,” 702-703] states: “. . .the purpose of the two miracle stories is to show that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles and that the Gentiles of Malta have some potential, however small, for Christian faith and fellowship.”

it differently, why does Luke send mixed signals by including the salvific and kingdom symbols of healing and defeat of the demonic but not include references to proclamation or conversions?

### E. Hospitality to Strangers

The Malta episode is infused with the ancient practice and the specific vocabulary of hospitality to strangers. Since hospitality is a major Lukan concern and the practice runs through both of his volumes we should not be surprised to see the practice reappear here in Acts 28:1-10 (e.g., Lk. 9:51-56; 10:1-16; 10:38-42; 15:1-2; 19:1-10; 24:13-35; Acts 10-11:18; 16:11-15, 24-35).<sup>106</sup> The practice of hospitality to strangers is the process whereby the identity and status of a “stranger”, or any outsider not part of one’s own kinship group or social network, is transformed into that of “guest.”<sup>107</sup> One can hardly overestimate the significance of the custom for ancient Mediterranean civilization. Numerous texts make it clear that the Greeks viewed hospitality as the mark of culture and civilization whereas barbarians feared outsiders, and instead of welcoming strangers treated them savagely (e.g., Homer, *Odyssey* 6.119ff; 9.175ff). That Zeus is frequently referred to as “god of the strangers” (e.g., Homer, *Odyssey* 6.207-08; 14.283-287; 2 Macc. 6:2) demonstrates the significant theological sanction the Greeks had for the religious impulse of hospitality.<sup>108</sup> Thus, when the reader encounters Maltese *barbarians* showing such extravagant hospitality, knowing the significance of the custom in the

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<sup>106</sup> E.g., John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Henry J. Cadbury, “Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts. III, Luke’s Interest in Lodging,” *JBL* 45 (1926) 305-22; Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke’s Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000).

<sup>107</sup> Again, see Bruce J. Malina, “The Received View and What It Cannot Do: III John and Hospitality,” *Semeia* 35 (1986) 171-189, here 181-182.

<sup>108</sup> Gustav Stählin, “ξένος,” *TDNT* V, 1-36, here 17.

ancient Mediterranean as well as in Luke's larger literary project, there is good reason to pause and ask what Luke's purposes may be.

Given, however, the infrequency with which commentators sometimes inquire into the custom of hospitality it is necessary to demonstrate the presence of technical hospitality language utilized by Luke in the Malta episode. While a more detailed examination of the socio-cultural and religious practice is forthcoming, here we pause to note briefly some of the lexical indicators of the practice. At least three compound verbs appear over and over again in NT and early Christian texts describing hospitality, and all three occur in the Malta episode: compounds of λαμβάνω, δέχομαι, and ξένιζω.<sup>109</sup>

Within the NT and early Christian writings hospitality language is used most often with respect to hospitality practiced within the setting of house churches and the sending and receiving of envoys.<sup>110</sup> In 2 John the elder warns the "Elect Lady" (v. 1) of false itinerant teachers, saying that if someone does not hold to the correct teaching "do not receive him into the house" (μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν, v. 10). The one who shows hospitality to these teachers "participates in his evil works" (v. 11). In 3 John the elder commands Gaius to "welcome such persons" (ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους, v. 8) who walk in a manner worthy of God whether they be "brothers or strangers" (τοὺς ἀδελφούς καὶ τοῦτο ξένους, v. 5).<sup>111</sup> And he chastises his opponent Diotrephes because, unlike Gaius, "he does not receive us" (οὐκ ἐπιδέχεται ἡμᾶς, v. 9) and "he

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<sup>109</sup> So Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) 96; Andrew Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (NTM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005) 53-54, 187-188; John Bell Matthews, *Hospitality and the New Testament Church: An Historical and Exegetical Study* (Princeton Theological Seminary, ThD. 1965; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms) 166-174.

<sup>110</sup> See Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 60-112; Donald Wayne Riddle, "Early Christian Hospitality: A Factor in the Gospel Transmission," *JBL* 57 (1938) 141-154.

<sup>111</sup> For more context on the social dynamics in 2 and 3 John, see Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do," 171-189.

does not receive the brothers” (οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐπιδέχεται τοὺς ἀδελφούς, v. 10).<sup>112</sup> In Romans, Paul commends Phoebe, his envoy and letter carrier, to the church in Rome and asks them to “welcome her in the Lord” (αὐτὴν προσδέξησθε ἐν κυρίῳ, Rom. 16:2). Paul makes the same request for a hospitable reception of their own Epaphroditus to the Philippian church (προσδέχεσθε οὖν αὐτὸν ἐν κυρίῳ, Phil. 2:29a). Similarly, the author of the *Didache* tells his readers to welcome the person (δέξασθε αὐτόν, 11:1) coming to them whose teaching is in accordance with truth and to even “welcome him as you would the Lord” (δέξασθε αὐτόν ὡς κύριον, v. 2) if his teaching contributes to knowledge of the Lord (also *Didache* 11:3-6).<sup>113</sup> Ignatius gives thanks to the church in Smyrna because they showed hospitality to his deacons and “received them as deacons of God” (ὑποδεξάμενοι ὡς διακόνους θεοῦ, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 10:1).<sup>114</sup> In Colossians 4:10 Paul commands the Colossians regarding Mark to “welcome him if he comes to you” (ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δέξασθε αὐτόν; cf. Mk. 6:11). Jesus commands the 72 to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom to those who “welcome you” (δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, Lk. 10:8). Jesus commands them to go without the benefit of any possessions precisely because they will be dependent upon hospitality of strangers.

But the clearest and most frequent words indicating hospitality are forms of ξέν-. Words formed with the root ξέν- bear the connotation of “stranger” or “guest” and

<sup>112</sup> On this text, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “‘Diotrephes does not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,” *JBL* 117 (1998) 299-320.

<sup>113</sup> Translations of the *Didache*, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, *1 Clement*, and *Shepherd of Hermas* are my own and are based on *The Apostolic Fathers* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912-1992).

<sup>114</sup> Commenting on the ubiquity of hospitality within early Christian settings, Riddle [“Early Christian Hospitality,” 144] notes that Ignatius’ “story is one long illustration of [hospitality]. In cities where his guard stopped, delegations of Christians of these and nearby cities visited him; that they lightened his journey with more than words of cheer is not to be doubted.”

therefore the verbal form typically indicates hospitality to strangers.<sup>115</sup> One finds the language repeatedly when ancient authors discuss travel and lodging. In 1 Cor. 16:19 Paul passes the greetings of Aquila and Priscilla onto the Corinthians, and he notes that he himself received hospitality from their house church (σὺν τῇ κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ παρ' οἷς καὶ ξένιζομαι).<sup>116</sup> The story of Cornelius and Peter repeatedly uses the verb ξένιζω to describe the hospitality which takes place within each other's homes (Acts 10:6, 18, 23, 32; cf. Acts 21:16).<sup>117</sup>

Numerous early Christian texts exhort its readers to love the stranger and show them hospitality. The author of Hebrews commands his readers: “do not forget to show hospitality (τῆς φιλοξενίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε) to strangers for in so doing some have shown hospitality (ξενίσαντες) to angels unaware” (Heb. 13:2). And in Romans 12:13 Paul commands the Romans to “pursue hospitality” (τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες). Clement of Rome claims that Abraham was given a son “on account of his faith and hospitality” (διὰ πίστιν καὶ φιλοξενίαν, *1 Clement* 10:7), and further blessings accrue to Lot and Rahab for the virtue of φιλοξενία (*1 Clement* 11:1; 12:1, 3; cf. 1:2; *Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 8.10). The host who gives hospitality to his guest is sometimes referred to as a φιλόξενος (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; cf. Rom. 16:23 1 Pet. 4:9). The “guest” or “stranger” is referred to as a ξένος, and Matthew 25:31-46 uses the term to describe Jesus as one who takes on the guise of a stranger (vv. 35, 38, 43, 44; cf. Rom. 16:23).

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<sup>115</sup> Stählin, “ξένος,” 1-3; BDAG, “ξένιζω,” 683-84.

<sup>116</sup> 1 Cor. 16:19 has numerous variant readings. The reading listed above is found in D\*, F, and G among other witnesses.

<sup>117</sup> This text will be examined in more detail in ch. 5. The story of Cornelius and Peter has been treated at length by Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 153-181; also see Walter T. Wilson, “Urban Legends: Acts 10:1-11:18 and the Strategies of Greco-Roman Foundation Narratives,” *JBL* 120 (2001) 77-99, esp. 91-93.

In light of our brief foray into the vocabulary utilized by the NT and early Christian authors we can readily see that hospitality language permeates the Malta episode. The narrator describes the actions of the Maltese by saying “they welcomed all of us” (προσελάβοντο πάντας ἡμᾶς, 28:2) by building a warming fire due to the cold rain. In the third scene the narrator notes that Publius “received us for three days” (ὡς ἀναδεξάμενος ἡμᾶς τρεῖς ἡμέρας, 28:7) and that “he gave exceedingly kind hospitality” (φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισεν, 28:7). Thus, in ten verses we find forms of all three verbs examined above which indicate the presence of the practice of hospitality. Note that in each instance Luke intensifies the quality of the hospitality as he refers to it as “extravagantly kind.” In describing the barbarians’ hospitality, Luke says “they showed to us extraordinary kindness” (παρεῖχον οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῖν, 28:2).<sup>118</sup> And in verse 7 it is noted that Publius’ hospitality is “very kind” (φιλοφρόνως).

I suggest, then, that a coherent interpretation of the Malta episode depends upon the reader understanding the cultural practice of hospitality to strangers – both within Luke-Acts as well as within the broader ancient Mediterranean world. Beyond examining mere vocabulary we need to ask: what are the practical elements involved in showing hospitality to strangers? How does the exchange that takes place between Paul (healings) and the islanders (sharing of possessions) play a role in their hospitality relations? Is Paul’s depiction as a prophet like Jesus who is referred to as a god related to the custom? What is the religious impulse or theological sanction that underwrites the

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<sup>118</sup> Hock [“Why New Testament Scholars Should Read Ancient Novels,” 121-138] demonstrates a remarkable connection between the motif of hospitality and the Greek word φιλανθρωπία. The term has an enormous semantic domain, however. For more, see Walter T. Wilson, “The Constitution of Compassion: Political Reflections on Philo’s *De Humanitate*,” in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay* (eds. Patrick Gray and Gail R. O’Day; NovTSup 129; Brill: Leiden, 2008) 33-46; Celsus Spicq, “La philanthropie hellénistique, vertu divine et royale (à propos de Tit 3:4)” *Studia Theologica* 12 (1958) 169-191.

host's obligation to practice hospitality? And why does his penultimate scene, before his conclusion, highlight hospitality to such a strong extent?

### III. Need for Further Examination

The interpretive key that will unlock the ambiguities and oddities of the Malta episode is found in a reconstruction of the cultural script of hospitality to strangers and an examination of that script as it is followed throughout Luke and Acts. Friendly and hospitable barbarians, the characterization of Paul as God's prophet and the acclamation of him as a god by pagans, Paul's stay in Publius' home, Paul's healings (in reminiscence of Jesus' healings) of the Maltese, and the barbarians' response of sharing their possessions with Paul and giving him honors – all of these seemingly diverse and odd elements making up the Malta episode make sense when understood as aspects of hospitality in the ancient Mediterranean world and in Luke's story.

### Chapter 3: Establishing the Cultural Script of Hospitality to Strangers in the Greco-Roman World

The interpretive key that unlocks the ambiguities of the Malta episode and makes possible a coherent interpretation of all its elements is found in a reconstruction of the ancient practice of hospitality to strangers. The socio-cultural gap between ancient Mediterranean hospitality and contemporary notions of hospitality (where the latter is often seen as little more than the provision of entertainment for insiders) is great.<sup>1</sup> The significance of Luke's description of the barbarians' hospitality, as well as his many other descriptions of the practice throughout his two volumes, depends on the reader knowing something about this central cultural practice. Given that the text of Luke-Acts is deeply embedded within its particular ancient Mediterranean culture, I assume that Luke's model readers are familiar with ancient conceptions of hospitality.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, chapters three and four establish the "cultural encyclopedia" of Luke's model readers with respect to the practice of hospitality to strangers.<sup>3</sup> The primary questions, then, which will drive this investigation include: What are the basic elements involved in welcoming strangers? What is the specific language used to describe the practice? Is there religious significance to the practice? How is hospitality corrupted?

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Ford Wiltshire, *Public and Private in Vergil's Aeneid* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989) 83, puts it well: "Modern hospitality is typically a transaction among friends. Ancient hospitality is a transaction among strangers. Modern hospitality reinforces our familiarities. Ancient hospitality alters us by exposing us to outsiders."

<sup>2</sup> On Luke's "model reader" or "implied reader," see William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993) 12-16.

<sup>3</sup> See Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984) 47-84.

## I. Constructing the Cultural Script

### A. Homer's *Odyssey* as Foundational

Homer's *Odyssey* commands attention in the construction of the cultural script for two reasons. First, Homer's poems exerted enormous influence, especially with respect to ethics.<sup>4</sup> As Werner Jaeger notes, Homer is "the first and the greatest creator and shaper of Greek life and the Greek character."<sup>5</sup> The veracity of Plato's famous claim regarding Homer, namely, that "this poet educated Hellas" (Ἑλλάδα πεπαίδευκεν οὗτος ὁ ποιητής, *Republic* 10.606e), has been demonstrated in numerous ways, but perhaps none so clearly as by the ubiquity with which the Homeric epics are used in school exercises for young students. Numerous historians have demonstrated the use of Homer within primary, secondary, and tertiary curricula. Whether it was learning to write through the copying of the names of Homeric heroes and deities,<sup>6</sup> the writing of interpretative essays on Homeric scenes and motifs,<sup>7</sup> practicing grammatical analysis upon difficult themes and lines from the *Iliad*,<sup>8</sup> or the memorization of Homeric quotations for rhetorical use,<sup>9</sup> Homer's place in the shaping of Greek and Roman *paideia*

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<sup>4</sup> For fuller treatments of this topic, see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Vol 1, Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens* (trans. Gilbert Highet; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; New York: Oxford University Press) 35-56; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. George Lamb; New York: Mentor Books, 1956) 21-34; Ronald F. Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (ed. Dennis Ronald MacDonald; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001) 56-77; Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and The Acts of Andrew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 17-34; Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Jaeger, *Paideia*, 1.36.

<sup>6</sup> See Ronald F. Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," 59-63. Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (ASP 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). Also see, Karl Olav Sandnes, *The Challenge of Homer: School, Pagan Poets and Early Christianity* (LNTS 400; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2009) esp. 40-58.

<sup>7</sup> Common school exercises for those studying rhetoric was to produce comparisons which would compare Homeric heroes (such as Ajax and Odysseus) and prove one superior to the other. See the many examples listed by Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the elder Cato to the younger Pliny* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977) 267-276.

<sup>8</sup> Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," 65-67.

<sup>9</sup> Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome*, 267-268.

was profound.<sup>10</sup> Dio Chrysostom was right that as an author Homer was “the first, the middle, and the last” (*Oration* 18.8) when it came to the student’s educational curriculum.<sup>11</sup>

The Homeric epics instructed youths in literary beauty but also educated and socialized the young into heroic and cultured patterns of behavior.<sup>12</sup> The poems create and perpetuate heroic exemplars as patterns for the young to imitate.<sup>13</sup> Strabo makes the connection between ethics and Homeric education explicit, saying that Greece uses Homer to educate children “not for the mere sake of entertainment, of course, but for the sake of moral discipline” (*Geography* 1.2.3). Plato acknowledges that the poet “by adorning countless deeds of the ancients, educates (παιδεύει) later generations” (*Phaedrus* 245a).<sup>14</sup> This was exactly the reason why Plato attacked Homer, since he took issue with Homer’s ethics and depiction of the gods.<sup>15</sup> Such protestations against the pedagogical force of Homer testify to the wide-ranging “spell of Homer” upon the

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<sup>10</sup> Dennis R. MacDonald has argued extensively that Luke (and other New Testament writings) consciously imitate Homer. With respect to Luke-Acts, see *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003). His arguments are illuminating and suggestive, and while I think his case is strongest for Acts 27:1-28:16 [see his “The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul,” *NTS* 45 (1999) 88-107], this study does not argue for (nor presume) direct Lukan literary dependence upon Homer nor does it subscribe to MacDonald’s theory that Luke-Acts are non-historical fictions penned as an imitative alternative to Homer’s epics.

<sup>11</sup> For text and translation, see *Dio Chrysostom* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). See also the Stoic Heraclitus: “From the earliest stage of life, our infant children in their first moments of learning are suckled on him [i.e., Homer]; we are wrapped in his poems, one might also say, as babies, and nourish our minds on their milk. As the child grows and comes to manhood Homer is at his side. Homer shares his mature years, and the man is never weary of him even in old age. When we leave him, we feel the thirst again. The end of Homer is the end of life for us.” Quoted in Karl Olav Sandnes, “*Imitatio Homeri*: An Appraisal of Dennis R. MacDonald’s ‘Mimesis Criticism’,” *JBL* 124 (2005) 715-732, here, 716.

<sup>12</sup> H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 29-30.

<sup>13</sup> Marrou [*A History of Education in Antiquity*, 30] states it well: “Homer’s real educational significance lies...in the moral climate in which his heroes act; in their style of life.”

<sup>14</sup> For text and translation, see *Plato* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> See Books 2, 3, and 10 of Plato’s *Republic*. The so-called “immoral” depiction of the Homeric deities was one of the primary impetuses which led to later allegorical interpretation of the epics. On this see, Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

ancient world.<sup>16</sup> Homer's *Odyssey* is a logical choice, then, for constructing the cultural script of hospitality to strangers.

A second reason for beginning with the *Odyssey* is the ubiquity of the theme of hospitality throughout the epic. Both Odysseus' absence from his own house in Ithaca, which results in Telemachus' (Odysseus' son) own traveling, as well Odysseus' constant wanderings into unknown lands and dwellings results in an epic which revolves around the motif of hospitality. Julian Pitt-Rivers claims in fact that the *Odyssey* "may be viewed as a study in the laws of hospitality."<sup>17</sup> Whereas words constructed with the root ξεν- occur 24 times within the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* contains 245 occurrences of words based on this root for hospitality.<sup>18</sup> Numerous Homeric scholars have argued that hospitality relations in the *Odyssey* appear as a type-scene.<sup>19</sup> The consistent pattern of these hospitality type-scenes within the *Odyssey* creates the possibility of studying and abstracting the distinct cultural elements involved in the practice of ancient Mediterranean hospitality.<sup>20</sup> Such consistent patterning enables the recognition of corrupted hospitality or hospitality improperly executed. It further allows one to observe when the script has been excelled, that is, when hospitality is unwittingly offered to

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<sup>16</sup> The quotation is taken from Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (trans. John Raffan; Malden, MA: Blackwell-Wiley, 1985) 119-125.

<sup>17</sup> Julian Pitt-Rivers, "The Stranger, the Guest and the Hostile Host," in *Contributions to Mediterranean Sociology* (ed. J. G. Peristiany; The Hague: Mouton, 1968) 13-30, here 13.

<sup>18</sup> For this information, see the chart in David E. Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer's Odyssey* (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1962) 66-67. Belmont demonstrates that whereas hospitality and guest-friendship structures the entire epic of the *Odyssey*, occurrences of hospitality language in the *Iliad* are incidental to its plot and structure.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew Clark ["Formulas, metre, and type-scenes," in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (ed. Robert Fowler; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 117-138, here 135] defines a type scene as "recurring situations which are narrated according to a more or less fixed pattern."

<sup>20</sup> For example: Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer's Odyssey*; Steve Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1993); Walter Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1933) 39-51.

disguised deities. We will see that the *Odyssey* narrates significant examples of the corruption as well as the excelling of the cultural script of hospitality to strangers.

### B. The Elements of Ideal Hospitality in the *Odyssey*

Eighteen hospitality scenes can be found in the Homeric epics.<sup>21</sup> Here I examine three depictions of idealized hospitality in order to reconstruct the cultural elements of hospitality: Nestor's welcome of Telemachus (Bk. 3), Menelaus' welcome of Telemachus (Bk. 4), and Alcinous' welcome of Odysseus (Bks. 5 – 13). These three scenes form the standard to which the rest of the hospitality scenes can be compared and evaluated.<sup>22</sup> There are at least seven broad elements of hospitality in these scenes.

#### i. The stranger approaches the household and waits for response from the host

In Telemachus' visit to Pylos, he approaches the threshold with Athena-Mentes and waits (3.29-31). In his journey to Sparta, likewise, he and Pisistratus approach "the gateway of the palace" of Menelaus and wait (4.20-22).<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Odysseus enters the city and immediately approaches "the threshold" of the palace of King Alcinous and the Phaeacians (7.81-82, 133-135). By leaving his heroes to wait at the threshold, Homer creates suspense as to whether these figures will receive hospitality or inhospitality. The suspense is often intensified by the stereotyped language (here, belonging to Odysseus): "Alas, to the land of what mortals have I now come? Are they insolent (ὕβριστάι), wild, and unjust (οὐδὲ δίκαιοι)? Or are they hospitable to strangers (φιλόξεινοι) and fear the gods in their thoughts?" (6.119-121). Odysseus' question produces suspense with respect to the question of hospitality. Are they hospitable or cruel to strangers?

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<sup>21</sup> See Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> So also Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, 59.

<sup>23</sup> For text and translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, see *Homer* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Note, further, that Odysseus equates hospitable treatment of strangers with piety toward the gods. The connection between piety, fear of the gods, civilization, and the proper treatment of strangers is repeated through the epic. In fact, that Telemachus will indeed receive hospitality from Nestor, and Odysseus as well from Alcinous, is indicated clearly by the fact that upon their arrival they encounter their hosts making sacrifices and pouring libations to the gods.<sup>24</sup> A fundamental element of hospitality to strangers involves this invitation to the stranger to incorporate oneself into the host's group through shared cultic participation – in this case sacrifice, libations, and prayers.<sup>25</sup> The positive evaluation of Nestor's piety and hospitality is indicated through the aside: "Pallas Athena rejoiced at the man's [Nestor's] wisdom and decorum" (3.52-53).<sup>26</sup>

ii. The host recognizes the presence of the stranger and offers hospitality

If a host intends to offer hospitality to the stranger then the immediate reaction will be one of positive recognition and an offer of hospitality. Nestor's response to the strangers Telemachus and Athena-Mentes is worth quoting in full:

When they saw the strangers (ξείνους) they all came thronging about them, and clasped their hands in welcome (χερσίν τ' ἠσπάζοντο), and bade them sit down. First Nestor's son Pisistratus came near and took both by the hand, and made them sit down at the feast on soft fleeces upon the sand of the sea, beside his brother Thrasymedes and his father. Thereupon he gave them servings of

<sup>24</sup> Upon arrival Telemachus and Athena-Mentes encounter the townsfolk on the shore "offering sacrifice of black bulls to the dark-haired Earth-shaker" (*Od.* 3.5-7). The repeated emphasis on Nestor's piety presents both a contrast to the suitor's behavior in Ithaca and demonstrates that Nestor's actions are symbolic of a well-ordered society. Odysseus encounters the Phaeacians pouring libations to the gods (7.136-140). This aspect is noted by numerous scholars. See, for example, Cedric Hubbell Whitman, *Homer and the Homeric Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958) 251-252; Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and Its Role in Homer's Odyssey*, 150-151.

<sup>25</sup> Ritual sacrifices typically include a shared meal which functions to cement group solidarity. On this, see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 85-89.

<sup>26</sup> Athena's pleasure with Nestor is also a result of the fact that he gives her the cup of wine before giving it to Telemachus (3.53-54). The repeated emphasis on Nestor's piety presents both a contrast to the suitor's behavior in Ithaca and demonstrates that Nestor's actions are symbolic of a well-ordered society. See Whitman, *Homer and the Homeric Tradition*, 251-252; Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and Its Role in Homer's Odyssey*, 150-151.

the inner parts and poured wine in a golden cup, and pledging her, he spoke to Pallas Athena....” (3.34-42).

When Menelaus’ servant encounters Telemachus and Pisistratus, he questions Menelaus: “Here are two strangers (ξείνω) ... shall we unyoke for them their swift horses, or send them on their way to some other host, who will provide hospitality for them (ὅς κε φιλήσῃ)?” (4.26-29). The servant’s question, that perhaps they should send them to another host, appears plausible given that Menelaus is, after all, engaged in a wedding celebration for two of his children, and the reader remembers well the tragic consequences from the last occasion that Menelaus gave hospitality to a young man.<sup>27</sup>

Menelaus, instead, rebukes Eteoneus:

Stirred to exceeding displeasure, fair-haired Menelaus spoke to him: ‘Before this it was not your custom to be a fool Eteoneus...but like a child you talk folly. Surely we two many times ate the hospitable cheer (ξεινήια πολλὰ φηγόντε) of other men on our way here, hoping that Zeus would some day grant us respite from pain. No! Unyoke the strangers’ (ξείνων) horses, and bring the men in, that they may feast.’ (4.30-37)

The servant’s question is a literary device which highlights the unthinkable act of turning away strangers. Menelaus’ household will never turn away strangers from hospitality.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, while all are waiting for the King’s response to the presence of Odysseus the stranger, one of the Phaeacian leaders, Echeneüs, addresses the assembly:

Alcinous, lo, this is not the better way, nor is it proper, that a stranger (ξείνων) should sit upon the ground on the hearth in the ashes; but these others hold back waiting for your word. Come, raise the stranger (ξείνων) to his feet, and set upon him a silver-studded chair; bid the heralds mix wine, that we may pour libations also to Zeus, who hurls the thunderbolt; for he walks in the footsteps of reverend suppliants (ὅς θ’ ἰκέτησιν ἄμ’ αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ). And let the housekeeper give the stranger (ξείνω) from what she has within. (7.159-166)

<sup>27</sup> On the Trojan Paris’ violation of Menelaus’ hospitality and guest-friendship, see *Iliad* 3.351-354; 13.620-639. See also, Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer’s Odyssey*, 69-72.

<sup>28</sup> So also Reece [*The Stranger’s Welcome*, 78] asks: “Or is the herald’s hesitation a poetic device designed to provide an opportunity for displaying Menelaus’ indignation at his servant’s lack of hospitality – Eteoneus’ impropriety acting as a foil for Menelaus’ magnanimous hospitality?”

One notices that in all three episodes the strangers are consistently referred to with the stereotypical language for strangers – ξένος. Words with this stem bear the connotation of “foreign” and “alien” and thereby the term frequently refers to strangers, visitors, and guests.<sup>29</sup> Second, the connection between piety and hospitality is established in these scenes. Echeueüs declares that the strangers are protected by Zeus, and the appropriate religious response upon encountering Odysseus is to pour libations to Zeus.<sup>30</sup> Upon recognition of Telemachus, Nestor invites him to join in participating in their sacrificial meal. The cultic offerings demonstrate both the piety of the hosts as well as the offer to the strangers to incorporate themselves into their host’s group.<sup>31</sup>

### iii. The host offers the guest a place to sit, food, drink, a bath, clothes, and entertainment

Some of the foundational elements of hospitality are nicely indicated by the Phaeacians who declare: “Always to us is dear the banquet, the lyre, the dance, change of clothes, warm baths, and the couch” (8.248-249). We have already seen Nestor and Pisistratus give blankets to the strangers to sit upon, food, and drink (3.34-42). Likewise, Menelaus’ servants provide the strangers with baths (4.48-49), anointing with oil (4.49), new clothes (4.50-51), further hand-washings (4.52-55), and the eating of meat and drinking of wine (4.55-59).<sup>32</sup> The expected elements of hospitality given to Odysseus by the Phaeacians are lavish: he is seated upon a beautiful chair next to the king (7.167-169),

<sup>29</sup> See Gustav Stählin, “ξένος,” *TDNT* V, 1-36; M. I. Finley [*The World of Odysseus* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Chatto & Windus, 1977) 100] rightly notes that in addition to “guest-friend,” the term ξένος “also meant ‘stranger’, ‘foreigner’, and sometimes ‘host’, a semantic range symbolic of the ambivalence which characterized all dealings with the stranger in the archaic world.”

<sup>30</sup> This is also mentioned in the scene where Nausicaa gives Odysseus a bath and food. She tells her handmaids to treat Odysseus courteously for “from Zeus are all strangers and beggars and even a small gift is kind” (πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσιν ἅπαντες ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε δόσις δ’ ὀλίγη τε φίλη τε, 6.207-208). The maidens give Odysseus “the stranger” (ξεῖνω) simple hospitality: food, drink, and a bath (6.209-210).

<sup>31</sup> Also, see Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 61.

<sup>32</sup> Menelaus’ hospitality is distinguished from Nestor’s, however, in that is lavish and opulent. See Telemachus’ frequent exclamations of Menelaus’ wealth and the beauty of his palace (e.g., 4.71-75).

he is washed with water (7.170-172), and he is given food and drink (7.173-178).<sup>33</sup> After an evening of drinking to Zeus, Alcinous declares that in the morning “we will show hospitality to the stranger” (ξεῖνον...ξεῖνίσσομεν, 7.190) and make sacrifices (7.186-208).

#### iv. The host questions the stranger after the meal

After Telemachus and Athena-Mentes have finished feasting, Nestor inquires into their identity and their purpose in traveling: “Now it is seemlier to ask and enquire of the strangers (ξεῖνους) who they are, since now they have had their joy of food. Strangers (ξεῖνοι), who are you? ... Is it on some business, or do you wander at random over the sea as pirates do?” (3.69-73). Nestor’s piety demands that he provide hospitality regardless of their identity, and, in this instance, suggests that for all he knows his guests may be pirates. Likewise with Menelaus, who declares: “Take the food, and be glad, and then when you have partaken of supper, we will ask you who among men you are” (4.61-62). And it is not until after Odysseus has had his meal that Queen Arete questions him regarding his identity and business (7.237-241).<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that Odysseus’ identity is gradually revealed to the Phaeacians within the context of the latter’s extensive and continuing hospitality.<sup>35</sup> The point of this element is that the revelation of one’s identity as a stranger is only safe when it occurs within the context of hospitality.

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<sup>33</sup> In antiquity the Phaeacians’ hospitality toward Odysseus was famed for its lavishness and its generosity. In a discourse devoted to hospitality Dio Chrysostom, for example, states: “I could declare in regard to the Phaeacians also and their generosity (φιλανθρωπίας) ... just what motives and reasons induced them to be so open-handed and splendid in their generosity” (*The Seventh Discourse* 90). For further references to the Phaeacians’ famed hospitality toward strangers, see Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 104 n. 2; note also, Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, 101.

<sup>34</sup> The prominent role of the female characters Nausicaa and Arete is striking. See further, Victoria Pedrick, “The Hospitality of Noble Women in the *Odyssey*,” *Helios* 15 (1988) 85-101.

<sup>35</sup> On this, see Sheila Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987) 92-103.

v. The guest may reveal that he is a guest-friend of the host//or the host may request the initiation of a guest-friendship relationship

As a means of ascertaining information about his father, Telemachus reminds Nestor that he and Odysseus are bound with friendship ties. Telemachus describes his father as “steadfast Odysseus, who once, men say, fought by your side and sacked the city of the Trojans” (3.84-86). He reminds Nestor of his father’s noble deeds and the favors he performed for Nestor (3.95-100). Nestor accepts Telemachus’ claim: “All the time that we were there noble Odysseus and I never spoke at variance either in the assembly or in the council, but being of one mind (ἓνα θυμὸν ἔχοντε νόω) advised the Argives with wisdom and shrewd counsel” (3.126-128). The description of Odysseus and Nestor as having “one mind” has a long-history as language used to describe friendship.<sup>36</sup> Telemachus’ revelation of his identity and his reminder of Nestor’s and Odysseus’ relationship results in Nestor no longer referring to Telemachus only as a ξένος but now, also, as “friend” (φίλος, 3.103, 184, 199, 211, 313, 352, and 375).<sup>37</sup> Nestor and Odysseus, and thereby Telemachus as Odysseus’ son inherits the guest-friend relationship, are bound together with friendship ties. Thus, the term “friend” marks an extension of a kinship bond between former strangers.<sup>38</sup>

One fundamental component of hospitality is the provision of a place to sleep, but in Nestor’s offer of lodging to Telemachus, the reader is afforded further insight into the

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<sup>36</sup> Greek proverbs frequently used the language of “one soul,” “one heart,” and “one mind” to describe ideal friendship. See, for example, Euripides, *Andromache* 376-377 and *Orestes* 1046; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1168b; Cicero, *On Friendship* 14, 50; Acts 2:44 and 4:32. See *Odyssey* 6.182-185 where “sharing one heart and one mind” is the language used to describe a harmonious marriage and household.

<sup>37</sup> So Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 64. David Konstan [*Friendship in the Classical World* (Key Themes in Ancient History; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 36] notes: “The adjective *philos*, in particular, picks out among *xenoi* or strangers those with whom relations of hospitality are acknowledged.”

<sup>38</sup> Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 33.

guest-friendship of Nestor and Odysseus. As Telemachus and Athena begin to go back to their ship to spend the night, Nestor speaks (3.352-356):

This may Zeus forbid, and the other immortal gods, that you should go from my house to your swift ship as from one utterly without raiment and poor, who has not cloaks and blankets in plenty in his house, whereon both he and his guests may sleep softly. In my house are both cloaks and fair blankets. Never surely shall the staunch son of this man Odysseus lie down upon the deck of a ship, while I yet live *and children after me are left in my house* to entertain guests (ξείνους ξεινίζειν), whosoever shall come to my house.

Nestor's claim that the son of Odysseus will always have a place for hospitality within his home for as long as "I yet live and children after me are in my halls" suggests that a permanent hospitality relationship exists between the two households.<sup>39</sup> The narrative fulfils the expectation as Telemachus later declares to Nestor's son, Pisistratus, when asking for his aid: "Guest-friends (ξεῖνοι) from of old we call ourselves by reason of our fathers' friendship (ἐκ πατέρων φιλότητος) ..." (15.195-197). Upon the basis of their "fathers' friendship" and their shared experiences during their journey, the two young men claim to have a relationship of guest-friendship.<sup>40</sup>

That a guest-friendship relationship also exists between Odysseus and Menelaus is made evident upon the revelation of Telemachus' identity. Menelaus exclaims: "Truly has there come to my house the son of my beloved friend (φίλου), who for my sake

<sup>39</sup> So also, Andrew Arterbury [*Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (NTM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005) 34] who notes: "Nestor first treats Telemachus with kindness simply because he is a stranger. But once Nestor realizes that Telemachus is the son of his guest-friend, Odysseus, he begins to fulfill a variety of additional obligations."

<sup>40</sup> Gabriel Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 16-17 states: "The most important feature of *xenia* shared with kinship was the assumption of perpetuity: once the rites establishing the relationships were completed, the bond was believed to persist in latent form even if the partners did not interact with one another. This assumption had two practical manifestations. First, the bond could be renewed or reactivated after the lapse of many years, a variety of symbolic objects serving as a reminder. Secondly, the bond did not expire with the death of the partners themselves but outlived them and passed on, apparently in the male line, to their descendants." See also, Otto Hiltbrunner, *Gastfreundschaft in der Antike und im frühen Christentum* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005) 26-33.

endured many toils. And I thought that if he came back I would give him hospitality (φιλησέμεν) beyond all the other Argives...! (4.169-173).” Menelaus proclaims that he would have lavished upon Odysseus a city and a palace so that they and their households could go on “entertaining each other (φιλέοντες) and having joy with one another” until death (4.173-179). Now that the identity of Telemachus is established, Menelaus refers to him with the language of φίλος more often than ξένος.<sup>41</sup> Menelaus and Odysseus, and thereby their families, are bound to each other through these friendship ties.

vi. The host invites the guest into the home and provides blankets and beds for sleeping

Five times Nestor refers to his house as the only proper location for a guest’s dwelling and sleeping (3.346, 349, 351, 354, and 355). For this response, Nestor is commended by Athena: “Well indeed have you spoken in this, old friend, and it is fitting for Telemachus to listen to you” (3.356-559). After an evening of exchanging stories, “the guests” (ξείνους, 4.301) are led to their bed-chambers within Menelaus’ house to sleep (4.296-304). When the Queen questions Odysseus, he begins to share the story of his detainment by Calypso, but it is late and so he is provided with blankets and a bed (7.334-342).<sup>42</sup>

vii. The host gives gifts and provisions for conveyance to the guest’s next destination

The reciprocal nature of ancient hospitality is seen most clearly in the host’s bestowal of guest-gifts as well as the provision of conveyance to the guest’s next destination. The gifts function as a memorial of remembrance which bind the two parties

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<sup>41</sup> For example, see 4.103, 184, 199, 211, 313, and 352. Despite this, however, the language ξένος is still used to describe Telemachus and Pisistratus even after their identities are revealed as indicated by 4.301. Konstan [*Friendship in the Classical World*, 35] misreads the evidence here in his argument that ξένος is not used to describe the relationship between known friends.

<sup>42</sup> The revelation of Odysseus’ identity is fascinating and complex as it spans Bks. 7-12. Perhaps most intriguing is the oddity that Odysseus never tells Queen Arete his name.

together, such that the guest will be obligated to reciprocate should he find the roles reversed.

For example, Menelaus tells Telemachus that soon he will send (πέμψω) him on his way with “honor and splendid gifts” (δώσω δέ τοι ἀγλαὰ δῶρα), including horses, a chariot, and a beautiful cup, *so that he will remember me forever* (μεμνημένος ἦματα πάντα)” (4.589-592).<sup>43</sup> When the reader comes to bk. 15 Telemachus is still in Sparta, and Athena has stirred his heart to return (15.1-41).<sup>44</sup> So passionate is Telemachus now to return that he wants to leave in the middle of the night, but Pisistratus advises him:

Wait until the warrior, son of Atreus, Menelaus, famed for his spear, shall bring gifts and set them on the chariot and will send (ἀποπέμψη) us on our way with kind words of farewell. For a guest remembers all his days the guest-receiving man who shows friendly kindness to him (τοῦ γάρ τε ξεῖνος μιμνήσκειται ἦματα πάντα ἀνδρὸς ξεινοδόκου, ὅς κεν φιλότητα παράσχη). (15.51-55)

It would be a corruption of hospitality for Telemachus to leave his host without a reception of the host’s guest-gifts. When Telemachus declares to Menelaus his intention to leave hastily, the latter declares that it would be wrong for a host to detain his guest (15.67-73).<sup>45</sup> The responsibility of the host is to “show hospitality to the guest while he is present but to send him forth when he would leave” (χρὴ ξεῖνον παρεόντα φιλεῖν, ἐθέλοντα δὲ πέμπειν, 15.74).<sup>46</sup> After one final meal, Menelaus loads the gifts and travel-provisions on the chariot, and Telemachus begins the journey (15.75-182). The

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<sup>43</sup> These gifts are not suitable, however, and so upon Telemachus’ request, Menelaus gives to him a mixing bowl (4.608-619). Having given away his own son in marriage, it may be that Menelaus is attempting to detain Telemachus in Sparta for as long as possible. See Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 88-90.

<sup>44</sup> On the poet’s technique of sandwiching Odysseus’ wanderings between Telemachus’ own journeys, see Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer’s Odyssey*, 121-132; more broadly, see Douglas J. Stewart, *The Disguised Guest: Rank, Role, and Identity in the Odyssey* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1976) 146-195.

<sup>45</sup> Again, in this passage Menelaus uses the language of ξείνος to describe his relationship with Telemachus even after their friendship ties have been recognized and reestablished. Contra Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World*, 34-36.

<sup>46</sup> On the proverbial hospitality expressions used by Menelaus, see Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 93.

language of “gift” (δῶρον) occurs repeatedly, as it functions as a memorial of the guest-friendship which binds together these two households (e.g., 15.75, 113, 125, and 130).

Telemachus’ departure from Pylos demonstrates the importance of provisions for a safe conveyance within a hospitality setting. Athena-Mentes commends Nestor’s hospitality and says these words: “But send (πέμψον) this man [Telemachus] on his way with a chariot and with your son, since he has come to your house, and give him horses, the fleetest you have in running and the best in strength” (3.368-370; cf. 3.322-328). Nestor follows her orders by giving Telemachus his own son as his travel companion, a chariot with horses, and bread and wine for the journey to Sparta (3.475-485).

When Zeus predicts the hospitable reception of Odysseus by the Phaeacians, he refers primarily to Odysseus’ reception of guest-gifts and his provision of safe conveyance to Ithaca, saying that the Phaeacians will “show him all honor as if he were a god (θεὸν ὡς τιμήσουσιν), and they will send (πέμψουσιν) him in a ship to his own native land, after giving him much bronze, gold, and clothing” (5.35-38). Not surprisingly, Zeus’ prophecy is fulfilled with all lavishness. Note, however, that whereas Menelaus and Nestor give gifts and conveyance in recognition of their prior guest-friendship with Odysseus, the Phaeacians consider Odysseus the stranger as worthy of their initiating a new guest-friendship.

Hear me, leaders and counselors of the Phaeacians. This stranger seems to me in the highest degree a man of understanding. Come then, let us give him a gift of friendship as is fitting (ἄγε οἱ δῶμεν ξεινήιον, ὡς ἐπιεικές); for twelve glorious kings hold sway in our land as rulers, and I myself am the thirteenth. Now do you, each of the twelve, bring a newly washed cloak and tunic, and a talent of precious gold, and let us quickly bring it all together that the stranger with our gifts in his hands may go to his supper glad at heart. (8.387-394)

All of the Phaeacian kings bring forth their gifts and set them before Odysseus in Alcinous' palace (8.416-424). Alcinous declares that after Odysseus has had another bath and they have poured libations, he will give him a beautiful gold cup so “that he may remember me all his days (μεμνημένος ἥματα πάντα)” (8.430-432). Alcinous declares: “It is for this revered stranger's (ξεῖνοιο) sake that all these things have been made ready, his sending and the gifts of friendship which we give him of our love (πομπή καὶ φίλα δῶρα, τὰ οἱ δίδομεν φιλέοντες). Dear as a brother is the stranger and the suppliant (ξεῖνός θ' ἰκέτης) to a man whose wits have even the slightest reach” (8.544-547).<sup>47</sup>

Alcinous and Arete even interrupt Odysseus' stories of his journeys to remind Odysseus of the guest-gifts they have given him and their promise for a safe journey to Ithaca. Arete proclaims regarding Odysseus that he “is my guest-friend (ξεῖνος δ' αὐτ' ἐμός ἐστιν), though each of you has a share in this honor (τιμῆς) ...therefore do not be stingy in your gifts to one in such need; for many are the treasures which are stored in your halls by the favor of the gods” (11.336-341).<sup>48</sup> And Alcinous says that Odysseus shall stay another evening so that he can make his gifts complete, and then he will give him conveyance to his home (11.347-354). Finally, after Odysseus ends his stories, Alcinous gives “a convoy and gifts of friendship” (πομπή καὶ φίλα δῶρα, 13.41), and they “send the stranger (τὸν ξεῖνον πέμπωμεν) to his native land” (13.51-52).

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<sup>47</sup> To be a “stranger” or a “suppliant” are overlapping social categories. On this see, John Gould [“HIKETEIA,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93 (1973) 74-103, here 93] who states that “...the rituals of *xenia* and *hiketeia* are parallel in that both alike serve to admit those who are outside the group to membership of it, and thus to a role within the ordered pattern of social behaviour.”

<sup>48</sup> The bestowal of τιμή upon one's guest functions in turn as a means of acquiring τιμή for receiving the reputation of being a generous host (see 3.346-355; 4.612-619; 11.338-341; 14.402; 18.223; 19.334).

### C. Some Summative Comments on the Semantics of and Sanctions for Hospitality

A few brief comments regarding the repeated vocabulary used in these scenes will aid us as we continue our study. First, both before and after their identity is revealed, the language of ξένος is used repeatedly as a title for the “strangers” and “guests” (e.g., 6.187, 246, 285, and 290). Once it is recognized that the host has a preexisting relationship with the ξένος the host will frequently refer to the guest as his friend with the language of φίλος (e.g., 3.103, 184, and 199). Further, verbal forms of ξέν- (3.352-356; 7.190) and φίλ- (4.26-29) encompass all of the elements just described in the demonstration of ideal hospitality. The overlap of these terms is indicated by the most common adjective used to describe hospitality – φιλόξενος (6.121). One also often finds the language of πέμπω (3.368-370; 15.74) or πομπῆς (8.33-34) to describe the host’s responsibility to provide for the guest’s voyage to his next destination. Finally, when the host gives guest-gifts one often encounters forms of δῶρα (4.589-592; 13.41) or ἀγλαα (4.590) to describe the gifts, and τιμῆς (5.35-38; 11.336-341) to describe the honor bestowed upon host and guest through the gifts.

The reader should note the repeated connection made between piety toward the gods and hospitality. Stereotypical language such as, “All strangers and beggars come from Zeus” (6.207-208), “Zeus the avenger of suppliants and strangers who walks in the footsteps of reverend strangers” (9.270-271; 7.159-166; 7.181-182), “Zeus, the stranger’s god” (9.271) function as the religious sanctions for hospitality.<sup>49</sup> The refrain is frequently invoked by the host as the motivation for his obligation to welcome the stranger. The connection between piety toward the gods and hospitality is further

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<sup>49</sup> The language is proverbial and is also found in Hesiod who connects Zeus’ anger to the one “who does wrong to a suppliant or a guest” (ὅς θ’ ἰκέτην ὅς τε ξείνον κακὸν ἔρξῃ, *Works and Days* 325, 331-332).

expressed in the frequent cry of Odysseus: “To the land of what mortals have I now come? ... Are they kind to strangers and fear the gods in their thoughts?” (6.119-121; 13.200-202).<sup>50</sup> Religious sanction for hospitality is also found in the ethical terms attached to the practice. It is referred to as: “the better way” (7.159), “obligatory” (9.268; 14.56), and “righteous” (20.294).<sup>51</sup>

Finally, our examination of these three scenes has indicated that a distinction existed between simple hospitality to a stranger and the formal establishment or recognition of a guest-friendship relationship.<sup>52</sup> Simple hospitality, or “obligatory” hospitality, is the straightforward welcoming of a complete stranger, whereas guest-friendship, or “formal hospitality,” is a ritualized establishing of pseudo-kinship relations between two people from different ethnic groups.<sup>53</sup> Nestor shows immediate hospitality to Telemachus, for example, but when Telemachus reveals that he is Odysseus’ son he is quick to remind Nestor of the permanent bond of guest-friendship that exists between the two families. That the relationship is inherited by the descendants of Nestor and Odysseus is indicated in Nestor’s oath that as long as he has children, his household shall continually show hospitality to Odysseus’ descendants (3.552-556; cf. 15.195-197).<sup>54</sup> Both Nestor and Menelaus refer to Telemachus as “friend” (φίλος) once his identity has

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<sup>50</sup> On this theme, see Walter Donlan, “Reciprocities in Homer,” *The Classical World* 75 (1982) 137-175, here 150; also Oscar E. Nybakken, “The Moral Basis for *Hospitium Privatum*,” *The Classical Journal* 41 (1946) 248-253, esp. n. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Also Donlan, “Reciprocities in Homer,” 150; Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Rome: Livy’s Concept of Its Humanizing Force* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1977) 12-15.

<sup>52</sup> On the distinction between “simple hospitality” and “guest-friendship,” see Walter Donlan, *The Aristocratic Ideal and Selected Papers* (eds. Walter Donlon; Wauconda, IL: Blochazy-Barducci, 1999) 272.

<sup>53</sup> Donlan, “Reciprocities in Homer,” 148-150; Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 41-54.

<sup>54</sup> Also, Donlan, “Reciprocities in Homer,” 149 n. 24.

been revealed. Guest-friendship, then, appears as an extension of kinship ties.<sup>55</sup> Alcinous even declares with respect to Odysseus that a “guest” is no less valuable than a “brother” (κασιγνήτου, 8.546).<sup>56</sup> The reciprocal and kinship-like nature of guest-friendship is highlighted by the giving of gifts.<sup>57</sup> The gifts can create (e.g., Alcinous and Odysseus) and renew guest-friendship relations (Odysseus and Menelaus).<sup>58</sup> Guest-gifts produce a reminder of the obligation binding them together.<sup>59</sup> Pisistratus commands Telemachus to delay his journey in order to receive guest-gifts from Menelaus, for a guest “remembers all his days” the host who gives him gifts (15.57-61).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The similarities between guest-friendship and marriage are striking. These are in fact the two primary institutions available for bringing outsiders into one’s own kinship group. On this, see M. I. Finley, “Marriage, sale and gift in the Homeric World,” *RIDA* 3 (1955) 167-194.

<sup>56</sup> See also, *Il.* 9.481-482 where Phoenix says that Peleus has received him and shown friendship to him “even as a father loves his own son.” That guest-friendship ties could often be stronger than blood-ties is argued for by Hermann, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 33, n. 72.

<sup>57</sup> One could also note the spear which Odysseus gave to Iphitus as “the beginning of a guest-friendship” (ἀρχὴν ξεινοσύνης, 21.35) which laid “in the palace as a remembrance of his dear guest-friend” (μνημὸν ξείνοιο φίλοιο, 21.40). On guest-gifts in Homer, see Richard Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 14-16.

<sup>58</sup> Hermann, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 58-69.

<sup>59</sup> Finley [*The World of Odysseus*, 98] states: “However the psychologists understand the affective side of this gift-giving, functionally it took its place with marriage and with armed might as an act through which status relations were created, and what we should call political obligation.”

<sup>60</sup> The Homeric epics are filled with examples of guest-friendships. The clearest of these is the encounter between Glaucus and Diomedes in *Iliad* 6. 212-231. Before the Trojan Glaucus and the Achaean Diomedes engage in battle, the former reveals his identity through a genealogy. The two of them thereby realize that they are guest-friends due to their ancestors’ exchange of hospitality and decide not to fight each other. Glaucus says: “Therefore I am your friend and host in the heart of Argos; you are mine in Lycia, when I come to your country. Let us avoid each other’s spears, even in the close fighting. There are plenty of Trojans and famed companions in battle for me to kill... [and] many Achaeans for you to slaughter if you can do it. But let us exchange our armor, so that these others may know how we claim to be guests and friends from the days of our fathers” (*Iliad* 6.223-231). Scholars point to this text as the clearest example of guest-friendship in the Homeric epics. See Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 1-2; Walter Donlon, “The Unequal Exchange between Glaucus and Diomedes in Light of the Homeric Gift-Economy,” in *The Aristocratic Ideal*, 267-282. Note also the exchange between Laertes and Odysseus/Eperitus. Odysseus/Eperitus (who is lying) tells his father that five years earlier he had given hospitality and bestowed “guest-gifts” (οἱ δῶρα...ξεινήϊα) upon Odysseus (24.273). In response, Laertes says: “Stranger, you bestowed thee gifts in vain, in your countless giving; for if you had found him alive in the land of Ithaca, then he would have sent you off having reciprocated well with gifts and good hospitality, for that is fitting for the initiator” (24.283-286). Other examples of guest-friendship in the *Iliad* include: Antenor and Menelaus (3.205-208), Phyleus, Meges and Euphetes (15.530-537); Sarpedon and Hector (17.149-153).

#### D. Corrupting the Cultural Script: Odysseus and Polyphemus the Cyclops (bk. 9)

Odysseus' encounters with mythical creatures and persons in the *Apologoi* (bks. 9-12) function as examples of corrupted hospitality, or, hospitality improperly executed.<sup>61</sup> While there is not a single positive example of ideal hospitality in these books, Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus the Cyclops provides the most extended negative example of the corruption of hospitality. The scene is not merely an inversion of proper hospitality but is an obvious parody of the hospitality customs.<sup>62</sup> Odysseus' characterization of the people of the Cyclopes is crucial. Like the suitors they are an "insolent and lawless people" (ὑπερφιάλων ἀθεμίστων, 9.106). Furthermore, they are barbaric and uncivilized, for they do not plant, sow, or plow but rather take advantage of their rich land (9.107-111). Neither do they have "assemblies for council nor appointed laws" (δ' οὐτ' ἄγοραὶ βουλευφόροι οὔτε θέμιστες), but rather "each one is a lawgiver (θεμιστεύει) to his children and his wives" (9.112-114). Again, Odysseus emphasizes that the Cyclops is a "monstrous man" who "does not mingle with others, but lived apart, obedient to no law" (9.187-189). He is "a savage man" who knows "nothing of rights and laws" (οὔτε δίκας ἐὺ εἰδότα οὔτε θέμιστας, 9.215). The Cyclopes are, indeed, the opposite of the Argives: they are insolent, lawless, do not toil with the land, are without assemblies for council, and individually make up their own laws.<sup>63</sup> They are not, then,

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<sup>61</sup> Reece [*The Stranger's Welcome*, 123-124] states it well: "While the first eight books of the *Odyssey* have demonstrated the proper function of these elements in normal scenes of human hospitality, the *Apologoi* by contrast portray the guest being abused by these very elements." Also, see Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer's Odyssey*, 124-125. An excellent reading of these episodes can be found in Karl Reinhardt, "The Adventures in the *Odyssey*," in *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretive Essays* (ed. Seth L. Schein; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996) 63-132.

<sup>62</sup> Belmont [*Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer's Odyssey*, 165] says: "...for us who have been conditioned to the normal *xenia* ritual, this adventure is an electrifying jolt, for in every respect it presents the direct reversal of an actual guest-host relationship."

<sup>63</sup> Within the narrative world of the *Odyssey*, the Cyclopes' treatment of strangers is contrasted with that of the Phaeacians. This contrast is highlighted by the fact that Odysseus is recounting the story of the

likely to share the same cultural script of hospitality to strangers. The evaluation of the Cyclopes through hospitality is again highlighted in Odysseus' declaration when he tells his crew: "I will go and make trial of these men, to learn who they are, whether they are cruel, wild, and unjust (ὕβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι), or whether they are kind to strangers (φιλόξεينوι) and fear the gods in their thoughts?" (9.172-176).

The contrast between Odysseus and the Cyclops is highlighted by the fact that when Odysseus and his men find Polyphemus' dwelling, Odysseus rejects the idea of stealing food from Polyphemus since he expects that when he returns, he "may give me gifts of hospitality" (εἶ μοι ξένια δοίη, 9.229). When the monster returns to his dwelling, Polyphemus breaks hospitality protocol by asking immediately who his guests are – before he has offered hospitality (9.252-255). His violation of the hospitality laws produces fear within Odysseus and he appeals to Zeus as the enforcer of Greek norms:

[W]e have come, visiting you, as suppliants to your knees, in the hope that you will give us hospitality, or in some other manner be generous to us, as is the due of strangers (εἴ τι πόροις ξεινήιον ἢ καὶ ἄλλως δοίης δωτίνην, ἢ τε ξείνων θέμις ἐστίν). Do not deny us, good sir, but reverence the gods. We are your suppliants; and Zeus is the avenger of suppliants and strangers – Zeus, the stranger's god (Ζεὺς δ' ἐπιτιμήτωρ ἰκετάων τε ξείνων τε, ξείνιος), who walks in the footsteps of reverend strangers. (9.266-271)

The Cyclops' response is instructive: Odysseus is a fool for the Cyclopes fear neither Zeus nor the other immortals, and they are a law to themselves (9.273-277). In one of the most horrific passages in the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus kills two of Odysseus' men and eats them (9.287-298).<sup>64</sup> Despite Odysseus' desire to kill the Cyclops, he devises a plan whereby he gets the monster drunk with wine (9.347-355). Having already drunk a large

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Cyclopes to the Phaeacians and by the fact that the text declares that these two people groups were formerly neighbors. For further parallels which contrast the Cyclopes with the Phaeacians, see Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer's Odyssey*, 165-167.

<sup>64</sup> Cannibalism is, for Homer, the premier example of uncivilized savagery. On the barbaric description of the Cyclops' killing Odysseus' men and his eating practices, see Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, 134-136.

portion, he commands Odysseus: “Give me it again with a ready heart, and tell me your name at once, so that I may give you a stranger’s guest-gift (ἵνα τοι δῶ ξείνιον) at which you may be glad” (9.355-356). Odysseus knows that whatever his guest-gift may be, it will not be in accordance with civilized hospitality laws, so he tricks the Cyclops by saying that he will indeed declare his name in return for the “guest-gift” and that his name is “Nobody” (Οὐτις) (9.364-368). The guest-gift of Polyphemus is, indeed, a parody: “Nobody will I eat last among his comrades and the others before him – this shall be your guest-gift! (τὸ δέ τοι ξεινήιον ἔσται)” (9.369-370).<sup>65</sup>

When Odysseus drives a stake through the monster’s eye, Polyphemus screams to his neighboring Cyclopes: “it is Nobody that is slaying me” (9.409-410). While Polyphemus is smarting from his wound, Odysseus and his men are able to escape from their ship. Instead of blessings for parting words, Odysseus mocks his tormenter: “Only too surely were your evil deeds to fall on your own head, you stubborn wretch, who did not shrink from eating your guests in your own house. Therefore, Zeus and the other gods have now taken vengeance on you” (9.477-479). Pathetically, the Cyclops tries to trick Odysseus into returning so that he can give him “gifts of hospitality” (ξείνιο) and help him with his “conveyance” (πομπήν) to his destination (9.515-522).

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Polyphemus episode is its clear manifestation of the belief that corruption of hospitality is equivalent to barbaric savagery, lack of civilization and impiety. Homer could not have given a more barbaric and uncivilized depiction of inhospitality and impiety than Odysseus’ encounter with the Cyclops. But the Cyclops’ perversion and corruption of the hospitality laws further

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<sup>65</sup> The inversion or parody of a proper guest-gift is reminiscent of Ctessipus throwing an ox-hoof at Odysseus as a guest-gift (20.288-302).

demonstrates and clarifies the script of ideal hospitality. Polyphemus corrupts the cultural script of hospitality in his: a) questioning of Odysseus before offering hospitality, b) his lack of respect for Zeus “god of strangers”, c) his eating and drinking in front of his guests, d) his mockery of a guest-gift in his eating Odysseus’ men, e) his refusal to offer sacrifice to the gods, and f) his false offer to provide conveyance and gifts to Odysseus.<sup>66</sup>

#### E. Excelling the Cultural Script: Telemachus gives hospitality to Athena (bk. 1)

I have delayed examinations of the hospitality scenes involving Telemachus and Athena in book 1 because the scenes are structured as a theoxeny, that is, the unwitting hospitality by a mortal to a deity. There are typically three major components of any theoxeny: a) hospitality or inhospitality unwittingly bestowed by the host upon the disguised divine guest, b) an epiphany or recognition scene where the divine identity of the god is revealed to the host, and c) attendant rewards or retribution for the host based on their treatment of the god.<sup>67</sup> Theoxenies function literarily as narrative symbolizations of the well-established connection between piety toward the gods and hospitality found in the stereotypical claim: “All strangers and beggars come from Zeus” (6.207-208). The decision to construct Athena’s visit to Ithaca as a theoxeny increases the narrative suspense regarding her reception.<sup>68</sup> Will the god be treated with hospitality? Who will respond favorably, and who will reject or mistreat the god?

Theoxenies are a well-established motif in both Greek and Roman myths, and our examination of them in the *Odyssey* will set the script for further encounters with them.

<sup>66</sup> On the Cyclops’ violation of the hospitality laws, see Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 125.

<sup>67</sup> This is an accurate, albeit condensed, account of the makeup of typical theoxenies. For more, see H. J. Rose, “Divine Disguisings,” *HTR* 49 (1956) 63-72; John B. Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany: Prison-Escape in Acts of the Apostles* (BZMW 131; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 32-36; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 28-38; Ludolf Malten, “Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Sagenforschung,” *Hermes* 74 (1939) 176-206, esp. 179-186; John F. Garcia, “Symbolic Action in the Homeric Hymns: The Theme of Recognition,” *Classical Antiquity* 21 (2002) 5-39, here 14.

<sup>68</sup> So Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 48.

Within the *Odyssey* one often finds the religious impulse to view strangers as potentially disguised deities. Alcinous, for example, declares that the people will continue to show hospitality to their guest Odysseus: “But if he is one of the immortals come down from heaven (εἰ δέ τις ἀθανάτων γε κατ’ οὐρανοῦ), then this is some new thing which the gods are planning...” (7.199-200). That the gods disguise themselves to test human’s piety is a fact with which all Homeric characters are acquainted.

After the initial assembly of the gods, Homer begins the *Odyssey* with an archetypal scene of hospitality between Telemachus and Athena-Mentes.<sup>69</sup> Having observed the woeful situation of Odysseus on Calypso’s island as well as the suitors’ devouring of Odysseus’ house, Athena visits Telemachus to arouse him to call an assembly of the Achaeans and to begin his journey to Nestor’s and Menelaus’ households in search of his father so that he will win a “a good report” (κλέος) among men (1.88-95). Readying herself with her sandals and her spear:

She went darting down from the heights of Olympus and took her stand in the land of Ithaca at the outer gate of Odysseus, on the threshold of the court. In her hand she held the spear of bronzed, and she was in the likeness of a stranger (εἰδομένη ξείνῳ), Mentes, the leader of the Taphians. (1.102-105)

Disguised as a “stranger,” that is, precisely as someone in need of hospitality from a host in a foreign land, Athena approaches the threshold of Odysseus’ palace to see who will welcome her. As she waits, she observes the activities of the suitors as they engage in playing checkers, sitting on the fleeces of the oxen they have sacrificed, and preparing for further feasting (1.106-112).<sup>70</sup> While the suitors are oblivious to the presence of a stranger at the threshold, Telemachus sees her and approaches her immediately, “for in

<sup>69</sup> Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer’s Odyssey*, 143.

<sup>70</sup> Reece [*The Stranger’s Welcome*, 48] notes that Homer’s description of the fleeces of the oxen “which they themselves slaughtered” (1.108), “poignantly encapsulates their outrageous behavior” as it underlines their devouring of Odysseus’ and Telemachus’ livelihood.

his heart he counted it a shame that a stranger (ξείνων) should stand long at the gates” (1.119-120).<sup>71</sup> The contrast between the suitors and Telemachus in terms of piety and hospitality could not be stronger. Telemachus approaches, clasps her hand, and relieves her of her spear (1.120-122).

Based on our examination of ideal hospitality, we see Telemachus further conforming to the script as he declares: “Welcome, stranger (ξείνε)! In our house you will find hospitality (φιλήσεται), and after you have tasted food you shall tell what you have need of” (1.123-124). The goddess is given a chair on which to sit, a footstool, water for washings, and food and drink (1.125-143). While Telemachus’ actions follow the idealized conventions of hospitality already examined, the narrator emphasizes his exceptional treatment of Athena. The chair is “beautiful” and “richly made” (1.130-131), the pitcher for the washings is a “beautiful pitcher of gold,” (1.137), the basin is silver (1.137), and the table is beautifully polished (1.138-139). Telemachus is shown, then, as excelling the protocols for hospitality to a guest. Again, the narrator draws a contrast between Telemachus and the suitors as the former is careful to seat himself and his guest away from the suitors “lest the stranger, vexed by their din, should loathe the meal, seeing that he was in the company of arrogant men” (1.133-134).<sup>72</sup> The narrator presents the suitors as violators of the hospitality laws. Their long presence within Odysseus’ house, their sexual escapades with the servants, their slaughtering of his livestock, and their failure to welcome strangers demonstrate their impiety and inhospitality.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> The quotation serves to simultaneously exalt Telemachus’ piety and as a critique of the suitors’ oblivion to the presence of the stranger. So Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer’s Odyssey*, 146.

<sup>72</sup> The suitors are consistently described as “arrogant,” “proud,” and “insolent” (1.134, 1.144; 2.227).

<sup>73</sup> On the suitors, see Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 103-104.

After they have eaten, Telemachus appropriately questions the stranger: “Tell me...whether this is your first visit here or whether you are indeed a friend of my father’s house (ἦ καὶ πατρῷός ἐσσι ξείνος). For many were the men who came to our house as guests since he too had traveled much among men” (1.174-177). In addition to its description of Odysseus’ frequent hospitality to strangers, the quotation serves to make the distinction between temporary hospitality and the practice of guest-friendship. Telemachus wants to know his obligation to the stranger. Is he in simple need of the basic elements of hospitality as a traveler in a foreign land, or is he bound by friendship ties to Mentos? In his answer to Telemachus, Athena-Mentos stresses that he is indeed a guest-friend of Odysseus and thereby Telemachus: “Friends of one another do we declare ourselves to be, just as our fathers were, friends from of old” (ξείνοι δ’ ἀλλήλων πατρῷοι εὐχόμεθ’ εἶναι ἐξ ἀρχῆς, 1.187-188).<sup>74</sup> Having declared her relationship to the household of Odysseus, Athena-Mentos fulfills her plans to inspire Telemachus to seek his father’s return. She foretells Odysseus’ return (1.200-205), reciprocates Telemachus’ outrage against the suitors and prophesies their impending doom (1.252-268), and advises Telemachus as to how he might win back Odysseus’ household (1.269-305).

In response to Telemachus’ hospitality, Athena reciprocates by putting into motion the events which will result in the doom of the suitors and the restoration of Odysseus’ household. As she prepares to make her way back to the ship, Telemachus is eager to continue engaging in hospitality. Mentos must have a bath and must receive “a costly and very beautiful gift which will be for you an heirloom from me, such a gift as

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<sup>74</sup> That guest-friendship is an inherited relationship is clear in Athena-Mentos’ response that his father and Odysseus’ father, Laertes, were friends from of old. Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 33.

guest-friends give to guest-friends (φίλοι ξεῖνοι ξείνοισι διδοῦσι)” (1.310-313). As a goddess, Athena can neither receive a bath from a mortal nor by gifts be bound in such reciprocal relations with mortals. Telemachus demonstrates his hospitality, but Athena must deflect (1.314-319).<sup>75</sup> When Athena ends her speech she departs and flies upward like a bird (1.321-322). Her visit functions to “put strength and courage in his heart” for “he suspected she was a god” (1.323-324). Telemachus, confident that he has entertained a deity (1.420-421), rebukes the insolent suitors, demands their presence at an assembly the following morning, and declares his intentions to pray for Zeus’ retribution against the evils they have committed against his house (1.365-398). The suitors recognize the transformation of Telemachus, and thus two of the suitors question the identity of the guest who met with Telemachus (1.383-387, 399-411). Telemachus declares that the stranger was a guest-friend, but he knew had been visited by a god (1.420-421).

A few analytical observations are in order. First, book 1 of the *Odyssey* provides evidence for the belief that deities disguise themselves and visit humans to test their piety.<sup>76</sup> Second, the description of Telemachus’ hospitality follows the idealized pattern we have laid out above, although the narrator emphasizes its lavishness and generosity. Third, the narrator demonstrates the impiety of the suitors by portraying them as oblivious to the presence of Athena-Mentes, whereas Telemachus’ piety is highlighted by his hospitable treatment of the stranger. There is a connection between Telemachus’ hospitality and his ability to recognize that the stranger is a deity.<sup>77</sup> Fourth, Athena rewards Telemachus’ hospitality by giving him courage to confront the suitors and to

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<sup>75</sup> On this see, Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 56-57; Belmont, *Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer’s Odyssey*, 144-145.

<sup>76</sup> Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 31.

<sup>77</sup> See Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 91-117.

seek information of his father. Conversely, Athena declares that the inhospitality of the suitors will receive its just reward in their destruction.

#### F. An Epilogue on Homeric Hospitality: Odysseus' Return to Ithaca (bks. 13-24)

Odysseus' return to Ithaca, his reestablishment of familial ties with his household, and his slaying of the suitors functions as the climactic ending to the *Odyssey*.<sup>78</sup> All of the hospitality laws examined earlier are on display here, thereby making this scene a fitting epilogue for our examination of Homer. Remarkable, however, is the fact that Homer has structured Odysseus' return as a theoxeny.<sup>79</sup> One finds here the central elements of a theoxeny: a) Athena disguises the "godlike Odysseus" with the form of a beggar; b) the disguised Odysseus tests his household and evaluates them according to their observance of the hospitality laws; and c) Odysseus reveals his identity as he slays those violating the hospitality laws and reestablishes relations with those who welcome strangers.<sup>80</sup>

As Odysseus approaches Ithaca, Athena has covered the land with a mist to hide Odysseus' return. Unable thereby to recognize his homeland, Odysseus again cries out: "Woe is me, to the land of what mortals have I now come? Are they cruel, and wild, and unjust? Or do they love strangers and fear the gods in their thoughts?" (13.200-202).<sup>81</sup>

Odysseus' question highlights the importance which hospitality will play in his testing of

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<sup>78</sup> See Michael Silk, "The *Odyssey* and Its Explorations," in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (ed. Robert Fowler; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 31-44.

<sup>79</sup> Murnaghan [*Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 20] says: "During their meeting in Book 13, Athena and Odysseus sit down together at the base of an olive tree and concoct the plot through which, imitating the story of a disguised god, he will defeat his enemies."

<sup>80</sup> Those who see Odysseus' return as a theoxeny include: Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 56-90; Emily Kearns, "The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny," *The Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982) 2-8; Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, 181-187.

<sup>81</sup> That Odysseus, given Athena's mist over the land, thinks the Phaeacians have tricked him by sending him to the wrong destination is one of the many pieces of irony that takes place in Odysseus' disguised return home. On this, see Bernard Fenik, "Studies in the *Odyssey*," *Hermes* 30 (1974) 5-61.

his household as well as foreshadows the treatment he receives from Eumaeus, Telemachus, and Penelope and, conversely, the suitors.<sup>82</sup> Without a plan for reestablishing himself as master of his household, Athena appears to Odysseus and declares that she is responsible for “ever standing by your side and guarding you in your toils,” and for “making you beloved by all the Phaeacians,” and has now come to help Odysseus take back his house (13.298-310).<sup>83</sup> The belief that gods disguise themselves as humans is indicated by Odysseus’ response: “It is hard, goddess, for a mere mortal to know you when he meets you...for you take whatever shape you desire” (13.312-313). Athena then disguises him by giving him the appearance of a beggar and commands him to go to the hut of his servant Eumaeus (13.392-417).<sup>84</sup> Throughout this episode Odysseus is characterized as Athena’s agent and the carrier of her power.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, his disguise is similar to the disguise the gods give to themselves when they appear to humans.<sup>86</sup> Odysseus’ disguised appearance enables him to concoct a plan to take back his household, *and* it allows him to test everyone in his house. The disguised Odysseus declares to Telemachus: “you and I will learn the temper of the women, and will likewise make trial of those serving me and see who honors the two of us and fear us from the heart and who does not honor us and scorns you” (16.304-307).

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<sup>82</sup> In a pre-‘polis’ society, the loyalty and autonomy of Odysseus’ household is crucial. On the *Odyssey* as reflecting a pre-polis society, see Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual*.

<sup>83</sup> On Athena’s revelation of her identity to Odysseus, see Jenny Strauss Clay, *The Wrath of Athena: Gods and Men in the Odyssey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983) 186-212.

<sup>84</sup> Odysseus is described as both ξείνος and πτωχός. See Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome*, 166 n. 3 and 4.

<sup>85</sup> Kearns [“The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny,” 5] states this well: “In other words, Odysseus has now taken on a divine part himself. By this I do not mean to imply that he has become equated with a god, merely that (with Athena’s blessing) he is now acting out what was her part.”

<sup>86</sup> Rose, “Divine Disguisings,” 65.

In Odysseus' encounter with Eumaeus we find another example of idealized hospitality.<sup>87</sup> All of the elements of ideal hospitality to strangers are present though in quite humble terms.<sup>88</sup> The stranger enters into the hut, is given a place to sit on a goatskin which Eumaeus uses as his blanket (14.48-52), and eats and drinks (14.72-184). Eumaeus shares with him the best portion of the meat (14.440-441). Eumaeus does not question the stranger until they have eaten (14.185-190). The stranger is given a bed and garment as a blanket (14.518-24), and later Eumaeus takes measures to ensure his safety into the city (14.515-517; 17.182-203). The relationship between Eumaeus' hospitality and his piety is often noted. Eumaeus declares that he would never turn away a guest "for from Zeus are all strangers and beggars" (πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσὶν ἅπαντες ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε, 14.57-58), and that he shows hospitality not as a personal favor "but from fear of Zeus the stranger's god" (ἀλλὰ Δία ξένοιον δείσας, 14.388-389).

There are repeated references to Odysseus testing Eumaeus. For example, when it rains the entire night Odysseus "made trial" of the swineherd to see whether he would give him his cloak (14.457-461). Eumaeus' response of moving the stranger's bed toward the fire and laying down thicker cloaks passes Odysseus' test (14.518-522). After Odysseus has slept, he again "made trial" of Eumaeus to see whether "he would still show kindly hospitality to him...or send him forth to the city" (15.304-306). Eumaeus declares that he is not annoyed by the stranger's presence and bids him to stay (15.325-339). In addition to his hospitality, Eumaeus' declarations that he longs for Odysseus'

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<sup>87</sup> So Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, 145-164; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 36-37.

<sup>88</sup> The poor and humble description of Eumaeus' hospitality reminds the reader of Ovid's myth of Baucis and Philemon. So Belmont [*Early Greek Guest-Friendship and its Role in Homer's Odyssey*, 157] who states: "We are here reminded of the myth of a similar reception of the disguised Zeus and Hermes by the elderly Baucis and Philemon, who like Eumaeus, offered their humble fare unstintingly and were ultimately rewarded suitably for their piety, while all those who had refused hospitality were destroyed."

return (14.61-71) and his wrath toward the suitors (14.80-108) indicates his loyalty to the laws of hospitality. Having proved his loyalty to Odysseus and demonstrated his hospitality toward strangers, the stranger reveals his identity to Eumaeus (21.205-210).<sup>89</sup> Odysseus speaks a blessing and promises a reward for Eumaeus' hospitality (14.53-54).<sup>90</sup>

Now, however, the rest of Odysseus' household must prove their fidelity to the hospitality laws. Telemachus demonstrates his loyalty to the laws of hospitality upon his arrival to Eumaeus' hut: he forbids the stranger to give him his seat (16.40-45), he laments his inability to show the stranger proper hospitality due to the presence of the suitors (16.56-74), he promises to provide new clothes and sandals, and promises provisions for his journey (16.78-82). In the midst of Telemachus' hospitality, Athena appears to Odysseus and transforms him into a godlike appearance. Telemachus turns away "lest he [the beggar] should be a god" (16.179). Telemachus' impulse is entirely correct: "Truly you are a god, one of those who hold broad heaven. Please be gracious so that we may offer to you acceptable sacrifices and golden gifts" (16.179-184).<sup>91</sup> Telemachus is right that the power of the divine is at work in Odysseus, despite the wrong conclusion that Odysseus is divine (16.185-189).<sup>92</sup> Eumaeus will lead Odysseus into the city (16.270-274) to test the suitors, Penelope, and his servants (16.310-315).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> On this scene, see Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 23-25.

<sup>90</sup> For Odysseus' fulfillment of this promise, see 21.214-216.

<sup>91</sup> Telemachus' fear and promise to give gifts is a classic theoxenic impulse as we will continue to see in our examination of further theoxenies.

<sup>92</sup> So also, Kearns, "The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny," 4.

<sup>93</sup> That Telemachus, Penelope, and a few of the servants play the parts of those who pass the god's test by showing hospitality is suggested by Kearns, "The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny," 8

Penelope demonstrates her loyalty through her tricks to delay marriage, her longing for his return, and in her hospitality to the stranger.<sup>94</sup> After the suitors have used the guest for sport, Penelope rebukes Telemachus for the poor treatment of the stranger:

What a thing is this that has been done in these halls, such that you should allow a stranger to be so poorly treated! What if the stranger, while sitting in our own halls should come to some harm through this grievous mishandling? On you, then, would fall shame and disgrace among men. (18.221-225)

Her hatred for the suitors brings delight to Odysseus (18.281-283). She tells the stranger how she longs for Odysseus' return (19.308-313), and she mourns the suitors' inversion of Odysseus' hospitality who himself "used to send reverend strangers on their way and would welcome them (ξείνους αἰδοίους ἀποπεμπέμεν ἠδὲ δέχεσθαι)" (19.315-316). Later Penelope rebukes the suitor Antinous for mistreatment of "Telemachus' guest" (ξείνους Τηλεμάχου) and calls his inhospitality "unjust" (οὐδὲ δίκαιον, 21.311-313). Upon his return to his household, then, the disguised Odysseus has tested the hospitality of some of his household members and their hospitality has proved to vindicate them.

