The Genre of a Meal: The Prototypical Instantiation of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11: 17-34

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THE GENRE OF A MEAL: THE PROTOTYPICAL INSTANTIATION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11: 17–34

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My years in the United States have coincided with a rise in concern and tensions about racial relations. The reality is that I never realized how my Blackness could become a social framework to interpret my whole life and qualities until I got to the United States. For the most part, I was insulated from most (not all) of the racial profiling and its consequences. I experienced racism, my position is different from many Black Americans because of my role as a priest while living in a town that is diverse and that is so much more than just Black and white
as we have Filipino, South Asian, Latin American, Assyrian, etc. Also, my social connections to white people have formed some insulation for me. Like I said I was insulated from racism but not always since there were times these privileged factors were not just there. That is why I hope that as a Black scholar, educator, and priest, I will continue to fight to make this world a just place. It is also because of this that I am also dedicating this work to the over sixty million black women and men who lost their lives in the Middle Passage. I am grateful that I did not have to make my trip to the United States through the Middle Passage. However, I am not unaware that about sixty million people who look like me made that trip—against their wills—and they perished. May their memory be blessed.
To
Thomas H. Tobin, S.J. (November 6, 1945–August 30, 2020)
and
sixty-one million and more
ὁσάκις γὰρ ἐὰν ἐσθίτε τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον πίνητε, τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε ἄχρι ὧν ἔλθῃ (1 Cor 11:26).
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### Epigraphical and Papyrological Abbreviations

<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>BGU</td>
<td><em>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Grieschische Urkunden</em>. Berlin: Weidmann, 1895–.</td>
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PSI *Papiri greci e latini* Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto. Firenze F. Le Monnier. 1912–.


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SEG  *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*.


INTRODUCTION

Human beings eat to survive. However, to understand eating only in terms of survival does little to further the comprehension of the role of this act of human survival. Every human culture has an understanding of eating which goes beyond mere human survival but is intrinsically woven into overall human existence.¹ This includes but is not limited to the ritual of eating itself, the menu, or who can be invited to eat. In the words of Mary Douglas,

If food is treated as a code, the message it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relationships being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion, and exclusion, boundaries, and transactions across the boundaries.²

Eating therefore can be used as a tool of identity formation which leads to the building and sustenance of boundaries. While this fact is evident in human culture generally, it is even more obvious among religious groups. Yet like any human institution, whatever contributes to the formation of group identity can also become a bone of contention within the same group, which, if uncontrolled, leads to factionalism.

This was the case within the Christ group in the Roman city of Corinth to whom Paul wrote in the first century. The meal which he calls the Lord’s Supper was supposed to establish equality and cement their common experience of the divine, but this meal had been turned into a ritual that ensured inequality, injustice, discrimination, and worst still, hunger for some. Paul’s

letter to the Christ group in Corinth therefore addresses this situation. Paul tries to resolve this conflict by reminding them of the nature and purpose of this meal.

The consensus among New Testament scholars today is that the Lord’s Supper is a variant of the Graeco-Roman Banquet. This means that the Lord’s Supper reflects the way formal meal events were performed in the first century Graeco-Roman world. In light of this position, scholars have outlined many similarities between the narrative of the Lord’s Supper in this letter to the Corinthians, other New Testament narratives of the Last Supper, and meal narratives obtainable in the first century of the Graeco-Roman world. However, while placing this meal in the context of other meals in the Graeco-Roman world, the scholarship on these meals among Christ groups has failed to address the ways in which the Lord’s Supper is significantly different from other banquets in the Graeco-Roman world. In trying to avoid an implication of Christian uniqueness, scholars have all too often glossed over the distinctiveness of this meal. Therefore, I will in this dissertation examine those features of this meal that make it distinct among the meals of the Graeco-Roman world. I will investigate how Paul argues for the distinct nature of this meal while at the same time I uphold the similarities it has with other meals in the Graeco-Roman world. The question this dissertation asks primarily is: if the Lord’s Supper is a variant of Graeco-Roman Banquet meal tradition, in what ways is it a variant? I will be arguing that the possibility of committing sacrilege and the eschatological atmosphere of the

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Lord’s Supper are the two ways in which this meal is distinct from other meals in the Graeco-Roman world.

In terms of sources, I will work with the New Testament (especially 1 Corinthians) and with evidence in the ancient world (literary and non-literary). Writings covering family meals, club or association meals, and religious meals provide a wide range of materials for comparison. This will affirm the similarities between these meals and the Lord’s Supper on the one hand and help highlight the distinctive features of the Lord’s Supper as described in Corinth on the other.

Methodologically, I classify the Graeco-Roman banquet meal tradition as a genre. I will survey the Aristotelian idea of genre, which sees genre as a category that is definition-like, constituted by necessary and sufficient conditions of membership. I will argue that this idea of genre presumed by scholars who emphasize the similarity of the Lord’s Supper to the Graeco-Roman Banquet meal tradition does not address sufficiently how the Lord’s Supper is a variant of this tradition. As an alternative, I will propose a prototype understanding of classification, a theory developed in cognitive psychology by Eleanor Rosch. The prototype theory argues that membership within a category is determined by its relationship to the category’s prototype(s).

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This prototypical understanding of categorization invites one to respect the distinctiveness of every member of the category while acknowledging the similarities.

It is the hope of this study that future examinations of various socio-cultural phenomena in early Christianity within its contemporary world will employ methodological tools that appreciate both the similarities these phenomena shared with this world and equally the distinctiveness of these same phenomena. This is not in any way an argument for the uniqueness of early Christianity but it is an appreciation of the fact that similarity does not preclude distinctiveness; it presumes it.
CHAPTER ONE
THE HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

Introduction

The evidence of the New Testament and other early texts sufficiently attest that having communal meals was an important feature of the early Jesus movement.\(^1\) While the gospels record Jesus having several meals during his lifetime, the circumstances of his last meal, called the *Last Supper*, and its role for subsequent developments in Christianity have attracted significant attention in scholarship.\(^2\) The *Last Supper* occupies a pre-eminent place among various meals Jesus had during his public ministry. This is shown in the way early Christians perpetuated that meal in various contexts. As such, the *Last Supper*, as it is known today among Christians under various names like *Mass*, *Eucharist*, and *Communion*, has also assumed significant doctrinal importance in the Christian tradition.

Apart from the text-critical challenges present in the texts on the *Last Supper*, a contentious Christian history mired in doctrinal controversies has made the objective study of the

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Last Supper a quite difficult task. This is due to the “tendency of each theological tradition to retroject its own understanding of the Eucharist back into the early Church, whether it would find itself at home or not.”³ This would suggest that the phenomenon of religious growth has transformed the form, meaning, and understanding of the Eucharist in every Christian tradition “without exception.”⁴ In spite of these challenges, however, significant progress has been made in the history of scholarship on the subject of the Last Supper.

Some of the issues that have come up in the history of scholarship on the Last Supper include:

1. The historicity of the last meal of Jesus
2. The relationship of the Last Supper to the Passover and Judaism
3. The relationship between the textual attestations
4. The original words of Institution
5. The relationship of the Last Supper to the mystery cults
6. The relationship of the Lord’s Supper to the Graeco-Roman Banquets
7. The relationship of the Lord’s Supper to the (cultic) meals among the Essenes and/or in the Dead Sea Scrolls.
8. The Lord’s Supper and ritual theory.

This dissertation hopes to benefit from the many discussions that have featured these issues in previous scholarship of this subject matter. It is the aim of this study to make a

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significant contribution that will further an appreciation of the *Last Supper* within its historical context.

Historically, 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 contains the earliest reference to the *Lord’s Supper* as a commemoration of the *Last Supper* in the Corinthian community. In this passage, Paul addresses what he considered to be an abuse of this established Christian practice (1 Cor. 11:17–22). This abuse had to do with the evident lack of communal love occurring in the manner in which the meal was being celebrated. By doing this, Paul reflected several themes which were also present in other literature of the first century similarly focused on the topic of meals. Paul then presents the community with the tradition of Jesus’ institution of the *Lord’s Supper* (1 Cor. 11:23–26). The fact that Paul is appealing implicitly to their memory of having received this tradition indicates that the Corinthians were not unaware of it. Finally, before he concludes this section (1Cor. 17:33–34), Paul warns about the consequences of participating in this meal unworthily (1 Cor. 11:27–32). Interestingly, he also includes a comment in this passage which explicitly interprets the recent events of death and illness in Corinth as being a consequence of eating the meal unworthily (1 Corinthians 11:30). In this way, he introduces the idea of judgment (by God) into this meal tradition.

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5 In this dissertation, the *Last Supper* will mean the last meal of Jesus. The *Lord’s Supper* is the Christian commemoration of the *Last Supper*. In the words of John Meier “On the one hand, then, the Christian Eucharist has its historical roots, its historical foundation, in the Last Supper… on the other hand, we must appreciate that Last Supper and Eucharist are not the same thing, pure and simple.” While Meier is making the distinction between the “Mass” or “Eucharist” and the *Last Supper*, I am making a distinction between the *Last Supper* and the *Lord’s Supper* which was taking place in Corinth. John Meier “The Eucharist at the Last Supper: Did it Happen?” *TD* 42 (1995): 335–50.

6 These include but are not limited to themes of social bonding, social stratification and social equality. Cf. Dennis Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist, From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 8–12.
Given the historical importance of the Corinthian passage, the contribution of this dissertation to scholarship in this field will be to further the understanding of the *Lord’s Supper* in the city of Corinth. This research will take into consideration the progress that scholarship has made so far in the study of this passage. Though the focus will be on understanding the Corinthian passage itself, reference to studies on the *Last Supper* are also relevant. This appreciation of previous scholarship will help establish the necessity of this dissertation. However, given the immense number of contributions to date on this subject, which makes it impossible to cover every study, special attention will be paid to issues directly relevant to establishing the context and significance of the present work.

This chapter will therefore review previous scholarship on the *Lord’s Supper* under four headings:

1. The historicity of the *Last Supper*

2. The *Lord’s Supper* in its socio-historical context: Judaism
   2.1 Passover
   2.2 The Dead Sea Scrolls

3. The *Lord’s Supper* in its socio-historical context: Graeco-Roman World
   3.1 Cultic Aetiology
   3.2 Mystery Cults

4. The *Lord’s Supper* and Ritual Theory

5. Graeco-Roman Banquet

6. Methodological Considerations
The Historicity of the Last Supper

The historicity of the *Last Supper* is an issue that has occupied a good deal of space in scholarship. While some deny that it ever occurred, many affirm its occurrence; others take an agnostic stance. The Jesus Seminar, for example, is deeply skeptical of the historicity of the *Last Supper*. In their analysis of the narratives of the New Testament, the passages narrating the *Last Supper* in the New Testament were either marked with the colors gray or black. Gray in the understanding of the group means that the information in the select passage is possible but unreliable while black means that information is improbable, does not fit verifiable evidence, and is largely fictive. The group argues that the *Last Supper* had its origins in a pagan context. The pagan context suggested is Asia Minor and Greece, where Paul established churches, and not Jerusalem where Jesus died. This group suggests that the idea of eating the body of Christ and drinking his blood would have been culturally offensive to Jewish sensitivities and did not reflect the cultural context of Palestinian Jews.

Marcus J. Borg, a member of the Jesus seminar, notes that,

> We do not know if Jesus in fact held a “last supper” with his disciples at which elements of the meal (bread and wine) were invested with special significance. The stories of a last supper in the gospels may be the product of the early community’s embryonic ritualization of the meal tradition [i.e., “open

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commensality”] rather than a historical recollection of the last night of Jesus’ life. There seems, in this instance, no way of moving beyond “not knowing.”

In a bid to explain the historical emergence of the Last Supper, John Dominic Crossan observes that “what Jesus created and left behind was the tradition of open commensality seen so often earlier, and what happened was that after his death, certain Christian groups created the Last Supper as a ritual that combined that commensality from his life with a commemoration of his death. It spread to other groups slowly.” Open commensality for Crossan is a term for Jesus’ unusual practice of eating with marginal people and social outcasts. Crossan then constructs the six stages of the development of the Last Supper. Though he was not a member of the Jesus seminar, Hyam Maccoby’s position is not far from that of this group: “Paul himself was the inventor and creator of the Eucharist, both as an idea and as a Church institution.” It was Paul, according to Maccoby, that founded the Eucharist on a revelation which he received. For

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12 John Dominic Crossan, Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 130. I had earlier observed that the Last Supper should be clearly distinguished from the other meals of Jesus (open commensality). See footnote no. 2. The Jesus Seminar’s (and specifically Crossan’s) lumping together of these meals does not reflect the evidence of the early Christian texts in which the Last Supper was treated as distinct and pre-eminent.


Maccoby, “Paul and no one else was the creator of the Eucharist. He gave authority to this new institution, which he actually derived from mystery religion, by adducing a vision in which he had seen Jesus at the Last Supper.”

A different approach to denying the historicity of the Last Supper holds that while “Jesus may indeed have held a final meal with his disciples, the narratives as we have them are creations of the early church and so can tell us nothing about the actual historical roots of the Eucharist but can only witness to its later development.” This is what I will call the Bultmannian approach to distinguish it from the outright historical denial by the Jesus Seminar. This is in line with Bultmann’s idea that the goal of form-criticism is to study the history of the oral tradition behind the gospels.

While appreciating the observations of scholars who doubt or deny the historicity of the Last Supper, this dissertation will argue along with Paul F. Bradshaw that although the accounts of the Last Supper in the New Testament and early Christian literature have been influenced by the liturgical practices of early Christians, one can still discern within them a firm historical

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17 Maccoby, *The Mythmaker*, 118. Maccoby’s idea about Paul as the originator of the Lord’s Supper, is not supported by the textual evidence in the New Testament. My understanding of the textual evidence follows the argument of Arthur Darby Nock that the phrase Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου in 1 Cor. 17:23 means that the tradition has the full authority of the Lord. See Arthur Darby Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 69. See also Charles H. Talbert who writes that “Paul does not claim that the tradition to follow was given him personally by the earthly Jesus or the risen Christ, but that the Lord was the origin of the tradition he passed on.” See also, Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 76.


core. Since there are disciples still alive who knew Jesus, there is a high probability to be attached, at least, to the core of the tradition of the Lord’s Supper. Also, Paul is not afraid of speaking in his own name, but he makes it quite clear when he did so. The notion that it is possible to alter or reconstruct a past, should always be nuanced since “the past is in some respects, and under some conditions, highly resistant to efforts to make it over.” This is what Barry Schwartz means when he claims that the malleability of the past has limits. This does not in any sense mean that the Gospel narratives are pure images of what really happened but to affirm that “the past is not in every way rewriteable and can even, in some cases, set the course for its own commemoration.” It is definitely within the realm of sound academic research to approach these texts with some healthy skepticism of its historicity. This healthy skepticism

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22 See 1 Corinthians 7:10, 40. With reference to the passage at the center of this dissertation, he wrote at the end “about other things, I will give instructions when I come” (1 Cor 11:34).


should, however, not descend into a form of historical nihilism. A healthy skepticism can be maintained while affirming that at its core, this event is historical. This will be beneficial in understanding what the writers of these texts mean by this event, since, for them, it was historical. For the early groups of Jesus followers, Jesus had a last meal with his disciples. This dissertation takes this to be the case with the Last Supper as recorded in the gospels and the Lord’s Supper in Corinth.

In a use of form critical methods, John Meier argues that the criteria of multiple attestation and coherence, and perhaps indirectly the criterion of Jesus’ rejection, all support the historicity of the Last Supper.26 The criterion of multiple attestation is satisfied by the presence of narratives of the Last Supper in (1) Paul and (2) Mark, who were both followed by Matthew and Luke with some changes.27 Jesus having a last meal with his disciples also coheres with the fact that Jesus is known to have had multiple public meals during his lifetime, a fact readily agreed with even by those who deny the historicity of the Last Supper. Jesus was once described as an eater and a drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matt. 11.19). This no doubt helps fulfil the third criterion of the rejection of Jesus, since such meals with social and moral outcasts do not endear him to the pious in society.28 Meier’s argument is not a foolproof case that all the

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26 Meier, “Did it Happen?” 335–51.

27 Meier explains that: “There are two major sources: Mark 14:22–24 and Paul, in 1 Cor11:23–25. Mark is followed with some changes by Matthew, and Luke represents a meshing of the two traditions of Paul and Mark, with possibly some special tradition of his own. Finally, while John pointedly has no Eucharist at the Last Supper, he does have the famous bread of life discourse in chapter 6. Some phrases toward the end of that discourse almost seem to be a reworking of and commentary on the words of institution at the Last Supper. That Jesus therefore spoke some words that related the bread to his body and the cup to his blood seems probable simply by the criterion of multiple attestation.” Meier, “Did it Happen?” 339.

28 Meier, “Did it Happen?” 338.
historical questions of these narratives have been answered definitively, but he does engage these questions without denying a historical core.

However, in her seminal article “On Using the Wrong Tool,” Morna Hooker observes that equating ‘form’ with ‘content’ is the trap that form criticism as practiced by the Jesus Seminar often fall into while analyzing the literature of early Christianity. That is, the form-critic often equates the *Sitz im Leben* with the *origin* of the material.29 In the words of Humphrey Palmer, whether or not the early Church was adept at thinking up stories about Jesus to fit Church situations, the form critics are certainly adept at “thinking up early-Church situations to suit stories of Jesus.”30 This is by no way dismissive of the laudable efforts of the form critics engaged in the study of the New Testament and early Christian literature but rather a *cautious* reminder that sometimes the tools of form criticism can be used rather arbitrarily.31

Another issue that has been important for historians of early Christianity has been to establish the earliest tradition among the textual attestations we have. The various positions held about these textual attestations can be classified into two traditions. The first tradition is linked to Jerusalem and is textually represented by Mark 14, while the second tradition is believed to have come from Paul (or Rome), and this is textually represented by 1 Corinthians 11. Reginald Fuller calls this the “double origin of the Eucharist,” an understanding he ascribes to F. Spitta.32 There have been arguments about which of the accounts is the earlier. Joachim Jeremias thinks there

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was a semitic tradition (Jerusalem tradition) written in the first decade after the death of Jesus which linguistically is the earliest, and that Mark best represents this. However, the oldest written form, according to Jeremias, belongs to Paul. The ‘Jerusalem/Paul’ binary has also been called the ‘Markan/Pauline’ binary with the sense that they are independent of each other. For Eduard Schweizer, “one cannot say that Mark’s tradition is directly derived from Paul’s. Both accounts stem from an earlier form of the tradition, with Paul’s account being on the whole closer to the original. Meier shares the same double origin argument when he concludes that “just as the form in 1 Corinthians represents the eucharistic formulas as known in the Pauline churches, and perhaps at Antioch, so too the Markan words of institution probably reflect the form of the eucharist known in Mark’s church, perhaps that of Rome.”

Hans Lietzmann has what can be called the most comprehensive analysis of the double origin of the Eucharist. Analyzing 4th century liturgical documents, he identifies two primitive forms. The first form is the Hippolytan-Roman form. The understanding that prevails in this form is that the last supper is a sacrifice offered to God. He argues that this idea is a genuinely ancient conception of sacrifice and the meal associated with it. Paul and Pauline churches

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36 Meier, “Did it happen?” 341. Meier is of the opinion that 1 Corinthians (Paul) gives us access to a remarkably early form but that the various attestations show that the tradition is rarely simple.


(specifically Corinth) have already shown familiarity with this idea of the meal as a sacrifice and must have been the originators of the ideas in the Hippolytan-Roman form.\textsuperscript{39}

The second form is the Egyptian form, and this is best represented by the Anaphora of Sarapion. It is in its basic form traceable to general supper practice of Jesus and his Jerusalem disciples. While it also bears some understanding of the meal as a sacrifice, here there was no connection with a memorial of Jesus’ \textit{death} and the remembrance of the Last supper.\textsuperscript{40} This means that the bread and wine are images of the body and blood of Christ and nothing more. The textual tradition at the basis of the Egyptian form is the \textit{Didache}.\textsuperscript{41} In the argument of Lietzmann, the Egyptian form preserves the general supper-practice of Jesus and his Jerusalem disciples while the Hippolytan-Roman tradition with its sacrificial interpretation of the Last Supper is a bold innovation by Paul.\textsuperscript{42}

The problem with Lietzmann’s construction (and indeed the double origin theory) is that we have here a model for analyzing the ancient data regarding the \textit{Lord’s Supper} that is based on the form of the Eucharist as it appeared in the later church.\textsuperscript{43} Using the Eucharistic liturgy of the 2nd or even 3rd centuries can distort, or at least obscure, what was occurring in the first century.\textsuperscript{44} In this light, Paul Bradshaw raises the pertinent point that “we need to start not from a

\textsuperscript{39} Lietzmann, \textit{Mass and Lord’s Supper}, 147.

\textsuperscript{40} Lietzmann, \textit{Mass and Lord’s Supper}, 160, 222.

\textsuperscript{41} Lietzmann, \textit{Mass and Lord’s Supper}, 195.

\textsuperscript{42} Lietzmann, \textit{Mass and Lord’s Supper}, 222.

\textsuperscript{43} Smith, \textit{From Symposium to Eucharist}, 4.

\textsuperscript{44} R.D. Richardson, for instance, notes that “we know nothing of the migration of rite and text into Egypt, nor indeed anything of Egyptian Christianity before the last part of the second century; how then can the investigation of rites and texts together be pursued in connection with Egypt at all? or how indeed can we affirm that
conviction about how things must have been, and then assemble the evidence in such a way that it fits our thesis, but rather from evidence itself and see where it leads.” A way of doing this is to pay some attention to meal traditions in the Graeco-Roman world and see how the Last Supper fits these meal traditions.

**The Last Supper in Its Socio-Historical Context: Judaism**

**Passover**

Understandably, the first religious tradition scholars go to in order to explain most phenomena in early Jesus movements is Judaism. The origin of the Last Supper has been explained by linking it to a number of meals among the Jews in the first century, most importantly, the Passover Seder. There are three positions held by scholars who seek to explain the Last Supper and its relationship to the Passover Seder. The first position is that the Last Supper was a Passover meal. The second is that the Last Supper was not a Passover meal, while the final position holds that while the Last Supper may not have been a Passover Seder, it appears that the early Jesus movement probably saw it as one or interpreted it as such.

Joachim Jeremias is prominent among scholars whose position is that the Last Supper was a Passover meal. He painstakingly went through chronological, calendrical and astronomical data to establish evidence for his argument. In the end he came up with fourteen

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46 Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words*, 48. This is a groundbreaking work in scholarship on the relationship of the Last Supper and the Passover.
observations he thinks makes it certain that the *Last Supper* was a Passover.\(^{47}\) These observations are:

1. The unanimous testimony of the synoptics and John that the *Last Supper* took place in Jerusalem.\(^ {48}\)

2. Jesus and his disciples had a room for it (cf. Mark 14:13–15)

3. The *Last Supper* was held at night, and from its inception, the Passover meal was held at night.

4. Jesus had the *Last Supper* with the Twelve, and there is a possibility this meal corresponds to the Passover practice.

5. Jesus and his disciples *reclined* at the *Last Supper*.

6. The *Last Supper* was eaten *in a state of levitical purity* (John 13:10).

7. Jesus broke bread during the meal. The Passover meal was the only family meal in the year at which the serving of a dish is preceded by the breaking of bread.

8. Jesus and his disciples drank wine at the *Last Supper*. The drinking of wine was prescribed as part of the rituals of Passover and Purim.

9. Jesus and his disciples drank *red wine* at the *Last Supper*. According to Rabbi Jeremiah (c. 320 C.E.), the use of red wine at the Passover was a binding prescription.

10. Jesus commissioned Judas to make some last-minute purchases for the festival because a purchase the following day (Passover) would not be possible (John 13:29).

\(^{47}\) Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words*, 41–48. In the first century, one has to come up to Jerusalem to fulfill the obligation to observe the Passover.

\(^{48}\) Reasonably this changed after the destruction of the Temple ca. 70 CE as that obligation was no longer feasible with the Temple now in ruins.
11. Jesus commissioned Judas to give something to the poor, and it was customary to do something for the poor on Passover night (John 13:29).

12. The Passover ends always with a hymn, as did the Last Supper (Mark 14:26).

13. Jesus did not return to Bethany after the meal because the night of the Passover has to be spent in Jerusalem.

14. The Paschal character of the Last Supper as an interpretation of the special elements of the meal is a fixed part of the Passover ritual.49

Crucially, Jeremias notes that the evidence of the synoptic gospels indicating that the Last Supper was a Passover meal is at variance with the rites of the early Church. This is because, while the Passover was an annual event, the Lord’s Supper for the early Church was not a yearly celebration that replicated or replaced the Passover. The Lord’s Supper was a daily or a weekly celebration.50 To explain this, he surmises that the reminiscence of the Passover could not have come from liturgical practice but from ‘the survival of an historical reminiscence.’51 This is a position similar to that of Howard Marshall, who argues that although the Last Supper was a Passover, the Lord’s Supper was not.52 In the Last Supper, “Jesus took the Passover meal and proceeded to give a new significance to it as a meal whose repetition by his followers would enable them to remember him.”53 The new significance given to this meal means that the Lord’s Supper

49 Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, 41–88. He notes “Jesus’ avowal of abstinence, the words of interpretation and the command to repetition first become fully understandable when they are set within the context of the Passover ritual” (Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, 88).

50 Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, 62. See also Acts 2:46.

51 Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, 62 (emphasis original).

52 Howard Marshall, Last Supper and Lord’s Supper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 111.

53 Marshall, Last Supper and Lord’s Supper, 143.
is not bound by the Passover ritual, including its requirement that it should be celebrated annually.\textsuperscript{54}

It has been observed, and rightly so, that many of Jeremias’ propositions draw on a picture of the Passover meal that is obtainable only after the destruction of Jerusalem. A good number of his sources are rabbinic, which he then read back into the gospels to create a paradigm of the \textit{Last Supper} as a Passover meal. In the view of Marshall, the \textit{Last Supper} was a first century Passover Seder Jesus held earlier than the official Jewish date for the Passover. Jesus was able to do this as a result of calendrical differences among the Jews.\textsuperscript{55} The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls have revealed with greater intensity the differences in ancient Judaism including a diversity of calendars in first century Judaism.\textsuperscript{56} Marshall argues that the seeming differences we have in the chronology of the synoptic gospels and John is explainable using this insight.

Relying on Jeremias, James Dunn argues that the \textit{Lord’s Supper} of the early followers of Jesus was an adaptation of the Jewish Passover in which the blessing and breaking of bread was the first act of the meal that came to stand for the whole meal. This meal is then followed with the cup.\textsuperscript{57} This line of thought is supported by Joseph Fitzmyer, who states that Jesus would not

\textsuperscript{54} Marshall, \textit{Last Supper and Lord’s Supper}, 111.

\textsuperscript{55} Marshall, \textit{Last Supper and Lord’s Supper}, 75.


\textsuperscript{57} James D.G. Dunn, \textit{1 Corinthians} (New York: T&T Clark, 1999), 77.
only have celebrated the Passover but that he also reinterpreted elements of it that became the basis of the Christian Eucharist.\textsuperscript{58}

As attractive as the hypothesis of linking the \textit{Last Supper} of Jesus to the Passover may be, this idea has its own inherent weaknesses. The first is that the evidence of the New Testament on this linkage is frustratingly varied. The synoptics, for instance, are explicit in linking the \textit{Last Supper} to the eve of Passover in a way Paul and John did not. Secondly, our knowledge of the ritual of the Passover Seder in the first century is so limited that the only way to make this argument is to read rabbinic texts back into the New Testament writings, as Jeremias did. This point has been well emphasized by those who say the \textit{Last Supper} was not a Passover meal.

Hans Lietzmann is one of the scholars who argues that the \textit{Last Supper} was not a Passover meal. He holds that it is wrong to hold that the rite of the Lord’s Supper has its source and prototype in the Jewish Passover and that the last meal of Jesus was a Passover meal.\textsuperscript{59} He recognizes four characteristics of the Passover which are absent from the \textit{Last Supper}.

1. The Passover Lamb
2. The Midrash on Exodus
3. The eating of only unleavened bread
4. Four cups of wine

\textsuperscript{58} Joseph A. Fitzmyer, \textit{First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary} (AB 32; New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 430–31. See also Robin Routledge, “Passover and Last Supper” \textit{TD} 53 (2002): 201–21. “Jesus’ words and actions at the Last Supper not only fit well into the context of the Passover meal, but also take on increased significance when viewed this way.”

\textsuperscript{59} Lietzmann, \textit{Mass and the Lord’s Supper}, 172. See also Rudolf Otto, \textit{The Kingdom of God and The Son of Man: A Study in the History of Religion}, trans. from the revised German edition, Floyd V. Fislon and Bertram Lee-Woolf (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1943), 287. “The entire assumption that Christ’s last meal was a Passover meal and is to be understood as of that category must be abandoned. The reasons for this have been given recently and, as it seems to me, conclusively, by Lietzmann in “Messe and Herrenmahhl.” See also, Clemens Leonard, “Pesach and Eucharist,” in \textit{Eucharist: Its Origins and Contexts}, 275–312.
In addition to this, he remarks that the oldest Christian community continued to celebrate the Jewish Passover, a practice from which, according to him, the Christian Easter developed. Lietzmann therefore concludes that “neither the significance nor the ritual (i.e., the Passover) of this annual festival was identical with the Lord’s Supper.” Schweizer also notes that while an inherent relationship between the Last Supper and the Passover tradition may be possible, it is by no means necessary or obvious. Rather, he avers that the Last Supper being a Passover meal is improbable.

Baruch Bokser for his part differentiates between Passover pre-70 CE and post-70 CE. He states that the pre-70 CE Passover meals would have been sacrificial meals, which was not the case with the Last Supper. According to Bokser’s argument, what the synoptics have done is to rework a Passover meal, which ends up coincidentally looking like the Passover meal of the early rabbis, especially as it looks forward to a future salvific action of God after the destruction of the Temple. In the opinion of Jonathan Klawans, the impossibility of the trial and execution of Jesus taking place during the Passover—since Jewish laws forbade the holding of trials and execution on holidays—makes the idea that the Last Supper is a Passover meal an improbable one. For him, the synoptic gospel accounts of the Last Supper that included accounts of the passion stretched one’s credulity historically, because they depict “something unlikely” and also

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60 Lietzmann, Mass and Lord’s Supper, 172.

61 Schweizer, The Lord’s Supper, 28. He states that, “Even in Mark the institution of the Last Supper, when taken by itself, shows no points of contacts with a Passover feast... on the other hand, the Johannine chronology may be theologically motivated... since the evidence presented by the texts are indecisive, the question can only be settled on the grounds of historical improbability” (Schweizer, The Lord’s Supper, 28–30). The idea that the chronology of the Gospels is inconsistent, which is evident, is generally shared by scholars. Cf. Baruch M. Bokser, “Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder,” BRev 3 (1987): 26–33.

62 Bokser, “Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder?” 32.
because they fail to recognize the unlikely and problematic nature of what they depict. Therefore, Klawans reasons that the Last Supper did not take place during the Passover and is therefore not a Passover meal. Arguments linking the Last Supper and the Passover meal remain, therefore, inconclusive in the face of the evidence of the New Testament; but the arguments against that link also do not seem conclusive. We can say that our textual evidence calls for an exercise of caution in linking both meals. What is, however, undeniable is that members of the early Jesus movement understood the Last Supper in the context of the Passover meal. Whereas the synoptics place it close to or within the Passover meal, John and Paul used the rabbinic midrashic style of interpretation in seeing the Last Supper, and subsequently the Lord’s Supper, in the light of the Passover.

In the New Testament and in early Christianity, there is no understanding of the Last Supper that is not Passover related. This is agreed upon by both sides.

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64 Clemens Leonard, “Pesach and Eucharist,” 275–312. Clemens Leonard is of the opinion that it will be naive to even use Old Testament texts as normative texts to draw a picture of how the Seder was celebrated in the first century. According to him, “Exodus 12 does not contain rules for a domestic form of Pesach but links the performance at the Temple in Jerusalem with the story of the Exodus” (Leonard, “Pesach and Eucharist,” 283). This is at least an invitation to be more cautious in thinking we know how the Passover was celebrated in the first century.

65 According to Hanne Trautner-Kromann, “There are two kinds of midrash, Midrash Halakah (legal midrash) and Midrash Aggadah (narrative midrash). However, since Aggadah is very difficult to define, it is customary to say that any midrash that is not halakhic (legal) is aggadic.” In this light, Paul’s use of the midrash in the Lord’s Supper is aggadic. Cf. Hanne Trautner-Kromann, From Bible to Midrash: Portrayals and Interpretative Practices (Lund: Arcus, 2005), 11.

66 See. G. H Box, “The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist,” JTS 3 (1902): 357–69. He asks succinctly “What account are we to give of the paschal features that undoubtedly exist in some of the New Testament accounts of the institution of the Rite.” 358. Bruce Chilton also notes that, “discussion of Jeremias’ contribution generally has been needlessly strident. Although he too readily projected rabbis into the first century and too easily assumed Jesus’ ipissima verba were to be found in the Gospels, the data he adduced and the insights he offered remain considerable.” See Bruce Chilton, A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johannine Circles (Leiden, New York, Koln: Brill, 1994), 2.
of the Passover- *Last Supper* debate.\(^67\) So those who deny the relationship of the *Last Supper* with the Passover have to explain the early association of both phenomena.\(^68\) Lauren F. Winner underlines this early association and its subsequent implication when she writes that:

> Although the Last Supper is connected to Passover in the Gospels, the connection was not drawn between the Eucharist and the Passover meal in the first centuries of its celebration. But relatively quickly, Christians made the connection—the habit of interpreting the Eucharist as a seder was sufficiently widespread by the fourth century that Chrysostom felt the need to homiletically correct those Christians who reasonably concluded that, since the seder was annual and the Eucharist was a Christian version of the seder, they needed to attend Mass only once a year.\(^69\)

This means that even if it is argued that the *Last Supper* is not a Passover meal, the paschal features must still be explained. The answer to the question of whether the *Last Supper* is a Passover meal goes beyond a simple Yes- or No-answer.\(^70\) This is because although the Passover provides the most obvious background for the *Last Supper* of Jesus and his disciples, that background does not fully explain our literary evidence.\(^71\) That the *Last Supper* can be understood in the light of the Passover meal tells us little in itself about the meal. We have to look beyond the Passover to understand the *Last Supper*.