Even before the reader encounters Odysseus' interaction with the suitors, there is no suspense regarding their fate. The reader knows they have violated the laws of hospitality. The narrator makes a point to mention this fact in connection with their impiety to the gods in that they devour Odysseus' livelihood without making sacrifices. Further, the model characters are united in their outrage against the suitors (Menelaus:

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<sup>94</sup> The reestablishment of the husband-wife relationship between Odysseus and Penelope is complex. See Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 42-52. On the role of Penelope's hospitality and her recognition of Odysseus, see Peter Gainsford, "Cognition and Type-scenes: the *Aoidos* at Work," in *Homer, Tragedy and Beyond – Essays in Honour of P.E. Easterling* (ed. Felix Budelmann and Pantelis Michelakis; London: The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies 2001) 1-21, here, 9-11.

17.124-151, Eumaeus: 14.80-88).<sup>95</sup> Omens often interrupt the story validating the suitors' doom (15.525-534), and Athena guides Odysseus' acts (19.1-3, 31-34, 50).<sup>96</sup>

Their violation of the hospitality laws climaxes in their treatment of Odysseus. As Eumaeus leads the stranger into the city, Melantheus reviles them:

Lo, now in very truth the vile leads the vile! As always, the god is bringing like and like together. Why, pray, miserable swineherd, are you leading this filthy wretch, this nuisance of a beggar to mar our feasts? He is a man to stand and rub his shoulders on our doorposts, begging for scraps...Since he has learned only deeds of evil he will not care to busy himself with work, but will go throughout the land begging so that he may feed his insatiate belly...If he comes to the palace of divine Odysseus, many a footstool, hurled about his head by the hands of those that are men, will be broken on his ribs as he is pelted through the home. (17.217-231)

Odysseus' palace has been transformed from a place that welcomes and shows hospitality to strangers into a place of abuse for strangers. Odysseus enters into his own palace "in the likeness of a woeful and aged beggar" (17.336-338) and one-by-one suffers abuse from the suitors. Athena plants the plan within Odysseus' heart to beg from each one of them for a piece of bread "in order to learn which of them were righteous and which lawless" (17.360-369).<sup>97</sup> As the suitors are questioning each other as to where this beggar has come from, Antinous rebukes Eumaeus for ruining their feast by bringing this wretch to it (17.370-379). When Odysseus asks Antinous for something to eat, Antinous responds: "What god has brought this bane here to trouble our feast? Stand far off from here, far away from my table....seeing that you are a bold and shameless beggar"

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<sup>95</sup> Belmont [*Early Greek Guest-Friendship and Its Role in Homer's *Odyssey**, 160-161] rightly notes that in every instance in which Telemachus or Odysseus experience ideal hospitality elsewhere it serves as a foil to the suitors who "hover contrastingly in the background."

<sup>96</sup> The suitors consistently reject or are unable to recognize these omens. For example, note Eurymachus' interpretation of an omen: "I can interpret these matters much better than you can. Many birds fly here and there under the sun, and not all are significant. But Odysseus died far away, as you too should have died with him." (2.180-184). See Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 80-81.

<sup>97</sup> The term *θέμις* is difficult to translate but can be understood as "propriety" or "that which is lawful."

(17.445-449). Antinous' inversion of the hospitality laws is striking. After his rebuke of the stranger he proceeds to take a footstool, an instrument intended for hospitality, and throws it at the stranger, striking him in the shoulder (17.462-467). That the suitors are engaged in a theoxenic scene is hinted at in the rebuke of Antinous made by one suitor:

Antinous, you have not done well to strike this wretched wanderer. Doomed man that you are, what if he should be some god come down from heaven (τις ἐπουράνιος θεός)! Yes, and the god in the guise of strangers from afar put on all manner of shapes (θεοὶ ξείνοισιν εἰκότες ἄλλοδαποῖσι), and visit the cities, beholding the violence and the righteousness of men. (17.483-487)<sup>98</sup>

The passage is significant for understanding the theoxenic logic of Odysseus' return. Odysseus is characterized as "godlike" and the references to his patron deity Athena indicate that the divine presence is on his side. Further, he is doing precisely that of which the suitor warns. He is disguised as a begging stranger and he is meticulously testing each one of them to see if they are righteous or wicked. None of the suitors pass the test. In another inversion of the hospitality laws, Ctesippus says he will give a "guest-gift," but instead of giving him the best portion of meat he throws an ox-hoof at Odysseus (20.292-304).<sup>99</sup> The feast is one of continual mockery, laughing, and abuse (20.346-374). Piraeus laughs at Odysseus and tells Telemachus that he is unlucky for he receives the most "evil guests" (κακοξενώτερος) imaginable (20.376-380).

We need not spend much time recounting Odysseus' punishment of the suitors. Through the contest to see who can string the bow, however, the reader sees that Odysseus is forced to compete with the suitors in the one place in which he ought not to

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<sup>98</sup> This passage was well-known in antiquity. For example, in Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* the King Dionysius mistakes Callirhoe for the goddess Aphrodite and exclaims: "And the gods, taking the shape of strangers from other lands, observe the insolence and the orderly behavior of mankind" (II.3).

<sup>99</sup> Seaford [*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 62] rightly states: "The violent act is paradoxically assimilated to the accepted mode of creating (by giving a *xeineion*) the friendly relation between strangers of *xenia*. Reciprocity and sacrificial are by implication simultaneously subverted, as when Polyphemos cruelly describes as his *xeineion* to Odysseus the privilege of being eaten last of all his companions."

be forced to compete – his household.<sup>100</sup> It is of further interest to see that as Antinous struck him with a footstool so Odysseus reciprocates by shooting an arrow through his throat (22.14-15). That the suitors' inversion of the laws of hospitality is reciprocated by Odysseus with retribution is further seen in Odysseus' killing of Ctessipus, the one who threw an ox hoof at him as a guest-gift.<sup>101</sup> Odysseus boasts over the dying suitor: "This is now your guest-gift (ξείνῆϊον) to match the hoof which you recently gave to godlike Odysseus when he went begging through the house" (22.291-292). Odysseus exacts retribution against all of the suitors who have inverted the laws of hospitality.<sup>102</sup> While Odysseus' killing of the suitors contains many elements of an epiphany, there is no recognition scene whereby his identity is revealed to them. This may be seen, however, as emphasizing the suitors' impiety, for it is often the case in theoxenies that only the pious recognize the identity of the stranger.<sup>103</sup> And given that hospitality was the means whereby the identity of a stranger was revealed, the suitors have denied Odysseus the channel to reveal who he is. Having killed all of them, Odysseus states:

These men here the fate of the gods has destroyed and their own reckless deeds,  
for they honored no one of men upon the earth, whether he were evil or good,  
whosoever came among them. Therefore, by their evil folly they brought on  
themselves a shameful death. (22.413-414; cf. 23.61-68)

The narrator portrays Odysseus' complete retribution against the suitors as just and as the will of the gods.<sup>104</sup> Omens and portents interrupt the narrative to indicate that Zeus is

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<sup>100</sup> Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 63.

<sup>101</sup> The parody of the guest-gift by Odysseus as an instrument of revenge is striking, for reciprocity was at the heart of both gift-giving as well as personal vengeance and retribution. On this, see Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual*, 23-29, 63-64.

<sup>102</sup> Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, 179.

<sup>103</sup> See Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 56-57; Rose, "Divine Disguisings," 67-68.

<sup>104</sup> Kearns ["The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny," 7] states: "The dénouement of the *Odyssey* is in full accordance with the concept of divine justice expressed and implicit in the poem. It should not be necessary to demonstrate in detail that the slaughter of the suitors is, at least in part, a moral act." For the argument that the slaying of the suitors is "an orgy of blood vengeance," see Whitman, *Homer and the*

displeased with the suitors' violation of the laws of hospitality and that the gods have willed their deaths (15.525-530; 17.155-161; 20.98-121; 20.240-243). Athena is characterized as the mastermind behind the destruction of the suitors. She is further portrayed as "the personification of the will of the gods" (e.g., 20.42; 22.256, 279-301; 24.479-80).<sup>105</sup> Odysseus, as the agent of the gods, returns to Ithaca and, like a god in a theoxeny, punishes the sins of the suitors and thereby restores civilization. The suitors have corrupted the essential institutions of civilization, and therefore are deserving of retribution from Odysseus.<sup>106</sup> Odysseus' return, then, has less to do with personal revenge and, rather, more to do with the restoration of civilization through his mediation of divine justice.<sup>107</sup> The gods are on the side of those who uphold the laws of hospitality.

## II. Extending the Cultural Script I: Hospitality in Post-Homeric Greek Writings

### A. Theoxenies and Euripides' *Bacchae*

The theoxenic aspect of the cultural script is widespread and impossible to treat in its entirety.<sup>108</sup> There is literary and epigraphic evidence for the presence of a sacrificial ritual in which the Greeks would worship the gods through the conventions of the hospitable entertainment of a guest – referred to as *theoxenia*.<sup>109</sup> Michael Jameson has

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*Homeric Tradition*, 305-308. For a mediating view, see Harry L. Levy, "The Odyssean Suitors and the Guest-Host Relationship," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 94 (1963) 145-153.

<sup>105</sup> Kearns, "The Return of Odysseus: A Homeric Theoxeny," 8.

<sup>106</sup> Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome*, 181-182. Murnaghan. *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 63.

<sup>107</sup> Murnaghan [*Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, 63] states: "It is in relation to the rights and obligations of the individual household that the Homeric gods act according to principles that are sufficiently consistent to be identified with justice." Seaford [*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 42-65] rightly notes that Odysseus' homecoming functions to restore the proper sacrificial rituals which the suitors have corrupted. On justice and morality within the *Odyssey*, see Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971) 28-33.

<sup>108</sup> For those interested in further references, see Anne Pippin Burnett, "Pentheus and Dionysus: Host and Guest," *Classical Philology* 65 (1970) 15-29, here 24-25 n. 8. Also see Daniela Flückiger-Guggenheim, *Göttliche Gäste: Die Einkehr von Göttern und Heroen in der griechischen Mythologie* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1984); Malten, "Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Sagenforschung," 176-186.

<sup>109</sup> Michael H. Jameson ["*Theoxenia*" in *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence* (ed. Robin Hägg; Stockholm: Svenska Institutet, 1994) 35-57, here 36] notes that while the concept is present in

demonstrated in detail how the hosts would entertain deities through the elements of issuing an invitation, adorning couches for reclining, setting a table with food and drink, and using tokens to represent the presence of the gods as guests.<sup>110</sup>

Of particular importance are the Dioskouroi, or the Twin Brothers, who were pursued as guests during this ritual. Numerous public festivals of *theoxenia* were held in the Twin Brothers' honor where a table would be spread, along with a couch for their reclining.<sup>111</sup> Vase paintings and reliefs depict the two horsemen galloping through the heavens towards two couches prepared for them.<sup>112</sup> There are also literary references to the Dioskouroi being entertained and pursued as guests. Herodotus refers to Euphorion who “welcomed Castor and Pollux under his own roof and afterwards kept open house for all strangers” (τοὺς Διοσκούρους οἰκίοισι καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου ξεινοδοκέοντος πάντας ἀνθρώπους, *Histories* 6.127).<sup>113</sup> In Euripides' *Helen*, the Twins promise Helen that when she dies she will be made a goddess, as the Twins have already been made gods by Zeus, and like the Dioskouroi she “will receive the gifts of hospitality from mortals” (ξένιά τ' ἀνθρώπων πάρα ἔξεις μεθ' ἡμῶν, 1668-1669).<sup>114</sup> The Spartan Phormion is punished by the Dioskouroi for his ungenerous hospitality to them in his house (Pausanias 3.16.3). Polyaeus notes that when Jason was planning to attack Thessaly, he made a vow “to celebrate a magnificent sacrifice in honor of them” should the Twins give assistance to him for the war. Thus, Jason's mother sends to him the most

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numerous places, the term τὰ θεοξένια only occurs with respect to “Apollo, at Delphia and Pellene, and for the Dioskourou at Akragas and Paros, and probably elsewhere (e.g. Karthaia on Keos and Tenos).”

<sup>110</sup> Jameson, “*Theoxenia*,” 35-57; also see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 107.

<sup>111</sup> Jameson, “*Theoxenia*,” 47-48; also Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 213.

<sup>112</sup> Flückiger-Guggenheim, *Göttliche Gäste*, 62-63; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 107 n. 84, 212-213; David Gill, “*Trapezometa*: A Neglected Aspect of Greek Sacrifice,” *HTR* 67 (1974) 117-137, esp. 120-123.

<sup>113</sup> For text and translation, see *Herodotus* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920-1925). A more detailed exposition for many of the following references can be found in Flückiger-Guggenheim, *Göttliche Gäste*, 62-70.

<sup>114</sup> For text and translation, see *Euripides* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994-2008).

costly and beautiful instruments of hospitality for the entertainment of the Dioskouroi (Polyaenus, *Stratagems* 6.1.3). Diodorus Siculus narrates that after receiving favorable omens during a sacrifice, before their return trip home, the Locrians prepared a couch in order to give hospitality to the Dioskouroi (8.32). Based on these literary references as well as the epigraphic evidence of *theoxenia* for the Twins, it appears that the Dioskouroi were viewed as helpers to those with emergencies and that the means of pursuing their help was the offer of hospitality. Thus, either in a response for services rendered or as a means of pursuing their help, one finds references to couches for reclining, silverware for eating and drinking, and sacrifices and libations in honor of these gods.

One of the most popular literary accounts of a theoxeny is Euripides' *Bacchae* which uses a "plot of divine punishment" to tell the story of Dionysus' inhospitable visit to King Pentheus of Thebes.<sup>115</sup> The continuation of Homer's depiction of wandering gods who appear in disguise to test humanity's piety is best embodied in stories about Dionysus. Dionysus is "the divine stranger *par excellence* of the ancient world," and the deity "who most tends to manifest himself among humankind, and to do so in various forms."<sup>116</sup> The central text which dramatizes Dionysus' forceful installation of his cult in Thebes is Euripides' *Bacchae*.<sup>117</sup> The text follows the Homeric pattern of a theoxeny.

Dionysus' speech in the prologue epitomizes the *Bacchae*'s theoxenic punishment of Pentheus. The elements of a god taking the shape of a mortal, wandering to various

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<sup>115</sup> Burnett, "Pentheus and Dionysus," *Host and Guest*, 15; The *Bacchae* is one example of stories of royal resistance to new cults. See Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 36-40.

<sup>116</sup> For the first quote: Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 35; for the second quote: Richard Seaford, *Dionysos* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006) 39. Dionysus' popularity among worshippers is attested to by the four major Greek festivals devoted to the god: the Anthesteria, the Agrionia, the Dionysia, and the Katagorgia ("The Great Dionysia"). See Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 163.

<sup>117</sup> Among numerous descriptions, see also Homer, *Iliad*, 6.130-140; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.510-733; *Homeric Hymn* 7; Nonnus, *Dionysiaka*, 47.34-225. Also, see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 161-167.

lands as a stranger, testing humans based on their (in)hospitable reception of the deity, and giving rewards or punishments are all present. In the first lines of the prologue Dionysus declares: “I have come” to Thebes” ( Ἦκω, 1), and “I have exchanged my divine form for a mortal one” (μορφὴν δ’ ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτῆσίαν πάρειμι, 4-5).<sup>118</sup> After establishing his rites throughout Asia, Dionysus has come to install his cult in the Greek cities, the first of which is Thebes (20-31).<sup>119</sup> He has already forcibly stung the women of the city with Dionysian madness and driven them to the mountains to perform his rites (32-43).<sup>120</sup> Should Pentheus and the rest of the city try to stop these bacchants from worshipping the god, Dionysus will make war against them. Dionysus’ intent to test the King is the reason for his disguise: “That is why I have taken on mortal form and changed my appearance to that of a man” (53-54). There is no suspense as to whether Dionysus’ cultic practices will be established, for he expressly declares that the land “must learn them to the full whether it wants to or not” (39-40). Suspense is also lacking as to whether the god will be treated hospitably, for Dionysus declares that Pentheus “is a god-fighter (θεομαχῆι) where my worship is concerned, forcibly excluding me from libations and making no mention of me in prayer” (45-46). Nevertheless, Dionysus will demonstrate to all that he is a god and then will “journey on to another land” (47-50).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> On Dionysus’ sobriquet as “the god who comes,” see Walter F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult* (trans. Robert B. Palmer; Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1965) 79-85.

<sup>119</sup> It is not simply individual homes but the entire *polis* which must accept his cult (39-40, 50, 320-321, 770, 1295). On stories and traditions regarding the installation of new cults, see Elizabeth R. Gebhard, “The Gods in Transit: Narratives of Cult Transfer,” in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays in Ancient Religion and Philosophy. Present to Hans Dieter Betz on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (eds. Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001) 451-476.

<sup>120</sup> For the details of the cultic rituals involved in the worship of Dionysus, including the women’s procession out to the hills and their return to the city, see Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual*, 238-251.

<sup>121</sup> The prologue is filled with the epiphanic language of “manifest,” “demonstrate,” and “appear” (e.g., 22, 42, 47-48, and 50). See R.P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948) 17-18, 163-167; Richard Hamilton, “Bacchae 47-55: Dionysus’ Plan,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 104 (1974) 34-49, esp. 44-49.

i. Dionysus comes to Thebes disguised as a stranger and seeking hospitality for his cult

To Dionysus' first words can be added the final lines of the tragedy spoken by the chorus:

What heaven sends has many shapes (πολλὰ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων),  
and many things the gods accomplish against our expectation. What men  
look for is not brought to pass, but a god finds a way to achieve the  
unexpected. Such was the outcome of this story. (1388-1392)

Thus, the opening and closing lines of *Bacchae* form an *inclusio* revealing the centrality of the god's disguise to the plot. Like Odysseus' return to Ithaca, the entire tragedy hinges upon Dionysus' disguise as a stranger which allows him to test Pentheus.<sup>122</sup> Throughout the play, Pentheus (and others) refers to the god as ὁ ξένος, and frequently as a stranger who is corrupting the city with his foreign cult (e.g., 233, 247, 441, 643, 800, 1047, and 1063).<sup>123</sup> Pentheus, for example, calls him “the effeminate-shaped stranger” (τὸν θηλύμορφον ξένον, 353) and a “stranger attractive to women” (ξένε ὡς ἐς γυναῖκας, 453-54).

ii. Pentheus rejects and scorns the disguised god

The appropriate response to the disguised stranger is hospitality, the giving of honor, and pouring libations to the god. Teiresias (seer of Thebes) and Cadmus (father-in-law of Pentheus) demonstrate proper treatment of the stranger.<sup>124</sup> They are ready to worship the god and give him τίμη (192), for the god “wants to receive joint honor from everyone” (ἐξ ἀπάντων βούλεται τιμὰς ἔχειν) and to be magnified by all without exception” (209-210).<sup>125</sup> In his warning to Pentheus, Cadmus declares: “join us in giving

<sup>122</sup> Burnett [“Pentheus and Dionysus,” 25] notes: “The visiting divinity masquerades in part that he may discriminate between those who do not keep the ancient rules of pious conduct in their daily actions....”

<sup>123</sup> Likewise Pausanias 7.19.6; 10.19.3.

<sup>124</sup> On Teiresias and Cadmus, see Winington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus*, 40-58.

<sup>125</sup> In Ovid's version of the story, Teiresias warns the king of failing to honor the god: “The day is near, I know, when the new god shall come, the son of Semele, whose due is honor from you; if you scorn his

honor (τιμῆν δίδου) to the god” (342).<sup>126</sup> Repeatedly, Pentheus is told to show hospitality to the god and give him worship: “Welcome the god into the land (τὸν θεὸν δ’ ἐς γῆν δέχου), pour libations to him, join the ecstatic dance, crown your head!” (312-313).

One of the motivations for offering hospitality is the promised blessings and rewards which Dionysus will give. At the height of Pentheus’ rejection of the god, a messenger begs him: “Master, welcome (δέχου) this god into the city...for I am told that he gave to mortals the vine that puts an end to pain” (769-773). So Cadmus and Teiresias, upon their encounter of Pentheus’ impiety toward Dionysus, beg the god in prayer to withhold harm from Thebes (358-368). Throughout the play, there is a frequent promise of rewards should the people give honor and show hospitality to the god. The chorus declares that such a person is “blessed” and “happy” (72), for Dionysus is the one who causes the ground to run with milk, wine, and nectar (140-143). The god loves to give wealth, peace, and joy to both rich and poor worshippers (417-432). And Teiresias rebukes the King for rejecting the god of the vine who alleviates humanity’s pain (265-284). Even after multiple acts of persecution of the god, the disguised Dionysus offers the King “rescue” (803) and “salvation” (806) should he welcome him into Thebes.<sup>127</sup>

Nevertheless, Pentheus treats the stranger with nothing but scorn, inhospitality, and persecution.<sup>128</sup> Dionysus has come to test Pentheus to see whether he will try to put

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temple, you will be torn into a thousand pieces, your blood pollute the woods, and its defilement spatter your mother and your mother’s sisters. And this will happen: you will never honor that god” (*Met.* 3.518-523).

<sup>126</sup> Also relevant is Teiresias’ rebuke of Pentheus: “The god too, I think, takes pleasure in honor (τιμώμενος)” (321).

<sup>127</sup> For more references, see Burnett, “Pentheus and Dionysus,” 26.

<sup>128</sup> A central portion of the play is a verbal contest between Pentheus and Dionysus (170-369). See Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 36 n. 32.

an end to the performance of the god's rites. The King's first words indicate that he has failed the god's test, for he declares that he has put the bacchants in prison, and he continues to hunt for others to imprison (215-232). Further, Pentheus boasts that if he finds the effeminate stranger then he will decapitate him (233-249). Having declared his refusal to accept the god into Thebes, Pentheus turns to further violent persecution of the cult. He declares that he will punish the stranger (343-351); he imprisons Dionysus (509-518); and he prepares to make war against the bacchants (778-786). In Ovid's version of the story, Pentheus' inhospitality to Dionysus is symbolized by "shutting the city-gates flat in [Dionysus'] face" (*Metamorphoses* 3.560). Ovid also describes the inhospitality to the god by King Acrisius of Argos who shut the city gates against Dionysus (*Metamorphoses* 605-609).

### iii. Dionysus punishes Pentheus

Throughout the tragedy, Euripides characterizes Pentheus as a "god-fighter" (θεομάχος, 45) and "hubristic" (ὕβρις, 516, 555, and 1347).<sup>129</sup> Further, his scorn and inhospitality toward the stranger repeatedly earns him the tag of "impious." Upon his initial proclamation to hunt the bacchants, the chorus declares: "What impiety! Do you not reverence the gods?" (263-264). Dionysus tells the King that his rites are "hostile to anyone who practices impiety" (476). As the King and the stranger are exchanging ripostes with each other, Dionysus declares that the god is near and he sees the contempt with which he is treated (500). The following exchange is significant (501-502):

Pentheus: "Where is he? To my eyes he is not in evidence."

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<sup>129</sup> Aristotle defines "hubris" as "doing and saying things at which the victim incurs shame" (*Rhetoric* 1378b). Pentheus' "hubris" is often connected to his inability to control his anger (214, 670) and his lack of self-control. On "hubris," see N. R. E. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992). For more on the characterization of Pentheus as a "god-fighter," see Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 40-44.

Dionysus: “He is with me. But since you are a godless man you do not see him.”

The remark is full of irony but its primary significance lay in the explicit connection between Pentheus’ impiety and his inability to see the god.<sup>130</sup> Again, we have further evidence that piety towards the gods is expressed through the practice of hospitality. The drama, in fact, hinges upon the connection between the King’s impious inhospitality to the stranger and the god’s attendant punishment of the King. We need not spend much time on the details of the King’s punishment.<sup>131</sup> Dionysus infuses Pentheus with madness and tricks him into dressing as a bacchant so that the King can spy on the god’s worshippers (810-845). When the King is spotted by the worshipping bacchants, it is his mother Agave – herself maddened in ecstatic worship of Dionysus – who entirely dismembers him (1039-1152). Through his destruction, the King “will learn that Dionysus is in the full sense a god” (859-860).<sup>132</sup> Pentheus’ final words are “This is only what I deserve” (972).<sup>133</sup> Pentheus’ destruction is justified, for as Dionysus concludes: “Though a god, I was treated with hubris” (καὶ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμῶν θεὸς γεγῶς ὑβριζόμεν, 1347).

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<sup>130</sup> Winnington-Ingram [*Euripides and Dionysus*, 165] states: “Through the play Dionysus is manifesting himself, to the eyes and to the understanding: the theme is fundamental.” We have already seen this motif in the *Odyssey* where the suitors are entirely blind to the presence of Athena. See the helpful comments of Rose, “Divine Disguisings,” 71, who notes that the pious are often able to see through the disguise or mask of the deity in theoxenic settings.

<sup>131</sup> On Dionysus’ punishment of those who resist him, see Park McGinty, “Dionysos’s Revenge and the Validation of the Hellenic World-View,” *HTR* 71 (1978) 77-94, here, 78.

<sup>132</sup> While Dionysus’ revenge upon Pentheus is harsh, the myth functions to remind humans of the inseparable connection between impiety toward the gods and punishment as well as reinforcing the belief in the asymmetrical power and status of the gods over humans. On the former, see Burnett, “Pentheus and Dionysus,” 15; for the latter, see McGinty, “Dionysos’s Revenge and the Validation of the Hellenic World-View,” 77-94. And on Pentheus’ death as a perverted sacrificial ritual, see the reading of Helen P. Foley, *Ritual Irony: Poetry and Sacrifice in Euripides* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985) 208-218.

<sup>133</sup> Burnett’s [“Pentheus and Dionysus,” 29] comments about the ending of the play are apropos: “Pentheus would not play host to the god in disguise; he gave him, in fact, the only kind of defeat a god can know, for he refused even to be pardoned for his errors and finally left his visitor with no alternative to making a punishment tragedy of the piece.”

The role of hospitality plays a significant yet muted role in the *Bacchae*. We have seen that the appropriate response to the stranger is indeed “welcome” into the land, the giving of “honor,” and cultic worship of the god. The play centers upon Pentheus’ impious resistance of Dionysus, and therefore his characterization as a god-fighter, full of hubris, and his recourse to violence and imprisonment overshadow his refusal to give proper hospitality to the god.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, the reader can easily discern how the plot of the *Bacchae* follows the theoxenic logic we have seen in the *Odyssey*: (a) a god disguises himself as a stranger, (b) in order to test the piety of his host(s) to see whether they will extend hospitality to the stranger, and (c), rewards or punishes the host(s) on the basis of his execution of the hospitality laws.

#### B. Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* and the Corruption of Hospitality

In the *Eumenides*, the concluding play of his trilogy the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus celebrates how the Athenian *polis*, through the divine patronage of Athena herself, produces civic justice for humanity and overcomes the cycle of familial blood-vengeance. The trilogy is, therefore, not simply a dramatic description of the cursed house of Atreus, but is rather a celebration of how the democratic *polis* of Athens is able to end the arbitrary execution of vengeance by the individual and thereby become “the guarantor of the freedom and the human dignity and security of the individual.”<sup>135</sup> The *Eumenides* introduces us to the notion of political hospitality whereby alliances are created that overcome the tribal warring of individual families and households. While the overarching purpose of his *Oresteia* is well-known, it is not as frequently noticed that Aeschylus demonstrates the fall of the house of Atreus through a series of violations of

<sup>134</sup> Weaver [*Plots of Epiphany*, 35] rightly notes: “In this way, tales of *theoxenia* constituted literary symbolizations of both proper and improper disposition toward the divine in the ancient world.”

<sup>135</sup> Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 1.260.

guest-friendship and corruptions of the hospitality laws.<sup>136</sup> Further, Aeschylus demonstrates the descent of Greek society and cultured behavior into a “barbaric” lifestyle precisely by portraying the Greek characters as transgressors of the hospitality codes through intra-familial violence.<sup>137</sup> The corruption of the hospitality rituals symbolically represents a disruption and perversion of the household which is central to the conflict of the trilogy.

i. Paris Violates his Guest-Friendship with Menelaus (*Agamemnon*)

The Trojan Paris’ transgression of Menelaus’ hospitality functions as a backdrop against which Aeschylus presents the house of Atreus’ descent into further transgressions of the hospitality code.<sup>138</sup> Paris and the Trojans are “barbarized” by the Greek Tragedians, and therefore the emphasis Aeschylus places upon this barbarian’s violation of the hospitality laws is an ironic backdrop against which the reader views the Greek characters’ violation of the hospitality laws.<sup>139</sup> The religious sanctions for hospitality are frequently emphasized in the *Agamemnon*: Zeus is invoked as the one meting out justice against the violators of hospitality. The theme is indicated immediately when the chorus sings of the justice of the Trojan War that was divinely initiated by Zeus: “So the sons of Atreus were sent against Alexander by the mightier power, Zeus god of hospitality

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<sup>136</sup> See, however, the helpful essays by G. W. Regenos, “Guest-Friendship in Greek Tragedy,” *The Classical Bulletin* 31 (1955) 49-56; and Paul Roth, “The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*,” *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993) 1-17. Seaford [*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 368-378] notes that other corruptions of household rituals are present in the *Oresteia*, including the death ritual and the wedding.

<sup>137</sup> Seaford [*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 13] notes that the “solidarity and relative autonomy of the Homeric household contrasts sharply with tragedy, in which violence within the family is a central theme...”

<sup>138</sup> On Paris as a violator of guest-friendship, see Homer’s *Iliad* 3.350-354; 13.620-625; Euripides, *The Trojan Women*, 864-867, 946-947. Also, see Simon Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: the Oresteia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 13-14. Goldhill notes: “The conjunction of Menelaus and Agamemnon in one household...maintains the focus on a single household. Especially when compared with the Homeric narrative, where it is quite plain that the two brothers live in different places, it becomes most pointed that the relation of opposition between Paris and the house of Atreus is to be viewed as binary, between a single household and a ξένος.”

<sup>139</sup> On this, see Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 56-159.

(ξένιος Ζεύς)” (*Aga.* 60-62).<sup>140</sup> The destruction of Troy is spoken of as the will of “Zeus the god of hospitality” (*Aga.* 362-363). Paris is destroyed by divine Justice because “he shamed the table of hospitality (ἧσχυνε ξενίων τράπεζαν) by stealing away a wife” (395-402; cf. 525-527). Again, the chorus declares its agreement that Paris deserved Wrath for his “dishonoring of the host’s table and of Zeus god of hearth-sharing (ξυνεστίου Διός)” (701-704; cf. 745-749). The repeated emphasis upon divine retributive justice against Troy, Paris as a transgressor of the hospitality of his host Menelaus, and Zeus’ characterization as ξένιος Ζεύς indicates the centrality of the theme in the *Oresteia*.<sup>141</sup> The gross nature of the corruption of hospitality by the members of the house of Atreus is ironically highlighted by this emphasis upon Paris’ transgression of the guest-friendship codes.

ii. Clytemnestra corrupts the hospitable giving of a bath and robe (*Agamemnon*)

Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, assumes the role of host as her husband returns from the Trojan War with his new mistress Cassandra. The reader knows that during Agamemnon’s protracted absence Clytemnestra has invited Aegisthus into her home as her lover. The reader also knows that Clytemnestra is aware that Agamemnon has sacrificed their daughter Iphigenia (*Agamemnon* 207-217, 223-247).<sup>142</sup> Her

<sup>140</sup> For text and translation, see *Aeschylus, Oresteia* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>141</sup> Roth, “The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*,” 2; on justice in the *Oresteia*, see Gilbert T. Murray, *Aeschylus: the Creator of Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940) 177-206.

<sup>142</sup> Three possibilities in antiquity were given for Clytemnestra’s hatred of Agamemnon: a) anger over the sacrifice of Iphigenia, b) love of Aegisthus, and c) knowledge of Agamemnon’s relationship with Cassandra. Richard Lattimore [“Introduction to the *Oresteia*,” in *Aeschylus: A Collection of Critical Essays* (ed. Marsh H. McCall, Jr; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1972) 73-89, here 74-75] remarks that for Aeschylus, all three options contribute to her hatred of Agamemnon.

characterization as a deceptive host in the guise of “the ideal woman” is indicated in her words:<sup>143</sup>

I will make haste to give my honorable husband the best possible welcome (δέξασθαι) when he comes home. What light could be sweeter than this for a wife to behold, when she opens the door (πύλας ἀνοίξει) to a husband whom god has brought safe home from the wars? ... May he come to find the wife in his palace just as faithful as when he left her, a watchdog of the house, friendly to him and hostile to those who wished him ill, and loyal in all other respects too, having broken no seal in all this long time; and I know no more of pleasure from another man, or of scandalous rumor, than I do of the tempering of steel. Such is my boast, and, being full of truth, it is not a disgraceful one for a noble woman to utter. (600-614)

But Clytemnestra is no Penelope, and her speech is full of deceptive irony. Roth notes that Clytemnestra “not only violates the code of hospitality by murdering her ‘guests,’ but she perverts the code in order to do so.”<sup>144</sup> As “host” she will kill both her husband and Cassandra precisely through the instruments of hospitality.<sup>145</sup> Agamemnon’s downfall will be the result of his supposedly loyal wife’s hospitality, specifically her “opening the gates” of the house to her husband.<sup>146</sup> So also with Cassandra, Clytemnestra urges her to come inside the house so that, as a stranger and foreigner, she may be incorporated into the family through shared participation in domestic worship of the gods. Clytemnestra declares to her: “You come along inside too...since Zeus, far from being angry with you, has enabled you to share the lustral water of this house, standing round the altar of Zeus Ktesios among other slaves” (1035-1038). Ironically, Clytemnestra says that the sheep are ready for sacrifice (1056-1055-1058), and later the

<sup>143</sup> Clytemnestra’s self-description draws on stereotypes of “the ideal woman.” See Haruo Konish, *The Plot of Aeschylus’ Oresteia: A Literary Commentary* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1990) 76-77.

<sup>144</sup> Roth, “The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*,” 5.

<sup>145</sup> Elizabeth S. Belfiore [*Murder Among Friends: Violation of Philia in Greek Tragedy* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 14] writes: “In tragedy, to a much greater extent than in epic, harm to suppliants and *xenoi* is represented as similar to harm to blood kin....Unlike epic, tragedy also portrays offenses against *xenoi* as betrayals of an existing *philia* relationship, represented as similar to kinship.”

<sup>146</sup> Seaford [*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 388-389] refers to her inversion of the hospitality laws as “tragic reciprocity.”

Chorus refers to Cassandra's death as being like an ox to the sacrificial altar and says that it can smell the blood of the sacrifices at the hearth (1295-1298; 1309-1310).<sup>147</sup> Cassandra herself refers to her impending death as a sacrifice (1278). Though Cassandra is a captive, she is also a "guest" and is referred to as such (ἡ ξένη, 950, 1062, and 1093). We have seen from our examination of the *Odyssey* that often within the context of hospitality, the host invites the guest/stranger to share in the religious and cultic activities of the host.<sup>148</sup> Instead of incorporating Cassandra into the household through shared participation in the sacrifice, Clytemnestra corrupts the ritual by instead sacrificing Cassandra at the hearth.<sup>149</sup>

Captive Cassandra refuses to enter the house and she begins to prophesy of Agamemnon's impending death: "Io, wretched woman! Will you really carry out this deed? You wash your husband, who shares your bed, in the bath, and – how shall I tell the end?" (1107-1109). The instruments of hospitality are the means used by Clytemnestra to kill her husband. Cassandra speaks: "Keep the bull away from the cow! She traps him in the robe, the black-horned contrivance and strikes – he falls into the tub full of water. I am telling you of the device that worked treacherous murder in the bath" (1125-1129). Cassandra's prophecies come true as Clytemnestra uses a robe like "an endless net, as one uses for fish – a wickedly opulent garment" in order to trap her husband and kill him (1380-1389; cf. 1577-1580).<sup>150</sup> Cassandra brings her prophecies to

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<sup>147</sup> For more on Zeus as "Zeus Ktesios," see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 130.

<sup>148</sup> For example, see *Odyssey*. So also, Roth, "The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*," 6.

<sup>149</sup> On this, see Seaford [*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 369-371] who sagely notes: "It is a *topos* of Homeric narrative that a stranger arrives while a sacrifice is being performed, a coincidence that allows relations to be established through the incorporative power of sacrifice, of the communal meal, or of both" (*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 370).

<sup>150</sup> The robe is frequently referred to as a "snare" or a "net" (e.g., 866-868, 1382-1383), and the theme of entanglement runs like a thread throughout the trilogy. See Latimore, "Introduction to the *Oresteia*," 77-79. Later, in the *Libation-Bearers*, Orestes describes the robe which was used to kill Agamemnon and

a close by claiming as her “guest-right” (ἐπιξενούμωι) that the chorus bear witness to the veracity of her prophecies before she dies (1316-1320).

Cassandra’s prophecies are of further significance in that they connect present perversions of hospitality with earlier corruptions of hospitality by the house of Atreus. Thus, Atreus’ brother Thyestes had defiled his brother’s bed by sleeping with his wife (1191-1193), whereupon later, when Thyestes returned as a supplicant, Atreus served him a feast made of his dead children’s bodies (1215-1224). Aegisthus, Clytemnestra’s lover, describes the event vividly: “Later the unhappy Thyestes came back as a suppliant to his hearth...but Atreus in an act of hospitality (ξένωια) to my father...pretending to be holding a cheerful day of butchery, served him with a meal of his children’s flesh” (1588-1593). Thus, within the *Agamemnon*, a curse is attached to the house of Atreus as retribution for the household’s corrupted hospitality.

### iii. Orestes disguised as a stranger kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (*Libation-Bearers*)

The *Libation-Bearers* narrates how Orestes, son of Agamemnon, with the help of his adopted brother Pylades, takes vengeance upon his mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. Apollo commands Orestes to take vengeance, for should he fail to avenge his father’s death “no one will receive him as a host or lodge with him as a guest, and finally he will die devoid of all respect and friends” (294-296). Here too, Orestes accomplishes this act through a corruption of the hospitality code.<sup>151</sup> Having found his sister Electra mourning their father’s death at his grave, Orestes declares his plan. He will disguise himself as a “stranger” (ξένω, 560), along with his foster-brother Pylades who is “bound

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declares that it would be a fit instrument of death for one who violated hospitality laws by “beguiling strangers,” but not for a wife against her own husband in his home (1001-1006).

<sup>151</sup> The guilt of Orestes is attached, however, to his murder of his mother and not his violation of the hospitality laws. Regenos, “Guest-Friendship and Development of Plot in Greek Tragedy,” 50.

to this house by hospitality and alliance” (ξένος δὲ καὶ δορυξένος δόμων, 562), in order to gain entrance into his family’s house. Ironically, Orestes is well-aware that given the house of Atreus’ history of corrupted hospitality, it is likely that none of the doorkeepers will admit them inside but will keep them waiting at the gate (565-566). Should this be the case, says Orestes, they will continue to wait in front of the household as “strangers” and “supplicants” (569, 575) so that others will observe the household’s shameful inhospitality (567-575). Once Aegisthus questions him, Orestes will kill him (577-585).

Orestes, therefore, knocks repeatedly upon the door of the palace and asks whether Aegisthus makes [the household] a hospitable one (φιλόξεν’)” (653-656). The doorkeeper does not follow hospitality laws: he not only keeps the strangers waiting, but he immediately questions Orestes about his identity (657). Clytemnestra arrives and she indicates her willingness to follow hospitality protocols for these two strangers (668-673).<sup>152</sup> The disguised Orestes engages in deceitful manipulation of the hospitality laws by claiming that he has been sent to declare the news of Orestes’ death:

I would have wished to make the acquaintance of such prosperous hosts (ξένοισιν), and to be entertained (ξενωθῆναι) by them, as a bringer of good news; for what friendship is there greater than that of host and guest (τί γὰρ ξένου ξένοισίν ἐστιν εὐμενέστερον)? But I would have thought it an act of impiety to fail to complete such a task for my friends, after having agreed to and after having been welcomed as a guest (κατεξενωμένον). (700-706)

Clytemnestra assures him that he will receive proper hospitality within their house despite the bad news (707-718).<sup>153</sup> The reader can observe that Orestes “is now, like

<sup>152</sup> Roth [“The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*,” 9] notes that her promise to give them “warm baths” cannot but help to recall for the reader the last and deadly bath she gave to Agamemnon.

<sup>153</sup> Konishi [*The Plot of Aeschylus’ Oresteia*, 178-179] notes numerous examples of how the deaths of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus parody their murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra.

Paris, a guest of those against whom he plots.”<sup>154</sup> In another piece of irony, Clytemnestra invites Orestes into the “men’s guest-quarters” (712) – the place where she killed Agamemnon. When Aegisthus questions the stranger, Orestes kills him (838-884) and his mother (895-935). The religious sanction of hospitality is indicated by the Chorus who declares that these violators of the hospitality laws have received their just due:

Justice (δίκη) came eventually to the family of Priam, the justice of grievous punishment; and now to the house of Agamemnon there has come a twofold lion, a twofold spirit of violence, and the exile who received an oracle at Pytho has brought it to complete fulfillment, having been well sped on his way the words of god. (935-941)

Both the house of Priam and the house of Agamemnon have received justice for their corrupted hospitality.<sup>155</sup> We have now heard of the three sets of crimes committed by the house of Atreus: Thyestes and Atreus, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and now Orestes and Pylades. All of the crimes committed were violations of hospitality: feasting upon the flesh of a supplicant’s children, the murder of a guest by means of a bath and a robe, and the murder of one’s hosts by a disguised stranger. Each violation is committed at an earlier stage in the guest/host relationship. Thus, Atreus corrupts the feast, Clytemnestra corrupts the bath and giving of garments, and Orestes corrupts the relationship at the initial stage in his entrance into the house. Roth states it well:

In showing the Greek code of hospitality violated at progressively earlier stages of its normal practice in the course of the trilogy, therefore, Aeschylus depicts the gradual destruction of the code of behavior between the individual *oikos* and those outside it, so that with Orestes’ abuse of the fundamental act of hospitality...the code has been entirely corrupted in the course of the first two plays of the trilogy.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Philip Vallacott, *The Logic of Tragedy: Morals and Integrity in Aeschylus’ Oresteia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984) 33, also 113.

<sup>155</sup> The irony is obvious. The Trojan War was a result, as the *Agamemnon* makes clear, of Paris’ transgression of the hospitality laws and now Orestes “will pervert the bonds of *xenia* by lying, murdering his hosts in order to reassert the ties of society.” See Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative*, 158.

<sup>156</sup> Roth, “The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*,” 11.

iv. The cycle of family blood vengeance is overcome by Athenian hospitality (*Eumenides*)

The apparent never-ending cycle of familial blood-vengeance is overcome only – or at least controlled – through the creation of Athenian civic hospitality and justice.<sup>157</sup> Clytemnestra’s Eryines want Orestes killed for matricide and they are succeeding in driving him to insanity (*Libation Bearers* 1061-1062).<sup>158</sup> Because Orestes is a suppliant of Apollo, however, the god treats him as his own ξένος and provides for his protection (*Eumenides* 89-93): “I will support and protect my suppliant (ἰκέτην); for the wrath of one who begs for succour is terrible, both among mortals and among gods, if they willing betray him” (232-234).<sup>159</sup> Apollo sends Orestes to Athena’s temple in Athens (referred to as her “domicile” and “dwelling”) as a suppliant seeking refuge and legal vindication.<sup>160</sup> If she will welcome Orestes, he promises that she and Athens “will acquire myself, my land, and my Argive people as allies (σύμμαχον) in righteous fidelity forever” (289-291; cf. 667-673; 772-774).<sup>161</sup> Apollo, who has already ritually cleansed Orestes of his blood-guilt, declares that he sent Orestes to Athena, “to the hearth of your house so that he might become your faithful friend for all time, and so that you might gain him for an ally (σύμμαχον)” (667-673). The language of συμμαχία is often a term

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<sup>157</sup> A traditional interpretation of the ultimate message of the *Oresteia* is given by Lattimore [“An Introduction to the *Oresteia*,” 88] who concludes that “through the dilemma of Orestes and its solution, the drama of the House of Atreus has been transformed into a grand parable of progress.” On the difficult, complicated, and controversial ending of the *Oresteia*, see also Foley, *Ritual Irony*, 40-42; Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: the Oresteia*, 262-283.

<sup>158</sup> On the Eryines’ torture of Orestes, see Konishi, *The Plot of Aeschylus’ Oresteia*, 204-207.

<sup>159</sup> Again, on the overlapping social institutions of *xenia* and *hiketeia*, see John Gould, “HIKETEIA,” 74-103; Regenos, “Guest-Friendship in Greek Tragedy,” 52.

<sup>160</sup> Orestes requests hospitality and vindication from Athena: “Lady Athena, I have come here on the instructions of Loxia. Be kind and receive (δέχου) this wanderer...I have arrived at your house (δῶμα), goddess, and before your image. Here I shall keep vigil and await a final judgment” (235-243).

<sup>161</sup> I pass over Aeschylus’ narration of the founding of the Areopagus as the Athenian tribunal as well as their tied vote over Orestes’ fate (397-489, 681-709).

for political or military hospitality.<sup>162</sup> The final words of Orestes declare his undying political alliance to Athens (754-777). According to Roth, “The host-suppliant relationship between Athens and Orestes thus provides the aetiological basis for the Athenian-Argive alliance of 462 B.C.”<sup>163</sup> Athena’s hospitality is also that which alleviates the wrath of the Eryines, for she offers them a place of dwelling within her city and the promise of the reception of many honors (804-807, 848-869).<sup>164</sup> Athena invites them, as “metics” or “resident foreigners” to receive her hospitality.<sup>165</sup> If they accept, they will be “held in glorious honor and as sharers of my [Athena’s] home” (σεμνότιμος καὶ ξυνοικήτωρ, 883). She asks them to “abide” (σὺ δ’ οὖν μένοις ἄν) within Athens and to refuse wandering in dishonor (881-891). As Athena’s guests, these deities will receive honor from all Athenians as the gods of marriage and fertility (890-891, 956-967). When the Furies finally accept her offer (δέξομαι Παλλάδος ξυνοικίαν, 916-917), they are transformed from demonic spirits of torment into allies of Athens who give peace, fertility, and the avoidance of civil strife.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> See C. W. Macleod, “Politics and the Oresteia,” *The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982) 124-144, here 126.

<sup>163</sup> Roth, “The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*,” 14.

<sup>164</sup> Athenian hospitality was often a subject of praise, of course, by the Greeks themselves. In Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* Oedipus, for example, states: “Athens is held of states the most devout; Athens alone gives hospitality and shelters the vexed stranger” (260-263).

<sup>165</sup> While Athenian ideology emphasized the hospitality of Athens’ courts for metics and strangers, Cynthia Patterson [“The Hospitality of the Athenian Justice: The Metic in Court,” in *Law and Social Status in Classical Athens* (eds. Virginian Hunger and Jonathan Edmondson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 93-112] has demonstrated that the metic was often an isolated, lonely, and vulnerable guest due to his or her lack of supporting witnesses and kinship connections. There may also be a reference to the hospitality of the law-courts in Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* where the Chorus states: “And may the people, which rules the city, protect well the citizen’s privileges...and to strangers (ξένοισι) may they offer painless justice under fair agreements before arming the god of war” (698-703).

<sup>166</sup> Murray [*Aeschylus*, 203-204] puts it this way: “They become no longer a mechanical Law of retribution which operates blindly; but a Law which thinks and feels and seeks real Justice.”

The drama concludes peacefully, then, with Orestes as an “ally” of Athens and the Eryines as honored “residents” within Athens.<sup>167</sup> Thus, the cycle of blood-vengeance and the descent of Greek society into increasingly more heinous violations of hospitality are overcome through Athenian political hospitality. Aeschylus’ message is that the alliance between Orestes (the Argives) and Athena (Athens) is a hospitable, reciprocal, and beneficial relationship between two parties which reverses the crimes and horrors of previous familial vengeance. The final prayer of the Chorus celebrates Athenian hospitality for reversing society’s descent as seen in *Agamemnon* and *Libation-Bearers*:

I pray that civil strife, insatiate of evil, may never rage in this city; and may the dust not drink up the dark blood of the citizens and then, out of lust for revenge, eagerly welcome the city’s ruin through retaliatory murder; rather may they give happiness in return for happiness, resolved to be united in their friendship and unanimous in their enmity; for this is a cure for many evils among men. (976-987)<sup>168</sup>

### C. The Equation between Inhospitality and Barbarians in the Greek Tragedians

We have seen in some detail how in the *Oresteia* Aeschylus uses the theme of corrupted hospitality to portray the downfall of the house of Atreus. We have also seen Homer characterize Polyphemus the Cyclopes as an uncivilized barbarian precisely through the monster’s rejection of the hospitality laws. Given that this equation between “barbarian” and “refusal to follow the hospitality laws” is found so frequently in the Greek Tragedians, I draw attention to two more Tragedies where this motif is foundational.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Macleod [“Politics and the Oresteia,” 126] states: “Orestes’ position should be compared to that of the Eryines. They remain; he goes home; they become μέτοικοι, he becomes a σύμμαχος. This alliance, like their co-residence, is a continuing relationship which expresses both parties’ gratitude.”

<sup>168</sup> On this passage, see Macleod, “Politics and the Oresteia,” 130-131.

<sup>169</sup> I do not intend to give the impression that ancient Greek conceptions of the Egyptians were monolithic. Herodotus, for example, devotes the second book of his *Histories* to a largely positive portrait of Egypt’s civilization. Plato praises the constitution of the Egyptians and notes that Solon learned about significant historical events from Egyptian priests (*Timaeus* 22). Examples could be multiplied. Plutarch, however,

In Euripides' *Helen*, Helen (having been spirited away to Egypt for safeguarding) tells the Greek "stranger" Teucer (151; cf. 306) to flee before the Egyptian king returns, for "he kills every Greek stranger he catches" (κτείνει γὰρ Ἕλληγν' ὄντιν' ἄν λάβη ξένον, 155).<sup>170</sup> Concurrently, Menelaus, who is voyaging home, has shipwrecked upon Egypt and is seeking hospitality and aid (405-430). When he approaches the palace of the king, however, he is told to leave the house (δόμων) before he is killed (437-440). The gatekeeper's primary task is, in fact, "to see that no Greek approaches the house" (443-444). Menelaus persists, however, still trusting in the laws of hospitality and asks the gatekeeper to give his message to the king and claims "I have come as a shipwrecked stranger, one under heaven's protection" (ναυαγὸς ἦκω ξένος, ἀσύλητον γένος, 449). But again he is told to leave, for "if the master catches you, death will be the only hospitality you get (θάνατος ξένιὰ σοι γενήσεται)" (479-480). Menelaus will not relent, however, and he tells himself: "I will not run away from the danger the servant mentioned. No man has such a barbaric (βάρβαρος) heart that he will not give me food" (500-502). But one of the messages of *Helen* is indeed that the "barbarian gates" (βαρβάροις πυλώμασιν, 789) of the Egyptians show no hospitality to strangers.<sup>171</sup>

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criticizes Herodotus for being tolerant of the Egyptians and for "acquitting Busiris of the charge of human sacrifice and murder of strangers" (*On the Malice of Herodotus* 857; cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.45). On the whole matter, see Katell Berthelot, "Greek and Roman Stereotypes of the Egyptians by Hellenistic Jewish Apologists, with special reference to Josephus' *Against Apion*," in *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium Aarhus 1999* (ed. Jürgen U. Kalms; Münsteraner Judaistische Studien; Münster: Verlag, 2000) 185-221.

<sup>170</sup> The king is referred to as a "barbarian" and Egypt as a "barbarian land" (e.g., *Helen* 224, 274-276, 743, 863-864, 1042). Plato stereotypes the Egyptian people as inhospitable (*Laws* 953 e).

<sup>171</sup> On the famed mistreatment of strangers and foreigners by Egyptians, see Wolfgang Helck "Die Ägypter und die Fremden," *Saeculum* 15 (1964) 103-114.

Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (*IT*) also utilizes the equation between barbarians and mistreatment of strangers.<sup>172</sup> Unlike the popular version of tragic events where Agamemnon succeeds in sacrificing Iphigenia, here Artemis has rescued Iphigenia from sacrifice and brought her to the Taurian people “where Thoas rules, barbarian king of a barbarian people (βαρβάροισι Βάρβαρος θόας)” (31-32). Throughout the play the Taurians are referred to repeatedly as “barbarians” (e.g., 629, 739, 906, 1086, and 1400). The Taurian barbarians are those who sacrifice “strangers” and especially Greeks (39-41), and they have commissioned Iphigenia as Artemis’ priestess with the craft of “killing strangers” (ξενοκτόνον, 53; cf. 75).<sup>173</sup> As coastal people they find their captives primarily through shipwrecked strangers (250-255; 270-280). When Orestes and Pylades arrive in Tauria as “strangers,” Iphigenia reveals her identity to her brother.<sup>174</sup> Iphigenia begs of him: “...brother, fetch me home to Argos from this barbarian land (ἐκ βαρβάρου γῆς)! Take me away from the goddesses’ sacrifices where it is my office to kill strangers (ξενοφόνους)” (774-776). Thus, again we find the common trope that whereas Greeks expect hospitality from strangers, barbarians mistreat and even kill them.<sup>175</sup> Thus, when Orestes suggests they kill the king in order to escape, Iphigenia rejects the idea and responds as a civilized Greek should: “Guests murdering their hosts? A foul deed! (δεινὸν τόδ’ εἶπας, ξενοφονεῖν ἐπήλυδας)” (1021).<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> For an excellent reading of this play which emphasizes many of the concerns of this study, see Elizabeth Belfiore, *Murder Among Friends*, 21-38.

<sup>173</sup> There is, of course, a great deal of critical irony in this as the reader is well aware of Agamemnon and his Greek companions’ sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis.

<sup>174</sup> Orestes and Pylades are consistently referred to as “strangers” (e.g., 246, 248, 250, 304-310, 336-343, 350). The relationship between Pylades and Orestes functions as a model of ideal friendship and “positive reciprocity” in contrast to the rest of the house of Atreus. See Belfiore, *Murder Among Friends*, 27-29.

<sup>175</sup> So Regenos, “Guest-Friendship in Greek Tragedy,” 50.

<sup>176</sup> The entire play revolves around this aversion to bloodshed. Thus, Iphigenia is not really sacrificed by Agamemnon, Iphigenia is opposed to her cultic duties to sacrifice Greeks, and they refuse to murder Thoas. With respect to Iphigenia, Belfiore [*Murder Among Friends*, 33] states: “By actively rejecting kin murder,

#### D. The Greek Historians and Guest-Friendship//Ritualized Friendship

Thus far our examination of hospitality has included epics and tragedies, but the Greek historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon demonstrate the ubiquity of these social practices – particularly the ritualized and formalized relationship of guest-friendship.<sup>177</sup> The historians are interested primarily in nations, cities, wars, and alliances and, therefore, describe “permanent hospitality” or “guest-friendship” used for political means.<sup>178</sup> Three components of this guest-friendship are illuminating for our purposes.

##### i. The transition from guest-friendship between individuals to nations

Gabriel Herman has demonstrated that with the rise of the Greek city, guest-friendship (or “ritualized friendship”) continued to be used as a means of initiating relationships. However, the rise of the Greek city in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. introduced complex and competitive negotiations between loyalty to one’s guest-friends and loyalty to one’s native city.<sup>179</sup> Rather than engaging in hospitality relations solely for personal and individual benefits, guest-friendship was used as a means for establishing political alliances between cities.<sup>180</sup> While the basic elements of hospitality remain the same, the Greek historians testify that hospitality is now used by nations as a means of entering into a reciprocal relationship.

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Iphigenia stops the pattern of bloodshed and pollution that has destroyed her house, and by pardoning her killer, and thereby freeing him from murder, she removes existing pollution.”

<sup>177</sup> For a list of references to the concept of hospitality and guest-friendship in the Historians (and other texts), see Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 167-184.

<sup>178</sup> The institution of *proxenia* (or “political hospitality”) is comparable to modern-day diplomacy such that a *proxenos* would live as a foreigner in another city-state in order to look after the concerns of his own city. The institution appears to have arisen out of personal and individual guest-friendship relations. Unlike guest-friendship which was private and personal, *proxenia* was a public relationship between an individual and a city-state. On the institution, see Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 130-142; Lynette G. Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435 – 323 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 28-37. Within the historians, see Herodotus, *Histories* 6.57; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.3.4; Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 5.76.

<sup>179</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 1-9.

<sup>180</sup> Also, see Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, 99-102; Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts*, 22-40.

No text better exemplifies the change in the laws of guest-friendship than Xenophon's portrait of the interaction between Agesilaos the king of Sparta and the Persian satrap Pharnabazus (*Hellenica* 4.1.29-35).<sup>181</sup> The two are odds with each other and so a "guest-friend from of old (ἐκ παλαιοῦ ξένος ὦν)" of Pharnabazus who happened to also "be a guest-friend (ἐξενώθη) of Agesilaos" arranges a meeting between the two (4.1.29).<sup>182</sup> Agesilaos has destroyed and burned the Persian satrap's property (4.1.33). Pharnabazus invokes his status as a "friend and ally" to Agesilaos and the Spartans (4.1.32). He reminds him that he helped them in their wars against Athens, and he asks how this vile treatment can be considered righteous reciprocity between guest-friends (4.1.33). The argument is clear: Agesilaos and the Spartans have violated guest-friendship laws. Agesilaos' response is instructive:

I think you know, Pharnabazus that in the Greek states, also, men become guest-friends of one another (ξένοι ἀλλήλοις). But these men, when their states come to war, fight with their fatherlands even against their former friends (ἐξενωμένοις), and, if it so chance, sometimes even kill one another. And so we today, being at war with your king, are constrained to regard all that is his as hostile. (4.1.34)

According to Agesilaos' hierarchy of loyalty, one's city-state comes before loyalty to one's personal guest-friends. Whereas Glaucus and Diomedes refused to engage in battle against each other due to their guest-friend ties (*Iliad* 6.224ff), Agesilaos claims that his loyalty to Sparta demands he treat Persian satraps, and even one's who are guest-friends, as enemies. With the rise of the Greek city "[c]ivic obligations had come to take priority even over guest-friendship."<sup>183</sup>

<sup>181</sup> On this story, see Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts*, 122-124. On translation and text for Xenophon, see *Xenophon* (Seven volumes; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918-1985).

<sup>182</sup> For more examples of political guest-friend relations between Greeks and Persians, see Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.1.9-10; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.1.6-32.

<sup>183</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 2.

Herodotus narrates how Croesus, king of Lydia, secured a political alliance through the initiation of guest-friendship for his battles against the Persians with the Spartans (*Histories* 1.65-70). The Spartans were formerly “the worst governed people in Greece, both in their internal and external relations – *for they would have no dealings of any kind with strangers* (ξείνοισι ἀπρόσμικτοι)” (1.65.6-9).<sup>184</sup> Herodotus declares that he will describe how the change to a good government occurred (1.65.10-11), and it is striking that his narrative concludes with the initiation of guest-friendship with the stranger Croesus (1.69-70). One could hardly ask for a clearer indication of the cultural importance of guest-friendship.

Having gathered information about Sparta, Croesus sends a delegation of messengers with “gifts” (δῶρά) to request an “alliance” (συμμαχίης) with the Spartans (1.69.1-3).<sup>185</sup> The heralds declare Croesus’ message: “I the King have been advised...to make the Greek my friend (φίλον)...I wish to be your friend and ally (φίλος τε θέλων γενέσθαι καὶ σύμμαχος) without deceit or underhanded dealing” (1.69.6-11). The Spartans are pleased with the request and thereby “make an oath of guest-friendship” (ἔποιήσαντο ὄρκια ξεινίης) with Croesus (1.69.13-14). The reciprocal nature of their guest-friendship is indicated both by their declaration to help Croesus in his battles (1.70.1-5) and their guest-gift of a bronze bowl to Croesus (1.70.5-9). Herodotus lists two reasons why the Spartans accept his offer: first, they are already reciprocally bound

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<sup>184</sup> The Spartans were often caricatured as xenophobic. See, for example, Thucydides, *History* 1.144; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 2; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.61.

<sup>185</sup> Richard Seaford [*Reciprocity and Ritual*, 7] states one of the functions of guest-gifts well: “Peaceful relations between members of different social units (households, etc.), who are potentially or actually hostile to each other, are established and maintained not only by an abstract duty of respect for others, but by a mutually recognized pattern of action which includes the giving or exchange of gifts.” Also see Anna Missiou, “Reciprocal Generosity in the Foreign Affairs of Fifth-Century Athens and Sparta,” in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (eds. Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite, and Richard Seaford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 181-197.

to the Lydian King for a past favor and they are pleased with the status conferred upon them as the first of all the Greeks to be his guest-friends (1.70.1-3).

ii. The initiation of guest-friendship for the purpose of reciprocal benefits

The sources indicate that the initiation of a guest-friendship relationship was a ritualized process.<sup>186</sup> Three elements appear to have been involved: a formal declaration or oath of guest-friendship, the exchange of gifts, and the promise for future reciprocation.<sup>187</sup> In most instances the sources are clear that the initiation of this relationship is for the purpose of accruing needed favors. We have already had occasion to discuss Croesus' request for a political alliance of guest-friendship with the Spartans, and these three initiation elements are clearly present within the story (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.65-70).

That a formal declaration of guest-friendship initiated the relationship is evident from the exchange between Parapita, son of the Persian satrap Pharnazabus, and the Spartan king Agesilaos (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.1.39-40): "Parapita...ran up to Agesilaos and said to him, 'Agesilaos, I make you my guest-friend (Ξένον σε, ἔφη, ᾧ Ἀγησίλαε, ποιουῦμαι).' Agesilaos responds: 'And I accept (δέχομαι) your friendship'" (4.1.39.3-4). The exchange of vows ends with Parapita commanding the Spartan leader to remember his obligations: "Now remember!" (4.1.39.5-6). The scene concludes with Parapita giving his javelin to the king as a guest-gift (4.1.39.6-7), and the Spartan giving the youth a "splendid set of trappings" (4.1.39.7-8). Xenophon narrates that Agesilaos does indeed

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<sup>186</sup> See the helpful discussions of the ritualized nature of these relationships in Hermann, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 58-69.

<sup>187</sup> The exchange of gifts as ratification or renewal of a guest-friendship are also seen in Herodotus, *Histories* 3.39-40; Homer, *Iliad* 6.219-220.

reciprocate and remember his guest-friendship, for later he provided special care for the son of Parapita when he was exiled (4.1.40).<sup>188</sup>

The desire for the reciprocal benefits afforded through guest-friendship is seen in Xerxes' initiation of guest-friendship with a rich Lydian (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.27-29). During one of Xerxes' military campaigns Pythius "shows hospitality to Xerxes and the whole army with lavish hospitality (ἐξείνισε τὴν βασιλέως στρατιὴν πᾶσαν ξεινίοισι μεγίστοισι καὶ αὐτὸν Ξέρξην) and promises to furnish money for the expenses of the war" (7.27.2-5). At this point Pythius is engaged in simple hospitality toward Xerxes, but the offer to provide money for the war is an attempt to establish a permanent guest-friendship with the King. After Xerxes confirms that Pythius is indeed able to contribute the amount needed for his campaigns (7.27.5-11), Xerxes initiates a guest-friend relationship with the Lydian for the purpose of obtaining Pythius' donation.

My Lydian guest-friend (Ξεῖνε Λυδέ), you are the only man I have met since I left Persian territory who has been willing to show hospitality (ἠθέλησε ξείνια προθεῖναι) to my army, and nobody but you has come into my presence with an offer to contribute money for the war of his own free will. But you have shown lavish hospitality (ἐξείνισας μεγάλως) to my army and offered me great sums. Therefore, as a reward for your generosity I make you my guest-friend (ξεῖνόν τέ σε ποιεῦμαι ἐμόν)...Have the wisdom to remain always the man you have proved yourself today. (7.29)

Reciprocity is at the heart of the guest-friendship: Xerxes obtains an enormous sum of money, and Pythius secures the benefits of being a guest-friend of the king of Persia.

The elements of reciprocity and the swearing of an oath are also important elements of the guest-friendship established between Etearchus and Themison

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<sup>188</sup> Note also Herodotus' description of Cambyses' (deceptive) attempt to make the Fish-Eaters his guest-friends through the elements of a declarative oath as well as the gifting of gifts (*Histories* 3.20-21).

(Herodotus, *The Histories* 4.154-155).<sup>189</sup> Herodotus narrates how a ruler of a city in Crete “made guest-friendship” (ξείνισια) with the merchant Themison and made him “swear an oath” (ἐξορκοῖ ἦ) to do what the ruler desired (4.154.15). The status distinction between a city ruler and a merchant indicates that the favor which the ruler desires may be large, and indeed, he wants Themison to kill his daughter.<sup>190</sup> When Themison sees that he has been tricked, he is angry with the “deceptive oath” and “renounces guest-friendship” (διαλυσάμενος τὴν ξεινίην ἐποίηε τοιάδε) with Etearchus (4.154.19-20). Striking, however, is the fact that Themison understands he is still reciprocally bound to fulfill his obligation, and so he binds the daughter with ropes and lowers her into the sea (4.154.22-28).<sup>191</sup>

### iii. Guest-friendship as pseudo-kinship

It is sometimes noted that the institution most resembling guest-friendship is marriage as these were the primary institutions whereby outsiders could be transformed into insiders and members of one’s own kinship group.<sup>192</sup> We have seen already from our study of the *Odyssey* that guest-friendship, like kinship, was assumed to exist for perpetuity.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>189</sup> On oaths and political guest-friendship and alliances, also see Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.3.12.

<sup>190</sup> The reason is that his daughter and his new wife (the daughter’s stepmother) do not get along.

<sup>191</sup> Note the unashamed emphasis on reciprocity and guest-friendship in Xenophon where Socrates is mediating a quarrel between two brothers: “‘Tell me,’ Socrates said, ‘If you wish to prevail upon one of your acquaintances to invite you for dinner when he is sacrificing, what would you do?’ ‘Of course I would begin by inviting him myself when I sacrificed.’ ‘And if you wished to persuade one of your friends (φίλοι) to take care of your property when you were away, what would you do?’ ‘Of course I would first undertake to look after his property when he was away.’ ‘And if you wished a guest-friend (ξένος) to show hospitality to you when you came to his city, what would you do?’ ‘Of course, I would show hospitality to him first when he came to Athens...’” (*Memorabilia* 2.3.11-13).

<sup>192</sup> Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, 99-102; Roth, “The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*,” 3; Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual*, 16-17; Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 36.

<sup>193</sup> On this, see Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 16-17.

Guest-friends, for example, often provided care for the children of their guest-friends and often would function as virtual foster-parents. In Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Orestes is sent to Phocis and raised within "the house of a guest-friend" (δόμους δορυξένους, 914). We have seen Xenophon narrate that the benefit the Persian Parapita receives from his guest-friendship with Agesilaos consists in the Spartan king providing care for his son when he is exiled (*Hellenica* 4.1.39-40). One of the clearest illustrations of this concept, however, is found in a fragment of a lost oration of Lysias (fragment 78). The Athenian man is speaking about his guest-friend's son.<sup>194</sup>

Kephisodots, the defendant's father, was a ξένος of mine, gentlemen, and when we were in exile, I and any other Athenian who wished to, enjoyed his hospitality in Thebes, and received many favors at his hands in public and in private before returning to our own city. Now that these gentlemen have suffered the same misfortunes as we, and have come in exile to Athens, realizing that I have a huge debt of gratitude to repay, I have taken them so completely into my family that no visitor without prior knowledge would know which of us was the owner of the house.

In this instance, not only did the exile's children live with his guest-friend but all of his exiled family and friends.

The kinship-like nature of guest-friendship is further evidenced by the references to guest-friends who give the name of the guest-friend to members of their family.<sup>195</sup> Thucydides comments upon the aid which Alcibiades gives to the Lacedaemonians due to the fact that he is a "guest-friend" (πατρικὸς ἐς τὰ μάλιστα ξένος) of Endius (Thucydides, *History* 8.2-3).<sup>196</sup> Thucydides, then, adds the parenthetical comment that this guest-friendship is the reason why Endius is called "Endius son of Alcibiades."

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<sup>194</sup> On this text, see Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 28.

<sup>195</sup> On this feature of guest-friendship, see Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 19-22.

<sup>196</sup> For text and translation, see *Thucydides* (LCL; 4 volumes; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919-1923).

It is not uncommon to find the emotion of love and affection between guest-friends. Herodotus tells the charming story of the Samian Polycrates who initiates a treaty of “guest-friendship” (ξεινίην, *Histories* 3.39.8) with Amasis king of Egypt. Polycrates is having remarkable success and luck in his battles, and while Amasis is pleased to hear that things are going so well for his “guest-friend and ally” (φίλον καὶ ξείνον, 3.40.6), he is greatly concerned that so much success will make the gods jealous. When destiny thwarts the advice which he gives Polycrates in order to avert the jealousy of the gods, Amasis sends a messenger to him to declare his renunciation of their guest-friendship (διαλύεσθαι ἔφη τὴν ξεινίην, 3.43.7) out of fear that soon Amasis will be forced to grieve for some evil done to his guest-friend. And similarly, Herodotus describes how the Milesians went into deep mourning when the Sybarites’ city was captured, for no two cities “were ever so closely joined in guest-friendship (ἔξεινώθησαν) as these” (6.21.7-8). Xenophon reports that when Clearchus is unable to give aid to Cyrus, “he stood and wept for a long time while his men watched him in wonder and were silent” (*Anabasis* 1.3.1-2). Why does he weep? He longs to fulfill his obligations to “Cyrus who is a guest-friend to me (ἐμοὶ γὰρ ξένος Κύρος)” (1.3.3).

There are other instances where an individual is put to death, considered a traitor, or regarded as an enemy solely on the basis of the individual’s relationship to his guest-friend. Xenophon himself, for example, becomes the friend of king Cyrus through their joint ξένος (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.1.4-5; cf. 6.1.23). Due to the fact, however, that Cyrus had aided the Spartans in their battles against Athens (Xenophon’s native city) the Athenians exile Xenophon from Athens due to his guest-friendship with Cyrus. Likewise, Ismenias is accused of crimes against Sparta and that he “had become a guest-

friend of the Persian (ξένος τῷ Πέρσῃ) satrap to the hurt of Greece” (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.34-35). For this guest-friendship, they decided to put Ismenias to death.

### III. Extending the Cultural Script II: Hospitality in Roman Writings

#### A. Continuity between Greek and Roman Hospitality

The cultural practice of hospitality to strangers, both in terms of temporary hospitality to travelers as well as ritualized guest-friendship relations, retained a remarkable amount of continuity from ancient Greek civilization to its manifestation in the late Roman Republic and early Empire.<sup>197</sup> Livy and Cicero both demonstrate the continuity of the custom with respect to hospitality as a mark of civilization and virtue, the religious sanctions for hospitality, and the reciprocal relationship of guest-friendship.

Thus, one finds the claim that it is the duty of all Romans to welcome travelling strangers into their home (Livy, 42.1).<sup>198</sup> The significance of hospitality for Livy is indicated by his unique claim in the first lines of his histories that Aeneas’ survival from the Trojan War was due to “longstanding claims of hospitality” (1.1.1).<sup>199</sup> The Romans, Livy claims, are a people characterized by hospitality, and this can be seen in the humane and hospitable treatment which they bestow upon foreign tribes (2.37; 4.35; 5.13; 5.28; 21.12-13).<sup>200</sup> Cicero repeatedly praises Rome because it neither expels foreigners, nor shuts its doors against them. Those who claim, for example, that justice and regard should be shown to citizens but denied “in the case of strangers...tear apart the common

<sup>197</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship*, 7; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 38-40.

<sup>198</sup> See Hermann Hager, “*Hospitium*,” in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (ed. William Smith; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1845) 981. On text and translation for Livy, see *Livy* (14 volumes; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919-1988).

<sup>199</sup> On this, see Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Rome*, 43-55. Bolchazy notes that there are eighteen other authors who comment upon Aeneas’ survival from the war, and that they give eight distinct accounts of how he survived. Only Livy claims that the survival was due to hospitality.

<sup>200</sup> Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Rome*, 60; Wiltshire, *Public and Private in Vergil’s Aeneid*, 87-88. On Livy and Roman *hospitium*, see Hiltbrunner, *Gastfreundschaft in der Antike und im frühen Christentum*, 78-85.

fellowship of the human race....for the fellowship among mankind that they overturn was established by the gods” (*On Duties* 3.28).<sup>201</sup> To deny hospitality to a stranger is “inhumane and barbaric” (*Against Verres* 2.4.25).<sup>202</sup> The equation between the violation of hospitality laws and uncivilized barbarians is seen in Cicero’s prosecution against Verres. Dexo begs Verres for justice for his innocent son. Cicero notes that Verres had been one of Dexo’s *hospes*:

You had stayed in his house. You had called him host (*quem hospitem appellaras*). And now that you saw this respected man overwhelmed with misery, could not his tears, could not his grey hairs, could not the sacred bond of hospitality turn you from your wickedness to show some little measure of humanity? But why do I speak of the bond of hospitality (*hospitii iura*) in connection with this beast and monster? He had been the guest of Sthenius of Thermae, and he had stripped his host’s house of everything it contained....So shall we now expect him to regard a host’s rights or discharge a guest’s duties? Nay, is it the cruelty of a human being that we have here – is it not the monstrous savagery of a wild beast? (*Against Verres* 2.2.109-110).

The lesson is clear: to refuse to reciprocate to one’s host, to further defraud and despoil another is the inhumane, uncivilized, barbaric behavior of a monster and not a human.<sup>203</sup>

The Republic is praiseworthy, says Cicero, for “foreigners do not in our city go short of that kind of liberality [i.e., hospitality]” (*On Duties* 2.64). Further, it is “inhuman to prevent foreigners from enjoying the city” (*On Duties* 3.47).

One finds statements in the Roman sources which indicate that the stranger was protected by Zeus. In his prosecution of Verres, Cicero refers to hospitality as “the most

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<sup>201</sup> I am dependent here upon *Cicero: On Duties* (ed. E. M. Atkins; trans. M. T. Griffin; Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>202</sup> For translation and text, see *Cicero* (28 volumes; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954-1989). For a table of references listing *Hospites* in Cicero’s *Against Verres*, see John Nicols, “*Hospitium* and Political Friendship in the Late Roman Republic,” in *Aspects of Friendship in the Graeco-Roman World Proceedings of a conference held at the Seminar für Alte Geschichte, Heidelberg, on 10-11 June, 2000* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 43; ed. M. Peachin; Portsmouth, RI: 2001) 99-108, 100.

<sup>203</sup> On this charge against Verres, see Nicols, “*Hospitium* and Political Friendship in the Late Roman Republic,” 103.

sacred thing” (*hospitem quod sanctissimum est*) in the world (*Against Verres* 2.2.110). And later he indicts Verres for violating the hospitality laws by removing a serving dish from his host’s table – a “symbol sacred to the gods of home and hospitality (*deorum ex hospitali mesa*)” (*Against Verres* 2.4.48).<sup>204</sup> Diodorus notes that it is an offense against the gods to violate guest-friend customs (20.70.3-4). Other texts speak of “Jupiter, god of hospitality” in the same way the Greek spoke of Zeus as the “god of hospitality.”<sup>205</sup>

The practice of guest-friendship is also frequently attested within the Roman sources, as prominent Romans developed ties of *hospitium* with other non-Roman elites.<sup>206</sup> The Roman sources indicate that *hospitium* was almost entirely a political, public, and elite cultural practice.<sup>207</sup> Livy uses contemporary notions of guest-friendship to describe the ancient Etruscan king Tarquinius’ role of making an alliance with the Latins: “the Latin race he strove particularly to make his friends, so that his strength abroad might contribute to his security at home. He contracted with their nobles not only ties of guest-friendship (*hospitium*) but also matrimonial connections” (1.49).<sup>208</sup> Livy tells another story of how two enemies, the Roman Crispinius and the Campanian Badius, had become “guest-friends, linked together by intimate hospitality” (*T. Quinctio Crispino Badius Campanus hospes erat, perfamiliari hospitio iunctus*) due to Crispinius’ household having earlier nursed Badius to health when he was sick in Rome (25.18.1-

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<sup>204</sup> For more texts, see See Gustav Stählin, “ξένος”, 17, n. 118.

<sup>205</sup> Further, see Hager, “*Hospitium*,” 981.