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\(^67\) Klawans, “Was Jesus’ Last Supper a Seder?” “Placing the Last Supper in the context of Passover was a literary tool in early Christian debates about whether or not how the Christians should celebrate Passover” (Klawans, “Was Jesus’ Last Supper a Seder?” 33).

\(^68\) After denying the link Norman A. Beck adds that “Perhaps it should merely be asserted, even after Jeremias’ detailed presentation in *Eucharistic Words*, that Jesus’ last supper was eaten during the Passover season.” See Norman A. Beck, “The Last Supper as an Efficacious Symbolic Act,” *JBL* 89 (1970): 192–98, 194.


The Dead Sea Scrolls

Of all the possible parallels we have in Judaism outside of the Passover meal, I will be focusing on the meals featured in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some scholars will refer to other meals like the Kiddush (the weekly sanctification at Sabbath) and Haburah meals (Jewish meals held by a company of friends). I see such parallels as problematic for anachronistic reasons (i.e., they represent later texts being read into the New Testament). They are also often conjectural. Therefore, I am focusing on the meal described in the Dead Sea scrolls because it is more relevant to my overall argument in this dissertation. The idea that the Last Supper should be seen in the same framework as the eschatological meal, or Messianic meal, described in the Dead Sea scrolls has a considerable following among scholars. For Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn the juxtaposition of bread and wine in a feast as we have in the Last Supper is paralleled in Judaism only in the communal meals of the Dead Sea Scrolls.72

Related is the question of whether the communal meals in the Dead Sea Scrolls are sacred or not. The sacral character of the communal meals in the scrolls is relevant because the early Jesus movement in Corinth (or at least Paul) thinks the Lord’s Supper (at least as an event) has a sacral character. Sacred or sacral in this sense would mean that the meal has a numinous quality and/or is an integral part of a religious ritual that brings one into the presence of the divine. The idea that the meal of the Scrolls’ community could have a sacral character was first suggested by Josephus’ interpretation of the Essene meals. According to Josephus:

After this purification, they assemble in a private apartment which none of the uninitiated is permitted to enter; pure now themselves, they repair to the refectory, as to some sacred shrine. When they have taken their seats in silence, the baker serves out the loaves to them in order, and the cook sets before each one plate with a single course. Before meat the priest says a grace, and none may partake until after the prayer.\textsuperscript{73}

The communal meal is represented in the scrolls by two texts. The first one, called the Rule of the Community (1QS) has this procedure for the eating of the communal meal:

In this way \textsuperscript{2} shall they behave in all their places of residence. Whenever one fellow meets another, the junior shall obey the senior in work and in money. They shall eat together, \textsuperscript{3} together they shall bless and together they shall take counsel. In every place where there are ten men of the Community council, there should not be missing amongst them \textsuperscript{4} a priest. And everyone shall sit according to his rank before him, and in this way shall they be asked for their counsel in every matter. And when they prepare the table to dine or the new wine \textsuperscript{5} for drinking, the priest shall stretch out his hand as the first to bless the first fruits of the bread \textsuperscript{6} and the new wine.\textsuperscript{74}

The second text that features communal meals in the Scrolls can be found in The Rule of the Congregation (1QSa):

\textit{II} At [a ses]sion of the men of renown, [those summoned to] the gathering of the community council, when [God] begets \textit{12} the Messiah with them: [the] chief [priest] of all the congregation of Israel shall enter, and all \textit{13} [his] br[others, the sons] of Aaron, the priests [summoned] to the assembly, the men of renown, and they shall sit \textit{14} be[fore him, each one] according to his dignity. After, [the Mess]iah of Israel shall [enter] and before him shall sit the heads of the \textit{15} th[ousands of Israel, each] one according to his dignity, according to [his] po[sition] in their camps and according to their marches. And all \textit{16} the heads of the cl[ans of the congre]gation with the wise [men …] shall sit before them, each one according

\textsuperscript{73} Josephus. \textit{The Jewish War}, 2.129–31 (Thackeray, LCL). \textit{καὶ μετὰ ταύτην τὴν ἀγνείαν εἰς ἵδιον οἴκημα συνώσασθαι, ἐνθὰ μηδὲν τῶν ἐπεροδοζόν ἐπιτίθεσθαι παρελθεῖν, αὐτοὶ τε καθαροὶ καθάπερ εἰς ἄγιν τι τέμνονς παραγίγονται τὸ δευτερητήριον. καὶ καθισάντων μεθ’ ἱσχύς ὁ μὲν σιτωποῦσ ἐν τάξι παρατίθεσθαι τοὺς ἄρτους, ὁ δὲ μάγειρος ἐν ἀγγείῳ καὶ ἄνδρος ἐκάστῳ παρατίθεσθαι. προκατεύχεται δ’ ὁ ἱερεύς τῆς τροφῆς, καὶ γεύσασθαι τινὰ πρὶν τῆς εὐχῆς ὀθέμτων.}

17 to his dignity. And [when] they gather [at the table] of community [or to drink the new wine, and the table of] 18 the community is prepared [and the] new wine [is mixed] for drinking, [no-one should stretch out] his hand to the first-fruit 19 of the bread and of [the new wine] before the priest, for [he is the one who blessing]es the first-fruit of bread 20 and of the new wine and stretches out his hand towards the bread before them. Afterwar[d]s, the Messiah of Israel [shall stretch out his hands] 21 towards the bread. [And afterwards, they shall bless all the congregation of the community, each [one according to] his dignity. And in accordance with this precept one shall act 22 at each meal, when] at least ten men are gathered.

Both quotations place emphasis on the communal character of these meals. In addition to the communal character of these meals, the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa) makes more evident the eschatological or messianic hopes of the community. However, we do not have in these texts an explicit reference to the sacral character of these meals.

It is to be noted that scholarly opinion on the sacral character is divided. In Bokser’s opinion these meals were sacral and designed to replace the sacrificial cult in the Temple. For Lawrence H. Schiffman the communal meals at Qumran were neither cultic nor sacral but were rather connected with the “future expectations of the community and stemmed from the deep Messianic consciousness of this group.” The scrolls do not describe the meal as a substitute for a cult which they no longer practiced but they anticipated the great banquet to occur in the days to


76 Baruch M. Bokser, The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 57, 94. He believes that “one must conclude that the need to show continuity with a cultic background is the operative principle… if the cultic transference does not apply to the Qumranites’ meals, it does apply to their concept of the community.” (Bokser, The Origins of the Seder, 57). See also John Pyke, “The Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion in the Light of the Ritual Washings and Sacred Meals at Qumran,” RevQ 5(1996): 543–52, who writes that “both the Qumran community’s meals and that of the Eucharist were cultic” (Pyke, “Sacraments,” 550). A closer look at the meal in IQSa will reveal that what we have is a strict order of events. This, therefore, is a ritualized event and hence the meal, for me, is sacred.

In a very insightful way, J. Van Der Ploeg makes a compelling argument for the distinction between a sacral and a non-sacral meal. The essence of his argument is that it is possible for a meal to have a religious meaning, but it is not on that account a sacred meal. While stating that there is not much evidence of sacred meals in the Scrolls, he notes that:

Since the essential act of a meal is the eating of the food, a meal can only be called sacred when the eating is a sacred act. This is normally when the food is sacred or when a sacred meaning is attached to it. In an article in the encyclopedia, Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (2nd ed.) F. Pfister knows of four kinds of “cultic meals” (kultische Mahlzeiten): meals in which holy foods are eaten; covenant meals; the meal of the sacrifice of communion; the meal offered exclusively to a god.

One can dispute the sacredness of the meals in the texts at Qumran; however, the eschatological fervor present in the description of these meals, especially in the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa), is undeniable. It is also to be noted that eschatology is the context for understanding the movement behind the scrolls. Yet significantly, eschatological fervor is not something characteristic of the Passover meal. The significance of the eschatological outlook evident in the meals in the Scrolls becomes apparent when one compares them with the meals of early Jesus movement. It is on this

78 Schiffman, “Communal Meals,” 53. “Several details must be noted. First, the passage indicates no obligation that all meals are communal. Second, the priest receives this honored status because of his position, not because the meal is cultic… third, the mention of the bread and wine does not indicate that the meal was of a sacral character” (Schiffman, “Communal Meals,” 51). J. Priest outlines a difference between a Messianic Banquet and an Eschatological Banquet. “If the Messiah is the host of the meal, it is properly called the Messianic Banquet; if no mention of the Messiah is made, the term eschatological banquet is more appropriate.” He further notes that “it seems more probable that the Qumran community understood their regular communal meals as anticipations of the great meal which would be celebrated when the Messiah appeared among them.” See J. Priest “A Note on the Messianic Banquet,” in The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 222–38, here 228–229.


80 This form of eschatology is what John J. Collins calls “Apocalyptic Eschatology.” It is an expectation of the end of this present age. This end is often seen as inaugurated by the arrival of at least one figure anointed by God. The significance of this expectation is that it transforms the lives of those who hope for it, though they live in this present age. Sometimes this transformation takes the form of a transcendence of death. Cf. John J. Collins, “Apocalyptic Eschatology as the Transcendence of Death,” CBQ 36 (1974): 21–43.
point that the communal meals in the Dead Sea Scrolls are similar to the *Last Supper* and the *Lord’s Supper.* In the communal meals of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the members of the community were looking forward to the coming of the Davidic and Priestly messiahs. Among the early Christ groups, this eschatological outlook is characterized by the expectation of the *return* of Jesus and subsequent end of time. While both exhibited a similar eschatological outlook, seeing themselves as living in the last days, the object of that focus was radically different. Nowhere is this difference more evident than their communal meals.

However, beyond the paschal and eschatological features present in the *Last Supper,* there are other features that are better explained by placing this meal in a different context than either the Passover or the communal meals in the texts from Qumran. To explain some of these features, scholars have turned to the socio-historical context of the larger Graeco-Roman world.

**The Last Supper in Its Socio-Historical Context: The Graeco-Roman World**

**Cultic Aetiology**

The *Last Supper* has also been described as a cultic aetiology in the manner of aetiologies present in the Graeco-Roman world. A cultic aetiology primarily serves as the grounding and explanation, in narrative form, of a cultic rite, simultaneously reflecting its concrete performance. Bultmann thought that “after the works of Eichhorn and Heitmueller I do not need to prove that a cult legend lies behind Mk. 14:22–25… It is clear that vv. 22–25 is the cult legend of the Hellenistic

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81 John Pyke’s attempt to extract eschatology from the Passover is far from successful. See Pyke, “Holy Baptism and Holy Communion,” 551–52.

circles about Paul, made to serve as an organic continuation of vv. 12–16 by recounting the Passover meal.”

The Last Supper, for Hans-Josef Klauck, has its basis in a mythical cultic aetiology. He analyzes the structure of timelessness in myths, which means that although events in a myth never happened, they are nevertheless forever extant. However, he avers that the Lord’s Supper is a different sort of myth, since the “ritual practice of the community is anchored in history and referred back to a fixed point in the recent, not to say most recent, past.” Meier in a similar manner reasons that there is nothing wrong with the idea of cultic aetiology in the sense of a “cult legend,” if by that one means that the Last Supper narratives “trace back and ground a ritual meal of the church in a meal celebrated by Jesus. However, when this term starts to mean a denial of any historical basis for the Last Supper, it is to be rejected.”

That said, for Anders Eriksson,

The differences between the words of institution and real cultic aetiologies are, however so great that the designation cultic aetiology should be rejected … the tradition is not a myth separated from the Last Supper. It has a historical basis, which is noticeable in the introductory phrase “in the night when he was betrayed.” Paul’s reception of this tradition από τοῦ κυρίου does not mean a personal revelation but a chain of transmission originating with the Lord.

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83 Bultmann, _Synoptic Tradition_, 265.
85 Klauck, “Presence in the Lord’s Supper,” 64.
Robert M. Grant is of the view that while the account of the Last Supper is “certainly aetiological in the sense that it describes the origin of the rite, it is not self-evidently a myth, however defined.”\textsuperscript{88} This dissertation argues that it is consistent with the literary evidence of early Christianity to reject any suggestion that the Last Supper is without a historical basis. This is because the narratives of the Last Supper consistently provided a historical basis for the meal. As noted earlier, this does not mean a wholesale acceptance of the information provided by these narratives; but it is an acknowledgement that seeks to respect a historical understanding of the event by its earliest narrators.

Mystery Cults

Some scholars have also argued that the origin of the Last Supper is to be sought in the mystery cults prevalent in the Graeco-Roman empire. The most comprehensive argument for the linkage with Hellenistic cult-meals has been provided by Ernst Käsemann.\textsuperscript{89} In Käsemann’s reasoning, Paul acknowledges this connection between Hellenistic meals and the Lord’s Supper and used it for paraenetic and polemic purposes (1 Cor. 10.19ff). He argues that the idea in the Lord’s Supper and Baptism is that Christians become members of Christ’s body, and he shows that Paul derived similar ideas from gnostic piety based on the Archetypal Man.\textsuperscript{90} In this case, Paul’s Christian interpretation is not gnostic but the underlying ideas are gnostic.


\textsuperscript{90} Käsemann, \textit{Essays}, 111–12. See also, “On the Origin of the World (II,5 and XIII, 2),” Introduced by Hans-Gebhard Bethge and translated by Han-Gebhard Bethge, and Bentley Layton in \textit{The Nag Hammadi Library: The Definitive Translation of the Gnostic Scriptures}, ed. James M. Robinson (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 170–89. Ralph Martin explains that the Gnostic idea of the Archetypal Man is derived from the Iranian myth of the Gayomart. This is the story of the Original Man sent by God at the beginning of time. “He fell prey to the powers of darkness and was victimized by them to such an extent that, although he was ‘rescued’ by the father of all
Hans-Josef Klauck is convinced that the *Last Supper* could never have developed without the ideological interaction and inspiration from the mystery cults. According to him, …the mystery cults too are an intrinsic element of the non-Jewish horizon of the reception of the Christian message. They too are embraced by the process of enculturation of Christianity in its initial phase, and they make their own contribution to this process. In my opinion, the Christian doctrine of the sacraments, in the form in which we know it, would not have arisen without this interaction.\(^{91}\)

Similarly, Richard Reitzenstein could not resist the temptation of finding possible parallels in mystery cults. He comes, however, to a different conclusion than Käsemann and Klauck. His full quotation is useful here:

> When Paul in this reshaping adds εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, “in memory of me,” of course I can never interpret these words simply to mean a memorial meal, such as is known in the Greek cult of the dead. This would be in contradiction to the sacramental doctrine which Paul gives immediately after this. One could rather interpret them in a mystical sense, somewhat corresponding to that narrative, from about the time of Paul, in a magical text in which Osiris gives to Isis and to Horus his blood to drink in a cup of wine, so that after his death, they will not forget him, but must search for him with longing and lamentation until, brought back to life, he is reunited with them. In fact, in the love magic and in friendship covenants of most peoples the portion of blood puts a magical spell upon the soul of the one who drinks it, and the idea is understandable that the Christians also, thanks to the effects of this draught cannot forget the Lord’s death, but must speak of him---of course not in empty lamentation—until he himself shall re-appear… Yet, unless a happy accident should give us new information about the practice and interpretation of the mystery-meals that were common in most of the cults, this remains only a matter of playing with possibilities; only baptism, not the Lord’s Supper can be compared, up to this point with non-Christian counterparts.\(^{92}\)

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Although, Reitzenstein is hesitant to conclude, pending further research, that the *Lord’s Supper* is a form of the Graeco-Roman meal as we have it in the mystery cults, he does not refrain from extensively outlining possible parallels. It is crucial to point out that his resistance is partly because the mystery-cults’ meals have at their basis a-historical cultic aetiologies.

Arthur Darby Nock makes a comprehensive argument that the notion of the *Lord’s Supper* being a mystery cult meal is best abandoned. He doubts that the sacred meals in mystery cults have the same significance as the *Lord’s Supper* in the early Jesus movement. In terms of the use of language, it is the opinion of Nock that we have little to suggest a relationship because any idea that what we call the Christian sacraments were in origin indebted to pagan mysteries or even to the metaphorical concepts based upon them shatters on the rock of linguistic evidence. Paul never uses *telē* or its correlatives, and has *myein* only once, and then metaphorically to describe what life has taught him (Phil. 4.12).