<sup>206</sup> Gabriel Hermann, “Friendship Ritualized,” in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 611-613, here 613. Nicols [“*Hospitium* and Political Friendship in the Late Republic,” 99] states: “Generally speaking, *hospitium* involves a personal connection developing out of a guest-host experience.” Also, see E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae (264 – 70 B.C.)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958) 155. Also, see T. P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate, 139 B.C. – A.D.14* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 34-35; David Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London: Duckworth with The Classical Press of Wales, 2000) 146-149.

<sup>207</sup> For example, Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate*, 33-38.

<sup>208</sup> Quoted from Hermann, “Friendship Ritualized,” 613.

4).<sup>209</sup> Later, when they encounter each other in battle Crispinius refuses to fight Badius since he will not “stain his right hand with the blood of a guest-friend (*ne hospitali caede dextram violet*)” (25.18.7). Badius claims that guest-friend ties are not binding since they are at war with each other, and thus he revokes his ties of hospitality with Crispinius. Thus, the story exalts the Roman who refuses to fight but serves to castigate Badius who renounces his guest-friendship in order to fight against Crispinius (25.18-8-15).

Cicero remarks that hospitality is rightly praised by the ancients, and that it is seemly that “the homes of distinguished men be open to distinguished guests.” Cicero is forthright in the reciprocal nature of this hospitality: “For those who wish to possess great power honorably, it is also extremely beneficial to wield influence and command gratitude among foreign peoples through the guests one has entertained” (*On Duties* 2.64). For this reason, the notable Roman man will make sure his house is spacious enough to receive “many guests” (*On Duties* 1.139). Having briefly noted these elements of continuity, I turn my attention now to more thorough descriptions of the role which hospitality plays in the writings of Vergil, Ovid, and Dio Chrysostom.

### B. Vergil's *Aeneid*

Like the Homeric epics, the influence of Vergil's myth of the founding of Rome can scarcely be overstated. Quintilian states that Vergil's writings are the closest to Homer's epics in terms of their artistic beauty as well as literary influence (*Institutes of Oratory* 10.1.46, 85-86).<sup>210</sup> The numerous adaptations of the *Aeneid* which extended, celebrated, revised, and criticized Vergil's myth attest to the influence this myth

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<sup>209</sup> On this text, see Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Rome*, 59-60.

<sup>210</sup> See Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 31-36. For a brief but helpful guide to the *Aeneid*, see W. A. Camps, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

wielded.<sup>211</sup> While less rich in hospitality scenes than Homer's *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid* contains some significant episodes where the practice of hospitality is crucial to understanding the larger plot.<sup>212</sup> Aeneas' relationships with Dido, Latinus, and Evander are all portrayed as political relationships of *hospitium*. Our examination of these hospitality scenes serves to reinforce our understanding of the prevalence of the cultural script as well as to locate it within its distinctively Roman setting.

#### i. Aeneas and Dido (bks. 1 and 4)

Like Odysseus whose absence from Ithaca forces him into the role of stranger and guest, so Aeneas and his Trojan men, as foreigners, are dependent upon the hospitality of others as they journey to Italy to found the city of Lavinium.<sup>213</sup> Having escaped from the Trojan War and already journeyed some distance, Aeneas and his men set course for the coast of Libya (1.158-179). In their initial encounter with Dido, queen of Carthage, the reader finds many familiar elements from the Homeric hospitality scenes.

First, there are indications that Dido and the Carthaginians do not treat strangers hospitably. Upon their arrival, Jupiter must send Mercury "to make the lands and the citadel of the new city of Carthage hospitable (*hospitio*), in case Dido, in her ignorance of destiny, should bar her country to them" (1.297-300).<sup>214</sup> Mercury, then, forcibly implants

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<sup>211</sup> See Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, 61-86.

<sup>212</sup> Susan Ford Wiltshire [*Public and Private in Vergil's Aeneid*, 83-105] notes five distinct episodes where hospitality is central to the plot: Dido and the Trojans; Aeneas and Helenus; Aeneas and Acestes; Latinus and the Trojans; Aeneas and Evander.

<sup>213</sup> The similarities between hospitality in the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey* should be evident to the reader. See Roy K. Gibson, "Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4," *Classical Quarterly* 49 (1999) 184-202.

<sup>214</sup> For text and translation, see *Virgil* (trans. H. R. Fairclough; rev. G. P. Goold; Two volumes; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999-2000). For another corruption or violation of the hospitality laws, see 3.30-69. Aeneas and his men make a stop in the land of the Thracians where the gods give a portent as a warning to leave Thrace. The ghost of Polydorus speaks to Aeneas and declares that after he was sent by Priam for safekeeping to the land of Thrace, the king killed him and stole his gold when he saw that Troy was soon to be defeated. Vergil declares: "They were of one mind. We must leave this accursed land where the laws of hospitality are profaned (*pollutum hospitium*) and let our ships run before the wind"

within the Queen “quiet and kindness toward the Trojans” (1.304-305). When brought before Dido, Ilioneus shames her for the inhospitable treatment they have received:

What manner of men are these? Is this a country of barbarians (*barbara*) that allows its people to act in this way? Sailors have a right to the shore and we are refused it. They make war on us and debar us the welcome of the beach (*hospitio prohibemur harenae*). You may be no respecters of men. You may fear no men’s arms, but think of the gods, who see right and wrong and do not forget. (1.538-543)

Notice three presuppositions in Ilioneus’ speech. First, he expects that simple hospitality should be granted to shipwrecked sailors; second, that only a “country of barbarians” would make war against shipwrecked strangers; and third, that basic acts of hospitality are sanctioned by the gods.<sup>215</sup> Given that *humanitas* and *hospitium* are the antitheses of *barbarus*, Ilioneus deftly seeks to persuade Dido to give them hospitality.<sup>216</sup> Ilioneus then mentions Aeneas, who is hidden in a cloud with Acestes, and declares to the Queen that she will not regret showing hospitality and thereby “taking the lead in a contest of kindness” (1.548-549).<sup>217</sup> In other words, Aeneas is a good host, and he and the Trojans will make good on their obligation to reciprocate if Dido will prove hospitable to them.<sup>218</sup> Ilioneus’ speech succeeds in shaming Dido. She explains the poor treatment which these sailors have received as due to the fact that Carthage is a new kingdom, and therefore,

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(3.60-62). On the corruption of hospitality by hosts, similar to what one finds in the ‘Apologoi’ of the *Odyssey*, see Craig A. Gibson, “Punitive Blinding in *Aeneid* 3,” *The Classical World* 92 (1999) 359-366.

<sup>215</sup> Richard C. Monti [*The Dido Episode and the Aeneid: Roman Social and Political Values in the Epic* (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 10] rightly notes that Ilioneus’ speech “develops around the antithesis between barbarity and humane and civilized conduct.”

<sup>216</sup> See Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 13 n. 5, 15-17. Monti [*The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 16] states it this way: “His [Ilioneus] statement is at once a declaration of the ideal standard of behavior and a description of the type of people with whom Dido is dealing. The declaration places the onus on Dido to act in accordance with the norm it proclaims.”

<sup>217</sup> Aeneas is described as the ideal Roman as Ilioneus refers to him with the qualities of *Iustitia*, *pietas*, and *officium*. He is not, in other words, a barbarian. See Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 11. On *Officium* as a reciprocal duty done in response to a favor, see Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 15.

<sup>218</sup> Gibson, “Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4,” 189.

must “take these precautions and post guards on all frontiers” (1.563-565). She declares, however, that she will show hospitality to the Trojans, as she promises safety within her land and supplies for their conveyance to their next destination (1.568-571).<sup>219</sup>

During this exchange Aeneas and Acestes have been hidden in a cloud (1.579-580). Hearing Dido’s offer of hospitality to his men, Aeneas reveals himself so that he and Dido can initiate their guest-friendship. The description of Aeneas’ appearance is portrayed with overtones of a theoxeny.<sup>220</sup> Like a deity sent to test humans, Aeneas waits to reveal himself until Dido has proved hospitable. His appearance also has the marks of an epiphany. In Aeneas’ earlier encounter with his mother, Venus had breathed upon him such that “he stood there resplendent in the bright light of the day with the head and shoulders of a god” (1.586-592). Aeneas is not a god but, as with Odysseus who had Athena’s aid, Vergil has made it clear that Aeneas is an agent of the gods and his mission is a fulfillment of their will. Now that Dido has invited them into her home (*domo socias*), Aeneas may reveal his identity in its entirety. And he promises to reciprocate for her hospitality by spreading her honor far and wide: “your honor, your name, and your praise will remain forever in every land to which I am called” (1.592-610).

Book 1 concludes, then, with the ritualized initiation of *hospitium* between Dido and Aeneas. Four elements of the ritualized hospitality initiation are evident.<sup>221</sup> First,

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<sup>219</sup> Her next offer is, however, too generous and actually dangerous, for Dido asks Ilioneus: “Or, do you wish to settle here with me on an equal footing, even here in this kingdom of Carthage? The city which I am founding is yours” (1.572-574).

<sup>220</sup> So also Gibson, “Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4,” 191; Gordon Williams, *Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1983) 20-23; Monti [*The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 24] states: “It is significant that only when Dido has proved her *humanitas* in this way that the magical cloud enshrouding Aeneas evaporates to allow him to speak with her.”

<sup>221</sup> These are also recognized by Vassiliki Panoussi, *Greek Tragedy in Vergil’s “Aeneid”: Ritual, Empire, and Intertext* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 95-96; Gibson, “Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4,” 193. Monti [*The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 24-25] describes Roman *hospitium*: “*Hospitium*, the proper designation for the association of individuals of different political states, is like

Dido leads Aeneas into her palace and they offer sacrifices to the gods (1.632-636). Second, they feast together (1.637-642). Third, Aeneas gives to Dido the guest-gifts of treasure from the ruins of Troy, including Helen's cloak and dress and a scepter belonging to Priam's daughter (1.647-656).<sup>222</sup> Dido too gives gifts, and references to these gifts pepper the narrative (5.571-572; 9.266; 11.72-75). Finally, the initiation concludes with shared libations and prayers to the gods (1.725-756) in which Dido offers a prayer to Jupiter, the one whom "they say appoints laws for host and guest" (*Iuppiter, hospitibus nam te dare iura loquuntur*, 1.731). Dido prays that their relationship may be remembered and be a source of blessing for later generations of Tyrians and Trojans (1.730-735).<sup>223</sup> All is not well, though, and Venus fears "Juno's hospitality" (1.671-672), as she knows Dido will soon claim her relationship with Aeneas is not one of guest-friendship but of marriage (1.657-690).<sup>224</sup>

After Aeneas has recounted the stories of his wanderings, Dido is inflamed with love for Aeneas: "But the queen had long since been suffering from love's deadly wound, feeding it with her blood and being consumed by its hidden fire."<sup>225</sup> Unsure of what to do with this "stranger" (*hospes*) who has been welcomed "into her house" (4.10-11), her sister Anna encourages the Queen to "be lavish with your hospitality" (*indulge hospitio*, 4.51) with the hope of detaining him from leaving Carthage (4.31-53). After Dido and

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other Roman political relationships based on the *fides* of the participants and so implies the whole range of social norms [including] *fides* itself, *pietas*, *officium* and *gratia*."

<sup>222</sup> This is a distinct variation from the giving of guest-gifts in the *Odyssey* where it is only the host who gives gifts to the guests.

<sup>223</sup> Dido's speech characterizes herself as an ideal queen who models royal φιλοσθρωπία and *pietas*. On this, see Francis Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 39-46.

<sup>224</sup> Scholars note that the description of the initiation of the guest-friendship between Aeneas and Dido has allusions to a wedding ceremony. See, for example, Panoussi, *Greek Tragedy in Vergil's "Aeneid,"* 96-99; Wiltshire, *Public and Private in Vergil's Aeneid,* 90-93; Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid,* 9-10.

<sup>225</sup> Dido's irrational passionate love for Aeneas has been jointly inflicted upon her through Juno (who hopes that it will result in a marriage which will detain Aeneas from fulfilling his duty) and Venus (who hopes it will result in Dido's fatal misery). See Camps, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid,* 31-35.

Aeneas spend the night together in the cave, Dido views her relationship with Aeneas as one of husband and wife and not guest-friends (4.160-172). In response, Jupiter sends Mercury to Aeneas in order to rebuke him for his dalliance with the Queen and to remind him of his destiny to found his kingdom in Italy (4.198-295). Rumor of Aeneas' resolve to leave Carthage travels immediately to the Queen, and she gives a lengthy speech where she tries to persuade him to stay (4.305-320). She accuses Aeneas of breaking both his contractual obligation to her as husband and guest-friend.<sup>226</sup> She pleads with him as husband: "Does our love have no claim on you?" (4.307), and "I beg you by our union, by the marriage we have begun...." (4.316). She also reminds him of his obligation as guest-friend: "I beg you...by the pledge you gave me with your right hand" (4.315 cf. 4.307).<sup>227</sup> Dido views Aeneas' departure as a violation of the hospitality laws: "My guest (*hospes*) is leaving me to my fate and I shall die. 'Guest' is the only name I can now give the man who used to be my husband" (4.323-325).

Aeneas, however, makes two claims in response to Dido. First, he never entered into a marital contract with her.<sup>228</sup> And second, he remembers the hospitality she has shown him and will never fail to reciprocate with her in terms of a guest-friend (4.331-340). Aeneas claims, then, that he is a good *hospes* and will, as such, fulfill his obligation to spread her fame.<sup>229</sup> Quite obviously, Aeneas denies her claim that guest-

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<sup>226</sup> Gibson, "Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4," 196. Note the complaint of Iarbas, Dido's rejected suitor, against Aeneas which also invokes the theme of corrupted hospitality: "...and now this second Paris...is enjoying what he has stolen while we bring gifts to temples we think are yours and keep warm with our worship the reputation of a useless god" (4.215-218).

<sup>227</sup> It is clear that Vergil identifies the giving of the "right hand" not with marriage but with that of *fides* in the context of political relationships such as *hospitium* (cf. 3.82-83; 3.610-611; 8.150-169; 11.292-293). So also, Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 1-8.

<sup>228</sup> Aeneas entirely avoids responding to Dido's emotional and passionate pleas. On this see, D. Feeney, "The Taciturnity of Aeneas," *The Classical Quarterly* 33 (1983) 204-219.

<sup>229</sup> Gibson, "Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4," 196-197. Aeneas is far from blameless as a *hospes*, however. He has clearly assumed the role of consort and royal sharer of Carthage's power and

friendship requires him to stay in Carthage. Dido, however, inflamed with passion and love, cannot bear any reciprocation from Aeneas for her hospitality that is not marriage with her in Carthage (4.362-387).<sup>230</sup> She begs the gods to take note of Aeneas' violations of justice and fidelity (*fides*) (4.371-373).<sup>231</sup> And she denies the likelihood of Aeneas remembering her hospitality and showing gratitude (*gratia*, 4.539).<sup>232</sup> If she had foreknown these events, she would have violated the hospitality laws herself by "tearing him limb from limb and scattered his pieces in the sea" and, in a statement that alludes to the household of Atreus' corruption of hospitality, she would have taken Ascanius "and served his flesh at his father's table" (4.600-604). Her speech ends with her renunciation of *hospitium* which gives an etiology for the enmity between Rome and Carthage: "Let there be war between the nations and between their sons forever" (4.628-629).<sup>233</sup>

## ii. Aeneas and Latinus (bk. 7)

Richard C. Monti states that "Aeneas' establishment of relations with Latinus and the recapitulation of the motif with his engagement in *hospitium* with Evander are the cardinal points of the narrative of the second half of the *Aeneid*."<sup>234</sup> Aeneas' marriage to Lavinia, daughter of Latinus, demonstrates the overlap between the custom of hospitality

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thereby entangled himself in obligations which he cannot and has no intention of fulfilling. Further, Vergil presents Aeneas' actions as resulting later in Rome's disastrous encounters with Carthage (e.g., 4.625-629). See Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 73-79.

<sup>230</sup> Much has been written on Dido's feminine characterization as an inflamed, overly-emotional, passionate lover. See Katherine Callen King, *Ancient Epic* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 148-152.

<sup>231</sup> On the reciprocal nature of *fides* and its overlap with *officium*, see Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Roman Empire*, 15.

<sup>232</sup> The claim is an attack on Aeneas as a good *hospes*, for it implies that he receives but does not reciprocate for prior services rendered. Saller [*Personal Patronage under the Roman Empire*, 21] states: "*Gratia* was often provoked by a *beneficium* or *officium* for which it constituted a kind of repayment."

<sup>233</sup> Fortunately we do not need to arbitrate between Aeneas and Dido and answer the question: "Was Dido justified in her claim that Aeneas broke hospitality and was a poor *hospes*?" This is not an easy question to answer, and the ancient responses to it are varied. Given the repeated connection, however, between *pietas* and *fides*, and the fact that Aeneas is characterized as one with *pietas* it would appear to suggest that Vergil does not intend the reader to view Aeneas as breaking hospitality with Dido. On the ancient responses to this problem, see Gibson, "Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4," 200-202.

<sup>234</sup> Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 95.

and marriage – the two institutions which transform strangers into kin.<sup>235</sup> At the exact time that the Trojans are arriving in Italy, Latinus consults an oracle which forbids him from giving his daughter in marriage to Turnus king of the Rutulian tribe.<sup>236</sup> Rather, the oracle declares: “Strangers will come to be your sons-in-law and by their blood to raise our name to the stars” (7.96-98). Through Aeneas’ marriage to Lavinia, the Trojan race will be united politically with the Latins thereby becoming Latinus’ “sons-in-laws.” The overlap between the customs of guest-friendship and request for marriage is evident.

When Latinus encounters the Trojans he asks them to accept “our guest-friendship (*ne fugite hospitium*)” and to be assured that the Latins are a pious people given that they are “the people of Saturn” (7.200-205).<sup>237</sup> In response, Ilioneus declares a pledge of faith, offers guest-gifts to the king, and declares that it is divine destiny which bids them make this alliance (7.212-248). Latinus accepts the initiation of political guest-friendship through the marriage of his daughter to Aeneas. He then requests a meeting with Aeneas if it is indeed true that Aeneas is eager “to join us in friendship (*hospitio*) and be called our ally (*amicos*)” (7.263-265). He then sends Ilioneus and the Trojans to Aeneas with gifts as a mark of the initiation of their guest-friendship and pledge to give Lavinia to Aeneas (7.270-285). As guest-friend and son-in-law of Latinus, Aeneas stands to inherit his kingdom (7.410-425).

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<sup>235</sup> On Lavinia, see Cairns, *Vergil's Augustan Epic*, 151-176.

<sup>236</sup> There is a contrast between Aeneas’ positive expectations for a hospitable reception upon his encounter of the Latins (7.130-132) and his fear of an inhospitable reception by the Carthaginians in bk. 1 (1.306-309). See Monti, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 87-88.

<sup>237</sup> Monti’s [*The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*, 86] comments on the speech of Latinus are relevant for they make explicit the common equation we have encountered between hospitality and civilization: “Latinus’ invocation of the Aturnian virtue and *aequitas* of the Latins is the indication that they act as civilized men. It is calculated to exhort the Trojans to seek *hospitium*, and it implies...the whole range of social values which operate in the civilized life of the city and foster benign intercourse.”

iii. Aeneas and Evander (bk. 8)

Juno's wrath rages, however, against the Trojans and she stirs up enmity between the Trojans and the Latins, and thereby forces Aeneas to pursue an alliance with Evander king of Arcadia. The alliance, again, is created through the custom of hospitality. While Evander is performing the yearly sacrifices to Hercules, the Arcadians see the Trojans approaching and rush to greet them. Aeneas declares that he is looking for Evander to see whether they can be "allies" in battle (8.102-125). Pallas, Evander's son, responds to Aeneas' request with a declaration of hospitality: "Pallas said, 'Come as a guest (*hospes*) into our house.' With these words he took Aeneas by the right hand in a long clasp..." (8.123-125).<sup>238</sup> With Pallas' initial invitation of hospitality, Aeneas returns the favor by speaking "words of friendship" (8.126) and offering "the right hand of friendship" (8.150-151). With the ratification of their guest-friendship, Evander invites Aeneas to join him in celebrating the sacrifices to Hercules and to "feel at home at the tables of your allies" (8.168-174). Aeneas and the Trojans engage, then, in the sacrifices, are offered comfortable couches on which to sit, drink, and eat the best portions of the sacrifices (8.175-183). After sharing some entertaining stories of how Hercules saved the Arcadians from Cacus, Evander invites Aeneas into his home with reminiscences of how he once showed hospitality to the god Hercules (8.361-365).<sup>239</sup>

When they arrived at his house, Evander said, 'The victorious Hercules of the line of Alceus stooped to enter this door. This was a palace large enough for him. You are my guest (*hospes*), and you too must have the courage to despise wealth. You must mould yourself to be worthy of the god. Come into my poor home and do not judge it too harshly.'

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<sup>238</sup> When Pallas is killed fighting Turnus, Evander refuses to reject his guest-friendship with the Trojans: "I would not wish to blame you, Trojans, nor our treaties, nor regret the joining of our right hands in guest-friendship (*nec vos arguerim, Teuceri, nec foedera nec quas iunximus hospitio dextras*)" (11.165-165).

<sup>239</sup> The description of Cacus contains allusions to Polyphemus in Homer's *Odyssey* 9, and the humble hospitality of Evander evokes the hospitality of Eumaeus to Odysseus in *Odyssey* 14. On *Aeneid* 8.361-365, see John Taylor, *Classics and the Bible: Hospitality and Recognition* (London: Duckworth, 2007) 101.

Evander's brief speech to Aeneas calls upon him to imitate the example of frugality, moderation, and hospitality.<sup>240</sup> The speech also contains many of the elements of a theoxeny. The god Hercules visits Arcadia; Evander welcomes the god and shows hospitality to the god; the god rewards the Arcadians by defeating the monster Cacus.

#### iv. Hospitality and Guest-friendship in the *Aeneid*

It is important to emphasize the lines of continuity between hospitality in the Greek writings and the practice in a Roman setting. First, hospitality is a mark of civilized and "humane" cultures, and those who refuse to show hospitality to strangers, particularly in mistreating shipwrecked sailors, are termed barbarians. Second, hospitality is not only a virtue but is sanctioned by the gods, particularly Jupiter. Third, the ritualized relationship of *hospitium* is recognizably similar to the Greek practice of ξένια. Though Aeneas' aims vary in his initiation of *hospitium* with Dido, Latinus, and Evander they all demonstrate remarkable similarities to Greek guest-friendship. The only major point of discontinuity here appears to be that now the guest is required to give guest-gifts to the host. Fourth, although brief, Vergil utilizes a 'theoxenic' literary trope in order to portray Aeneas' testing of Dido's loyalty to the hospitality laws as well as in Evander's recounting the story of Hercules' aid to the Arcadians. Fifth, the reciprocal nature of hospitality is emphasized throughout the Aeneas-Dido episode, and Dido's rebuke of Aeneas lays blame upon him for failing to show *fides*, *gratia*, and *officium* by denying her proper reciprocity.

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<sup>240</sup> Throughout book 8, Evander functions as an exemplary model and guide for Aeneas. See Sophia Papaioannou, "Founder, Civilizer, and Leader: Vergil's Evander and his Role in the Origins of Rome," *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003) 680-702.

### C. Theoxenies in the Writings of Ovid

The literary trope of humans showing hospitality, unknowingly, to disguised and wandering deities has been examined in our studies of Homer's *Odyssey*, the festivals of *theoxenia* for the Dioskouroi, Euripides' *Bacchae*, and briefly in Vergil's *Aeneid*. The continuation of this portion of the cultural script in the Roman world is best demonstrated by three stories from Ovid of Jupiter and Mercury visiting humans: the visit to Lycaon, the visit to Baucis and Philemon, and the visit to the elderly Hyrieus.<sup>241</sup> Given that we have already examined this portion of the cultural script in some detail our comments can be synthetic and brief. In what follows, we will be attentive to: a) the constituent elements or general structure of theoxenies, b) the direct equation that is made between (in)hospitality and (im)piety, and c) the way in which these stories function as literary symbolizations of piety (with respect to humans) and justice (with respect to the gods).

#### i. Jupiter visits the wicked king Lycaon (*Metamorphoses* 1.163-252)

The story has four constituent parts.<sup>242</sup> First, Jupiter hears rumors of the remarkable wickedness of humanity (1.163-164). Epitomizing the height of human barbarity is the incident that took place at "Lycaon's table" (1.165), where Jupiter was subjected to "the plotting of the barbarous Lycaon" (1.197-198).<sup>243</sup> Second, as a result of the rumors of humanity's impiety, Jupiter recounts his actions: "Eager to prove this false [i.e., rumors of the evil of humanity], I descended from high Olympus, and as a god

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<sup>241</sup> One might also examine Callimachus' *Hecale* where Theseus receives hospitality from Hecale. Scholars have suggested that Ovid's tale of Philemon and Baucis may be dependent upon *Hecale*. See A. S. Hollis, *Ovid Metamorphoses Book VIII* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970) 104. On hospitality in *Hecale*, see Taylor, *Classics and the Bible*, 79-82; A. S. Hollis, *Callimachus Hecale* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 341-354.

<sup>242</sup> See Joseph Fontenrose, *Philemon, Lot, and Lycaon* (University of California Publications in Classical Philology 13; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945) 93-119, here 97-109.

<sup>243</sup> For translations I am dependent upon *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (trans. Rolfe Humphries; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983); A. S. Hollis, *Ovid: Metamorphoses, Book VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

disguised in human form travelled up and down the land” (1.212-213). His tour of inspection of humanity demonstrates that the rumors of evil are true, and the evil is patently manifest in the “inhospitable abode” (*inhospita tecta*) of king Lycaon (1.218). Third, the king’s response is one of unbridled impiety made manifest through his inhospitality to the deity. When Jupiter gave a sign that a god had descended to their midst, Lycaon mocked the prayers of the pious common folk and devises a test to see if Jupiter is a god (1.220-223). He, first, makes a plan to kill Jupiter while he is sleeping (1.224-225), and then, secondly, tries to serve him boiled human flesh (1.226-229).<sup>244</sup> As soon as Lycaon places the broiled flesh on the table, Jupiter punishes the king for his impious inhospitality by destroying his house with a thunderbolt and by transforming the king into his true nature – a savage wolf (1.230-235).<sup>245</sup> Lycaon’s inhospitality is the height of human wickedness, and it forces Jupiter to send a flood to destroy humanity.

#### ii. Jupiter and Mercury visit Baucis and Philemon (*Metamorphoses* 8.617-724)

One of the most well-known stories in the *Metamorphoses* is the charming and humorous recounting of the gods’ visit to the poor and elderly Baucis and Philemon.<sup>246</sup> Despite its humor, the story is striking for its moralistic and religious tone in comparison

<sup>244</sup> This element of the story recalls the crimes committed within the house of Atreus. On this, see Fontenrose, *Philemon, Lot, and Lycaon*, 98.

<sup>245</sup> This is common strategy throughout Ovid’s characterization of his characters. G. Karl Galinsky [*Ovid’s Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) 45] states it well with respect to Lycaon: “The physical characteristics of the personages are subject to change, but their quintessential substance lives on.” Also, Andrew Feldherr [“Metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid* (ed. Philip Hardie; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 163-169, here 170], “And Lycaon’s new shape not only more clearly reveals his essence, it also manifests and enforces the cosmic hierarchies he has violated. The wolf itself becomes a reminder of the consequences of behaving either as a beast or a god.”

<sup>246</sup> For additional versions of this story, see Hesiod, *Astronomy* 3; Eratosthenes *Catasterismi* 16.1-31; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 176. Much of the scholarship on this story has centered upon discerning its sources. So, for example, Hollis, *Ovid: Metamorphoses, Book VIII*, 106-112; Alan H. F. Griffin, “Philemon and Baucis in Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses,’” *Greece and Rome* 38 (1998) 62-74.

with the rest of Ovid's myths.<sup>247</sup> The story is told directly, in fact, to rebut Pirithous' claim that "the gods have no such powers to give and take away the forms of things" (8.614-615).<sup>248</sup> Again, the structure of the story unfolds in three basic parts.<sup>249</sup> First, the gods disguise themselves and proceed upon a journey of testing humans (8.626-630):

Jupiter came here in the guise of a mortal, and with his father came Atlas' grandson, he that bears the caduceus, his wings laid aside. To a thousand homes they came, looking for rest; a thousand homes were barred against them. But one at last received them.

Notice, secondly, that the response to the gods is entirely couched in the language of hospitality and entrance into one's home. The humble depiction of the home of Baucis and Philemon as well as their simple hospitality is humorous.<sup>250</sup> They are very poor but they face their poverty with a cheerful heart (8.631-637). Ovid provides a nice description of the elements of hospitality. The divine visitors must stoop down in order to enter the cottage; Baucis provides a blanket and a bench for them to sit upon; they serve the gods cabbage and a small portion of "long-cherished" smoked bacon; they tell stories to the gods to entertain them; the gods recline; they eat; and they serve the gods some wine of no great age (8.637-660). In the midst of their simple hospitality to these strangers, however, Baucis and Philemon recognize that these strangers are no ordinary guests for the mixing-bowl continued to refill itself with wine after it had been drained

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<sup>247</sup> See also Brooks Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 413-415.

<sup>248</sup> The stories of Baucis and Philemon recall that of Lycaon in book 1. So Otis, commenting on the stories of Baucis and Philemon and Erysichton [*Ovid as an Epic Poet*, 414] states: "It hardly seem an accident that these two tales of reward and punishment (for piety and impiety respectively) stand in the very centre of the poem, while two quite similar reward and punishment tales (*Lycaon, Deucalion-Pyrrha*) stand at its beginning (Creation-Epic).

<sup>249</sup> For a similar outline of the structure, see Flückiger-Guggenheim, *Göttliche Gäste*, 51-53.

<sup>250</sup> Their humble and simple hospitality would resonate with Augustan Roman virtues where it was "official policy to glorify the simple life of Italy's past – as viewed from a comfortable distance away." Hollis, *Ovid: Metamorphoses, Book VIII*, 111.

(8.679-681).<sup>251</sup> The elderly couple recognizes that they are entertaining deities, and thus they say a prayer and become embarrassed by their “meager hospitality” (8.681-684) and so they try to sacrifice their only goose for their “divine guests” (8.685-688). The gods, then, reveal their identity to the couple and promise to reward them for their hospitality (8.689-692): “We are gods, and this wicked neighborhood will be punished as it deserves. But to you shall be given exemption from this punishment.” In response to the inhospitality of the rest of the country, the gods send a flood to destroy the land. The elderly couple, however, is taken to a mountain where their requests are granted. Their house, however, is transformed into a richly adorned temple. They will serve as priests of the gods until their death; they will not outlive the other but will die together at the same time; and upon death they will be transformed into sacred trees (8.695-724).<sup>252</sup>

### iii. Jupiter and Mercury visit the elder Hyrieus (*Fasti* 5.493-544)

In recounting the origin of the constellation Orion, Ovid recounts another theoxeny similar to the story of Baucis and Philemon.<sup>253</sup> First, Jupiter, Mercury, and Neptune descend to earth and journey together (495-496). Second, an elderly man, Hyrieus, encounters the strangers and bids them to stay with him: “Long is the way, but short the hours of daylight left, and my door is open to strangers (*et hospitibus ianua nostra patet*)” (500-503). The gods accept the offer of hospitality and disguise their divinity from Hyrieus (504-505). The elements of hospitality are similar to those recounted in the story of Baucis and Philemon. The old man kindles a fire, boils some

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<sup>251</sup> This feature of the replenishment of the wine is reminiscent of the Elijah-Elisha stories (1 Kings 17:14-16; 2 Kings 4:2-6). On this, see Griffin, “Philemon and Baucis in Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses,’” 71.

<sup>252</sup> The story of Baucis and Philemon demonstrates the reward of piety while the following story, the episode of Erysichthon, demonstrates judgment for impiety. Hollis, *Ovid: Metamorphoses, Book VIII*, 112.

<sup>253</sup> A. S. Hollis [*Ovid: Metamorphoses, Book VIII*, 106] refers to it as a “doublet” in terms of both its “language and in approach.”

beans, and serves some wine (506-513). Having drained the wine, Neptune reveals his identity by commanding Hyrieus to serve the wine to Jupiter (513-514). Hyrieus wisely sacrifices his only ox and finds more wine which he had been saving since he was a youth (515-519). In response to his hospitality, the gods ask him to make a request to them. Hyrieus declares that his wife is barren, and that his one wish is to have a son in his old age (523-530). After ten months a boy was born and Hyrieus named him “Urion” (531-536).<sup>254</sup>

We have seen that the theoxenies in Ovid, at their most basic level, are composed of three constituent parts: a) a god (or gods) disguises himself and descends to earth to test the (im)piety of humans; their descent is portrayed as a tour of inspection of the piety of mortals; b) the gods are either treated with hospitality or inhospitality; and c) the gods reveal their identity and destroy the inhospitable and reward the hospitable. Further, there is an equation in these stories between hospitality and piety and, conversely, inhospitality and impiety. In the story of Jupiter’s visit to king Lycaon, for example, Ovid uses the gross inhospitality of the king to represent how savage humanity has become. Throughout the theoxenies, there is an emphasis on the proper moral impulse as one of hospitality to strangers. Conversely, there is an emphasis on the justice of the gods to reward the pious and curse the wicked.<sup>255</sup> John Weaver is right, therefore, that

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<sup>254</sup> There are numerous parallels between the story of Abraham and the divine visitors in Genesis 18 and Ovid’s story of Hyrieus, and perhaps the most explicit is that they miraculously are blessed with the birth of a son. On these parallels, see Griffin, “Philemon and Baucis in Ovid’s ‘Metamorphoses,’” 70-71, n. 54.

<sup>255</sup> Numerous commentators note that one of the major themes of Ovid’s theoxenies is that of theodicy, more specifically as the vindication of the power of the gods. See, for example, Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet*, 413-415; Fontenrose, *Philemon, Lot, and Lycaon*, 93.

“tales of *theoxenia* constituted literary symbolizations of both proper and improper disposition toward the divine in the ancient world.”<sup>256</sup>

#### D. Dio Chrysostom’s *the Hunter*: a Critique of Upper-Class Hospitality

Dio’s “The Hunter” (or “The Euboean Discourse”) is one of his most well-known discourses, due to its description of the economic state of the countryside in Greece as well as its entertaining depictions of the poor hunter and his family.<sup>257</sup> Its theme is simple: the life and character of the poor is superior to that of the rich.<sup>258</sup> One of the primary elements Dio uses to establish the superior virtue of the poor is his depiction of their simple but generous hospitality. Of further interest here is Dio’s critique of elite/upper-class hospitality, the motif of shipwrecked strangers, and his interaction with hospitality scenes from the *Odyssey*.

##### i. The Description of the Hunter’s Hospitality to Strangers

*The Hunter* is composed of a series of encounters between the poor peasant and bereft strangers.<sup>259</sup> In every encounter the hunter bestows hospitality upon the stranger. First, when Dio has been shipwrecked off the Euboean coast he encounters the hunter who immediately invites Dio “the stranger” (5) into his home, promises to share his venison with him once they reach his home, to provide him with a place of rest, and give him aid for his conveyance to his destination (5-8). After recounting some stories on their way back to his home, the hunter has Dio recline on some deerskins, he eats, and he drinks wine (65-66, 75-76). Second, when a man from the city comes to the hunter’s

<sup>256</sup> Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 35-36.

<sup>257</sup> So Edmund Berry, “Dio Chrysostom the Moral Philosopher,” *Greece and Rome* 30 (1983) 70-80, here 73; C. P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) 56-61.

<sup>258</sup> Thus Dio’s frequent asides: “Now I had often found in other situations...that poverty is in reality a sacred and inviolable thing and no one wrongs you...” (9; cf. 65, 81-82, and 103).

<sup>259</sup> Translations have been aided by *Dio Chrysostom* (trans. J. W. Cohoon; 5 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932-1951).

home seeking taxes, the hunter entertains him (ἐξενίσσαμεν δὲ αὐτόν) and gives him gifts of two deerskins (21-22). Third, when the hunter is accused of growing rich off of the land but not paying taxes, a man from the crowd testifies on behalf of the hunter. In defense of the hunter, he recounts the hospitality that was shown to him. When the man was shipwrecked and in danger of dying of thirst and starvation, the hunter “invited us in” for shelter, made a fire, rubbed olive oil on them, gave them baths, fed them bread, made them recline, clothed them, gave them wine, and after three days of hospitality gave them meat and clothes for their journey (55-58).

#### ii. Hospitality to Shipwrecked Strangers

More significant for our purposes, however, given its relevance for Acts 28:1-10, is the way in which Dio demonstrates the virtue of the hunter through highlighting his hospitality to shipwrecked sailors. Dio is the first example of a shipwrecked stranger to whom the hunter gives hospitality (4-8). But when the hunter is accused by the townsfolk of making his living by terrorizing shipwrecked sailors the hunter wholeheartedly rejects the accusation. In his rejection of this charge, the hunter calls “this act a ghoulis and wicked practice” (51) and the height of “impiety” (τῆ ἄσεβείᾳ, 51). He responds:

Many is the time I have shown mercy (ἠλέησα) to shipwrecked travelers who have come to my door, have received (ὑπεδέξαμην) them into my hut, given them to eat and to drink (φαγεῖν ἔδωκα καὶ πειν), helped them in any other way that I could, and accompanied them until they got out of the wilderness. Yet who of them is there who will testify for me now? (52)

Fortunately for the hunter one of these shipwrecked travelers who has received the hunter’s hospitality is among the citizens! Having listened to the hunter’s story this man recognizes the hunter as the one who gave hospitality to him when he and his friend had

shipwrecked off the coast and were in danger of death (54-55). It is thanks to this poor hunter that their lives were saved.

Dio has emphasized that the hunter consistently shows hospitality to shipwrecked strangers precisely because the destitute sailor is unable to reciprocate for the hospitality. The hunter's hospitality, then, is not motivated by hope for an economic return. Unlike the back-and-forth reciprocal hospitality of the elite, the hospitality offered by the hunter can only be motivated out of love for virtue and humanity. Something like this is, in fact, made explicit by Seneca who frequently upholds aid given to shipwrecked strangers as the ultimate pure favor (*On Favors* 4.11.1-3).<sup>260</sup>

If a sordid calculation of my own advantage is what makes me liberal, if I assist no one unless he can assist me in return, I shall not find myself doing a favor to anyone who is setting out for distant foreign parts, never to return, nor to anyone so ill as to have no hope of recovery...And yet, to show that benefaction is something to be chosen for its own sake, strangers who have only just arrived in our harbors and are due to depart immediately receive help from us. *We give the shipwrecked stranger a ship to carry him back, and equip it for him. He leaves us hardly knowing who is responsible for his rescue.* Never expecting to come into our sight again, he entrusts the gods with his debt to us and prays them to repay us, while we, in the meantime, have the awareness of our favor, unrewarded though it has been, to gladden us.

We need not enter into the finer points of Seneca's Stoicism to understand his point that virtue consists in choosing what is good without the motivation for its benefits or results, and that one of the best examples of this virtue consists in giving hospitality to the shipwrecked stranger who has no means to repay. So with the hunter, Dio can demonstrate his exemplary virtue and character no better than by upholding his consistent hospitality given to shipwrecked strangers.

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<sup>260</sup> On shipwrecked strangers, see also *On Favors* 1.5.4; 3.9.3; 3.35.4.

### iii. Dio's Critique of the Reciprocal Nature of Upper-Class Hospitality

Finally, Dio's oration is significant as it provides a rare portrait of lower-class hospitality and a strong critique of the reciprocal nature of elitist hospitality relations.<sup>261</sup> Dio is clear that the goal of his oration is to "present an illustration of the manner of life...of the poor" so that his readers will be able to question whether "the poor are at a disadvantage in comparison with the rich on account of their poverty" (81). While he uses a variety of means to accomplish this goal, his primary strategy consists in holding up the hospitality given by the poor as superior to the rich and thereby overturning the words of Euripides in *Electra* 424-425: "hospitality to strangers (τὰ πρὸς τοὺς ξένους) is so difficult for them [i.e., the poor] that they can never welcome (ὑποδέξασθαι) or entertain anyone in need" (82). Euripides' words are false! The poor are more likely to light a warm fire, share their clothes with shipwrecked strangers, and share food (82).

To prove the validity of this claim, Dio invokes the hospitality of Odysseus' poor swineherd Eumaeus and compares it with the hospitality of the suitors.

In Eumaeus he [i.e., Homer] has given us a slave and a poor man who can still welcome Odysseus generously (καλῶς ὑποδεχόμενον) with food and a bed, while the suitors in their wealth and insolence share with him but grudgingly even what belongs to others, and this is just what Odysseus himself is represented as saying to Antinous when he upbraids him for his churlishness. 'You would not give a suppliant even salt in your own house, you who, while sitting here, feed at another's table cannot even bear to give me bread from your well-loaded board.' (83)

The hospitality of Penelope is not much better than the suitors either, for she only promises to give the (disguised) beggar a cloak if his words about Odysseus' return prove true (84-86). Eumaeus is not even surprised at the poor treatment and "inhumanity"

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<sup>261</sup> The first half of the narrative which upholds the virtues of the hunter and his family function as a foil to the second part of the work which is declamatory critique of the rich and their social practices. See Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom*, 56-57.

(ἀπανθρωπίαν) with which the beggar is treated by these aristocrats (88). Hospitality between the rich is, for Dio, a sham for it is motivated not by the virtue of “humanity” but rather out of hope for a reciprocal return. According to Dio, the rich:

[W]elcome openheartedly (ὑποδέχεσθαι φιλοφρόνως) with gifts and presents only the rich, from whom, the host expected a like return, very much as the present custom is in selecting the recipients of our kind treatment (φιλανθρωπίας) and choice. For what seems to be acts of kindness and favors (φιλοφρονήσεις καὶ χάριτες) turn out to be nothing more or less than accommodations and loans, and that too at a high rate of interest as a usual thing. (88-89)

Even the guest-gifts (ξένια) of the poor are superior to those of the rich, for who really has need of silver bowls, embroidered robes, and four-horse chariots (92-93)? Dio’s conclusion is that Euripides is wrong: wealth decreases the quality of hospitality for wealth makes one’s character parsimonious and ungenerous (91-92). Dio takes one last jab by reminding his listeners of the outcome of Menelaus’ act of “receiving the wealthiest prince of Asia as a guest” (δέξασθαι τὸν πλουσιώτατον ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας ξένον, 94). Aristocratic hospitality led to all of the trials of the Trojan War (94-96)!

Dio’s *the Hunter* is important for at least four reasons. First, it provides further evidence for the continuation of the cultural script of hospitality to strangers well into the end of the first century C.E. Second, Dio singles out hospitality to shipwrecked strangers as the height of virtuous hospitality, for bereaved sailors simply have no means of making a reciprocal return for the hospitality they receive. Third, Dio’s oration presents a strong critique of reciprocal hospitality relations among the elite. Lack of wealth does not disqualify the poor from showing hospitality and humanity to strangers. Fourth, Dio’s description of hospitality to strangers is often connected to the virtue of

“humanity” as φιλάνθρωπια and numerous words beginning with the φιλοφρόν- prefixes are found in connection with descriptions of hospitality (see 86-89).

## **Chapter 4: The Cultural Script of Hospitality to Strangers in the Hebrew Bible and Post-biblical Jewish Literature**

Through an examination of a wide array of texts I have explored the script of hospitality in the Greco-Roman world. But Mediterranean culture embraces Judaism as well. So I continue my construction of the cultural script, asking the same basic questions in texts originating out of an explicitly Jewish matrix regarding hospitality to strangers: its proper and improper execution, the religious sanctions for the practice, and the corruption or refusal of the practice. Given that Luke refers to Abraham, Lot, and the Sodomites – all figures which occur in relation to the theme of hospitality in the Hebrew Bible – I am particularly attentive to the depiction of these characters in Jewish literature.

### I. Constructing the Cultural Script of Hospitality to Strangers

#### A. The Hospitality of Abraham and the Divine Visit in Genesis 18:1-16

The practice of hospitality binds together the stories about Abraham in Genesis 18 and those about Lot and the Sodomites in Genesis 19.<sup>1</sup> Abraham's hospitality to the three messengers of Yahweh who announce the impending birth of Isaac is the premier example of hospitality in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>2</sup> The passage is particularly instructive for it contains an exemplary description of the elements of ideal Jewish hospitality and it does so in the context of a divine visitation. We are presented at once with the same combination of elements as in Homer's theoxenies.

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<sup>1</sup> John Van Seters [*Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) 215-216] lists seventeen vocabulary parallels between Genesis 18 and 19. See; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16 – 50* (Word Biblical Commentary 2; Waco: Word Publishers, 1994) 40-44.

<sup>2</sup> Other examples of hospitality in the Hebrew Bible which will not be considered in detail here include: Joshua 2:1-24; 1 Kings 17:8-24; 2 Kings 4:8-36; Psalm 23.

From the start the reader knows that Genesis 18 is a divine visit: “the Lord appeared to him [i.e., Abraham]” (יְהוָה אֵלֵיוֹ נִרְאָה//LXX, ὡφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ θεός, 18:1).<sup>3</sup> The phrase is editorial, and may be redactional, but its clear function as the first phrase of the narrative is to present the entire scene, including Genesis 19, as a divine visit (cf. Gen. 22:1a).<sup>4</sup> While there is no explicit mention of transformations or disguises, the Lord visits Abraham through the medium of “three men” (אֲנָשִׁים אֵלֵיהֶם//τρεις ἄνδρες, 18:2).<sup>5</sup> The identity of these three men, their relation to God, and the back-and-forth alternation between singular and plural pronouns to refer to the messengers highlights the “difficulty of human comprehension” of the divine visit to Abraham.<sup>6</sup> While numerous theories have been advanced, it seems best to see all three men as mediators of the presence of God to Abraham.<sup>7</sup> While there is no consensus as to when exactly Abraham recognizes the divine status of his visitors, nothing in the text indicates that he

<sup>3</sup> Translations of the Old Greek are my own and are based on *Septuaginta* (ed. Alfred Rahlfs; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979). John H. Sailhamer [*The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 160-161] states: “In opening the narrative with the statement that the Lord ‘appeared’ to Abraham, the author leaves no doubt that in some (albeit unexplained) way, these men represented the Lord’s appearance to Abraham....However one sorts out the details of the story, the fact remains that, in sum, the events of the chapter constitute an account of the Lord’s appearance to Abraham.” Robert Ignatius Letellier [*Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom: Abraham and Lot in Genesis 18 and 19* (BIS 10; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 80] notes that אֵלֵיהֶם in the niphal “is overwhelmingly associated with the theophany, the self-manifestation of God.” Claus Westerman [*Genesis 12 – 36* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1985) 275] argues, however, that Genesis 18 “does not belong to any of the types of divine-appearance in the Old Testament” and, for this, reason “the title in v. 1a, ‘Yahweh appeared to Abraham,’ is redactional.”

<sup>4</sup> So Wenham, *Genesis 16 – 50*, 45; Letellier, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom*, 80. Van Seters [*Abraham in History and Tradition*, 210] notes that “the author who made use of the ‘heavenly visitors’ theme did so with considerable freedom. This can be seen first in the way in which he combined the theme with the story of Isaac’s birth.”

<sup>5</sup> In the Hebrew Bible God characteristically appears – when he does so – in the form of a human. So James Barr, “Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament,” in *Congress Volume: Oxford, 1959* (VTSup 7; Leiden: Brill, 1960) 31-38. On the theophanic features of Gen 18, see Letellier, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom*, 88-93.

<sup>6</sup> See Wenham, *Genesis 16 – 50*, 51. Many scholars see the alteration between the singulars and plurals as evidence of the editor’s amalgamation of two or more sources about Abraham. So Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12 – 36*, 274-276; Herman Gunkel, *Genesis* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1964) 193-201.

<sup>7</sup> For a good discussion, see William John Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis: Canonical Praxis and the Sodom Narrative* (JSOTSS 352; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 151-157.

immediately recognizes their divine identity upon his initial offer of hospitality to the strangers.<sup>8</sup> His offer of food and drink, his comments that they will pass on after they are refreshed (v. 5), and the general story-line of divine visits wherein hosts remain ignorant of their guests' identity, suggest that Abraham is unaware of the strangers' divine identity.<sup>9</sup>

Abraham's response to the three visitors is one of ideal hospitality.<sup>10</sup> A sense of eagerness and generosity characterizes Abraham's hospitality. Abraham is sitting at the entrance of his tent, but upon seeing the strangers he "ran to meet them (קרא־לָם רָץ) // προσέδραμεν εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτοῖς) and bowed down to them" (18:2b).<sup>11</sup> Like Telemachus and unlike Penelope's suitors, Abraham considers it wrong to leave a stranger waiting at his tent entrance, which is his zone of obligation to provide hospitality.<sup>12</sup> Running to meet the strangers emphasizes his readiness to provide the hospitality they need. He politely requests that the visitors stay with him (18:3): "My

<sup>8</sup> So Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 45; Westermann [*Genesis 12-36*, 277-278] states: "Abraham does not know who the strangers are, but he cannot and will not exclude the possibility that they are worthy of honor. One who comes as a stranger is honored because a dignity may be his without there being need of any external sign thereof."

<sup>9</sup> See H. Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative* (London: University Press of America, 1995); Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 65; Letellier, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom*, 83; J. A. Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities: Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, early Jewish and early Christian Traditions* (CBET 1; Kampen: J. H. Kok Publishing House, 1990) 18. This is also how the author of Hebrews understood the text as he refers to "some who showed hospitality to angels *without knowing it*" (ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους, 13:2). The same understanding is evident, as we will see, in Philo and Josephus. See, however, Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 157-158.

<sup>10</sup> For brief summaries of Abraham's hospitality in Genesis 18, see Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (NTM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005) 59-60; Adelbert Denaux, "The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ed. J. Veryheden; BETL 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999) 255-279, here 269-270.

<sup>11</sup> In the patriarchal narratives, bowing is an action indicating great respect and reverence (Gen. 23:7, 12; 33:3-7; 39:9-10; 42:6; 43:26-28).

<sup>12</sup> On the tent entrance and the gate of the city as the "sphere of hospitality which comprises a zone of libation for both the individual and the village or town within which they have the responsibility to offer hospitality to strangers" see Victor H. Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," *BTB* 22 (1992) 3-11, here 11.

lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant.” Abraham asks that they relax under the tree, that they receive some water to wash their feet (18:4; cf. Genesis 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Judges 19:21), and eat “a morsel of bread” (אֶרְפוּ בֶּחֶם לֶחֶם//ἄρτον, v. 5; cf. Genesis 27:19; Judges 19:6; 1 Samuel 20:5, 24; 1 Kings 13:20) in order that “you may refresh yourselves” (v. 5).<sup>13</sup> After they are refreshed, Abraham, as a good host, promises he will not detain them from their journey since they have considered him worthy to be their host (18:5).<sup>14</sup>

Learning that they will receive his hospitality, “Abraham rushes into Sarah’s tent” (הָאֵלֹהִים אָבְרָהָם אֶל־שָׂרָה//καὶ ἔσπευσεν Ἀβραὰμ ἐπὶ τὴν σκηνὴν πρὸς Σαρρὰν, 18:6a) and commands her to make “bread cakes” out of fine flour for the guests. Abraham’s commands have a note of urgency as he tells her to make the bread “with haste” (מִהֵרָא//σπεῦσον, 18:6b). The scene is filled with haste as Abraham then “ran to the herd” (וַאֲלֵהֶבְקָר רָץ//καὶ εἰς τὰς βόας ἔδραμεν, 18:7b) to find a calf to slaughter, and then gives the calf to his servant who “hurried” (וַיְמַהֵר//ἑτάχυσεν) to prepare it (18:7b).<sup>15</sup> Finally, Abraham serves his guests the food while they rest from the heat under the shade of a tree (18:8). Thus, we see that Abraham does considerably more than provide water and bread for the guests as he initially offered in vv. 3-5.<sup>16</sup> A choice

<sup>13</sup> Abraham deliberately understates his hospitality. So Letellier, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom*, 85-86.

<sup>14</sup> This is the sense of Abraham’s words: “Since you have come to your servant” (כִּי־עָלְתָּ עַבְדְּךָ//οὐ εἶνεκεν ἐξεκλίνατε πρὸς τὸν παῖδα ὑμῶν, v. 5b). So Wenham, *Genesis 16 – 50*, 46.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Brueggemann [“‘Impossibility’ and Epistemology in the Faith Tradition of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:1-15),” *ZAW* 94 (1982) 615-634, here 616-619] demonstrates how the narrative “is paced by the rapid sequence of active verbs.” Also, Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative*, 30. Westerman [*Genesis 12-36*, 277] notes that the haste and hurriedness of Abraham’s hospitality is especially striking when one remembers that “no one is in a hurry elsewhere in the patriarchal stories.”

<sup>16</sup> On which, see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 18 – 50* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 11. Compare, further, with Gen. 27:9; Judges 6:19; 13:15.

calf, fresh and sour milk, and bread cakes are served to the guests. Thus, a simple structure for hospitality emerges from Gen. 18:1-8:<sup>17</sup>

- a) Abraham sees the strangers who are at the entrance of his tent.
- b) He immediately runs to greet them and shows them honor by bowing down.
- c) Abraham offers an invitation to the strangers to receive hospitality.
- d) Water is offered to drink and to wash the feet.
- e) Comfort and rest is offered within the lodging.
- f) Food and drink are provided.
- g) The host does not detain his guest(s) from their journey.

That Abraham's hospitality is ideal and proper is indicated by the haste with which Abraham prepares their meal and the generous amount of food offered.<sup>18</sup>

Within the context of this hospitality, the divine guests disclose their purpose for visiting Abraham and Sarah. One of the visitors declares: "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son" (אָשׁוּב אֵלַיךְ כָּעֵת תִּיָּהּ) (אֲשׁוּב//ἐπαναστρέψω ἤξω πρὸς σὲ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτου, 18:10a). Indeed, in Genesis 21:1 it is said that God fulfilled his promise and visited Sarah to give her Isaac.<sup>19</sup> The human impossibility of the promise is emphasized by the fact that both Abraham and Sarah were extremely old (18:11a; cf. 17:17) and that Sarah was no longer experiencing menstruation (18:11b-12).<sup>20</sup> Given that the childlessness of Abraham and Sarah is the central problem of the Abrahamic narratives (cf. Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-15; 17:1-14), it is not hyperbolic to claim that the divine guests promise "salvation to the host's house."<sup>21</sup> Even within Genesis 18 itself, the reader may see the promise of a child as a reward or

<sup>17</sup> For a more general sociological description of hospitality protocols, see Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 11.

<sup>18</sup> So Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 165; Wenham, *Genesis 16 – 50*, 47; Terence E. Fretheim, *Abraham: Trials of Family and Faith* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007) 112.

<sup>19</sup> See, further, Wenham, *Genesis 16 – 50*, 48.

<sup>20</sup> Brueggemann, "Impossibility' and Epistemology in the Faith Tradition of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:1-15)," 618-619; Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 169-170.

<sup>21</sup> Denaux, "The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents," 270.

response to Abraham's hospitality.<sup>22</sup> While the promise to Abraham for a son has, indeed, already been made repeatedly (cf. Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 16:11; 17:15-21), the dynamics of Genesis 18 suggest a connection between Abraham's appropriate hospitable response to the visitors and God's gift of Isaac.<sup>23</sup> While it is difficult to answer with precision the question of *when* Abraham recognized the identity of the three visitors, it is not until Genesis 18:14 that the visitor(s) reveals his identity.<sup>24</sup> These concluding words disclose that Abraham has indeed offered hospitality to God as the stranger asks: "Is anything too wonderful *for the Lord*?" (לְמוֹעֵד מִיְהוָה דָּבָר לְמוֹעֵד // μὴ ἄδυναται παρὰ τῶ θεῶ ῥήμα, 18:14a).<sup>25</sup> The narrative discloses the simple threefold dynamic of a theoxeny, a dynamic that can also be found in other Ancient Near Eastern stories: a) divine visitor(s) appear; b) proper hospitality is unwittingly offered to the deity; and c) the divine guest discloses his identity and rewards the host.<sup>26</sup> The author of Genesis 18 clearly and creatively utilizes the generic features of a divine visit in order to present God's birth announcement of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> So Dorothy Irvin [*Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* (Neukirchener Verlag Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1978) 20] states: "The reward for Abraham's hospitality is the son promised to Sarah." See also, J. Morgenstern, *The Book of Genesis: A Jewish Interpretation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965) 122; Westerman, *Genesis 12 – 36*, 275; J. Skinner, *Genesis* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1910) 298. See, however, Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 168;

<sup>23</sup> See also *1 Clement* 10:7a: "Because of his faith and hospitality a son was given to him in his old age."

<sup>24</sup> Westerman, *Genesis 12 – 36*, 282; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1; New York: Doubleday, 1964) 131, 135.

<sup>25</sup> Letellier [*Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom*, 100] calls this "the key sentence of the story (18,1 – 15), an affirmation of trust in the power of God....".

<sup>26</sup> That Gen. 18 – 19 is a theoxeny is not a novel claim. W. Baumgartner [*Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Leiden: Brill, 1959) 154] writes: "Es handelt sich um jenen Sagentypus der Theoxenie." For a comparison of Gen 18 – 19 with other ANE theoxenies, see Irvin, *Mytharion*, esp. 17-24; Hamilton, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 9-11; P. Xella, "L'episode de Dnil et Kothar [KTU 1.17 (=CTA 17) v 1-31] et Gen. xviii 1-16," *VT* 28 (1978) 483-488; Y. Abishur, "The Story of the Angels' Visit to Abraham [Gen. 18:1-16] and its Parallel in Ugaritic Literature [2 Aqhat v:4-31]," *Beth Mikra* 32 (1986/87) 168-177. See also, Letellier, *Day in Mamre, Night in Sodom*, 210-212.

<sup>27</sup> So Westerman, *Genesis 12 – 36*, 275; Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, 209-212; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 193-194. Also note J. Rendel Harris, *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906).

## B. The Hospitality of Lot and the Inhospitability of the Sodomites in Genesis 19:1-11

Genesis 19 serves as the negative counterpart to Genesis 18, as the divine messengers are met with both hospitality (Lot) and inhospitability (the Sodomites).<sup>28</sup> The divine visit is presented as a response to the injustice and wickedness of Sodom.<sup>29</sup> After meeting with Abraham, the men set out “and they *looked down* upon Sodom” (פְּנֵי סֹדֹם) על וַיִּשְׁקֹפוּ עַל מַשְׁמֵ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּקְמוּ//κατέβλεψαν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον Σοδομων, 18:16a).<sup>30</sup> That the visit of the men is pictured as a divine descent to Sodom is further emphasized as the Lord says that in response to “the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah” (18:20) he “must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know” (הֲבָאָה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ כָלָה וְאִם־לֹא אֵדָעָה) הַכְּצַעֲקָה הַזֶּה וְאִרְאֶה נָא אֲרִי־הֶהֱנֵא//καταβὰς οὖν ὄψομαι εἰ κατὰ τὴν κραυγὴν αὐτῶν τὴν ἐρχομένην πρὸς με συντελοῦνται εἰ δὲ μή ἴνα γινῶ, 18:21). The emphasis on “looking down upon” Sodom in 18:16 and the statement that the Lord must “go down” or “descend” to inspect Sodom indicates that the author views the journey of the men to Sodom as a divine visit.<sup>31</sup> Further, the motif of the deity hearing rumors of wickedness and then deciding to inspect the city is reminiscent of Ovid’s story wherein Zeus hears rumors of King Lycaon’s wickedness and descends, disguised in human form, to inspect

<sup>28</sup> Virtually all commentators note that Genesis 18 and 19 are a unity in the final form of the text and that the motif of hospitality functions to bind the two stories together. See, for example, Van Seters [*Abraham in History and Tradition*, 216] who notes: “The notion that these two stories could gradually come together and develop such similar vocabulary and thematic dovetailing through a complex process of oral tradition is complete fantasy. All of these features are indications of deliberate literary composition.”

<sup>29</sup> So Van Seters, “*Abraham in History and Tradition*, 216; Irvin, *Mytharion*, 22.

<sup>30</sup> The LXX adds καὶ Γομορρᾶς to 18:16a.

<sup>31</sup> So Adelbert Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents,” 270.

the validity of what he has heard (*Metamorphoses* 1.165-223).<sup>32</sup> The reader is not yet told the exact content of Sodom's "grave sin," but with the repeated usage of the term "outcry" (זעק, v. 20; צעק, v. 21) it is clear that the Sodomites are accused of an abuse of *social justice* (cf. Genesis 4:9-11; Exodus 2:23; 3:7; Isaiah 5:7).<sup>33</sup> It is striking that in Exodus 22:20-23 the same term is used to speak of the "outcry" (v. 23) which will come to the Lord if Israel oppresses the resident alien or stranger (גר//προσήλυτον, v. 22) living within Israel (cf. Exodus 11:6; Nehemiah 9:9; Jeremiah 20:16).<sup>34</sup>

With the scene set as a divine visit of inspection in response to rumors of Sodom's injustice, "the two messengers/angels" (שני המלאכים//οἱ δύο ἄγγελοι)<sup>35</sup> come to Sodom "in the evening" (בֶּעֶרְבַּי//ἑσπέρας) and encounter Lot who is sitting at the gate of Sodom (19:1).<sup>36</sup> Lot responds to their presence with proper hospitality. The messengers' initial resistance to Lot's invitation should not be understood as an attempt to reject his shoddy hospitality but, rather, as a test "designed to judge whether his offer

<sup>32</sup> Many have noted the similarities between these myths in Ovid and the stories in Genesis. See, for example, Alan H. F. Griffin, "Philemon and Baucis in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,' *Greece and Rome* 38 (1998) 62-74, esp. 68-72.

<sup>33</sup> On the term "outcry" in the Hebrew Bible, see Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The World of the Bible in the Light of History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966) 144-145; Weston W. Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah: History and Motif in Biblical Narrative* (JSOTSup 231; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 171-179.

<sup>34</sup> See Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 181-183; Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative*, 89.

<sup>35</sup> The shift from three to two divine agents here is due to one of the divine visitors remaining to converse with Abraham (Gen. 18:22-33). So Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 215.

<sup>36</sup> That the messengers/angels were able to travel from Mamre/Hebron to Sodom in the matter of hours (it was midday when the visitors encountered Abraham) further highlights their supernatural identities. See Hamilton, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 31. The theme of night and darkness pervades the Sodom narrative (e.g., see Gen. 19:1, 2, 4, 5, 33) thereby evokes "an ominous and sinister feeling in their readers." So Weston W. Fields, "The Motif 'Night as Danger' Associated with Three Biblical Destruction Narratives," in *'Sha'arei Talmon': Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (eds. Michael Fishbane and Emmanuel Tov; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 17-32, here 22.

is purely perfunctory or genuine.”<sup>37</sup> The parallels between Abraham’s and Lot’s hospitable response to the messengers is obvious:<sup>38</sup>

- a) “Lot was sitting at the gateway of Sodom” (שָׁב בְּשַׁעַר־סֹדֹם) // Λωτ δὲ ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν πύλην Σοδομῶν, 19:1; cf. 18:1).
- b) Lot sees them and immediately “he rose to meet them and bowed down” (וַיִּשָׁח וַיִּקָּם) // ἐξάνεστη εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτοῖς καὶ προσεκύνησεν, 19:1; cf. 18:2).
- c) Lot responds with a polite greeting: “Please my lords...” (נְאֻדְנִי) // ἰδού κύριοι, 19:2a; cf. 18:3).
- d) Lot invites them to enter his lodging: “Turn aside to your servant’s house and spend the night” (וְאַל־בֵּית עַבְדְּכֶם וְלִינוּ) // ἐκκλίνατε εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ παιδὸς ὑμῶν καὶ καταλύσατε, 19:2; cf. 18:3).
- e) Lot provides water for the washing of their feet (וַיִּשְׂפֹּשֶׁתֵם) // νίψασθε τοὺς πόδας, 19:2; cf. 18:4).
- f) Lot promises not to detain his guests (19:2b; cf. 18:5b).
- g) The angels “enter into his house” (וַיָּבֵאוּ אֵלָיו) // καὶ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ, 19:3; cf. Gen. 18:5b).
- h) Lot “made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate” (וַיַּאכִּלֵם) // καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς πότον καὶ ἄζύμους ἔπεψεν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔφαγον, 19:3b; cf. 18:5-8).

As with Abraham, there is no indication that Lot immediately recognizes the divine identity of his visitors.<sup>39</sup> While Abraham’s hospitality is characterized as ideal in that he offers an extravagant feast and performs the hospitality with haste, scholarly attempts to malign Lot’s hospitality are forced and unconvincing.<sup>40</sup> The parallels between Abraham’s and Lot’s hospitality reinforce Lot’s response to the angels as virtuous and

<sup>37</sup> Laurence A. Turner, “Lot as Jekyll and Hyde,” in *Bible in Three Dimensions* (eds. David J. A. Clines; Stephen E. Fowl; Stanley E. Porter; JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 85-101, here, 93; Irvin, *Mytharion*, 97.

<sup>38</sup> These are noted by most commentators. See, for example, Wenham, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 43-44.

<sup>39</sup> Contra Lyons [*Canon and Exegesis*, 216] who thinks that Abraham does recognize immediately the divine identity of his guests.

<sup>40</sup> For example, S.P. Jeansonne [“The Characterisation of Lot in Genesis,” *BTB* (1988) 123-129] notes that whereas Abraham *ran* to meet the guests (Gen. 18:2), Lot only *rose* to meet them (Gen. 19:1). Lot does not humbly ask the visitors to receive his hospitality “if I find favor with you” (Gen. 18:3a) as does Abraham. Abraham prepares an extravagant meal for the strangers (Gen. 18:5-8), whereas little is said of the food provided by Lot. See, further, Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative*, 78-80. Better are the comments of Loader [*A Tale of Two Cities*, 36]: “Lot is picture as a man who respects the sacred duty of hospitality. If anything, he even surpasses Abraham because of his insistence and because of the fact that the himself does the baking while Abraham orders his wife to do so.”

commendable.<sup>41</sup> This is not to say that all of Lot's later actions are commendable or that he is monolithically characterized as righteous throughout the narrative, only that his response of hospitality to the divine visitors is entirely appropriate.<sup>42</sup>

One of the perplexing features of Lot's hospitality, however, is that the responsibility for welcoming strangers ought to have been practiced by citizens of the city whereas Lot is himself a "resident alien" (19:9).<sup>43</sup> Has Lot, then, committed a transgression by welcoming these visitors? The answer is negative, for the story indicates that not one citizen of Sodom practices hospitality to strangers. Matthews states:

The failure of a citizen of Sodom to carry out the communal responsibility of the city is as much a crime as Lot's invitation and this heightens the irony of the situation. It ultimately serves as the necessary indictment of the people to justify the destruction of Sodom, and, ironically, it creates a situation in which the socially and politically weakest member of a community is the sole survivor.<sup>44</sup>

That none of the Sodomites would offer hospitality to the strangers is the implication of Genesis 19:4 where the author states that "the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old (יְעַד־יְקֹן מִנְעֵר // ἀπὸ νεανίσκου ἕως πρεσβυτέρου), all the people to the last man (מִקְצֵה מְקַצֵּה // ἅπας ὁ λαὸς ἅμα) surrounded (בְּסָבִיב // περιεκύκλωσαν) [Lot's] house."<sup>45</sup> The language may be hyperbolic, but the narrator's intent is to

<sup>41</sup> Matthews ["Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 4] notes that (outside of the fact that Lot is not a citizen of Sodom) his actions are "precisely the way the hospitality code is supposed to work." So T. Desmond Alexander, "Lot's Hospitality: A Clue to his Righteousness," *JBL* 104 (1985) 289-291; Hamilton, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 32-33; Wenham, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 53-54; Turner, "Lot as Jekyll and Hyde," 90-93.

<sup>42</sup> Turner, "Lot as Jekyll and Hyde," 93] states it well: "Since giving hospitality to strangers is a feature of righteousness, then Lot has demonstrated that, *on this particular point*, there is at least *one* righteous person in Sodom." Further, many ancient sources view Lot as righteous as a result of his hospitality (Wisdom of Solomon 10:6; 2 Pet. 2:8-9; 1 Clem. 11:1).

<sup>43</sup> This point is made clearly by Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 3-5. On the implications of Lot as an "alien" within Sodom, see Weston W. Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 35-42.

<sup>44</sup> Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 4; so Wenham, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 55.

<sup>45</sup> The language of "surrounding" is often used in military and battle scenes (e.g., Josh. 7:9; 2 Kgs. 6:14-15). Further, see Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 75.

implicate every citizen of Sodom in gathering outside Lot's house, and prepared to act sinisterly.<sup>46</sup> The custom of hospitality has not tamed their hostility toward strangers.<sup>47</sup>

The men of Sodom command Lot to put his visitors outside of the house “so that we may know them” (וַיִּדְעוּ אֹתָם // ἵνα συγγενώμεθα αὐτοῖς, Genesis 19:5b). One can be sidetracked here by focusing on the Sodomites' precise intent, but it seems clear that they intend to sexually violate the strangers. The verb יָדַע, as is well known, often carries the meaning of sexual intercourse (e.g., Genesis 4:1, 17, 25; 24:16; 38:26; Judges 19:25). The mob-like picture of the men of Sodom (19:4-5) and their plan to break down Lot's door (19:9) suggests that something like gang-rape is desired by the Sodomites.<sup>48</sup> In response to the mob, Lot acts as a virtuous host: he steps out of his house and places himself between the visitors and the mob (19:6). Lot's second desperate attempt to safeguard his strangers, offering his two virgin daughters to the Sodomites for sexual pleasure, is morally repugnant but further demonstrates Lot's resolve to fulfill the hospitality protocols at any cost (19:6-8).<sup>49</sup> In fact, he begs the men to cease from their wickedness since the strangers “have come under the shelter of my roof” (בָּאוּ בְּצֶל קַרְתִּי).

<sup>46</sup> On the niph'al Hebrew verbs in 19:4 as conveying evil intentions, see Speiser, *Genesis*, 139. Loader [*A Tale of Two Cities*, 37] is right to claim: “When the mob of Sodom arrives at his door, it is specifically stressed that not one of the men of the city was absent.”

<sup>47</sup> That the natural response to strangers is one of fear and hostility is demonstrated in Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 72-74.

<sup>48</sup> Hamilton [*Genesis 18 – 50*, 34-35] argues that the Sodomites' wickedness is homosexuality and not homosexual gang-rape. Clearly, however, the issue is sexual violence by force – not consensual sex. A better interpretation, then, is offered by Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 226-229.

<sup>49</sup> Hamilton [*Genesis 18 – 50*, 36] writes: “Lot's conundrum in this situation is to decide which of his two options is the lesser (or greater evil): exposing his guests to the crowd, and thus withdrawing his hospitality and the protection of his roof, or exposing his two daughters to deflowering, and thus quenching the thirst of the mob for sexual gratification through females rather than males.” So also Wenham, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 55-56; George W. Coats, “Lot: A Foil in the Abraham Saga,” in *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson* (eds. James T. Butler, Edgar W. Conrad, and Ben C. Ollenburger; JSOTSup 37; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985) 113-132, here 121-122.

כִּי־עַל־בֶּן//εἰσηλθον ὑπὸ τὴν σκέπην τῶν δοκῶν μου, 19:8b).<sup>50</sup> The men of Sodom reject the offer, and press against Lot in an attempt to break down the door in order to violate the strangers (19:9). That they have no respect for hospitality protocol is indicated in their intention to treat Lot – himself a resident alien (בֶּן־לִגְרִי//εἰς ἡλθεῖς παροικεῖν, 19:9) – more wickedly than the two strangers! Clearly, then, the rumors which the Lord had heard of the wickedness of the Sodomites are true. Not only has Lot, the resident alien, been the only one willing to offer hospitality to the two men, but the Sodomites intend to sexually violate the men and they reject Lot’s status as host.<sup>51</sup>

At this point in the narrative the two messengers have confirmed the validity of the rumors of Sodom’s wickedness (18:20-21). The entire city is in gross violation of the hospitality laws.<sup>52</sup> The divine visit, then, concludes with the salvation of Lot (and his daughters) and the destruction of Sodom. The identity of the two messengers is at last revealed to Lot as they provide Lot with preliminary salvation from the violence of the men surrounding his house (19:10), while the Sodomite men receive a preliminary form of judgment and are struck with blindness (19:11).<sup>53</sup> The messengers reveal to him that they have come “to destroy this place because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord (הָיָה יְהוָה אֶת־פְּנֵי צַעֲקָתָם לְהַרְגֹתָ//ὅτι ὑψώθη ἡ κραυγὴ αὐτῶν ἐναντίον κυρίου) and the Lord has sent us to destroy it” (19:13; cf. 18:20-21).<sup>54</sup> The

<sup>50</sup> Westerman [*Genesis 12 – 36*, 301] states that the phrase indicates “the place of security for the guests, the violation of which was a fearful crime with incalculable consequences.”

<sup>51</sup> Fields [*Sodom and Gomorrah*, 54] rightly notes: “The central role of the host in the narratives under scrutiny here [i.e., Gen. 19, Judges 19, and Josh. 2] is turned into a device for highlighting the misbehavior of the full-fledged citizens when the host turns out to be a גַּר.”

<sup>52</sup> See Gossai, *Power and Marginality in the Abraham Narrative*, 95. On the “sin of Sodom” and its association in other texts with a host of other wicked actions, see Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis*, 234-239.

<sup>53</sup> See Hamilton, *Genesis 18 – 50*, 37.

<sup>54</sup> Note that Isaiah draws upon Sodom and Gomorrah as archetypal cities that refuse to show justice to the vulnerable (Isa. 1:9-10, 16-17, 21-23).

text continues to emphasize that the messengers are the divine agents of the destruction of Sodom: “the Lord (יְהוָה//κύριος) is about to destroy this city” (19:14), “the Lord rained on (יְהוָה הַמָּטִיר//καὶ κύριος ἔβρεξεν) Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven (מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם יְהוָה מֵאֵת//παρὰ κυρίου ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) and he overthrew those cities” (19:24-25a), and “when God (אֱלֹהִים//κύριος) destroyed the cities of the plain...” (19:29a).<sup>55</sup> Along with his two daughters, however, Lot is shown mercy and is saved from destruction. Lot cuts a pathetic figure as he is unable to convince his sons-in-law to flee (19:14), lingers from leaving Sodom despite its impending destruction (19:15-16), and is unwilling to flee to the hills and asks to settle in the city of Zoar (19:17-22).<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, due to his hospitality to the divine visitors *and* as a result of his uncle, the hospitable Abraham (19:29), God spares Lot and saves him from destruction.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, Genesis 18-19 provide narrative distillations of the theme of divine visits and hospitality, showing again a similar cultural script as the stories of divine visits in Greco-Roman texts: a) a divine visit (Gen. 18:1-2; 19:1); b) hospitality to the strangers (18:3-8; 19:1-3) or inhospitality to the strangers (19:4-9); c) salvation/reward to the hospitable (18:9-15; 19:10-11, 29) and destruction of the inhospitable (19:11, 13-14, 24-29). The texts also provide evidence for the basic elements of proper hospitality: immediate

<sup>55</sup> The story is indeed once again reminiscent of Zeus’ destruction of Lycaon’s household with a thunderbolt (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.230-235). Those who explicitly comment upon Genesis 18 – 19 as stories of divine visits, include Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents,” 271; Irvin, *Mytharion*, 17-24.

<sup>56</sup> On the narrative’s complex characterization of Lot, see Turner, “Lot as Jekyll and Hyde,” 85-101, esp. 94-96. On Lot as “passive, foppish, and foolish,” see Coats, “Lot: A Foil in the Abraham Saga,” 119-126, here 129.

<sup>57</sup> With respect to Lot’s hospitality, Matthews [“Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19,” 6] writes: “Lot’s desire to follow custom pays dividends as the theme becomes clear: ‘only the hospitable survive’.” Irvin [*Mytharion*, 97] writes: “Lot is rescued from destruction because of his hospitality to these messengers, although he did not know their identity.”

acknowledgment of presence, greeting, invitation, entrance into home, water for foot-washing, food and drink, and promise not to detain. Finally, we find confirmation of the religious sanctions for hospitality: God rewards the hospitable and destroys inhospitable persons and civilizations.<sup>58</sup> God's commitment to the hospitality laws is demonstrated through the destruction of societies who do not show hospitality to strangers.<sup>59</sup>

### C. Post-biblical readings of Genesis 18-19

#### i. Philo, *On Abraham*

In Philo's *On Abraham*, itself one part of the series of treatises known as *Exposition of the Law*, one finds a detailed retelling of Abraham's hospitality toward the three visitors.<sup>60</sup> Philo's goal in the treatises devoted to Israel's patriarchs is to demonstrate that "the Mosaic Law reflects the law of nature, which had already been enacted by the patriarchs even before the specific laws were given."<sup>61</sup> The patriarchs are living "laws endowed with life and reason" (οἱ γὰρ ἔμψυχοι καὶ λογικοὶ νόμοι, 5) and each one represents a specific symbol of virtue (52-53).<sup>62</sup> Abraham is said to be "filled with zeal for *piety* (εὐσεβείας) which is the highest and greatest of virtues" and "eager to follow God and to be obedient to his commands" (60). Philo's decision, then, to

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<sup>58</sup> Sarna [*Understanding Genesis*, 145-146] rightly states: "As with the Flood, the Sodom and Gomorrah narrative is predicated upon the existence of a moral law of universal application for the infraction of which God holds all men answerable."

<sup>59</sup> The way in which political polemic is involved in portraying Sodom (or Gibeah) as inhospitable and, therefore, deserving of destruction is excellently articulated by Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 143-154.

<sup>60</sup> In what follows I am interested in the "literal Abraham in Philo" as opposed to the "spiritual Abraham in Philo." On the distinction, see Samuel Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (New York: KTAV, 1971) 217. For text and translation of Philo's *On Joseph*, *On Abraham*, and *the Life of Moses*, see *Philo* (vol. 6; trans. F. H. Colson; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

<sup>61</sup> Maren R. Niehoff, "Philo, Expositor of the Law," in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (eds. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 1074-1076, here 1075. The prologue of *On Abraham* is programmatic here (see *On Abraham* 1 – 6).

<sup>62</sup> Sandmel [*Philo's Place in Judaism*, 228] writes: "Abraham observed the law of nature, and Abraham himself was a law; the Law of Moses is the copy of the law of nature, and the Law of Moses derives its specifications from those specific things which Abraham (and other patriarchs) did." For Greek text and translation, *Philo* (trans. F. H. Colson; 12 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935-1951).

highlight Abraham's hospitality as a manifestation of his piety toward God is as lofty a valorization of this cultural practice as one could hope to find.<sup>63</sup>

Philo thinks of hospitality as related to φιλανθρωπία, as he notes that Abraham's "humanity (τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν)" contrasts with the Egyptians' "inhospitality and licentiousness (ἄξενον καὶ ἀκόλαστον)" (107).<sup>64</sup> Philo later comments on Abraham's hospitality and characterizes it as πρὸς φιλανθρωπίαν (109). And in *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, Philo claims that Genesis 18 "shows the abundance of the humaneness (τῆς φιλανθρωπίας) with which [Abraham] was endowed" (4.20).<sup>65</sup>

Philo further idealizes Abraham's welcoming of the three visitors and places emphasis on Abraham's joyful internal disposition. When Abraham sees the men, he not only ran to greet them, but he "earnestly begs them not to pass his tent but to enter as was fitting and partake of hospitality (ὡς πρέπον εἰσεληλυθότας ξενίων μετασχεῖν)" (107). The strangers accept the invitation because they discerned his sincerity (μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς διανοίας εἰδότες ἀληθεύοντα, 107) and because "his soul was filled with joy" (πληρωθεὶς δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν χαρᾶς, 108) with the opportunity to welcome strangers (107-108). Philo retains the Genesis narrative's emphasis on the haste with which the meal is prepared (108-109). This is only fitting for a virtuous sage for "in a wise man's house no one is slow to show humanity (βραδὺς γὰρ οὐδεὶς πρὸς φιλανθρωπίαν ἐν

<sup>63</sup> On Philo's brief comments on the story in Genesis 18 outside of *On Abraham*, see William T. Miller, *Mysterious Encounters at Mamre and Jabok* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984) 58-61.

<sup>64</sup> Philo thereby ignores the depiction of the inhospitality of the Sodomites in Genesis 19. Arterbury [Andrew E. Arterbury, "Abraham's Hospitality among Jewish and Early Christian Writers: A Tradition History of Genesis 18:1-16 and Its Relevance for the Study of the New Testament," *PRS* 30 (2003) 359-376, here 363] claims that Philo's focus on Egyptian (instead of Sodomite) inhospitality is "not surprising given Philo's context in Alexandria."

<sup>65</sup> For text and translation, see *Philo* (trans. Ralph Marcus; ed. C. P. Goold; LCL supplement 1; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

οἴκῳ σοφοῦ)” (109). The visitors feast less on the meal, however, than on “the hospitable goodwill of their host” (πρὸς τὰς τῶν ξενιζομένων ὑπηρεσίας, 109).<sup>66</sup>

Philo enhances the elements of the story that portray Abraham’s encounter with the men as a divine visit. While the travelers are not God, they do take on a disguise in “the form of men” in order to conceal “their diviner nature” (θειοτέρας ὄντες φύσεως) (107).<sup>67</sup> Philo declares that their promise to Abraham for a son is a reward that is in explicit response to Abraham’s hospitality: “on this example of a great and unbounded generosity, they presented him with a reward surpassing his hopes by promising him the birth of a son born in wedlock” (110). The lack of a recognition scene in Genesis 18 is remedied by Philo as he notes that when the visitors proclaimed all things to be possible with God, Sarah then recognized “in the strangers before her...angels transformed from their spiritual and soul-like nature into human shape” (113). Philo concludes by remarking on the wonder it is that “though incorporeal [the angels] assumed human form (εἰς ἰδέαν ἀνθρώπων μεμορφῶσθαι) to do kindness to the man of worth” (118). Philo concludes the story with an encomium to Abraham’s piety and virtue as it is embodied in his perfect hospitality (114-118). Hospitality (φιλόξενον) is a by-product of the “greater virtue (ἀρετῆς μείζονος)” of “piety (θεοσέβεια)” (114). As the embodiment of piety, Abraham’s hospitality is revelatory of obedience to God.<sup>68</sup> Philo declares that words fail to capture the “abundant happiness and blessedness” of the house of virtue wherein angels “stop and receive hospitality from men” (115)! The angels, in fact, receive Abraham’s hospitality because they know that due to his piety they are kinsmen (116).

<sup>66</sup> In *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, Philo says Abraham took as his example the words of Homer: “It is proper to welcome a stranger when he comes and to give him a send-off when he wishes to go” (4.20).

<sup>67</sup> Philo refers to them as “angels, those holy and divine beings, the servitors and lieutenants of the primal God whom he employs as ambassadors to announce predictions which he wills to make to our race” (115).

<sup>68</sup> On Abraham’s piety, see Sandmel, *Philo’s Place in Judaism*, 231-240.

ii. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*

Three aspects of Josephus' retelling and reinterpretation of the story of Genesis 18-19 are significant for our understanding of hospitality to strangers.<sup>69</sup> First, perhaps due to the fact that he has already announced the imminent birth of Isaac (*Jewish Antiquities* 1.191-193, Genesis 17:1ff), Josephus places the greatest emphasis on God's destruction of the Sodomites due to their μισόξενοι ("hatred of strangers").<sup>70</sup> In fact, his retelling of Gen 18-19 has as its primary lesson the theme that God punishes the inhospitable.<sup>71</sup> Note the character traits that Josephus attaches to the inhospitable Sodomites in *Jewish Antiquities* 1.194: "they are overweeningly proud" (ὑπερφρονουῦντες), they are "hubristic both toward humans and to the Deity" (εἰς τε ἀνθρώπους ἦσαν ὕβριστὰ καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον), they practice "hatred of strangers and refuse social contact with others" (εἶναι τε μισόξενοι καὶ τὰς πρὸς ἄλλους ὀμιλίαν ἐκτρέπεσθαι), and they are "arrogant" (ὑπερηφανίας). When Josephus mentions the men of Sodom's attempt to gang-rape Lot's guests, it is clearly the violation of hospitality protocols (not sexual ethics) which is at stake as Lot begs them "not to shame the strangers" (μὴ χωρεῖν ἐπ' αἰσχύνῃ τῶν ξένων, 201).<sup>72</sup> Characterizing the Sodomites with these appellations has as its goal the demonstration that inhospitality is the primary trait of those impious toward God and haters of humanity.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> For text and translation, see *Josephus, Jewish Antiquities* (trans. Henry St. John Thackeray et al.; 13 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926-1965). Louis H. Feldman, *Flavius Josephus: Judean Antiquities 1 – 4* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>70</sup> God's destruction of the wicked and those who do not follow his laws is a deuteronomistic theme running throughout the *Jewish Antiquities* (e.g., 1.13-15, 18-23).

<sup>71</sup> For this reason, Josephus locates the story of Abraham's hospitality (*Antiquities*, 196-198) after the announcement of Sodom's impending destruction (*Antiquities* 194-195). So Arterbury, "Abraham's Hospitality among Jewish and Early Christian Writers," 365.

<sup>72</sup> Josephus avoids the embarrassing detail of Lot offering his virgin daughters to the men of Sodom.

<sup>73</sup> Feldman [*Flavius Josephus*, 73, n. 606] notes that according to Tosefta, *Sotah* 3:11-12 the failure to show hospitality is considered impiety toward God.

As a side-note, it is surprising that most re-readings of the Sodom story do not follow Josephus in identifying the so-called “sin of Sodom” with inhospitality, cruel treatment of strangers, or misanthropy. Rather, most Jewish retellings of Gen. 19 focus upon the Sodomites sexual vice and, to a lesser extent, their arrogance and greed due their material abundance (e.g., *Testament of Levi* 14:6; *Testament of Naphtali* 3:4; 4:1; *Testament of Benjamin* 9:1; *Jubilees* 16:5-9; 20:5-6; Philo, *On Abraham* 119-166).<sup>74</sup> The *Testament of Asher* does, however, connect the destruction of Sodom with their failure “to recognize the angels of the Lord” (7:1).<sup>75</sup> Ezekiel, likewise, describes the sin of Sodom in this way: “she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy” (Ezek. 16:49).<sup>76</sup> And Wisdom of Solomon argues that the inhospitality of the Egyptians during the time of the Exodus surpasses the inhospitality of the Sodomites. According to Wisdom of Solomon 19:13-16, the Egyptians:

...justly suffered because of their wicked acts; for they practiced a more bitter hatred of strangers (χαλεπωτέραν μισοξενίαν). Others [i.e, the Sodomites] had refused to welcome (ἐδέχοντο) strangers when they came to them, but these made slaves of guests who were their benefactors (εὐεργέτας ξένους ἐδουλοῦντο). And not only so – but, while punishment of some sort will come upon the former for having received strangers with hostility (προσεδέχοντο τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους), the latter, having first received (εἰσδεξάμενοι) them with festal celebrations, afterward afflicted with terrible sufferings those who had already shared the same rights.

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<sup>74</sup> These are treated extensively in Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 75-104.

<sup>75</sup> For text and translation of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, see H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 1; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Doubleday, NY: 1983) 775-828.

<sup>76</sup> On which, see Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 171-179.

In other words, while Sodom refused to show hospitality to Lot and the three visitors, the Egyptians even surpass the gross nature of Sodom's inhospitality by first welcoming the Israelites into their land only later to enslave and oppress them.<sup>77</sup>

Second, returning to Abraham's exemplary hospitality, the brief portrait of Abraham's hospitality toward the three men functions, as it does in Genesis 18, as a foil to the inhospitable Sodomites. Josephus notes that when Abraham saw "the three angels" (τρῆῖς ἄγγέλους, 196) he took them for "strangers" (νομίσσας εἶναι ξένους, 196).<sup>78</sup> Josephus clarifies, then, that the encounter is with "angels" and not God himself.<sup>79</sup> Thus, Josephus' interpretation maintains that Abraham did not immediately recognize the identity of these strangers as divine agents. As in Genesis 18, Abraham "arose and saluted them and invited them to lodge with him and partake of his hospitality (ξενίῳ μεταλαβεῖν)" (196). In addition to noting the standard elements of hospitality from Genesis 18, Josephus highlights its personal nature by saying that Abraham himself killed and cooked the calf (197), instead of giving the responsibility to his servant (Genesis 18:7). After they are unable to dissemble any longer the angels declare to Abraham that they have come to announce Isaac's imminent birth and the destruction of Sodom (197-198).<sup>80</sup> Later Josephus attributes Lot's hospitality to his being "a disciple of Abraham's liberality" (μαθητῆς τῆς Ἀβράμου χρηστότης, 200).

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<sup>77</sup> On this text, see Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 79.

<sup>78</sup> Abraham is sitting now at the "door his courtyard" (*Antiquities* 196) instead of his tent (Gen. 18:1-2).

<sup>79</sup> Feldman, *Flavius Josephus*, 74, n. 610.

<sup>80</sup> This detail fits with Josephus' general tendency to avoid anthropomorphizing God. See Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 101.

Third, Josephus notes that Lot “invited the strangers to be his guests” (ἐπὶ ξενίαν παρεκάλει, 200) as a result of his “love for humanity” (ξένους φιλόανθρωπος, 200).<sup>81</sup> Hospitality toward strangers is the premier mark of the classical virtue of love for humanity, and this stands in contrast to the μισόξενοι (194) of the Sodomites.

We should note that one of the ideological functions of Josephus’ retelling of Gen. 18-19 is to counter the common invective launched against Jews that they practiced hatred of foreigners, that they were an inhospitable people, and that they declined social intercourse with non-Jews.<sup>82</sup> By portraying Abraham and Lot as hospitable and practicing φιλανθρωπία, Josephus suggests that, on the contrary, hospitality and love of humanity is rooted in the foundation of Judaism.<sup>83</sup>

In *Against Apion* Josephus actually argues that the Jewish constitution legislates hospitality to “for the foreigner” (πρὸς ἄλλοφύλους) and “gives a graciously hospitable welcome” (δέχεται φιλοφρόνως) to any strangers who would join themselves to the

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. Josephus describes Joseph as a man of “hospitality and generosity” (τὴν ξενίαν καὶ τὴν φιλοφροσύνην, 2.128). Rebecca is also described as acting with “generosity” (φιλοφρόνως) to Isaac as she bestows hospitality upon Isaac (1.246-247). Her parents’ possession of the virtue of “humanity,” (τῆς τῶν γονέων φιλανθρωπίας αὐτῆς) ensures that Isaac will be treated with hospitality (1.250-251).

<sup>82</sup> Josephus reproduces Apion’s charge that “we [i.e., Jews] swear by the God who made heaven and earth and sea to show no goodwill to a single alien, above all to Greeks” (*Against Apion* 2.121). Tacitus claims that Jews show only hatred and hostility to non-Jews (*Hist.* 5.5.1). Diodorus claims that Jews practiced “a lifestyle of hatred of humanity and hatred of strangers (ἀπάνθρωπὸν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίου)” (40.3.4). According to Philostratus, “The Jews have long been in revolt against not only against the Romans but against humanity” (*Life of Apollonius*, 5.33). See, further, Louis H. Feldman and Meyer Reinhold (eds.), *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) 384-386.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Schäfer [*Judeophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) 172] rightly remarks on the moral of the story: “The Jews not only are not xenophobic and do not separate themselves from others, they very much disapprove of the ‘cardinal sin’ of human behaviour and fought against it in the earliest period of history.” One of Josephus’ primary agendas, mentioned in the prologue, is to demonstrate both as a superior πολιτεία and φιλοσοφία. For an excellent introduction to these themes, see Feldman, *Flavius Josephus*, xxii-xxxv. In Josephus’ *Contra Apion*, one of his express purposes is to show that the Jewish constitution promotes “piety, friendly relations with each other, humanity towards the world at large (πρὸς τὴν καθόλου φιλανθρωπίαν), besides justice, courage, and contempt of death” (2.145).

Jews (*Against Apion* 2.209-210).<sup>84</sup> While the Lacedaemonians “made a practice of expelling foreigners” (2.259), the Jews “gladly welcome” (ἡδέως δεχόμεθα) anyone who wishes to join them. This, Josephus states, “may be taken as a proof both of our humanity (φιλανθρωπίας) and magnanimity” (2.261). Further, to strangers, sojourners, and even enemies, the Jewish law commands the furnishing of “fire, water, and food to all who ask for them, and to point out the road” as examples of how through the Torah, God “has educated us to show humanity” (φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμᾶς ἐξεπάιδευσεν, 2.213).<sup>85</sup>

### iii. *The Testament of Abraham*

*The Testament of Abraham*, a first or second century C.E. pseudepigraph, is an entertaining story of Abraham’s final days when God sends his angel Michael to Abraham in order to warn him of his imminent death.<sup>86</sup> The idyllic piety of Abraham is central to the story and makes a great impression upon Michael. While Abraham’s piety is displayed through many virtues, the central by-product of Abraham’s piety in the story, not unlike Philo’s *On Abraham*, is his hospitality. The author’s initial characterization of Abraham is that he: “...lived all the years of his life in quietness, gentleness, and righteousness, the righteous man was extremely hospitable (φιλόξενος ὁ δίκαιος)” (1.2-4).<sup>87</sup> Throughout the story, the author plays in an entertaining way with Abraham’s

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<sup>84</sup> For text and translation, see *Josephus: The Life, Against Apion* (trans. H. St. J. Thackeray; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

<sup>85</sup> On Josephus’ strategy as it relates to Apion’s charges, see John M. G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary: Against Apion, Volume 10* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) xliii-xliv.

<sup>86</sup> On which, see Dale C. Allison, Jr., “Abraham, Testament of,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, 298-300; also, see J. M. Knight, “Testament of Abraham,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 1188-1189.

<sup>87</sup> Translations and Greek text come from the A recension found in Michael E. Stone (trans.), *The Testament of Abraham: The Greek Recensions* (Text and Translations 2; Pseudepigrapha Series 2; Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 1972).

hospitality to the three men in Genesis 18.<sup>88</sup> The parallels between Genesis 18 and *Testament of Abraham* are numerous.<sup>89</sup> In explicating his hospitality, the author notes:

For having pitched his tent at the crossroads of the oak of Mamre, he welcomed all (τοὺς πάντας ὑπέδεχετο), rich and poor, kings and rulers, cripples and helpless, friends and strangers (ξένους), neighbors and travelers – all alike did the devout, all-holy, righteous, hospitable Abraham welcome (ἴσον ὑπέδεχετο...φιλόξενος Ἀβραάμ). (1:4-9)

In this story, it is Michael the archangel who will receive Abraham's hospitality. God declares to Michael that even though Abraham has been more "hospitable than all men" (φιλόξενος, 1.19), he must tell Abraham that his time has come "to depart from this vain world and leave the body" (1.23-25).

So Michael descends to meet Abraham at the oak of Mamre (2.1-2; cf. Genesis 18:1). Abraham is seated (2.1; cf. Genesis 18:1) by his oxen and reacts to the presence of the visitor predictably. Upon seeing the stranger approaching "from a distance," Abraham "arose and met him as was his custom to meet and welcome all strangers (τοῖς ἐπιξένοις πᾶσιν προὔπαντων καὶ ὑποδεχόμενος)" (2:2; cf. Genesis 18:2). Abraham greets the Lord's angel and offers hospitality (2.2; cf. Genesis 18:3-5); Isaac fetches water to "wash the feet of this stranger (νίψωμεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου τοῦ ἐπιξένου τοὺς πόδας, 3.7; cf. Genesis 18:4)"; an ornate guest-room and a lavish feast with "an abundance of every good thing" is provided for "the guest" (τοῦ ἐπιξενισθέντος, 4.15-25; cf. Genesis 18:6-8). Michael is overwhelmed by Abraham's hospitality, and he ascends to God and declares: "I have not seen his like upon the earth – merciful, hospitable (φιλόξενον), just, truthful, pious, refraining from any evil action. Now know,

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<sup>88</sup> On the entertaining and comedic features of the story, see J. W. Ludlow, *Abraham Meets Death: Narrative Humor in the Testament of Abraham* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

<sup>89</sup> On the parallels, see Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Job in the *Testament of Abraham*," *JSP* 12 (2001) 131-147, here 132-133; Arterbury, "Abraham's Hospitality among Jewish and Early Christian Writers," 367-368.

Lord, that I cannot pronounce the mention of his death” (4.1-5). God does not relent, however, and Michael returns to Abraham.

In the middle of the night, after Isaac’s dream of his father’s death creates a commotion, Sarah recognizes the identity of Michael and declares to Abraham:

You know, my lord, the three heavenly men who were guests in our tent by the oak tree Mamre, when you slaughtered the unblemished calf and set a table for them....Do you not realize, my lord Abraham, that they gave us the promised fruit of the womb, Isaac? This man is one of the three holy men. (6.8-17; cf. Philo, *On Abraham* 113)

Abraham, then, recognizes the identity of his guest (6.18-29), but he refuses to follow Michael out of this world, and requests that he first receive a tour of God’s creations before he departs this world (8-9). The rest of the narrative is an entertaining tour (10-20), and the story ends with the narrator’s concluding words: “let us imitate the hospitality of the patriarch Abraham (τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀβραάμ τὴν φιλοξενίαν μιμησώμεθα)...” (20.5-6).<sup>90</sup>

The *Testament of Abraham*, then, provides further evidence for the popular depiction of Abraham as overwhelmingly hospitable to strangers (so hospitable in fact that Michael cannot carry out God’s command to warn Abraham of his imminent death), hospitality as an expression of piety toward God, Abraham as a hospitable exemplar for imitation, and the popularity of the story of Genesis 18:1-16 in later Jewish writings.

#### D. Other Jewish Heroes as Paragons of Hospitality in Post-biblical Literature

Abraham’s reputation of ideal hospitality tends to overshadow the rest of Israel’s heroes, but in what follows we will make rapid mention of a few texts which exalt other

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<sup>90</sup> The concluding words certainly derive from the hand of a Christian author/editor. On the problem of whether the writings of the Pseudepigrapha are Jewish or Christian, see James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

Jewish patriarchs as examples of hospitable hosts and who treat strangers with kindness.<sup>91</sup>

### i. Joseph

Philo's *On Joseph* presents an idealized version of the Joseph narrative in Genesis 37-50 that aims at giving a portrait of the ideal statesman.<sup>92</sup> In the hands of Philo, Joseph is a model of wisdom, eloquence, and civic intelligence. He is also a model host as Philo retells the story of the hospitality which the brothers receive from Joseph. According to Genesis 43:16-34 Joseph invites the brothers into his house (v. 16-17), serves a feast of meat (v. 16), and gives them water to wash their feet (v. 24). The brothers, in turn, give a gift to Joseph (vv. 25-26) and bow in obeisance to Joseph (v. 28).

According to Philo's telling of the story, when his brothers journey to Egypt for grain and unknowingly encounter Joseph as the governor's highest assistant, Joseph invites "the strangers" (τοὺς ξένους, 201) to feast with him.<sup>93</sup> At the feast the brothers are surprised at the appropriateness and proper protocol of the Egyptian hospitality (202-204). The brothers surmise that this man Joseph – whose identity is still unknown to them – is likely responsible for the introduction of "good order" (εὐταξίαν, 204) to the Egyptian custom of hospitality and a "style of life" that is more "civilized" (204). The brothers are impressed with Joseph's ability to maintain, in a time of famine, both the disposition of "sympathizer with the needy and of the host at a feast" (205). Joseph's

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<sup>91</sup> Idyllic treatments of Abraham as a hospitable host include *Genesis Rabbah* 48 – 49; *Abot Rabbi Nathan* 7; and 1 Clement 10:7 (also Lot 11:1 and Rahab 12:1). That Abraham's hospitality (and willingness to offer Isaac) stands behind James' exaltation of "his deeds" in James 2:20-24 is convincingly argued by Roy Bowen Ward, "The Works of Abraham: James 2:14-26," *HTR* 61 (1968) 283-290. Ward also points to Rahab as a paragon of hospitality in James 2:25-26; cf. Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17-25; Heb. 11:31; *1 Clem.* 12.

<sup>92</sup> For analyses of the Joseph story in Philo, see Maren R. Niehoff, *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1992) 54-83; Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998) 81-87.

<sup>93</sup> On Joseph as ideal host and guest in Philo's *de Ioseph*, see Sarah J. K. Pearce, *The Land of the Body: Studies in Philo's Representation of Egypt* (WUNT 208; Mohr-Siebeck, Tübingen: 2007) 201-205.

“friendly disposition” (φιλοφροσύνη, 206) makes up for any lack in quantity of food and drink. Philo draws attention to the magnanimous kindness with which Joseph treats his brothers, for instead of making accusations against them and seeking vengeance, the brothers “had been made partners in the table and salt which men have devised as the symbols of true friendship (ἅ σύμβολα γνησίου φιλίας ἀνθρώποις ἀνεύρηται)” (210). Later, when Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers he attributes his kind treatment of them to his “natural humanity” (τῆ φυσικῆ φιλανθρωπία, 240-241; also “his kindness and humanity,” τὰ χρηστὰ καὶ φιλάνθρωπα, 264).<sup>94</sup>

## ii. Job

In an oath testifying to his righteousness before God, Job declares that “the stranger has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the traveler” (Job 31:32, **פִּתְחֵי בֵּיתִי לְרֵגֹל אֲלֹמֶת וְלֹא יָלַדְתִּי בְּרֵגֹל אֲלֹמֶת**//ἔξω δὲ οὐκ ἠύλιζετο ξένος ἢ δὲ θύρα μου παντὶ ἐλθόντι ἀνέωκτο). This verse provides the impetus for the intensification of Job’s hospitality by the author of *Testament of Job*. For example, Job declares that “the four doors of my house stood open” in service of the poor and the travelers (9:7-8).<sup>95</sup> He would keep in order “thirty tables spread at all hours for strangers only” (10:1), and when “a stranger would ask for alms he was required to be fed at my table before he would receive his need” (10:2-3). When Job dies, his brother laments: “Gone is the father of orphans! Gone is the host of strangers!” (53:3).

<sup>94</sup> It should also be noted that Joseph is portrayed as the ideal guest for when Potiphar’s wife attempts to seduce him, Joseph rejects the advances out of obligations to his host and benefactor. Note Joseph’s response: “A fine gift this would seem to be, a suitable return for preceding favors! The master found me a captive and an alien, and has made me by his kindnesses a free man and citizen as far as he can do it. Shall I, the slave, deal with the master as though he were a stranger and a captive?” (*On Joseph* 47).

<sup>95</sup> I am using the translation of R. P. Spittler, “Testament of Job,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 1; ed. James H. Charlesworth; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983) 829-868.

### iii. Zebulun

Zebulun declares that as a result of his compassion, he would give some of his fish “to every stranger” (*Testament of Zebulun* 6:4). He would cook, prepare, and serve the fish to anyone who was a “traveler, sick, or aged” (6:5-6). The Lord looked favorably upon Zebulun’s hospitable provisions to strangers and the poor, and therefore enabled him to have successful fishing for five years (6:6-8).

## E. Legislated Hospitality to Aliens and Wanderers in the Pentateuch

In this section I intend to demonstrate two simple points from the Pentateuch which are rarely made in discussions of Jewish hospitality.<sup>96</sup> First, Israel’s self-identity was rooted in its experience as aliens and wanderers, both in the patriarchal period when Israel’s heroes were nomadic sojourners and during their enslavement in Egypt and journey to the Promised Land. Second, due in part to their self-identification as aliens, the Torah legislates that Israelites treat the alien with justice and charity. Standing behind Israel’s laws pertaining to aliens and strangers is almost certainly the ancient custom of hospitality to strangers.

### i. The Israelites as Aliens and Wanderers

Within the Hebrew Bible the term “alien” (גֵּר//προσήλυτος) is applied most frequently to non-Israelites, but on occasion it can also refer to the Israelite’s conception of their own identity as wandering sojourners.<sup>97</sup> The biblical tradition is consistent in portraying Israel, prior to its settlement in the land of Canaan, as aliens and sojourners. One sees this, for example, in Deuteronomy 26 in the legislated tithe of firstfruits which

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<sup>96</sup> This topic is not treated, for example, in Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*.

<sup>97</sup> On the Israelites as aliens, see the helpful article by R. J. D. Knauth, “Alien, Foreign Resident,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch* (eds. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003) 27-33, here 28.

Israel must offer when they enter into the land. After giving the tithe of firstfruits to the priest (vv. 1-4) they are to declare before the Lord: “My father was a wandering Aramean (אֲבִי אֲרָמִי אֲבָד אָבִי // Συρίαν ἀπέβαλεν ὁ πατήρ μου), and he went down into Egypt with a few people and sojourned there (וַיֵּרֵד וַיִּגְרַם // παρώκησεν ἐκεῖ) and became a great nation, powerful and numerous” (v. 5). The tithe functions in two ways. First, it testifies as a remembrance that though Egypt mistreated and oppressed Israel while they were aliens in the land, God remembered Israel and brought her into the land of promise (vv. 6-10). But secondly, the tithe is to be shared with “the Levite, the alien (לְלֵוִי וְלַגֵּר // τῷ προσηλύτῳ), the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied” (v. 12b; cf. v. 11). In other words, the tithe enables the economically disadvantaged, including the alien, to participate in the cultic act of remembrance. Further, in 1 Chronicles 29:15 David blesses God for granting Israel with material prosperity to build the temple and declares: “We are aliens and strangers in your sight (וְאֵנָּחְנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה וְחֹשְׁבִים // ὅτι πάροικοί ἐσμεν ἐναντίον σου καὶ παροικουῦντες) as were all our forefathers.” David’s statement is an articulation of the Jubilee legislation in Leviticus 25 which is premised on the idea that God is the owner of the land before whom the people of Israel are simply “aliens and tenants before him” (וְאֵנָּחְנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה וְחֹשְׁבִים אֲנָּחְנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה // προσήλυτοι καὶ πάροικοι ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐναντίον μου, Lev. 25:23; cf. 1 Chr. 16:19-22).<sup>98</sup> The Psalmist, further, declares to God “I am your traveling alien (אֲנִי לֵוִי וְגֵר // πάροικος), a sojourner (וְגֵר // παρ᾽ ἐπίδημος), like all my forebears” (Ps. 39:13; LXX 38:13).

<sup>98</sup> On God as the owner and giver of the land to Israel, see Patrick D. Miller, Jr. “The Gift of God: The Deuteronomic Theology of the Land,” *Int* 23 (1969) 454-465.

The patriarchs were seen as nomadic wanderers who had abandoned their family, land, and inheritance in order to obey God's call (Genesis 12:1-9). All of the patriarchs are, at one point or another, referred to as "aliens." Thus, God promises Abraham that he will give to him "the whole land of Canaan where you are now an alien (מְגֵרִי//παροικεῖς)" (Genesis 17:8). Abraham "sojourns in Gerar" (וַיֵּגֵר//παρώκησεν, 20:1b); "he sojourns" (וַיֵּגֵר//παρώκησεν) in the land of the Philistines (21:34); he requests the Hittites to sell him a plot of ground as a burial site, for "I am an alien and a stranger among you" (אֲנֹכִי עֵמֶמְכֶם //πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος ἐγὼ εἰμι μεθ' ὑμῶν, 23:4). We have seen that Lot is an alien in Sodom (19:9). Isaac, Jacob, and Abraham are all said to have been aliens in Hebron (35:27; also 36:6-7; 37:1). And in Genesis 47:4-9 Jacob and his brothers travel to Egypt "to sojourn in the land (בְּאֶרֶץ לְגֹר //παροικεῖν ἐν τῇ γῆ, v. 4)" due to the famine in Canaan (cf. 47:9). God tells Moses that he made his covenant to give them the land when "they lived as aliens (בְּהַגְרָוּ אֲשֶׁר-גָּרוּ מִגְרֵיהֶם //παρώκηκασιν ἐν ἧ καὶ παρώκησαν ἐπ' αὐτῆς)" (Exodus 6:4).<sup>99</sup> The Torah also speaks of Israel's time in Egypt as a time when they were aliens. God declares to Abraham that "your offspring will be aliens (וְיִהְיֶה יְרֵעֶךָ //ὅτι πάροικον ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου)" in Egypt and will be oppressed by them for 400 years (Genesis 15:13-14; cf. Exodus 22:21-22; 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19) And Deuteronomy even legislates that Israel must not abhor the Egyptians, "since you

<sup>99</sup> Moses is also described as an alien while he is in Midian. "I have become an alien in a foreign land" (Exod. 2:22 and 18:3).

were an alien residing in their land” (כִּי־גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶצוֹ // ὅτι πάροικος ἐγένου ἐν τῇ γῆ αὐτοῦ, 23:7).<sup>100</sup>

Abraham’s call to leave his native land (Genesis 12:1-3; cf. 15:13), the patriarchs’ continuation of wandering in lands not belonging to them, Israel’s time in Egypt, and Moses in Midian all testify to Israel’s identity consisting in part as aliens and wanderers. Thus, the experience of being an alien, a stranger, and wanderer is built into the very fabric of Israel’s identity and is fundamental for its own self-conception throughout the Torah.<sup>101</sup> Remarkably, this aspect of Israel’s identity continues even after they take possession of the land, and it functions as the basis for the legislation that God is the owner of the land and that Israel’s land ownership is never perpetual given that they are but God’s “aliens and tenants” (Leviticus 25:23).<sup>102</sup>

## ii. Treatment of Aliens and Wanderers in Mosaic Legislation

Most references to “aliens” in the Pentateuch, however, refer to non-Israelite foreigners who are without land and family.<sup>103</sup> J. Joosten argues that within the Pentateuch “alien” is “practically a technical term” and “is a person...conceded a certain

<sup>100</sup> On the dual tradition of “Israel as slaves in Egypt” and “Israel as aliens and sojourners in Egypt” within the Pentateuch, see E. W. Heaton, “Sojourners in Egypt,” *ExT* 58 (1946) 80-82.

<sup>101</sup> Knauth [“Alien, Foreign Resident,” 28] says that their experience as aliens is “fundamental to the character of Israel” and “a basic part of their self-identity.” This aspect of Israel’s identity was remembered in post-biblical writings (Judith 5:7-10; Wis. Sol. 19:10; 3 Macc. 6:36; 7:19).

<sup>102</sup> On this, see Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004) 103-145; idem. *God’s People in God’s Land: Family, Land and Property in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). It is of further interest that Israel’s cultic system had a built in “landless” class, the Levites, for which Israel was responsible to provide with the tri-annual tithe (in addition to the widow, orphan and stranger). Thus, in this way the identity of the stranger further makes it way into Israel’s legislation (cf. Deut. 26:11-12).

<sup>103</sup> The meaning and tradition-history of the term גֵּר is admittedly complex. For a review of meaning of the word in the law codes, see J. Joosten, *People and Land in the Holiness Code: An Exegetical Study of the Ideational Framework of the Law in Leviticus 17 – 26* (VTSup 67; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 54-58. A גֵּר seems to have the connotations of a protected non-Israelite (Exod. 12:44, 48; Num. 9:14), whereas נֶכְרִי has connotations of a transient foreigner (Exod. 12:43). Due to the former’s permanence within the land and circumcision, cultic inclusion was a feature of the גֵּר (Gen. 17:12). See further, A. H. Konkel, “*nēkār*,” *NIDOTTE* 1: 108-109; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (NICOT Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 621-24

juridical status because of the fact that he has settled among a foreign tribe or people.”<sup>104</sup> Given their economically vulnerable status (no land and no family), throughout the Torah one repeatedly finds legislation which commands Israel to treat the alien with justice and charity. The legislation is often quite repetitive, for “in all cases the law calls for equality between the alien and the Israelite.”<sup>105</sup> This legislated hospitality is frequently said to have its foundation upon Israel’s former identity as strangers and wanderers.

Thus, within the book of the covenant, Moses states: “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien (גֵּר//προσῆλυτον), *for you were aliens (גֵּרִים//προσῆλυτοι) in the land of Egypt*” (Exodus 22:21).<sup>106</sup> Again, the basis for treating aliens with justice is due to the fact that “you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9). Israel’s own identity as former aliens functions as the foundation for justice and charity throughout the Torah’s legislation with respect to aliens, Levites, and widows (e.g., Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 5:15; 24:17-18). Just and charitable treatment of the alien is, according to the Holiness Code, an expression of fulfilling the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:33-34 with 19:18).<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Joosten, *People and Land in the Holiness Code*, 55. On the vulnerable socioeconomic status of aliens, see Knauth, “Alien, Foreign Resident,” 29.

<sup>105</sup> Christian van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law* (JSOTSup 107; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 138.

<sup>106</sup> J. G. McConville [“Fellow Citizens’: Israel and Humanity in Leviticus,” in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham* (eds. J. G. McConville and Karl Möller; LHB/OTS 461; New York/London: T&T Clark, 2007) 10-32, here 24] states: “...the attitude to the alien is deeply symbolic for the nature of Israel, because it is a consequence of Israel’s former status as aliens in a foreign land, a status which continues in a certain sense.”

<sup>107</sup> The linguistic similarities are striking. Compare: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord” (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמֹדֶךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה) Lev. 19:18b). “You shall love the alien as yourself (וְאָהַבְתָּ לוֹ כְּמֹדֶךָ) (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם) (הַגֵּר הַגֵּר אִתְּכֶם)” (Lev. 19:34b). On the parallel, see van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, 142. Van Houten is dependent upon the observations of Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 273. On the importance of Leviticus 19:18 as a pithy summary of the Torah, see E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE - 66 CE* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1992) 257-260.

In Deuteronomy 10:18-19 we see that God safeguards the aliens, actively pursues justice for them, and even “provides them with food and clothing” (v. 18). God takes on this role on behalf of the stranger because God is the “one who loves the stranger (אֱלֹהִים/ἀγαπᾷ τὸν προσήλυτον)” (v. 18). For this reason Israel must “also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (v. 19). If Israel fails to pursue justice for the alien, God threatens to bring a curse against Israel’s land (Deuteronomy 27:19). And the prophet Ezekiel declares that God will punish his people, for: “the alien residing within you suffers extortion” (22:7b), and “the people of the land...have extorted from the alien without redress” (22:29b; cf. Zechariah 7:10; Malachi 3:5). Deuteronomy legislates that no Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the Lord’s assembly as a punishment for their inhospitality to the Exodus generation: “because they did not meet you with food and water on your journey out of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 23:4a). The reasoning here is not unlike what we discovered in Homer’s *Odyssey* where Zeus’ role as the patron god of strangers functions as the religious sanction for humans to welcome strangers. The God of Israel is on the side of the alien and the stranger; therefore to love the alien is to imitate God.<sup>108</sup> Specifically, within the Torah, this just treatment of the alien includes: rendering fair legal verdicts for strangers (Deuteronomy 1:16-17), fair payment of wages (Deuteronomy 24:14-15), purposely leaving grain, olives, and grapes un-harvested for the aliens and the needy (Deuteronomy 24:19-22; Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22), and (non-coercive)<sup>109</sup> inclusion within Israel’s religious festivals and rituals such as the reading of Torah (Deuteronomy 16:11 – 14; 31:9-13; cf. Numbers 15:14-16), observance of the

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<sup>108</sup> Knauth [“Alien, Foreign Resident, 33] says, on the basis of Deut. 10:18-19, that “loving aliens becomes a type of *imitation Dei*.”

<sup>109</sup> That the alien can retain his foreign religious customs is the implication of Lev. 17:3; 23:42; and 24:15.

Sabbath (Deuteronomy 5:14-15), participation in the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29) and Passover (Exodus 12:48-49; Numbers 9:14).<sup>110</sup> Thus, J. G. McConville states that “the obligation to care for the alien is more than a call to charity; it amounts to a readiness to extend to him or her in effect full membership in Israel.”<sup>111</sup>

Some scholars have surmised that behind the legislation protecting aliens and is the practice of hospitality to strangers. Christina van Houten notes: “Perhaps the surprising thing, the new thing, is that this custom has been formulated as a law. This is a significant step however. It gives what was perhaps a generally accepted moral norm the new status of being part of the written legal tradition.”<sup>112</sup>

## II. Corrupting the Cultural Script of Hospitality to Strangers

Having described the cultural script of hospitality within a Jewish matrix, we can turn to compositions that depict violations of hospitality as a way of critiquing societies. In the first example, Judges uses the theme of corrupted hospitality to present the pre-monarchic Israelite society as degenerate.<sup>113</sup> In the second, Philo uses the same strategy to criticize Egyptian culture.

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<sup>110</sup> Quite helpful on this is van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, esp. 127-131; also, see Jousten, *People and Land in the Holiness Code*, 62-70; Bernhard A. Asen, “From Acceptance to Inclusion: The Stranger (גֵר/gēr) in Old Testament Tradition,” in *Christianity and the Stranger: Historical Essays* (ed. Francis W. Nichols; South Florida-Rochester-Saint Louis Studies on Religion and the Social Order; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 16-35.

<sup>111</sup> J. G. McConville, “‘Fellow Citizens’: Israel and Humanity in Leviticus,” 22. Also, see Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 34.

<sup>112</sup> van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, 67; also, see Knauth, “Alien, Foreign Resident,” 32-33.

<sup>113</sup> It is also widely recognized that the Judges contains polemic against the Benjaminites (and thereby Saul and Saul’s family) and, conversely, a pro-Judah message. See, for example, Marc Brettler, “The Book of Judges: ‘Literature as Politics,’” *JBL* 108 (1989) 395-418; Yairah Amit, “Literature in the Service of Politics: Studies in Judges 19-21,” in *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (eds. Henning Graf Reventlow, Yair Hoffman, and Benjamin Uffenheimer; JSOTSup 171; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 28-40. With respect to polemic against Gibeah and the tribe of Benjamin, see Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 152-154.

### A. Violated Hospitality in the Book of Judges

The book of Judges shows how Israel sinned and failed to capture their tribal allotments by refusing to drive out the foreign nations (Judges 1:27-36), how those nations became snares and oppressors (2:3), and how God raised up judges to liberate and bring rest in response to Israel's cry (e.g., 2:16-18; 3:1-11).<sup>114</sup> The cyclical repetition of this pattern and the increasing pagan behavior of Israel *and its Judges* draw searing attention to the total moral failure of Israel's leadership during this period.<sup>115</sup> Within this framework the stories in Judges function to jolt and surprise the reader through the telling of reprehensible tales which embody twisted sets of ethical norms. Gideon's legacy of Baal-worship (Judges 6:31-32; 8:33-35; 9:1-57), Samson's comic love-affairs with Philistine women (Judges 14:1-20), and the Danites cultic practices (chapters 17-18) shock the reader who has entered "an 'inverted world' where actions are often ludicrous, absurd, and self-defeating."<sup>116</sup> The author wants his readers to see that a society where "there was no king in Israel, and all the people did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25; cf. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1) is a morally chaotic and upside-down world.<sup>117</sup> The corruption of hospitality protocols is a startling symptom of a chaotic world.

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<sup>114</sup> On the cyclical structure of Judges, see Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) 49-54.

<sup>115</sup> For example, the increasing process of wickedness and degeneration is seen in Israel's Judges which accounts for combination in Gideon of obedience to God and increasing pagan/polytheistic characteristics. See Daniel I. Block, "Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up? Narrative Style and Intention in Judges 6-9," *JETS* 40 (1997) 353-366. Also, see Wenham, *Story as Torah*, 48.

<sup>116</sup> The quote is from Stuart Lasine, "Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot's Hospitality in an Inverted World," *JSOT* 29 (1984) 37-59, here 37.

<sup>117</sup> The author's solution is not, however, simply a monarchy (cf. Judg. 8:22-23) but, rather, a covenant-keeping Davidic king. See rightly, J. Alan Groves, "Judges, Book of," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 410-415. More cautious, however, is J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology: Genesis – Kings* (LHB/OTS 454; New York/London: T&T Clark, 2006) 125-132.

i. Sisera and Jael in Judges 4:17-22

Sisera and his large army are defeated by Barak and Deborah (4:4-16). Sisera escapes from the battle and flees on foot to the tent of Jael, whose husband (Heber the Kenite) had friendly relations with the Canaanite King Jabin, only to be murdered by Jael while he is sleeping. Ironically, then, Sisera meets his death not in battle but, through a perversion of hospitality protocols, in the tent of his ally's wife. In this story, both host (Jael) and guest (Sisera) violate the custom of hospitality. These violations have been set forth by others, so my discussion can be brief.<sup>118</sup> First, instead of approaching the male head of the household, his ally Heber, Sisera seeks a reception from the wife of Heber (4:17). He thereby both deprives Heber the honor of functioning as host and additionally shames him by putting his wife at risk of the charge of adultery. Second, Jael improperly offers hospitality to Sisera: "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me and have no fear" (אַל־תִּירָא אֶלִי סוּרָה אֲנִי סוּרָה // ἔκνευσσον κύριέ μου ἔκνευσσον πρὸς με μὴ φοβοῦ, 4:18a). The language recalls both Abraham's (Genesis 18:3) and Lot's (Genesis 19:2) invitation to the divine messengers. In this instance, the reader knows that her offer of hospitality is improper, offered as it is by the female, and is deceptive and has harmful intentions (cf. Judges 4:9).

Third, while Jael fulfills the duty of the host to provide comfort (she covers him with a rug, 4:18b) and drink (she gives him milk, 4:19b), Sisera also breaks protocol. Instead of waiting for the host to offer and then provide food and drink (e.g., Genesis

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<sup>118</sup> These violations have been examined most extensively by the helpful article of Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," 13-21. Also, see Mieke Bal, *Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre, and Scholarship on Sisera's Death* (trans. Matthew Gumpert; Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988) 60-64, 120-124.

18:4-5; 19:3), Sisera demands a drink of water (4:18a).<sup>119</sup> Jael's provision of milk in place of the water he requested functions to deceive, in that it reassures Sisera of the goodwill of his host even as the milk works as a soporific aid in lulling him into a deep sleep.<sup>120</sup> Fourth, Sisera again violates the custom by improperly demanding that Jael stand guard at the entrance of her tent and deny that he is present (4:20). Given that, according to the custom of hospitality, he is already within the sphere of her protection as his host (cf. Genesis 19:4-9), his demand is insulting.<sup>121</sup>

Finally, once Sisera has been comforted through the warmth of the rug, the milk, and reassurance of safety, he falls asleep within the tent (4:21). Jael uses the household-tent tools of a peg and hammer to drive a peg into her Sisera's temple (4:21). When Barak comes in pursuit of Sisera, Jael take him into her tent "and there was Sisera lying dead with the tent peg in his temple" (4:22). Thus, the custom of hospitality and the place of Jael's tent – both (custom and place) intended to provide protection for guests – have become the means Jael has used to murder Sisera.<sup>122</sup> Jael's deceptive and perverted use of hospitality is celebrated in a song by Deborah and Barak (5:24-27). Clearly one of the messages of this story, then, is that a world where hospitality – the civilizing custom which is intended to remove hostility from strangers – is used to murder guests is an inverted, upside-down, degenerate society.

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<sup>119</sup> Bal [*Murder and Difference*, 60-64, 120] thinks that the hospitality ritual is accompanied by a second ritual – the selection of a sexual partner – and that this, in part, accounts for Sisera's request for water.

<sup>120</sup> Arthur E. Cundall [*Judges: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1968) 100] states it nicely: "The seemingly generous action..., thus lulling him into a false sense of security, was the prelude to an act that...broke every accepted standard of hospitality."

<sup>121</sup> So Mieke Bal, *Murder and Difference*, 60-61.

<sup>122</sup> Bal, *Murder and Difference*, 61-62. Matthews ["Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," 19] writes: "Sisera was unknowingly a dead man from the moment he entered the area of Jael's tent and accepted her improper offer of hospitality. He had systematically violated every covenant of the code governing the actions of host and guest. He had brought shame upon Jael and her household and now must suffer the shame of death...."

## ii. The Levite and his Concubine in Judges 19

The gang-rape and murder of the unnamed Levite's concubine in Judges 19 is notorious as one of the Bible's premier "texts of terror."<sup>123</sup> The violence of the story can overshadow the fact that these horrors are perpetuated by means of flagrant abuses of hospitality. The allusions to the story of Lot's hospitality and the Sodomites' inhospitality in Genesis 19 demonstrate that the Israelite society depicted in the world of Judges is more evil and degenerate than the city of Sodom in the days of Lot.<sup>124</sup> In what follows I examine the violations of the hospitality code, the horrific effects of these violations, and the purpose of the allusions to Genesis 19.

The story of the Levite begins with the ominous words of the narrator: "In those days when there was no king in Israel" (בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם וּמֶלֶךְ אֵין בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל) // καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις καὶ βασιλεὺς οὐκ ἦν ἐν Ἰσραηλ, Judges 19:1a).<sup>125</sup> The phrase again occurs in 21:25 (cf. 17:6; 18:1), thus forming an *inclusio* that passes judgment on the wicked anarchic nature of the period.<sup>126</sup> Within this *inclusio* two hospitality stories are narrated, both centering upon a Levite and his concubine (19:1-9 and 19:10-30).

<sup>123</sup> On which, see Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (OBT 13; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 65-91.

<sup>124</sup> Most scholars now think that Judges 19 was written later than, and with an awareness of, Genesis 19. For example, see Lasine ["Guest and Host in Judges 19," 38-41, here 38] who writes that "...Judges 19 presupposes the reader's awareness in order to be properly understood." Also, see Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 3-12; Daniel I. Block, "Echo Narrative Technique in Hebrew Literature: A Study in Judges 19," *WTJ* 52 (1990) 325-341; J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 282. More skeptical, however, are Susan Niditch, "The 'Sodomite' Theme in Judges 19-20: Family, Community, and Social Disintegration," *CBQ* 44 (1982) 365-378.

<sup>125</sup> There now appears to be a consensus that Judges 17 – 21 is not an appendix but a coherent and integrated part of Judges 1 – 16. See, for example, Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading* (JSOTSup 46; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987).

<sup>126</sup> Most scholars have seen this phrase as one of the means the book of Judges uses in its defense of the Davidic (not Saulide) monarchy. See, however, William J. Dumbrell ["In Those Days There Was No King in Israel; Every Man Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes": The Purpose of the Book of Judges Reconsidered," *JSOT* 25 (1983) 23-33] who argues that Judges is a call for direct theocratic rule.

The hospitality within the first episode of the story violates proper protocols through being excessive and overbearing.<sup>127</sup> The scene (19:1b-9) begins with “a certain Levite” from the hill country of Ephraim (v. 1) setting out on a journey to Bethlehem to visit his estranged concubine and her father for the purpose “to speak tenderly to her, to reconcile her to him, and to bring her back” (v. 3). When he sees the Levite, the concubine’s father “saw him and came with joy to meet him” (וַיִּשְׂמַח לְקִרְאָתוֹ//καὶ παρήν εις ἀπάντησιν αὐτοῦ, v. 3b). The father-in-law does not simply return his daughter to the Levite, but “forced” the Levite to stay with him for three days (v. 4a). During these three days, “they ate and drank together and he lodged there” (וַיֵּלֶיְנוּ שָׁם) וַיֹּשְׁתּוּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ//ἔφαγον καὶ ἔπιον καὶ ὑπνωσαν ἐκεῖ, v. 4b). So far, the reader should have no problem in evaluating the man’s hospitality positively on the basis of his immediate and warm greeting, the serving of food and drink, and the provision of lodging. However, Frank Yamada rightly notes that “the use of the verb חזק at the beginning of the scene is instructive in that it suggests that the father prevails over his son-in-law by persuading him to remain in his house longer than the Levite desires.”<sup>128</sup>

And, indeed, the hospitality turns obnoxiously excessive for both the son-in-law and the reader.<sup>129</sup> After three days – often the normal and appropriate length for a guest’s stay – the Levite prepares to leave for home, but the father-in-law prevails upon his son to “fortify yourself with a bit of food and after that you may leave” (v. 5b). As they eat

<sup>127</sup> That the hospitality of the Levite’s father-in-law is excessive and thereby dangerous is perceptively noted by Frank M. Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible: A Literary Analysis of Three Rape Narratives* (Studies in Biblical Literature 109; New York: Peter Lang, 2008) 73-79.

<sup>128</sup> Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 75.

<sup>129</sup> Yamada [*Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 76] notes that the man’s hospitality “serves to frustrate the reader in that the father’s controlling generosity slows the plot into an increasingly absurd repetitive dialogue.” And Tribble [*Texts of Terror*, 68] comments similarly regarding the three speeches of the father-in-law: “Strikingly, as the three periods decrease, the accounts of them increase so that the closer the departure, the longer the delay. The narrated expansion corresponds to the buildup of tension.”

and drink together, the father-in-law says, “why not spend the night and enjoy yourself?” (v. 6b). When the Levite gets up to leave, the father-in-law “kept urging him until he spent the night there again” (v. 7b). At this point the father-in-law has delayed and detained his guest and is, now, in violation of hospitality protocol.<sup>130</sup> Again, in the morning the father detains the Levite for a second time (v. 7). On the fifth day, the father again detains his son-in-law with hospitality (eating and drinking) with the result that “they lingered until the day declined” (v. 8b). As the Levite again tries to set forth on his journey, the father-in-law’s final words indicate that his enthusiastic hospitality has become a nuisance (19:9b):

Look, the day has worn on until it is almost evening. Spend the night. See, the day has drawn to a close. Spend the night here and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early in the morning for your journey, and go home.

The length of the father-in-law’s speech, its repetition from his earlier pleas, and its obviously false promise to send the Levite on his way in the morning serve to present this excessive hospitality as a frustration to the Levite’s purpose to return home with his concubine.<sup>131</sup>

The over-zealous practice of hospitality, further, serves to put the Levite and his concubine in great danger. The narrator has already indicated that the two have “lingered until the day declined,” and in the father’s final plea, his speech repeatedly emphasizes

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<sup>130</sup> One of the duties of a host, as we have seen, is to send the guest on his way to his next destination and not to detain him. Contra Matthews [“Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19,” 7] who states regarding the father-in-law’s detainment of the Levite: “This is his right since the host, after the initial period of hospitality, can not force his guest to remain. He may request an extension, but it is up to the guest to decide whether to stay or not.”

<sup>131</sup> In this light, one should be wary of characterizing the father-in-law’s hospitality as a stark contrast or a foil to the inhospitality in Gibeah as do Matthews [“Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19,” 7] and Niditch [“The ‘Sodomite’ Theme in Judges 19-20,” 366-367]. Both stories are examples of violations of hospitality.

the onset of night (19:9): “the day is declining (רָפָה הַיּוֹם),” “it has become dark (לְעֶרֶב),” and “the day has come to a close (תַּנּוּחַ הַיּוֹם).” The father-in-law utilizes the tactic of the fast approaching night as one more means to convince the man and the concubine to lodge with him, for the night places would-be travelers in a dangerous and vulnerable position. The reader cannot help but recall the disastrous hospitality story from Genesis 19 where the Lord’s messengers traveled at night.

Outside of battle scenes, as Fields has noted, for the Hebrew Bible, “the rule for normal life seems to have been, start a task early in the morning, continue during the day, and finish it in time to be home before darkness.”<sup>132</sup> Thus, the repeated motif of “night” and “the end of the day” as the contextual setting for the journey sounds an ominous note for the story and creates the expectation of danger within the reader.<sup>133</sup> The Levite has been unable to extricate himself from his father-in-law’s hospitality, and now he must start his journey back home as a vulnerable night-time traveler (so 19:11).<sup>134</sup> Instead of providing safety, the father-in-law’s hospitality endangers, and we will see that it ultimately contributes to the death of his daughter.

The second episode begins with the Levite, determined, even though night is fast approaching, to make the journey to Bethlehem. As they approach the non-Israelite city of Jebus, the servant notices that it is indeed now night and suggests they look for hospitality and lodging within the city (19:11). The Levite’s response sounds a tragic and ironic note: “We will not turn aside into a city of foreigners who do not belong to the

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<sup>132</sup> Fields, “The Motif ‘Night as Danger’ Associated with Three Biblical Destruction Narratives,” 21.

<sup>133</sup> Fields, “The Motif ‘Night as Danger’ Associated with Three Biblical Destruction Narratives,” 22-25; Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 78; Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 110-112.

<sup>134</sup> Josephus rightly senses the danger. Note his expansion of the servant’s plea to seek hospitality from the Jebusites (Judg. 19:11): “The servant counseled them to lodge somewhere, lest, journeying *by night*, some misadventure should befall them, above all when they were not far from foes, that hour oft rendering perilous and suspect even the offices of friends” (*Jewish Antiquities* 5.139).

children of Israel” (יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) (// οὐ μὴ ἐκκλίνω εἰς πόλιν ἀλλοτρίου ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῶν υἰῶν Ἰσραηλ, 12a). The reader can draw the obvious implication: non-Israelites, “a city of foreigners,” will not offer proper hospitality to strangers.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, the man insists, “we will continue on to Gibeah” – a city inhabited with Israelites from the tribe of Benjamin (v. 12b). Given the man’s previous encounter with his father-in-law’s “Israelite hospitality,” the reader is justified in questioning the Levite’s assumption that he will receive proper hospitality within an Israelite city.<sup>136</sup>

As they journey, the narrator reminds the reader one more time of danger and threat through the night motif: “So they passed on and went their way, and the sun went down (וַיָּשָׁם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לָהֶם וַיָּבֹא לְעֵדוּ γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος) on them near Gibeah” (v. 14). The group arrives in Gibeah and travels to the open square of the city (בְּרֶחוֹב הָעִיר), i.e., the part of the city where the Israelites of Gibeah will surely be prepared to notice and welcome strangers (v. 15a). The scene is pathetic as the strangers stand waiting in the city square where “no one took them in to spend the night” (אִישׁ מֵאֶסְר־אֹתָם הִבִּיתָה לָלוֹן;) (// οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ὁ συνάγων αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν οἶκον καταλῦσαι, v. 15b).<sup>137</sup> The Levite supposes that by making the effort to get to Gibeah he will receive safe hospitality from his own people, but instead, the narrator tells us, he has arrived in a place where hospitality to strangers does not exist. He has come, one might say, to a place even less

<sup>135</sup> The city of Jebus was, in fact, peopled by one of the Canaanite tribes.

<sup>136</sup> So Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 81.

<sup>137</sup> The narrator’s brief description of the lack of Gibeahite hospitality stands in stark contrast to the overbearing and excessive hospitality of his father-in-law.

hospitable than Sodom.<sup>138</sup> The direct implication is the point of the author: the ethics and social customs of the people of Israel are no better than those of a Canaanite city.<sup>139</sup>

However, while the crew is waiting in the city square they are accosted by an old man from Ephraim who is returning home from his work in the fields (v. 16a). At this point, the narration of Judges 19 begins to mimic and parody Genesis 19. Like Lot in Sodom, this old man too is an alien sojourning in Gibeah (בְּגִבְעָה רִגְרִיזָה//αὐτὸς παρῳάκει ἐν Γαββα, v. 16b).<sup>140</sup> It is likely that the narrator's condemning parenthetical note, "for the people of the place were Benjaminites" (v. 16c), serves proleptically to cast the tribe as playing the part of the men of Sodom. At any rate, the tribe is contrasted with the Ephraimite alien who sees the "traveling man" (הַיָּרֵחַ אִישׁ הָאֵלֶּיךָ//τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ὁδοιπόρον, v.17) in the city square and questions them immediately: "Where are you going, and where do you come from?" (v. 17b). While the Ephraimite man rightly notices the presence of the strangers, his immediate violation of hospitality protocol is also evident in his questioning the man of his identity *before* he offers and bestows hospitality to the man.<sup>141</sup> The narrator strikes, then, a note of concern regarding the safety of the Ephraimite. The Levite's response "nobody has offered to take me in" (הַבְּיָתָה אִישׁ מֵאַסְרָךְ אוֹחֵי הַבְּיָתָה//οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ συνάγων με εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν, v. 18b) serves as a scathing critique of the Benjaminites' inhospitality. The Ephraimite man, in

<sup>138</sup> While none of the men of Sodom offered hospitality to the visitors in the city square, at least Lot did (Gen. 19:1-2). See Block, "Echo Narrative Technique in Hebrew Literature," 336. Also, see Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 7-8. Webb [*The Book of Judges*, 189] states the irony well: "Having eschewed the hospitality of foreigners and entrusted himself to Israelites he finds himself in a virtual Sodom!"

<sup>139</sup> Block, "Echo Narrative Technique in Hebrew Literature," 336-341.

<sup>140</sup> Fields [*Sodom and Gomorrah*, 64] rightly notes: "Not only are the customary laws of hospitality contravened by the men of Gibeah, who as Israelites should provide lodging and protection most of all to other Israelites; it is a רִגְרִיזָה in their town who takes their rightful place as host."

<sup>141</sup> We have seen this repeatedly, especially in Homer's *Odyssey*. Also, see Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," 8.

response, promises to take care of their hospitality needs and pleads with them to leave the city square and come to his home (v. 20). Having brought them into his home, he feeds the donkeys, gives them water to wash their feet, and they eat and drink together (v. 21). At this point, outside of his initial and over-zealous questioning of the Levite's identity and business, the man has showed himself to be a generous and kind host – in contrast to the Benjaminites – as the hospitality encounter between them is summarized by the narrator: “they were making their hearts glad” (v. 22a).<sup>142</sup>

That Judges 19 is following and recasting Genesis 19 becomes even more obvious as within this hospitality setting, “the men of the city, a perverse lot, surrounded the house and started pounding on the door” (v. 22b; cf. Genesis 19:4).<sup>143</sup> Like the men of Sodom, they demand that the Ephraimite alien hand over the stranger “who came into your house so that we may have intercourse with him” (v. 22c; cf. Genesis 19:5). Like Lot, the man stands as a safeguard between his guests and the vile men of Gibeah and begs them: “since this man has come to my house, do not do this wicked deed” (v. 23b; cf. Genesis 19:6-7).<sup>144</sup> The script is now, however, both followed and altered as the old man, like Lot, offers his virgin daughter *and* (unlike Lot!) the concubine of his guest (cf. Genesis 19:8).<sup>145</sup> The old man's plea to the crowd “rape them and do to them *whatever is*

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<sup>142</sup> So Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 82-83. I disagree with Matthews [“Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19,” 8-9] who suggests that the old man is culpable for offering hospitality to the Levite since he is only an alien and not a citizen of Gibeah. Rather, it is the culpability of the Benjaminites that is stressed given that not one of them offered hospitality to the Levite.

<sup>143</sup> The thematic and linguistic parallels with Genesis 19 are ably summarized by Block, “Echo Narrative Technique in Hebrew Literature,” 326-327. Also, see C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (reprint; New York: KTAV, 1970) 443-445. Niditch's [“The ‘Sodomite’ Theme in Judges 19-20”] claim that the similarities are the result of the common language used to describe practices associated with hospitality and family is unconvincing.

<sup>144</sup> On closed doors and gates representing protection and safety in Genesis 19 and Judges 19, see Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 97-102.

<sup>145</sup> On the divergences from Genesis 19 and their implications, see Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (JSOTSup 68; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988) 168-170.

*good in your own eyes* (בְּעֵינֵיכֶם לְהֵם הַטֹּב וַיַּעַשׂוּ אִוְהַם רַעַנְנִי//ταπεινώσατε αὐτάς καὶ ποιήσατε αὐταῖς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑμῶν)” echoes the narrators’ frequent refrain of the moral and anarchic chaos that existed in this pre-monarchic period of Israel’s history (Judges 19:24, cf. 17:6; 21:25).<sup>146</sup> The clear implication is that in this period in Israel’s history, violations of hospitality are the norm and, further, that hospitality protects men but leaves women vulnerable.<sup>147</sup> The man’s offer of the Levite’s concubine is a breach of hospitality, all the more shocking because it is almost as if the man is unaware of his violation of hospitality protocol.<sup>148</sup> That a host would offer his guest’s concubine to a violent crowd with the command “rape her” is so bizarre that Stuart Lasine is surely correct to claim that the reader has moved into the world that is “ludicrous and absurd.”<sup>149</sup> Unlike the men of Sodom, the men of Gibeah successfully act out their base desires: “they wantonly raped her and abused her all through the night until the morning” (19:25). The corruption of hospitality is highlighted by the concubine’s pathetic death, where she is found by the Levite lying at the door of the house with her hands stretched out upon the threshold (19:26-27), and the Levite’s callous response “Get up, we are going” (19:28).

Thus, the civilizing custom of hospitality, a practice designed to safeguard vulnerable strangers at all costs, has been transformed here into a practice that is dangerous, violent, and ultimately deadly. Instead of providing protection for strangers,

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<sup>146</sup> Scholars frequently noted the verb is also used to speak of the rape of Dinah (Gen. 34:2) and Tamar (2 Sam 13:12-14). So Lasine, “Guest and Host in Judges 19,” 39.

<sup>147</sup> This point is rightly and repeatedly brought home by such works as Tribble, *Text of Terror*, 65-91.

<sup>148</sup> Lasine, “Guest and Host in Judges 19,” 39.

<sup>149</sup> Lasine, “Guest and Host in Judges 19,” 40.

the host commands the mob to rape his guest.<sup>150</sup> The allusions to Lot and the men of Sodom function to make the point that this period of Israel's history is more degenerate than the non-Israelite city of Sodom.<sup>151</sup> Block's comments are apropos regarding the author's use of Genesis 19:

...[T]he narrator serves notice that, whereas the travelers had thought they had come home to the safety of their countrymen, they have actually arrived in Sodom. The nation has come full circle. The Canaanization of Israelite society is complete. When the Israelites look in a mirror, what they see is a nation which, even if ethnically distinct from the natives, is indistinguishable from them with regard to morality, ethics, and social values.<sup>152</sup>

The story ends with the Levite dismembering his concubine into twelve pieces and sending one piece to each tribe of Israel as a call to make war against the tribe of Benjamin. Thus, the corruption of hospitality has resulted in civil war and the almost total destruction of the tribe of Benjamin (19:29-20:48).<sup>153</sup> If the author's intent was to use corrupted hospitality to demonstrate the degeneration of the world of Judges, he could have hardly been more successful.

#### B. The Inhospitable Egyptians in Philo

We have already had occasion to see the way in which "barbarians" are constructed by Greek and Roman writers according to a certain "other-ing" script whereby their speech, religion, dress, and customs are emphasized and often criticized. Additionally, we have noted writings which portray the Egyptians as examples of inhospitable barbarians par excellence. To take a few examples, Euripides portrays the Egyptian king as one who sacrifices shipwrecked strangers to Artemis in his *Helen*. Plato

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<sup>150</sup> That one of the purposes of hospitality was to provide protection for strangers is demonstrated in Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 61-67.

<sup>151</sup> Almost all commentators make this point. See Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*, 88.

<sup>152</sup> Block, "Echo Narrative Technique in Hebrew Literature," 336.

<sup>153</sup> On which, see Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 190-194.

reprimands the Egyptians for their harsh and inhospitable treatment of non-Egyptians (*Laws* 953e). And in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* the sons of Aegyptus declare in their own voices that they have no concern or respect for the laws of hospitality or the gods who protect strangers, and they are shown to be monstrous guests in the land of Argos (e.g., 847-929).<sup>154</sup> In his interpretation of the Scriptures Philo capitalizes on this convenient stereotype of inhospitable Egyptians to present them as a foil to the hospitable Jewish patriarchs.<sup>155</sup> Whereas Abraham, Joseph, and Moses practice hospitality to strangers as one example of their embodiment of φιλανθρωπία, the Egyptians consistently break the laws of hospitality.<sup>156</sup> Thus, Philo reads the Scriptures in such a way so as to simultaneously exalt Judaism as hospitable and slander the Egyptians as inhospitable. Two examples suffice to make the point.

#### i. Abraham and Sarah in Egypt

We have seen how Philo lauds Abraham's hospitality to the divine visitors as a means of demonstrating the patriarch's piety (*On Abraham* 107-118). But Philo constructs the immediately prior scene, of Abraham's sojourn to Egypt, as a foil to his retelling of Genesis 18. Philo declares at the end of our passage, "I have described the inhospitality and licentiousness (ἄξενον καὶ ἀκόλαστον) of the Egyptians" in order to exalt the magnanimity of the victim's (i.e., Abraham) "kindness of heart (τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν)" (107). Philo goes to great length, then, to read Genesis 12:10-20 as

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<sup>154</sup> Herodotus is the exception to the rule as he critiques rumors and stories which caricature the Egyptians as inhospitable (e.g., *Histories* 2.45 and 2.113-117).

<sup>155</sup> Pearce [*The Land of the Body*, 194] states regarding Philo and hospitality: "His distinctive contribution is to present hospitality towards strangers as fundamental to Jewish tradition by employing a strategy of contrasting the Mosaic principles of hospitality with the inhospitableness of Egyptians."

<sup>156</sup> On the role of *philanthropia* in Philo, see Walter T. Wilson, "The Constitution of Compassion: Political Reflections on Philo's *De Humanitate*," in *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity in Honor of Carl R. Holladay* (eds. by Patrick Gray and Gail R. O'Day; NovTSup 129; Brill: Leiden, 2008) 33-46.

recounting the inhospitable treatment that Abraham and Sarah received from the Egyptians.

When a great drought threatens the livelihood of Abraham and Sarah, the two sojourn to Egypt for grain (91-92). Philo notes that Sarah was “distinguished greatly for her goodness of soul and beauty of body” (93). But the Egyptians, captivated by all things attractive to the body’s appetites (99-102), only take notice of Sarah’s physical beauty and inform Pharaoh of the stranger and his beautiful wife (93).<sup>157</sup> Philo is obviously embarrassed by the biblical text which states that Abraham took the initiative to deceive the Egyptians by presenting themselves as brother and sister (Genesis 12:11-13), and silences this part of the text in order to lay the blame entirely on the Egyptians and their lusts. Philo notes that the king, enraptured by Sarah’s physical beauty, “showed little regard to decency or *the laws enacted to show respect to strangers*” (βραχὺ φροντίσας αἰδοῦς καὶ νόμων τῶν ἐπὶ τιμῇ ξένων ὀρισθέντων) and “gave free license (ἐνδοῦς ἀκρασίᾳ)” to his sexual desires (94). It is striking that Philo explicitly refers to a common shared understanding of the legislation of hospitality laws and thereby emphasizes the king’s wickedness.<sup>158</sup> Philo says that the king made a pretense of marrying Sarah but only intended to shame her sexually (94). Sarah, who as vulnerable foreigner is at the mercy of a “licentious and cruel-hearted despot” (95), flees for refuge to God the one who is “kind and merciful and shields the wronged and who takes pity on the strangers (τῶν ξένων)” (96). And God does show mercy to Sarah and Abraham, for he inflicts Pharaoh the body-lover, and his entire household, with all kinds of plagues and

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<sup>157</sup> Philo later notes that the king of Egypt symbolizes “the mind which loves the body” (*On Abraham* 103). On Egypt as symbolic of the body and its passions within Philo’s writings, see Pearce, *The Land of the Body*, esp. 81-127.

<sup>158</sup> So Pearce, *The Land of the Body*, 197.

thereby removes the king's desire for physical pleasure (96-97). The chastity of Sarah, as well as the purity of Israel's blood, is thereby protected by the God who shows mercy to strangers and punishes those who trample the hospitality laws.<sup>159</sup>

Philo's departure from the biblical text is most obvious in his transformation of a story which originally highlighted Abraham's deception and the subsequent *unintentional* error of the Egyptian king into a story which paints them as gross violators of the hospitality laws and addicted to bodily pleasure. Pharaoh is reminiscent of Homer's Polyphemus in his disregard for the custom, and the God of the Bible is not unlike Homer's Ζεὺς Ξεινός who avenges those who abuse strangers.<sup>160</sup> Philo has succeeded, then, in presenting the Egyptians as a foil to the hospitable Abraham. The Egyptians are barbarians par excellence in their lack of cultured civility.

#### ii. Moses and the Israelites in Egypt

Philo's greatest invective is reserved for the Egyptians of the Exodus who flouted the hospitality laws by enslaving their guests. Moses showed nothing but goodwill to his adopted Egyptian kinsmen until he "found the king adopting...a new and highly impious (ἀσέβημα) course of action" (*The Life of Moses* I.33). The Jews, says Philo, were strangers (ξένοι γὰρ ἦσαν) who had come to Egypt as a result of famine; they were "suppliants who had fled (ἰκέται καταπεφυγότες)" to Egypt for aid (I.34).<sup>161</sup> Initially, they had received mercy, and Philo commends the general law that "strangers (οἱ...ξένοι)...must be regarded as suppliants of those who receive (τῶν ὑποδεξαμένων) them and not only suppliants...but settlers and friends...because they differ little from the

<sup>159</sup> One of Philo's concerns in this story is to demonstrate that, unlike the words of the biblical text (Gen. 12:15) Sarah did not actually go into Pharaoh's house and have sexual relations with the king. A reading of the biblical text which could be taken to indicate Israel's Egyptian origins is, thereby, rejected (*Abr.* 97-98).

<sup>160</sup> So rightly Pearce, *The Land of the Body*, 198.

<sup>161</sup> On I.34-36, see Pearce, *The Land of the Body*, 205-208.

original inhabitants” (I.35). Philo emphasizes the vulnerable state of the Israelites as they present themselves as guests, hoping to receive safety from the Egyptians (I.36). Instead, the Egyptians revoke their status as guests and reduce them to prisoners of war:

In thus making slaves of men who were not only free but guests, suppliants, and settlers (ξένους καὶ ἰκέτας καὶ μετοίκους), [the Pharaoh] showed no shame or fear of the God of liberty and hospitality and of justice to guests and suppliants (οὔτε αἰδεσθεῖς οὔτε δείσας τὸν ἔλευθέριον καὶ ξένιον καὶ καὶ ἰκέσιον καὶ ἐφέστιον θεόν), who watches over such as these. (I. 36)

Philo constructs an image of the Egyptians as uncultured, inhospitable, and without respect of the deity. Philo emphasizes the brutality and uncivilized treatment of the Israelites by the Egyptians. The king chooses the most savage and cruel men as taskmasters and places unreasonable expectations upon the Israelites (I.37-39, 43-44).

When God raises up Moses to deliver the Israelites he tells Moses that he is of “a kindly nature and gracious to true suppliants,” and he will, thus, deliver them from bondage (I.72-73). Philo notes that even the plagues do not mitigate the inhospitality of the Egyptians, for they “cling to their old inhumanity and impiety (ἀπανθρωπίας καὶ ἀσεβείας) as if it were the surest of blessings” (I.95). Philo justifies the righteousness of the despoiling of the Egyptians when Israel is delivered, for “the Egyptians began the wrongdoing by reducing guests and suppliants to slavery like captives” and the Israelites’ actions were “shielded by justice whose arm was extended to defend them” (I.142).

Both the book of Judges and Philo use the motif of violated or corrupted hospitality for larger purposes. For the book of Judges, violation of the hospitality laws serves to demonstrate the degeneration of a society where everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes, where there is no monarchy. Even attempts to follow the hospitality laws results ironically in placing guests in dangerous situations. Philo uses the theme of

violated hospitality laws to portray the Egyptians as barbarians who lack civilized customs and who fail to fear and honor God. The Egyptians' inhospitality serves as a foil to the Israelite patriarchs who are ideal hosts and guests, and therefore the motif serves Philo's goal of exalting the superiority of Judaism as a religion and way of life.

### III. Conclusion

The custom of hospitality pervaded the ancient Mediterranean world. Given the prevalence of the custom, it is difficult to find a stopping point for analysis of the script. An array of authors encompassing a range of literary genres use the script for manifold purposes. Invariably positive characters are exemplary practitioners of hospitality: Abraham and Lot in Genesis, Nestor and Menelaus in the *Odyssey*, the hunter in Dio's Seventh Oration, and the patriarchs in Philo. Conversely, people who violate hospitality laws demonstrate their uncivilized "barbaric" impious character: the degenerate pre-monarchical society of the book of Judges, Philo's Egyptians, the house of Orestes in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, and the suitors and the Cyclopes in Homer's *Odyssey*. The frequent religious sanctions for the practice are often connected to the way in which texts depict its heroes and heroines as simultaneously hospitable and pious. And, of course, the converse is also true. At least one of the points of the violations of the hospitality laws in Judges and the *Oresteia* is to show that pre-monarchical Israelite society and the house of Orestes, respectively, are corrupt. Homer repeatedly makes a connection between impiety and inhospitality in his characterization of Polyphemus and the suitors. But the religious sanctions are often even more direct as in the direct legislation of hospitable and kind treatment of aliens and strangers within the Pentateuch, or in the frequent epitaph of Zeus as patron deity of strangers.