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94 Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity*, 132–33. Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, “The Qumran Meal and the Lord’s Supper in Paul,” see 243–47, where he observes that the word *κοινωνία* as used in 1 Cor 10:16 is indubitably filled with pagan (i.e., non-Jewish) ideas since the LXX never used the root *κοινόν* of the communion of man and God. The pagan ideas he is referring to are the mystery cults. It is, however, useful to note that though the LXX never used the Greek word *κοινόν* of the communion of man and God, that does not mean that the idea of a communion between man and God is absent in Judaism. In fact, 1 Corinthians 10 is replete with images drawn from the Exodus narrative that suggest ‘communion’ with God is not an insurance against the wrath of God. See also Exodus 24, where Moses and the elders are described as seeing God in the context of a meal. Therefore, the absence of a linguistic reference does not validate the absence of the idea. In the case of Paul, it is especially curious that he did not use the words that suggest that he was borrowing from mystery cults when evidence suggests that he is not reluctant to use words from the Graeco-Roman world to advance his ideas. In addition to that, Nock uses linguistic evidence in addition to other arguments to establish the weakness of the belief that the *Lord’s Supper* borrowed mystery cult ideas or is dependent on mystery cult as Kuhn suggested. See also Bruno Dombrowski ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς εὐαγγελίας in 1QS and τὸ ἱερό τῶν ἀνθρώπων: An Instance of Early Greek and Jewish Synthesis,” *HTR* 59 (1966): 293–307. Another useful article in this regard is by J.Y Campbell, “*Koinonia* and Its Cognates in the New Testament,” *JBL* 51(1932): 352–80. Campbell argues that *koinonia* and its cognates primarily express the participation in something along with others and not an association i.e., sharing’ with another person or persons.
Nock concludes that “in pagan initiatory rites, washing was no more than a preliminary, and meals were meals, with no known special significance save in Mithraism—and Mithraism was not a notable force in the world around nascent Christianity.”

Just as has been the case with cultic aetiology, locating the origin of the Lord’s Supper in the mystery cult has been hampered by the dearth of textual evidence for such a connection. In the few cases where there is textual evidence, the meanings derived from such evidence have not been self-evident but conjectural.

Ritual Theory Studies

While there is no consensus about the definition of ritual, the consistent thing in many definitions of ritual is the idea of repetition. This is because rituals play an important role in the generation and fixation of religious beliefs by means of repetition. This, however, does not shed much light on the concept of ritual, since many of the things we do daily share the feature of repetition. So, the idea of sequencing is also important, since each ritual has a recognizable sequence of events.

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95 Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity*, 133. Nock also dismisses the idea that the Last Supper could have been a funerary meal. He notes that funerary meals do no more than give outward expression to fellowship among cult members or commemorate a dead founder in whose honor they meet or pecuniary benefactions they enjoy. The phrase ‘in memory of me’ in 1 Cor 11 was not used with the same significance for the early Jesus movement in Corinth who thought of Christ not as dead but as living (Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity*, 72–3). Recent scholarly opinion seems to have also discarded this notion that there existed a distinct legal category of burial associations, as all associations may have had a funerary dimension. See Jinyu Liu, “Professional Associations,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome* ed. Paul Erdkamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 352–68.


Paschal Boyer and Pierre Liénard describe the main characteristics of (human) action ritualization as compulsion, rigidity (adherence to a script), goal demotion, and internal repetition (and redundancy). An interesting idea in their characterization of ritual is what they called “goal demotion.” This is when a ritual uses ordinary events of life and, while doing so, divorces them from observable goals. By so doing we invest these ordinary categories with some qualities that defy expectations, and then attention is drawn to the information embedded in or associated with them. Luther H. Martin notes that such “information tends, thereby, to be considered more valuable than others in the marketplace of possible human ideas and, consequently, selected and transmitted.” Crucial to this understanding of ritual is the idea of goal demotion and repetition. In the Lord’s Supper in Corinth, we have a situation in which the ordinary categories of bread and wine meant for biological nourishment experience a goal demotion. Both elements are now imbued with new meanings. The call to “do this in remembrance of me” is a call to repetition, a cornerstone of Boyer and Liénard’s definition of ritual. This definition and outline of ritual makes the Lord’s Supper in Corinth a likely candidate for ritual analysis.

Czachesz observes that in the New Testament there are three aspects to textual interpretation as it concerns rituals. The first aspect is when texts describe ritual activity as we have in 1 Cor. 11. Another aspect is when we can make assumptions about the use of passages in ritual settings. This would include our labelling of some texts as hymnic. Assumptions in this

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101 See Philippians 2:6–11.
instance must be made with extra caution. The final aspect of textual interpretation is when we use evidence from the cultural setting of the New Testament to help us understand ritual practices, even if these practices are not explicitly described in the text. In this instance he also calls for an exercise of caution because the available samples may not be well understood or may even be biased.102

The Lord’s Supper in the city of Corinth has understandably been brought into this conversation on rituals, since it is one of the better candidates for the use of religious ritual.103 To buttress this point, Czachesz gives an example from I Corinthians 11:17–34, which he understands as an attempt to make the shared meals of the Corinthians more like a ritual and less like any other meal. He observes that, in Paul’s view, the ritual should be unlike the meals people consume in their homes (v. 22), its connections to the myth of Christ should be made explicit (vv.23–26), and some non-trivial consequences of consuming the meal should be kept in mind (vv.28–30).104 He therefore suggests that the transformation of communal meals in the Corinthian assembly, initiated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11, should be understood as an example of ritualization. It is not clear if by “initiated by Paul” Czachesz has the same sense as Maccoby as noted earlier in this chapter.105

Since rituals are seen as marks of social identification, the Lord’s Supper has been described as a community ritual which helps in giving an identity to the early Christian

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movements. Application of ritual theory has helped turn the focus on the way social and identity formation can be effected in those meals, since rituals are important locations for the generation of memories and for the reinforcement of existing ideas. This insight into the early Jesus movement has been a compelling one. In the words of Hal Taussig “recent ritual theory provides a lens through which to see how meals furnished the larger Hellenistic society with ways to think about, experiment with and negotiate its social structures, personal relationships, and identity formations.” In the view of Richard DeMaris such phenomena as the Last Supper, as with any other reality of the early Jesus movement, cannot be understood without paying attention to ritual and ritual theories. Anders Eriksson calls the Lord’s Supper a ritual of solidarity, and by participating in the ritual the Corinthians display their adherence to a new community in a new covenant. Wayne Meeks also suggests that for the Christians in the Corinthian Church the Lord’s Supper would have been seen as a ritual of solidarity. Therefore, in more recent studies on early Christian meals, there has been a surge in the application of ritual theories such as those suggested by scholars like Jonathan Z. Smith and Ithamar Gruenwald.

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108 Taussig, In the Beginning was the Meal, 68.


110 Eriksson, Traditions as Rhetorical Proof, 187.


The challenge that exists in applying ritual theories to meals in the New Testament is to avoid providing a general hypothesis of ritual actions that obscures the particular understanding of each ritual in its setting. The aim of this dissertation is to understand a particular ritual as we have it in 1 Corinthians 11:17–34. It is hoped that the particularity of this study will help encourage caution in the application of general theories of ritual analysis to particular instances of rituals.

Graeco-Roman Banquet

Two studies in the 20th century successfully marked a shift in terms of the search for the origins of the Lord’s Supper. Significantly for this dissertation, both of these studies appealed to the text of 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 in making their arguments. The first work was Dennis Smith’s *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World*, which was a revised version of his 1980 Harvard dissertation. Working independently of Smith, Matthias Klinghardt published *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft: Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern* (1996) in which he “proposed and thoroughly documented separately” the same integrative thesis as Smith. Smith, Klinghardt, and other scholars drawing on the works of these two, participated in an 8-year Society of Biblical Literature study.

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of Meals in the Graeco-Roman World from 2002–2010. The thesis of this group of scholars is that “there was a common meal tradition throughout the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean that lay at the basis of all active meals of the Greco Roman era, whether they be Gentile, Jewish or Christian.” For Smith, “clearly the Corinthian community, and by extension, the churches of Paul throughout the eastern Mediterranean were following a Greek model for their community meal.” In several places in his work Smith lays out his argument, as in the following passage:

Contrary to a large body of previous scholarship, I will not be arguing that Paul utilized a particular form of meal, such as the Passover meal or the meal of the mystery cults, as his model. I am instead referring to a generic meal model from the culture, one which, importantly, is utilized by groups throughout the Greco-Roman world, including Judaism and the mystery cults.

Smith’s idea of a generic meal model would mean that:

The Greco-Roman Banquet tradition contributed more to early Christianity, however, than simply the form of the meal. The Banquet was a social institution of the first order and as such was a carrier of a social code, the ideology of the banquet. Earliest Christian ideology developed out of the models for religious thinking of its day, and one such model was the ideology of the banquet. Banquet ideology provided a model for creating community, defining behavior within the community, sharing values, and connecting with the divine.

Gordon J. Bahr had before Smith and Klinghardt signaled a growing trend to view both Jewish and early Christian meals within the wider context of banquets in contemporary Graeco-Roman culture and especially the symposion, the traditional formal supper at which drinking wine did

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118 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 175.

119 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 279.
not accompany the meal itself but followed it.\textsuperscript{120} He therefore treats the passover meal as one among Jewish festive meals and then set Jewish meals generally in the larger context of other festive meals of that period of history (i.e. Graeco-Roman world).\textsuperscript{121} His conclusion is that the order of festive meals was the same both for Jews and Gentiles in this same period.\textsuperscript{122}

Earlier, Siegfried Stein argues for the influence of the Symposia literature on the literary form of the Pesach Haggadah.\textsuperscript{123} Therefore, in his understanding, the Haggadah in its literary form really belongs to the Greek symposia literature. Stein’s idea is supported by Sandra R. Shimoff who acknowledges that:

\begin{quote}
if we want to appreciate the true extent of Hellenization among Jews in Eretz Israel and how the rabbis reacted to Hellenization, Greco-Roman Banquets are of special significance; no other Hellenistic practice was at once so culturally attractive and so religiously reprehensible.\textsuperscript{124}
\end{quote}

The Jewish world’s ambiguous relationship with Hellenization often led Jews to reject some ideas in the Hellenistic world. In many cases, however, the rejection was not wholesale. In such instances, the Hellenistic ideas will have undergone some transformation before being adopted


\textsuperscript{121}Bahr, “The Seder of Passover,” 182.

\textsuperscript{122}Bahr, “The Seder of Passover,” 199.

\textsuperscript{123}Siegfried Stein, “The Influence of Symposia Literature on the literary form of the Pesach Haggadah,”\textit{JJS} 8 (1957): 13–44. The difference I think between Bahr and Stein is that while Bahr holds that there is a generic relationship between these meals, Stein settles for an “influence.” In that sense, I think that Bahr is the precursor to Smith and Klinghardt.

\textsuperscript{124}Sandra R. Shimoff, “Banquets: The Limits of Hellenization,”\textit{JSJ} 27 (1996): 440–52. Shimoff notes that “When two cultures compete for allegiance of a single people, the politically weaker culture has three options: Assimilation, rejection or accommodation… accommodation to the dominant culture while maintaining cultural identity and integrity may be the only option that allows for survival. Eretz Israel was the arena for the clash of rabbinic and Greco-Roman cultures; rabbis and sages for the most part rejected the first two options and adopted accommodation as their response to the challenge of the Greco-Roman domination” (Shimoff, “Banquets,” here 440). For Shimoff, even Mystery cults adopted these practices. (451).
by Jews. It is in these instances that the extent of Hellenization among the Jews in the Graeco-
Roman world is best reflected. In Shimoff’s view no other institution perfectly captured this
reality better than the Graeco-Roman banquets that were transformed before being adopted by
Jews.

The thesis of Stein and Bahr has been challenged by Baruch Bokser. For Bokser, the
“several analogues between the symposia and the Passover rite are characteristic in general of
dinners in antiquity.” If anything, for Bokser, the Seder was specifically designed in a way to
distinguish the Passover rite from ancient banquets and symposia and to maintain the distinctive
character of the Passover Seder. This means that it is unlikely that the biblical rite was
expanded by the observation of Hellenistic symposia or on account of their knowledge of the
symposia literature. Bokser does not deny that an outside influence played a role in the
shaping of the rabbinic Seder. He did not agree, however, that an external influence was the sole,
or even the main, generative cause of the formation. The main generative cause was the internal
need of the rabbis after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Unfortunately, as
Lawrence A. Hoffmann notes, Bokser’s critique did not become widely accepted, because he
died an untimely death.

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126 Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder*, 50, 62. The Passover Seder is seen by Bokser as a denial strategy
designed to deal with the loss of the Temple and the Lamb.


129 Lawrence A. Hoffmann, “The Passover Meal in Jewish Tradition,” in *Passover and Easter: Origin and
History to Modern Times*, ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame
Press, 1999), 8–26. Bokser’s position is similar to what Nock said of the Lord’s Supper when he writes that “while it
had much in common with what was around, the driving forces in its development came mostly from within… in
As a result, the understanding that prevailed is the interpretation of Bahr that had been applied to the study of the Last Supper and the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament by Smith, Klinghardt and others after them. Many of these studies have established similarities between the Lord’s Supper in Corinth and Graeco-Roman banquets by first outlining their relation to the sequential structure of the meal, that is, the progression from eating to drinking (movement from deipnon to symposion), and secondly, investigating the social values addressed by Paul in Corinth and the classical literature available on these banquets.

The advantage of the Smith-Klinghardt model is that it helps scholarship move beyond the idea that a religious institution was the point of exclusive origin for the Lord’s Supper to the idea of a “genuinely connected systems of meals in the ancient Mediterranean.” Here, the sociological architecture of the meal becomes primary. The relationship between the Lord’s Supper and the Banquet is therefore, in the words of Andrew McGowan, more of identity than of mere homology because the Last Supper is not like a banquet but is a banquet.

In this vein, scholars have argued that we have five central characteristics in Hellenistic meals. These include:

religious history... it is even clearer than elsewhere that nothing can exercise influence which does not find its way prepared” (Nock, Early Gentile Christianity, 87).


1. The reclining of (more or less) all participants while eating and drinking together for several hours in the evening

2. The order of a supper (deipnon) of eating, followed by an extended time (symposion) of drinking, conversation, and performance

3. Marking the transition from deipnon to the symposion with a ceremonial libation, almost always wine

4. Leadership by a “President” (symposiarch) of the meal—a person not always the same, and sometimes a role that was contingent or disputed\textsuperscript{134}

5. A variety of marginal personages, often including servants, uninvited guests, “entertainers,” and dogs.

   According to Klinghardt, these meals focused on values such as community (koinonia), equality (isonomia), friendship (philia), and grace/generosity/beauty (charis), expressed as utopian political values.\textsuperscript{135} For Smith, these meals effected the following social values: social boundaries, social bonding, social obligation, social stratification, and social equality.\textsuperscript{136} These meals not only created boundaries in society but are also the basis for bonding. In addition, the meals also placed an obligation on participants. While some meals enforced strict social stratifications, others expressed the equality shared among diners. It is therefore not a surprise

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\textsuperscript{136} Taussig, \textit{In the Beginning was the Meal}, 29. Cf. Smith “The Greco-Roman Banquet as a Social Institution,” 23–33.
that “whom one dines with defines one’s placement in a larger set of social networks.”

Evidence for these conclusions have largely been drawn from the available literature of the Graeco-Roman world.

These studies have been strengthened by archaeological discoveries, with Jerome Murphy-O’Connor’s study of the archaelogy of Graeco-Roman banquet halls being one of the most important studies of the archaeological evidence available today on this subject. The research by Murphy-O’Connor has been helpful for grasping the possible social context of what went on in the Church at Corinth. In addition, the works of Wayne Meeks, Gerd Theissen, and Justin Meggitt illuminate the social-economic and possible architectural structures of buildings in Corinth where these meals may have taken place. All of these studies support the notion that the meal described in I Corinthians shared much with the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. That the Lord’s Supper as it was celebrated in the city of Corinth is a variant of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition is a well-established position among scholars today.

It is also a position I agree with, but only partially. My concern in this dissertation is with establishing how the Lord’s Supper as introduced by Paul in Corinth (and restated by him in chapter 11 of the first letter), stood out as a significant variant of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. Indeed, little attention has been paid to how the meal appeared to be distinct. That is, if

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137 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 9.


this meal is a variant of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, what makes it a variant? What are those values or characteristics that make it different? The observation of McGowan in this regard is apt when he remarks that if it were to be assumed that the Graeco-Roman culture of the symposium was a uniform or stereotypical set of practices that offered explanatory power for the earliest Christian meals, this would be little advance on earlier discussions.\textsuperscript{140}

That scholarship has not paid much attention to the particularity or specificity of the Christian variant, or Christian adaptation, of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition is evidenced by the list prepared by the SBL committee of Graeco-Roman meals as the seminar’s contribution to studies on meals in the Graeco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{141} According to Taussig, this list included:

1. The application of the new paradigm of the Graeco-Roman meal in the combined work of Dennis Smith and Matthias Klinghardt to a broad range of literature and social settings of the first century BCE to the fourth century CE;
2. The elaboration of the social meanings and dimensions of this Graeco-Roman meal;
3. The development of an understanding of the social significance of these meals through a study of ritual and performance theory;
4. The integration of Jewish meals into this Graeco-Roman model of meals;
5. The articulation of the consequences of the Klinghardt/Smith meal paradigm for the history of the Christian Eucharist.