We have seen that theoxenies, or the entertainment of divine guests, are prevalent throughout both Greco-Roman and Jewish texts. There is remarkable flexibility in the use of theoxenies: not only Homer portrays Athena's visit of Telemachus as such but also constructs Odysseus' return according to the logic of a theoxeny. Further, even a Jewish text such as Genesis has no compunction about portraying God in the guise of three human strangers who receive hospitality from Abraham. While these theoxenies are flexible, they share a common structure whereby a deity descends in the guise of a traveler, receives hospitality or inhospitality, compensates the host with attendant blessings or judgments, and reveals his identity. Thus, Telemachus is blessed while the suitors are killed; Lycaon is transformed into a wolf while Baucis and Philemon are spared from the flood; Abraham and Lot are saved while Sodom is destroyed.

In their praise of hospitality, further, many Hellenistic and Roman authors view it as a subset, or constituent component, of the larger virtue of φιλανθρωπία. Philo repeatedly portrays the patriarchs' hospitality as deriving from their love for humanity, whereas the Egyptians' "hatred of humanity" is the root of their unwillingness to show hospitality to strangers. Dio's description of hospitality is often connected to φιλανθρωπία and numerous words beginning with the φιλοφρόν- prefixes are found in connection with descriptions of hospitality. Dido presents herself as a model of "love for humanity" and "piety" after showing hospitality to Vergil and his crew.

I turn now to examine the role of hospitality in the Lukan writings. To what extent does Luke show knowledge of the custom of hospitality, and how does he deploy this cultural script? To what purposes does he use hospitality to strangers within his two-volume work?

## **Chapter 5: The Grammar, Symbols, and Practices of Hospitality in the Lukan Writings**

A full understanding of the role of hospitality in Luke-Acts requires two levels of analysis. It must first be demonstrated that Luke is fluent in the symbolism of ancient Mediterranean hospitality – its grammar, its practice, and its religious-ethical implications. The Lukan writings manifest an obvious interest in table-fellowship and hospitality to strangers, but more precise analysis beyond simple motif recognition is necessary.<sup>1</sup> Does Luke – like the texts examined in chapters three and four – utilize religious sanctions for the custom, portray his narrative’s antagonists as violators of hospitality laws and, conversely, the protagonists as hospitable, use the formalized processes of ritualized friendship to bring together two disparate people or people groups, and present his narrative (or aspects of it) according to the literary logic of a theoxeny? The present chapter addresses such questions through a thick analysis of four texts from Luke-Acts. It also provides a database for the analysis in the next chapter which is devoted to giving an account of the purpose and structure of hospitality in Luke-Acts.

### I. Hospitality Corrupted and Excelled in Simon and the Sinful Woman: Luke 7:36-50

#### A. The Divine Visitation and the Peoples’ Response: Luke 7:1-35

In order to understand the meaning and literary significance of the sinful woman’s display of hospitality and, conversely, the inhospitality of Simon the Pharisee, it is

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<sup>1</sup> Most classically articulated by Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (reprint; London: SPCK, 1958) 251-253; idem. “Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts. III, Luke’s Interest in Lodging,” *JBL* 45 (1926) 305-22. Commenting on Luke and hospitality, John Koenig [*New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 85-86] notes that “the sheer quantity of evidence for our author’s regular accentuation of guest and host roles in his two-volume work suggests that the whole matter is more than peripheral to his concerns.” Andrew Arterbury [*Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (NTM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005)] demonstrates the presence of hospitality scenarios within Luke-Acts, but there is a lack of attention to *how* hospitality functions, or *why* Luke utilizes hospitality, within his larger literary project.

necessary to situate 7:36-50 within its literary context. Two integrally related themes predominate: the identity of Jesus as the embodiment of God's visitation to his people and the peoples' mixed response to God's visitation.<sup>2</sup>

First, in Luke 7:2-10 a Roman centurion commissions Jewish elders to request that Jesus heal his "highly valued" (ἐντιμὸς) slave (7:2b). The Jewish elders make their appeal to Jesus based on the system of patronage by declaring to Jesus: "he is worthy (ἄξιός) of having you do this for him" (7:4b), "for he loves our people (ἀγαπᾷ γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν)" (7:5a), and "he built the synagogue for us" (7:5b).<sup>3</sup> The Jewish elders' appeal to the centurion's status as patron as the basis for Jesus' healing of the servant blatantly contradicts Jesus' own teachings wherein an ethics of reciprocity is rejected (6:20-48).<sup>4</sup> Further, by basing their request on the practices of patronage the elders effectively request that Jesus, as his client, fulfill an obligation to the centurion. The elders' initiative is inappropriate because it fails to recognize the identity of Jesus as the embodiment of God's visitation to this people. The centurion, in contrast, surprisingly rejects his role as benefactor and patron: "Lord (κύριε), do not trouble yourself for I am not worthy (ἰκανός) to have you come under my own roof" (7:6b). He explains his rationale for sending messengers to Jesus, for "I have not considered myself worthy

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<sup>2</sup> These claims are hardly controversial but are worth pressing in further detail. See, for example, Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 281-305; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS 39; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977) 96-103. Francois Bovon [*Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50* (trans. Christine M. Thomas; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) 290] states: "The overarching theme of chap. 7 is the saving visitation of God, and also the identity of the mediating messengers (cf. 7:49)."

<sup>3</sup> Green [*The Gospel of Luke*, 286] rightly notes: "These Jewish elders portray him as a broker and benefactor of the people." On patronage in Luke: see Halvor Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 241-268.

<sup>4</sup> On Luke 6:20-49 and reciprocity, see Alan Kirk, "'Love your Enemies,' the Golden Rule, and Ancient Reciprocity (Luke 6:27-35)," *JBL* 122 (2003) 667-686; Christopher M. Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics: A Study in Their Coherence and Character* (WUNT 2.275; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010) 107-117.

(ἤξιῶσα) to come to you” (7:7a). He rightly bases his request for Jesus’ healing on the recognition of Jesus’ superior authority and power.<sup>5</sup> The centurion’s request, “speak the word and my servant will be healed” (ἀλλὰ εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήτω ὁ παῖς μου, 7:7b), demonstrates a proper recognition of Jesus’ powerful healing authority. Luke has already indicated that God’s power is embodied in Jesus’ healing acts: “the power of the Lord was with him to heal” (δύναμις κυρίου ἦν εἰς τὸ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτόν, 5:17a), and “the whole crowd was trying to touch him because power was coming from from him (δύναμις παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἐξήρχετο) and he was healing everyone” (6:19).<sup>6</sup> Jesus lauds the centurion’s behavior as an exemplary response to God’s visitation of his people: “I tell you not even in Israel have I encountered such faith” (7:9b).

Second, in Luke 7:11-17, “the Lord had compassion” (ὁ κύριος ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, 7:13a) for a grieving widow and restores her dead son to life. The authorial use of ὁ κύριος is significant, for (at the least) it indicates Luke’s conception of the identity of Jesus as the bearer of divine power.<sup>7</sup> The people’s response to the healing is significant: “fear took hold of everyone and they gave glory to God saying, ‘A great prophet has been raised up for us!’ and ‘God has visited his people!’” (ἔλαβεν δὲ φόβος πάντας καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν λέγοντες ὅτι προφήτης μέγας ἠγέρθη ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ, 7:16). The people’s response to Jesus is appropriate for three reasons. a) Within Luke’s narrative, giving praise and glory to God is one of the proper responses to the divine visit and the powerful healing acts of Jesus

<sup>5</sup> On which, see Paul S. Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal: The Prophet Vocation According to Luke* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976) 16-18.

<sup>6</sup> On Luke 5:17-26 and the subtle use of κύριος to indicate the divine identity of Jesus throughout the Gospel of Luke, see C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (BZNW 139; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) 92-105.

<sup>7</sup> Again, see Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 117-121.

(e.g., Lk. 1:46-55; 1:67-79; 5:25-26; 18:43).<sup>8</sup> b) While Luke characterizes Jesus as Davidic Messiah (e.g., Lk. 1:31-35; 18:35-43; 20:41-44) and as “Lord” (Lk. 1:43-44; 5:17; 7:13), he is also characterized as God’s great prophet (e.g., Lk. 4:16-30; 7:21-23).<sup>9</sup> The claim of the people, therefore, that “God has raised up a great prophet for us” fits well with the narrator’s own presentation of Jesus’ identity. c) The peoples’ claim that “the Lord the God of Israel has visited his people” through Jesus is certainly correct as the reader has already twice encountered praise to God for his impending visitation (cf. 1:68, 78). Further, the fear that comes upon the people is the appropriate response to a theophany (e.g., 1:12, 65; 5:26). Insofar, then, as the people see God’s visit of his people embodied in this prophet, they respond rightly to Jesus.<sup>10</sup>

Third, the lengthy section of Luke 7:18-35 centers upon the nature of Jesus’ prophetic ministry and the peoples’ response to it. In response to John the Baptist’s question as to whether Jesus is the expected “coming one” (ὁ ἐρχόμενος, 7:19), Jesus reaffirms his identity as the prophetic agent of Isaiah 61. In the presence of John’s disciples, Jesus heals the sick, exorcises evil spirits, gives sight to the blind (7:21), and tells them: “Go report to John what you have seen and heard: ‘The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are

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<sup>8</sup> On this, see Kindalee Pfremmer De Long, *Surprised by God: Praise Response in the Narrative of Luke-Acts* (BZBW 166; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> He is compared, for example, to Elijah, Elisha, and “one of the ancient prophets” (Lk. 4:25-27; 7:11-17; 9:51-56) and to a prophet like Moses (Lk. 9:28-36; Acts 3:22-23; 7:22-53). See Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 70-77; Minear, *To Heal and Reveal*, 102-12.

<sup>10</sup> I am in agreement with C. Kavin Rowe’s argument regarding the importance (if not primacy) of the term ὁ κύριος in Luke’s narration of Jesus’ identity. However, I dispute his claim that in Luke 7:11-17 “the essential judgment about Jesus’ identity as that of ‘prophet’ is one that falls short.” See Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 119. Better are Joel Green’s [*The Gospel of Luke*, 293] comments on Luke 7:16: “Even if this epithet is incomplete for Luke, it is correct as far as it goes.” Johnson [*The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 100] is also accurate and succinct: “The Lukan construction of the two miracle stories, the proclamation of 7:16, the thematic statement of 7:22, and the story of 7:36ff all throw attention on the figure of Jesus as Prophet over against John.”

proclaimed good news. And blessed is the one who does not stumble over me” (7:22). Jesus responds to John’s question with an amalgamation of Isaianic references (e.g., Isaiah 29:18; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1), and the reader is reminded of Jesus’ initial articulation of his identity as the prophetic agent of Isaiah 61 in Luke 4:18-19.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the prophetic and liberative character of Jesus’ identity is reaffirmed.

But perhaps most significant are Jesus’ words affirming the role of John as God’s messenger sent “before your face who will prepare your way before you” (πρὸ προσώπου σου ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου, 7:27b). What John’s “preparation” consists in, namely repentance, is made clear by Luke’s parenthetical statement: “all the people – even the tax collectors justified God (ἐδικαίωσαν τὸν θεόν) because they had been baptized with the baptism of John” (7:29). In other words, the “people” and the “tax collectors” respond rightly to God by responding to John’s call for a baptism of repentance (cf. Lk. 3:10-14). Alternatively, the lawyers and Pharisees “reject the purpose of God for themselves” (τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θεοῦ ἠθέτησαν εἰς ἑαυτούς, 7:30) by rejecting John’s baptism.<sup>12</sup> In rejecting John, the Pharisees and Lawyers refuse to see their need for repentance thereby rejecting God’s plan. While the Pharisees and Lawyers fail to accept Jesus and John, sinners and tax-collectors embrace the purpose of God and respond favorably to his prophets (7:34b-35).<sup>13</sup> It is of further significance that one of the reasons the Pharisees reject Jesus is due to the identity of

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<sup>11</sup> On which, see David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2.130; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000) 70-84.

<sup>12</sup> In Luke 3:1-17 the crowds come out to receive John’s baptism whereas there is no mention of the Pharisees coming to John.

<sup>13</sup> Jesus’ statement in 7:35 that “Wisdom is justified by all her children” is parallel to 7:29-30. It is the tax collectors and the people from v. 29 who make up God’s children. See Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 304; David P. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 105-106.

those with whom he eats and shares hospitality: “the Son of Man has come eating and drinking and you say, ‘behold a glutton and a drunkard!’” (7:34; cf. 5:27-32; 15:1-2).

### B. The Pharisee and the Sinful Woman: Luke 7:36-39

The story is linked to the preceding statements as Luke introduces his reader to “a certain one of the Pharisees” (τις...των Φαρισαίων, 7:36a).<sup>14</sup> In fact, within vv. 36-39 Jesus’ host is referred to as a Pharisee four times (7:36a; τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Φαρισαίου, v. 36b; ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ Φαρισαίου, v. 37b; ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Φαρισαῖος, v. 39a). The reader is invited to see this Pharisee as a representative character, as one of the characters Luke has just described in 7:29-35, namely, as a representative portrait of one who rejects “the purpose of God” (7:30) by rejecting God’s prophet.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, the “woman who was known as a sinner in the city” (γυνὴ ἣτις ἦν ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀμαρτωλός, 7:37a) is a character-type within Luke’s narrative who does respond favorably to Jesus – the “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (φίλος τελωνῶν καὶ ἀμαρτωλῶν, 7:34b).<sup>16</sup> While the reader must wait to see if the narrator fulfils these expectations, the literary context provides strong impetus for seeing the Pharisee and sinful woman as representations of two contrasting responses to Jesus’ ministry and his vision of the kingdom of God.

The story is a hospitality scene as evidenced by numerous details. The Pharisee assumes the role of host and “asks [Jesus] to eat with him” (7:36a). Jesus enters into the

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<sup>14</sup> On characterization in Luke 7:36-50, see David B. Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend: Portraits of the Pharisees in Luke and Acts* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 2; New York: Peter Lang, 1991) 219-222. With respect to the Pharisees, see John T. Carroll, “Luke’s Portrayal of the Pharisees,” *CBQ* 50 (1988) 604-621, esp. 609-611.

<sup>15</sup> So Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 108-109; Carroll, “Luke’s Portrayal of the Pharisees,” 610 n. 26.

<sup>16</sup> The “sinful woman” is a clear narrational example of the saying that Jesus is a “friend of tax collectors and sinners” in Luke 7:34. So Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) 90. On Luke’s meaning of the term “sinner,” see E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 174-211.

Pharisee's home (εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ φαρισαίου, 7:36b).<sup>17</sup> Reminiscent of Greco-Roman banquets, Luke notes that after entering his home Jesus “reclined” (κατεκλίθη, 7:36b).<sup>18</sup> With one verse, then, Luke has deftly set up the story as a hospitality scene: Simon assumes the role of host, he requests that Jesus be his guest within his home, and they recline to share a meal. Given these cues the reader expects Simon to fulfill certain hospitality obligations, such as food, drink, water for washing, and oil for anointment, all accompanied by polite and deferential social interaction. While Jesus levels no critique of Simon's hospitality at this point in the narrative, the reader is surprised to find that, instead, a “sinful woman” has assumed the role and duties of host – and this so in a shocking manner.<sup>19</sup>

The woman stands in a position of subservience to Jesus the guest, as she stands “alongside his feet” (παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ), bathes and dries “his feet” (τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ) with her own tears, and kisses and anoints “his feet” (τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ) with her ointment (7:38b-39). Instead of water for washing, the woman uses her tears; instead of a towel for drying, the woman uses her hair; instead of anointing his head, the woman kisses and anoints his feet.<sup>20</sup> The contrast to Simon's inhospitality is obvious to the reader, even if left unstated. The description of the woman's actions is

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<sup>17</sup> John B. Matthews [*Hospitality and the New Testament Church: An Historical and Exegetical Study* (ThD dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1964) 171-172] notes that this phrase (“to enter into the house”) is a “virtual technical term in Lucan literature to denote the act in which the guest enters into and accepts the hospitality offered by his host.”

<sup>18</sup> On Luke and the issue of Greco-Roman meals and symposia, see Dennis E. Smith, “Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke,” *JBL* 106 (1987) 613-638.

<sup>19</sup> It is not clear how the woman gains access to the house of the Pharisee. Did she arrive with Jesus? Is she an uninvited intruder? Was it the custom for the doors of village homes to be left open? Joachim Jeremias supposes that Jesus has preached a sermon which functions as the occasion which attracts the interest of both Simon, his guests, and the woman. See Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1963) 126.

<sup>20</sup> On her actions, see Bovon, *Luke 1*, 294-295.

intended to convey a lavish emotional response of respect, love, and devotion to Jesus.<sup>21</sup> The thrice-repeated posture and action of the woman as caring for *the feet of Jesus* is a symbolic depiction of her wholehearted recognition of his authority, a favorable response to Jesus that indicates a state of obedience to her superior, just as Mary's action of "sitting at the feet of the Lord" (παρακαθησθῆῖσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τοῦ κυρίου, 10:39) is an unambiguously positive response to Jesus.<sup>22</sup> The reader's expectations are jarred as the woman displaces Simon as the hospitable host of Jesus.<sup>23</sup> While one possible connotation of the woman's unbound hair is sexual, another (preferable) cultural option is to see her unbound hair as indicative of religious devotion or perhaps a sign of grief over her sins.<sup>24</sup> The reason for the woman's tears is not explicitly identified, but given the context focusing on response and repentance (especially 7:29-30 with 3:10-14), they are likely tears of repentance for her sins or loving gratitude to Jesus. At any rate, her tears function as an extravagant sign of her favorable disposition toward Jesus.

The reader is reminded in verse 39 that it is "the Pharisee who is the one who invited him" (ὁ Φαρισαῖος ὁ καλέσας αὐτόν). It is the Pharisee and not the woman who has the social obligation to be Jesus' host. Yet the Pharisee has yet to bestow upon Jesus any of the favors associated with hospitality. Further, the Pharisee's narrative aside

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<sup>21</sup> I. Howard Marshall [*The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 309] is right that interpretations must account for the obvious "overwhelming emotions" of the woman in response to Jesus.

<sup>22</sup> On the symbolic function of "feet" in Luke-Acts, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Sacra Pagina 5; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 87.

<sup>23</sup> On this aspect of the story, see James L. Resseguie, "Automatization and Defamiliarization in Luke 7:36-50," *JLT* 5 (1991) 137-150.

<sup>24</sup> The former interpretation pervades the secondary literature on the matter and is one of the reasons her epitaph "sinner" is assumed to mean "whore." See, for example, Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 308-310; Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and their Role as Reflected in His Earthly Life* (SNTSMS 51; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 54-55; Francois Bovon, *Luke 1*, 293-295. For a richer and more nuanced interpretation of the cultural meanings of her unbound hair and its relevance for Luke 7:38, see Charles H. Cosgrove, "A Woman's Unbound Hair in the Greco-Roman World, with Special Reference to the Story of the 'Sinful Woman' in Luke 7:36-50," *JBL* 124 (2005) 675-692.

(“he said to himself,” 7:39) presents a direct assault upon and affront to Jesus: “If this one was a [the]<sup>25</sup> prophet (οὗτος εἰ ἦν προφήτης), he would have known who and what type of woman this is touching him (ἄπτεται αὐτοῦ) – that she is a sinner (ὅτι ἁμαρτωλός)” (7:39b).<sup>26</sup> Within the hospitality setting Simon’s remark breaches protocol, since it initiates a combative and competitive relationship with his guest.<sup>27</sup> Two of the Pharisee’s assumptions are crucial. First, he assumes that Jesus’ ignorance regarding the “sinful” status of the woman proves that he is not God’s prophet. Jesus lacks the insight of a prophet in his association with the woman. Second, Jesus allows himself to become ritually contaminated by the touch of the woman, who is not only of questionable character but is performing, in Simon’s eyes, an inappropriately erotic act.<sup>28</sup> God’s prophet, according to Simon’s logic, would not associate with sinners, tax collectors, and the ritually impure (7:39). The Pharisee interprets the woman’s tears not as a positive sign of repentance or gratitude, but rather as an act which defiles his guest.

### C. Hospitality as a Sign of Acceptance of Jesus: Luke 7:40-47

Jesus does manifest prophetic insight, however, for in his immediate riposte to Simon he demonstrates an awareness of the Pharisee’s inner thoughts and character (7:40-43).<sup>29</sup> Jesus tells Simon a simple story. A moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other owed fifty. Since neither could repay their debt, the moneylender “freely forgave” (ἑχαρίσατο) both debtors (7:42). That Jesus is the

<sup>25</sup> There are significant textual witnesses (e.g., Vaticanus) which include the masculine definite article thereby referring to Jesus as “the prophet (ὁ προφήτης)” in accordance with, for example, Luke 7:16 (“the great prophet” and Luke 24:19 (“the prophet powerful in deed and word before God”).

<sup>26</sup> On soliloquies in Luke-Acts, though Luke 7:39 is inexplicably omitted, see Steven M. Sheeley, *Narrative Asides in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

<sup>27</sup> Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend*, 222-223.

<sup>28</sup> See Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 310-311; Bovon, *Luke I*, 295. If she is a prostitute then she is clearly ritually impure. See Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, 163 n. 21.

<sup>29</sup> See further, Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal*, 115.

agent who “freely forgives” debtors and “brings release” to the captives and oppressed is a fact with which the readers of Luke’s narrative are by now well familiar (e.g., 4:18-19).<sup>30</sup> Jesus is the debt-canceller, the embodiment of divine benefaction. Returning to the parable, Jesus asks Simon: “Which one of them will love him [i.e., the moneylender] more?” (7:42b). Simon draws attention to the act of “freely forgiving” in his answer to Jesus’ question: “I suppose the one for whom he freely forgave the greater debt” (τὸ πλεῖον ἔχαρίσατο, 7:43a). Jesus is attempting to lead Simon to a reevaluation of the woman’s hospitality as an expression of deep love to the one who is able to bestow divine forgiveness upon her.

Finally, in 7:44-47 Jesus provides a direct interpretation of both the woman’s actions and Simon’s actions as evidence of opposing responses to Jesus. The woman serves as an object lesson for Simon as Jesus “turns to the woman” and “speaks to Simon” (7:44a). Jesus’ question, “Do you see this woman?” asks Simon to look again at the woman’s action and reevaluate his interpretation.

Do you see this woman (βλέπεις ταύτην τὴν γυναῖκα)? I came into your house (εἰσηλθὼν σου εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν). You did not give water for my feet (μοι ἐπὶ πόδας). But she has washed my feet (τοὺς πόδας) with her tears and dried them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss. But since I came in (εἰσηλθὼν) she has not stopped kissing my feet (μου τοὺς πόδας). You did not anoint my head with oil. But she has anointed my feet (τοὺς πόδας μου) with myrrh. (7:44b-46)

Jesus’ words function as a scathing critique of Simon’s inhospitality. His opening remark that “I came into *your house*” triggers the reader’s expectations of Simon’s obligations as host.<sup>31</sup> But in every instance, Jesus claims Simon has failed his hospitality obligations. He is inhospitable and he is culpable for his morally reprehensible actions. Even the

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<sup>30</sup> So Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 311.

<sup>31</sup> See Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend*, 225.

basic necessities of hospitality – water to wash his feet, a greeting kiss, and oil to anoint his head – have been withheld from Jesus the guest.<sup>32</sup> Further, he has insulted his guest (7:39) with hostile words and thereby treated Jesus not as a guest but as a competitor, or perhaps more accurately, as an enemy. The lack of honor and the lack of hospitality that Simon has shown to Jesus place Simon in an adversarial relationship with Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

Jesus interprets the woman's actions, however, as a proper and commendable hospitable response to Jesus, the guest. But her actions go above and beyond the expected social obligations of a host. Water should have been offered for Jesus to wash his feet, but the woman herself has washed his feet with her own tears (v. 44),<sup>34</sup> a kiss should have been given Jesus on the face, but the woman has unceasingly kissed his feet (v. 45); the host should have anointed his head with oil, but the woman has anointed his feet with costly perfume (v. 46). The contrast indicates that the woman's hospitality has been lavish and extravagant – more than a guest would expect. It is remarkable, further, that “the feet of Jesus” are mentioned four times in 7:44-46 with all of the woman's actions performed on his feet. As I have suggested, the attention to Jesus' feet indicates her total submission and recognition of Jesus' authority.

In 7:47 Jesus interprets the deeper meaning of her hospitality and Simon's inhospitality. With “for this reason” (οὐ γάρ, 7:47a) Jesus directly refers to the contrasting responses of the two figures and provides an interpretation of the meaning of

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<sup>32</sup> Seim [*The Double Message*, 94] underestimates the extent to which Simon breaks hospitality protocols by refusing these basic necessities. It is not simply that the woman's extravagant hospitality puts Simon's hospitality to shame, it is that Simon does not even fulfill his basic obligations as host to Jesus. For examples of breaking hospitality protocols, see Petronius, *Satyricon*, 26-78.

<sup>33</sup> Green [*The Gospel of Luke*, 312] states it well: “Hence, he who has so carefully followed social conventions in his condemnation of the woman as a sinner has himself failed to follow related conventions. Simon implicates himself in a serious breach of the laws of hospitality whereby he has challenged the honor of his guest, Jesus.” So also Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend*, 223-225.

<sup>34</sup> On pre-meal washings, see for example, Plato, *Symposium* 175A.

their actions. The woman's hospitality functions as a tangible expression of her love for Jesus and her faith in him as the divine and prophetic agent who can forgive her sins. Thus, Jesus declares that due the loving hospitality she has bestowed upon him, "her many sins have been forgiven" (ἀφέωνται αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῆς αἱ πολλαί, 7:47b).<sup>35</sup> She is the greater debtor of Jesus' parable (7:42), and "for this reason she loves much" (ὅτι ἠγάπησεν πολύ, 7:47c).<sup>36</sup> Her hospitality to Jesus, the agent of the divine visitation, has elicited his gift of forgiveness of sins. In contrast, Simon's inhospitality is an expression of his lack of love and lack of acknowledgment of his need for forgiveness (7:47d).<sup>37</sup> In this pericope, Luke utilizes hospitality toward Jesus to convey a positive and negative response to Jesus the prophetic agent of God's visitation.

#### D. The One Able to Forgive Sins: Luke 7:48-50

But the story does not end with Jesus' commendation of the woman's hospitality and love. Jesus turns to the woman and states: "Your sins have been forgiven" (ἀφέωνταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, 7:48). The perfect tense (ἀφέωνταί) foregrounds Jesus' performative speech-act of forgiveness of sins, and it does not indicate the past-tense (previous) forgiveness of her sins. It must be emphasized that there is no textual

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<sup>35</sup> Jesus' declaration to Simon that the woman's sins have been forgiven seem to indicate that the woman he views as a "sinner" has already been released and forgiven of her sins. So Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 313-314; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX* (AB 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1981) 693-694. John J. Kilgallen ["John the Baptist, the Sinful Woman, and the Pharisee," *JBL* 104 (1985) 675-679] argues that the literary context of the story, particularly Luke 7:29-30, suggests that the woman repented and received forgiveness in her submission to John's baptism. More expansively, see John J. Kilgallen, "Forgiveness of Sins (Luke 7:36-50)," *NovT* 40 (1998) 105-116.

<sup>36</sup> Unlike many interpreters, I translate ὅτι causally and not logically. In other words, the woman's hospitality elicits and is the foundation for Jesus' gift of forgiveness of sins to her. Most interpreters, however, manifest a concern that the woman's forgiveness *not* be the result of her hospitality to Jesus. Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986-1990, 1.117-118; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 306-307; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX*, 686-687; Bovon, *Luke 1*, 297; Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus*, 56.

<sup>37</sup> On the Pharisees' lack of love or misdirected love, see Luke 11:42-43 and 16:13-14.

evidence for the claim that she was forgiven sometime before the banquet.<sup>38</sup> Rather, it is the woman's hospitality to Jesus, functioning as a sign of welcoming love to Jesus as the embodied visit from God, which elicits his favor in bestowing the divine benefit of forgiveness. Hospitality to Jesus parallels the response of faith in Jesus. In the story of the healing of the paralytic, for example, it is faith (τὴν πίστιν) which elicits Jesus' enactment of forgiveness (5:20; cf. 7:9). Here the woman's hospitality elicits the divine benefit of forgiveness, and Jesus later interprets her act of hospitality as an act of faith (7:50). Those familiar with the script of hospitality are not surprised to find benefits or rewards bestowed upon those hospitable to divine visitors.

Simon's guests who "were reclining together" again engage in a narrative aside as they ask: "who is this who even forgives sins?" (τίς οὗτός ἐστιν ὃς καὶ ἀμαρτίας ἀφίησιν, 7:49). The guests' question draws attention both to the divine identity of Jesus and the issue of whether they will respond to Jesus.<sup>39</sup> And in a parallel statement, Jesus tells her: "Your faith has saved you, go in peace" (ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε, πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην, 7:50). Jesus' final words "go in peace" take on a greater significance than a mere farewell when it is remembered that Jesus is God's agent who brings peace to humanity (e.g., Lk. 1:79; 2:14; 2:29; 8:48; 19:38, 42).<sup>40</sup> Faith, love, and hospitality are all spoken of in this story as proper responses toward Jesus, the embodiment of God's

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<sup>38</sup> See Kathleen E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993) 125-126.

<sup>39</sup> Bovon, *Luke 1*, 298.

<sup>40</sup> Peace should be understood holistically with connotations of health and social well-being. In Luke-Acts it is often connected with salvation. On which, see Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 314.

visitation of his people. The question now is whether Simon and his guests will change their response and welcome God's visitation by responding to his prophet.<sup>41</sup>

The woman's hospitality to Jesus is neither unique nor an aberration, for in the following verses we see "many other women" (ἕτεροι πολλαί, 8:3a) who had been healed by Jesus or had demons exorcised "who were ministering to them [i.e., Jesus and the disciples] from their own possessions" (αἴτινες διηκόνουν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς, 8:3b). Within the context of 7:36-50, these women's ministry to Jesus with their resources functions as a positive sign of full acceptance of God's visitation of his people through Jesus.<sup>42</sup>

In Luke 7:36-50, specific elements of hospitality are utilized: eating and reclining, invitation and entrance into a host's home, the washing of feet, the kiss of greeting, and anointing the head or feet with oil. Luke uses hospitality and inhospitality to indicate positive and negative responses to Jesus and his message. Jesus' parable (7:41-43), and his interpretation of it (7:47), function explicitly to connect hospitality to a dispositional expression of love toward Jesus. Conversely, Simon's violation of hospitality laws portrays him negatively as one who is unreceptive of Jesus and his mission and lacking in love. Finally, Jesus is presented as *the* great prophet and as the embodiment of God's visitation of his people: his authority surpasses that of a Roman centurion, his healing powers give life to the dead, and he invokes God's authority to forgive sin.

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<sup>41</sup> Green [*The Gospel of Luke*, 314] suggests that the repetition of the woman's forgiveness of sins is due to the need to declare publicly that the woman has been forgiven and is undeserving of the epithet "sinner."

<sup>42</sup> The literary relationship between Luke 7:36-50 and 8:1-3 is often missed. See, for example, Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 314-317. However, see rightly Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 319; Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 102-103.

## II. Hospitality and the Kingdom of God, Inhospitability and Judgment: Luke 9:51-10:24

A host of issues are raised in Luke 9:51 – 10:24, including the inauguration of the Lukan travel narrative (9:51), the role of the Samaritans (9:52-55), echoes of Elijah-Elisha, Jesus' relationship to the Torah (9:59-60), and the inclusion of two sendings of the disciples (9:1-6), but these issues are subordinate to my primary task which is to provide a thick description of how Luke uses hospitality for his own purposes.

### A. The Journey to Jerusalem Begins: Luke 9:51 – 62

While the precise function or organizing principle for Luke's "travel narrative" has resisted scholarly consensus,<sup>43</sup> there can be no doubt that Luke 9:51 marks a major turning point in the Lukan narrative.<sup>44</sup> The time for Jesus' ministry in Galilee is now past (4:14-15), and Luke notes that "the days of his going up (ἀναλήμψεως αὐτοῦ) had drawn near" (9:51a).<sup>45</sup> While Luke is unconcerned with providing an exact itinerary for

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<sup>43</sup> Scholarly literature on the "travel narrative" is voluminous. Those who argue that Luke has constructed the narrative according to the pattern of a New Exodus or Deuteronomistic history include: C. F. Evans, "The Central Section of St. Luke's Gospel," *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford: Blackwell, 1955) 37-53; James M. Dawsey, "Jesus' Pilgrimage to Jerusalem," *PRS* 14 (1987) 217-232; Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*; David L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 55-63. That Luke's purposes in the travel narrative were christological, see W. Grundmann, 'Fragen der Komposition des lukanischen "Reiseberichts"', *ZNW* 50 (1959) 252-71. Readings of the travel narrative focused on discipleship or ecclesiology: W.C. Robinson, Jr, "The Theological Context for Interpreting Luke's Travel Narrative (9.51ff.)," *JBL* 79 (1960) 20-31; David Gill, "Observations on the Lukan Travel Narrative and Some Related Passages," *HTR* 63 (1970) 199-221.

<sup>44</sup> Despite many good arguments, including demonstrating the difficulty of pinpointing the ending of the "travel narrative" as well as the impossibility of reconstructing Jesus' itinerary, I remain unconvinced by the recent challenge to the existence of Lukan travel narrative by Reinhard von Bendemann, *Zwischen ΔΟΞΑ und ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ: Eine exegetische Untersuchung der Texte des sogenannten Reiseberichts im Lukasevangelium* (BZNW 101; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001). For good discussions of the travel narrative, see Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 394-399; Frank J. Matera, "Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9.51 – 19.46): A Conflict with Israel," *JSNT* 51 (1993) 57-77; William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 51-54; Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*.

<sup>45</sup> Given the usage of ἀναλήμψ- language to describe his exaltation to heaven in Acts 1:8-11 (also Lk. 24:51) as well as the possible echoes of Elijah's assumption (2 Kings 2:1-11), it is most likely that 9:51 is a reference to Jesus' ascension. So Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 402-403; Jacques Dupont, "ΑΝΕΛΗΜΦΘΗ," *NTS* 8 (1961-62) 154-157; Adelbert Denaux, "The Delineation of the Lukan Travel Narrative within the Overall Structure of the Gospel of Luke," in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (ed. Camille Focant; Leuven: Leuven University, 1993) 357-392. Helmuth L. Egelkraut, *Jesus' Mission to Jerusalem: A Redaction Critical Study of the Travel Narrative in the Gospel of Luke, Lk 9:51-*

Jesus and the disciples, the section of Luke 9:51-19:44 is suffused with reminders that they are journeying to Jerusalem, and thus the programmatic remark: “he then set his face to journey to Jerusalem” (αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, 9:51b).<sup>46</sup> This remark along with the repeated references to Jesus’ journeying and being “on the way” (e.g, 13:22, 31-33; 14:25; 17:11; 18:31, 35-36; 19:11, 28) characterize Jesus as a travelling itinerant prophet within Luke 9:51-19:44.<sup>47</sup> Within Luke 9:51-62 alone there are five references to a form of πορεύομαι (vv. 51, 52, 53, 56, 57), three to Jesus “setting his face” for the journey to Jerusalem (vv. 51, 52a, 53), and one to Jesus and the disciples traveling “on the way” (v. 57).<sup>48</sup> Thus, while the connections between individual sections of the travel narrative are loose, there can be no doubt about Luke’s characterization of Jesus as a sojourner on his way to Jerusalem. Like Odysseus, he is an itinerant, far from home and completely dependant for survival upon hospitality from strangers.

In Luke 9:51, the combination of Jesus’ “face” and his resolve “to journey” evokes the depiction of John’s task as forerunner of Jesus: “Behold I send my messenger before your face (πρὸ προσώπου σου) who will prepare your way before you (τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου)” (7:27; cf. Exodus 23:20; Malachi 3:1).<sup>49</sup> Just as John’s task

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19:48 (Ph.D. Dissertation; Princeton Theological Seminary, 1973) 82-83. Against Marshall [*The Gospel of Luke*, 405] who states that the “primary reference here is probably to the death of Jesus.”

<sup>46</sup> Johnson [*The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 105] states: “The Journey motif is not so much geographical in character as it is dramatic. The high point of Luke’s narrative takes place in Jerusalem, and by means of the prolonged journey motif he is able to build dramatically to that climax.” For 9:51 functioning programmatically for the entire travel narrative, see Egelkraut, *Jesus’ Mission to Jerusalem*, 76. The narrative style of Luke 9:51-56 is Septuagintal and archaizing, and therefore the potential Septuagintal allusions within the passage are legion. Note Adelbert Denaux, “The Delineation of the Lukan Travel Narrative within the Overall Structure of the Gospel of Luke,” 370.

<sup>47</sup> So also, Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 92-93.

<sup>48</sup> See also, Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 402.

<sup>49</sup> So Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1,229-230. On the role of Isaiah 40:3 in Luke-Acts, along with Exodus 23:20 and Malachi 3:1, see Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 37-69; Klyne R.

was to announce repentance and thereby make a people ready to respond to the Lord (1:16-17; 1:76-79; 3:4-6; 7:27), so now Jesus gives the disciples a share in John's ministry as he "sends messengers before his face" (ἀπέστειλεν ἀγγέλους πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, 9:52a). Their task is to precede Jesus on the journey by going before him, in this instance, into a Samaritan village "to make preparations for him" (πορευθέντες εἰσηλθόντες εἰς κώμην Σαμαριτῶν ὡς ἑτοιμάσαι αὐτῶ, 9:52b). To make "preparations" for Jesus' coming is a reference to searching for a welcoming host who will receive Jesus (cf. Luke 10:8-10).<sup>50</sup> But the language of "preparation" or "to make ready" for Jesus has deeper significance, for forms of ἑτοιμάζω have been used already three times to refer to John's task of making a people ethically prepared to respond to Jesus.<sup>51</sup> It is of further significance that this preparation is spoken of in connection with the motif of journeying.

Thus, in Luke 1:16-17 the angel Gabriel prophesies of John that "he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God" (v. 16). And "he will go before him (αὐτὸς προελεύσεται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ) [i.e., Jesus]" in order to "turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, in order to make ready for the Lord a prepared people (ἑτοιμάσαι κυρίῳ λαὸν κατεσκευασμένον)" (1:17). And again, Zechariah prophesies of John's task: "for you will go before the Lord

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Snodgrass, "Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40:1-5 and Their Adaptation in the New Testament," *JSNT* 8 (1980) 24-45.

<sup>50</sup> So Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 141-142 who notes that Luke "employs standard hospitality language when describing the Samaritan's refusal to extend hospitality to Jesus..." So Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 133.

<sup>51</sup> And note the semantic parallel κατεσκευάζω in 7:27. Moessner [*Lord of the Banquet*, 133] is right that "...ἑτοιμάζω in 9:52 signifies more than the preparations for the usual hospitality..." but he misses the references to the role of John the Baptist in preparing a people ready for the Lord. Marshall [*The Gospel of Luke*, 406], likewise, misses these references and therefore sees the disciples' preparation as consisting in nothing more than "making preparations for hospitality."

in order to make his paths ready” (προπορεύση γὰρ ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἑτοιμάσαι ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ, 1:76). And quoting Isaiah 40:3 John declares his task to be: “to make ready the way of the Lord (ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου), to make his paths straight” (3:4). John’s “making ready the way of the Lord” utilizes the language of journeying and roads to refer to his task of preparing a people who have repented (thus, Luke 1:16-17 and 3:7-17) and are ready to respond favorably to God’s visitation in Jesus.

Thus, Luke utilizes the mundane language of journeying and hospitality to refer to the disciples’ task of making the Samaritan village ready and prepared (ὡς ἑτοιμάσαι αὐτοῖς, 9:52b) for the coming of Jesus the agent of God’s visit.<sup>52</sup> Thus, when the narrator states “they did not welcome him (καὶ οὐκ ἐδέξαντο αὐτόν) because his face was set toward journeying to Jerusalem (πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ)” (9:53a), more is indicated than simply a reference to the disciples’ inability to find a household who would show hospitality to Jesus.<sup>53</sup> Rather, the Samaritan village’s refusal to show hospitality is indicative of their rejection of Jesus and his mission. The refusal of hospitality (οὐκ ἐδέξαντο αὐτόν) is, in this instance, Luke’s means of indicating rejection of Jesus. Given that Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem is connected with the necessity of his suffering and crucifixion (e.g., 9:31; 18:31-34), the Samaritans are portrayed as resisting this vision of a suffering prophet-messiah (9:53b).<sup>54</sup> Aware of the divine power at work in Jesus, and in light of the Samaritan village’s refusal to provide a hospitable welcome, James and John ask: “Lord (κύριε) do you want us to call down fire from

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<sup>52</sup> Moessner [*Lord of the Banquet*, 139] rightly states: “*To prepare for Jesus is to prepare a repentant people*, which in this instance ends in rejection” (italics his).

<sup>53</sup> The necessity of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem has been declared to the readers in Lk. 9:22, 31, and 44.

<sup>54</sup> Green [*The Gospel of Luke*, 405] states: “Like them [i.e., the people of Nazareth in Luke 4:16-30], these Samaritan villagers rebuff Jesus because they cannot accept his understanding and embodiment of the divine purpose.” See also, Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.230; Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts*, 60-61.

heaven to destroy them” (9:54b). After rebuking the disciples for their suggestion, again “they journeyed into another village” (καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς ἑτέραν κώμην, 9:56).

Jesus’ “journeying on the way” (πορευομένων... ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, 9:57a) provides the context for his following encounter with three would-be followers in Luke 9:57-62. In each instance, it is the journey “on the way” that provides the background for Jesus’ teaching on discipleship.<sup>55</sup> The first would-be disciple declares his readiness to travel with Jesus: “I will follow you wherever you journey” (ἀκολουθήσω σοι ὅπου ἐὰν ἀπέρχῃ, 9:57b). Jesus’ response that “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (9:58b) is a direct reference to the Samaritans’ rejection of Jesus and their refusal to show hospitality to him and his disciples – a situation which largely characterizes the journey as a whole. The rejection of Jesus and his mission is quite literally evident in Jesus’ current homeless state.<sup>56</sup> The next two disciples are invited by the Lord to join him in his journey (ἀκολούθει μοι, 9:59a). Both recognize Jesus as a figure of authority as they refer to him as “Lord” (κύριε, 9:59a, 61a),<sup>57</sup> but family obligations and concern with Torah cause them to delay joining the journey.<sup>58</sup> One must “first turn back to bury my father” (9:59b) while the other wants to “first say goodbye to those in my household (τοῖς εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου)” (9:61b). Jesus’ identity and the radical nature of the journey

<sup>55</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 406.

<sup>56</sup> Hays [*Luke’s Wealth Ethics*, 87] does not quite have it right when he states: “From a narrative-critical perspective, Luke uses this would-be disciple to establish Jesus’ poverty as something to be imitated, a constituent part of discipleship after Jesus.” From a narrative-critical standpoint, it is actually not a call to poverty or homelessness that Jesus calls this character to, as much as it is a call to *join him in his journey to Jerusalem, a journey often characterized by rejection and inhospitality*.

<sup>57</sup> On which see, Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 127-132.

<sup>58</sup> Most scholars see Jesus’ command “let the dead bury their own dead” as indicative of Jesus placing himself and his authority over that of Torah. On this, see the two contrasting interpretations: Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “‘Leave the Dead to Bury Their Own Dead’: Q 9.60 and the Redefinition of the People of God,” *JSNT* 26 (2003) 39-68; Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 23-48.

demand that those who would join him on the way recognize his unparalleled authority over everything else in life.

### B. Hospitality and Inhospitality to the Lord's Emissaries: Luke 10:1-16

The literary connections between the sending of the seventy in Luke 10:1-16 and the inauguration of the journey in 9:51-62 are strong.<sup>59</sup> The narrator continues to identify Jesus as “the Lord” (ὁ κύριος, 10:1; cf. 9:55, 59, 61) who, here, “sends” (ἀπέστειλεν) seventy emissaries to go “before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to go” (πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ τόπον οὗ ἤμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι, 10:1b). Again, the absolute usage of ὁ κύριος signifies that the identity of Jesus is distinctly related to God (cf. 1:43-45; 3:4), and that Jesus’ journey is part and parcel of God’s visitation to his people (cf. 10:21-23). The seventy, like John the Baptist (7:27; cf. 1:17; 1:76), are sent πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ, thereby indicating that they share in John’s role of going before the Lord in his journey, making ready a repentant people who are prepared for the divine visitation – the very one who “is about to come into every city and every place” (10:1b). In effect, their mission is to ensure that the Lord and his message receive a hospitable welcome.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> On the text-critical problem of whether the text should read ἑβδομήκοντα (with  $\aleph$ , A, C, and L) or ἑβδομήκοντα δύο (with P 75, B, and D), see Bruce M. Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-Two Disciples?,” *NTS* 5 (1958-59) 299-306. Michi Miyoshi, *Der Anfang des Reiseberichts, Lk 9,51-10,24: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (AB 60; Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute Press, 1974) 61, 79; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 232-233. Much of the scholarly discussion on Luke 10:1-16 centers upon the symbolic significance of 70/72 and the way in which their mission prefigures the mission in Acts. For example, see James M. Scott, “Luke’s Geographical Horizon,” in *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (eds. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 483-544; David Lertis Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts: Pattern and Interpretation* (JSNTSup 123; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 31-38; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP 3; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991) 170. For a critical response, however, see Egelkraut [*Jesus’ Mission to Jerusalem*, 145-148, here 148] who makes the sane statement: “At this point Lk wants to describe a specific phase in Jesus’ ministry: the mission to Israel.”

<sup>60</sup> That the language of “hospitality” has been expanded by Luke to include the concept of “mission” is often missed. For example, Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 416 who, in commenting on Luke 10:1, states: “This indicates that their task was mission, rather than the arranging of hospitality...”

The peoples' response to the Lord's envoys is of decisive significance, for their acceptance of the messengers will indicate whether they are "wheat" or "chaff," or otherwise stated, will prove whether they are a people prepared for the Lord's visit (10:1b). That the response of acceptance will not prove to be the norm, however, is indicated in Jesus' words: "I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves" (10:3). Given their experience in the Samaritan village, they cannot assume that hospitality will be given, and yet Jesus commands them to go without purse, wallet, or sandals and to forego greetings on the journey (10:4). With these instructions to go "on the way" without any provisions, to be entirely dependant upon strangers for basic survival, Jesus ensures that a favorable response to these emissaries will be embodied through the provisions of hospitality.<sup>61</sup>

And, in fact, the language of hospitality permeates Jesus' instruction to the disciples in Luke 10:5-12: "whenever you enter into a house" (εἰς ἣν δ' ἂν εἰσέλθητε οἰκίαν, verse 5a); "whenever you enter into a city" (εἰς ἣν ἂν πόλιν εἰσέρχησθε, verse 8; cf. verse 10); five occurrences of "house" or "household" (two in v. 5, three in verse 7)<sup>62</sup>; two references to "eating and drinking what is set before you" (ἐσθίοντες καὶ πίνοντες τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν, verse 7; cf. verse 8); the command to "remain" within one household (μένετε, v. 7)<sup>63</sup>; references to those who "welcome you" or "receive you" (δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, verse 8; cf. verse 10); and an allusion to Genesis 19 and the destruction of Sodom (verse 12).

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<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 136; Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 90-91; John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991) 399.

<sup>62</sup> In Luke 10:1-16 the physical structure of "the household" becomes effectively a sacred space where the kingdom of God is made manifest through hospitality, table-fellowship, healings, and blessings of peace. On this, see Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 47-49.

<sup>63</sup> Within Luke, forms of μένω always refer to staying within a house (Lk. 1:40, 56; 8:27; 9:4; 10:7; 19:5).

The disciples are not to conduct themselves as ordinary guests within these households, but as guests who embody the presence of the journeying “Lord” (ὁ κύριος) whose presence they are going before (10:1).<sup>64</sup> That they are semi-divine agents of the Lord is indicated in Jesus’ final words to the disciples: “The one listening to you listens to me, and the one rejecting you rejects me, but the one rejecting me rejects the one who sent me” (Ὁ ἀκούων ὑμῶν ἐμοῦ ἀκούει, καὶ ὁ ἀθετῶν ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ ἀθετεῖ, ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ ἀθετῶν ἀθετεῖ τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με, 10:16).<sup>65</sup> The Lord’s disciples, then, are real representatives and substitutes for the presence of the Lord – and ultimately God. To show inhospitality to the emissaries, then, is to reject God (cf. *Didache* 11:2).

The disciples are agents of the Lord’s peace, for when they enter into a house they are to proclaim “peace be upon this house” (εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ, 10:5b). The theme of the people’s response is again highlighted in their own response to this word of peace. If the household contains “a son of peace” (υἱὸς εἰρήνης, 10:6),<sup>66</sup> then “your peace shall rest upon him” (ἐπαναπαύσεται ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν, 10:6b), but if not, then the peace shall return back to the disciples (10:6c). Luke’s narrative associates Jesus as the agent of peace: he is the one who leads “our feet in the path of peace” (τοὺς πόδας ἡμῶν εἰς ὁδὸν εἰρήνης, 1:79b), the one who brings “peace on earth” (ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, 2:14b), and whose entire ministry is characterized by Peter as one of “proclaiming the

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<sup>64</sup> On envoys as representatives and substitutes for the real presence of the one sending the envoy, both within the ancient Mediterranean world and the NT writings, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus,” *JBL* 111 (1992) 641-662.

<sup>65</sup> Luke’s concern to highlight the people’s characteristic response of rejection rather than acceptance may be highlighted by contrasting his negative assessment (“the one rejecting you rejects me”) with Matthew’s more optimistic phrasing (“the one receiving you receives me,” Mt. 10:40).

<sup>66</sup> Luke frequently identifies characters as “sons of x” (e.g., 5:34; 16:8; 20:34, 36). On this, see Frederick W. Danker, “The υἱὸς Phrases in the New Testament,” *NTS* 7 (1960-61) 94; William Klassen, “‘A Child of Peace’ (Luke 10.6) in First Century Context,” *NTS* 27 (1980-81) 488-506.

good news of peace” (εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην, Acts 10:36b). Within the Lukan narrative, “peace” is a virtual synonym or descriptor of God’s salvation for humanity (e.g., 7:50; 8:48; 24:36).<sup>67</sup> As the envoys of Jesus, then, the disciples are given a share in embodying and proclaiming God’s salvific peace to welcoming households. To receive the blessing of peace is to welcome Jesus as the salvific presence of God.

The envoys share, further, in Jesus’ enactment of God’s visitation, for he commands them (assuming the house has responded favorably to the offer of peace) to “heal the sick” (θεραπεύετε τοὺς . . . ἄσθενεῖς, v. 9), a synecdoche for Jesus’ ministry of healing, restoration, and exorcism – and a sign of the imminence of the kingdom of God (cf. Luke 4:16-19; 11:20).<sup>68</sup> Like Jesus, his emissaries proclaim to the households that with the presence of the coming Lord “the kingdom of God has come near to you” (ἤγγικεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 9b; cf. Lk. 4:43; 6:20; 8:1).<sup>69</sup> Further, the emissaries’ table-fellowship with the household, their “eating and drinking that which is set before you” (vv. 7-8), is an extension of the table-fellowship which Jesus shares with those receptive to him as a sign of the presence of God’s kingdom (cf. 5:27-32; 19:1-10).<sup>70</sup>

The single appropriate response to the proclamation of the Lord’s peace is hospitality to the Lord’s envoys. Hospitality is the people’s dispositional indication that

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<sup>67</sup> On the meaning of peace in Luke 10:5-6 and within the Lukan narrative, see Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 136-137; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 413-414; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.237; Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 45; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 419.

<sup>68</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 415; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 421-422.

<sup>69</sup> On the meaning of ἤγγικεν as indicative of both imminence and presence, see George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986) 72-73; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 422-423; Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 120-125.

<sup>70</sup> This point is stated nicely by Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 139: “They are to establish a ‘banquet fellowship’ where the presence of the coming King is celebrated and anticipated as the ‘eating and drinking’ of salvation.” It is also possible that Jesus warns his disciples to pay no attention to whether the food is ritually clean.

they are prepared for the Lord's visit. The people's hospitality to the disciples is undifferentiated from hospitality to the message itself.<sup>71</sup> If the people "receive you" (δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, 10: 8; cf. 10:10), that is to receive them with hospitality, then the emissaries engage in the activities of God's salvific visit to his people: table-fellowship, healing the sick, and proclaiming the kingdom (10:8-10). Conversely, if the city "does not receive you" (μὴ δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, 10:10), that is refuses hospitality to the envoys, they are to go into the streets and declare that they wipe off the dust of the city from their feet as a sign against it (10:10b-11a). To the inhospitable they declare that "the kingdom of God has come near" (10:11b), but for the inhospitable its coming will mean judgment.

The religious sanctions and consequences for inhospitality within the ancient Mediterranean world are highlighted by the reference to the destruction of Sodom: "I say to you that on that day it shall be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city" (10:12). The implication of Jesus' word of judgment is striking. In Genesis 19 the city of Sodom was destroyed for its inhospitable treatment of God's own messengers/angels. But here Jesus compares Sodom's inhospitality (10:12) with the inhospitality of the Galilean cities who reject the disciples (10:13-15), and he declares that inhospitality towards his emissaries is worthy of a harsher judgment given that God himself is now visiting his people through the Lord Jesus.<sup>72</sup> The inhospitality which the emissaries will receive from unreceptive towns leads Jesus to a pronouncement of eschatological judgments on the Galilean cities which had witnessed his ministry of "powers performed among you" (αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, 10:13) but had failed to recognize within these powers

<sup>71</sup> So Green [*The Gospel of Luke*, 414] "The welcome people extend to the messengers is commensurate with the welcome they extend to the message." Also, Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.235.

<sup>72</sup> On Jesus' pronounced judgments on the Galilean cities, see Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) 221-230.

the presence of God's visitation.<sup>73</sup> Jesus proclaims that Tyre and Sidon – pagan cities recipients of some of the harshest prophetic oracles in the OT (Isa. 23:1-18; Ezek. 26-28) – would have “repented” (10:13b) had they been the recipients of God's visitation in Jesus. Jesus' language of “repentance” here as the appropriate response to God's visitation suggests again that hospitality is being used by Luke as a sign of a favorable response of welcome to Jesus and his mission. Jesus' woes against these Galilean cities suggest that while some individuals have responded favorably to God's visit, the overwhelming response to Jesus has been one of rejection.<sup>74</sup> The fundamental point here is that inhospitality is equated with rejection of the envoys and what they embody, and that a failure to welcome the visit of God results in eschatological judgment (10:13-15).

#### C. The Success of the Lord's Visitation: Luke 10:17-24

Luke 10:17-20 has been discussed in chapter two, so my comments here will be brief. Two aspects should be noted, however, regarding what follows the disciples' sending in 10:1-16, for 10:17-24 is an explicit interpretation of their mission.<sup>75</sup> First, Jesus' interpretation of the mission of the seventy, and specifically his prayer to the Father (10:21-22), functions to clarify both to the reader and the disciples that Jesus – the journeying guest – is indeed the revelatory embodiment of God's visitation to his people.

Luke notes that the disciples return from their mission “with joy” (10:17a), a characteristically Lukan response to divine activity (e.g., Lk. 1:39-56; 2:22-40; 19:37-38).<sup>76</sup> Their response to Jesus as “Lord” (v. 17b) rightly recognizes the divine at work within him, and their comment that “even the demons are submissive to us *in your name*”

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<sup>73</sup> These miraculous displays of power function as signs of the presence of the kingdom of God – both within the ministry of Jesus (5:17; 6:18-19) and the ministry of the emissaries (10:9, 17-19).

<sup>74</sup> So Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 414-415; Egelkraut, *Jesus' Mission to Jerusalem*, 149-150.

<sup>75</sup> Rightly Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 420.

<sup>76</sup> On which, see De Long, *Surprised by God*.

(10:17b) correctly discerns that it is the power of Jesus that was at work in their exorcisms.<sup>77</sup> Jesus' response in verses 18-19 indicates that the defeat of the evil one is being embodied proleptically in the healing of the sick, the exorcising of the demonic, and the proclamation of the kingdom of God. Jesus does not rebuke the disciples' for rejoicing in the power over the demonic which they enjoy in his name, but he does redirect their joy to the fact that "your names have been written in heaven" (10:20b).<sup>78</sup> In other words, given that "heaven" is a circumlocution for God or divine reality, Jesus commands the disciples to rejoice in their relation to God.<sup>79</sup>

This, then, leads to "a christological peak in the Gospel of Luke" as Jesus bursts forth in praise and joyful exultation to God for the disclosure of his identity to the disciples.<sup>80</sup> The narrator indicates that in response to the seventy's rejoicing in God's visitation, so also Jesus "rejoiced within himself with the Holy Spirit" (ἠγαλλιάσατο ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ,<sup>81</sup> 10:21a; cf. 3:21-22; 4:16-19). A more explicit statement concerning the disclosure of Jesus' identity cannot be found in the Gospel of Luke than within this prayer where Jesus addresses as "Father" the one who is "the Lord of heaven and earth" (πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, 10:21b; cf. Acts 17:24). It is striking that Jesus who has repeatedly been called "Lord" (e.g., 10:17) refers to his Father

<sup>77</sup> In the book of Acts it is "the name of Jesus" with which the apostles' heal (3:6, 16; 4:10; 19:13), call upon for salvation (4:12), suffer for (5:41; 9:16), and proclaim (5:28, 40).

<sup>78</sup> Jesus affirms their response but does so critically, for while the demonic and Satanic is indeed being overpowered by the kingdom of God this is no sure sign or guarantee that people will respond to Jesus positively. So Egelkraut, *Jesus' Mission to Jerusalem*, 150-151.

<sup>79</sup> On the spatial significance of "heaven" within Acts, see Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (SNTSMS 146; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

<sup>80</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 421. A comprehensive analysis of Luke 10:21-24 which rightly argues that Jesus' prayer is a response of joyful thanksgiving to the Father for "illuminating the disciples' spiritual vision," see David Michael Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts* (WUNT 2.49; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992) 49-75, here 56.

<sup>81</sup> A few important manuscripts (e.g., A and W) do not contain τῷ ἁγίῳ, but the longer reading is to be preferred. See Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 433.

with the same title.<sup>82</sup> Within his prayer in 10:21-22, he refers to God as his Father five times and himself as Son three times. Further, in 10:22 Jesus declares himself to be the definitive agent of God's revelation, the singular embodiment of his visitation:

All things have been handed over to me by my father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and [no one knows] who the Father is except the Son and to whomever the Son desires to reveal Him (πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ οὐδεὶς γινώσκει τίς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ, καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ πατήρ εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ᾧ ἐὰν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι). (10:22)

Again, as “the Son,” Jesus identifies himself as *the* revelatory agent of the Father. That he is the *singular* agent of God's revelation is indicated in no uncertain terms through the use of οὐδεὶς...εἰ μὴ.<sup>83</sup> Jesus is not simply a great wonder-worker able to tap into divine power; he is the Son of God, the singular person entrusted with mediating the revelation of God to the world. This Son who embodies the Father's visitation to his people desires to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι) God to the disciples, to include them within his mission, and extend to them the privilege of embodying the divine visitation.<sup>84</sup> There is a parallel, then, between Luke 10:21-22 and Luke 10:16 and the transmission of the embodiment of the divine visitation: God the Father → the Son → the Seventy envoys. The significance of the mundane act of hospitality to the Lord's emissaries (cf. 10:8-11), then, could

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<sup>82</sup> Rowe [*Early Narrative Christology*, 137] states: “The tensive agility of κύριος in the movement of the narrative creates a unity such that both Jesus and God the Father are κύριος with respect to who they are in Luke's story....Yet, within this shared identity as κύριος, they are and remain πατήρ and υἱός.”

<sup>83</sup> Also, see Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 138-139.

<sup>84</sup> De Long, *Surprised by God*, 221 states: “Correspondingly, Jesus' own praise now alerts the reader that the disciples have moved to another level of recognition. They have seen in αἱ δυνάμεις not only the divine visitation but also Jesus' distinctive connection to the Father.” Also, see Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, 56-60, who is attentive to the way in which Jesus' prayer in 10:21-22 rejoices in the illumination and revelation of his identity to the disciples but connects this explicitly (and somewhat tenuously) with Jesus' prayer in 9:18. He himself admits: “It would expedite the argument of this study if Lk. 10:21-24 did follow immediately upon Peter's confession, but there is no justification for such rearrangement” (p. 60, n. 45).

hardly receive greater religious sanction, for in welcoming the Lord's envoys they are indeed welcoming and entertaining the embodiment of deity.

The second way in which Luke 10:17-24 interprets the mission of the seventy is to indicate the theme of the people's division and their mixed responses to the divine visit. In 10:21 Jesus praises the Father for "hiding *these things* from the wise and the foolish and for revealing *them* to infants" (ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις). The most logical referent for the demonstrative pronouns (ταῦτα and αὐτά) is to take them as referring to the disclosure of Jesus' divine identity and its powerful presence at work in the seventy's ministry just narrated in 10:1-16.<sup>85</sup> Again, the Lukan theme of reversal is present as Jesus indicates that it is God's pleasure (εὐδοκία, v. 21b) to reveal the kingdom to "the infants" – those, in other words, without status or honor (cf. Luke 9:46-48), and to conceal the kingdom from the wise.<sup>86</sup> The motif of divine revelation to the lowly and concealment from the exalted continues in 10:23-24 where Jesus turns to his disciples and pronounces a blessing on "the eyes which see what you see" (οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ οἱ βλέποντες ἃ βλέπετε, 10:23b). The disciples play the part of "the infants," for the Lord has revealed his presence and kingdom to them and their own eyes have witnessed its effects (cf. 10:17-19). On the other hand, "many prophets and kings" have desired "to see what you have seen" (ἰδεῖν ἃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε), namely the divine visitation, but "they have not seen" (καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν), for to them the

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<sup>85</sup> So De Long, *Surprised by God*, 217-218, who states: "The content of the revelation is not the events but their *meaning*: namely, that the divine visitation is present in the person of Jesus, the Messiah" (p. 218). For competing proposals, see Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, 56-57.

<sup>86</sup> On the disciples as infants, see W. Grundmann, "Die ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in die Urchristlichen Paränese," *NTS* 5 (1959) 201-204. On Luke 10:21-24 and the motif of Lukan reversal, see Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 170-171; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 423-424.

visitation has been concealed (10:24).<sup>87</sup> While the correlation between the disciples with the infants, and the wise and understanding with prophets and kings should not be pressed, it highlights the mixed responses to the person and message of Jesus, and that it is those without status who “see” and “hear” the divine at work in the person of Jesus.<sup>88</sup>

Luke’s creation of the long journey narrative, commencing in 9:51, affords him the opportunity to utilize the motif of hospitality in manifold ways. First, we have seen Luke use and broaden the language of hospitality to refer to the disciples’ role in preparing the Samaritans for the coming of the Lord to their village. The complete rejection of the journeying Lord, his mission and purpose, is thereby symbolized in the Samaritans’ refusal to show hospitality to the Lord (9:51-53). Inhospitability is equated with rejection of the Lord and his message. Second, the travel narrative allows Luke to characterize Jesus as the journeying Lord who, as homeless (Lk. 9:58), depends upon others’ hospitality. The travel narrative functions, then, as the context for Jesus’ radical demands of discipleship as joining him in his journey “on the way.” Third, within Luke 10:1-16 we have seen that hospitality to the Lord’s envoys is a sign or a symbol of complete acceptance of their ministry, which is an embodiment of the Lord’s presence (10:16), and results in the household’s participation in the kingdom of God (10:7-9). Inhospitability, conversely, is a sign of the people’s rejection and results in judgment and destruction (10:10-15) – worse than the Lord’s retribution against the inhospitable city of Sodom (10:12). Finally, it has been demonstrated that within Luke 9:51-10:24, the descriptors of Jesus as “Lord” (e.g., 9:54, 57, 59, 61; 10:1, 2), the signs of the presence of

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<sup>87</sup> It is interesting that the “greatest prophet” John the Baptist did not himself see or hear what the disciples have witnessed. When John appears confused over the identity of Jesus, Jesus tells John’s disciples to report back to him “that which you have seen and heard” (ὃ εἶδετε καὶ ἠκούσατε, 7:22a).

<sup>88</sup> So De Long, *Surprised by God*, 220-221.

the kingdom (10:5-11), and the disclosure of his divine identity to the disciples in response to the success of their mission (10:17-24), leads one to the conclusion that Jesus is the embodiment of God's visitation to his people. The journey narrative employs hospitality as the symbol of the positive acceptance of God's visitation.

### III. Hospitality and the Recognition of the Lord: Luke 24:13-35

The story of the two disciples' encounter with the stranger on the Emmaus road in Luke 24:13-35 centers upon the motif of recognition.<sup>89</sup> Not only the simple recognition of the name of "the stranger" they encounter, but the deeper revelation of *who* he is and *how* his sufferings and crucifixion are part and parcel of his messianic identity are disclosed to the disciples in Luke 24. Of critical importance for my investigation, however, is the insight that the disciples' recognition of the identity of their Lord occurs within the context of hospitality. The mundane elements of hospitality – the sharing of food, drink, and shelter with the stranger – are revelatory of the stranger's identity.

#### A. To See the Crucified: Luke 23:1-24:12

Throughout his narrative Luke has used the motif of sight and blindness as metaphors for revelation and concealment of Jesus' identity (e.g., Luke 1:79; 2:30).<sup>90</sup> The theme of sight highlights not only recognition or disclosure but also the element of

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<sup>89</sup> On the literary technique of ἀναγνώρισις, see Aristotle, *Poetics* 1404b-1455a. That "recognition" is the central motif in Luke 24:1-35 is generally recognized. E.g., Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, 97-98; Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 143-144; From an explicit theological standpoint, see R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 45-70, esp. 46-48. With respect to the Gospel of John, see Kasper Bro Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John* (BIS 93; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008).

<sup>90</sup> On this theme in the Lukan writings, see R. Alan Culpepper, "Seeing the Kingdom of God: The Metaphor of Sight in the Gospel of Luke," *CurTM* 21 (1994) 434-43; Dennis Hamm, "Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke," *Bib* 67 (1994) 457-77; Chad Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization* (BIS 94; Leiden: Brill, 2008).

response to this revelation.<sup>91</sup> Jesus' teaching that the role of the Messiah involves being handed over to the authorities, shameful suffering, and crucifixion, has repeatedly proved to be incomprehensible to the disciples (e.g., 9:44-45; 18:31-34).

Throughout the narration of Jesus' crucifixion Luke subtly notes characters who "see" the fulfillment of Jesus' messianic task in the cross but fail to recognize the event as constitutive of Jesus' identity. Their "seeing" but not "perceiving" is highlighted by Luke often attaching to the characters an inappropriate response or emotion. When Pilate sends Jesus to Herod, for example, Luke states Herod's desire to use Jesus for sport: "When Herod *saw* Jesus (ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν) he rejoiced greatly, because for a long time he had wanted *to see* him (θέλων ἰδεῖν αὐτόν) for he had heard about him and he hoped he *might see* (ἰδεῖν) a sign performed by him" (23:7-8; cf. 10:23-24). The identity of Jesus is obviously concealed from Herod who construes Jesus' task in terms of power and entertainment and not the cross.<sup>92</sup> The emphasis on sight continues in the crucifixion account: Luke notes: all "the people were *watching*" (ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν, 23:35); that "the entire crowd had assembled together at the *spectacle* in order to *watch* the things happening (πάντες οἱ συμπαραγεγόμενοι ὄχλοι ἐπὶ τὴν θεωρίαν ταύτην θεωρήσαντες τὰ γενόμενα)" (23:48); and that all of Jesus' companions including the women from Galilee "*watched* these things" (ὄρωσαι ταῦτα, 23:49).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> John A. Darr [*On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 58] refers to the sight/blindness and revelation/concealment language as the "rhetoric of recognition and response."

<sup>92</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 804.

<sup>93</sup> On this motif within Luke 23-24, see the perceptive comments by Robert J. Karris, "Luke 24:13-35," *Int* 41 (1987) 57-61, here 59-61. Attentive to these texts within the larger Lukan theme of sight/recognition is T. J. Lang, "'You will desire to see and you will not see [it]': Reading Luke 17.22 as Antanaclasis," *JSNT* 33 (2011) 281-302, esp. 289-290.

There is no hint, despite their “seeing” the crucified one, that Herod, the crowds, the people, or even the companions of Jesus comprehend the meaning of Jesus’ sufferings and crucifixion. Ironically, it is the Roman centurion who upon “*seeing...the event*” (ἰδῶν...τὸ γινόμενον), namely Jesus’ dying last breath (23:46), gives glory to God and declares Jesus to be righteous (23:47).<sup>94</sup>

In contrast to the centurion, and later the women who in response to the angels’ interpretation of the empty tomb “remembered [Jesus’] words” (24:8; cf. 24:6), Luke emphasizes the male disciples’ lack of comprehension. For the words of the women appeared “like nonsense” to them and “they did not believe them” (24:11). Thus, when Peter runs to Jesus’ tomb and departs “marveling to himself” after “he sees” (βλέπει) the linen clothes in the empty tomb (24:12),<sup>95</sup> the reader is also left wondering if the disciples will be given sight, and if so, what will finally lead them to a recognition of Jesus’ identity.<sup>96</sup>

#### B. Journeying with the Concealed and Disguised Lord: Luke 24:13-27

The transformation of the disciples from a state of ignorance to one of recognition does not occur through the testimony of the women (24:1-11), through Peter’s encounter with Jesus’ vacant tomb (24:12), or through christological interpretation of scripture (24:25-27).<sup>97</sup> The disclosure of Jesus’ identity, rather, takes place within the context of the disciples’ extension of hospitality to a wayfaring stranger. In fact, it is no stretch to

<sup>94</sup> On which, see De Long, *Surprised by God*, 239-242.

<sup>95</sup> Many text-types from the Western manuscripts omit 24:12. For the inclusion of 24:12, see Richard J. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word: Tradition and Composition in Luke 24* (AB 24; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978) 57-67.

<sup>96</sup> Green [*The Gospel of Luke*, 842] states it well: “...the Emmaus account is structured in such a way as to call particular attention to the progression from lack of recognition to full recognition and to the means by which insight is gained, and thus to underscore the women’s earlier affirmation that Jesus is alive.”

<sup>97</sup> So Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, 98-101.

claim that Luke narrates this recognition story according to the conventions of a theoxeny, that is, as a story of humans unwittingly offering hospitality to a traveling god.<sup>98</sup>

First, the Emmaus account is suffused with the language of journeying. It is critical to note that the first appearance of the risen Lord takes place with him as a traveler journeying on the way. The periphrastic construction used to state that the two disciples “were journeying” (ἦσαν πορευόμενοι) to a village near Jerusalem gives the entire narrative the frame of a journey (24:13).<sup>99</sup> Luke continually inserts reminders to his readers that the story is a journey narrative: while the two are conversing, Jesus “approaches and journeys together with them” (ἐγγίσας συνεπορεύετο αὐτοῖς, 24:15b); and Jesus questions them “while they are walking” (24:17b); after the disciples’ initial conversation with the stranger, “they come near to the village to where they are journeying” (ἤγγισαν εἰς τὴν κώμην οὗ ἔπορεύοντο, v. 28a).<sup>100</sup> The resumption of the language of journeying returns the reader to the Lukan journey narrative of 9:51-19:44 where Jesus’ proclamation of his messianic task to the disciples was unsuccessful and remained hidden from their eyes (e.g., 18:31-34).<sup>101</sup> Now that they are travelling on the way with Jesus once more, is there hope that the disciples will “see” Jesus? If so, what will produce this transition from blindness to sight?

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<sup>98</sup> This is not an entirely novel insight, but it is one that is not frequently found in the secondary literature on Luke 24. See, however, briefly, Adelbert Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ed. J. Verheyden, BETL 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999) 255-279, here 274-275; Craig T. McMahan, “More than Meets the ‘I’: Recognition Scenes in *The Odyssey* and Luke 24,” *PRS* 87-107.

<sup>99</sup> So Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word*, 89. On the journeying language more generally, see Robert J. Karris, “Luke 24:13-35,” 57-58.

<sup>100</sup> The language of journeying occurs also within 24:29, 32, 33, and 35.

<sup>101</sup> Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word*, 90; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 843.

Second, as is standard in theoxenies, the identity of Jesus is disguised from the disciples. Even though it is “Jesus himself” (αὐτὸς Ἰησοῦς, 24:15) who joins the disciples on the journey, “their eyes were kept from recognizing him” (οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγινῶναι αὐτόν, 24:16).<sup>102</sup> The intensive pronoun αὐτός is emphatic and indicates that Jesus himself is physically visible in human form to the disciples despite their lack of recognition. Jesus, not unlike Athena in the *Odyssey* or Zeus in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, takes on the guise of a traveling “stranger” (παροικεῖς, 24:18) and is present-but-hidden from his conversation partners.

Jesus’ “disguise” from the eyes of the disciples serves not only Luke’s literary theoxenic purposes, but it initiates the resolution of the motif of the disciples’ “sight” of Jesus as a suffering, dying Messiah. Throughout his narrative Luke has put to good metaphoric usage “eyes” and “sight” and has provided editorial insertions regarding the inability of the disciples to see and understand the necessity of the Messiah’s suffering and crucifixion. When Jesus teaches them of the necessity of his suffering, Luke notes that Jesus’ words were “*hidden from them* and they did not understand what was said” (κεκρυμμένον ἅπ’ αὐτῶν καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκον τὰ λεγόμενα, 18:34b), and that “they did not understand these words, and *it was concealed from them lest they perceive it*” (οἱ δὲ ἠγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο καὶ ἦν παρακεκαλυμμένον ἅπ’ αὐτῶν ἵνα μὴ αἴσθωνται

<sup>102</sup> I do not think ἐκρατοῦντο should be understood as a divine passive as, for example, Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* (AB 28A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985) 1563; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 893; Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age According to St. Luke: A Commentary on the Third Gospel* (St. Louis, MO: Clayton Publishing House, 1974) 248; B. P. Robinson, “The Place of the Emmaus Story in Luke-Acts,” *NTS* 30 (1984) 481-497, here, 484. Better is Tannehill [*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.282] who states: “Rather, there is something inherently difficult in understanding God’s way of working through the death of Jesus. God holds human eyes in the sense that God’s ways necessarily appear meaningless to humans who understand events in terms of their own purposes and ways of achieving them. A new vision of how God works salvation in the world must be granted to the disciples before a crucified and risen Messiah can be meaningful for them.” Similarly, McMahan, “More than Meets the ‘I’,” 100-101; Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God’s People Intertextually* (JSNTSup 282; London: T & T Clark, 2005) 138-139.

αὐτό, 9:45).<sup>103</sup> Thus, when Luke presents the two disciples on the road “seeing” Jesus but having eyes that do “not recognize him” (τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγινῶναι αὐτόν, 24:16), he utilizes the theoxenic trope of “disguise” to portray their inability to understand God’s manner of work through the sufferings and death of Jesus.

In one of the greatest pieces of Lukan irony, Luke highlights the disciples’ blindness by having the disciples educate Jesus about his own identity while they are journeying (24:18-24).<sup>104</sup> First, they ask Jesus whether he is the only *stranger* in Jerusalem who “does not know” (οὐκ ἔγνωσ) about the recent events (24:18). Jesus is, of course, the only one of them who is in the know and comprehends their meaning.<sup>105</sup> Second, while they rightly understand that Jesus “was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (24:19), their insight leads them to assume that his crucifixion is irreconcilable with his identity as God’s prophet (24:20).<sup>106</sup> Third, this lack of comprehension is further brought to the fore when the disciples inform the stranger that they had hoped Jesus would restore Israel but note that it is now “the third day” (24:21) since these events happened – an affirmation of the reliability of Jesus the prophet who foretold his resurrection on “the third day” after his death and who claimed

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<sup>103</sup> On these verses, see Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word*, 146-149; Arthur A. Just Jr., *The Ongoing Feast: Table Fellowship and Eschatology at Emmaus* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 64-68.

<sup>104</sup> On Lukan irony, see James M. Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice: Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986). Tannehill [*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 283] comments on Luke 24: 13-27: “The course of the story suggests that the implied author is fascinated by the ironies that arise from the interaction of divine and human purposes.”

<sup>105</sup> Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 143.