Significantly absent in this scholarship surveyed by Taussig so far is a study of what the Lord’s Supper distinctively brings to the Graeco-Roman meal traditions. Attempts to get at this have all been peripheral to the goal of many studies on the Lord’s Supper. Andrew B. McGowan, for example, notes only that the Christian meal tradition, recalling as it did a crucified victim of their community, was a more remarkable, and indeed, countercultural thing. In the understanding of Taussig, the Christian meal tradition was a form of political resistance and hence, in this case, this is the one way in which it differed from other similar Graeco-Roman meals. A similar limiting view is also proposed by Lanuwabang Jamir, who argues that “the uniqueness of the Lord’s Supper was the interpretation given to the common bread and wine at the table in terms of the sacrifice on the cross.”

Some scholars have played down any sense of something distinct about the Lord’s Supper. For Valeriy Alikin “The Lord’s supper was clearly a real meal; it was meant to satisfy the participants’ hunger.” Erin K. Vearncombe believes that in Corinth Paul used “the meal practice to encourage the development of certain moral dispositions in a way strikingly similar to association practice.” Overall, in most of these studies, scholars evince a persistent tendency to situate the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament, and especially in Corinth, within the context of

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143 Taussig, In the Beginning was the Meal, 115–43.

144 Lanuwabang Jamir, Exclusion and Judgement in Fellowship Meals: The Social-Historical Background of 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 165.

145 Valeriy Alikin, “Eating the Bread and Drinking the Cup in Corinth: Defining and Expressing the Identity of the Earliest Christians,” in Mahl und religiöse Identität im frühen Christentum, 119–30, here 120.

the Graeco-Roman meal and its values. Despite the value of this effort, it has led to an unintentional and unfortunate consequence—scholarly neglect of the question of what makes the Lord’s Supper distinct in the Graeco-Roman world. While the failure in recent scholarship to note the distinctive features of the Lord’s Supper has led to some conclusions about the characterization of the meal which may often be accurate as far as the overall nature of the Graeco-Roman banquet, when applied to the Lord’s Supper in its specificity, however, they fall short.147 It is the lack of attention to the distinctness of the Lord’s Supper within the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition by even ritual studies that this dissertation will address.

Preliminary Methodological Considerations: Sacred Versus Secular

One major methodological outlook in the recent understanding of this Corinthian passage (and of the Lord’s Supper) is the understanding that in Corinth, as in the larger Graeco-Roman world, the “sacred versus secular or profane” model is not applicable to ancient meals.148 This stands in marked contrast to studies of religious phenomena in early 20th century that have regarded this dichotomy to be an irreducible trait of all religious expression. For instance, in the words of Emile Durkheim:

All known religious beliefs display a common feature. They presuppose a classification of the real or ideal things that men conceive of into two classes—two opposite genera—that are widely designated by two distinct terms which the words profane and sacred translate fairly well. The division of the world into two

147 These conclusions will be addressed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

148 Dennis E. Smith, From Symposium to Eucharist, 6. See also, Siegfried Stein, “There was thus no strict demarcation line between the sacred and the profane in this type of literature and in the pattern of life it tried to depict” (Stein, “The Influence of Symposia Literature on the literary form of the Pesach Haggadah,” 26). See also Pauline Schmitt-Pantal, who argues that “the ‘insertion of the religious element’ is clear in all the collective practices … whether symposium, meal of hospitality, or sacrificial banquet and the sacred-profane distinction seems inapplicable here.” Pauline Schmitt-Pantal, “Sacrificial Meal and Symposium: Two Models of Civic Institutions in the Archaic City?” in Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposium, ed. Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 14–33, here 24.
domains, one containing all that is sacred and the other all that is profane—such is the distinctive trait of religious thought.\textsuperscript{149}

However, many (if not all) who argued for understanding the Corinthian passage as a Graeco-Roman meal insist that in the ancient world meals must be understood to be an integrative activity combining both the sacred and secular in one ritual event.\textsuperscript{150} In the words of Smith, “most Graeco-Roman meals would fall into a category in which they exhibit characteristics of both sacred and secular. Indeed, in ancient Mediterranean culture in general sacred and secular are interwoven and tend to be indistinct.”\textsuperscript{151} Central to the argument of those who see the \textit{Lord’s Supper} as a Graeco-Roman meal is the position that the sacred character of a meal is one of degree and not of kind.\textsuperscript{152} This means that all meals are to some extent always both sacred and secular; the extent to which they are either is a matter of degree and not of kind.

To understand the tendency among scholars to emphasize mainly the similarities between the \textit{Lord’s Supper} and the Graeco-Roman banquet, one needs then to constantly recollect this understanding of the sacred and secular. This understanding of the sacred and secular is made in a bid to ensure that the \textit{Lord’s Supper} fits into the generic description of the Graeco-Roman banquet as a sociological institution. This methodological picture sometimes pits the religious against the


\textsuperscript{150} Smith, \textit{From Symposium to Eucharist}, 6.

\textsuperscript{151} Smith, \textit{From Symposium to Eucharist}, 6.

\textsuperscript{152} Cf. Taussig, \textit{In the Beginning was the Meal}, 33: “Characterizing meals of that era as religious or secular would be a modern caricature and therefore would miss much of what these meals have to say about the social identities of the complex variety of persons in the Greco-Roman epoch.” See also, Jamir, \textit{Exclusion and Judgement}, 93: “This division between the sacred and secular as two different realms can be misleading, since in ancient culture and practices, both were interwoven and interrelated because social and religious life were much integrated.” See also Jamir, \textit{Exclusion and Judgment}, 95: “Even in the case of sacrificial meals, which were clearly intended to be religious, it was just a matter of the religious component of the meal being enhanced by its association with the sacrifice.”
sociological. The immediate result of this is the downplaying of the religious dimension of ancient meals. By contrast, however, it is the religious dimension of the meal that was emphasized by these narratives especially in 1 Corinthians 11:17–34. So, an essential character of this meal is lost by the denial or the de-emphasizing of its religious dimension. The position that will be advanced in this dissertation is that the Lord’s Supper contained a religious dimension that differs in kind from the Graeco-Roman banquet meal traditions.

It is important to note that this dissertation is aware that the Lord’s Supper in Corinth can be studied from ecclesiological, theological (doctrinal), historical (sociological), and literary perspectives. This dissertation, however, is interested primarily in the historical and literary perspectives and will try to limit itself to this scope.

**Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has surveyed the history of scholarship on the meal tradition of the early Jesus movements as received from Jesus in the Last Supper. The first argument of this chapter was that the Last Supper has a historical basis. This claim does not resolve many historical questions surrounding this meal; however, it is an understanding that is helpful in grounding this research in the socio-historical context of the early Christ movements responsible for the narratives of the Last Supper.

The second argument of this chapter is that the Last Supper has for its background a Passover Seder. This argument was based on literary evidence that at no time had the early Jesus movements as represented in the New Testament given an interpretation to the Last Supper that

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had no paschal features or significance. It is the position of this dissertation that this interpretation of the *Last Supper* has some considerable historical weight. This interpretation fits a long history in Jewish tradition of interpreting the primary event at the foundation of their tribal and national life (the Passover) in both cultic and salvific terms. All that is required for such an interpretation of the *Last Supper* is for the meal itself to be structured around the Passover offering. This structuring around the Passover offering is at the same time expanded to accommodate other elements.\(^{154}\)

This chapter also defended the idea that the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth is based on the *Last Supper*. It rejected some positions that the *Lord’s Supper* is based on mystery cults, aetiological legends or funerary meals. It argued that the eschatological focus is a common theme shared by both the communal meals in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the *Lord’s Supper*, albeit with a significant difference in the object of their expectations.

This chapter also noted the development in scholarship in establishing that there was a common meal tradition in the Graeco-Roman world. Several groups and cultures in the Graeco-Roman world, including Judaism and the early Christ group in Corinth, shared this common meal tradition in their cultic contexts. It has been argued in several relevant studies that the Passover meal (both before and after 70 CE), the communal meals in the texts at Qumran, the *Last Supper*, and the *Lord’s Supper* all have features of the Graeco-Roman banquet meal tradition. Significantly, these studies have established the similarities between the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth and Graeco-Roman banquets, first, by outlining their relation to the sequential structure of the meal, that is, the progression from eating to drinking (movement from *deipnon* to *symposion*), and secondly, by

\(^{154}\) Bokser, “Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder,” 26
investigating the social values addressed by Paul in Corinth and in the literature available on these banquets. It has also been shown that the ritual theory has often been at the service of these studies.

The fact that scholarship on the Lord’s Supper and meals in the early Jesus movement so far has focused on the similarities that these meals share with the Graeco-Roman banquet has meant that the distinctness of the Lord’s Supper has not been adequately attended to. This neglect has led scholars to underestimate the features or issues that make the Last Supper distinct within the banquet traditions. For instance, in its conclusion, one recent study on communal meals among early Christ groups laments that 1 Corinthians 11:27–32 awaits a sociological explanation. Paul’s punitive interpretation of the abuse at the Lord’s Supper in this particular pericope (1 Corinthians 11:27–32) is intriguing, given that there were other abuses going on in the Corinthian community in response to which Paul himself took punitive measures. Whereas Paul assumes authority in these cases, he interprets the recent illness and death in the community as God’s punishment for abuses occurring at the community’s ritual meal. Why did Paul argue that in the case of the communal meal, God himself is the dispenser of justice and in fact had already done that? In other words, why did he attach this interpretation to the abuse of the community’s religious meal? This dissertation will in the coming chapters show how answering these questions reveal the distinctness of the Lord’s Supper among the banquet traditions in the Graeco-Roman world.


156 The abuses raised in the letter include sexual immorality, Christians bringing lawsuits against each other, divisions, and doubts on the ‘fact’ of the Resurrection of the Lord.

The second chapter of this dissertation will treat the Graeco-Roman banquet meal tradition as a genre. To lay the groundwork for this application of genre studies to the Graeco-Roman meal traditions, I will discuss the major theories of genre analysis. I will argue that the Smith-Klinghardt model reflects the traditional idea of genre classification which sees genres as categories that are capable of definition, constituted by necessary and sufficient criteria of membership. But this type of categorization, with which scholars of the Corinthian passage have generally approached the texts of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, is an insufficient model. The aim in this chapter will be to explain how the prototype theory is more useful in understanding the place of the Lord’s Supper in the Graeco-Roman banquet meal tradition.

The third chapter will apply the prototype theory to the Lord’s Supper in Corinth to help understand its place in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. There will be a critical assessment of how the characteristics of Graeco-Roman meals as discussed by Smith and Klinghardt capture various associations within the Graeco-Roman world. The result will be to establish that although these meals share much in common, those distinctive features which are not in common are also particularly important for understanding the Graeco-Roman meal traditions and are worth investigating. In this chapter the distinctive features of the Lord’s Supper will also be treated in detail.

158 My understanding of genre will extend beyond the literary phenomenon.

The third chapter will present my understanding of what historically occurred in Corinth regarding the Lord’s Supper. It will be posited that Paul, during his initial contact with the Church of Corinth at its formation, presented the Lord’s Supper as an encounter with the divine in which sacrilege is possible. What happened in Corinth was understood by Paul to be a sacrilege.\textsuperscript{160} I will disagree with the view that “Paul has a negative view of the Corinthian meal because he misunderstands it.”\textsuperscript{161} Rather, Paul understood perfectly well the tradition he handed over to the Corinthians and what took place there concerning it as reported to him.

The fourth chapter building upon chapters 2 and 3 will show how the Corinthian meal is a distinctive instantiation of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. The Graeco-Roman meal tradition helps us situate the Lord’s Supper within the meal landscape of its world. However, it is equally important that while we situate it in the Graeco-Roman world, we do not lose sight of what the early Christians understood by the Lord’s Supper particularly. To understand that, we must pay attention to those elements in which the Lord’s Supper is distinct within the common meal tradition. The import of these differences becomes more comprehensible when we set them within the context of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. The larger implication is that the prototype theory of genre analysis can be utilized to understand what the early Christians shared with their Graeco-Roman world along with an emphasis on how their distinctness persisted even as they shared a similar social ritual. In the fifth chapter, my conclusion will be that, while the early Christian meal is not entirely unique in the Graeco-Roman world, it is distinct and a witness to the rich diversity that existed in the ancient world.

\textsuperscript{160} Jamir, \textit{Exclusion and Judgement}, 174.

\textsuperscript{161} Peter-Ben Smit, “Ritual Failure, Ritual Negotiation and Paul’s Argument,” 165–93, here 185.
CHAPTER TWO
CATEGORIZATION AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

Introduction

In the first chapter, I argued that the Lord’s Supper in Corinth is best understood in light of the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. In making that argument, I acknowledged that categorization is an indispensable tool in human cognition and culture. Therefore, scholars have categorized the Lord’s Supper generically as a Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. Scholarship has also classified the narratives of the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament as part of a literary genre that focused on meals.¹ This chapter will focus on how categorization has worked and should work in the description of the Lord’s Supper. I am using categorization as a method because this study involves comparison, and every comparison inevitably involves some mode of classification based upon perceived similarities in various aspects of the phenomenon being compared.² The challenge of every effort of comparison is to grasp the differential quality.³ In this vein, C.

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¹ When I use the word “genre” in this study, it always refers to a literary phenomenon (unless otherwise stated). However, in this case, I am also paying attention to its social dimension. The term “generic,” on the other hand, invokes the classical distinction between the genus and species.


Wesley Demarco argues that categories can only mediate truth if they are “qualified” by pertinent distinctions and clarifications.  

Identifying similarities when comparing two or more phenomena is always interesting, but progress is made in comparison when one has a model that can account for the differential quality of the phenomena being compared.  

It is the aim of this chapter to argue and propose a model of categorization that will help establish the place of the Lord’s Supper in the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. The model of categorization this chapter will propose is to serve as the theoretical framework for analyzing the evidence presented in this dissertation. This model will equally account for the similarities the Lord’s Supper shares with other meals in the Graeco-Roman banquet traditions as well as for its distinctiveness.

First, this chapter will briefly explain how categorization functions in human cognition. Critical studies on human cognition are now a domain of cognitive science. I will outline the progress made in scholarship when it comes to the use of categorization as a cognitive tool. It will be noted that reflective study and theorization on categorization started with the pioneering effort of Aristotle. Aristotle’s foundational study on the nature of human cognition has now been more recently complemented by Ludwig Wittgenstein’s notion of “family resemblance” and Eleanor Rosch’s prototype theories.

Second, this chapter will explain how developments in cognitive science have made their way into other disciplines. Genre analysis (including genre analysis in biblical literature) is one of the disciplines that has benefited from the progress made in cognitive science. Since the

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5 Ponge, Méthodes, 42.
language of genre analysis is being used in categorizing the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition, I will trace here how cognitive science and genre analysis interact.

Finally, this chapter will argue that the current framework used in categorizing the Lord’s Supper mirrors the Aristotelian taxonomic model of categorization. I used the word ‘mirror’ because none of the scholars who have written on meals among early Christ groups have explicitly described their categorization of the Lord’s Supper as Aristotelian. However, the emphasis these scholars have placed on the similarities between the Lord’s Supper and the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition—while mainly overlooking the differences between the two—display an Aristotelian understanding of categorization. Additionally, the progress made in cognitive science will make it clear that their framework works best under the Aristotelian model of categorization. It will be shown, however, that this model of categorization provides an insufficient understanding and explanation of the Lord’s Supper. It also means that with this Aristotelian framework, current scholarship on the Lord’s Supper has not utilized the insights that come from the significant progress made in cognitive science and genre analysis. As an alternative, an understanding of categorization based on the idea of a prototype will be shown to be more helpful in appreciating the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. At the level of human cognition, a prototype is the exemplar of a cognitive model. A cognitive model is the basic idea of a category in its idealized form also known as the Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM). Using this understanding of categorization, that is comprised of a model and its prototype, we will at the

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6 The Idealized Cognitive Model is a theory of Categorization proposed by George Lakoff. Further explanation of this will be given in this chapter. See George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
end of this chapter propose both a cognitive model of the Graeco-Roman Banquet and its prototype.

**Categorization as an Indispensable Human Tool**

Classifying and categorizing things and people is one of the most useful tools of human cognition and often goes unnoticed.\(^7\) Classifications, however pervasive in our lives, are ordinarily invisible, yet their impact is indisputable and inescapable.\(^8\) We create and recreate categories and schemes of classifications for the world we encounter, and we sometimes let go of them. This is possible because “nature in itself is category-friendly, so much so that a range of category sets can translate nature’s intelligible content for us.”\(^9\) The means that we can categorize nature because nature itself yields to being categorized. We can for instance count a number of trees because trees can be counted. This does not mean that these categories are innate in nature, but they are traceable to what Demarco calls some primitive acts of nature or formative acts of nature. Chief among these primitive acts of nature is qualification, which is the ability to see one thing as different from another.\(^10\) This means that we cannot categorize what we cannot

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\(^7\) I understand classification and categorization as the same in our thought processes. A category is a number of objects that are considered equivalent. Cf. Rosch Eleanor, H “Principles of Categorization,” in *Cognition and Categorization*, ed. Eleanor Rosch and Llyod Barbara B, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1978), 27–48, here 30. By underappreciated, I mean we often categorize unconsciously.

\(^8\) Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 2. On the inescapable nature of classification, Bowker and Star write, “Try the simple experiment of ignoring your gender classification and use instead whichever toilet is nearest; try to locate a library book shelved under the wrong library of congress catalogue number; stand in the immigration queue at a busy foreign airport without the right passport or arrive without the transformer and the adaptor that translates between electrical standards. The material force of categories appears always and instantly” (Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 3).


\(^10\) It is worth quoting Demarco at full length here: “By ‘qualifications’ I mean, in the first place, the sense-delimiting operations that serve to specify utterances and sort out meaning-variations. Qualifications in the intended sense are not hedges or dodges. Evasions and prevarications are common abuses of qualification. In the main, they are the moves we use to discern divergences in interpretation, to survey usage and thereby sort out the elements of
qualify since categorization presumes qualification.\textsuperscript{11} It is with qualifications that we resolve “issues about meaning and truth by making determinations about relative interiors and exteriors, situations and contexts, features and emphases, functions and roles. Established categories are simply settled patterns of such determinations.”\textsuperscript{12} Qualification of nature is only possible because nature yields itself to qualification.\textsuperscript{13} Human beings have also inherited nature’s formative acts as primitive operations of thought. Since we are a part of nature, we have inherited that formative act of qualification (hence categorizing) as a basic form of thought.\textsuperscript{14} Being (nature) and human thinking are therefore identical at the level of primitive acts. In other words, nature’s own act of construction and qualifying acts of mind are formally identical.\textsuperscript{15} Demarco says:

Language and nature do not coincide in any particular category set but in the formative activities that in nature give rise to different kinds of beings and in language and thought give rise to different kinds of categories. Nature’s being is based in forms of activity more fundamental than taxa or types. It is a dissension. They are the contrasts and comparisons we make in the name of clarification. We make qualifications to point up the discourse- and argument-shaping purposes of interlocutors, to discern the meaning-modifying circumstances of controversies, to articulate differences in significance that often go unmarked. We employ qualifications to identify aspects and situate events and experiences with respect to each other and their backgrounds. Vehicles of questioning and interpretation and translation, qualifications are more basic than categories” (Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 244–45).

\textsuperscript{11} Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 246. According to Demarco, “Qualifications are the characteristics of things (by bequest or conversion more or less central or peripheral, intrinsic or extrinsic, salient or incidental). Acts of qualification are the operations productive of the qualifications of things, events, properties, relations, situations, and so on. ‘Forms’ are the common principles in these acts (‘form of qualification’ is hence short for ‘form of the act of qualification’); forms are not structures; structures are derivative. The root term ‘qualification’ may be used abstractly or concretely; abstractly it refers to all of the above together, generically, while concretely it refers to the act of being that generates and destroys them” (Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 255).

\textsuperscript{12} Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 247.

\textsuperscript{13} I use ‘Nature’ in the philosophical understanding of \textit{Being} which is all that exists (and can exist).

\textsuperscript{14} Also “the operations ultimately responsible for all the varieties are in reality forms of activity that are not exclusive possessions of human language or mind.” Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 254–55.

\textsuperscript{15} Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 266. Demarco elsewhere notes that “the mind is a sort of wildlife; its operations therefore ought to be understood to be natural acts.”
philosophical error to locate the being of nature in categories and concepts or even in the structures of real articles that correspond to them. Since the structures are derivative, the qualifications of things can be categorized in any number of ways according to any number of patterns.\textsuperscript{16}

The challenge one will have with qualification as a primitive act of nature is its elementary and hence, crude characteristic. Qualification’s capacity to distinguish between things in nature cannot by itself mediate intelligibility.

These forms of qualifications are so inclusive and ungarnished that they tell us virtually nothing about the distinctive determinations of the domains needing mediation. To that end we need further articulation. That is where categories come in. Categories settle some clear-cut shapes the unbound brands of qualification might take. Experience and language are category-hungry just because the forms of qualification that define their most basic operations need additional specifications if they are to express the specific qualifications of particular media.\textsuperscript{17}

Therefore, while categories are not innate in nature, the act of categorization itself is an act inherent in nature. Categories reflect our innate desire to make sense of the world through the act of reasonable partitioning. There is a lot of variety encountered in the world, and our classifications and categorizations translate this variety to us in a range and scheme of sets. We can say that to categorize is human, since it is impossible to think without using categories.\textsuperscript{18}

The English word ‘category’ is from the Greek verb καταγορεύω. In its pre-Aristotelian popular usage, this verb with its corresponding noun (καταγόρευσις) has the sense of show,


\textsuperscript{17} Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories” 252. Demarco observes that, “Qualifications are not categories. They are acts we draw upon when we make determinations and articulate partitions and segmentations, complements and supplements, particular patterns of inclusion and exclusion, and so on. Settled into replicable patterns, these more specific determinations can mediate content and translate truths. The settled shapes are what function as categories” (Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 259).

reveal, prove, signify, declare and tell. In its legal usage, it means to accuse someone in general or in particular, to charge someone in court, or to denounce or accuse someone publicly. It was in Aristotle that this word took on a technical and philosophical significance in the sense of a predicate. The linguistic development of this word as it passed over to its philosophical sense indicates that its basic meaning as a noun is “that which is asserted” and as a verb “to assert something” about something else. It is, in other words, to name something as belonging to an individual, as when someone says Paul is a thief. While initially the study of categorization was the purview of logic, mathematics, and philosophy, today, it is a science in its own right. The field that studies how we come to know and classify things is now known as “cognitive science.” The ability to put things in groups helps us to handle the influx of information we process daily. Our inclination to classify is largely driven by the fact that categorization is the way we make sense of human experience. This means that there is nothing more basic to our thought, perception, language, action and speech than categorization. George Lakoff observes that “every time we see something as a kind of thing, for example a tree, we are categorizing.

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Most categorization is automatic and unconscious, and if we become aware of it at all, it is only in problematic cases.27 He explains this further by noting that:

In moving about the world, we automatically categorize people, animals, and physical objects both natural and man-made. This sometimes leads to the impression that we just categorize things as they are, that things come in natural kinds, and that our categories of mind naturally fit the kind of things that are in the world. But a large proportion of our categories are not categories of things; they are categories of abstract entities.28

It is important to note at this stage that a category is something we have come up with ourselves and this means that all categories are humanly constructed.29 However, in this work, this is not the main concern. The challenge is to establish whether the categories we have come up with correspond to the divisions already there in the world.30 That is to say, “Do our categorizations reflect reality?” In our case, to call the Lord’s Supper a form or a variant of the Graeco-Roman banquet is an exercise in categorization or classification. However, does the current framework for understanding the Lord’s Supper reflect the reality of this meal? The next section will discuss some theories of classification to see which framework illuminates best the Lord’s Supper in Corinth.

27 Lakoff, Women 5–6. See also Lakoff and Johnson Metaphors We Live By, 3. Here, Lakoff and Johnson both argue that “our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of. In most little things we do every day, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious.”

28 Lakoff, Women, 6.


Theories of Classification

The Aristotelian Taxonomic Model

In terms of a logical analysis and the systematization of human thought—that is, the science of human reasoning—Aristotle was a pioneer. He is the first to work out a scientific methodology and a systematic analysis of reasoning processes. Aristotle argues that categories are basic to human thought processes and are rooted in reality. This means that “the categories of thought which we express in language, are also the objective categories of extramental reality.”

What we call categories are not “merely linguistic or mental entities but the primary parts by which the world itself is organized.” It is very important to keep in mind Aristotle’s distinctive idea of categories as having a foothold in reality, since it will be a very great mistake to think that, for him, categories have no connection with external reality.

For Aristotle, there are ten categories:

Next, we must define the kinds of categories in which the four above-named predicates are found. They are ten in number: essence, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, activity, passivity.

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31 Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 1: Greece and Rome; From Pre-Socratics to Plotinus* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 285. Gorman and Sandford note that “it was Aristotle who inaugurated the systematic discussion of categories” (Gorman and Sanford, “Introduction,” vii). Owens also writes that “the notion of categories does as a matter of historical fact originate with the Stagirite” (Owens, “Aristotle on Categories,” 73).


35 Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 277. This is different from the Transcendental Logic of Immanuel Kant who argues that categories exist only in the mind.

36 Aristotle, *Topics* I.XIX “Μετά τοιν οὐκ ἔσται ἔρχει τά γένη τῶν κατηγοριῶν, ἐν οἷς ὑπάρχουσιν αἱ ἐφεξάν τέτταρες. ἔστι δεσμευμένοι ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀρετῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν δέκα, τί ἐστι, ποσόν, ποιόν, πρός τι, ποῦ, ποτέ, κεῖσθαι, ἔχειν, ποιεῖν, πάσχειν.” (Forster, LCL). Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 278 observes that elsewhere, in *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle lists the categories as eight, with “position” and “state” subsumed under other categories. See *Posterior Analytics* I.XXII “Then, when one term is predicated of another, that which is stated is either part of the essence, or quality, quantity, relation, activity, passivity, place or time” (οὗτο γάρ αἱ ὑποδειγματικῶς ὑποδεικνύουσιν. ὅσα ἐὰν τῷ τί ἐστιν ἢ ὅτι ποιητικὸν ἢ ποιητικὸν ἢ πρός τι ἢ ποιητικὸν ἢ πάσχον ἢ ποιήτες ἢ ποιήτες, ὅταν ἐν καθ’ ἐνός κατηγορηθῆ).
Of these ten categories, the first one, τί ἐστι— that is, “being,” “substance,” or “essence”—occupies a primary place. It is the most fundamental type of category. Against “being” as a primary category are a number of “schemata containing things that have to be in something else, in the sense of entitative dependence on substance.” The other nine categories that depend upon the substance are called accidents. In this sense, a primary substance is the “ontological ground that supports the other categories.” Herbert Granger understands the distinction between the “substance” and the other categories as one arising between nouns and adjectives. The “substance” is the noun while the other categories will qualify as adjectives.

Since, for Aristotle, categorization is not merely a matter of thought, things exist in reality as substances and actually have accidents. We therefore think of an object either “as a substance or as a determination of substance, as falling under one of the nine categories that express the way in which we think of substance as being determined.” If any of the nine categories is co-extensive with the “being,” it becomes the essence of the subject. The essence of a thing is that which makes a thing what it is. According to Aristotle, “Substance means…”

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42 Copleston, A History of Philosophy, 278.
43 Copleston, A History of Philosophy, 279.
parts immanent in things which define and indicate their individuality, and whose destruction causes the destruction of the whole.”

If a category is not co-extensive with the subject in question, it is either a part of the attributes which grounds the definition of the subject (a genus or a difference) or it is not a part of the definition that grounds the definition of the subject. In the latter case, it is an accident. Aristotle sees a genus as “that which is predicated in the category of essence of several things which differ in kind.” The difference in kind means they are species of the genus. Accidents are incidental properties which apply to something and are truly stated, but “neither necessarily nor usually.” Accidents are neither definition, nor property, nor genus—but still belong to the thing. They can belong or not belong to the thing.

Therefore, for Aristotle, every object of reality is made up of two major properties. On the one hand, we have the object’s essence and its attributes (genus and difference), which constitute its essential definition. On the other hand, we have its accidents. When defining an object, Aristotle considers essential definitions (i.e., definition having to do with essences) to be the only type of definition that is worthy of its name. A definition of an object is “a phrase

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44 ἔτι δὲ σαμὸ μόρια ἐνοπάρχοντα ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ὁρίζοντα τε καὶ τὸ δε τι ζημιώνοντα, ὅν ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀναρχομένων ἀ

45 Copleston, A History of Philosophy, 280. The genus refers to the general class to which something belongs, and the difference refers to how that thing differs from others in the group. See Herbert Granger, “Aristotle on Genus and Differentia in the Topics and Categories,” 1–2. See also, Aristotle, “For the genus ought to separate the subject from all other things, and the differentia from something in the same genus.”

46 Aristotle, Topica, I.V.102a.30 (Forster, LCL): Γένος δ’ ἐστί τὸ κατὰ πλειόνων καὶ διαφορόντων τῷ εἴδει ἐν τῷ τί ἔστι κατηγοροῦμενον.

47 Aristotle, Metaphysics V.XXX.1 (Tredennick, LCL): οὗτ’ ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὐτε (ὡς) ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ.

48 Aristotle, Topica, I.V.102b.4–5 (Forster, LCL).

49 Copleston, A History of Philosophy, 280.
indicating the essence of something.” In *Posterior Analytics*, he outlines three possible ways in which an object can be defined, and each of these ways focused on the essence of the object. In his words:

Thus in one sense, definition is an indemonstrable account of the essence; in another it is a logical inference of the essence, differing from demonstration in grammatical form; and in a third it is the conclusion of the syllogism which demonstrates the essence.

Relatedly, definitions tend to bring together things that are similar, since “when we can argue that things are the same or that they are different, we shall by the same method have an abundance of arguments for dealing with definitions also.” Objects and things are then defined *exclusively* by their similarities or only by those things they share in common. Defining objects by essence and by their similarities are very much the same thing, since for most categories the essence is one of the similarities (if not the only one) shared by all members of the category. This requirement of defining things or of categorizing objects by the essential definitions is known as the Aristotelian or classical model of classification. It has been applied extensively in many disciplines to help categorize and classify things. In the words of George Lakoff:

Over the centuries it simply became part of the background assumptions taken for granted in most scholarly disciplines. In fact, until very recently, the classical...

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53 Classical here has two senses. The first sense is that this idea is from Greek antiquity. The second sense is that this model has dominated psychology, philosophy, and linguistics throughout much of the twentieth century. Cf. John R. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 22.
theory of categories was not even thought of as a *theory*. It was taught in most disciplines not as an empirical hypothesis but as an unquestionable, definitional truth.\(^5^4\)

Categories are seen as definition-like, constituted by necessary and sufficient conditions of membership.\(^5^5\) Membership in categories is treated as a “digital, all or none phenomenon.”\(^5^6\)

That is, much scholarship, especially “much work in philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and anthropology assumes that categories are logical bounded entities, membership in which is defined by an item’s possession of a simple set of criterial features, in which all instances possessing the criterial attributes have a full and equal degree of membership.”\(^5^7\)

The deficiency of the Aristotelian theory of categorization is that reality is more complex than can be accounted for by this model. We see in daily experience that some members of a category are perceived as “better representative” than others. Things in the same category are not similar in the same way. If it is the case that they share the same “necessary and sufficient” properties, then there should be no privileged status. The fact, however, that this is the case means that there is need for some form of categorization that explains what makes a member of a category a better representative. Ibn Ulbæk notes that the Aristotelian model of categorization will work best in a static universe where things can be explained in terms of a unified system—a

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\(^5^5\) Michael Sinding, “Framing Monsters,” 468.


*scala naturae*—in which everything has its place.⁵⁸ This, however, is not the way things work since the dynamic nature of things defies a categorization strictly by similar features.⁵⁹

This does not mean that this form of categorization is without merit. Without a collection of similar features, there would be no categorization at all. That in part will explain why, in spite of the criticism the traditional form of categorization has garnered over the years, it has had an amazing persistence. It has proven that it is a system that should not be entirely jettisoned.⁶⁰ The objection, in other words, is not to classification but to rigidity.⁶¹ Lakoff remarks that while the classical view of categories based on shared properties is not entirely wrong since we often do categorize things on that basis, it is only a small part of the story.⁶² In reality, human categorization is based on principles that extend far beyond those envisioned in the classical theory.⁶³ For any categorization in the classical system, there are “consistent, unique classificatory principles at work, the categories are exclusive, and the system is complete.”⁶⁴ However, in reality in every system of categorization, the principles on which categorization is

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⁵⁹ Demarco remarks that, “We say that a living thing must be a plant or an animal, and then encounter the euglena; or say that something must be living or nonliving and then confront viruses; or say that something must be a liquid or a solid or a gas, and then face plasmas and colloids” (Demarco, “The Generation and Destruction of Categories,” 265).


based are mixed, and there are anomalies and ambiguities which the system sorts out as best as it can.  

Birds, for instance are seen as mammals that fly. However, penguins and ostriches are birds that do not fly. There are, therefore, instances in which the classical model does not work well.

It would be unfair to criticize Aristotle for not having a comprehensive, fool-proof theory of category. Aristotle’s works on categories should be seen as the foundation for subsequent discourse on this subject, since it is very much “unclear what sort of achievement ever could bring closure to the sort of investigation his work initiates.”