<sup>106</sup> The disciples’ claim that Jesus was a mighty prophet before God clearly resonates with Jesus’ own characterization of his career or identity (e.g., Lk. 4:18-19; 4:24; 7:16, 39; 13:33; 18:37) as well as that of the narrator (Acts 2:22; 3:22; 4:10; 7:22; 10:38). That Luke has shaped his stories of Jesus to reflect a prophet-like-Moses pattern based on Deut. 34:10-12 has been argued, as we have seen, by Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 29-78; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 846-847; Just, *The Ongoing Feast*, 6-11, 87-107.

it to be part of God's plan for accomplishing Israel's restoration (9:22; 13:32; 18:33).<sup>107</sup> Fourth, they testify to their own inability to see when they tell Jesus that when they ran to Jesus' tomb, "him – they did not see" (αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶδον, 24:24b)<sup>108</sup> – an ironic affirmation that despite the women's testimony, Jesus' own predictions, and the teaching of the Scriptures, the disciples still do not recognize this stranger. Even when the stranger berates them for lacking insight (ὦ ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῆ καρδία, 24:25) and again teaches them from the Scriptures "the things about himself" (τὰ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, 24:27b) they are not brought to recognition of the stranger (24:25-27).<sup>109</sup> Thus, Jesus' disguise remains and the reader is left wondering if it will be removed.

### C. The Stranger is transformed into the Host: Luke 24:28-35

The language of journeying picks up once again after the conversation between the disciples and the disguised Jesus: "they came near to the village to which they were journeying" (ἤγγισαν εἰς τὴν κώμην οὗ ἔπορεύοντο, 24:28a). As Jesus tested them by asking what they were discussing, so now he tests them by "pretending" he will journey further on the way (αὐτὸς προσεποιήσατο πορρώτερον πορεύεσθαι, 24:28b).<sup>110</sup> Despite the disciples' sadness over recent events in Jerusalem (24:17), and despite their foolishness and slowness of heart to believe the christological testimony of the Scriptures (24:25-27), they respond admirably to the journeying stranger in their offer of hospitality: "They compelled him strongly (παρεβιάσαντο αὐτόν), saying 'Stay with us (μεῖνον

<sup>107</sup> The disciples' hope and expectation that Jesus would be the one who would initiate Israel's restoration (ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ, 24:21) is also affirmed by other reliable characters within Luke (e.g., all of the characters in Luke 1-2). See Joel B. Green, "The Problem of a Beginning: Israel's Scriptures in Luke 1-2," *BBR* 4 (1994) 61-85.

<sup>108</sup> Again, as in Luke 24:15, the pronoun is intensive and emphasizes the inability of the disciples to see and perceive Jesus. So Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 896; Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1565.

<sup>109</sup> For an attempt to tease out the implications of 24:25-27 and 24:44-46, see Joshua W. Jipp, "Luke's Scriptural Suffering Messiah: A Search for Precedent, A Search for Identity," *CBQ* 72 (2010) 255-274.

<sup>110</sup> On προσποιέω meaning "to engage in an action or gesture that gives the appearance of conveying specific intent," see BDAG, p. 884.

μεθ' ἡμῶν), for already it is evening and the day has reclined” (24:29a).<sup>111</sup> Thus, despite their obtuseness, the disciples respond to the journeying stranger by welcoming him into their own space.<sup>112</sup> Given the symbolic and literary significance of hospitality to strangers within the Lukan writings, and given the fact that hospitality is *the single* proper response to all travelers *and especially journeying deities* in theoxenies, the reader anticipates the disclosure of Jesus’ identity to the disciples.<sup>113</sup>

Jesus accepts their offer of hospitality and his role as their guest as “he entered in to stay with them” (εἰσῆλθεν τοῦ μείναι σὺν αὐτοῖς, 24:29b). Joel Green states that their offer of hospitality is “an act pregnant with possibilities” and this is certainly true.<sup>114</sup> Numerous examples from the cultural script in chapters three and four have demonstrated the connection between the unveiling of a stranger’s identity within the confines of hospitality.<sup>115</sup> And within Luke’s Gospel meals often function as occasions for deeper disclosure of Jesus’ identity (e.g., 7:36-50; 9:11-17; 14:1-24; 22:14-38).<sup>116</sup>

Thus, it is no great surprise that when Jesus “reclined at the table with them” (κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν μετ’ αὐτῶν, 24:30a) to share the meal, Jesus the guest assumes the role of the host: “upon taking the bread he gave a blessing and after breaking it he distributed it to them” (λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς,

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<sup>111</sup> See Acts 16:15 where Lydia compels Paul and his companions to receive her hospitality (εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου, καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς).

<sup>112</sup> This is eloquently stated by Karris [“Luke 24:13-35,” 59]: “Bereavement over the loss of Jesus, who had been violently removed from their midst, disappears in the face of welcoming a stranger into their midst. Hospitality replaces crippling self-concern. The Emmaus story captivates its readers and compels them to reflect upon hospitality, which at root is the entertainment of divine mystery in human life, especially when that life seems scattered and shattered.”

<sup>113</sup> Attuned to the relationship between Luke 24 and stories of theoxenies (particularly in Homer’s *Odyssey*) is McMahan, “More than Meets the ‘I’,” 87-107.

<sup>114</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 849.

<sup>115</sup> This is why it is a breach of hospitality protocol for the potential host to ask the name and identity of the stranger before certain hospitality elements have been partaken in by the stranger (e.g., the Cyclops in Homer’s *Odyssey* 9.355-356).

<sup>116</sup> See, for example, Just, *The Ongoing Feast*, 128-195.

24:30b).<sup>117</sup> The language clearly evokes other Lukan stories of Jesus as host who feeds and nourishes his people *by disclosing himself* to the people. Thus, in Luke 9:16 Jesus “takes” (λαβών) bread, “blesses” (εὐλόγησεν) and “breaks” (κατέκλασεν) the bread and “gives” (ἐδίδου) it to the disciples to feed the crowd. The feeding of the five-thousand functions, further, as the revelatory context for Peter’s confession of Jesus as “God’s Messiah” (9:20).<sup>118</sup> Likewise, at the Last Supper Jesus assumes the role of host and “takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it and gives it to them [i.e., the disciples]” (λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς, 22:19a). He then interprets the bread as his body and the wine as his blood which, he declares to the disciples, is being given/poured out “on your behalf” (τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, 22:19b, 22:20b).<sup>119</sup> The connections between Luke 9:16 and 22:19-20 with 24:30 indicate that the Emmaus meal symbolizes the active, experiential, presence of the risen Jesus who nourishes his disciples in some ineffable and transcendent manner. The shared meal functions to reestablish in a fuller and deeper way that which the disciples thought was irremediably broken through his death, namely, real fellowship with Jesus.<sup>120</sup>

The symbolic presence of Jesus, then, finally initiates the disciples’ recognition of the stranger’s identity, moving them from a state of blindness (cf. 24:16) to one of insight and recognition: “and their eyes were opened and they recognized him” (αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοιχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν, 24:31a). There is no question that

<sup>117</sup> Luke frequently portrays “Jesus the guest” assuming the role of host during meal scenarios (e.g., 5:27-32; 10:38-42; 14:1-24).

<sup>118</sup> The literary frame (9:7-9 and 9:18-36) of the feeding of the five-thousand (9:12-17) is concerned with elucidating the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship. See Danker, *Jesus and the New Age According to St. Luke*, 111-119, and 250.

<sup>119</sup> Those who have pressed a Eucharistic interpretation of Luke 24:28-35 include: R. Orlet, “An Influence of the Early Liturgy Upon the Emmaus Account,” *CBQ* 21 (1959) 212-219; Hans Dieter Betz, “The Origin and Nature of Christian Faith According to the Emmaus Legend,” *Int* 23 (1969) 34-46, here 39.

<sup>120</sup> Rightly, Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.290.

it is shared hospitality between Jesus and the disciples which functions as the catalyst for moving the disciples from blindness to sight or from non-recognition to recognition.<sup>121</sup> For when the two disciples return to the others, Luke highlights the fact that they narrate to them “the things which happened on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread” (τὰ ἐν τῇ ὁδῶ καὶ ὡς ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου, 24:35).<sup>122</sup> The language parallels the disciples’ remembrance of Jesus’ words “on the way” and how “he opened up the Scriptures to us” (ὡς διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς, 24:32b; cf. 24:25-27). It is the ineffable hospitality experience, however, of the undisguised-risen Jesus which “opens” the disciples’ eyes to the christological testimony of the Scriptures and finally moves them to an understanding of the necessity of Jesus’ sufferings, crucifixion, and resurrection (cf. 9:44-45; 18:31-34; 24:25-27; 24:44-46).

Luke’s use of hospitality in Luke 24 can now be summarized. First, all of the elements of a typical theoxeny are present within Luke 24:<sup>123</sup> a) Jesus is a traveling prophet-deity; b) he appears to the disciples in human form but is disguised from them leading to their regarding him as a “stranger”; c) the disciples appropriately offer

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<sup>121</sup> Crump’s [*Jesus the Intercessor*, 98-108] argument that the phrase “he was made known in the breaking of the bread” should be understood as circumlocution for the revelation occurring within the context of Jesus’ praying is not so much wrong as it is reductionistic and minimalistic as it fails to adequately account for the revelatory significance of hospitality and meal scenes in Luke-Acts. Ultimately, it is the intensified and mysterious experience of the risen Jesus at the table which functions as the catalyst for the disciples’ recognition, and therefore attempts to pinpoint *what exactly it was about the meal* that sparked the disciples’ insight should be rejected. The same criticism can be lodged against De Long [*Surprised by God*, 243-244] who wants to pin the disciples’ recognition at the moment of Jesus’ *praise* of God.

<sup>122</sup> The phrase “the breaking of the bread” is a metonymy for the entire meal (cf. Acts 2:46). See B. P. Robinson, “The Place of the Emmaus Story in Luke-Acts,” 484.

<sup>123</sup> The similarities between Luke 24 and stories of theoxenies are not as frequently recognized as one might expect. See, however, McMahan, “More than Meets the ‘I’,” 87-107; Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits,” 274-275. Quite briefly, see Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 146; Robinson, “The Place of the Emmaus Story in Luke-Acts,” 485. A. Ehrhardt, “The Disciples of Emmaus,” *NTS* 10 (1963-1964) 182-201, here 193-195, has compared Luke 24 to Greek and Roman stories of epiphanies to wanderers, but this comparison fails to account for the significant role of hospitality that binds together Luke 24 with theoxenies. Similarly, see Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 398 who points to Livy, *Roman History* 1:16; Ovid, *Fasti* 2:489; and Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 8:5.

hospitality to the journeying stranger; d) the disciples recognize Jesus – the removal of their blindness – through their shared hospitality at the table; e) the disciples receive salvific blessings from Jesus, including recognition and sight which leads to rejoicing (24:30-35, 41, 52; cf. 10:17, 20, 21-24), “peace” (24:36; cf. 10:5-6), insight into the Scriptures (24:45; cf. 10:21-22), the promise of “power” from on high (24:49; cf. 10:13, 19), and a blessing (24:50; cf. 10:24).<sup>124</sup>

Second, hospitality functions as a climax to Luke’s Gospel.<sup>125</sup> I have repeatedly noted the Lukan motif of blindness/sight and specifically the concealment of Jesus’ full identity from the eyes of the disciples. The journey narrative (9:51-19:44), in particular, is characterized by the inability of the disciples and others to comprehend Jesus’ task as a suffering Messiah. Despite his self-revelation to the disciples, often occurring most dramatically during meals where he acts as host and thereby feeds others (cf. 9:12-17; 22:14-27), the disciples do not see Jesus (9:44-45; 18:31-34). The blindness of the disciples creates strong narrative tension, and the tension is finally resolved by Luke through the mundane-yet-ineffable experience of the disciples’ bestowal of hospitality upon their guest and the guest’s transformation into a host who reveals himself through the breaking of bread (24:30-31, 35). It is shared hospitality, then, between the disciples and the risen Lord which mysteriously communicates his presence and reveals his identity to the disciples, thereby removing their blindness.

Third, Jesus embodies God’s visitation of his people and his divine power. Death is unable to hold Jesus “the living one” (τὸν ζῶντα, 24:5) under its power. The other disciples continue to refer to him as ὁ κύριος (24:34) thereby demonstrating that

<sup>124</sup> The connections between Luke 24 and Luke 10:1-24 are not accidental since both texts center upon divine visitation and human response to the visitation.

<sup>125</sup> This is rightly seen by Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 183-186.

suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection now characterize and are taken up into deity.<sup>126</sup> Jesus promises that he will send to the disciples from the Father the divine power of the Spirit which has characterized his own ministry: “you will be clothed with power from on high” (ἕως οὐ ἐνδυσθησθε ἐξ ὕψους δύναμιν, 24:49). And after blessing the disciples, Jesus “ascends into the heaven” (ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, 24:51b) – the metaphorical locale of God’s dwelling.<sup>127</sup> The disciples’ ultimate response to the risen Jesus is that of joy (ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς, 24:41; 24:52, μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης) – a characteristically Lukan human response to divine presence and activity.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps most remarkably, after Jesus ascends into heaven the disciples worship Jesus, an act allowed only for God in Luke-Acts, signifying their right response and recognition of the divine visitor (αὐτοὶ προσκυνήσαντες αὐτόν,<sup>129</sup> 24:52a).<sup>130</sup>

#### IV. Ritualized Hospitality and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Acts 10:1-11:18

Luke’s narration of the story of Cornelius and Peter is rich, detailed, and complex. Its sheer length and its threefold repetition indicate its importance within Acts. The primary significance of the story lay in the surprising inclusion of a Gentile Caesarean congregation within the church and thereby the church’s subsequent transformation into a multiethnic institution. The city of Caesarea is apropos for the setting of the story as the city was “clearly intended to be a Roman and pagan city” by its founder Herod.<sup>131</sup> The story functions as a watershed event as it sets into motion the gospel’s expansion through

<sup>126</sup> Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 188-189; Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 184.

<sup>127</sup> On “heaven” as the locale of God’s dwelling and the implication of Jesus’ ascension to heaven, see Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*.

<sup>128</sup> On which, see De Long, *Surprised by God*, 242-246.

<sup>129</sup> The phrase has overwhelming strong textual support despite the fact that it is omitted in D, the Sinaitic Syriac versions, and the majority of the Old Latin witnesses.

<sup>130</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 862, states: “Their worship of Jesus signifies that the disciples have, at last, recognized Jesus for who he is.”

<sup>131</sup> See Lee I. Levine, “Caesarea Maritima,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 453-456.

God's witnesses to "the ends of the earth" (1:8b).<sup>132</sup> The narration of the Antiochene church (Acts 11:19-30), composed as it is of "Greeks" (τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς, 11:20b), follows logically on the heels of Cornelius' conversion, while Paul's conversion from persecutor to God's chosen vessel to the Gentiles (9:15) logically precedes the story.<sup>133</sup>

Luke's narrative has not yet indicated *how* it will come to be that Jew and Gentile will be included within one people. Given the restrictions and social taboos of Jews eating with and entering the spaces and dwellings of Gentiles, the reader wonders *how* there can be one church composed of multiple ethnic-groups.<sup>134</sup> Further, given the Lukan Jesus' practice of giving hospitality and receiving hospitality as a symbol of the acceptance of his person and message (and the church's practice, Acts 2:41-47), the reader wonders how Gentiles will be included within the church if they are restricted from sharing table-fellowship with Jews. In what follows I will demonstrate the significance of the practice of shared hospitality between Peter and Cornelius and its role in leading to the inclusion of the Gentiles within the church.<sup>135</sup> This shared hospitality is

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<sup>132</sup> That Cornelius is a representative or symbolic character is suggested by many. See Jacques Dupont, *The Salvation of the Gentiles: Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. John R. Keating; New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 24-27. Martin Dibelius' ["The Conversion of Cornelius," in *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. M. Ling and P. Schubert; New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1956 109-122] insights regarding the symbolic and foundational role of the Cornelius story within the Lukan narrative can be maintained without necessarily accepting his conclusions regarding the "original" Cornelius story and the later "Lukan additions."

<sup>133</sup> On the central importance of Acts 10:1-11:18 to the surrounding context, see the valuable history of research in Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 355-363.

<sup>134</sup> On the issue of Jews' maintenance of boundaries through food laws, see Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The social and political motivations of Lukan theology* (SNTSMS 57; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 71-109, esp. 73-86; Markus Bockmuehl, "Antioch and James the Just," in *James the Just and Christian Origins* (eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 155-198, here 164-165.

<sup>135</sup> Those who recognize the importance of hospitality in Acts 10:1-11:18 include Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 107-125; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 153-181; Helga Rusche, *Gastfreundschaft in der Verkündigung des Neuen Testaments und ihr Verhältnis zur Mission* (Münster: Aschendorffsche, 1958) 26-27; Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 86-134; Walter T. Wilson, "Urban Legends: Acts 10:1-11:18 and the Strategies of Greco-Roman Foundation Narratives," *JBL* 120 (2001)77-99, here 91-93.

the result of surprising divine interventions which lead Peter to conclude that God has shown hospitality to the Gentiles and that they are “welcomed” by God (δεκτός, 10:35).<sup>136</sup> By depicting Peter and Cornelius as taking turns staying in each other’s homes and acting as the beneficiaries of each other’s hospitality, Luke alludes to the custom of guest-friendship (ξενία), thereby portraying the binding of the two social parties together into a kinship relationship.<sup>137</sup>

#### A. Scene One: Cornelius’ divine vision (Acts 10:1-8)

The characterization of Cornelius is familiar to readers of Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 7:2-10): he is a pious God-fearing (εὐσεβῆς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, 10:2) centurion (10:1), whose acts of piety – giving alms to the people and constantly praying (10:3) – mirror those of Peter and the Jerusalem apostles.<sup>138</sup> Further, Luke notes that “his entire household” (σὺν παντὶ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ) follows Cornelius in his piety (10:2), and this household introduces the social location that will be so significant for the story. The “household” functions as the locus of divine interventions *and* the shared hospitality between the parties of Cornelius and Peter.<sup>139</sup> Given his military occupation, Cornelius is ritually unclean according to the Torah, and thereby both he and his household are

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<sup>136</sup> This is stated nicely by Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 109: “By means of the issue of *hospitality*, Luke demonstrates that the conversion of the first Gentile required the conversion of the church as well. Indeed, in Luke’s account, Peter and company undergo a change that is more wrenching by far than the change experienced by Cornelius.”

<sup>137</sup> Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971) 357-360, divides Acts 10:1 – 11:18 into seven scenes. I follow him except in combining his fifth (10:34-43) and sixth scene (10:44-48) into one scene.

<sup>138</sup> Tannehill [*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.133] states: “Thus Cornelius is addressed like a Jew by the angel and portrayed like a Jew by the narrator ... Everything in the narrative conspires against maintaining the barrier between Jews and this Gentile.” Pervo, *Acts*, 267, notes that “his piety reminiscent of the values ascribed to the characters in Luke 1-2.” Also, see W. C. van Unnik, “The Background and Significance of Acts x, 4 and 35,” in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. Van Unnik* (SupNT 29; Leiden: Brill, 1973) 1.213-258.

<sup>139</sup> On the importance of the household, see John H. Elliott, “Temple versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions,” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, 211-240.

potentially defiling agents for Peter.<sup>140</sup> Cornelius' status, however, is immediately rendered insignificant by "the angel of God" (ἄγγελον τοῦ θεοῦ, 10:3b), who in a vision, *enters into the space and dwelling* of this unclean Gentile (εἰσελθόντα πρὸς αὐτόν, 10:3b). The angel of God's entrance into Cornelius' home has set a precedent for Peter's crossing the boundary and entering into Gentile-space (cf. 11:13).<sup>141</sup> Both the presence of God's angel within Cornelius' house (10:3) *and* the angel's message that his prayers and alms have "ascended (ἀνέβησαν) as a memorial before God" (10:4) legitimate his status as a righteous Gentile.<sup>142</sup> This language is cultic and suggests that God has accepted his piety as a spiritual sacrifice in lieu of literal sacrifices in the Temple – offerings which would have been impossible for him to make given his ethnicity.<sup>143</sup>

The angel commands Cornelius to send men to Joppa to call for Simon Peter who at this moment is *receiving hospitality* (ξενίζεται, 10:6) in Simon the tanner's "house (οἰκία) by the sea" (10:6). Luke refers to Peter receiving hospitality from Simon the tanner on three more occasions: "he remained (μεῖναι) many days in Joppa with Simon the tanner" (9:42); Cornelius' embassy stops at the "house of Simon" (τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ Σίμωνος, 10:17b) and asks where Peter is "receiving hospitality" (ξενίζεται) (10:18); Cornelius tells Peter that the angel told him to send for Peter who "is receiving hospitality in the house of Simon the tanner by the sea" (ξενίζεται ἐν οἰκίᾳ Σίμωνος βυρσέως

<sup>140</sup> Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 104.

<sup>141</sup> On the importance of the angel setting the precedent for Peter, see also Edith M. Humphrey, "Collision of Modes? – Vision and Determining Argument in Acts 10:1 – 11:18," *Semeia* (1995) 65-84, here 77.

<sup>142</sup> See Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, 225; Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 104-105. On Cornelius as a righteous Gentile, see Gerhard Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte, II. Teil: Kommentar zu Kap. 9.1-28.31* (HThK V. 2; Freiburg: Herder, 1982) 2.65

<sup>143</sup> So Esler, *Community and Gospel*, 162; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 348. Pervo, *Acts* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 268, says that the phrase "ascended as a memorial" is a "cultic metaphor that assumes the legitimacy of 'spiritual sacrifices,' a concept known to the Greco-Roman world, the Hebrew Bible, sectarian Judaism, nascent Christianity, and rabbinic Judaism."

παρὰ θάλασσαν, 10:32). Thus, on four occasions Luke uses hospitality language to remind his readers that Peter is engaged in a hospitality relationship with Simon the tanner (ξενίζω, 10:6, 18, and 32; μένω, 9:43). It is a matter of debate as to whether Simon's occupation, which required him to work with animal urine, rendered him ritually unclean or simply denoted him as a member of the undesirable lower class.<sup>144</sup> Regardless, Luke draws attention to the motif of houses, lodging, and hospitality – a theme which will take center stage in the encounter between Peter and Cornelius – and he highlights Peter's willingness to enter into a hospitality relationship with Simon whose occupation renders him socially undesirable (if not unclean).<sup>145</sup> Already, then, Peter is challenging social boundaries in his reception of Simon's hospitality.<sup>146</sup>

#### B. Scene Two: Peter's divine vision (Acts 10:9-16)

As Cornelius' men are journeying to find Peter, Peter also has a vision while he is praying on Simon's roof (10:9): "he was seeing heaven opened up and something like a great sheet descending onto the earth by its four corners" (10:11).<sup>147</sup> Luke connects the characters of Peter and Cornelius together here in two ways: both have revelatory encounters with the divine and both are men characterized by prayer. Luke highlights the divine nature of Cornelius' experience by noting twice that the sheet came from τὸν

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<sup>144</sup> Many commentators point to *m.Ket.* 7:10 as evidence proving that Simon's trade made him chronically unclean. E.g., Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP 5; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992) 178-179.

<sup>145</sup> See Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 113; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 155 n. 62; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 186.

<sup>146</sup> F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 123; Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, 230-232.

<sup>147</sup> Due to commentators' frequent failure to see the importance of the motif of hospitality in Acts 10:1 – 11:18, Peter's vision in Acts 10:9-16 has often been seen as problematic, secondary, and likely deriving from a different source which has not been carefully integrated into the story. On the matter of sources, see Dibelius, "The Conversion of Cornelius," 109-122; Pervo, *Acts*, 264-267.

οὐράνιον (10:11a, 16a; cf. 1:9-11; 2:2; 2:33; 9:3; 22:6).<sup>148</sup> The reference to the sheet's "four corners" descending "on the earth" may refer to the four corners of the earth, and thereby be a symbolic designation of the entire inhabited world (cf. Isaiah 11:12; Ezekiel 7:2; Revelation 7:1; 20:8).<sup>149</sup> Peter sees on this sheet "every kind of four-footed beast, things that creep on the earth, and the birds of heaven" (10:12; cf. Genesis 1:24). When the voice commands Peter to "kill and eat" (10:13), he responds as one would expect: "Never Lord! For I have never eaten anything unclean and defiled" (πάν κοινὸν καὶ ἀκάθαρτον, 10:14).<sup>150</sup> The presence on the sheet of both "unclean" *and* "clean" animals mixed together contaminates the clean animals for Peter.<sup>151</sup> In response to Peter's refusal, the voice speaks a second time: "that which God has cleansed, you shall not [consider] common" (ὃ ὁ θεὸς ἐκαθάρισεν, σὺ μὴ κοίνου, 10:15b).<sup>152</sup> *God* is the one who has rendered insignificant the social divisions established between Jew and Gentile, and his command requires that Peter's social perceptions undergo transformation.

The division of animals into clean and unclean categories is a staple of Torah (e.g., Leviticus 11) and Jewish identity, and the food-laws provide one of the most fundamental bases separating Jews from non-Jews (see *Jubilees* 22:16). Non-Jewish first-century authors testify that one of the most distinctive practices of the Jews was precisely their food traditions which separated them from the rest of humanity.<sup>153</sup> Peter's refusal to eat unclean food finds parallels in Jewish texts which idealize heroic characters

<sup>148</sup> So Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, 226-229.

<sup>149</sup> So Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (2 vols., Zürich: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986) 1.338. Cautiously, see Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts* (PCNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 145; Pervo, *Acts*, 271 n. 65.

<sup>150</sup> On this phrase, see Mikeal C. Parsons, "'Nothing Defiled AND Unclean': The Conjunction's Function in Acts 10.14," *PRS* 27 (2000) 263-274.

<sup>151</sup> So Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 350; Parsons, *Acts*, 146.

<sup>152</sup> The theological foundation behind God's cleansing is left unstated. In the Gospel of Luke Jesus is portrayed as one who "cleanses" lepers (4:27; 5:12-13; 7:22) including Samaritan lepers (17:14, 17).

<sup>153</sup> So Diodorus Siculus 34.1.2; Tacitus, *Histories* 5.4-5; and Juvenal, *Satires* 14.104ff.

that refused to eat the unclean food of the Gentiles even under threat of persecution (Daniel 1:8-16; Tobit 1:10-12; 1 Maccabees 1:62-63; Judith 10:5; 12:2, 19; *Joseph and Asenath* 7:1; 8:5).<sup>154</sup> The animals in the vision, then, are (as the rest of the narrative makes clear) a symbolic map of humanity.<sup>155</sup> Peter's social categories are challenged, for to eat something unclean would be to do away with the social restrictions against non-Jews – especially given the close anthropological connection between what one eats and with whom one eats.<sup>156</sup> At issue here is the question of hospitality.<sup>157</sup> Can Jew and Gentile eat together and share the same home, or must they eat different food at different tables in different houses? Should Peter continue to consider Gentiles “unclean” and as agents who “defile” then he will never be able to share hospitality or receive hospitality from a Gentile such as Cornelius.<sup>158</sup> Of further significance is the fact that it is the deity who speaks three times *from heaven* who instigates the eradication of the social barriers which are preventing shared hospitality between Jew (Peter) and Gentile (Cornelius).

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<sup>154</sup> On this, see Dennis E. Smith, “Meals,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (eds. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 924-926. Pervo, *Acts*, 271 states: “[Peter’s] assertion represents the classical Jewish rejection of forbidden food in the face of pressure.”

<sup>155</sup> On the close connection between the evaluation of humans and animals in Leviticus, see Gordon Wenham, “The Theology of Unclean Food,” *EvQ* 53 (1981) 6-15.

<sup>156</sup> See Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts,” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. idem; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 271-304.

<sup>157</sup> Johnson [*The Acts of the Apostles*, 186-187] rightly notes that the reader has never questioned God’s intent to bring salvation to the Gentiles as this has been made clear and affirmed on numerous occasions (Lk. 2:32; 3:6; 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2:29; 3:25-26). The struggle that Luke communicates in Acts 10:1 – 11:18 is the more practical matter of the church’s discernment of how Gentiles would be included as part of God’s people. For a very different view that sees Luke as frequently diminishing human response and decision-making, see Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 362-363.

<sup>158</sup> Wilson [“Urban Legends,” 89] rightly notes: “The epiphany dramatizes the seemingly impossible boundaries that must be crossed before Peter can engage the forbidden ‘other’ in meaningful contact.” That the vision in Acts 10:9-16 is related to the matter of hospitality is rarely noted in the secondary literature and even Arterbury [*Entertaining Angels*] does not comment directly on the matter. See, however, the brief but suggestive comments of Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 109, 113-115.

C. Scene Three: Peter's hospitality to Cornelius' embassy (Acts 10:17-23a)

Luke highlights the dramatic nature of Peter's encounter with the Gentiles by narrating simultaneously Peter's state of "great perplexity" over the meaning of the vision with the arrival of Cornelius' three ambassadors (ἐν ἑαυτῷ διηπόρει ὁ Πέτρος τι ἂν εἴη τὸ ὄραμα ὃ εἶδεν, 10:17; Τοῦ δὲ Πέτρου διενθυμουμένου περὶ τοῦ ὄράματος, 10:19). After the three men find "the house of Simon" (10:17b) they "stand before the gate" (ἐπέστησαν ἐπὶ τὸν πυλῶνα, 10:17b). Those familiar with the cultural script of hospitality remember the scenes of strangers approaching another person's gate in search of hospitality. The men's non-Jewish ethnicity "highlights the problematic issue of space, this time from a gentile perspective."<sup>159</sup> The reader waits with the men at the gate to see if Peter will invite them into his own space. Peter *does show hospitality* to these three men, who are strangers to him, but his hospitality is the explicit result of the voice of the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα): "Behold, three men are looking for you. Now get up and go down and go with them not making any discrimination (μηδὲν διακρινόμενος) for I have sent them (ἐγὼ ἀπέσταλκα αὐτούς)" (10:19b-20).<sup>160</sup> That Peter is not to "make any discrimination" carries a double meaning of "do not hesitate in your response," and "do not make any negative judgments against the Gentile men."<sup>161</sup> Again, Luke emphasizes that the encounter between Peter and the Gentile strangers is the result of divine initiative

<sup>159</sup> Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 105.

<sup>160</sup> For this reason I find a parallel between Cornelius' three men and the three messengers in Genesis 18 to be unlikely. Contra Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 156-157, who states that "Peter's hospitable response to the three strangers is an indication of his intimate relationship with God and his Jewish ancestors." And "...Luke portrays Peter as a pious and righteous person because he welcomes strangers." (p. 156). If anything is being stated of Peter's hospitality it is that divine initiative *forcefully compels* Peter to show hospitality to the Gentiles – an action he would have never engaged in had it not been for repeated divine interventions!

<sup>161</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 147; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 185; Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 105 n. 86.

as Cornelius' men have been sent to him at the Spirit's behest (10:20). The vision will receive its meaning through Peter's reception of hospitality from the Gentiles.

The men declare to Peter that they have come as a result of a divine revelation to Cornelius (10:22a), and that they have been "sent in order to bring you *into his house* (μεταπέμψασθαί σε εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ) and to listen to your words" (10:22b).<sup>162</sup> Peter's entrance into the house of Cornelius, according to the regulations of Torah, will result in his defilement as he interacts with unclean people in an unclean domicile. Peter's initial response to them is significant, as first "he invites them *inside* and provides hospitality" (εἰσκαλεσάμενους οὖν αὐτοὺς ἐξένισεν, 10:23a). Gentiles have now entered into his space and received hospitality. Distinctions between Jew and Gentile are being blurred through Peter's hospitality.<sup>163</sup> Will Peter himself enter into Gentile-space, receive hospitality from them, and thus refuse to regard *them* as unclean defiling?<sup>164</sup>

#### D. Scene Four: Cornelius welcomes Peter into his home (Acts 10:23b-33)

The previous three scenes have created narratival suspense as the reader is now prepared for Peter's entry into Cornelius' home. The significance of Peter's entrance into Gentile-space cannot be overestimated, and Luke draws attention to this hospitality setting through a variety of strategies. First, the physical movement of Peter into pagan space is emphasized by Luke, as three times he narrates that Peter "entered into" Cornelius' space: a) "the next day [Peter] entered into Caesarea (εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν

<sup>162</sup> Their characterization of Cornelius as "a righteous man and one who fears God who is testified about by the whole people of the Jews" (10:22) again has the function of drawing attention to virtues and practices which parallel those of Peter and other law-observant Jews. See Christoph W. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT II/108; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999) 148-150.

<sup>163</sup> On Peter's hosting Cornelius' men, Parsons [*Acts*, 148] states: "The way for Peter's conversion is being gradually but thoroughly prepared, and this act of hospitality is a significant step in that direction."

<sup>164</sup> Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 106, underestimates the importance of this question when he states: "Peter's subsequent offer of hospitality to the messengers of Cornelius (10.23a), however, shows that Peter's resistance to associating with Gentiles is now largely overcome."

Καισάρειαν)” (10:24a); b) “when Peter entered into ( Ἦλθεν δὲ εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Κορνηλίου)” (10:25a); c) “after conversing together he entered in (εἰσῆλθεν) with him” (10:27a).<sup>165</sup> Luke’s repetition of Peter’s entry into Cornelius’ home (both in 10:25a, 27a) highlights the climactic nature of the event.<sup>166</sup>

Second, Luke utilizes the συν-prefix a total of six times in his narration of Peter’s entry into Cornelius’ home thereby highlighting the two group’s *togetherness*: “some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him (συνῆλθον αὐτῷ)” (10:23b); “Cornelius had waited for them having called together (συγκαλεσάμενος) some of his relatives (τοὺς συγγενεῖς)” (10:24b); when Peter enters into his home, Cornelius “met him” (συναντήσας αὐτῷ, 10:25a); Peter “converses together” (συνομιλῶν) with Cornelius (10:27a); and Peter finds that “many had come together” (συνεληλυθότας) to listen to him (10:27b). Luke’s peppering of Peter’s entrance into Cornelius’ home with six συν-prefixes draws Jew and Gentile together in the closest possible manner for the reader.

Third, Cornelius’ act of “falling at his feet and prostrating himself” (πεσὼν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας προσεκύνησεν, 10:25) in response to Peter’s entrance into his home is capable of a dual resonance. On the one hand the response is entirely appropriate.<sup>167</sup> Within Luke-Acts recognition of rightful apostolic (or christological) authority is often

<sup>165</sup> In this episode Luke maintains a balance between divine initiative on one hand and the human response and discernment of God on the other. One should not accept, therefore, the claim of Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971) 362: “...in endeavouring to make the hand of God visible in the history of the Church, Luke virtually excludes all human decision...As Luke presents them [i.e., divine interventions], these divine incursions have such compelling force that all doubt in the face of them *must* be stilled. They compellingly prove that God, not man, is at work.”

<sup>166</sup> Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 116. I disagree with Pervo, *Acts*, 273, who thinks Luke’s description of Peter’s entrance into Cornelius’ home demonstrates “narrative awkwardness” due to the “clumsy repetition of εἰσέρχομαι (“enter”) in vv. 24, 25, and 27.”

<sup>167</sup> So Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 116.

symbolized through falling at one's feet (e.g., Lk. 7:38-39; 10:38-42; Acts 4:35).<sup>168</sup> Peter is, of course, embodying divine power and revelation (10:9-16), and he will soon interpret the very workings of God in this event (10:34-43).<sup>169</sup> On the other hand, Cornelius' stereotypical Gentile response *is* no doubt shocking to Peter's Jewish sensibilities as he wrongly equates divine presence with Peter's presence in his home.<sup>170</sup>

Fourth, given that Cornelius has invited both his "relatives" and "his closest friends" (τοὺς ἀναγκαίους φίλους, 10:24), when Peter enters into Gentile-space he discovers that the nature of the event is public and corporate as "he finds many who have gathered together" (εὐρίσκει συνεληλυθότας πολλούς, 10:27).<sup>171</sup> Peter is not simply in the presence and under the roof of one pious god-fearing Gentile, but is in the closest imaginable contact with a multitude of Gentiles in Gentile-space. The corporate and shared hospitality that is unfolding between two different ethnic groups triggers resonances of the custom of ritualized friendship/hospitality in the mind of the reader. The result of shared hospitality between these two distinct ethnic peoples will, if continued, result in the creation of a new kinship group.

Peter's first words to the corporate body of Gentiles are significant and emphasize Peter's enormous step in entering into Gentile-space: "You know that it is unlawful for a Jewish man to be joined with or to visit a foreigner" (ὕμεις ἐπίστασθε ὡς ἀθέμιτόν ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ Ἰουδαίῳ κολλᾶσθαι ἢ προσέρχεσθαι ἀλλοφύλῳ, 10:28a). Peter, however, has just transgressed this Jewish division of the world into clean/unclean and pure/defiled by entering into Gentile-space. He has acted in complete dependence on the

<sup>168</sup> This is rarely recognized in the scholarly literature. See Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 189-190.

<sup>169</sup> On Peter as "an agent of divine power," see Wilson, "Urban Legends," 89-90.

<sup>170</sup> Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, 234-235; Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*, 151-152.

<sup>171</sup> See Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, 233-234.

vision “from heaven” (10:11, 16) having offered “no resistance” (ἀναντιρρήτως, 10:29). And he now makes the crucial interpretation of this heavenly vision: “*God* has shown me that I should call no human unclean and defiled” (καὶ μοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἔδειξεν μηδὲνα κοινὸν ἢ ἀκάθαρτον λέγειν ἄνθρωπον, 10:28b). The vision of the clean *and* unclean animals symbolized, then, the complete removal of distinctions which made social intercourse – hospitality, eating, drinking, conversing, and lodging – between Jew and non-Jew an impossibility. Jews are no longer defiled by social interaction – sharing the same space in a hospitality setting – with Gentiles.<sup>172</sup> Peter has now made two essential moves: a) he has entered into Gentile space with the intention of receiving hospitality from Gentiles, and b) he has interpreted these formerly unclean and defiled Gentiles as the referent of “that which God has cleansed” (10:15).<sup>173</sup>

Cornelius’ response to Peter has the obvious function of leading into his sermon which interprets the events, but it also emphasizes the shared experience of Peter the Jew and Cornelius the Gentile: both have had divine visions (10:30), and both manifest “Jewish” piety of prayer and almsgiving (10:31).<sup>174</sup> The angel’s claim that God has accepted Cornelius’ prayers as a memorial (10:31; cf. 10:3-4) teaches Peter that God *has* accepted and cleansed the Gentiles (10:15).<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, Cornelius and his entire Gentile household are now with Peter in divine space as they “are all present in the presence of God” (πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πάρεσμεν, 10:33; cf. 10:31b). It is God himself who is host in this hospitality scene as he has brought together Peter and

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<sup>172</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 136; Wilson, “Urban Legends,” 89.

<sup>173</sup> See Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 108.

<sup>174</sup> Wilson, “Urban Legends,” 90. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 194, states: “As Peter hears his account and realizes how Cornelius’ experience intersects his own, he comes to understand still more deeply the meaning of his vision.”

<sup>175</sup> Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, 237.

Cornelius' household together into his presence.<sup>176</sup> All are now finally ready “to listen (ἀκούσαι) to all the things commanded Peter by the Lord (ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου)” (10:33b).

E. Scene Five: Peter declares God has shown hospitality to the Gentiles (Acts 10:34-48)

The first words of Peter's speech, given to him “by the Lord” (10:33b), declare his new understanding of God and his relationship to non-Jewish peoples. First, Peter declares that God has shown full hospitality to the Gentiles.<sup>177</sup> Peter states: “In truth, I perceive that God does not show partiality” (ἐπ’ ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήπτῃς ὁ θεός, 10:34). Peter's statement can be understood as an insight into Israel's Scriptures, for example Deuteronomy 10:17-19 (cf. Leviticus 19:15-19), where God is described as both impartial *and* one who loves and protects strangers. But never had this theological axiom been used as the basis to provide for the full inclusion of the non-Jew *qua* non-Jew within the people of God.<sup>178</sup> Ethnicity, race, cultural custom are irrelevant for participating in God's blessings and for inclusion within his people. Rather, “for every nation” (ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει) the one who fears God and does righteousness is “acceptable” (δεκτός) before God (10:35). The term δεκτός is often cultic and is used in the LXX to refer to God's acceptance of sacrifices.<sup>179</sup> But the word also has the related non-cultic resonance of “welcome” and is used in this way in Jesus' sermon in Nazareth when he proclaims the “year of the Lord's *welcome*” (ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν, Lk. 4:19) and declares that “no prophet is *welcome* (δεκτός) in his fatherland” (4:24). Further, given the word's relationship to the hospitality lexeme

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<sup>176</sup> Parsons, *Acts*, 151.

<sup>177</sup> So Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 169-173.

<sup>178</sup> On God as impartial in the Old Testament, see Lev. 19:15; Deut. 10:17; 2 Chr. 9:17; Ps. 82:2; Sir. 35:15-16; in the NT, see Rom. 2:11.

<sup>179</sup> On δεκτός used for sacrifices in the LXX, see Exod. 28:34; Lev. 1:3-4; 17:4; 19:5; Isa. 56:7; 60:7; Jer. 6:20; Mal. 2:13; and Sir. 32:7.

δέχομαι (cf. Lk. 9:53; 10:8, 10; Acts 11:1), the hospitality scenarios in Acts 10:1-11:18, and the ensuing emphasis in Peter's speech on the Gentile's participation in God's blessings, one can construe 10:35 as a reference to Peter's full recognition of God as hospitable host of the Gentiles.<sup>180</sup>

Second, interpreters sometimes comment on the generally non-distinctiveness of Peter's speech in 10:36-43, noting its similarities to the speeches given to Jews in 2:14-41, 3:11-26, and 13:13-41.<sup>181</sup> Yet what is often overlooked is that Peter's speech declares that the Gentiles are full participants in the benefits and gifts of God, previously described as given to Jewish Christians (Acts 2:14-41). These gifts are mediated through the person of Jesus (10:36-43) who is, Peter declares, "Lord of all" (πάντων κύριος, 10:36b).<sup>182</sup> Peter notes the implications and thereby insists on the complete parity of Jew and Gentile by demonstrating that the latter have been made partakers in the history and cult of the Jews.<sup>183</sup> Like Peter's explication of the messianic benefits to the Jews at Pentecost, now Peter declares that Gentiles have received: the forgiveness of sins (10:43b), the gift of the Holy Spirit (10:44-45), the ecstatic proclamation of the mighty deeds of God in tongues (10:46), and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (10:47-48). The theme of parity between Jew and Gentile as a result of the Spirit's descent is invoked three times by Peter: "they have received the Holy Spirit *just as we have*" (οἵτινες τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔλαβον ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς, 10:47b; cf. 11:15, 17). Peter insists upon

<sup>180</sup> This is stated well by Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 169: "...Luke's audience would have understood God's activity in Acts 10-11 as that of a host who extends hospitality to guests. God has forged a permanent hospitality relationship between himself and the Gentiles who are gathered in Cornelius' house."

<sup>181</sup> For an analysis of Peter's speech, see Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 70-77.

<sup>182</sup> On the importance of this phrase, see C. Kavin Rowe, "Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult: A Way through the Conundrum," *JSNT* 27 (2005) 279-300, here 291-294.

<sup>183</sup> The only one I have seen tease out this insight is Wilson, "Urban Legends," 91, who rightly notes that "the elements of the Christian cult introduced to Caesarea are described in terms that essentially duplicate those used earlier in Acts to describe Jewish Christian institutions."

viewing the events in Caesarea as a second Pentecost, an event which makes Gentiles full participants in God's gifts and God's people.<sup>184</sup>

Third, the reader is unsurprised to find the story of Peter and Cornelius end with one more hospitality scene: "then they [i.e., Cornelius' household] asked him to stay for some days" (τότε ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν ἐπιμεῖναι ἡμέρας τινὰς, 10:48b).<sup>185</sup> In response to the divine gifts and revelation they have received from Peter, the Gentiles reciprocate by giving hospitality to Peter. The short phrase is rhetorically pregnant as Peter is now finally able to eat, drink, converse, and share space with Gentiles without hesitation or discrimination.<sup>186</sup> The narrative length devoted to Peter's vision which eradicates the table-fellowship barrier between Jew and Gentile and the alternating hospitality scenarios makes Peter's stay with Cornelius a fitting conclusion to the story. Given the symbolic power of shared meals, wherein meals mediate the presence of the risen Lord (e.g., Luke 24:28-35; Acts 2:41-47), the shared hospitality of Peter and Cornelius' household functions as a religious ritual binding the two parties together. Finally, as Walter Wilson has rightly noted, numerous aspects of this story resonate with guest-friendship (ξενία) or, as I prefer to call it, ritualized hospitality.<sup>187</sup> The alternating stays and extension of hospitality between Peter *and* his companions *and* Cornelius and his men (10:23a, 23b-

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<sup>184</sup> See Earl Richard, "Pentecost as a Recurrent Theme in Luke-Acts," in *New Views on Luke and Acts* (ed. Earl Richard; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990) 133-149.

<sup>185</sup> On Acts 10:48b, Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, 120, writes: "Consistent with the entire narrative, this request suggests that the inclusion of Gentiles does not have to do merely with a grudging admission to the circle of the baptized. Including Gentiles means receiving them, entering their homes, and accepting hospitality in those homes."

<sup>186</sup> Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, 243, notes: "If heaven has demonstrated a unity between Jew and gentile (10:44-45)...then this solidarity must be fully embodied on earth in the manner already outlined earlier in Acts, namely baptism and fellowship (10:47-8)." Also, see Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 113-115; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 96.

<sup>187</sup> Wilson, "Urban Legends," 91-93.

27, 48b),<sup>188</sup> the emphasis on Jews and Gentiles mutually sharing together in the gifts of God (10:34-48), Peter's conversion to be able to eat and share table-fellowship with non-Jews (10:9-16, 23-28), and the extension of the foundational story of Jesus to the Gentiles (10:36-43) can readily be understood according to the formal and ritualized social custom of guest-friendship.<sup>189</sup> As I have demonstrated in chapter three, ritualized hospitality was a formal and reciprocal custom which functioned to extend and create kinship relations and alliances between strangers. Luke draws on the custom of ritualized hospitality to portray the cultic integration of distinct peoples into one family of God.<sup>190</sup> The blessings of the Jews are given to the Gentiles (10:34-48a), particularly the (guest-)“gift of the Holy Spirit” (ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, 10:45), and the Gentiles reciprocate and bind themselves to the Jews by extending hospitality to Peter and his companions (10:48b).<sup>191</sup>

#### F. Scene Six: The Judean Church Welcomes the Gentiles (11:1-18)

The sixth scene repeats and summarizes preceding events and functions as the public confirmation of the inclusion of the Gentiles to the Judean church. Three points are worth noting. First, given the abundance of hospitality scenarios in Acts 10, the reader cannot fail to note that Luke uses hospitality language to narrate the Gentiles' acceptance of the gospel: “the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the

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<sup>188</sup> For this reason, it is significant to note the public and corporate nature of Acts 10:1-11:18. It is not simply a private affair between two individuals, but is rather an event that takes place between Peter and his companions (10:23b) and Cornelius and his whole household (10:24, 27).

<sup>189</sup> Peter's speech is largely a summary of the Gospel of Luke and has the function of extending the implications of the history and person of Jesus to the Gentiles. On Peter's speech as a summary of the Gospel of Luke, see Ulrich Wilckens, “Kerygma und Evangelium bei Lukas (Beobachtungen zu Acta 10,34 – 43),” *ZNW* 49 (1958) 223-237. Also, see Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*, 154-155.

<sup>190</sup> On the guest participating in the cultic activities of its host, see Wilson, “Urban Legends,” 92; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 166.

<sup>191</sup> Also, Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 169-171.

Gentiles had *welcomed* the Word of God” (τὰ ἔθνη ἐδεξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, 11:1). Later, I will discuss both the personification of the “Word of God” as it travels to Mediterranean cities as well as the attendant response of welcoming or showing hospitality to the Word upon its arrival into a new city. Here it is enough to note that the Gentile’s welcoming of “*the word* which was sent to the sons of Israel” (τὸν λόγον..., 10:36a; cf. 11:14), spoken through Peter, is the catalyst or cause of the Gentile’s reception of the Spirit.<sup>192</sup> Second, the charge brought against Peter by “those from the circumcision” (11:2) confirms the fundamental importance of the hospitality scenarios recounted in Acts 10: “you have entered in to [the home of] uncircumcised men and eaten with them! (εἰσηλθες πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχοντας καὶ συνέφαγες αὐτοῖς, 11:3). Peter’s narration to them of the events (11:4) has as its central task justifying his decision to “enter into the house of [Cornelius]” (εἰσήλθομεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀνδρός, 11:12b).<sup>193</sup> Third, Peter repeatedly justifies his actions – his shared hospitality with the Gentiles – by invoking divine initiative, specifically, by claiming that his actions were the result of heavenly action (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, 11:5; ἐκ δευτέρου ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, v. 9; εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, v. 10). The hospitality shared between Peter and the Gentiles (11:3), then, is the outworking of God’s plan to bestow divine hospitality upon the Gentiles. Peter, further, declares to the Judean church that God, through his angel, has visited Cornelius and entered into Gentile space: “he [i.e., Cornelius] declared how he saw the angel standing in his home” (ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ἡμῖν πῶς εἶδεν τὸν ἄγγελον ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ

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<sup>192</sup> On this, see David L. Balch, “ἀκριβῶς...γράφαι (Luke 1:3): To Write the *Full* History of God’s Receiving All Nations,” in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim upon Israel’s Legacy* (ed. David P. Moessner; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999) 229-252, here 239-244.

<sup>193</sup> Acts 11:3 confirms Esler’s statement [*Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 93]: “The central issue in this narrative is not that the gospel has been preached to Gentiles, but the far more particular fact, of great ethnic and social significance, that Peter has lived and eaten with them.”

αὐτοῦ σταθέντα, 11:13). The narratival tension is not broken, however, until 11:18 when the Judean church affirms God's visit of the Gentiles and gives glory to God (ἐδοξασαν τὸν θεόν): "when they heard these things they were quiet and praised God saying, 'so then to the Gentiles God (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ θεός) has given the repentance unto life!'"

#### V. Hospitality in the Lukan Writings at the Micro-Level

I have now examined in some detail four hospitality scenes in Luke-Acts (Luke 7:36-50; 9:51-10:24; 24:13-35; Acts 10:1-11:18). Luke is clearly at home within the world of ancient Mediterranean hospitality that was examined in chapters three and four, as demonstrated by his frequent use of hospitality and journeying scenarios as well as his fluent deployment of hospitality lexemes. Luke uses hospitality (and conversely inhospitality) to depict responses of acceptance or rejection of God's visitation in the person of Jesus in Luke 7:36-50. This aspect of hospitality is expressed in the responses to Jesus and his emissaries in Luke 9:51-10:24. In Luke 24:13-35 Luke uses the script of a theoxeny: Jesus is disguised from the disciples and is only revealed in a hospitality setting when he breaks the bread at the table. Finally, the conversion of the Gentiles (and Peter) is initiated by God, the gracious host, who cleanses the Gentiles, includes them within his people, and leads Peter and the Jewish Christians into a kinship hospitality relationship with the Gentiles. Further, the response of hospitality to Jesus and his emissaries results in the bestowal of the gifts of the kingdom to the hospitable: peace (Luke 7:50; 10:5-6), forgiveness of sins (7:47-48), healings (10:9), illumination (24:31, 35), the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46) and social incorporation and inclusion into the

people of God (Acts 10:47-48). Conversely, inhospitality to Jesus and his emissaries results in punishment and/or social exclusion (Luke 7:44-46; 10:10-15).

There remains the question of the *structural* role that hospitality to strangers plays in the Lukan writings? To this question I now turn.

## Chapter 6: Divine Visitations and Hospitality in Luke-Acts

Few interpreters have moved from recognition of Luke's interest in hospitality to the question of Luke's overall literary purpose and structure.<sup>1</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, for example, rightly sees the extent to which Luke-Acts narrates God's visitation of his people through Jesus, but his circumscribed study of possessions fails to explore the role hospitality plays in the larger narrative.<sup>2</sup> Andrew Arterbury makes helpful comments on hospitality in the Lukan writings, but pays less attention to larger literary concerns.<sup>3</sup> John Koenig has a rich discussion of hospitality in Luke-Acts, but is less concerned with the literary purpose of the writings than the historical circumstances which give rise to Luke's emphasis on hospitality.<sup>4</sup> I argue here that hospitality to Jesus plays a significant role within Luke's larger project of narrating human response to the divine visit.

In what follows I assume and expand on the notion that Luke-Acts narrates God's visitation of his people, that is, his climactic and tangible coming to his people for the

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<sup>1</sup> This may in part be due to the diverse ends to which hospitality is used by Luke. Adelbert Denaux ["The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ed. J. Verheyden, BETL 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999) 255-279, here 258-263] argues that there are four "main fields of application" of the hospitality motif: ethics, theology and christology, mission and ecclesiology, and a metaphor for the kingdom of God.

<sup>2</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS 39; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> Arterbury includes some brief comments regarding the theological and practical import of Luke's attention to hospitality. See Andrew Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (NTM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005) 135-181. See also Helga Rusche, *Gastfreundschaft in der Verkündigung des Neuen Testaments und ihr Verhältnis zur Mission* (Münster: Aschendorffsche, 1958) 24-30, who provides a discussion of hospitality in Acts.

<sup>4</sup> Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 86: "...Luke highlights hospitality in order to help residential believers, whose faith and life are centered in house church communities, take their rightful place alongside itinerant prophets in the worldwide mission initiated by Jesus." See Richard J. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word: Tradition and Composition in Luke 24* (AB 24; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978) 238-249. The most relevant piece of scholarship is Denaux, "The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts," 255-279, who notices the resonances between hospitality scenes in Luke-Acts and stories of divine visits. His comments are brief but suggestive.

purpose of salvation or judgment (Luke 1:68, 78; 7:16; 19:44; Acts 15:14; cf. Acts 7:23).<sup>5</sup> God's first visit occurs through Jesus the messianic-prophet who performs God's salvific visit of his people through miracles, exorcisms, table-fellowship, and proclamation (Luke 4:16-30). Luke-Acts makes clear that Jesus' activities are the result of *God's activity* through Jesus (Acts 2:22; 10:38). God's second visitation of his people is also enacted through miracles, exorcisms, and proclamation of the Word, but instead of Jesus, the Spirit-anointed traveling apostles, who are entrusted with the Word of God, function as the agents of the divine visitation.<sup>6</sup> Based on the cultural script and the importance of travel in Luke-Acts, it is no surprise that hospitality plays a crucial role in evaluating the people's response.

## I. God's First Visitation of his People through Jesus in the Gospel of Luke

### A. The Infancy Narrative Establishes Jesus as the Agent of God's Salvific Visitation

In Gabriel's announcement to Mary, it is clear that Jesus is sent by God from heaven. Luke's birth narrative has three epiphanies of God's angel who breaks into the human world from heaven and announces a coming figure *from heaven* (Luke 1:5-25; 1:26-38; 2:8-20).<sup>7</sup> These miniature versions of divine visits resonate with other stories of divine visits such as God's coming to Abraham in Genesis 18. Gabriel declares Jesus'

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<sup>5</sup> Reading Luke-Acts as God's twofold visitation of his people is well-represented in the scholarly literature. See especially Paul S. Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation According to Luke* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976); Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*; Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Two volumes; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986 and 1990); David P. Moessner, "'The Christ Must Suffer': New Light on the Jesus-Peter, Stephen, Paul Parallels in Luke-Acts," *NovT* 28 (1986) 220-256, here, 226-227.

<sup>6</sup> Like Jesus, the apostles are Spirit-inspired, work signs and wonders, proclaim the word of God, and experience suffering and rejection by the people. On Luke's characterization of the apostles as prophetic figures like Jesus, see Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal*, 122-147; Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 60-70.

<sup>7</sup> On the theme of God's visitation of his people through Jesus as the primary theme of the infancy narrative, see Denis McBride, *Emmaus: The Gracious Visit of God According to Luke* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1991) 30-46. The emphasis on divine initiative is emphasized in Mark Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative: Narrative as Christology in Luke 1-2* (JSNTSup 88; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 51-74. Denaux, "The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts," 272-274.

heavenly origin to Mary: “the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you” (πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι, 1:35b). The repetition of ἐπί- emphasizes the “downward thrust from heaven to earth” that generates Jesus’ birth.<sup>8</sup> Every phrase in 1:35b grounds “Jesus’ *divine sonship* in the creative power of God.”<sup>9</sup> The “Holy Spirit coming upon” Mary alludes to Isaiah 32:15 which describes the Spirit’s heavenly descent: “the Spirit of the Most High will come upon you” (ἐπέλθη ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ἀφ’ ὑψηλοῦ).<sup>10</sup> The circumlocution “power of the Most High” signifies heavenly origin and agency.<sup>11</sup> Jesus is, then, a Messiah whose heavenly origin makes him “Son of God” (1:35).

Luke’s portrayal of Jesus as the embodiment of God’s visitation is explicit in Zechariah’s hymn. Bracketing the hymn, he twice praises God for visiting his people (1:68, 78). God is the subject of the visit: “Blessed is the Lord the God of Israel *for he has visited* (ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο) and brought redemption for his people” (1:68), and “from the compassionate mercy of our God, the dawn from on high *will visit us* (ἐν οἷς ἐπισκέπεται ἡμᾶς)” (1:78). In the LXX, the word-group ἐπισκέπτομαι and ἐπισκοπή typically describes a great act of God’s coming in salvation or judgment. God is almost always the subject of the verb ἐπισκέπτομαι.<sup>12</sup> For example, the word group is used to speak of God’s coming to rescue the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. Joseph tells his brothers: “God will surely visit you (ἐπισκοπή δὲ ἐπισκέπεται ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός) and bring you up out of this land... [and] when God visits you (ἐν τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ ἧ

<sup>8</sup> Quotation here is from Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative*, 67.

<sup>9</sup> Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology* (JSNTSup 110; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 93.

<sup>10</sup> See David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2.130; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000) 91-93, 132-133.

<sup>11</sup> Luke twice more uses ἐπισκιάζω for heavenly encounters (Lk. 9:34-35; Acts 5:15).

<sup>12</sup> For the details on this, see H. W. Beyer, “ἐπισκέπτομαι κτλ.,” *TDNT* 2:599–622.

ἐπισκέψεται ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός), you shall carry my bones from here” (Genesis 50:24-25). This divine visit for Israel’s liberation is later accomplished through Moses who states: “The Lord...has appeared to me, saying: ‘I will surely visit you’ (ἐπισκοπή ἐπέσκεμμαι ὑμᾶς) ... [to] bring you up out of the misery of Egypt...” (Exodus 3:16-17).<sup>13</sup>

The language of divine “visitation”, therefore, connotes a downward spatial movement of God from heaven to his people on earth.<sup>14</sup> Within Luke-Acts, where it has an unambiguous subject, ὁ θεός is the subject of the visitation (1:68, 78; 7:16; Acts 15:14; cf. Lk. 24:19). It is important to note, then, that Zechariah interprets God’s visitation of his people as taking place through Mary’s son. God is visiting his people by the means of sending from heaven the ἀνατολή (“Dawn” or “Branch,” 1:78b).<sup>15</sup> The spatial movement of God’s visit from heaven to his people is encapsulated in Luke 1:78b: “the dawning light from on high (ἐξ ὕψους) will visit us” (1:78b). The language “on high” is a metaphorical descriptor of divine dwelling indicating that God’s visit occurs through Jesus’ descent from heaven (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:9-11; 2:1-4, 33).<sup>16</sup>

In the stories of theoxenies examined in chapters three and four we have seen that the divine visitor’s identity is often hidden and disguised from the people, and that human hospitality to the deity often results in the disclosure of the deity’s identity. Luke creatively adopts this portion of the script by portraying Jesus as an agent of light and

<sup>13</sup> Further LXX references include: Gen. 21:1; Exod. 3:19; 4:31; Ps. 80: 14; 105:4; Jer. 29:10-14; Zeph. 2:7; Zech. 3:7; Judt. 8:33; Wis. Sol. 3:7, 13; 4:15. See also 1QS 3:18; 4:19; CD 7:9; 8:2-3. The word-group can be used to refer to judgment: Exod. 32:34; Job 6:14; 7:18; Isa. 10:3; 24:22; 23:17; Jer. 6:15; 10:15.

<sup>14</sup> Also, see Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts,” 277.

<sup>15</sup> The difficult term ἀνατολή is a messianic image with connotations of the dawning of light, as is indicated by the result of the coming of the ἀνατολή – shining light in darkness (1:79). On this term, see Simon J. Gathercole, “The Heavenly ἀνατολή,” *JTS* 56 (2005) 471-488.

<sup>16</sup> On Luke’s spatiality as it relates to Christ’s exaltation, see Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (SNTSMS 146; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Within the LXX the phrase refers to heaven (e.g., 2 Sam. 22:17; Sir. 16:17; Lam. 1:13).

giver of sight whose identity is revealed to those who show him hospitality. Thus, in 1:78-79, Zechariah praises God for the salvific visitation of his people, through the means of “the morning light” from heaven, who will bring salvation by “giving light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace” (1:79). As the agent of God’s visit, one of Jesus’ tasks is to bring light and sight so that “all flesh will see God’s salvation” (3:6; cf. 1:78-79). Thus, the shepherds hear the good news of the Messiah’s birth through the angel of the Lord who causes “the glory of the Lord to shine around them” (2:9). The shepherds are positive recipients of the message as they give glory to God “for all the things they heard and they *saw*” (2:20). Sight and light is, again, emphasized when Simeon, upon seeing Jesus, states “my eyes have seen your salvation” (2:30), and declares that Jesus will be a “light of revelation for the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel” (2:32). The reader must read on to see, however, whether the people, Israel’s leaders, and the Gentiles will indeed *see* Jesus as the agent of God’s salvation.

#### B. Jesus’ Ministry Enacts the Divine Visitation

Luke presents Jesus as the performer of God’s visitation by portraying Jesus’ actions as the actions of God. In his programmatic sermon in Nazareth, Jesus declares that “the Spirit of *the Lord* is upon me” (πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμέ, Luke 4:18a), and he declares that his ministry is “to proclaim the year of the Lord’s welcome” (κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν, 4:19). The phrase πνεῦμα κυρίου refers to the Spirit of God. And the phrase in 4:19 is a quotation of Isa. 61:2a, so there can be no doubt that the primary referent of κυρίου is the God of Israel, even though Jesus has already been titled “Lord” within the narrative (cf. 1:43; 2:11). Jesus’ entire ministry, then, is both

empowered by the Spirit of God (4:18a) and a manifestation of God.<sup>17</sup> Kavin Rowe captures this when he states that “the year of the Lord’s favor is in fact the ministry of the Lord.”<sup>18</sup> With Jesus’ declaration of his ministry as the enactment of the Lord’s welcome of his people, the reader is encouraged to see Jesus’ entire ministry as disclosing God’s welcome to his people.

Luke uses multiple narrative tactics to present the ministry of Jesus (cf. Luke 4:16-30) as the enactment of God’s visit. Thus, the note preceding Jesus’ healing of the paralytic, “the power of the Lord was with him to heal” (δύναμις κυρίου ἦν εἰς τὸ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτόν,<sup>19</sup> 5:17b), encapsulates his healings as the performance of divine welcome to the oppressed. Jesus engages in performance of divine activity as he proclaims release from sins (5:20) to the paralytic – an activity, rightly noted by the scribes and Pharisees, reserved for no one “except God alone” (5:21). Jesus’ proclamation of “release” is an exemplification of the “year of the Lord’s welcome” (4:19), where his ministry is twice described as bringing release to the oppressed (4:18). It should also be noted that Luke foregrounds the response to Jesus’ enactment of divine activity. Whereas the Pharisees and scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy (5:21), the paralytic recognizes God’s visit in Jesus by “giving glory to God” (δοξάζων τὸν θεόν, 5:25). Like the paralytic, all the people “give glory to God (ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεόν) and are filled with fear” (5:26).

The response to the raising of the widow’s son is similar: “Fear took hold of everyone and they gave glory to God, ‘A great prophet has been raised up for us!’ and ‘God has visited his people’ (ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ, 7:16)!” The

<sup>17</sup> On this passage, see C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (BZNW 139; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) 78-82.

<sup>18</sup> Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 81.

<sup>19</sup> Some manuscripts (cf. A, C, D, and Q) read αὐτούς instead of αὐτόν. These manuscripts take αὐτούς as the direct object of τὸ ἰᾶσθαι resulting in: “the spirit of the Lord was with [him] in order to heal them.”

response is a declaration of recognition that God’s visit is disclosed in Jesus’ acts of healing. Further, Luke peppers the Galilean section with summaries of Jesus’ ministry as a disclosing divine power. Thus, Jesus manifests “God’s greatness” (τῆ μεγαλειότητι τοῦ θεοῦ, 9:43) and is an agent of divine δύναμις (4:33-37; 5:15-17; 6:19).

### C. Hospitality to Jesus and the People’s Acceptance of the Divine Visitation

Dispersed throughout Luke’s Gospel are accounts where Jesus is met with proper hospitality by those who accept him and his message – most often sinners and outcasts. Hospitality to Jesus is thereby established as *one of* the primary responses to God’s visitation.

#### i. Hospitality to Jesus in the Galilean Narrative (Luke 4:14-9:50)

Three accounts from the Galilean narrative demonstrate this point clearly. In obedience to Jesus’ command “follow me” (5:27b), Levi the tax-collector divests himself of his possessions to follow Jesus (5:28), and then “gives a great feast for [Jesus]” (ἐποίησεν δοχὴν μεγάλην Λεὺις αὐτῷ, 5:29), welcoming Jesus and tax-collectors as guests “into his own home” (ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 5:29).<sup>20</sup> The focus here is on Levi’s act of hospitality toward Jesus.<sup>21</sup> The Pharisees and scribes act out their rejection of the divine visit by “grumbling” (ἐγόγγυζον) against Jesus’ acceptance of hospitality from sinners and outcasts: “why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” (5:30; cf. 15:1-2). Jesus, however, interprets Levi’s hospitality to him as repentance: “I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (5:32).

<sup>20</sup> On the role of possessions in Luke 5:27-32, see Christopher M. Hays, *Luke’s Wealth Ethics: A Study in Their Coherence and Character* (WUNT 2.275; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010) 82-84.

<sup>21</sup> Scholarship often neglects the text’s depiction of *Levi’s* appropriate response of hospitality to Jesus and instead focuses entirely on Jesus table-fellowship practices. See Arthur A. Just Jr., *The Ongoing Feast: Table Fellowship and Eschatology at Emmaus* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993) 130-140.

In chapter 5 I showed how Luke 7:36-50 illustrates hospitality as the acceptance of Jesus as the agent of God's visitation of his people. The literary context situates the woman's hospitality to Jesus as the recognition of Jesus as God's prophet (7:39), the embodied divine visit of God's people (7:16), and the one with authority to forgive sins (7:47-48). Her hospitality elicits the divine favors of forgiveness and peace (7:47-50). Simon's inhospitality and refusal to follow hospitality protocols in his own home (7:44), conversely, manifests his disposition of rejection of Jesus as God's prophet (7:39).

In Luke 9:1-6, Jesus confers upon the Twelve the task of acting out the divine visitation through the Galilean villages: "he gave to them power and authority over all the demons and to heal sicknesses. And he sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal" (9:1b-2). The conferral of "power and authority" upon the disciples is language used to describe Jesus' own ministry (e.g., 4:32, 36; 5:17; 6:19). Likewise, the task of healing, exorcisms, and preaching the kingdom parallels Jesus' ministry (4:18, 40-44). The disciples take no possessions with them, and so they are entirely dependent upon hospitality (9:3). The people of Galilee accept the divine visit by providing hospitality to Jesus' emissaries: "when you enter into a house (εἰς ἣν ἂν οἰκίαν εἰσέλθητε), stay there (ἐκεῖ μένετε), and leave from there. And wherever they do not welcome you (μὴ δέχωνται ὑμᾶς), when you leave the town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them" (9:4-5).<sup>22</sup> The point is clear: hospitality to the emissaries signifies one has recognized and accepted the divine visit, whereas inhospitality is a sign of rejection.

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<sup>22</sup> See Henry J. Cadbury, "Dust and Garments," in *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part I: The Acts of the Apostles* (eds. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury; BC 1; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 269-277.

ii. Hospitality to the Journeying Jesus in the Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51-19:44)

But Luke's construction of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem according to the logic of a theoxeny lends some clarity to the narrative.<sup>23</sup> Jesus is a wandering Odysseus-like figure in the travel narrative. Earlier prophecies of Jesus' ministry as the "journeying κύριος" within Luke's Gospel have prepared the reader for this journey of the Lord (cf. Luke 1:76, 79; 3:4-6). Whereas Odysseus' destination is home and the reestablishment of authority over his household, the goal of the Lord's journey is Jerusalem and the events of the Passion (13:31-35; 18:31-34). As Jesus had descended from "on high" (1:78; cf. 1:35), so now his journey will culminate in the divine visitor's "exodus" (τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, 9:31a) or "ascension" (τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ, 9:51) – namely his journey back to heaven (εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν πορευομένου αὐτοῦ, Acts 1:10; cf. Luke 24:52; Acts 1:11). Not unlike the stories examined in chapter three, the divine visitor descends to earth, makes a journey, and ascends to heaven. Luke presents Jesus as an itinerant wanderer, with little connection to family ties, no home, and birthed away from home during a journey, and spending the night in the open air (Luke 2:1-7).<sup>24</sup>

Further, like Odysseus and the wandering deities, Luke is clear that Jesus' identity is hidden – or disguised – from the people. Jesus as the divine visitor discloses himself to infants but is hidden (ἀπέκρυψας) from the wise and understanding (10:21). Jesus has revealed his identity to the lowly but hidden it from the powerful (10:21-24). A blind beggar "sees" (18:41-43) that the journeying Jesus is the "son of David" (18:38-39), while the necessity of his suffering is "concealed" (κεκρυμμένον) from the disciples

<sup>23</sup> See Denaux, "The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts," 279.

<sup>24</sup> See Henry J. Cadbury, "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts. III, Luke's Interest in Lodging," *JBL* 45 (1926) 305-322, here 317-319.

(18:34). Luke frequently draws a connection in this Travel Narrative (and in Acts) between hospitality to Jesus and ability to see his identity.

Luke repeatedly inserts the language of journeying. Jesus is a wandering stranger: “he was traveling (διεπορεύετο) through all the cities and villages teaching and making his journey (πορείαν ποιούμενος) to Jerusalem” (13:22); “it is necessary for me to continue journeying (πορεύεσθαι) today, tomorrow, and the next day...” (13:33); “many from the crowd were journeying (συνεπορεύοντο) with him” (14:25a); “he was making his way (ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι) to Jerusalem, and he was passing through (διήρχετο) an area between Samaria and Galilee” (17:11); “he said to them, ‘Behold we are going up to Jerusalem,’” (18:31); “after he said these things he journeyed (ἐπορεύετο) further going up to Jerusalem” (19:28).<sup>25</sup>

Luke portrays the nature of the hospitality Jesus desires in the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Luke connects this story with the preceding hospitality scenes by describing Jesus as journeying: “as they journeyed on their way, he entered into a certain village” (10:38).<sup>26</sup> Jesus is performing the ministry to households which he outlined in Luke 10:1-15 as the women hospitably welcome Jesus into their home, feed him, and, in the case of Mary, listen to his word.<sup>27</sup> The hospitality cues are clear as Martha “hospitably receives him” (ὑπεδέξατο αὐτόν, 10:38b).<sup>28</sup> Martha’s hospitality contrasts with the Samaritan village which had refused to welcome Jesus (9:53). Jesus is

<sup>25</sup> In addition, see Luke 10:38; 18:35, 36; 19:1, and 19:11.

<sup>26</sup> Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 142.

<sup>27</sup> On the relationship between 10:1-16 and vv. 38-42, see Kathleen E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993) 141-142.

<sup>28</sup> On ὑπεδέχομαι as a technical hospitality lexeme, see Luke 19:6 and Acts 17:7. Many manuscripts contain the addition “into her home” which intensifies the hospitality cues: **Ⲑ**, C, L, 33; a1, C2 read: ὑπεδέξατο αὐτόν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτῆς; A, D, W, Θ, and Ψ read: ὑπεδέξατο αὐτόν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς. On the text critical problems here, see Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals*, 134 n. 142.

honored as guest by both sisters, but two types of hospitality are depicted. Mary sits at “the Lord’s feet and listens to his word” (τοὺς πόδας τοῦ κυρίου ἤκουεν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, 10:39). The reader has already seen Jesus’ positive evaluation of the hospitality of the woman who cared for his feet (7:38-46). To honor his feet is to recognize his authority (8:35, 41).<sup>29</sup> Her listening to his word is characteristic of faithful disciples (8:4-21). Thus, it is significant that Jesus is referred to as κύριος three times (10:39, 40, 41), and given Luke’s use of κύριος, one can conclude Mary is giving hospitality to the visitor by listening to his words.<sup>30</sup>

Martha’s hospitality is contrasted with Mary’s. She is anxiously preoccupied with her domestic responsibilities in caring for her guest (10:40). Her speech to Jesus contains a large amount of “me”-language: “Lord, do you not care that *my* sister has abandoned *me* to do the work alone? So tell her to help *me*” (10:40).<sup>31</sup> While table-service has a positive role in Luke-Acts (Luke 22:24-27; Acts 6:1-6), Martha is faulted for anxiety over her domestic obligations which distracts her from Jesus: “Martha, Martha you are worried and distracted by many things” (Luke 10:41). While Martha’s hospitality centers upon domestic obligations, Mary’s centers on attending to Jesus’ words.<sup>32</sup> The story ends with Jesus’ praise of her hospitality: “one thing is necessary (ένὸς δέ ἐστὶν χρεία),<sup>33</sup> for Mary has chosen the better part (τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα) which will not be taken from her”

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<sup>29</sup> Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions*, 202.

<sup>30</sup> Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994) 100.

<sup>31</sup> Seim, *The Double Message*, 103; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 437.

<sup>32</sup> See Seim, *The Double Message*, 102-106; Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 175; Marshall, *Luke*, 452.

<sup>33</sup> The phrase ένὸς δέ ἐστὶν χρεία occasioned much confusion for the scribes as witnessed by its complicated textual history. For a defense of the reproduction of NA-27 above, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971) 153-154.

(10:42). The “one necessary thing” and “the better part” is her hospitality that treats Jesus the guest with fixed attention to him and his words.<sup>34</sup>

In Luke 19:1-10 Jesus bestows salvation to Zacchaeus through receiving hospitality from him, *and* Zacchaeus “sees” and responds to Jesus by providing hospitality to the journeying Lord. The hospitality motif is triggered by Luke’s reminder that Jesus is still journeying: “He entered into Jericho and was traveling through it” (19:1). Zacchaeus, a “chief tax-collector” and “rich man” (19:2), is on a quest to see Jesus. The motif of sight and the identity of Jesus are highlighted: “he was seeking to see Jesus – who he is” (ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστίν, 19:3a). The crowd creates opposition to his quest (19:3), and due to his stature he must climb a tree “in order to see him” (ἵνα ἴδῃ αὐτόν, 19:4). The previous two pericopes have centered on sight: Jesus’ words about his suffering are “concealed from them” (18:34b), and Bartimaeus’ encounter with the journeying Lord results in sight (18:41-44). Zacchaeus’ quest to see Jesus and “*who he is*” triggers the question: Will he truly see Jesus and how?<sup>35</sup>

Again, Luke reminds the readers that Jesus is journeying: “he was about to journey through (διέρχασθαι) that way” (19:4b), and “he came (ἦλθεν) to the place” (19:5a). After the repeated mention of Zacchaeus’ desire to see Jesus, it is arresting that it is Jesus who sees Zacchaeus (ἀναβλέψας ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 19:5a) and initiates revelation and salvation for him. In order to accomplish his self-revelation Jesus demands hospitality: “Today I must receive hospitality in your house” (σήμερον γὰρ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σου δεῖ με μείναι, 19:5b). Divine necessity mandates that outcasts like Zacchaeus be incorporated into God’s family and receive the Lord’s salvation through the elicitation of

<sup>34</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 437.