Present scholarship on the Lord’s Supper uses a set of five criterial features which make the Lord’s Supper qualify as a Graeco-Roman banquet. I will come back to these features in more detail later on in this chapter. However, it is important to note at this stage that these are the features the Lord’s Supper shares with other meals in the Graeco-Roman world. These five criteria are often taken for granted in discussions on the Lord’s Supper and meals in the Graeco-Roman world. Instances of the Lord’s Supper are therefore measured against these criteria. Scholarship on the Lord’s Supper has often consisted simply of illustrations showing how the Lord’s Supper reflects all these criteria. This helps to reinforce the view that the meal is a

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68 This is well treated later in this chapter in the section: Classification Theories and The Lord’s Supper in Corinth.

Graeco-Roman banquet by emphasizing the similarities that this meal shares with the Graeco-Roman banquet meal tradition. The way these criteria are presented reflect an Aristotelian understanding of categorization. It is a kind of understanding that refers to a collection of features which are both common and shared. There is therefore often a talk of a ‘paradigm’ which manifests itself in Christ groups and Judean groups.70

In the case of the *Lord’s Supper*, the problem is not what this model explains: it is what it leaves out. It has been remarked that “what is most difficult to grasp when presented with a new idea is not what about the idea is similar, but what is different.”71 While the classical model takes into consideration the similarities this meal shares with the Graeco-Roman banquet, it leaves unexplained those features of this meal that are absent in other instances of the Graeco-Roman banquet meal tradition. The argument here is that the typical criteria following the classical model as developed by current scholarship on the *Lord’s Supper* tell us more about the Graeco-Roman banquet meal but less about the *Lord’s Supper*. There is therefore the need for a model of categorization that will account for these criteria and at the same time recognize the *Lord’s Supper* in its own right as an instantiation of the Graeco-Roman banquet.

The Family Resemblance Model

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his family resemblance theory, suggests a corrective to the traditional model of classification. The initial aim of Wittgenstein that led him into a more specific direction of systematic understanding of categorization was to illuminate the


nature of language. This led him to the analogy of games, which in turn led him to the analogy of family, in order to illustrate the idea of a network of similarities.\textsuperscript{72} The family resemblance theory proposed by Wittgenstein in his \textit{Philosophical Investigations} is best captured in the following quotation:

Consider for example the proceedings that we call “games.” I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? —Don’t say: “There must be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’”— but \textit{look and see} whether there is anything common to all. — For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that... And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of details. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than “family resemblances”: for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, color of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.\textsuperscript{73}

This theory steps away from the strict notion of membership of a category suggested in the classical theory of classification. While the classical theory emphasizes equality in the possession of criteria for every member of the category, the family resemblance theory stresses similarity in relationship for members of the category.

The decision in this study to understand previous presentations of the Graeco-Roman banquet meal tradition as Aristotelian rather than following Wittgenstein’s family resemblance model is informed by the clearly delineated set of criteria that scholarship on this topic have identified and argued for. The standards of criteria (as listed in chapter one and later in this chapter) and the way they have been employed in scholarship—stressing always the similarities

\textsuperscript{72} David Fishelov, \textit{Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory} (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 55.

the Lord’s Supper shared with these criteria—fit the Aristotelian model much more than the family resemblance model.

The family resemblance theory has been accused of being a vague theory, since it seems less rigorous and less capable of demonstration. This critique makes the claim that this model can make anything resemble anything else. It is not the case that games, as Wittgenstein describes them, cannot be defined by their shared features. It is rather the case that there will be ambiguous borderline cases in any definition. So the need is, in short, to recognize the distinctive and coherent core of a category and at the same time to identify its “fuzzy” edges. This need for an explanation of categorization that incorporates the strengths of both the classical and family resemblance theory without being reducible to either of them is provided by the prototype understanding of categorization.

Prototype Theory

The prototype understanding of categorization was developed in cognitive psychology by Eleanor Rosch. Rosch sought to discover whether people perceive category membership as a clear-cut issue or a matter of degree. Her findings consistently showed that people perceive category membership as a degree. According to Rosch, Carol Simpson, and R. Scott Miller:

There is increasing evidence that membership in the semantic categories referred to by the words of natural language is not an all-or-none phenomenon. Contrary to

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75 John M. Swales, *Genre Analysis*, 51.

76 Collins, “Genre Analysis and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 393.

77 Collins, “Genre Analysis and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 393.

the assumption that categories are necessarily logical, bounded entities, membership in which is defined by an item’s possession of a simple set of criterial features… many natural categories are continuous and possess an internal structure in which members are ordered according to the degree to which they are judged good examples (typical) of the category.\textsuperscript{79}

Pointing out Rosch’s major insight, Carol Newsom remarks that “conceptual categories are not best thought of as defined by distinctive features possessed by every member of the group but rather by a recognition of prototypical examples which serve as templates against which other possible instances are viewed.”\textsuperscript{80} The idea is that “human categories typically arise and are embedded in the mind not by means of definition, or the finding of necessary and sufficient conditions, but by a space occupied by one or two central examples (prototypes) and then a penumbra of decreasingly typical examples.”\textsuperscript{81} Rosch defines prototypes as “the clearest cases of category membership defined operationally by people’s judgments of goodness of membership in a category.”\textsuperscript{82} So, “when one is asked for instance if a particular animal is a bird, rather than consulting a mental list of criteria (feathers, wings, flies, sings, etc.), people compare the prospective bird to examples that are considered typical examples of the category, which


\textsuperscript{82} Rosch, “Principles of Categorization,” 36.
typically are birds such as sparrows or robins.” The judgments we make about asymmetries in category members and structure are what Rosch calls prototype effects. A basic idea in prototype theory is that the mind organizes information in such a way that the resulting category demonstrates these asymmetries known as prototype effects. Categorization therefore coheres around central exemplars and from these exemplars extends to examples that are less typical. Our intuitive ideas about categorization are always developed from these prototypes, which serve as the core against which other members of the category are assessed. Prototypical understanding of categorization does not mean that features that make up a category are abandoned. The emphasis in the prototypical understanding of categorization moves from a feature-list to a prototype. Membership of a category in a prototypical understanding is not determined by whether a thing meets a definition but by whether it matches a prototype. As understood by cognitive scientists, the prototype is a typical instance of a category, and other elements are assimilated into the category on the basis of their perceived resemblance to or approximating the prototype. Matching the prototype does not imply a one-on-one correspondence. It means that, provided a thing shares some privileged properties of the


87 Ulbæk, “Genre and Categorization,” 431.

prototype, the differences from the prototype will not be treated as accidental (as we have in Aristotle) but as demonstrating that each member can have a distinctive instantiation of the prototype. The absence of an obviously essential feature (e.g., a flightless bird, an egg laying mammal or voiceless vowels) by a member of the category does not force such members from the category but merely renders them non-prototypical.\(^89\) It is this capacity for prototype theory to tolerate, accommodate and explain differences among category members that sets it apart from the classical theory. Therefore, prototype theory looks at the exemplars and has an analysis of the privileged properties that establish the sense of typicality.\(^90\) This typicality does not however disallow or minimize the non-typicality of some members of the category.

Rosch denies that the typicality of these examples is a result of their frequency.\(^91\) That is, she does not think that it is because we see these members of a category more often than others that we make them prototype examples. Rather, to be most representative of, or informative about, items in the category, the best examples of the category should be items that are most like other category members. This means the prototype example occupies the most central position of a category. It is therefore not a question of frequency but one of an internal structure, since members of a set of patterns resemble one another because they are variants of the same prototype.\(^92\) Categories are to be viewed as networks of overlapping attributes, and members of a category are viewed as prototypical of the category to the extent to which they bear a family


\(^{90}\) Newsom, “Spying out the Land,” 24.

\(^{91}\) Rosch and others argue that “the persistence of the belief that frequency is the basis of prototypicality may itself be an effect of typicality… frequency is not entirely separate from structure; the frequency of attributes can be a structural variable” (Rosch, Simpson, and Miller, “Structural Basis of Typicality Effects,” 501).

\(^{92}\) Rosch, Simpson, and Miller, “Structural Basis of Typicality Effects,” 492.
resemblance to (i.e., have attributes which overlap with those of) other members of the category.\textsuperscript{93} This means that, within a category, there exists a family resemblance based on an internal structure. Rosch believes that the theory of family resemblance advocated by Wittgenstein \textit{a priori} has been demonstrated empirically with experiments of the prototype effects.\textsuperscript{94} Robert Williamson adds that prototype theory improves the family resemblance theory by leaving it in the processes of the mind rather than leaving it in the realm of things “seemingly familiar.”\textsuperscript{95}

It is noteworthy at this stage that prototype theory is not itself a model of categorization.\textsuperscript{96} It is an explanation of what occurs in any category structure that leads to unevenness among its members. Michael Sinding notes that although the prototype effects are asymmetries about category members and the structure of a particular category, they are not equivalent to category structures in general.\textsuperscript{97} While it is true that early in her career Rosch seemed to give the impression that prototype effects directly mirror category structure and that they constitute


\textsuperscript{94} Rosch, Simpson, and Miller, “Structural Basis of Typicality Effects,” 492; See also Lakoff, \textit{Women}, 41–42. In a set of experiments Rosch asked subjects to rate from the scale of one to seven how good an example of a category (e.g., BIRD) various members are (e.g., robin, chicken). She found out that the response times are shorter for representative examples and that when asked to draw a list of category members, the subjects were likely to list more representative examples. She started her experiments with primary color categories in Dani, a New Guinea language, and extended the experiments to categories of physical objects.


\textsuperscript{96} Williamson, “Pesher: A Cognitive Model of the Genre,” 316. A theory is a generalized statement explaining a phenomenon. In the case of a prototype theory, it explains the asymmetries or unevenness that we have among members of a category. A model, however, is a purposeful representation of reality. Models are used to describe applications of theories. See, “What is the difference between a model and a theory,” https://physics.stackexchange.com/questions/187967/what-is-the-difference-between-a-model-and-a-theory

\textsuperscript{97} Sinding, “After Definitions,” 193.
representations of categories, it was an idea that she later abandoned.\textsuperscript{98} She notes that although prototypes must be learned, “they do not constitute any particular theory of category learning.”\textsuperscript{99} Rather, the prototype theory uncovers some principles at the basis of our reasoning process that explain how categorization works in reality. Categories must have an additional internal structure of some sort that produces goodness-of-example ratings.\textsuperscript{100} This means that when we talk about, say a chair for example, we have a broad picture in our minds what a chair is. This is the cognitive model. We then extend this picture by metaphor and analogy when trying to decide if any given thing we are sitting on counts as one. In the end, we call up a best example (of that mental picture) and then see if there a reasonable direct or metaphorical thread that takes us from the example to the object under consideration.\textsuperscript{101} I find most helpful Langacker’s understanding of a prototype as “that unit in a schematic network which is naturally most salient, most often thought of, most likely to be chosen as representative of the category.”\textsuperscript{102} This means that behind every prototype is a schematic/idealized model. Rosch’s understanding of the prototype has been picked up by George Lakoff and developed into a model of categorization using the idea of Idealized Cognitive Model.

\textsuperscript{98} Lakoff, \textit{Women}, 68.

\textsuperscript{99} Rosch, “Principles of Categorization,” 40. Human categorization is the result of psychological principles of categorization which are subject to investigation. Prototypes for Rosch are the results of some principles of categorization at work, a point she notes “is so often misunderstood that it requires discussion” Rosch, “Principles of Categorization,” 40. In this case, behind our prototypes are the category of cognitive models, and this idea of a cognitive model itself is the particular theory of category learning.

\textsuperscript{100} Lakoff, \textit{Women}, 45.

\textsuperscript{101} Bowker and Star, \textit{Sorting Things Out}, 63.

\textsuperscript{102} Langacker, \textit{Foundations of Cognitive Grammar}, 492.
Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs)

Lakoff’s argument is that human cognition is organized by means of presupposed, culturally conditioned mental frameworks which he called Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs). Category structures and prototype effects (i.e., perception of typicality differences) are by-products of these kinds of framework.103 In this sense, the prototype effects observed by Rosch result from instances in which reality deviates from the Idealized Cognitive Model being used by an individual to interpret and organize a particular set of pieces of information.104 Sinding notes that “prototype effects arise from incongruities between our cognitive models and our experience of the world.”105

Each ICM structures a mental space.106 To give an idea of how an ICM works, Lakoff uses a classical analysis of the word bachelor:

The noun bachelor can be defined as an unmarried adult man, but the noun clearly exists as a motivated device for categorizing people only in the context of a human society in which certain expectations about marriage and marriage age obtain. Male participants in long-term unmarried couplings would not ordinarily be described as bachelors; a boy abandoned in the jungle and grown to maturity away from contact with human society would not be called a bachelor; John Paul II is not properly thought of as a bachelor.107

103 Lakoff, Women, 68.
106 Lakoff, Women, 68.
107 Lakoff, Women, 70. In using this example, Lakoff was quoting Charles Fillmore who was the first to use this example. See Charles J. Fillmore, “Towards a Descriptive Framework for Spatial Deixis,” in Speech, Place and Action: Studies of Deixis and Related Topics, ed. Robert J. Jarvella, and Wolfgang Klein (New Jersey: John Wiley, 1982), 31–59, esp. 32-35.
In this case, the word *bachelor* is defined in line with an ICM in which there is a human society with (typically monogamous) marriage and a typical marriageable age.\(^{108}\) This idealized model knows nothing about the existence of priests, “long-term unmarried couplings,” homosexuality, or Muslims who practice polygamy.\(^{109}\) The drawback of an idealized model is that it does not fit the world precisely, because it is oversimplified in its background assumptions.\(^{110}\) While the ICMs will fit some segments of the society well and in these cases an unmarried adult male might well be called a *bachelor*, the ICM does not fit in the case of the Pope, or in the case of the boy in the jungle or in cases of polygamy. In such a case as of the Pope, we have an unmarried adult male who is certainly not a representative member of the category of *bachelor*.\(^{111}\)

The ICM model goes ahead to explain the asymmetries observable in instances of the term *bachelor* by noting that:

An idealized cognitive model may fit one’s understanding of the world either perfectly, very well, pretty well, somewhat well, pretty badly, badly, or not at all. If the ICM in which *bachelor* is defined fits a situation perfectly and the person referred to by the term is unequivocally an unmarried adult male, then he qualifies as a member of the category *bachelor*. The person referred to deviates from prototypical bachelorhood if either the ICM fails to fit the world perfectly or the person deviates from being an unmarried adult male.\(^{112}\)

This explanation of *bachelor* is an assessment of how instances conform (or do not conform) to the appropriate ICM. Technically, ICMs are presupposed background frames against which our

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\(^{108}\) Lakoff, *Women*, 70.

\(^{109}\) Lakoff, *Women*, 70.

\(^{110}\) Lakoff, *Women*, 70.

\(^{111}\) Lakoff, *Women*, 70.

\(^{112}\) Lakoff, *Women*, 70.
concepts make sense. A related example is provided by Robert Williamson, when he notes that:

In a cultural context in which a person carries an idealized cognitive model of a bird as a small, winged creature that flies and sings, a robin or sparrow will seem like a (proto) typical bird. A penguin, which neither flies nor sings, will appear as a less typical member of the bird category. If a person were to have been raised in Antarctica, however, we might imagine that her idealized model of a bird would much more closely resemble a penguin, and a sparrow might seem a strange creature indeed!

As can be seen, these explanations are done with the aid of—or based on—the prototype exemplars. All categorization starts from a basic level that is idealized. Objects are then assessed in relation to this idealized framework. These frameworks do not always fit, however, into real life and, in these cases, it is the ICM which organizes and authorizes the extension from the prototypical cases to those that are less typical.