<sup>35</sup> See further Dennis Hamm, ‘Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke,’ *Bib* 67 (1994) 457-77

hospitality to Jesus. Hospitality between the Lord and Zacchaeus *is necessary* to accomplish Jesus' mission of "seeking and saving the lost" (19:10). Hospitality functions as the context for the revelation of Jesus' identity and the incorporation of Zacchaeus into the family of the Lord.<sup>36</sup> Again, Jesus is engaging in the enactment of the divine visit to households he instructed in Luke 10:1-15.<sup>37</sup> Zacchaeus' response of hospitality and joy indicates that he sees Jesus as the embodiment of God's visitation of his people: "he welcomed him and rejoiced" (ὑπεδέξατο αὐτὸν χαίρων, 19:6b; 15:1-2, 3-7).

The scene takes an ominous turn when Luke narrates that "everyone who saw this grumbled, saying 'He enters in as a guest (εἰσηλθεν καταλύσαι) with a sinful man'" (19:7). Jesus' hospitality practices are creating a fictive kinship-group which includes "the wrong people" within God's people. Up to this point it has been the Pharisees and lawyers who have grumbled at Jesus' hospitality practices, but now Luke notes that Jesus' hospitality to sinners is being rejected by Israel's leaders *and* the people. Despite the grumbling, Zacchaeus declares: "Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have extorted anyone of anything I will pay back four times as much" (19:8).<sup>38</sup> His response elicits Jesus' declaration: "Today salvation has come to this house (σήμερον σωτηρία τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο), for he indeed is a son of Abraham" (19:9). The "today salvation" statement (19:9) parallels "today I must receive hospitality in your house" (19:5), and indicates the connection between salvation and hospitality to Jesus.

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<sup>36</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 670, states that the hospitality language "signifies from Jesus' point of view that he hopes, in the context of a shared meal, to forge a relationship with Zacchaeus in which the unifying dynamic is the good news of the kingdom."

<sup>37</sup> Also John P. Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts: An Audience-Oriented Approach* (SBLMS 52; Atlanta: SBL, 1999) 153; David P. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 169.

<sup>38</sup> The traditional interpretation of this as a salvation story is to be preferred given the parallels between this story and Luke 5:27-32; 15:1-32 and salvation coming to Zacchaeus *today* (19:5, 9). See Dennis Hamm, "Luke 19:8 Once Again: Does Zacchaeus Defend or Resolve?" *JBL* 107 (1988) 431-437.

The divine visitor's stay as guest in Zacchaeus' house, his hospitality to Jesus, his rejoicing, and sharing wealth prove Zacchaeus is a "son of Abraham." Further, just as Abraham hosted the divine visitors in his tent and received the gift of Isaac, so Zacchaeus hosts the Lord in his home and receives salvation.<sup>39</sup> Zacchaeus' hospitality to the Lord and sharing possessions with the poor proves his conduct mimics the hospitable Abraham.<sup>40</sup> As God did the impossible for Abraham in giving him a son (Gen. 18:14), so God does the impossible by granting salvation to a rich man (Lk. 18:25-27).<sup>41</sup>

#### D. Inhospitability to Jesus and the Rejection of the Divine Visitation by Israel's Leaders

Whereas women (Luke 10:38-42), sinners (7:36-50), and tax-collectors (19:1-10; cf. 5:27-32) bestow hospitality upon Jesus as guest, and exemplify the hospitality which he requires, Israel's leaders, represented by the Pharisees and lawyers, show inhospitability to Jesus and reject him as the agent of God's visit. The adversarial hospitality scenes between Jesus and Israel's leaders are often centered upon the contention that Jesus should not share hospitality with sinners and outcasts. In other words, their inhospitability to Jesus results from the thinking exemplified by Simon: "If this man was a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him – that she is a sinner" (7:39). While hospitality leads to the incorporation of sinners and outcasts into the new kinship group, these scenes of failed hospitality between Jesus and the Pharisees and lawyers results in

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<sup>39</sup> Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 287; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 672.

<sup>40</sup> Some of these parallels are set forth by Andrew E. Arterbuy, "Zacchaeus: 'A Son of Abraham'?" in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: Volume Three: The Gospel of Luke* (ed. Thomas Hatina; Library of New Testament Studies 376; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2010) 18-31, here, 26-27.

<sup>41</sup> Arterbuy, "Zacchaeus: 'A Son of Abraham'?", 18-31, argues that he is called a son of Abraham because "Jesus' interactions with Zacchaeus resembles the Lord's interactions with Abraham" (p. 19).

failed social incorporation and portrays the latter, due to their inhospitality, in an unfavorable and impious light.<sup>42</sup>

In Luke 11:37-41, when a Pharisee invites Jesus as a guest to his home “to feast with him, and [Jesus] enters in and reclines” (ὅπως ἀριστήσῃ παρ’ αὐτῶ, εἰσελθὼν δὲ ἀνέπεσεν, 11:37b), the host challenges Jesus *the guest* by “marveling” at his refusal to wash ritually before meals (11:38). Jesus responds to the affront by attacking the Pharisees for elevating purity-regulations to exclude the poor and vulnerable, instead of embracing an ethic of solidarity with the poor (11:39-44; cf. 10:25-37).

In another scene when Jesus is invited to share a meal “in the home (εἰς οἶκόν) of a certain ruler of the Pharisees” (14:1), Luke notes their motive in offering hospitality was because they intended to “watch him closely” (ἦσαν παρατηρούμενοι αὐτόν, 14:1b). The language “watch him closely” occurs on two other occasions in Luke, and both contexts bear the connotation of watching *to test or trip up* (6:7; 20:20; cf. 11:37-38).<sup>43</sup> To place the guest in an adversarial setting is one of the heights of corrupted hospitality. In response, however, Jesus enacts divine hospitality through healing the dropsical man (14:2-6). His knowledge of the Pharisees’ disapproval (14:6) is the occasion for his rebuke regarding their banquet etiquette, for their pursuit of “the places of honor” at meals (14:7).<sup>44</sup> In these meal scenes the goal of hospitality is thwarted: social incorporation between outsiders is not accomplished and becomes the occasion for

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<sup>42</sup> David B. Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 2; New York: Peter Lang, 1991) 233, summarizes the results of the Pharisees’ inhospitality to Jesus nicely: “The infringement of the hospitality code destroys the social roles of host and guest; incorporation does not take place; and Jesus, the Pharisees, the and the scribes all revert to a hostile relationship. They are no longer host and guest; they are enemies.”

<sup>43</sup> Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend*, 244.

<sup>44</sup> On meals as occasions for social stratification, see Dennis Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003) 254-256.

hostility and rejection.<sup>45</sup> Further, due to their inhospitality to the agent of the divine visit, the Pharisees and scribes are characterized as impious.

While not the object of their inhospitality, in Luke 15:1-2 it is Jesus' sharing of hospitality with sinners that gives rise to the Pharisees and lawyers' rejection of Jesus:

And all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and scribes were grumbling, saying, 'This one shares hospitality with sinners and he eats with them (ὅτι οὗτος ἁμαρτωλοὺς προσδέχεται καὶ συνεσθίει αὐτοῖς)!' (15:1-2)

Jesus eats with sinners, and given the use of προσδέχομαι, his opponents complain about his act of sharing hospitality with sinners. In other words, Jesus is using hospitality and table-fellowship to, again, incorporate "the wrong people" into the people of God.

In Luke 13:31-35 Jesus warns of the consequences of rejecting him as the agent of God's visit, and in 19:41-44 Israel's inhospitality and rejection of the Lord is complete. In 13:31-35 Jesus exhorts Jerusalem to be prepared to welcome its divine visit(or). "Today and tomorrow" Jesus journeys and performs the divine visit through exorcisms and healings (13:32), but there is a sense of imminent danger, for "on the third day" he will finish his work (13:32b); and "today, tomorrow, and the next [he] must make the journey" to Jerusalem (13:33a).<sup>46</sup> Will the people be ready for the Lord's return?

The warning is portentous, however, for Jesus knows that prophets are not welcomed in Jerusalem (οὐκ ἐνδέχεται, 13:33b), and that the people have "not desired" to embrace him (13:34). Jesus pronounces a conditional warning of judgment against the Temple and its leaders should they reject him: "Behold your house is left to you" (ἰδοὺ

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<sup>45</sup> See further David B. Gowler, "Hospitality and Characterization in Luke 11:37-54: A Socio-Narratological Approach," *Semeia* 64 (1994) 213-251.

<sup>46</sup> On the temporal language and its relationship to the journey motif, see David L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 72-73.

ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν, 13:35a).<sup>47</sup> Should they reject the Lord of the house, the divine presence will abandon the temple (cf. Ezek. 9-11; Jer. 7:8-15; 12:7; 22:5).<sup>48</sup> Jesus' final statement: "you will not see me unless/until you say, 'blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord'" (13:35b; Ps. 118:26) is a warning to respond to the divine visitor with the welcome of blessing.<sup>49</sup> Refusal to "see" and "bless" him will result in the abandonment of the temple.<sup>50</sup> The language of εὐλογημένος is an expression of rejoicing and praise – appropriate responses to the divine visit. Those who proclaim the blessing of Ps. 118:26 "will see" (ἴδητέ) the Lord. Given the Lukan use of sight as recognition, the reader understands that those who proclaim the blessing on Jesus see him as the divine visitor.<sup>51</sup> Should Israel's leaders fail to welcome him, though, they "will not see" their divine visit as salvation and it will mean the judgment of their house (13:35).

When Luke inserts his final journey note that Jesus "journeyed (ἐπορεύετο) ahead up to Jerusalem" (19:28), the reader wonders whether the divine visitor will be greeted with blessing or rejection. Within Luke 19:28-40 numerous journey markers slow narrative time and intensify the drama of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. Jesus enters the city on the colt as Israel's χριστός κύριος (Luke 2:11).<sup>52</sup> When the disciples procure the colt, he instructs them that should anyone inquire of their actions they should

<sup>47</sup> The "house" is a reference to Jerusalem's Temple (Luke 6:4; 11:51; 19:46), but it is likely that it is representative also of the Jerusalem leaders (Luke 1:27, 33, 69).

<sup>48</sup> Klaus Baltzer, "The Meaning of the Temple in the Lukan Writings," *HTR* 58 (1965) 263-277, here, 273.

<sup>49</sup> Dale C. Allison ["Matt. 23:39 = Luke 13:35b as a Conditional Prophecy," *JSNT* 18 (1983) 75-84] argues this saying is a conditional warning that presents the option of Israel responding favorably to Jesus.

<sup>50</sup> Baltzer, "The Meaning of the Temple in the Lukan Writings," 272-274; J. Ross Wagner, "Psalm 118 in Luke-Acts: Tracing a Narrative Thread," in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (eds. C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders; SSEJC; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 154-178, here 162-164.

<sup>51</sup> Allison, "Matt. 23:39 = Luke 13:35b as a Conditional Prophecy," 77-81.

<sup>52</sup> The royal nature of the event and the custom of welcoming kings are well-known. See Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 305-317; Brent Kinman, *Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem: In the Context of Lukan Theology and the Politics of his Day* (AGJU 28; Leiden: Brill, 1995).

say, “Its Lord (ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ) has need of it” (19:31b). And as they are untying it, “its lords” (οἱ κύριοι αὐτοῦ, 19:33) question them, to which they respond “Its Lord (ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ) has need of it” (19:33b). Thus, the procurement of the colt is rooted in Jesus’ lordly identity.<sup>53</sup> The repetition of ὁ κύριος leads the reader to see the scene as God’s hidden visit to Jerusalem.

As the Lord rides upon the colt into Jerusalem, “the whole crowd of the disciples were praising God and rejoicing with a great voice for all the mighty displays of power they had seen” (Luke 19:37b). The disciples, therefore, play the part of Mary, Zechariah, and the shepherds who praise God with joy for Israel’s divine visit (cf. 2:13-14).<sup>54</sup> They rejoice over the power displayed in the divine visitor’s ministry (cf. 10:9, 17-20) and are described as those who *see* (cf. 10:21-24).<sup>55</sup> The content of their praise, taken from Psalm 118:26, is significant, for it is the literary fulfillment of Luke 13:35b: “They were saying, ‘Blessed is the one who comes (εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος), the King, in the name of the Lord (ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου). Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’” (19:38). The cry of the disciples fulfills Jesus’ promise in 13:35, and marks them as those who “see” Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem as the Lord’s coming. Jesus the King is entering Jerusalem “in the name of the Lord” (ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου, 19:38; 13:35b), and as Rowe states, his “entry takes on the character of an embodied coming of the God of Israel as κύριος through his χριστός κύριος.”<sup>56</sup> This coming means blessing and salvation for the disciples – those who *see* the Lord’s coming (19:37). But the divine visit is not good news for Israel’s leaders. Notable in this scene is the absence of any priests, scribes, or

<sup>53</sup> Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 159-163.

<sup>54</sup> See above. Also, see Kindalee Pfremmer De Long, *Surprised by God: Praise Responses in the Narrative of Luke-Acts* (BZNW 166; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009) 222-228.

<sup>55</sup> Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 172, surprisingly states that “there is a hollow ring to their praise.”

<sup>56</sup> Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*, 165.

temple leaders (19:47).<sup>57</sup> Indeed, some Pharisees state: “Teacher, rebuke your disciples” (19:39). The title “teacher” betrays that they do not see Jesus as Lord (e.g., 7:40; 10:25; 11:45).<sup>58</sup> Their request for Jesus to silence the disciples is a plea to hush those who do see him as the divine visitor. These Pharisees are exemplars of those who are blind to the things that make for peace (19:42) and fail to recognize the time of their visitation (19:44b).<sup>59</sup>

Again, narrative time slows thereby foregrounding Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem as he “approaches the city” and weeps (19:41). He has come to the city as its King and Lord (19:31-38), but instead of a city’s joyous welcome of its king, only his disciples have greeted him with blessings – and even they have been rebuked (19:40). Thus, Jesus weeps over Jerusalem’s failure to see the coming of their Lord. Jesus utters a lament, “if only you had recognized on this day, even you, the things which make for peace!” (εἰ ἔγνωσ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ καὶ σὺ τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην, 19:42). Luke has frequently drawn attention to the divine visitor as an agent of peace to the people (e.g., 1:79; 2:14; 2:38; 7:50; 8:48; 10:5-8) and hospitality as one of the proper responses. But the paths of peace have remained hidden from Israel’s leaders and the people.<sup>60</sup> The blessing of peace has not “rested upon” but “has returned” to Jesus for they have shown no hospitality to the divine visitor (cf. 10:6). They have failed to “see” Jesus as God’s agent

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<sup>57</sup> Brent Kinman, “Parousia, Jesus’ ‘A-Triumphal’: Entry, and the Fate of Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44),” *JBL* 118 (1999) 279-294, here 291-292; Wagner, “Psalm 118 in Luke-Acts,” 167. Similarly, see Anthony Le Donne [*The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009) 191-220] who argues that the absence of the high priest’s endorsement of Jesus in his procession into Jerusalem breaks the typological trajectory of the cohesion between the Davidic King and the High Priest (cf. 1 Kgs. 1:32-40; Ps. 118; Zech. 9:9).

<sup>58</sup> Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy, and Friend*, 272-273.

<sup>59</sup> Kinman, “Parousia, Jesus’ ‘A-Triumphal’ Entry, and the Fate of Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44),” 291.

<sup>60</sup> The Pharisees’ desire to silence the disciples (19:39), the Jerusalem leaders’ absence, and the lament over Jerusalem portray the people united in opposition to Jesus. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 689 states: “One can perhaps hear in the background the word of v 14: ‘We do not want this man to rule over us.’”

of peace, and “now it has been hidden from your eyes” (νῦν δὲ ἐκρύβη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου, 19:42b). The divine visitor has remained an outsider to Jerusalem, for the means of unveiling and disclosing the visitor’s identity – i.e., hospitality – has not been offered to the Lord.<sup>61</sup>

Jesus declares that Jerusalem’s destruction will be “because you have not recognized the time of your visitation” (τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου, 19:44b; cf. Jeremiah 6:15 LXX). Luke has portrayed Jesus as “Lord,” as Israel’s divine visitor, and has used the language of “visitation” now on four occasions (Luke 1:68, 78; 7:16; 19:44). But Israel’s rejection, its inhospitality, to the divine visit means judgment instead of God’s gracious salvation. Israel’s leaders have refused to welcome Jesus with hospitality (7:36-50 11:37-38; 14:1-6) and have grumbled at his shared hospitality with sinners and outcasts (15:1-2; 19:6; cf. 5:30). Thus, the Jerusalem Temple’s destruction is the logical consequence of its leaders’ failure to show hospitality to the divine visitor (19:43-44).<sup>62</sup>

#### E. The Theoxeny of Luke 24 and the Continuation of the Divine Visit

I have discussed Luke 24:13-35 in detail in the previous chapter, so only a few comments regarding its literary function are necessary here. The story contains the elements of a theoxeny: Jesus is journeying as a disguised stranger (24:15-16, 28-29); the two disciples offer him the staples of hospitality (24:29-30); through their hospitality Jesus’ disguise is removed and he discloses himself to the eyes of the disciples as the Lord (24:31-32, 35); and Jesus distributes the salvific blessings of his presence as host, insight into the Scriptures, peace, and the outpouring of the Spirit (24:36-49). This

<sup>61</sup> See Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts,” 276-277.

<sup>62</sup> On the Temple’s destruction in Luke, see C. H. Dodd, “The Fall of Jerusalem and the ‘Abomination of Desolation,’” *Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947) 47-54; Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels* (NovTSup 23; Leiden: Brill, 1970).

scene's wedding of hospitality with the climactic recognition and sight of the Lord dramatically reinforces the role hospitality has played in Luke's Gospel as the proper response to the journeying Jesus as the agent of God's visitation. Those who have shown hospitality to Jesus comprise the few who can accurately *see* his identity (Lk. 10:1-24; 19:1-10), whereas the inhospitable remain blind and fail to see who Jesus is (13:31-35; 19:41-44). The theoxeny which concludes Luke's first volume also has a forward-looking literary function. Given that the theoxeny is followed by the risen Jesus' final words where he commissions the apostles to continue the divine visitation as the Lord's Spirit-anointed witnesses even to all the Gentiles (24:44-49), it would not be surprising to find the book of Acts narrating scenes where the Lord's presence is taken up by the traveling witnesses who enact the divine visit, who bestow God's salvation and revelation upon those offering hospitality to them, and who thereby incorporate the hospitable into God's people. The theoxeny of Lk. 24:13-35 establishes that the Lord's salvific presence and his revelatory self-disclosure will be gifted to those showing hospitality to his journeying witnesses (24:48).

## II. God's Second Visitation of his People in the Acts of the Apostles

Luke continues to use hospitality to describe the people's response to the divine visit in his narration of its expansion into the Mediterranean world. As the journeying Jesus dominates over one-third of Luke's Gospel, so the itinerant Word of God and Christian witnesses are "an omnipresent theme of [Luke's second] narrative."<sup>63</sup> The itinerancy of the Word and the witnesses functions to place travel at the heart of the narrative as they bring the divine visit to new cities and regions. Within the plot of Acts

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<sup>63</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles'* (SNTSMS 121; trans. Ken McKinney, et. al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 234.

the journey motif allows Luke the opportunity to portray the continuation of the travelling divine visit. Here hospitality to the traveling Word and witnesses expresses acceptance of the divine visit and results in salvation, familial incorporation, and the establishment of the Word in new regions. The hospitality which occurs between members of the community demonstrates the creation of a new fictive kinship group which, while encompassing Jews, is increasingly comprised of Gentiles. Though Jews are by no means excluded from the creation of the new kinship group, Luke frequently portrays them as inhospitable to the Word and the apostolic witnesses.

#### A. Hospitality and Inhospitability to the Travelling “Word of God”

Some scholars have with good reason suggested that the primary character of the Acts of the Apostles and the agent of the continuing divine visitation is the traveling ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>64</sup> One may justifiably refer to “the Word” as a character, for in the summaries of the Word’s expansion into new territories Luke refers to its “growth and multiplication” (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἠΰξανεν καὶ ἐπληθύνετο, Acts 6:7; 12:24), and its increase in “strength” and “power” (οὕτως κατὰ κράτος τοῦ κυρίου ὁ λόγος ἠΰξανεν καὶ ἰσχυεν, 19:20).<sup>65</sup> That the “Word” is personified as the powerful agent of the Lord’s presence is seen by the fact that in Luke’s Gospel it is John and Jesus who are spoken of similarly as “growing and becoming powerful” (ἠΰξανεν καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο, Lk. 1:80; 2:40).<sup>66</sup> Further, the summaries of the growth of the Word depict it as the powerful

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<sup>64</sup> See Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 36: “The Theme of Acts is neither the history of the Church, nor the activity of the Spirit, but the expansion of the Word.” Also, see Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971) 98: “It is this ‘Word of God’ which fills the time after Pentecost...Here then is the clamp which fastens the two eras together and justifies, indeed demands, the continuation of the first book...”

<sup>65</sup> Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 147-180; Leo O’Reilly, *Word and Sign in the Acts of the Apostles: A Study in Lucan Theology* (Analecta Gregoriana; Rome: Editrice Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, 1987).

<sup>66</sup> The parallel is also noted by Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 160.

agent that conquers opposition. Coming on the heels of the death of Herod Agrippa I, who persecuted believers and “did not give glory to God” (ἀνθ’ ὧν οὐκ ἔδωκεν τὴν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ, 12:23), Luke notes that “the Word of God grew strong and multiplied” (12:24). Again, the “exaltation of the name of the Lord Jesus” (19:17b) over its competitors in Ephesus leads to the summary: “the Word of the Lord grew strong and prevailed with power” (19:20).<sup>67</sup> The apostles who proclaim ὁ λόγος demonstrate its power through the performance of “signs and wonders” (6:8; 8:6, 13; 14:13).<sup>68</sup> That Luke portrays “the Word” as a personification of the divine visit is again clear in Acts 13:48 where the Gentiles “rejoice and give glory to the Word of the Lord.”<sup>69</sup> Further, Paul is spoken of as “possessed” by the Word (συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος, 18:5), and the parallel between “proclaiming the Word” (τὸν λόγον, 8:4) and “preaching...Christ” (τὸν Χριστόν, 8:5) indicates that the Word bears Christ’s presence.<sup>70</sup>

But “the Word” is not only a divine agent, it is the *travelling* divine visitor who journeys to Mediterranean cities. The ὁ λόγος journeys to: Jerusalem (2:41; 4:4), Samaria (8:4, 14), Cornelius in Caesarea (10:36; 11:1), Cyprus (13:5, 12), Pisidian Antioch (13:26, 42-44), Lystra (14:3), Perga (14:25), Antioch (15:35), Philippi (16:32), Berea (17:11-13), Corinth (18:5, 11), Ephesus (19:10, 20), and Miletus (20:32).<sup>71</sup> Luke never speaks of ὁ λόγος as returning to a city a second time. Thus, the “Word” is absent

<sup>67</sup> On Acts 19:20 as a theological interpretation of Paul’s time in Ephesus, see Scott Shauf, *Theology as History, History as Theology: Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19* (BZNW 133; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005) 291-299.

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 38-76.

<sup>69</sup> On God and Jesus as object of δοξάζω, see Lk. 2:20; 4:15; 5:25-26; 7:16; 13:13; 23:47; Acts 4:21; 11:18.

<sup>70</sup> Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 253, states: “The parallels between the portrayal of Jesus in Luke and the word in Acts affirm the narrative unity of the two works.”

<sup>71</sup> The itinerary of ὁ λόγος is traced by Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 150-156.

from chapters 21-27 given that it has already conquered Caesarea (11:1) and Jerusalem (2:41). Luke speaks of the “growth” and “increase” of the traveling λόγος as the conquest of new geographical regions and the foundational creation of communities of God’s people through the Mediterranean cities.<sup>72</sup> The apostles are, then, not owners who possess “the Word” but God’s “witnesses” who give testimony to “a Word that precedes them, the effects of which they have to recognize.”<sup>73</sup>

One way Luke describes the appropriate response to the traveling λόγος is through the language of hospitality. Luke’s Gospel uses forms of δέχομαι to describe the hospitable reception of the divine visit (e.g., Luke 9:53; 10:8, 10).<sup>74</sup> Thus, it is hardly accidental that Luke uses a form of δέχομαι to describe the hospitable reception of ὁ λόγος in four geographical regions which correspond to the geographical itinerary of Acts 1:8. The welcoming of ὁ λόγος occurs after signs of the divine visit’s manifestation in that region and indicates the initial establishment of a Christian community.<sup>75</sup> Thus, the first description of welcoming the Word takes place in Jerusalem after the outpouring of the Spirit has been demonstrated through ecstatic speech and the proclamation of the Word (2:1-36). Peter exhorts the audience to “be saved from this crooked generation” (2:40b). The adjective “crooked” (τῆς σκολιᾶς) in combination with “be saved” (σώθητε) recalls Luke 3:4-6 (Isa. 40:3-5) where the coming of “the salvation of God” (Lk. 3:6) is described in terms of “the Lord’s paths” (τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, Luke 3:4) being made straight instead of crooked (3:5b). Peter uses the language of Luke 3:4-6 to warn the people of an inhospitable response to God’s visit. Thus, the conversion

<sup>72</sup> In this vein, the echoes to the growth of the Israelites in Exodus 1:7, 20 are relevant. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 167-176; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 163 n. 93.

<sup>73</sup> Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 37.

<sup>74</sup> On which, see chapter 5. See also, Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.235-236.

<sup>75</sup> The typical signs of the divine visitation are absent, however, in Berea in Acts 17:11.

of Jews in Jerusalem is described as “those who welcomed the Word of his” (οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, 2:41a). Luke uses hospitality language to signify the foundational creation of the restored Israel – the first accomplishment of Acts 1:8.

In Samaria, Philip proclaims “the Word” (8:4), performs signs and exorcisms (8:6-13), and the people respond with “much joy in that city” (8:8). The establishment of the Word in Samaria is also described with hospitality language: “when the Jerusalem apostles heard that Samaria had welcomed the Word of God...” (δέδεκται ἡ Σαμάρεια τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, 8:14a). The symbolic significance of Samaria, as representing the tribes of Israel’s northern kingdom, and its inclusion within God’s people is often noted.<sup>76</sup> By showing hospitality to the Word, the Samaritans are engrafted into a new kinship group, fulfilling the words: “you will be my witnesses in...Samaria” (Acts 1:8).

In Caesarea of Judea, after “the Word” (τὸν λόγον, 10:36) is heard by Cornelius and the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit descends “upon all those who heard the Word” (τὸν λόγον, 10:44b). Again, Luke summarizes the conversion of the Gentiles in Judea with hospitality language: “and the apostles and the brothers in Judea heard that the Gentiles had welcomed the Word of God” (τὰ ἔθνη ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, 11:1). Showing hospitality to the Word is a fitting way for Luke to summarize the role hospitality plays between Cornelius and Peter, resulting in the Gentiles’ incorporation into the new kinship group. The Judean church’s response of “giving glory to God” (ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεόν) confirms that the divine visit has incorporated the Gentiles into God’s people (11:18). Thus, the Word has come to Gentiles in Judea, fulfilling the promise: “you will be my witnesses...in Judea” (Acts 1:8).

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<sup>76</sup> Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 127-129.

Finally, in contrast to the synagogue in Thessalonica, the Jews of Berea “welcomed the Word (ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον) with zeal every day examining the scriptures....” (17:11). The result is that many believed, including some “Greek women and men of high standing” (17:12). The Word has now moved into the heart of Macedonia bringing those from “the end of the earth” into the community (Acts 1:8).<sup>77</sup> Thus, Luke employs δέχομαι in four summary statements to describe the hospitable reception of the Word in Jerusalem (2:41), Samaria (8:14), Judea among the Gentiles (11:1), and among Jews and Gentiles in Berea (17:11). Given the role hospitality plays in the creation of new kinship groups, Luke’s symbolic use of showing hospitality to the Word of God is eminently appropriate.

On three occasions Luke uses the language of inhospitality to describe those who reject the ὁ λόγος. In each instance, the ethnic identity of those who show inhospitality to the Word is Jewish.

In Cyprus, Paul proclaims “the Word of God” (τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, 13:7b) to the proconsul Sergius Paulus. When Elymas, described by Luke as a “Jewish false prophet magician” (13:6), tries to turn the proconsul from the Word, Paul rebukes him for inhospitality to the Lord: “...*will you not cease from making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?*” (οὐ παύση διαστρέφων τὰς ὁδοὺς κυρίου τὰς εὐθείας, 13:9-10). The italicized phrase uses the language of Isaiah 40:3-5, quoted in Luke 3:4-6, to portray opposition to the paths of the Word.<sup>78</sup> Opposition to God’s work and the attempt to hinder the Word’s success is described as inhospitality. The Word of the Lord, however, conquers amidst inhospitable opposition, as “the hand of the Lord” blinds Elymas, and

<sup>77</sup> On “the end of the earth” as a reference to Gentiles, see Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 91-96.

<sup>78</sup> Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 224; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.234.

the proconsul believes and is “astounded at the teaching of the Lord” (13:11-12). The infliction of blindness upon the Jewish false prophet is fitting judgment to one showing inhospitality to the divine visit as it symbolizes his inability to see divine activity.

In Pisidian Antioch, when Paul proclaims “the Word of God” to the Gentiles (13:46-47), they “rejoice and give glory to the Word of the Lord” (13:48). The result is that “the Word of the Lord spread through the whole country” (13:49). The Jews respond, however, with inhospitality against the apostles and “cast them out (ἐξέβαλον αὐτούς) of their region” (13:50b).<sup>79</sup> Luke interprets this as an inhospitable act and a sign of their rejection of the divine visit: note the allusion to Lk. 10:11 – the apostles “shook off the dust from their feet against them” (οἱ δὲ ἐκτιναξάμενοι τὸν κονιορτὸν τῶν ποδῶν ἐπ’ αὐτούς, Acts 13:51).<sup>80</sup>

The narration of Paul’s proclamation of the Word to the Jews in Corinth is similar. When Paul becomes “possessed by the Word” he testifies to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ (18:5). In response to their opposition, Paul “shakes out his garments” (ἐκτιναξάμενος τὰ ἱμάτια, 18:6a) and speaks a word of judgment against them (18:6b).<sup>81</sup> In sum, one way Luke narrates the continuation of the divine visit is through the traveling Word which journeys from city to city, manifests itself through signs and proclamation, and is shown hospitality or inhospitality which results in salvation and inclusion, or judgment and exclusion.

<sup>79</sup> On ἐκβάλλω as inhospitality, see its use in 3 John 10 where it is used in opposition to proper hospitality. So Abraham J. Malherbe, “Hospitality and Inhospitality in the Church,” in *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Second ed., Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 92-112, here 108-109.

<sup>80</sup> That the apostles’ actions in Acts 13:51 and 18:6 are done in accordance with Jesus’ command in Luke 9:5 and 10:11 is argued by See Henry J. Cadbury, “Dust and Garments,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity. Part 1: The Acts of the Apostles* (eds. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury; BC 1; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 269-277; cf. Bart J. Koet, *Dreams and Scripture in Luke-Acts: Collected Essays* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006) 180-181.

<sup>81</sup> So David Lertis Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts: Pattern and Interpretation* (JSNTSup 123; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 173; Pervo, *Acts*, 344.

## B. Hospitality and Inhospitality to the Traveling Emissaries of the Lord

Luke uses the practice of hospitality to narrate Peter's crossing into Gentile-space which results in the creation of a new multiethnic kinship group and the incorporation of the Gentiles within God's people. Hospitality between the witnesses and Gentiles signifies God's own inclusion of the Gentiles as belonging to his covenant people (cf. Acts 15:14). Luke's continued narration of shorter hospitality scenes between the apostolic witnesses and Gentiles should be understood within this framework. The paradigmatic significance of the Cornelius-Peter story and the affirmation of the divine visit's move to the Gentiles are cemented at the Jerusalem council where Peter declares that God has "made no distinction between us and them and has cleansed their hearts by faith" (15:9). James supports Peter and declares: "God first made a visitation to take from the Gentiles a people for his name" (πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, 15:14). Note the familiar language of "God's visitation" applied to God's "first" act of extending divine hospitality to Cornelius and the Gentiles which results in the multiethnic integration of Jew and Gentile (Acts 10-11).<sup>82</sup> That the response of hospitality to the divine visitation has as its goal the recognition of God's salvation for the Gentiles and their incorporation into this family is indicated by James' words "to take a people from the Gentiles for his name."<sup>83</sup> Thus, the λαός of God, his special possession, is now inclusive of Gentiles whose hearts have been cleansed by faith. James' statement confirms that it is "God" who is advancing his visit to the Gentiles in

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<sup>82</sup> See Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 172.

<sup>83</sup> On this phrase and its allusion to OT texts which speak of Israel as God's possession, see Nils Dahl, "'A People for his Name' (Acts 15:14)," *NTS* 4 (1957-58) 319-327; Jacques Dupont, "*LAOS EX ETHNON*," in *Études sur les Actes des Apôtres* (idem. *Lectio Divina* 45; Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1967) 361-365; Richard Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles (Acts 15.13-21)," in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed. Ben Witherington III; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 154-184, here, 170-172. On *laos* as a reference to Israel: Lk. 1:17, 68, 77; 2:32; 7:16; 20:1; 22:26; 24:19; Acts 2:47; 3:23; 4:10.

Paul's mission (cf. 15:4, 8, and 12). The literary placement of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) is significant for Paul's mission to the Gentiles and the continuing theme of divine visits and hospitality.<sup>84</sup> The establishment of "the Word" in new territories through Paul and the witnesses takes place at the behest of divine activity, and the divine activity is responded to appropriately through hospitality.

In Paul's mission hospitality functions as the positive Gentile response to the continuation of God's visit, to highlight the social incorporation of the Gentiles into this kinship group, and to establish the Gentile house as sacred cultic space thereby founding the Christian cult in new places.<sup>85</sup> The converse holds true as well as Jewish inhospitality functions as the negative Jewish response to God's visitation, to highlight their exclusion from this kinship group, and to facilitate the transition from the Jewish synagogue to the Gentile house as sacred space for the new cult.

That Paul's Macedonian mission is to be viewed as the outworking of God's plan to visit the Gentiles is clear from the epiphany in Acts 16:6-10.<sup>86</sup> Divine initiative hinders Paul from continuing his ministry in Asia: they are forbidden "to speak the Word (τὸν λόγον) in Asia by the Holy Spirit" (16:6b) and "the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them" to speak in Bithynia (16:7). Paul's vision of the Macedonian man calling "come to Macedonia and help us" initiates the movement of the Word and witnesses into new territory (16:9). Paul interprets the vision as legitimating his mission: "so God called us to proclaim the good news to them" (16:10b).

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<sup>84</sup> On the Jerusalem Council as the legitimation of Paul's mission to the Gentiles, see Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The social and political motivations of Lucan theology* (SNTSMS 57; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 99-101; John B. Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany: Prison-Escape in Acts of the Apostles* (BZNTW 131; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 263.

<sup>85</sup> See Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 187.

<sup>86</sup> See Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 140-142.

When Paul and his party arrive in Philippi they look for a prayer house (προσευχήν, 16:13). The “prayer house” is likely a reference to a Jewish synagogue.<sup>87</sup> Luke never narrates whether they find a prayer house, though Paul does find a group of women and Lydia (16:13-14). Lydia’s identity as a Gentile God-fearer woman will function as a test case for the Jerusalem council’s affirmation of “God’s visit” moving to Gentiles. Her response to Paul’s proclamation is exemplary: Lydia “listened, [and] the Lord opened up her heart to pay attention to the words spoken by Paul” (ἤκουεν, ἦς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου, 16:14b). The characterization of Lydia is reminiscent of Mary who showed hospitality to Jesus by listening to his words (Lk. 10:39b).<sup>88</sup> Lydia’s response also recalls Luke 24 where the disciples “eyes are opened (διηνοιχθησαν) and they recognize [Jesus]” (Luke 24:31a) within the context of hospitality.<sup>89</sup> Thus, as Jesus opened the disciples’ eyes, so the Lord continues his revelatory activity with Lydia. The result is that “she and her household are baptized” (ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, 16:15a). Lydia’s response to the Lord’s opening her heart is to open her own doors: “if you have judged me faithful to the Lord, come in and remain in my house; and she compelled us” (εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε, καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς, 16:15b). Lydia’s hospitality is the right response to the divine visit as it is paired with her “faithfulness to the Lord” which recalls the agreement for the basis of Gentile membership in God’s people (hearts cleansed by faith, 15:9b). Lydia’s “compelling”

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<sup>87</sup> Reasons include: Acts 16:16, “we were going to *the prayer house*” (προσευχήν), Paul’s practice to first visit the synagogue upon arriving into a city (e.g., Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1), the equivalence between “prayer-house” and “synagogue” in Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2:10) and Philo (*Flaccus* 45-59), and the fact they looked near water where synagogues were located for washings (Ezra 8:15, 21). Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 127-134.

<sup>88</sup> So Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 146 n. 59.

<sup>89</sup> The parallel is recognized by Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1.207 n. 1; Pervo, *Acts*, 403.

(16:15b) Paul to receive her hospitality presses him to make good on his commitment to include Gentiles within God’s people based on faith not ethnicity.<sup>90</sup>

The reader familiar with the cultural script is unsurprised to find Lydia respond to the divine visitation and its blessings with hospitality. Not unlike Dionysus’ transfer of his cult to Thebes in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, Luke portrays the movement of the divine visitation into new territory and “the reception of the Christian cult – its message, conversion rituals, and worship practices – ...in terms of hospitality shown to the Christian leaders.”<sup>91</sup> In the Lukan narrative, the phrases “enter into the house” and “stay” alludes to Jesus’ instructions where hospitality was legislated as the proper response to the divine visit (Lk. 10:7-8). The divine visit thereby took root within hospitable households who shared food and possessions with the emissaries.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, we have seen how Cornelius’ house is the location where the divine visit is welcomed and takes root. Finally, Lydia’s “pressing” (Acts 16:15b) Paul to receive her hospitality is reminiscent of the disciples who “press [Jesus], saying ‘Stay with us’” (παρεβιάσαντο αὐτὸν λέγοντες, μείνον μεθ’ ἡμῶν, Lk. 24:29a).<sup>93</sup> This parallel to Luke 24:29 along with the Lord “opening up” Lydia’s heart suggests the continuation of the Lord’s visit, now to Gentiles in new territory, and their response of hospitality epitomized by Lydia.

Paul’s acceptance of Lydia’s hospitality has significant social ramifications. Lydia’s acceptance of the strangers’ cultic ritual of baptism incorporates her and her household into the cult. And likewise the hospitality which occurs between these two

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<sup>90</sup> Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 148; Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, 101; Pervo, *Acts*, 404.

<sup>91</sup> Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 255. On the role of hospitality in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, see chapter three.

<sup>92</sup> On Lk. 10:1-13 and Acts’ hospitality scenes, see Matson, *The Household Conversions in Acts*, 135-182.

<sup>93</sup> These are the only two occurrences of the verb παρεβιάζομαι within the Lukan narrative. When the visitors arrive in Sodom, Lot invites them to come into his home (Gen. 19:1-2). When they decline: “[Lot] urged them strongly (κατεβιάζετο αὐτούς), so they turned aside to him and entered his house...” (19:3).

distinct parties brings her household and the Christian movement into a binding permanent relationship. Based on the dynamics of ritualized friendship one expects a new kinship group created out of former strangers that shares its resources. Lydia's demand (παρεβιάσατο, 16:15) that Paul accept her hospitality is a request that Paul accept the integration of her household with the Christian cult. That a kinship group has been created through hospitality is evident when, before Paul and Silas are forced to flee, "they entered into Lydia's house and saw *the brethren* (τοὺς ἀδελφούς), and encouraged them and departed" (16:40). Finally, Lydia's hospitality in her οἶκος creates a new space for the Christian cult other than the synagogue. The contrast between the house and the synagogue is evident in their attempt to proclaim in the latter but only establish the Christian cult in the former.<sup>94</sup> The place where disciples and family are located who listen to the Word (16:14, 40), who share resources (16:15), and function as a base for his mission has become the hospitable household (16:15, 40).<sup>95</sup>

The hospitality of a pagan household in response to the divine visit further establishes the Christian cult in Philippi in the conversion of the jailer in Acts 16:19-34. Following Paul's exorcism of a slave girl (16:16), Paul and Silas are imprisoned for "disturbing our city" (16:20) and teaching "customs which are impermissible for us" (16:21). The charges are stereotypical polemic against foreign cults.<sup>96</sup> The imprisonment of the agents of the divine visit is ironic and resonates with stories where "god-fighters"

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<sup>94</sup> So Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 150.

<sup>95</sup> On the household as the base for the Christian mission see Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 85-121; Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 98-99; John H. Elliott, "Temple Versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, 211-240.

<sup>96</sup> See Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 226-233; Pervo, *Acts*, 407; C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 26-27.

oppose the establishment of a cult or appearance of a god in a new location.<sup>97</sup> The epiphanic cues of the divine visitation within the Philippian jail are obvious: Paul and Silas “praying and hymning to God” (16:25), “a sudden and great earthquake” that shakes the prison and “opens all the doors” (16:26a), the release of the prisoners (16:26), and the guard’s response of trembling and falling down (16:29).<sup>98</sup> The elements of prayer, hymning, and earthquakes portray the prison as sacred space (e.g., Acts 4:23-31). In this context, the jailer’s response to them as “lords” (κύριοι) and his question “what must I do to be saved?” (16:30) indicate he sees them as connected to divine power. Given Luke’s use of κύριος to signify God and Jesus, and the pagan predilection to see deity manifested in powerful humans (e.g., Acts 14:8-18), the jailer’s reference to Paul and Silas as κύριοι indicates his confused but not entirely wrong conception of them as gods.

Pervo perceptively notes: “The jailer treats the affair as a theoxeny.”<sup>99</sup> The narrative moves from the manifestation of the divine visit (16:25-29) to the jailer’s acceptance of the Christian cult in his home. His request for “lights” (φῶτα, 16:29) symbolizes divine disclosure (cf. Luke 24:31). Paul and Silas interpret the epiphanic signs as the Lord’s presence. Thus, they call on him to “believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household (σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου) will be saved” (16:31a), and they proclaim “the Word of the Lord with all in his house” (ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 16:32).<sup>100</sup> The Gentile οἶκός is the setting for proclamation (16:32) and the locale for hospitality (verse 34); it comprises the group of people which receives salvation, believes, and is baptized (verses

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<sup>97</sup> The classic example is Dionysus in Euripides’ *Bacchae*. See Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 29-91; Richard Seaford, “Thunder, Lightning and Earthquake in the *Bacchae* and the Acts of the Apostles,” in *What is a God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity* (ed. Alan B. Lloyd; London: Duckworth, 1997) 139-151, esp. 141-142. Also, Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 501-502; Pervo, *Acts*, 409-411.

<sup>98</sup> On the epiphanic nature of these elements, see Weaver, *Plots of Epiphany*, 266-269.

<sup>99</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 412.

<sup>100</sup> Thus, in response to the jailer’s calling them “lords,” Paul and Silas point them to “the Lord.”

31, 33, and 34). The repeated mention of the οἶκός indicates that the establishment of the divine visit within the οἶκός is the goal of the epiphany.

The relationship between the Gentile household and “the Lord” is formally ratified through the jailer’s hospitality to the Lord’s emissaries. The jailer’s “taking them into his home” (ἀναγαγών τε αὐτούς εἰς τὸν οἶκον, 16:34a; παραλαβὼν αὐτούς ἐν..., 16:33; cf. 16:32), “washing their wounds” (16:33), and “setting before them a table” (παρέθηκεν τράπεζαν, 16:34) are markers of a hospitality scene. The reference to “the table” recalls the Gospel’s description of Jesus who instructs his emissaries to eat in hospitable households (Luke 10:7-8). The note that the jailer and his whole household “rejoiced” (ἠγαλλιάσατο, Acts 16:34) during the meal is Lukan grammar for recognition of the divine visit.<sup>101</sup> The hospitality meal functions on at least three levels: a) it establishes the hospitable Gentile jailer as recipient of the divine visit; b) it signifies the continued presence of the risen Jesus through the table; c) and it incorporates two ethnic entities into one multiethnic kinship group.

After leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas arrive in Thessalonica where they find a synagogue (17:1). Luke’s note that Paul “enters into” (εἰσῆλθεν) the synagogue “according to [his] custom” (17:2) draws attention to Paul’s inability to establish the Christian cult in the synagogue and, rather, highlights his success within households. Luke narrates Paul’s proclamation using the divine visitation language of Luke 24: “from the Scriptures (ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν) he was opening up and setting before them (διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος) that it was necessary (ἔδει) for Christ to suffer and be

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<sup>101</sup> Commenting on the sharing of the meal and rejoicing and its similarity to Acts 2:42-47, Pervo, *Acts*, 413 states: “The experience of the early Jerusalem community is recurring on gentile soil.” See also, Philippe-Henri Menoud, “The Acts of the Apostles and the Eucharist,” in *Jesus Christ and the Faith: A Collection of Studies* (trans. E. M. Paul; PTMS 18; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978) 84-106, here 89-90.

raised from the dead” (17:2b-3a). Paul’s proclamation draws upon Lukan texts which have narrated encounters with the presence of the risen Lord. Thus, Paul’s “opening up” the Scriptures recalls the Lord who “opened” (διηνοίχθησαν) the disciples’ eyes (Luke 24:31) and “opened (διήνοιγεν) the Scriptures” (Luke 24:33) regarding the Messiah (Luke 24:26, 46). His proclamation recalls Lydia for whom “the Lord opened (διήνοιξεν) her heart” to Paul’s message (Acts 16:14).<sup>102</sup> Similarly, Paul’s act of “setting before” them (παρατιθέμενος) the kerygma recalls revelatory hospitality scenes such as the jailer’s “setting before them a table” (παρέθηκεν τράπεζαν, 16:34) and Jesus’ command to his disciples to “eat that which is set before you” (ἔσθίετε τὰ παρατιθέμενα ὑμῖν, Luke 10:8). Thus, Luke describes Paul’s proclamation as “opening up” and “setting before” them the Scriptures to draw attention to the presence of the revelatory divine visit.

The response to Paul’s preaching in the synagogue is mixed: some *Greek* God-fearers and women are persuaded (17:4), while “the Jews become jealous,” set the city in an uproar, and form a mob to “attack the house of Jason” (ἐπιστάντες τῆ οἰκίᾳ Ἰάσονος, 17:5). Based on the mob’s search for Paul and Silas at Jason’s house and the reference to them as guests to “whom Jason has shown hospitality” (οὓς ὑποδέδεκται Ἰάσων, 17:7a), it is evident that Paul and Silas have made Jason’s house their base. Unable to find them at the house, “they drag Jason and some brothers” (ἔσυρον Ἰάσονα καὶ τινὰς ἀδελφούς, 17:6a) out of the house to the magistrates.<sup>103</sup> The reference to

<sup>102</sup> These parallels are also noted by Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.206-207.

<sup>103</sup> The language used to describe the Thessalonians’ inhospitality to the household is reminiscent of Luke’s description of Saul who was “going into house after house (κατὰ τοὺς εἰσπορευόμενος) and dragging out men and women to hand them over to prison” (8:3). Saul’s inhospitality (8:3) is remarkable given his summary of his ministry as proclaiming the gospel “...from house to house” (κατ’ οἴκου, 20:20).

“some brothers” inhabiting Jason’s house again indicates that the house, not the synagogue, has become the locale for the reception of the Christian message and base of Paul’s mission.<sup>104</sup> The Jews bring charges to the magistrates against the Christians: “they are disrupting the world” (17:6b), they act against “Caesar’ decrees” (17:7a), and they proclaim Jesus as a rival king (17:7b).<sup>105</sup> In lieu of the script of an appearance of a deity or a new cult, which Acts 17:2-4 has just narrated, the charges should be understood as the inhospitable rejection of the divine visit in Thessalonica. Luke has portrayed the antagonists of the Christian cult as rabidly inhospitable (cf. 13:50-51). They gather a crowd to purge the cult from their city (17:5), they attack the house of Jason (17:5b), they drag Jason and the “brothers and sisters” from the house (17:6a), and they seek to harm Jason’s guests (17:7a). Thus, the divine visitation and its messengers are rejected by the synagogue (17:2-3), but it is welcomed within the hospitable household. Thus, the Bereans form a positive contrast to Thessalonica’s inhospitality as the divine visit takes root and “they show hospitality to the Word” (ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον, 17:11a).

One finds similar dynamics in Paul’s stay in Corinth (18:1-11). Paul first receives hospitality from the Jews Aquila and Priscilla (ἔμενον παρ’ αὐτοῖς, 18:3), while he proclaims in the synagogue (18:4). When the Jews reject “the Word” Paul interprets their rejection as a sign of inhospitality, and “he shakes out his garments against them” (18:6; cf. Lk. 10:10-11) declaring that “from now on I am free to go to the Gentiles” (18:6b). The contrast between the synagogue as inhospitable to the Word and witnesses, and the “house” as hospitable and locus of the Christian cult continues as Paul “transfers from [the synagogue] and enters into the house (εἰσηλθεν εἰς οἰκίαν) of a God-fearer named

<sup>104</sup> Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 169-170.

<sup>105</sup> On the charges, see Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 95-99.

Titius Justus” (18:7a). The symbolic contrast between the inhospitable synagogue and hospitable household is suggested by the note that Titius’ “house was next door to the synagogue” (οὐ ἡ οἰκία ἦν συνομοροῦσα τῇ συναγωγῇ, 18:7b). Heightening the contrast is that the establishment of Paul in Titius’ house leads to the conversion of the synagogue leader and his household: “Crispus the chief synagogue leader with his entire household believed in the Lord” (18:8a). That they convert in the Gentile house and not the synagogue establishes the household as cultic space. Crispus and his household are representatives for “many other Corinthians who when they heard, they believed and were baptized” (18:8). Again, hospitality to the Christian messengers “becomes the concrete expression of household salvation.”<sup>106</sup> The establishment of the divine visit in Corinth through hospitable households is confirmed by Paul’s vision of the Lord (18:9) who declares “I am with you,” and promises the cult’s success in Corinth: “I have many people in this city” (18:10).

### C. The Jewish Leaders Reject God’s Second Visitation

The relationship between hospitality and the creation of a kinship group is evident in Paul’s final journey to Jerusalem where hospitality to Paul is bestowed by “the disciples” and “the brethren.”<sup>107</sup> The hospitality which Paul receives demonstrates that there is now a significant multiethnic kinship group which bestows hospitality upon Paul as a sign of acceptance of his message. In Tyre Paul searches for “disciples” where “we remained (ἐπεμείναμεν) for seven days” and who “sent us off” (προπεμπόντων ἡμᾶς, 21:4-5). In Ptolemais, Paul and his crew receive hospitality from the brethren (τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἐμείναμεν, 21:7b). Later, in Caesarea they “enter into the house (εἰσελθόντες

<sup>106</sup> Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts*, 182.

<sup>107</sup> See Hays, *Luke’s Wealth Ethics*, 249-20; F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: The Study of Roles and Relations* (JSNTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992) 258-262.

εἰς τὸν οἶκον) of Philip” and “remained (ἐμείναμεν) with him” (21:8). After receiving his hospitality (Ἐπιμενόντων, 21:10), they come to the house of the Cypriote disciple Mnason “with whom they receive hospitality” (παρ’ ᾧ ξενισθῶμεν, 21:16). Upon arrival to Jerusalem, “the brothers welcome” (ἀπεδέξαντο ἡμᾶς οἱ ἀδελφοί) Paul and his crew (21:17). On Paul’s journey to Rome he receives hospitality from the Maltese islanders and Publius (to which we will return in due course; 28:1-10), but Luke also notes that he receives hospitality from brethren in Puteoli: “we found brethren (ἀδελφούς) and we were invited to receive hospitality (ἐπιμεῖναι) from them for seven days” (28:14). When he arrives in Rome “the brethren” (οἱ ἀδελφοί) greet Paul (28:15). Throughout, the bestowal of hospitality to Paul is “expected” and “matter of course.”<sup>108</sup> Those who bestow hospitality are described with the familial language – “the brethren.” Thus, by the end of Paul’s mission one finds an established multiethnic network of kin which demonstrates its acceptance of the divine visit through hospitality to Paul.

In contrast to this kinship group which has demonstrated its acceptance of Paul through hospitality, Paul’s trial scenes (chapters 21-26) narrate the Jewish leaders’ rejection of God’s visit as embodied in Paul’s witness to the risen Christ. In his defense speeches, Luke portrays Paul’s mission as giving testimony to God’s visitation of his people through the risen Christ.<sup>109</sup> This divine visit through the Messiah is *for* the Jewish people and is the fulfillment of their Scriptures. The Jewish leaders, however, represented by the chief priest and Sanhedrin, reject Paul’s message and thus once again reject God’s visitation.

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<sup>108</sup> Hays, *Luke’s Wealth Ethics*, 252-253.

<sup>109</sup> The christological aspect of Paul’s defense speeches are rightly highlighted in Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.285-292.

First, Paul characterizes his entire mission, including his defense speeches, as nothing other than the obedient testimony to God’s visitation of his people through the risen Christ.<sup>110</sup> The risen Lord is the one who initiated and stands behind Paul’s mission. Twice Paul recounts how his violent attempts to eradicate “the Way” (22:3-5; 26:9-12) were thwarted by the risen Lord. The language of “light” (22:6, 9, 11; 26:13), “heaven” (22:6; 26:13, 19), “sight” (22:13; 26:16, 18), “seeing” Jesus (22:14, 18), and the title “Lord” (22:8, 10; 26:15) portrays the event as a direct encounter with the agent of God’s visit. Thus, it is the resurrected Christ who calls Paul to give testimony to all people: “you will be a witness (μάρτυς) for [Christ] to all people of what you have seen and heard” (22:15); during his trial in Jerusalem the Lord (ὁ κύριος) appeared to Paul saying, “As you have testified about me (τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ) in Jerusalem, so you must (δεῖ) give testimony even in Rome” (23:11); again Christ states, “I have appeared to you for this purpose to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and those in which I will appear to you (ὧν τε εἶδές με ὧν τε ὀφθήσομαι σοι)” (26:16).

Second, this divine visit is *for* the Jewish people, belongs to the Jewish people, and is the fulfillment of their hopes.<sup>111</sup> God has, again, visited his people through resurrecting the Messiah, and has offered repentance and salvation in his name – and this all in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Thus, it is not simply “resurrection” that Paul proclaims, it is God’s resurrection of Messiah Jesus in the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Paul states, then, to Felix that he “believes everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets” and that this is the basis for his hope in the resurrection (24:14-

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<sup>110</sup> That Paul’s witness to Christ’s resurrection from the dead is the primary reason for his trials is argued by Alexandru Neagoe, *The Trial of the Gospel: An Apologetic Reading of Luke’s Trial Narratives* (SNTSMS 116; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 195-218.

<sup>111</sup> This theme is prevalent throughout Acts 22. See Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 197-200.

15). He proclaims to Herod Agrippa II that his testimony regarding the suffering and resurrected Messiah is “what the prophets and Moses said would take place” (26:19-23). Again Paul states he is on trial “on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain....Why is it thought incredible by you that God raises the dead? (26:6-8).<sup>112</sup> Paul emphasizes that he is on trial for the Messiah’s resurrection, and that this event is the accomplishment of God’s scriptural promises for the Jews. So strongly does Luke identify resurrection with Jewish belief that the reader is led to view Paul as more faithful to his religion than the Jewish leaders who oppose it!<sup>113</sup> Quite simply, Paul is on trial for “the hope of Israel” (28:20).<sup>114</sup> Far from being a renegade who teaches against the Jewish people, Paul testifies to God’s visit of the Jewish people through the resurrected Messiah.<sup>115</sup> Paul’s hope is for the people’s acceptance of their visit from God (26:27-29), the opening of their eyes, their turn from darkness to light, and their incorporation into a people sanctified by faith (26:18).

Third, the Jewish leaders’ rejection of the second visitation is complete. The Diaspora synagogue’s inhospitable rejection of Paul has prefigured his final rejection – and that of the divine visit – by the Jewish leaders (e.g., Acts 13:44-52; 17:1-9; 18:4-16). The response of the Jews is represented by Christ’s message to Paul: “They will not welcome your testimony about me” (οὐ παραδέξονται σου μαρτυρίαν περὶ ἐμοῦ,

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<sup>112</sup> Acts 26 can be read as Paul’s testimony to and defense of God’s visit of the Jews through the resurrected Christ. See Robert F. O’Toole, *Acts 26, The Christological Climax of Paul’s Defense (Ac 22:1-26:32)* (AB 78; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1978); Neagoe, *The Trial of the Gospel*, 201-206.

<sup>113</sup> So Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 202. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 115.

<sup>114</sup> The phrase pithily summarizes, for Luke, the content of Jesus’ and Paul’s proclamation. Further, see Klaus Haacker, “Das Bekenntnis des Paulus zur Hoffnung Israels,” *NTS* 31 (1985) 437-451.

<sup>115</sup> On the trial narratives as a defense of Paul’s Jewish orthodoxy, see Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 153-183.

22:18b). The Jews are hostile to two aspects of Paul's mission which they take to be a betrayal of Judaism: his proclamation of encounters with the Risen Christ (22:17-21; 26:22-23; cf. 4:2) and his incorporation of Gentiles within God's people (22:21; 26:17-18, 23). Thus, the Jewish leaders oppose both the agent (Christ) and purpose (incorporation of all peoples) of God's visitation. The Jewish leaders' rejection of Paul mimics the rejection of Jesus in the final chapters of the Gospel. As with Jesus, false testimony is brought against Paul: "he teaches everyone everywhere against our people, law, and this place," and he has defiled the temple (21:28). Both Jesus and Paul are brought before the Sanhedrin, give testimony to the resurrection, and are rejected (22:30-23:10; cf. Lk. 22:66-71).<sup>116</sup> As Jesus was charged with leading the nation astray, so Paul is charged as "an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world" (24:5). And it is repeatedly attested he is innocent (25:8, 19, 25; 26:30).<sup>117</sup>

The Jews' rejection of Paul and his message of the resurrected Christ is epitomized in their mob-like violence and inhospitality. The result of the Asian Jews' accusations against Paul is that "the city was agitated (ἐκινήθη) and the people rushed together and seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple" (ἐπιλαβόμενοι τοῦ Παύλου εἴλκον αὐτὸν ἔξω τοῦ ἱεροῦ) – upon which "immediately *the gates shut* (ἐκλείσθησαν αἱ θύραι)" (21:30). The shutting of the gates emphatically symbolizes that Paul is not welcome in the temple or Jerusalem.<sup>118</sup> We have seen the shutting of the city gates as an element of inhospitality toward the god Dionysus (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.560; 4.605-609), and so here Jerusalem decisively rejects the witness to the divine visit

<sup>116</sup> See Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 428-429.

<sup>117</sup> On these parallels, see Walter Radl, *Paulus und Jesus im lukanischen Doppelwerk: Untersuchungen zu Parallelmotiven im Lukasevangelium und in der Apostelgeschichte* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1975) 211-221.

<sup>118</sup> On the shutting of the temple gates, Pervo, *Acts*, 551 states: "This indicates that official Judaism as its center has closed itself to the message of Paul."

by shutting its gates against Paul. The scene is riotous as the Jews try to kill Paul (21:31-32), the crowd is in an uproar (τὸν θόρυβον) and shouting one thing and another (21:34), and “the violence of the mob” (τὴν βίαν τοῦ ὄχλου) is so powerful that Roman soldiers have to protect Paul (21:35). The mob’s cries “Away with him!” (αἶρε αὐτόν, 21:36), and again after Paul’s speech to the Jews in Jerusalem, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! He should not be allowed to live” (αἶρε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς τὸν τοιοῦτον, οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν, 22:22), echoes the frenetic cries of the crowd who sought Jesus’ crucifixion (Luke 23:18).<sup>119</sup> The Jews are not content with imprisonment but seek to murder Paul at any cost. Thus, the chief priests and the elders cooperate with the “conspiracy of the Jews” (Acts 23:12, 13) who take an oath to abstain from food until they have killed Paul by ambush (23:16, 21). After Paul has been moved to Caesarea, the Jews ask Festus to transfer him to Jerusalem as they again intend to kill him by an ambush (25:3).

Paul’s opponents are unable to kill him before he gets to Rome, and he has managed to persuade Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II that he is innocent of all charges, and that the dispute is only a matter of “certain points of disagreement...about their own religion” (25:19; cf. 23:29). In a stronger sense, however, the trial ends on a tragic note. Paul has desired to persuade “all who listen to me today” (26:29) of the message of the resurrected Christ, and yet the resounding chorus of the kings, rulers, and Jewish leaders has been one of decisive and complete rejection of Paul and his message. Tragically, God’s second visit of his people has again ended with rejection by the Jewish leaders.

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<sup>119</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.274.

This chapter has demonstrated that Luke has been influenced by accounts of ancient theoxenies in the construction of his two-volume story which centers upon the people's acceptance and rejection of Jesus (and the Word and witnesses) as the agent(s) of God's salvific visit of his people. Jesus in Luke, and the Word and the witnesses in Acts are the Odysseus-like travelling agents of the divine visit, who act out the visit through healings, exorcisms, and revelatory teaching. Hospitality to these traveling figures elicits the salvific benefits of the kingdom, whereas inhospitality signifies rejection and results in judgment. Hospitality serves as a significant symbol, not unlike faith (e.g., Luke 5:20; 7:9; 7:50; Acts 15:9; 16:15) or sharing possessions (e.g., Luke 5:27-28; 9:57-62), which signifies acceptance of God's visitation. Sight, illumination, and recognition regarding the identity of the agents of the divine visitation belong to those who show hospitality to these travelling strangers (e.g., Luke 19:1-10; 24:13-35; Acts 16:14-15; 16:29-34), whereas inhospitality results in the continued blindness of the people to the strangers' hidden identity (e.g., Luke 13:34-35; 19:42-44; Acts 13:10-11).

Luke's use of hospitality as a symbol of acceptance of Jesus and the Word and witnesses also serves an "ecclesial" function. Given that one of the purposes of hospitality was the social incorporation between strangers or outsiders, and that formalized hospitality ("guest-friendship") created new alliances and kinship groups, Luke uses hospitality to highlight those people who are incorporated into the new multiethnic kinship group of God's people. It is no surprise that when James refers to God's decision to visit the Gentiles to create a people for his name (Acts 15:14), exemplified in the Peter-Cornelius story (Acts 10:1-11:18), the Gentiles' incorporation takes place through hospitality between the Christian witnesses and the Gentiles (Acts

10:23-33, 48). While Gentiles are increasingly hospitable to the Word and witnesses and are incorporated into the kinship group (Acts 10:1-11:18; 16:11-15; 16:25-34; 17:7; 18:7; 28:1-10), one of the tragedies of Luke's story is that the Jews (cf. Lk. 13:31-35; 19:28-44) are again increasingly inhospitable (Acts 13:9-10; 13:50-51; 17:5-7; 18:5-6; 21:30).

With this literary and structural examination of hospitality in the Lukan writings in place, we are ready to turn to the Malta episode and ask: does the scene contain the elements of a theoxeny? What is the significance of the barbarians' hospitality to Paul? What is the relationship between the response of the barbarians to Paul in the Malta episode and the response of the Roman Jews to Paul in the conclusion?

### **Chapter 7: Divine Visitations and Hospitality in the Malta Episode: An Interpretation of Acts 28:1-10 and its Literary Function in Luke-Acts**

A convincing interpretation of the Malta episode – one that accounts for *all* of its diverse elements – depends upon the reader’s acquaintance with the practice of hospitality to strangers – both the broader cultural script in the ancient Mediterranean world and its utilization in Luke’s two-volume work. Hospitality permeates Acts 28:1-10 and is, as I have suggested, the key to unlocking the text’s ambiguities. In what follows I provide a reading of the Malta episode that builds on the cultural script of hospitality to strangers (and Luke’s adaptation of it) and argue for its literary function within Luke-Acts.

The Malta episode unfolds according to the logic of a theoxeny: the visitor Paul, who embodies the powerful presence of Jesus, is received hospitably by pagan barbarians; his identity is successfully (albeit not fully) revealed; the Maltese receive the gifts and blessings of the kingdom of God; and the barbarians are incorporated into the people of God through the initiation of guest-friendship. The Maltese barbarians are characterized as exceptionally virtuous since they counter the script concerning savage inhospitable barbarians: they show hospitality to the shipwrecked strangers; they recognize Paul’s identity; they fulfill the standard elements required of ideal hosts; and they engage in guest-friendship with Paul.

The Malta episode functions, then, as a climactic example of God’s salvation going forth to “the end of the earth” as it finds a welcome reception among the Gentiles in Malta (Acts 28:28). Further, the hospitality of the Gentile barbarians contrasts sharply with the Roman Jews who reject Paul’s message of God’s visitation and refuse to receive

divine healing (28:27). While the Maltese “see” the divine power at work in Paul, the Roman Jews’ sensory perceptions are dull and non-functioning. Whereas the Maltese receive Paul with hospitality and enter into a guest-friendship relationship, the Roman Jews reject the same offer within Paul’s own “space for hospitality” (28:23). Thus, Acts 28:1-10 produces closure to Luke’s larger literary project as it narrates one final encounter between God’s salvation going to the Gentiles through his emissaries and finding a third climactic rejection among the Jews.

### I. The Success of God’s Visitation to the Gentiles in Acts 27:1-28:10

#### A. The Salvation of the Gentiles through Paul in Acts 27:1-44

In chapter two I argued that Paul’s journey to Rome is a realistic yet symbolic depiction of God’s salvation going to the Gentiles through Paul. Paul has been engaged in defense speeches, has performed no healings or exorcisms, and has converted no Gentiles for almost six chapters by the time the reader encounters Paul’s sea-voyage.<sup>1</sup> Acts 27:1-28:10 remedies this void in a surprising manner with two portraits of God’s salvific visit going to the Gentiles through Paul’s continuation of Jesus’ ministry: Paul’s extension of hospitality to the prisoners on the boat (27:1-44) and his hospitable reception by the Maltese (28:1-10). The reader must keep in mind two aspects of Paul’s voyage in order to understand Acts 28:1-10: Paul’s identity as God’s emissary and his role in extending salvific hospitality to the Gentiles.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul is characterized more as an ideal philosopher than as a prophet in Acts 21-26. See Abraham J. Malherbe, “‘Not in a Corner’: Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26:26,” *SC* 5 (1985/1986) 193-210.

i. The identity of Paul as prophetic emissary of God's salvation

Paul is God's chosen emissary, characterized as a Jesus-like-figure, through whom salvation is accomplished for *everyone* on the ship.<sup>2</sup> Paul makes true prophecies (27:9-12 and 27:13-20). He receives visits from "God's angel" (27:23) who assures Paul he will make it to Rome and will save everyone on the boat (27:24-26). Through his angel God promises the crew's salvation as a gift to Paul: "God will freely give to you (κεχάριστάι σοι ὁ θεός) all those traveling with you" (27:24b). God accomplishes the salvation of all, but the wording indicates that he does so through Paul's instrumentality.<sup>3</sup> Further, Paul's actions as the host of the meal recall Jesus' meal-scenes where he extends hospitality to all people (e.g., Lk. 9:16; 22:14-27). Paul's promise to the crew that "none of you will lose a hair from your heads" (27:34b) even recalls Jesus' promise in Luke 21:18 and demonstrates the same disposition of trust. The literary context preceding the Malta episode, therefore, sets forth the Paul who is God's emissary of salvation, makes divine prophecies, receives visits from God's angel, and speaks the words of Jesus. He embodies, then, the presence of Jesus, the agent of God's first visitation, as he accomplishes salvation for all on board. This characterization of Paul is crucial for our interpretation of the Malta episode, since Paul will continue to embody Jesus' presence.

ii. Like Jesus, Paul extends hospitality to everyone

One of the surprising components of hospitality in Luke's Gospel is that the journeying Jesus not only receives hospitality but, as the divine host, also extends it. Jesus receives hospitality as a sign of welcome of him and his message, but he also enacts

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<sup>2</sup> On the characterization of Paul, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP 5; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 459.

<sup>3</sup> Richard I. Pervo, *Acts* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 662, commenting on 27:24 states: "Paul is the cause of their deliverance and thus their savior." See also, Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 449.

God's visit by extending hospitality to the people such that they are made participants in the benefits of the kingdom (Lk. 9:11-17; 15:1-2). Jesus' ministry as host is conferred upon the apostles who continue his ministry of extending hospitality (cf. Lk. 22:28-30). Throughout Acts, one finds the creation of an egalitarian kinship group which shares meals in remembrance of Jesus' extension of hospitality, as a sign of acceptance of the apostolic message, and incorporation into the new community (e.g., Acts 2:42-47; 6:1-6; 16:25-34). Paul's meal with the Gentile prisoners in Acts 27 is the concluding salvific meal scene in Luke-Acts.<sup>4</sup>

Paul takes the initiative and acts as the host of the meal as he *twice* exhorts everyone "to receive nourishment" (27:33-34) by participating in the meal together. Paul's actions as host whereby he "takes the bread, gives thanks to God before everyone, and breaking it began to eat" recalls Jesus' meal scenes and the command to remember him by continuing his meal practices (Lk. 22:19; cf. 9:16; 24:30).<sup>5</sup> The allusion to Jesus' meal practices activates the motif of divine hospitality to the people (Lk. 9:11-17), Jesus' continued presence with his people through sharing food (Lk. 22:14-27), and the revelation of Jesus' identity (Lk. 24:28-35). Further, as Jesus' meals were inclusive, so it is emphasized that Paul bestows the meal upon "everyone" on the ship (27:33, 35, 36, and 37).<sup>6</sup> Thus, both Jesus' and Paul's meals are inclusive and non-discriminatory. Luke indicates the salvific nature of Paul's extension of hospitality to the prisoners as "it exists for your salvation" (τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας σωτηρίας ὑπάρχει, 27:34). On the literal level, the eating of the meal provides the crew with strength to endure the

<sup>4</sup> John P. Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts: An Audience-Oriented Approach* (SBLMS 52; Atlanta: SBL, 1999) 296-299.

<sup>5</sup> On the similarities between Acts 27:33-38 and the Eucharistic texts in the New Testament, see Bo Reicke, "Die Mahlzeit mit Paulus auf den Wellen des Mittelmeers Act 27,33-38," *ThZ* 4 (1948) 401-410.

<sup>6</sup> Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts*, 301.

shipwreck. On the symbolic level, the prisoners are saved through participation in divine hospitality. The salvific nature of the meal is suggested by the notation of “all 276 souls on the ship” (27:37) which evokes earlier scenes where Luke recounts the number of “souls” saved (2:41; 4:4).

Paul’s meal with the pagans also recalls the depiction of the Jerusalem community which engaged in “breaking the bread” (2:42) and when eating “received nourishment (μετελάμβανον τροφῆς) with joy and sincerity of heart” (2:46). Within Acts 27:33-38 Luke uses four variations of the phrase “to receive nourishment” (μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς, 27:33, 34, 36, 38) suggesting he intends Paul’s meal to recall the early church’s foundational act of breaking bread together.<sup>7</sup> As the early church formed an inclusive kinship group through sharing meals, so Paul and the prisoners are bound together as a community through sharing food in remembrance of Jesus.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Paul allows the Gentiles to taste God’s salvation through his extension of hospitality, and thereby Luke symbolically portrays the Gentiles as being incorporated into God’s people.

#### B. The Divine Visit and the Hospitality of the Barbarians in Acts 28:1-10

If in Acts 27 Paul continues the pattern of Jesus from Luke’s Gospel who extends divine and salvific hospitality as host to all people, in the Malta episode he is hospitably received as the guest who embodies the salvific and powerful presence of Jesus. The following reading and interpretation brings to bear all that has been examined regarding hospitality to strangers from the cultural script in the preceding chapters.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Both the early church as well as Paul and the prisoners eat the meal with joy (2:46; εὐθυμοί, 27:36).

<sup>8</sup> Heil, *The Meal Scenes in Luke-Acts*, 294-296; Reta Halteman Finger, *Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 240. Philippe-Henri Menoud, “The Acts of the Apostles and the Eucharist,” in *Jesus Christ and the Faith: A Collection of Studies* (trans. E. M. Paul; PTMS 18; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978) 84-106, here, 96] states: “But by the words he pronounced and by his actions, he created between the passengers and himself a bond which, to all appearances, intentionally recalls the Christian communion....”

The reader acquainted with the cultural script of hospitality to strangers should be able to identify that the Malta episode operates according to the logic of a theoxeny.<sup>9</sup> While the stories of divine visits and hospitality are malleable, I have argued that one typically finds at least the following three broad components: a) hospitality or inhospitality unwittingly bestowed by the host upon the journeying and disguised or unknown divine guest, b) a recognition scene where the divine identity of the visiting stranger is revealed to the host, and c) attendant rewards or retribution for the host based on their treatment of the god.<sup>10</sup> In chapter two I argued that Acts 28:1-10 is one discrete episode which unfolds in three scenes, and these scenes can now be seen as three constitutive parts of a theoxeny with Paul playing the role of the journeying divine stranger and the Maltese barbarians the welcoming hosts. Luke portrays the journeying Paul enacting the divine visit to Gentiles one final time in a memorable manner.

i. Scene 1, Acts 28:1-2: The barbarians show extraordinary hospitality to the shipwrecked Paul.

Paul is a total stranger to the Maltese. The island contains no “brethren” (21:7-17; 28:12-15), no “friends” (27:3), and no synagogue with whom Paul can seek hospitality.<sup>11</sup> Luke highlights, in fact, the social distance between Paul and the Maltese by referring to

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<sup>9</sup> This has been suggested but not demonstrated in any detail by Adelbert Denaux, “The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts: Its Old Testament and Graeco-Roman Antecedents,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (ed. J. Verheyden, BETL 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999) 255-279, here 264; Andrew Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (NTM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005) 151.

<sup>10</sup> Identifying the amount of components involved in theoxenies is, of course, an artificial abstraction from the stories. My examination of the cultural script of hospitality, however, has identified that these three elements are present in some form in all theoxenies. The most detailed presentation of these elements is D. Flückiger-Guggenheim, *Göttliche Gäste: Die Einkehr von Götter und Heroen in der griechischen Mythologie* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> Luke’s focus is completely upon Paul and the barbarians. The rest of the crew drops entirely out of his purview. So Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1971) 713; Pervo, *Acts*, 673.

the latter as οἱ βάρβαροι – a term which portrays the Maltese as “other” and not belonging to Paul’s ethnicity or (at this point) fictive kinship group.

The mention of a story of sailors who shipwreck on an unfamiliar island activates an impending hospitality or, more likely, an inhospitality scenario for ancient readers. Odysseus, for example, when encountering a new land in his voyage utters the stock phrase: “Alas, to the land of what mortals have I now come? Are they insolent, wild, and unjust? Or are they hospitable to strangers (φιλόξεينوι) and fear the gods in their thoughts?” (Homer, *Odyssey* 6.119-121).<sup>12</sup> The phrase is spoken three times by Odysseus and lends narrational suspense to the story as the reader wonders: will Odysseus receive a hospitable reception from those who fear the gods or will he be treated with violence and inhospitality by impious savages?<sup>13</sup> According to Seneca, hospitality to shipwrecked strangers was the height of virtue, for shipwrecked strangers are destitute and vulnerable; they are entirely without means to repay or reciprocate for the reception of hospitality from their host.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, in Dio Chrysostom’s *Seventh Oration* (i.e., “The Hunter”), Dio exalts the supremacy of the virtue of the poor person over the rich as the hunter declares that many times he bestowed hospitality on shipwrecked sailors, with no concern over their inability to reciprocate for his favor (6.51-54).<sup>15</sup>

Not all shipwrecked sailors, however, were treated with hospitality as we have seen. I have drawn attention to numerous texts which portray “the barbarian” as

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<sup>12</sup> The similarity (though he is arguing for direct Lukan literary dependence) between Acts 28:1-2 and Odysseus’ stock phrase is rightly noted by Dennis R. MacDonald, “The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul,” *NTS* 45 (1999) 88-107, here, 101-102.

<sup>13</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 6.119-121; 9.172-176; 13.200-202.

<sup>14</sup> On hospitality to shipwrecked sailors, see Seneca *On Favours* 1.5.4; 3.9.3; 3.35.4; 4.11.1-3. Cf. Lucian, *True Story* 1:28-29; 2:46; Petronius, *Satyricon*, 114.

<sup>15</sup> On the hunter as demonstrating the virtue of φιλοανθρωπία, see Ronald F. Hock, “Why New Testament Scholars Should Read Ancient Novels,” in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (eds. Ronald F. Hock and J. Bradley Chance; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 121-138, here 132-133.

uncivilized and as a violator of the hospitality laws. Polyphemus the Cyclopes is the violator of the hospitality laws *par excellence* as he systematically parodies each element, and is portrayed as uncivilized, unjust, and no respecter of the gods (Homer, *Odyssey* 9).<sup>16</sup> Cicero states that to fail to show hospitality to a stranger is not only inhumane; it is also “barbaric” (*Against Verres* 2.4.25). In Virgil’s *Aeneid* when the Trojans are treated inhospitably after landing upon Carthage, Ilioneus rebukes Dido for Carthage’s inhospitable treatment of the shipwrecked: “Is this a country of barbarians (*barbara*) that allows its people to act in this way?” (1.538-539). Not only were “barbarians” often troped as inhospitable and uncivilized, barbarians were those who murdered the shipwrecked and sometimes sacrificed them to their gods.<sup>17</sup> For example, King Xerxes commands his troops to lie in wait to kill shipwrecked Greeks (Aeschylus, *Persians* 447-450), the Tauric barbarians make human sacrifices out of the shipwrecked (Herodotus, *Histories* 4.103), and the “barbarian gates” (βαρβάρους πυλώμασιν, 789) of the Egyptians show no hospitality to shipwrecked strangers in Euripides’ *Helen*. Xenophon of Ephesus speaks of Phoenicia as a “barbarian land” since it is inhabited by “lustful pirates” (*An Ephesian Tale* 2.1).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Other “barbarians” who violated the hospitality laws include: Paris (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 60-62, 362-363, 395-402, 525-527, 701-704, 745-749; Euripides, *Trojan Women* 865-66; Herodotus, *Histories* 2.115), the Egyptian king Teucer (Euripides, *Helen* 155), Lycaon (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.197-198). Cf. Phaedrus (“About Simonides”) 4.23.14-18.

<sup>17</sup> See Euripides, *Helen* 405-430, 449, 500-502; Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, 39-75, 774-776; Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 7.31-33.

<sup>18</sup> The Tauri and the Scythians were thought to have sacrificed strangers to their gods and then consumed their flesh. See Strabo, *Geog.* 7.3.6-7; 17.1.19; Herodotus, *Hist.* 4.103; Thucydides, *Hist.* I.144.2; I.77.6; II.39.1; Plutarch, *Lyc.* 27; Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 3.42.3. For more references, see Gustav Stählin, “Ἐένος,” *TDNT* V, 1-36, here 4-5; Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer: The Odyssey, Plato, and The Acts of Andrew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 80-81. For more references, see Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*, 404, n. 314.

Thus, it is evident that the pairing of βάρβαροι with the prized Greek virtue of φιλανθρωπία is jarring, and the surprising juxtaposition must indeed be intentional.<sup>19</sup> Luke deliberately overturns the oft-found stereotype of inhospitable savage “barbarians” who kill the shipwrecked.<sup>20</sup> According to the cultural script, the reader is prepared for a scenario of inhospitality as Paul and the crew is at the mercy of these unknown “barbarians.” Henry J. Cadbury rightly notes that the narrative expectations of the passage forebodes “to any Greek unfriendly treatment, especially to shipwrecked strangers.”<sup>21</sup> Yet Luke surprisingly overturns this negative stereotype of “the other” by the glowing statement: “the barbarians showed us no insignificant φιλανθρωπίαν” (οἱ τε βάρβαροι παρέιχον οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῖν, 28:2a; cf. 27:3).<sup>22</sup> The semantic domain of the virtue φιλανθρωπία is flexible and can have a variety of meanings but given the literary context, “hospitality” or “hospitable kindness” is the most appropriate translation.<sup>23</sup> Most literally, of course, the term means “lover of humanity”

<sup>19</sup> Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*, 405-406; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. Brian McNeil; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 113. On Luke’s attempt to show how his heroes subvert and undercut contemporary stereotypical expectations, see G. W. Trompf, *Early Christian Historiography: Narratives of Retributive Justice* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2000) 73-74.

<sup>20</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 673, perceptively writes regarding the barbarians that they are “characterized by their atypical conduct.” In more detail, see Richard Pervo, *Luke’s Story of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 90; Jens Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch: Zur lukanischen Verwendung eines literarischen Topos in Apostelgeschichte 27,1-28,6* (WUNT 2/274; Mohr-Siebeck, 2010) 403-404. According to Diogenes Laertius, Plato gave this definition of philanthropy: “Philanthropy is of three kinds. One is by way of salutations, as when certain people address every one they meet and, stretching out their hand, give him a hearty greeting; another mode is seen when one is given to assisting every one in distress; another mode of philanthropy is that which makes certain people fond of giving dinners. Thus philanthropy is shown either by a courteous address, or by conferring benefits, or by hospitality and the promotion of social intercourse” (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* 3.98). Cf. Plato, *Euthyphro* 4d; Demosthenes, *Oration* 19.225. The virtue is often connected to the beneficent rule of an ideal king (e.g., Xenophon: *Cyropaedia*, 1.2.1, 1.4.1, 4.2.10, 7.5.73, 8.2.1, 8.4.7, 8.4.8, 8.7.25; *Agesilaus*, 1.22, 11.10; *Hellenica*, 1.7.18).

<sup>21</sup> Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955) 25.

<sup>22</sup> The barbarians’ philanthropic hospitality is another example of Luke’s reversal motif whereby outsiders, the lowly, the excluded and Gentiles are the types of characters who respond to the divine visit (e.g., see Lk. 10:25-37; 15:11-32; Acts 8:26-40; 13:46-47).

<sup>23</sup> On φιλανθρωπία, see Celsus Spicq, “La philanthropie hellénistique, vertu divine et royale (à propos de Tit 3:4),” *Studia Theologica* 12 (1958) 169-191.

and it often has the connotations of providing help and aid to humans.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the cultural script has noted that φιλανθρωπία is frequently used to describe paragons of hospitality.<sup>25</sup> Luke expands on the barbarians' noble behavior by stating that "they hospitably received all of us (προσελάβοντο πάντας ἡμᾶς) by lighting a fire because of the pouring rain and the cold" (28:2b).<sup>26</sup> In light of Seneca's and Dio Chrysostom's comments on hospitality to the shipwrecked, the Maltese's bestowal of hospitality upon Paul and the crew is the height of virtue, given that these "strangers" have no means for reciprocating. While Paul is not disguised in the same way as many of the deities in stories of theoxenies, his identity as the powerful agent of God's salvation is hidden to the Maltese and obscured by the fact that he is a prisoner.

The literary and theological significance of the initial hospitality of the Maltese barbarians is rich with meaning.<sup>27</sup> Their hospitality has demonstrated that they are of the same ilk as such Lukan characters as the Good Samaritan, Mary, Zacchaeus, Cornelius, and Lydia, and that they unwittingly demonstrate the disposition of hospitality to strangers which Jesus requires and which so often functions as a sign of acceptance of the message of Jesus and the apostles. This glowing characterization of the Maltese must be kept in mind in order to counter some interpreters' one-sided negative description of their supposed naïveté and superstition in vv. 3-6. Further, given the role of hospitality as the

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<sup>24</sup> In Plato's *Symposium* 189d, Aristophanes states: "For Eros is the most philanthropic [*philanthrôpôtatos*] of gods, a helper of human beings as well as a physician dealing with an illness the healing of which would result in the greatest happiness for the human race." Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1155a.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., see Dio Chrysostom, *The Euboean Discourse* 6.84-86, 88-89; *The Seventh Discourse* 90; Philo, *On Abraham*, 107-109; Philo, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 4.20; Philo, *On Joseph*, 240-241, 264; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 200; *Against Apion* 2.209-213; 2.259-261. See also, Hock, "Why New Testament Scholars Should Read Ancient Novels," 132-137.

<sup>26</sup> Note that Josephus describes the furnishing of fire as an example of the hospitality and humanity (φιλανθρωπία) legislated by Torah (cf. *Against Apion* 2.209-213, esp. 211).

<sup>27</sup> Though it is frequently underemphasized (or not mentioned at all) in commentaries on Acts. See, however, the good discussion of the barbarians' philanthropy by Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts* (PCNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 367-370.

civilized practice whereby a stranger's identity is disclosed to the host, the reader should be attentive to the potential revelation of Paul's identity to the Maltese.

ii. Scene 2, Acts 28:3-6: Paul's identity, as one who embodies the powerful presence of Jesus, is revealed to the barbarians in his victory over the viper.

As is standard with stories of divine visits and hospitality, a recognition scene wherein Paul's identity is disclosed to the barbarians follows on the heels of the Maltese's initial hospitality to Paul.<sup>28</sup> Through Paul's successful encounter with the viper wherein he is unharmed by and destroys the serpent, Paul is revealed to be an agent of the powerful presence of Jesus who defeats evil in new territories wherever he journeys. Paul is not a murderer; rather, though his identity is hidden due to his appearance as a prisoner, he is in some manner a divine figure by virtue of his embodiment of Jesus' presence. The barbarians' acclamation that Paul is a god, then, is, not altogether incorrect, since they rightly recognize Paul's embodiment of divine power (i.e., the presence of Jesus).

As Paul is gathering kindling, a "viper" (ἔχιδνα) comes forth from the fire and attacks him by fastening upon his hand (28:3). Both the reaction of the Maltese, namely that this attacked prisoner will die (28:4), and the symbolic valences of vipers within Luke-Acts as agents of evil (Luke 3:7; 10:18-19; 11:11-12) demonstrate that the viper is a potentially dangerous enemy of Paul.<sup>29</sup> While serpents *do* carry positive connotations of wisdom and beauty in some ancient texts, within Luke-Acts it is Satan's power and

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<sup>28</sup> There is great flexibility and diversity in the recognition scenes, yet all of them occur *after* hospitality or inhospitality has been offered to the divine guest. Cf. Luke 24:13-35.

<sup>29</sup> So dangerous in fact that some think Luke is narrating the symbolic death of Paul. See Pervo, *Acts*, 675; John Clabeaux, "The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke's Apology for Paul," *CBQ* 67 (2005) 604-610.

authority which is symbolized through serpents (Luke 10:18-19; cf. Mark 16:18).<sup>30</sup> A turf battle ensues between the realm of Satan, symbolized through the viper, and the kingdom of God, represented through Paul.<sup>31</sup>

The focus of the scene, however, is upon Paul's identity as God's emissary and the disclosure of this identity to the Maltese. Thus, "when the barbarians *saw*" (ὡς δὲ εἶδον οἱ βάρβαροι) the viper dangling from Paul's hand, it leads them to the conclusion that the prisoner is guilty and deserving of death: "The goddess Justice will not allow him to live" (ἡ δίκη ζῆν οὐκ εἴασεν, 28:4). The barbarians' interpretation of the event, that Paul is guilty of murder and worthy of death, is of course entirely wrong and largely beside the point as at no point has the reader entertained the notion that Paul is a murderer (πάντως φονεύς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος, 28:4).<sup>32</sup>

Their inaccurate exclamation in v. 4 thereby functions as a foil to be overturned by the ensuing event which accurately reveals Paul's identity: "then, however, he shook off the beast into the fire and he suffered no evil" (ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀποτινάξας τὸ θηρίον εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἔπαθεν οὐδὲν κακόν, 28:5). Paul's "suffering no evil" marks him as God's

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<sup>30</sup> The polyvalence of the serpent is emphasized by James H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized* (AYBRL; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2010). Charlesworth underestimates, however, the negative valences attributed to the serpent within Luke-Acts in his comment: "The author of Acts 28:1-6 inherits and uses many aspects of serpent symbolism. All are positive... [T]he appearance of the viper reveals Paul may be a god." It is not the appearance of the viper which reveals Paul's identity; it is, rather, Paul's ability to shake off the viper into the fire without suffering harm from the serpent.

<sup>31</sup> On turf battles, see Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> Thus, I find unconvincing the suggestion that the primary purpose of Acts 28:1-10 is to demonstrate Paul's innocence in a manner easily understood to a pagan audience. This suggestion is of limited help in that it does not present a convincing interpretation of Acts 28:1-2 and 28:7-10. Further, the oft-cited parallel text Statilius Flaccus, *Anthologia Graeca* 7.290 where a pathetic man survives a shipwreck only to be killed by a snake is not an example of justice but rather an illustration of the unpredictable nature of fate. Cf. G. B. Miles and G. Trompf, "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27-28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution, and Shipwreck," *HTR* 59 (1976) 257-267; David Ladouceur, "Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27-28," *HTR* 73 (1980) 435-449; Lou Silberman, "Paul's Viper: Acts 28:3-6," *Forum* 8 (1992) 247-253. See, however, Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*, 407-408.

emissary and is the result of Jesus' promise that nothing, including serpents and scorpions (ὄφρων καὶ σκορπίων), shall be able to harm his disciples (οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήση, Luke 10:19).<sup>33</sup> The goddess ἡ Δίκη cannot harm Paul, for Jesus has promised that nothing shall "harm" (οὐ μὴ ἀδικήση) his disciples. As Jesus' emissary, Paul demonstrates the success of the powerful divine visitation precisely through his immunity to *and* destruction of the deadly creature. These successful encounters over "serpents and scorpions" function as demonstrations of Satan's destruction through Jesus' emissaries (Luke 10:17-18). The incident resembles earlier scenes where the Word of God advances into and conquers new territories through exorcisms and healings (e.g., Acts 8:14-24; 13:4-12; 16:16-18; 19:11-20; cf. Mk. 16:18).<sup>34</sup>

The barbarians' evaluation of Paul's identity is overturned through an epiphany and recognition scene as they wait for a long time (ἐπὶ πολὺ) for Paul to "swell up with fever or suddenly fall down dead" (μέλλειν πίμπρασθαι ἢ καταπίπτειν ἄφνω νεκρόν, 28:6a). Luke again plays on the theme of sight and recognition, for the barbarians' initial evaluation of Paul as a murderer is due to their seeing (εἶδον) the snake attached to his hand (28:4a), but this is overturned when "they see (θεωροῦντων) that nothing evil was happening to him" (μηδὲν ἄτοπον εἰς αὐτόν, 28:6). The result is that the barbarians suppose they have encountered a deity: "they changed their mind and said that he was a

<sup>33</sup> Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, 114; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Acts* (ANTC; Abingdon, Nashville, 2003) 358.

<sup>34</sup> Paul's encounter with the viper functions similarly to the Markan Jesus' promise to his disciples that they will embody his resurrection power and will defeat the realm of Satan through exorcisms, healings, and victorious encounters over serpents. In the Longer Ending of Mark, Jesus promises that "they will pick up snakes in their hands (καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσίν), and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them (οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάψῃ); they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mk. 16:18). See also Börstinghaus, *Sturmfahrt und Schiffbruch*, 423. James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark* [WUNT 2.112; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000] 402-404] notes that there is a similar function between Mk. 16:18a and Acts 28:3-6 in that the Christian emissaries' immunity to the vipers would impress others and provide divine legitimation to their ministry.

god” (μεταβαλόμενοι ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν, 28:6b). Every reader of Acts knows that their exclamation is theologically imprecise as Luke has often enough corrected the pagan predilection to blur the boundaries of humans and gods (e.g., Acts 10:25-26; 14:8-19), but there is much to commend in the barbarians’ perception of Paul.<sup>35</sup> Paul’s immunity to the snake whereby he conquers death and the demonic demonstrates that Jesus’ resurrection power is at work in Paul and that he is marked as an emissary of God (cf. Luke 10:18-19).<sup>36</sup> Paul’s rescue and vindication from the viper as the demonic agent of death parallels Jesus’ own vindication from death.<sup>37</sup> Paul’s successful encounter with the viper marks him as God’s agent who conquers the demonic in new territories. Paul is not a god, but the barbarians rightly perceive the divine presence at work in this powerful agent.<sup>38</sup> Given their prior hospitality to Paul (28:1-2), it is no surprise that the Maltese see divine power at work within Paul, for the cultural script has set forth many instances of hospitality resulting in the revelation of one’s identity (cf. Luke 24:13-35).

In the next scene Paul further demonstrates that he is an agent of divine power through Jesus-like healing, as he becomes a benefactor to the first man of Malta and the

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<sup>35</sup> As we have seen in ch. 3 in Homer’s *Odyssey*, bks. 13-24, Odysseus’ return to Ithaca functions as a precedent for a human playing the traditional role of the deity in a theoxeny. See Sheila Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987) 20.

<sup>36</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 672 states: “Paul’s immunity from the viper vividly depicted the defeat of death and the devil.”

<sup>37</sup> The parallels are elucidated by John Clabeaux, “The Story of the Maltese Viper and Luke’s Apology for Paul,” *CBQ* 67 (2005) 604-610; Pervo, *Acts*, 675. Whether these parallels justify Clabeaux’s argument that Luke is depicting symbolically Paul’s death and resurrection is another matter.

<sup>38</sup> Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 462 writes: “Once more the logic is sound enough if the premise is granted: if someone can withstand deadly serpents, then some divine *dynamis* must be at work in him (compare Mark 16:18).” Klauck [*Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, 115] is open to this possibility and asks: “Or does Luke wish here to offer a positive portrait of the barbarians, whose kindness make them open to the divine working?” Richard I. Pervo [*The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010) 154-155] argues that in Acts 27:1-28:10 “...Paul is not just a bearer of a saving message; he is also a saving figure.”

entire island (28:7-10; cf. Luke 4:38-41).<sup>39</sup> It is clear that Paul's power is not his own, but is the result of his embodied presence of Jesus. Therefore, Paul's extension of hospitality (27:33-38), his power over the evil one (28:4-6), and, as we will see, his healings (28:7-10), mimics that of Jesus as he continues to enact the divine visit. The Maltese barbarians may be in need of supplemental theological education, but Luke portrays them positively as seeing the divine power of Jesus operative in Paul.<sup>40</sup>

iii. Scene 3, Acts 28:7-10: Paul bestows gifts of healing to the Maltese, and the relationship between Paul and the Maltese is cemented through ritualized friendship.

Richard Pervo is correct in his claim that “Verse 7 jumps without transition to the hospitality of Publius.”<sup>41</sup> When, however, the theoxenic structure and logic of the episode is recognized, the further offer of hospitality by the host of the island (28:7, 10) and the bestowal of benefits and gifts by the quasi-divine guest Paul (28:8-9) can be seen as conventional to stories of divine visits and, therefore, as unsurprising despite the abrupt transition. The barbarians' recognition and “sight” of Paul's identity, demonstrated through his power over death and defeat of the devil (28:3-6), is appropriately followed by the extraordinary hospitality of “Publius the first man of the island” (τῶ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου ὀνόματι Ποπλίῳ, 28:7a).<sup>42</sup> Regardless of its exact meaning, Luke's description of Publius as “first man of the island” grants to him a

<sup>39</sup> Reinhard von Bendemann, “‘Many-Coloured Illnesses’ (Mark 1.34): On the Significance of Illnesses in the New Testament Narratives,” in *Wonders Never Cease: The Purpose of Narrating Miracle Stories in the New Testament and its Religious Environment* (eds. Michael Labahn and Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte; LNTS 288; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2006) 100-124, here 114.

<sup>40</sup> For this reason I am unsympathetic to the dominant portrait of the Maltese barbarians as superstitious, naïve, and inferior in intellect. E.g., I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992) 417; Christoph W. Stenschke [*Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT II/108; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999) 236-37 and 372-374] who repeats that Gentile hospitality occurs “in the context of spiritual failure” and says the text indicates “their spiritual blindness and its persistency.”

<sup>41</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 675.

<sup>42</sup> It is not clear whether the phrase identifies Publius as a local magistrate or a benefactor to the island. See further, Alfred Suhl, “Zum Titel πρώτος τῆς νήσου (*Erster der Insel*) Apg 28,7,” *BZ* 36 (1992) 220-226.

representative role on behalf of the entire island (e.g., Acts 13:50; 17:4; 25:2; 28:17). Publius' impulse to heighten and continue the Maltese's hospitality to Paul, therefore, functions similarly as a confirmation of the Maltese's full acceptance of Paul and seeks to elicit the divine favor they have seen embodied in him. It further portrays Publius, and the rest of the Maltese, as having a pious disposition toward God given that theoxenies function as literary symbolizations of piety and impiety toward the divine. The bestowal and continuation of extraordinary hospitality to deities upon recognition of their identity has been seen, for example, in Telemachus' hospitality to Athena (Homer, *Odyssey* 1.123-139), Abraham's reception of the divine messengers (Gen. 18:1-14), and Baucis and Philemon's hospitality to Zeus and Hermes (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.681-688).

Thus, as the patron or representative of the island, Publius offers further extraordinary hospitality to Paul and his companions: "he welcomed and for three days extended friendly hospitality to us" (ὅς ἀναδεξάμενος ἡμᾶς τρεῖς ἡμέρας φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισεν, 28:7b). Luke accentuates the extent of this hospitality and portrays Publius as an exceptional host through the use of two standard hospitality lexemes (δεχ- and ξεν-) which the reader of Luke-Acts has come to identify with the appropriate response to Jesus and his emissaries.<sup>43</sup> The friendship language of φιλοφρόνως idealizes the hospitality of the Maltese leader; and its activation of friendship ideology (cf. φιλανθρωπία, 28:2) reminds the reader of the Jerusalem community which idyllically implemented Jesus' hospitality ethics (2:42-47; cf. 6:1-6).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> This is established programmatically in Luke 9:51-10:16 (esp. 10:8, 10) where the benefits of the divine visitation are bestowed through Jesus' emissaries on those who "welcome you" (δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, 10:8). Also, see Lk. 9:5; Acts 8:14; 11:1; 17:11. We have also explored in some detail the role of Cornelius' hospitality and bestowal of lodging (ξένιζω) to Peter in ch. 5 (see Acts 10:18, 23, 32; cf. 21:16).

<sup>44</sup> The adverb φιλοφρόνως is used in connection to hospitality in 2 Macc. 3:9; *Letter of Aristeas* 183; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 11.340. On the "friendliness" of the barbarians, see Robert C. Tannehill, *The*

We have seen numerous examples throughout Luke-Acts that when the divine visitation moves into new territory and discloses its presence through proclamation of the word, powerful displays of healings, exorcisms, or prison-escapes, that one of the appropriate responses to the divine visit is hospitality (Acts 8:14; 10:1-11:18; 16:11-15; 16:24-34; 17:1-9; 18:5-11). Hospitality to the emissaries of the divine visit (or to “the Word of God”) signifies the acceptance of the Christian cult, its leaders, and its rituals in new territories (Luke 10:16).<sup>45</sup> God’s visitation takes root and is localized in new lands through hospitable households who welcome God’s emissaries. Publius’ hospitality in response to the powerful demonstration of the divine visit’s presence in Malta (28:3-6), therefore, functions as the total reception of Paul as God’s emissary.

It is, therefore, no surprise that Paul reciprocates for Publius’ extraordinary hospitality through the gift of healing (ἰάσατο αὐτόν, Acts 28:8b; ἔθεραπεύοντο, 28:9b), for in every instance of hospitality to a deity that was examined in the cultural script we have seen that rewards and gifts are bestowed upon those who welcome the god(s). This pattern is established and continued in Luke-Acts where Jesus commands his emissaries to “heal the sick in it [i.e., the city]” (θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς, 10:9a) as a sign of the presence of the kingdom of God only *if they are received with hospitality* (10:8). As we have seen, throughout Luke-Acts the divine benefits of the kingdom (e.g., peace, forgiveness, healing, and exorcisms) are bestowed upon those hospitable to the divine visit. The hospitable treatment of Paul, the carrier of God’s

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*Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Two volumes; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986-1990) 2.340.

<sup>45</sup> There are clear similarities here with ancient cult transfer narratives. On which, see Elizabeth R. Gebhard, “The Gods in Transit: Narratives of Cult Transfer,” in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essay sin Ancient Religion and Philosophy Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on His 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (eds. Adela Y. Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001) 451-476.

power, results, then, in the healing of both Publius' father (28:8) as well as all the rest of the islanders suffering from sicknesses and diseases (28:9).

The story of Paul's healing the islanders in Acts 28:8-9 is an obvious recapitulation of Luke's narration of Jesus' healing ministry in Luke 4:38-41. Commenting on the similarities between Luke 4:38-41 and Acts 28:7-10 Pervo notes that there is in this scene "a virtual equivalence between Paul and Jesus as healers."<sup>46</sup> Both Publius' father and Simon's mother-in-law are "hemmed in" by a great "fever" (ἦν συνεχόμενη πυρετῶ μεγάλῳ, Luke 4:38; πυρετοῖς καὶ δυσεντερίῳ συνεχόμενον, Acts 28:8); the wording suggests that they are inflicted by a demonic agent.<sup>47</sup> The mention of Paul's "laying his hands on him" (ἐπιθεῖς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶ, Acts 28:8) as well as the initial healing resulting in "all the rest of the people on the island who had sicknesses came and were healed" (καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας προσήρχοντο καὶ ἐθεραπεύοντο, Acts 28:9) recalls Jesus' healing of Simon's mother-in-law – a healing which also resulted in "everyone who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him and he laid his hands on them and healed them" (ἅπαντες ὅσοι εἶχον ἀσθενούντας νόσοις ποικίλαις ἤγαγον αὐτοὺς πρὸς αὐτόν, Luke 4:40).<sup>48</sup> As Jesus' healings and exorcisms enacted the (first) divine visit and

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<sup>46</sup> So Pervo, *Acts*, 676. Also, see Susan Marie Praeder ["Miracle Worker and Missionary: Paul in the Acts of the Apostles," in *SBL 1983 Seminar Papers* (ed. Eugene Lovering; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983) 107-129, here 118] notes that Acts 28:7-10 and Luke 4:38-41 are the only NT passages that consist of two short miracle stories in succession."

<sup>47</sup> Jesus' healings of sicknesses are frequently portrayed as an encounter with and victory over the realm of the demonic. On this, see Joel B. Green, "Jesus and a Daughter of Abraham (Luke 13:10-17): Test Case for a Lukan Perspective on the Miracles of Jesus," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 643-654. See also, Ulrich Busse, *Die Wunder des Propheten Jesu: Rezeption, Komposition und Interpretation der Wundertradition im Evangelium des Lukas* (FB 24; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977).

<sup>48</sup> For example, see Praeder, "Miracle Worker and Missionary: Paul in the Acts of the Apostles," 118-119; Gaventa, *Acts*, 359; Pervo, *Acts*, 675; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 341-342; F. Scott Spencer, *Journeying through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers,

accomplished salvific release from Satan's bondage, so do Paul's healings and exorcisms continue to enact the second divine visit.

It should not go without notice that Simon's mother-in-law's response to the healing she receives from Jesus is one of hospitality and domestic service: "immediately she got up and began waiting on them (διηκόνει αὐτοῖς)" (Luke 4:39b; cf. Luke 8:2-3).<sup>49</sup> Thus, again, we see that the proper impulse of both Peter's mother-in-law and the Maltese islanders is to respond to divine activity with hospitality.<sup>50</sup>

Paul's "Jesus-like" acts of healing Publius' father and all the rest of the Maltese afflicted with diseases, described in such a way as to recall Jesus' initial healing ministry in Luke 4:38-41, along with Paul's defeat of the demonic in the viper-episode (Acts 28:3-6), functions to portray the success of the divine visitation in the new territory of Malta. Further, by having Acts 28:7-10 echo Luke 4:38-41, Luke portrays the conclusion of Paul's ministry as recalling the beginning of Jesus' healing ministry thereby demonstrating that God's visitation is not ending but is continuing to spread to the ends of the earth.<sup>51</sup> Given the connotations of "islands" as Gentile territory within the OT (e.g., Isa. 40:15; 49:1-6), the island of Malta serves as a symbolic Gentile setting (27:26; 28:7, 9). As Jesus enacted God's visitation of his people through healings and exorcisms in Galilee, so the divine visit continues into new Gentile lands through God's emissaries.

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2004) 245-246; Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 741; Alfons Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag, 1986) 370; Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity*, 115.

<sup>49</sup> In Luke-Acts women are portrayed positively often through engaging in domestic service on hospitality (Lk. 4:39; 8:1-3; 10:38-42; Acts 6:1-6; cf. Lk. 22:24-27). On this, see Finger, *Of Widows and Meals*, 262-263.

<sup>50</sup> Joel B. Green [*The Gospel of Luke*, 225-226] in commenting on her hospitality states: "As will become evident as the narrative progresses, Luke regards this as an authentic, positive response to Jesus' salvific ministry (cf., e.g., 7:36-50; 8:1-3; Acts 16:33-34)." Luke Timothy Johnson [*The Gospel of Luke* (SP 3; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991) 84] notes that the context justifies translating διηκόνει as "domestic hospitality."

<sup>51</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 675-676; Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 366; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.342.

The episode concludes by returning to the Maltese's extraordinary hospitality to Paul and the crew: "they bestowed many honors upon us and as we were setting sail they placed on board the things we needed" (οἱ καὶ πολλαῖς τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀναγομένοις ἐπέθεντο τὰ πρὸς τὰς χρείας, 28:10). The phrase τὰ πρὸς τὰς χρείας refers to the Maltese's sharing of possessions and the things needed for the successful continuation of the voyage to Rome.<sup>52</sup> The act of πολλαῖς τιμαῖς ἐτίμησαν ἡμᾶς could also be a reference to giving money or possessions (cf. Acts 4:34; 5:2, 3; 7:16; 19:19), but more likely it refers to bestowing honor upon their guest Paul who has acted as a benefactor to the island.<sup>53</sup> The bestowing of honor, we have seen, is the appropriate response to deities (e.g., Euripides, *Bacchae* 192, 209-210, 321, 342; Aeschylus, *Libation-Bearers* 883-891; Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 846-868, 881-891; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.518-523) and noble "god-like" guests (e.g., Homer, *Odyssey* 5.35-38; 16.304-307).<sup>54</sup> One would be hard-pressed, in fact, to find a closer parallel to Acts 28:10 than the Phaeacians who send Odysseus on his journey: "They heartily showed him all honor as if he were a god (οἱ δὴ μιν περὶ κῆρι θεὸν ὥς τιμήσαντο), and gave him many gifts, and were fain themselves to send him home unscathed" (Homer, *Odyssey* 19.280).<sup>55</sup> Further, according to the cultural script, the host was obligated to provide a safe conveyance for his guest's continued journey. This is stated proverbially by

<sup>52</sup> Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 463, notes: "As always in Luke-Acts, the sharing of physical possessions is a symbol of sharing in the good news (Luke 6:32-36; 8:3; 12:32-34; 14:13-14; 18:22; 21:1-4; Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37.)"

<sup>53</sup> On the ancient value of honor, see Halvor Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 19-41; Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 27-57.

<sup>54</sup> See too Denaux, "The Theme of Divine Visits and Human (In)Hospitality in Luke-Acts," 259 n. 17; MacDonald, "The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul," 102-103.

<sup>55</sup> In *Odyssey* 5.36-38, Zeus commissions Hermes to speak to Odysseus: "[The Phaeacians] shall heartily show him all honor, as if he were a god (θεὸν ὥς τιμήσουσιν), and shall send him in a ship to his native land, after giving him stores of bronze and gold and clothing."

Menelaus in Homer's *Odyssey*: the host is obligated to "show hospitality to the guest while he is present but to send him forth when he would leave" (15.74; cf. 8.387-445; 11.338-61). Their giving of "many honors" to Paul suggests their proper reception of Paul and the recognition of the divine power which he embodies.

The Maltese, therefore, present themselves again as ideal hosts as they provide for Paul's continuation of his journey to Rome. Their giving of gifts and provisions for Paul's conveyance to Rome, I suggest, can helpfully be construed against the social custom of ritualized friendship (ξένια) whereby the host's giving of gifts and conveyance functions as a memorial which binds the two parties together in a permanent kinship-like relationship.<sup>56</sup> The "simple hospitality" bestowed by the barbarians upon Paul (28:1-2), which was considered obligatory hospitality to the stranger in need, has given way to the initiation of a more formalized and complex relationship of ritualized friendship between the two parties.<sup>57</sup> This is suggested by the following facets of the hospitality relationship between Paul and the Maltese: a) the relationship takes place between two distinct ethnic parties – Paul and the Maltese "barbarians"; b) "simple hospitality" is initially bestowed upon Paul and the crew, but upon recognition of his divine identity, a longer hospitality scenario of "three days" takes place; c) the hospitality is granted by Publius "the first man of the island" who functions as the corporate representative of the Maltese people; d) Paul the guest reciprocates for the hospitality by granting healing to both Publius' father and the rest of the Maltese with diseases, and thereby enables the Maltese to participate in

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<sup>56</sup> As we have seen, there is precedent for a literary theoxeny concluding with guest-friendship in Vergil's *Aeneid* where the disguised Aeneas, like a deity, tests Dido's hospitality (1.579-592) before he and the Trojans enter into a relationship of guest-friendship with her (1.632-756).

<sup>57</sup> On the distinction between "simple hospitality" and "guest-friendship" (or "ritualized friendship"), see Walter Donlan, *The Aristocratic Ideal and Selected Papers* (eds. Walter Donlan; Wauconda, IL: Blochazy-Barducci, 1999) 272.

divine gifts and benefits; e) the giving of possessions and honors to Paul functions not unlike “guest-gifts” which are a symbolic reminder of the binding relationship that exists between two distinct (ethnic) parties. We have seen that ritualized friendship operated to create kinship relations between non-familial peoples, and that Luke draws on this custom to portray the cultic integration of the Gentiles and the Jews into one family in the foundational story of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-11:18).<sup>58</sup> Similarly, here, the process of ritualized friendship creates kinship relations between Paul – the powerful bearer of the divine visit – and the Maltese. The kinship nature of this relationship is further demonstrated by the fact that the Maltese’s actions parallel those of Paul’s fellow brethren, namely, his “friends” who “provided for his needs” for the initial voyage (τοὺς φίλους πορευθέντι ἐπιμελείας τυχεῖν, 27:3).<sup>59</sup>

### III. The Literary Function of the Malta Episode within Luke-Acts

#### A. The Malta Episode and the Divine Visitation of the Gentiles in Luke-Acts

In Acts’ account of “God’s first visitation (πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο) to take from the Gentiles (ἐξ ἔθνῶν) a people for his name” (Acts 15:14), the role of hospitality as the proper Gentile response to the emissaries, as mediators of the second divine visit, is established programmatically (cf. Acts 10:1-18). The divine visit moves into new territory, whether through proclamation (11:1; 17:11; 18:5), divine revelation (16:14-15; 17:1-3), or prison-escapes (16:25-34), upon which hospitality functions as the response of its acceptance. Given that hospitality occurs between the apostolic emissaries and

<sup>58</sup> See chapter 5.4.E. Cf. Walter T. Wilson, “Urban Legends: Acts 10:1 – 11:18 and the Strategies of Greco-Roman Foundation Narratives,” *JBL* 120 (2001) 77-99, here 91-93.

<sup>59</sup> The similarity between Acts 27:3 and 28:2 is noted by Stenschke, *Luke’s Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith*, 235.

Gentiles of a variety of social-ethnic backgrounds, the hospitality results in the Gentiles' incorporation into this fictive kinship group (Acts 16:11-15; 16:25-34; 18:1-11).

The Malta episode (Acts 28:1-10) is, therefore, *the final and climactic successful episode* of the manifestation of the salvific divine visitation in new Gentile territory, the revelation of Paul's identity as the powerful agent of Jesus, and the total acceptance of the divine visit through Gentile hospitality which results in their incorporation into the new fictive kinship group. The Maltese barbarians are idyllic and civilized hosts; they recognize the divine power at work in Paul and respond with hospitality; they are philanthropic in their treatment of shipwrecked strangers; and they know how to initiate guest-friendship with the agent of the divine visit. The episode functions for the reader as a final and memorable reminder of the success of the salvific divine visitation among hospitable Gentiles before the narration of its failure among the Romans Jews who are among those Lukan characters who do not "see" or "hear" (cf. Acts 28:26-27).

Luke has thereby utilized, in a surprising and memorable fashion, the practice of hospitality to strangers in order to depict the final narrativization of the success of God's salvific visitation of Gentiles through the emissary Paul. But there are still two questions which remain: What is the function of the literary placement of Acts 28:1-10 in its relationship to the conclusion of Acts? And, secondarily, why does Paul not engage in any direct christological proclamation or the making of converts?

#### B. The Literary Placement of the Malta Episode before the Conclusion to Acts (28:17-31)

Paul's final encounter with the Jewish leaders in 28:17-31 stands in sharp contrast to the Sea Voyage (27:1-44) and the Malta episode (28:1-10). The reader is returned to the agonistic tone of Paul's exchanges with the Jews in chs. 21-26. Given the literary

connections between the Malta episode and the conclusion of Acts and the contrastive responses to Paul as God's prophetic agent of the divine visitation, it is surprising that the two passages are rarely interpreted together. Despite their close proximity, few interpreters ask whether the meaning of one passage influences the meaning of the other. I maintain, however, that Acts 27:1-28:10 cannot be overlooked in one's interpretation of the ending of Acts as it forms a "narrative epilogue" to the entire book.<sup>60</sup> At least three aspects of Acts 28:16-31 take on fuller meaning when read in light of the Malta episode.

First, Luke *continues* to characterize Paul as the prophetic agent of God's visitation who offers salvation to the Jews.

Second, Luke's narration of the Jews' final rejection of Paul's message is of one piece with previous representative scenes of Jewish inhospitality to God's prophetic emissaries (cf. Acts 13:48-52; 18:1-8). Jewish rejection results in Paul's turn to the Gentiles and their acceptance of Paul's message. The Malta episode forms part of this pattern as it functions as the positive Gentile counterpart to the Roman Jews' rejection. Social and cultic incorporation between the Roman Jews and Paul fails for the third and final time within Acts. Luke thereby places the full quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 within Paul's mouth in order to highlight the Jews' rejection of God's *second* visitation due to their blindness and deafness – which contrasts with the sensory perceptions and hospitable acceptance of Paul by the Maltese Gentiles.

Third, in the narration of the Jews' rejection of Paul, Luke uses a variety of techniques which produce narrational openness as they call to mind the Malta episode and thereby lead the reader to participate in accepting the claim that the Gentiles will continue

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<sup>60</sup> I am in full agreement with Loveday Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (LNTS 288; London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2005) 207-229, here 211-212, who claims that Acts 27:1-28:16 functions as the "narrative epilogue" of Acts.

to show receptivity to God's salvation – even beyond the bounds of Luke's narrative. Luke has crafted the Malta episode in order to present a narrational exemplification of Gentiles who contrast with the Jews in that they: a) show hospitality to God's emissaries, b) have well-functioning sensory perceptions, and c) welcome divine healing. Luke's use of the full Isaiah 6:9-10 quotation is the hermeneutical key for understanding both the conclusion to Acts and its relationship with the Malta episode.

#### i. Paul as God's prophetic emissary to the Jews

In Acts 27 Paul delivers three prophecies to his shipmates, receives messages from an angel of God, recalls promises made by Jesus, extends Jesus-like hospitality to his shipmates, and is instrumental in securing salvation for his companions. In the Malta episode Paul is the carrier of God's prophetic power: he heals like Jesus, and he conquers the powers of the evil one. Luke characterizes Paul as the agent of the divine visit who bestows salvific benefits upon the Gentiles. But Luke's characterization of Paul as a prophetic emissary of the divine visit, and now specifically as a prophet to Israel, continues in the conclusion to Acts.

In Acts 28:17-20 Paul recounts and summarizes his faithful prophetic witness to Israel in an attempt to persuade them of his message. After three days in Rome Paul “summons together the first men of the Jews” (συγκαλέσασθαι αὐτὸν τοὺς ὄντας τῶν Ἰουδαίων πρῶτους, 28:17). Paul's meeting with “the first men” not only gives a representative quality to the scene, but it recalls Paul's interaction with Publius, “the first man of the island” (τῷ πρῶτῳ τῆς νήσου, 28:7) just previously narrated.<sup>61</sup> Paul declares that he is loyal in every way to the Jewish people and their customs (28:17; cf.

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<sup>61</sup> On Paul's Jewish audience as in some manner representative of all Roman Jews, see H. J. Hauser, *Strukturen der Abschlusserzählung der Apostelgeschichte (Apg 28,16-31)* (AnBib 86; Rom 1979) 82-83.

23:1; 24:10-13; 25:10-11). Paul refers to the Roman Jews as his “fellow brothers” (verse 17b), confirms his fidelity to his Jewish faith (verse 17c), and affirms that he has no counter-accusation against his brethren (verse 18).<sup>62</sup> His chains and shackles are evidence of his loyalty to “the hope of Israel” (verse 20b). He has been called to take “the name” of the Lord not only to the Gentiles but also to “the sons of Israel” (9:15b). And his regular practice of seeking out the local Jews when he arrives in a new city confirms this.<sup>63</sup> Despite opposition and persecution, Paul never ceases from proclaiming to the Jews that this hope of Israel has been fulfilled through the resurrection of the Messiah Jesus (23:6; 24:15; 26:6-7). Throughout the trial scenes Paul declares that he stands trial as a result of his commitment to the promised hope of Israel (26:6). This “hope of Israel” is that for which the twelve tribes of Israel have been longing (26:7a).<sup>64</sup> Paul, then, is no Jewish renegade or apostate.<sup>65</sup> He is a faithful, loyal, and persistent prophet to Israel as he proclaims the fulfillment of God’s promises and warns of the consequences of rejecting them. His chains and shackles, representative of the Jewish people’s rejection of his message, confirm his status as God’s rejected prophet to Israel.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The effect of Acts 28:17-20 is to briefly summarize the main points of the lengthy trial narratives and in particular Paul’s defense speeches. See Haenchen, *Acts*, 727; Charles B. Puskas, *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts: The Significance of Acts 28:16 – 31* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009) 66-73; Troy M. Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of Acts within Its Literary Environment* (WUNT 2.280; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010) 118-122.

<sup>63</sup> Paul’s regular practice of taking the initiative to meet with the local Jews can be seen in Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1; 18:2-4; and 19:8.

<sup>64</sup> On the phrase “the hope of Israel,” see Klaus Haacker, “Das Bekenntnis des Paulus zur Hoffnung Israels,” *NTS* 31 (1985) 437-451; B. J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989) 119-139, here 123; Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 121.

<sup>65</sup> On these themes and this characterization of Paul throughout the trial narratives, see Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 153-183.

<sup>66</sup> Paul’s chains in his imprisonment are referred to in Acts 2:33; 22:5, 29; 23:29; 24:27; 26:28, and 31. On Luke’s portrayal of Paul as a prisoner, see Matthew L. Skinner, *Locating Paul: Places of Custody as Narrative Settings in Acts 21-28* (AB 13; Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

Of further significance is that in Acts 28:17-20 Paul's trials parallel Jesus' trials.<sup>67</sup> Both are faithful to the Jewish law (Luke 23:14-16; 24:26-27); neither have acted against the Jewish people (Luke 23:14-15); both have been delivered into the hands of the Romans (Luke 24:7, 20); neither deserve death (Luke 23:15, 22); and both are declared innocent (Luke 23:4, 15, 22).<sup>68</sup> Paul's prophetic suffering witness, then, recapitulates and follows the same pattern as that of Jesus. The parallels between Paul and Jesus, however, are ominous. For whereas in Acts 27:1-28:10 the parallels between Paul and Jesus served to highlight Paul's continuation of the salvific divine visitation (through healings, the defeat of evil, and extension of hospitality), here they suggest that Paul's fate will mirror that of Jesus as the Jews will again reject the agent of the divine visit.

Paul spends night and day trying to persuade the Roman Jews by "giving witness" (διαμαρτυρούμενος) to the kingdom of God based on interpretations "from the law of Moses and the Prophets" (ἀπό τε τοῦ νόμου Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, 28:23b).<sup>69</sup> Again his christological interpretation of Israel's Scriptures follows the pattern set by Jesus (Luke 24:24-27, 44-49). Further, his preaching of "the kingdom of God" links his preaching with Jesus' preaching.<sup>70</sup> But the clearest piece of evidence indicating that Luke intends his readers to view Paul as a prophetic agent of the divine visit is his quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10. Commentators note correctly that Luke has been saving this text for the final scene in Acts 28, but fewer comment upon Luke's decision

<sup>67</sup> Pervo, *Acts*, 682-683; Walter Radl, *Paulus und Jesus im lukanischen Doppelwerk: Untersuchungen zu Parallelmotiven im Lukasevangelium und in der Apostelgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1975) 252-267.

<sup>68</sup> See Puskas, *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts*, 68-69, 109-110. Tannehill [*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.345-346] and Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles'* (trans. Ken McKinney, et. al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 222 n 46] note that Paul's words in Acts 28:17-20 actually fit the details of Jesus' trial better than they do the trial of Paul.

<sup>69</sup> The language of "witness" or "to testify" is used frequently by Luke to describe Paul's proclamation (cf. Acts 18:5; 20:21, 24; 22:15; 23:11; 26:16).

<sup>70</sup> Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.346.

to include the command given to the prophet: “Go to this people and say...” (πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον καὶ εἰπόν, Acts 28:26).<sup>71</sup> The effect of Luke’s inclusion of Isaiah 6:9a is that it allows the reader to identify Paul as the prophet who fulfills the command given to Isaiah. The language of the sending of the prophet reminds the reader of Paul’s call to the Gentiles which is also cast in the form of a prophetic call narrative (Acts 9:15-16; 18:9-10; 22:10-21; 26:15-18).<sup>72</sup> The evocation of Paul’s prophetic call and his identification with God’s mandate to Isaiah evoke Luke’s larger literary pattern of the rejected prophet, preparing the reader for Paul’s final encounter with the Jews.<sup>73</sup>

#### ii. The Failure of the Jews to See and Hear Paul’s Message of God’s Salvation

Given the elements of Luke’s prophetic pattern, the reader is unsurprised that the Roman Jews’ response is not one of acceptance. Luke heightens the intensity of this scene. The reader has been anticipating Paul’s arrival to Rome now since Acts 19:21 with repeated affirmations that “it is necessary” for Paul to make his way to the capital city (e.g., 23:11; 27:24). The language evokes Jesus’ earlier repeated passion predictions that “it is necessary” for him to get to Jerusalem (Luke 13:33-35; 17:25; 24:7, 26, 44). Now that he has finally arrived, the reader expects a climactic event. Further, the language used to describe Paul’s encounter with the Jews suggests a heightened importance.<sup>74</sup> The Jews have received no letter from Judea regarding Paul (28:21a), and nor has any Jewish brother spoken any evil to them regarding Paul (28:21b). There is,

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<sup>71</sup> Notable exceptions, however, include: Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 225; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 347-348.

<sup>72</sup> David P. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 298-299; Günter Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte – Heil für die Welt: Eine narrative-exegetische Studie zur Theologie des Lukas* (BZNW 92; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 101-103.

<sup>73</sup> See Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions*; Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*; Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 139-140.

<sup>74</sup> So Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 124.

then, a sense of neutrality in the air. Instead of accepting hearsay regarding Paul, they would prefer to listen to him themselves and make their own judgment (v. 22a). Further, once they have appointed the day for the meeting, Luke notes that “a large group” (πλείονες) came to hear Paul where he preached “from morning until evening” (28:23).

But most importantly, the scene functions as Paul’s third and final representative encounter with Jewish resistance to his message, resistance which has taken place in Asia at Pisidian Antioch (13:42-47), in Greece at Corinth (18:5-6), and now in Italy at Rome (28:23-28).<sup>75</sup> The three scenes follow the pattern: a) proclamation to the Jews, b) Jewish rejection (inhospitality) to the proclamation of the divine visit, c) a statement by Paul that he will turn to the Gentiles, and d) Gentile acceptance of Paul’s message.

Thus, in Pisidian Antioch, after Paul proclaims the word to the Jews in the synagogue (13:13-46), Luke interprets the Jews’ rejection of “the word” (13:44-46) and their “casting [Paul and Barnabas] out from their region” (13:50) as inhospitality as Paul and Barnabas do precisely what Jesus commanded them to with inhospitable cities: “they shook off the dust from their feet against them” (13:51; cf. Luke 10:11). In response, Paul claims he will turn to the Gentiles (ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, 13:46), and the Gentiles accept the divine visit: “when the Gentiles heard they rejoiced and gave glory to the word of the Lord” (13:48). Similarly in Corinth, Paul’s proclamation of the word of God is rejected by the Jews resulting in Paul, again, “shaking out his garments” (18:6; cf. Luke 10:11) as a testimony against them for their inhospitality to the word, and he claims

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<sup>75</sup> So also Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) 226; David P. Moessner, “Paul in Acts: Preacher of Eschatological Repentance to Israel,” *NTS* 34 (1988) 96-104, here 101-103; Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 729; Pervo [*Acts*, 681] writes: “Luke knew as much about ‘the rule of three’ as anyone, and he exploited it vigorously.” See, further, Dupont, “La conclusion des Actes et son rapport à l’ensemble de l’ouvrage de Luc,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: traditions, rédaction, théologie* (ed. J. Kremer; BETL 48; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979) 486-490.

that now he will go to the Gentiles (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι, 18:6b). Jewish inhospitality to Paul and the word gives way, however, once more to Gentile hospitality as Paul and his message take root in the hospitable household of the Gentile Titus Justus (18:7-8).

In the Roman Jews' meeting with Paul, Luke activates the motif of hospitality by noting that the Jews enter into Paul's "space for hospitality" (τὴν ξενίαν, 28:23). While some have translated τὴν ξενίαν as "lodging" or "guest-room" due to the difficulty of seeing Paul the prisoner functioning as host, it is better to follow the consistent usage of the ξεν- root in Luke-Acts (Acts 10:6, 18, 23, 32; 21:16; 28:7) and elsewhere (see Philemon 22) thereby indicating that the Roman Jews fixed a day when they could come to Paul to receive hospitality and hear his message.<sup>76</sup> Paul's prior referring to the Jews with familial language (ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, 28:17), the abundance of familial language just previously used to describe Paul's *hospitable fictive kinship group of Christians* (28:11, 14, 15), and Luke's use of συν- prefixes to describe the initial meeting between Paul and the Roman Jews (συγκαλέσθαι αὐτόν; συνελθόντων δὲ αὐτῶν, 28:17; cf. Acts 10:23-29) nudge the reader into viewing the scene as an attempt at cultic incorporation.<sup>77</sup> The questions are raised, then, will these Jews become participants in Paul's cult? Will a relationship of guest-friendship ensue between the two parties? Or will they reject the prophetic agent of the divine visit, as have their ethnic counterparts in Pisidian Antioch and Corinth, with an attendant apostolic response of turning to the Gentiles?

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<sup>76</sup> See Henry J. Cadbury, "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts. III, Luke's Interest in Lodging," *JBL* 45 (1926) 305-322, here 319-322. Note Pervo, *Acts*, 684, n. 33, who states: "The word ξενία means 'hospitality,' but 'lodging' is also possible, by metonymy, and is preferable here."

<sup>77</sup> On the implications of Acts 28:11-15 as the literary context for the conclusion to Acts, see Alan J. Thompson, *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting* (LNTS 359; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2008) 167-169.

While the response is notably less hostile, Luke interprets the Roman Jews' response to Paul and his message as one of rejection. After Paul's christological witness to the Jews, Luke tells the readers that "some were persuaded by his words while others did not believe" (οἱ μὲν ἐπείθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις, οἱ δὲ ἠπίστουν, 28:24). Luke's narration of a mixed response through the μὲν-δέ clause is stereotypical (cf. Acts 2:12-13; 13:42-45; 17:32-34; 18:4), and there is no reason to deny that Luke presents some Jews as convinced by Paul's message.<sup>78</sup> Yet given the heightened intensity of the scene it is apparent that Luke intends that the reader view Paul's preaching as an anticlimactic failure.<sup>79</sup> Luke's emphasis is found in the tragedy that Paul's preaching about Jesus produces "disunity" in the Jewish people (ἀσύμφωνοι δὲ ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους, 28:25). Both Greco-Roman and Jewish texts make it clear that one of the greatest attributes a ruler, a constitution, or a people can have is unity and harmony; while, conversely, disunity and division in a people group is despised.<sup>80</sup> Luke's portraits of the unity of the early Christian community and their ability to overcome conflict (e.g., Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 8:1-25; 10:1-11:18) stands in contrast to the division of the Jewish

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<sup>78</sup> That ἐπείθοντο functions as the opposite of ἠπίστουν thereby indicating that some Jews actually do believe is also argued for by Jacques Dupont, "La des Actes et son rapport à l'ensemble de l'ouvrage de Luc," 374-75; Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2.1244.

<sup>79</sup> On the one hand, I see little justification for concluding that the Jews are beyond hope, that they are no longer an object of the early Christians' preaching, and that none of the Jews respond positively to Paul's message (cf. Paul's receiving "all" who come to him in Acts 28:31). See, however, the arguments of Jervell who argues that this text indicates that the mission to the Jews is over. Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 41-74. Jack T. Sanders thinks Luke condemns the Jews and writes them off entirely in Acts 28:25-28; cf. Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987) 51-75. On the other hand, the climactic finality of Paul's words in 28:25-28 cannot be overstated.

<sup>80</sup> For numerous ancient texts which make this point and as it relates to the book of Acts, see Thompson, *One Lord, One People*, 19-134. The significance of the negative connotations of ἀσύμφωνοι are underplayed by most interpreters, including Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 125; Jervell, *Luke and the People of God*, 49, and 63; Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*, 232.

people in Acts 28:24-25.<sup>81</sup> Further, the disunity of the Roman Jews stands in contrast to the unity of the witness of Paul, the Prophet Isaiah, and the Holy Spirit who all agree in their “one word” (ῥῆμα ἓν) of judgment against the Jews: “Paul spoke *one word*, ‘Rightly did the Holy Spirit speak through the Prophet Isaiah to your fathers....’” (εἰπόντος τοῦ Παύλου ῥῆμα ἓν, ὅτι καλῶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐλάλησεν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ὑμῶν, 28:25b).<sup>82</sup> While some Jews respond favorably to Paul’s message, their division – in marked contrast to the early Christians – sets them apart from the people of God.<sup>83</sup> The Roman Jews, thus, join the ranks of those Jews in Pisidian Antioch and Corinth as they reject Paul’s proclamation.

As a result of their rejection, Paul takes on the role of the prophet Isaiah while the people take on the guise of the ancient Israelites who rejected the prophet. Paul identifies the Roman Jews with the people of Isaiah’s time by referring to the latter as “your fathers” (τοὺς πατέρας ὑμῶν, 28:25b; cf. Luke 6:23; 11:48; 13:33-34; Acts 7:51-53).<sup>84</sup> In response to their rejection of the message, Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 in full as a message of judgment against them.<sup>85</sup> They have had ample opportunity to “hear” (ἀκοῆ)

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<sup>81</sup> So David W. Pao, “Disagreement among the Jews in Acts 28,” in *Early Christian Voices: in Texts, Traditions, and Symbols; Essays in Honor of Francois Bovon* (eds. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, and David W. Pao; Biblical Interpretation Series 66; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 109-118; Pervo, *Acts*, 684.

<sup>82</sup> Also, see Thompson, *One Lord, One People*, 166-167.

<sup>83</sup> Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian* 224-225, states it nicely: “Even if the conversion of individuals within Judaism is envisaged and sought (v. 30: πάντας), the hope of unifying the Jewish people (v. 26: λαόν) around Jesus is lost.”

<sup>84</sup> The salvation-historical continuity between Isaiah’s generation and the Jews of Paul’s generation is stated well by Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 225]: “The apostle takes on and duplicates in the face of Israel the prophet’s failure; he borrows the prophet’s voice (Paul does not speak in vv. 26-7, but he makes the prophet speak) in order to attest to the continuity of refusing God’s over all through the history of salvation.” Also, see Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 250; Susan Wendel, *Scriptural Interpretation and Community Self-Definition in Luke-Acts and the Writings of Justin Martyr* (SupNovT 139; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 193-195.

<sup>85</sup> I find it highly unlikely that the rhetorical effect of the quotation from Isaiah 6 is an exhortation or rebuke intended to bring about repentance rather than a final word of judgment against the Jews. The former position is argued, however, by many, including: Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 127-130; Spencer, *Journeying through Acts*, 250; Robert L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and*

ἀκούσετε) and “see” (βλέποντες βλέψετε) but their sensory perceptions are dull and hardened (28:26b).<sup>86</sup> Luke heightens the intensity of the scene and the literary finality of Paul’s mission to the Jews by moving the Isaiah 6 quotation from Jesus’ Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:12; Matthew 13:14-15) and saving the bulk of it for this final scene. In Luke 8:10 Jesus explains that to those who do not receive the mystery of the kingdom, the parables work such that “while seeing they may not see and while hearing they may not understand” (βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνιῶσιν, Luke 8:10b). But the full quotation is not yet used against them in judgment. The first rejection of the divine visitation through Jesus is explained briefly with the short quote from Isaiah, but the final rejection of the *second visitation* through the prophetic emissaries receives a thundering note of rebuke with a full citation of Isaiah 6:9-10 and occurring as it does at the end of the narrative.<sup>87</sup>

The inability of the Roman Jews to “see” God’s salvation is ironic and tragic given that one of the fundamental components of Jesus’ ministry was to give sight to the blind.<sup>88</sup> In his inaugural and programmatic sermon in Nazareth, Jesus quotes Isa. 61:1 and declares that the Spirit of the Lord “has sent me...to open the eyes for the blind” (ἀπέσταλκέν με... τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν, Lk. 4:18). Given that the healing of blindness is one of the main components of Jesus’ mission, one finds that vision and the healing of

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*Conciliation* (SBLMS 33; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) 155-159. See, however, Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 149-151; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 473-476.

<sup>86</sup> The quotation of Isa. 6:9-10 in Acts 28:26-27 follows the LXX very closely. There are two minor changes. Whereas Acts 28:26b has πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον, Isa. 6:9 has πορεύθητι καὶ εἰπὼν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ. Second, in Acts there is an omission of αὐτῶν after ὧσιν. See Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, 128-130; Dietrich Rusam, *Das Alte Testament bei Lukas* (BZNW 112; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) 435-438.

<sup>87</sup> So also Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 476; Günter Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte – Heil für die Welt*, 98-108, esp. 98-99; Francois Bovon, “Schön hat der heilige Geist durch den Propheten Jesaja zu euren Vätern gesprochen’ (Act 28, 25).” *ZNW* 75 (1984) 224-32; Puskas, *The Conclusion of Luke-Acts*, 78-81.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Robert C. Tannehill, “Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story,” *JBL* 104 (1985) 69-85.

blindness function as metaphors for salvation and the recognition of God's salvation throughout Luke-Acts (see Luke 7:21-23; 10:23-24; 18:35-43; Acts 9:1-19; 26:18).<sup>89</sup>

The connection between vision and God's salvation is stated clearly by Simeon who, upon encountering the child Jesus gave praise to God and declared: "my eyes have seen your salvation" (εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου, Luke 2:30). This salvation is said to be not only for Israel but also "a light of revelation for the Gentiles" (φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν, Luke 2:32a; cf. Acts 13:47). But already in Jesus' promise to heal the blind there is an ominous note of rejection sounded by the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:25-27), foreshadowing that Jesus' promised healing will not be embraced by everyone.<sup>90</sup> Further, in Luke 3:4-6 John the Baptist quotes another Isaianic text at length, this time Isaiah 40:3-5, which ends with the promise that "all flesh *will see* the salvation of God" (καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, Luke 3:6).<sup>91</sup> Here too salvation is something that is seen by all peoples, but again it is something which will not be met with full acceptance (Luke 3:7-9). Luke's literary project is, then, bracketed by Isaianic references to sight and blindness. Between this Isaianic inclusio centering on sight, light, and salvation (Luke 3:4-6; 4:18-19 and Acts 28:25-28), Luke also narrates Paul's mission through an Isaianic lens whereby Paul's task is to illumine the Gentiles with God's salvific light: "for so has the Lord commanded us: 'I have

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<sup>89</sup> See Chad Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization* (Biblical Interpretation Series 94; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 167-205; Dennis Hamm, "Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke," *Bib* 67 (1986) 457-477; R. Alan Culpepper, "Seeing the Kingdom of God: The Metaphor of Sight in the Gospel of Luke," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 21 (1994) 434-443.

<sup>90</sup> The connections between Luke 4:16-30 and Acts 28:17-28 are well noted. See Dupont, "La conclusion des Actes et son rapport à l'ensemble de l'ouvrage de Luc," 396-402.

<sup>91</sup> On this cluster of Isaianic texts, see Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 105-09; Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts*, 201-205; Loveday Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 220-221; Wendel, *Scriptural Interpretation and Community Self-Definition in Luke-Acts and the Writings of Justin Martyr*, 159-165; 134-135. Günter Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte – Heil für die Welt: Eine narrative-exegetische Studie zur Theologie des Lukas* (BZNW 92; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 110-111.

appointed you as a light to the Gentiles so that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth” (οὕτως γὰρ ἐντέταλται ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος, τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς, Acts 13:47; Isa. 49:6). Before Herod Agrippa II Paul summarizes his prophetic ministry as an encounter with the exalted Lord who commissions Paul “to open their [i.e., Jews and Gentiles] eyes” (ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν) and to bring them “to the light” (εἰς φῶς, 26:18; cf. 26:23). Thus, the Gospel begins with the promise of the vision of God’s salvation for “all flesh” and “Gentiles” (Luke 3:6//Isaiah 40:3; cf. Luke 2:30-32) and with Jesus’ mission to give sight to the blind (Luke 4:18//Isaiah 61:1), a prophetic mission which is continued in Acts by the apostolic witnesses who are commissioned by the exalted Lord to bring light to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47 and 26:18//Isa. 49:6), but concludes with a judgment against the Jews who have “seen” but not “perceived” and have closed their eyes to God’s salvific healing (τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, 28:27b).

Thus, the failure of the Jews to see God’s salvation and receive divine healing (28:26-27) stands in contrast to the Gentiles on Malta who “see” (28:6) God’s power at work within Paul, receive his Jesus-like healing, and hospitably welcome him as God’s prophetic agent. The Malta episode thereby functions as the positive Gentile counterpart, or response, to the Jewish rejection of Paul and his message – not unlike the Gentiles in Pisidian Antioch who rejoice in their acceptance of the divine visit (13:48) and the hospitable house of the Gentile Titius Justus in Corinth (18:7-8). For even as the reader encounters the Jews’ third rejection of the divine visit, their blindness and deafness to divine activity, and their refusal to bind themselves together with Paul and his message, the reader has in mind a narrative exemplification of Gentiles who “see” and respond

favorably to divine activity when s/he hears Paul's final words: "this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen" (28:28).<sup>92</sup> As literary characters, the barbarians on Malta thereby align themselves with the Lukan characters whose sensory perceptions enable them to see God's salvific visitation (e.g., Luke 2:25-35; 3:4-6; 4:18; Acts 13:47; 26:18, 23) in contrast to the Roman Jews who are blind to God's second visitation (cf. Luke 8:10; 13:34-35; 19:41-44).<sup>93</sup>

### iii. Gentile Hospitality and Narrative Openness in the Ending of Acts

While few have noted any relationship between the two sections, the Malta episode (28:1-10) contributes to the openness of the ending of Acts (28:17-31).<sup>94</sup> There are, in fact, some important connections between Acts 28:1-10 and 28:16-31, many of them related to the Isaiah 6:9-10 quotation, which need to be set forth. The most obvious is that when Paul utters his final words regarding God's salvation going to the Gentiles γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπεστάλη τοῦτο τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀκούσονται, 28:28), the reader's most recent encounter with salvation and Gentiles is Acts 27:1-28:10 where the language of "salvation" is used repeatedly to describe the safety of the crew in the sea voyage and where Paul encounters a remarkably hospitable group of Maltese barbarians. As Loveday Alexander has noted "Paul's use of the rare word τὸ σωτήριον sets up multiple intertextual links with a cluster of texts

<sup>92</sup> That the verb should be translated as "listen" and not simply "hear" is suggested by its contrast with the negative sensory perceptions of the Roman Jews in 28:26-27. See Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte – Heil für die Welt*, 110.

<sup>93</sup> On Luke's "rhetoric of perception," see John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992) 56, who notes that "Luke's rhetoric of perception is...most often and most clearly manifested in the interaction of the secondary characters with the protagonists."

<sup>94</sup> It is surprising that in an entire monograph devoted to the ending of Acts, Troftgruben devotes so little space to Acts 27:1 – 28:16 and fails to ask whether this section affects the meaning of the conclusion. See his *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 116-118. And in his excellent study of Acts 28:16-31 Charles B. Puskas [*The Conclusion of Luke-Acts: The Significance of Acts 28:16-31* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009)] does not mention any role for Acts 28:1-10 in understanding the conclusion of Acts.

which speak of the ‘knowledge’ of God’s salvation ‘among the Gentiles’ and at ‘all the bounds of the earth’.”<sup>95</sup> I suggest that at this point readers will find it difficult to resist the impulse to refer back to the hospitable Gentiles of Malta. It is also interesting that Paul’s primary interactions on Malta are with “the first man of the island named Publius” (τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου ὀνόματι Ποπλίῳ, 28:7), while in Rome Paul seeks out “those who were the first men of the Jews” (τοὺς ὄντας τῶν Ἰουδαίων πρώτους, 28:17).<sup>96</sup> Further, while Paul is the recipient of hospitality from the Maltese and received as a guest in his home (φιλοφρόνως ἐξένισεν, 28:7b), it is the Roman Jews who are Paul’s guests in his lodging – or more literally, his “space for hospitality” (ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ξενίαν, 28:23).<sup>97</sup> While the former exchange gifts with one another, the latter leave their host having rejected his message. These details suggest that Luke intends the reader to interpret the two episodes in relation with one another.

When the reader encounters the dull sensory perception of the Jews and their inability to “see,” so strongly emphasized by Isaiah 6:9-10, readers cannot help but think of the Maltese barbarians who are quick to “see” (αὐτῶν...θεωρούντων, 28:6) the power of God at work in Paul. It is of further significance that the Isaiah quotation uses the language of healing to describe salvation (ἰάσομαι αὐτούς, 28:27), a healing which the Jews have rejected, but the Maltese have received in abundance (ἰάσατο αὐτόν, 28:8; οἱ ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἔχοντες ἀσθενείας προσήρχοντο καὶ ἐθεραπεύοντο, 28:9). The

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<sup>95</sup> Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 221; also Pervo, *Acts*, 686. These intertextual links include Isa. 49:6; Ps. 66:3 LXX; Ps. 97:3 LXX.

<sup>96</sup> The designation is used by Luke also in Lk. 19:47 and Acts 25:2.

<sup>97</sup> As Pervo [*Acts*, 684] notes: “The word ξενία means ‘hospitality,’ but ‘lodging’ is also possible, by metonymy, and is preferable here.”

salvific and metaphorical connotations of healing and seeing, which we have already observed, nudge the reader into seeing salvation as having come to the Maltese.<sup>98</sup>

This investigation suggests that the Malta episode is constructed as a counterpart or contrast to the conclusion of Acts. Whereas Acts 28:17-31 is devoted to Paul and the Jews, the Malta episode, along with the sea-voyage in Acts 27, is devoted to Paul and the Gentiles. I suggest, in fact, that both the Sea Voyage and the Malta episode generate openness in the ending of Acts. As John Chrysostom stated regarding the ending of Acts:

The author brings his narrative to this point, and leaves the hearer thirsty *so that he fills up the lack by himself through reflection*. The outsiders [i.e., non-Christian authors] do the same; for, knowing everything wills the spirit to sleep and enfeebles it. But he does this, and does not tell what follows, deeming it superfluous for those who read the Scripture, *and learn from it what it is appropriate to add to the account*. In fact, you may consider that what follows is absolutely identical with what precedes.<sup>99</sup>

But this insight may be profitably extended to the narrative epilogue of Acts 27:1-28:10 whereby the narrative's openness is accomplished through "a rhetoric of silence." According to Chrysostom, this literary convention deliberately excludes certain information so as to surprise the reader by engaging her in actively participating in the narrative's closure by filling in the gaps and finishing the story in a manner that is in accord with the narrative.<sup>100</sup> Authors may exert a certain amount of rhetorical power through a non-narrated ending in that it forces the reader to participate in supplying the

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<sup>98</sup> On healing as a metaphor for salvation, see Pervo, *Acts*, 685.

<sup>99</sup> John Chrysostom, "Homily LV: Acts XXVIII. 17-20," in *Homilies in the Acts of the Apostles*. In *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (ed. Philip Schaff; trans. Henry Browne; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956) 326. I have reproduced the longer reading above.

<sup>100</sup> Chrysostom himself applies this reading strategy to the Malta episode as he notes the incongruity between Paul's highly positive interaction with the Maltese but Luke's failure to narrate any preaching by Paul or Maltese conversions. Chrysostom resolves this by supplying the missing information in a way that is congruent with the plot of Luke-Acts: "It is plain that having thus received them, they also received the word of the preaching: for it is not to be supposed, that during an entire three months they would have had all this kindness shown to them, had these persons not believed strongly, and herein exhibited the fruits (of their conversion): so that from this we may see a strong proof of the great number there was of those that believed."

missing information, thereby preventing a reading situation where “knowing everything wills the spirit to sleep and enfeebles it.” When a reader encounters missing information the imagination is stimulated to provide the information which fills in the gaps so as to produce an integrated story.<sup>101</sup> Daniel Marguerat suggests that this literary technique has three elements: 1) the author excludes certain narrative data thereby preventing the closure of the narrative; 2) the reader must produce the closure of the narrative by completing the story in a way that is in accord with its plot,<sup>102</sup> and 3) the narrative includes an episode or single declaration that works as a metaphor that suggests the non-narrated outcome of the story.<sup>103</sup> Each element can be applied to Acts 27:1-28:10.

First, Lukan grammar for salvation is present through the characterization of Paul as a powerful figure who extends Jesus-like-hospitality to the Gentiles and is instrumental in their “salvation” in Acts 27; it is also present in Paul the prophet’s epiphanic defeat of the serpent, bestowal of Jesus-like healing upon the barbarians, and Paul’s hospitable reception in the Malta episode. Entirely absent, however, is any christological proclamation or teaching about the kingdom of God, indication as to whether the meal on the boat is a “proper Eucharist,” and calls for repentance, conversion, and acceptance of baptism. Thus, by intentionally excluding this information – information the reader has come to expect from every other instance of Paul’s interaction with Gentiles! – Luke displaces the reader’s expectations and thereby leaves the narrative open.

Second, I suggest that Luke’s narrational intentions are subtle and questions such as “was the meal a proper Eucharist? or “did the Maltese convert to the Way?” are

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<sup>101</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1978) 167-186.

<sup>102</sup> On this element, see especially Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 17.

<sup>103</sup> Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 215-216.

insoluble precisely because Luke has intended them to be such so as to produce narrational openness regarding the extension of salvation to the Gentiles. The reader is thereby led to participate in the narrative by producing closure in consonant with the plot. Lukan grammar, as we have observed, is everywhere in abundance in the Malta episode. The Maltese's response is the response of converts to the Way: they show extraordinary hospitality to Paul – which the script has shown is the appropriate response to the divine visit (cf. Luke 7:36-50; 10:1-8); they enter into a kinship-like relationship with Paul through the dynamics of ritualized friendship (cf. Acts 10:1-11:18); they see the divine power at work within Paul; and they receive Jesus-like healing (cf. Luke 4:38-41). Thus, the *presence* of Lukan grammar for salvation but the *exclusion* of direct narration of their conversion stimulates the reader to participate in finishing the story by assuming the Maltese's full acceptance and participation in Paul's gospel.<sup>104</sup> Luke's narration of the Malta episode thereby becomes more powerful and memorable as that which is left unsaid stimulates the reader into finishing the story.

Third, that Luke pushes the reader to this conclusion is supported by Paul's "single declaration" following his quotation of Isaiah 6 in Acts 28:28: "let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen" (28:28). Paul's final sentence in the book of Acts suggests the "non-narrated outcome" of the Malta episode. Thus, when the reader encounters Paul's final words "the Gentiles will listen" (v. 28) s/he is assured of their validity due to Paul's recent experience with the

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<sup>104</sup> As Wolfgang Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (ed. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) 106-120, here 110-111, states, it is often the gaps – that which is left without narration – which "stimulates the reader into filling the blanks with projections. He is drawn into the events and made to supply what is meant from what is not said....[I]t is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meaning."

Maltese and thereby receives encouragement that continued missions to the Gentiles will prove successful.<sup>105</sup> In fact, it seems likely that Paul's final words "they will listen" contribute to the narrative's openness by suggesting an ongoing and continuous mission to the Gentiles. It is doubtful that the programmatic command of the risen Jesus that the disciples will be "my witnesses...unto the ends of the earth" (μου μάρτυρες...ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς, Acts 1:8) finds full completion in Acts.<sup>106</sup> In fact, biblical tradition often epitomizes "Gentiles" as islanders or inhabitants of the coast (e.g., Genesis 10:5, 32 LXX; Isaiah 40:15). Isaiah 49:1-6 not only makes an equation between "Gentiles" (ἔθνη, v. 1, 6) and "the ends of the earth" (ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς, v. 6), but it also equates these Gentiles at the ends of the earth as *islanders* (νησοί, v. 1).<sup>107</sup> Further, Paul has already quoted Isa. 49:6 as a description of his task to be a "light to the Gentiles" and take "salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47; cf. 26:18, 23). The island of Malta is thus a fitting setting for the final depiction of God's salvation going to Gentiles unto the ends of the earth. Given the use of islands to represent Gentiles and the "ends of the earth," one *may* view the Malta episode as the fulfillment of Acts 1:8,<sup>108</sup> it seems likely, however, that Luke uses the phrase "the ends of the earth," rather, to discourage any end or stopping point for Jesus' witnesses and to extend the goal of their witness

<sup>105</sup> So also Johnson [*The Acts of the Apostles*, 472] who writes: "The truth of Paul's statement ["the Gentiles will listen" in Acts 28:28] has been established throughout the narrative since Acts 10 and most recently by the events in Malta (28:1-10)." On the importance of Acts 28:28 for understanding Paul's quotation of Isaiah 6, see Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte – Heil für die Welt*, 109-112.

<sup>106</sup> This point is disputed to be sure. For an argument that Rome constitutes the completion of this narrative expectation, see David P. Moessner, "'Completed End(s)ings' of Historiographical Narrative: Diodorus Siculus and the End(ing) of Acts," in *Die Apostelgeschichte und die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung: Festschrift für Eckhard Plümacher zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (eds. Cilliers Breytenbach, Jens Schröter, and David S. Du Toit; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 193-221.

<sup>107</sup> See Spencer, "Paul's Odyssey in Acts," 155-156. Cf. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 85-86, 91-92; Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews*, 32-33.

<sup>108</sup> This is suggested as a possibility by Alexander, *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context*, 214. Though it has an impressive pedigree, I find the identification of Rome with "the ends of the earth" unlikely. See Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 24-28.

beyond the narrative of Acts.<sup>109</sup> In other words, while the risen Jesus' command is fulfilled in part throughout the narrative as salvation is extended to the Gentiles, the command to continue this mission remains unfinished. While the Jews may not see, hear, or accept God's healing, the reader has confidence that ongoing future contact with the Gentiles will be successful based on Paul's healing of the Maltese, their recognition of divine power in Paul, and their hospitality to Paul. While Paul's ministry is now localized due to his house arrest "in his own rented room" (28:30a), the Malta episode along with Paul's final words (28:28) provides confidence and hope for those readers who take up Paul's mantle and carry his message to the Gentiles.<sup>110</sup>

The narrative concludes, then, with the Jews' final rejection of God's prophetic agent of his salvific visitation of his people. As they rejected Jesus, so they again confirm their unbelief by rejecting Paul. But while the narrative ends on a tragic note concerning the Jewish people, it also concludes with a sense of hope that the message will continue to take root in new Gentile lands – the most recent cause for optimism being the hospitable reception of Paul by the Maltese barbarians in 28:1-10.

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<sup>109</sup> So also, Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2.17-18; Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 156-157, 173-177. Those who have devoted attention to the effect Acts 28:1-10 has on one's interpretation of the conclusion of Acts include: Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 216-221; Alexander, "Reading Luke-Acts from Back to Front," 212.

<sup>110</sup> Luke thereby moves from the world of the narrative to the world of the reader. Similarly, Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 228-229; Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 169-178; Brian S. Rosner, "The Progress of the Word," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (eds. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 215-233, here 229-233.

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