The framework of an ICM is drawn from the “privileged properties of the prototypes.” It is these privileged properties that establish the sense of typicality. An ICM is a constellation

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114 Williamson, “Pesher: A Cognitive Model of Genre,” 316. An example of the ICM is a definition of a vehicle by Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary as “a thing that is used for transporting people or goods from one place to another, such as car or lorry/truck.” See Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1711. In a world where spacecraft are not possible, it would barely qualify as one. However, in a world in which that is possible, it is readily understood as such. This also applies in a world in which a scooter is not imagined versus a world in which it is. Again, the ICM and the prototypes keep expanding the category keeping a core ‘center’ by admitting new sometimes ‘strange’ members with their idiosyncrasies. This example comes from a personal conversation with Mrs. Alaba Atoyebi, a Beninoise who lived in Nigeria for a long time and knows that bikes in Benin Republic are differently built from the bikes in Nigeria.


of properties in any given category that is central to the prototypes.\textsuperscript{118} However, the ICMs are not just a series of features. These properties must possess a \textit{Gestalt} structure.\textsuperscript{119} This means that these properties must be structured in such a way that they are intrinsically related to one another. It does make a significant difference if these features are structured in a way we can perceive them as a \textit{Gestalt} or whether these properties are unrelated to each other.\textsuperscript{120} These properties should operate within a set of structural relations that function meaningfully together as a template or background schema.\textsuperscript{121}

The ICM model of categorization argues that the mind perceives and processes information not as a list of features but as a \textit{Gestalt} structure in which the whole is more basic than its parts.\textsuperscript{122} This is because the mind (in the reasoning process) grasps \textit{parts-in relation} before it comprehends the parts themselves.\textsuperscript{123} Lakoff remarks,

\textit{Gestalts} for general overall shapes (e.g., the shape of an elephant or a giraffe or a rose) are relatively rich in structure. Still, they occur pre-conceptually as \textit{gestalts}, and although one can identify internal structure in them, the wholes seem to be psychologically more basic than the parts. In short, the idea that all internal structure is of a building-block sort, with primitives and principles of combination, does not seem to work at the basic level of human experience.\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{itemize}
\item[118] Wright, “Joining the Club,” 265; Sinding, “After Definitions,” 194.
\item[120] Collins, “Genre Analysis,” 391.
\item[121] Wright, “Joining the Club,” 265.
\item[122] Williamson, “Pesher: A Cognitive Model of Genre,” 321. With reference to simply representing, or listing, the features of a category, Ronald W. Langnacker remarks that: “I suggest that a feature representation is perfectly legitimate (if properly interpreted) but does not in itself fully reconstruct the systemic nature of the actual phenomenon. For a description to be complete, the feature representation of a structural complex must be supplemented by a more holistic account that accommodates its integrated nature.” See Langacker, \textit{Foundations of Cognitive Grammar}, 19–20.
\item[124] Lakoff, \textit{Women}, 270.
\end{itemize}
As an example:

We do not notice four legs, sharp teeth, orange and black stripes, claws, and then perceive a tiger. Rather, we recognize a tiger and then proceed to notice that it has legs, teeth, stripes and claws. The *individual elements do not convey meaning in themselves* but only as they relate to the whole. We do not understand the whole as a sum of its parts, but rather the parts as a function of the whole.¹²⁵

In other words, the *Gestalt* understanding of ICM is a way of seeing categorization as more than a chastened form of definition by strict and set features.¹²⁶

In addition to necessary components, the *Gestalt* structure also contains some optional and some default elements. This is why “we will have no trouble accepting that three-legged, toothless albino tigers are still tigers.”¹²⁷ Individual examples can depart from a prototypical standard with changes to those elements (optional and default) and still easily be recognized.¹²⁸

Significantly, this approach accounts for the play of similarity and difference that one sees in a category, since certain elements would have been identified as essential, some as default elements, and others as optional.¹²⁹ Though the default and optional features support the basic *Gestalt* structure but are not fundamental to it, definition of a category must be open to them.¹³⁰

It is in this light, by explaining both the similarities and differences, that the ICM model of categorization becomes a useful tool in understanding the *Lord’s Supper* in the ancient city of

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¹³⁰ The Aristotelian model talks about definition only in the sense of essential features.
Corinth. It is this model—alongside its use of the prototype theory—that will inform the methodology of this dissertation.

Before we relate prototype theory to the *Lord’s Supper*, it is necessary to provide an overview of the impact of this understanding of categorization on genre studies. It is not surprising that prototype theory would have this influence, since genre studies itself is a study in classification.\(^{131}\) An overview is further justified since this study will primarily be dealing with texts that have already been categorized using genre analysis and already been given a generic category.

**Prototype Theory and Genre Studies**

In addition to being tied to the Aristotelian understanding of categorization, present scholarship on the *Lord’s Supper* also uses the language of genre analysis to interpret its categorization of this meal. Authors situating the *Lord’s Supper* in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition have consistently used generic labels and genre analysis.\(^{132}\) Also, literary data—on meals in the ancient world—are treated as constituting a literary genre. Smith, for instance, talked about the

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\(^{132}\) Jamir, *Exclusion and Judgement*, for example, states that “At the same time, Passover and other meals were merely variations of the generic fellowship meal culture practiced rigorously by all.” here 151. Elsewhere, he notes, “But the characteristics of the Supper show that it was not based on a particular meal but on the generic fellowship practices.” here 164.
“stock motif in the literary genre of the symposium.” In several places in his work, Smith lays his arguments out clearly, as in the following passage:

Contrary to a large body of previous scholarship, I will not be arguing that Paul utilized a particular form of meal, such as the Passover meal or the meal of the mystery cults, as his model. I am instead referring to a *generic* meal model from the culture, one which importantly, is utilized by groups throughout the Greco-Roman world, including Judaism and the mystery cults.

This dissertation will be following the same line of argument by treating the *Lord’s Supper* in light of genre analysis. However, the *understanding of genre* in this study differs in extending the analysis beyond written texts. This study will see a genre as a cultural artifact that is interpretable as a recurrent, significant action which embodies an aspect of cultural rationality.

This is not unlike the idea of James R. Martin and Joan Rothery that a genre is a staged purposeful social process through which a culture is realized in language. Sune Auken’s understanding makes this more explicit when he writes:

Many of the inferences we make when interpreting a text are not based solely on what is written in it. Even in the most basic examples—and sometimes in these even more than in other examples—we find that basic elements of the information communicated by a text are not actually present in the text’s own wording, but depend on some sort of regulative, interpretative framework that involves the sender or author, the reader, and the text, as well as the cultural landscape within

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133 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 22.

134 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 175.


which all of these are embedded. Some of these inferences are textual while others are not.\textsuperscript{137}

To treat genre as an exclusively textual phenomenon is therefore an inadequate approach to genre analysis. The danger in regarding genre as exclusively textual is that some understanding of the reality that the text represents will be lost. In the case of the \textit{Lord’s Supper}, this includes respecting the assumptions of the early Christians when they met to celebrate this meal. Their overtly religious assumptions—especially the interpretation of the elements of the meal and the framework of eschatology—though not written outright in the texts, should be seen as an intrinsic part of the meal. It is only when one has a holistic understanding of genre that one can embrace the lived experiences of the early Christians to help interpret the texts that represent this lived experience.

Scholars in genre studies have also taken advantage of the fruits of the conversations in the field of cognitive psychology. This means that genre studies have moved from a classical understanding of categorization to a prototypical understanding. The classical understanding downplays, at best, the distinctiveness of each performance of the genre or, at worst, eliminates it. Tzvetan Todorov explains the beauty in recognizing the distinctness of each performance of a genre when he argues that “the fact that a work ‘disobeys’ its genre does not make the latter nonexistent … because transgression, in order to exist as such, requires a law that will, of course,

\textsuperscript{137} Sane Auken “Genre and Interpretation,” in \textit{Genre and…Copenhagen Studies in Genre} 2, 154–83, here154. In the words of Molly Zhan, “It follows that questions about genre always involve both the author/producer of a text and its reader or audience; genre is not defined solely by scholars or critics…this means that genre study should address the ways texts were perceived by ancient communities and cannot function on a purely “etic” level.” See Zahn, \textit{Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism}, 57.
be transgressed. One could go further: the norm becomes visible—lives—only by its transgressions.”

A shift to the prototypical understanding of genre establishes a framework that allows, firstly, that certain instances of a genre are further from the prototype than others and that, secondly, relationships can be perceived between members of a genre which may in fact be structurally different from each other. In this case, genres are at once shared and unique. As Amy J. Devitt notes, what we describe as similar communicative purposes and tasks may share enough similarities to be perceived as similar but still differ in important ways. Auken observes that the originality of a work often lies in how it utilizes the reader’s established assumptions in order to undermine, to twist, or, for that matter, even to reinforce these very assumptions. This means that no two performances that are nominally of the same genre have the same exact relation to it, because each example becomes both a unique case and a special application of the embedded genre’s resources. To interpret each instance should therefore mean paying attention to what makes that instance distinct and what that instance shares with the genre. In a helpful way, Marie-Laure Ryan describes genres as “clubs imposing a certain

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141 Devitt, “Genre performances,” 47.

142 Auken, “Genre and Interpretation,” 173

143 Auken, “Genre and Interpretation,” 177.

144 Auken, “Genre and Interpretation,” 179.
number of conditions for membership, but tolerating as quasi-members those individuals who can fulfil only some of the requirements, and who do not seem to fit into any other clubs.”

For Mikhail Bakhtin, “The actual meaning of an utterance is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme because there is a relationship that upholds the similarity of themes but at the same time does not stifle the uniqueness of every utterance.”

Context plays a significant role in the prototypical understanding of genre analysis, as it does in the ICM understanding of prototype. This is because within a genre we can have many variations based on the possibility of “variation” in contexts. This emphasis on the importance of variation is highlighted by Devitt when she writes that:

At the heart of all such variation is the fact that genres are at once shared and unique. Each performance of a genre demonstrates its degree of prototypicality, disciplinary membership, historical moment, authorial identity and many other qualities shared with other members of its category.

This means that varying from a genre in a particular performance of the genre is as rhetorically significant as conforming to the genre. Such variations occur even in utterances that might appear as identical to one another—a greeting, for instance, “Good morning.” Membership within a genre category in this model therefore respects the contexts of performance.

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147 Devitt, “Genre performances,” 44.

148 Devitt, “Genre performances,” 49.

149 Devitt, “Genre performances,” 47.
The ICM model of categorization in genre studies is featured prominently in the ideas of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, and Carolyn Miller. Campbell and Jamieson talk about a genre as being composed “of a constellation of recognizable forms bound together by an *internal dynamic.*”¹⁵⁰ Miller, using Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann’s idea of types, argue that:

> [O]ur stock of knowledge is useful only insofar as it can be brought to bear upon new experience: the new is made familiar through the recognition of relevant similarities; those similarities become constituted as types…. It is through the process of *specification* that we create recurrence, analogies and similarities. What recurs is not a material situation but our construal of a type.¹⁵¹

The *type* as described above reflects ICMs and is a similar example of ideal situations into which we try to fit our daily experiences.

The success of the prototype understanding of categorization as applied to genre studies has also found its way into biblical studies. In biblical studies, the prototype theory has been applied by John J. Collins to understanding the literary character of apocalypses. Earlier, Collins had used the traditional model to argue for the classification of the apocalyptic genre. In a seminal study of apocalypses published in the journal *Semeia* in 1979, Collins states that “the thesis presented in *Semeia* is that a corpus of texts that has been traditionally called ‘apocalyptic’ does indeed share a significant cluster of traits that distinguish it from other works.”¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Karlyn Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson, *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action* (Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1978), 146 (emphasis mine).

¹⁵¹ Miller “Genre as Social Action,” 157. See also Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, *The Structures of the Lifeworld*, trans. Richard M. Zaner and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 231. “New experiences are determined by means of a type constituted in earlier experiences. In many situations of daily life, the type is sufficient for the mastery of the current situation” (229–30). Type is defined as a meaning-context “established” in life worldly experiences, a uniform relation of determination sedimented in prior experiences. It is constituted as a “unity” of determinations, in an original situation of acquisition.

states that the approach of the apocalypse group established a strict boundary between texts that are members of the genre and those that are not.\textsuperscript{153} As Newsom notes, while the initial group that worked on apocalypses—of which Collins was a member—did intuitively work with something like prototype theory, it did not conform to the prototype theory.\textsuperscript{154} Collins himself later agreed that using the prototypical approach would have saved them from some agonizing boundary cases caused by the classificatory approach applied in \textit{Semeia} 14.\textsuperscript{155} Significantly, in his more recent works, he argues that this traditional classification is no longer adequate because the apocalyptic genre, like all genres, had fuzzy edges and some works may participate in more than one genre.\textsuperscript{156}

In his study of the genre of the book of \textit{Jubilees}, Collins’s conclusions further this argument by stating that:

\begin{quote}
Jubilees is not an anti-apocalyptic polemic, but apocalyptic beliefs and expectations are not at the center of its concerns. In the perspective of \textit{Prototype Theory}, it may be regarded as a marginal member of the genre apocalypse, on the “fuzzy edge” of the genre, without claiming that this is its only generic affiliation…. Neither was it an ironic subversion of the apocalyptic worldview. It was rather a strategic adaptation of it.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{154} Newsom, “Spying Out the Land,” 24.

\textsuperscript{155} Collins, \textit{Apocalypse, Prophecy and Pseudepigraphy}, 13.

\textsuperscript{156} Collins, \textit{The Apocalyptic Imagination}, 10. See also, idem, \textit{Apocalypse, Prophecy and Pseudepigraphy}, esp. 1–22. Collins has also called the prototype theory as the “new messiah of generic analysis.” See idem “Epilogue: Genre Analysis and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” \textit{DSD} 17 (2010): 389–401, here 390.

At this stage, since the phrase “fuzzy edges” as employed Collins is sometimes used by scholars who work on classification and genre analysis, it is important to state that “fuzzy edges”—a feature of the prototype theory—is different from the “fuzzy set theory” which is another theory of categorization developed by Lofti Zadeh. Lofti Zadeh defines a fuzzy set as “a class of objects with a continuum of grades of membership. Such a set is characterized by a membership (characteristic) function which assigns to each object a grade of membership ranging between zero and one.”\(^{158}\) Also, it is necessary to note the fuzzy set theory is not the same as the prototype theory, at least not in the sense this dissertation understands the prototype theory. In this study when we talk about the prototype theory, it is not in the sense of gradience in which membership of a category is earned through a membership characteristic which assigns membership range within a category. The prototype understanding requires that a category must have a prototype and that a prototype be part of a cognitive model, i.e., an internal structure.

It is such an integrated nature (i.e., internal structure) that Lakoff refers to as the ICMs, which have now become a critical component of the prototype understanding of categorization. Such an account of categorization has not been applied in biblical studies to the Lord’s Supper.\(^{159}\) The aim of this study is to utilize the fruits of research in the cognitive study of resemblance approach to genre seems to me to offer advantages for how one would think about Jubilees or the Temple Scroll or revelatory discourses in relationship to the genre apocalypse in contrast to a classificatory approach that talks of the boundaries of the genre and the problem of borderline cases.” Cf. Newsom, “Spying Out the Land,”26.


categorization— as applied in genre studies— to understanding the *Lord’s Supper* in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. It will approach categorization from the standpoint of the prototype theory and the ICM as a framework of internal structure. The ICM as applied to genre studies will give this study the tool it needs to argue for the distinctiveness of the *Lord’s Supper*. It also allows this study to regard the *Lord’s Supper* as a member of the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition from the viewpoint of both its textual evidence and explicit non-textual assumptions.

**Classification Theories and the Lord’s Supper in Corinth**

Let me now return to something I noted at the beginning of this chapter. Present studies on the *Lord’s Supper* have classified the meal employing the traditional classification model. The most representative example of this use of traditional classification is the argument that there are five central characteristics of Hellenistic meals.\(^\text{160}\) I referred to these characteristics briefly earlier on and these are now detailed here.\(^\text{161}\) These included:

1. The reclining of (more or less) all participants while eating and drinking together for several hours in the evening.

2. The order of a supper (*deipnon*) of eating, followed by an extended time (*symposion*) of drinking, conversation, and performance.

3. Marking the transition from *deipnon* to *symposion* with a ceremonial libation, almost always wine.

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\(^{161}\) See the initial reference in this chapter to these characteristics in the section: Theories of Classification.
4. Leadership by a “President” (symposiarch) of the meal—a person not always the same, and sometimes with the role contingent on the fulfilment of a condition. In some cases, this role was even disputed.

5. A variety of marginal personages, often including servants, uninvited guests, “entertainers,” and dogs.

Many of the studies so far have been efforts at seeing how the Lord’s Supper in Corinth conformed to these five characteristics listed above, and they do this essentially using the Aristotelian classificatory model. A point made so far in this study is that behind every categorization is a model. Often scholars categorizing the Lord’s Supper as a Graeco-Roman banquet pay little or no attention to the categorization model or genre analysis underlying their arguments. Nevertheless, such attempts at categorization suffer all the same from the weakness of the model implicitly adopted. And as has been argued so far, this model of classification usually ignores the specificity of the performance of each member of the genre or of each member in the category. This means that in categorizing the Lord’s Supper as a member of the Graeco-Roman banquet genre, there is typically a neglect of the distinctiveness of the Lord’s Supper within the genre. Comparison of the Lord’s Supper with other meals in the Graeco-Roman banquet traditions has so far been chiefly an affair of the recollection of similarity.

While outlining the similarities and shared features is a good way to start, it tells us little about

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163 The weakness here refers to that of the Aristotelian categorization.

the peculiarity of the Lord’s Supper. This can be done only when attention is paid to the distinctiveness of the Lord’s Supper. Jonathan Z. Smith aptly observes that “comparison is, at base, never identity. Comparison requires the postulation of difference as the grounds of its being interesting (rather than tautological) and a methodical manipulation of difference.” It is when these differences (distinctiveness) are noted that we can ask then what these differences mean for early Christ groups. The question, in other words, is “What a difference does difference make?” Difference is rarely something simply to be noted; it is most often—as is the case with the Lord’s Supper—something in which one has a stake. In his review of Dennis E. Smith’s *From Symposium to Eucharist*, Larry W. Hurtado notes that Smith’s analysis sometimes sought to “minimize the differences and lump things together in such a way that the particularities of either the pagan or early Christian practices are obscured.”

Of course, in their first century settings it is completely expected that Christian circles would have meals together. And it is also right to say that their communal meals likely reflect (in some ways) the influence of their cultural setting. But the reason that they had communal meals as followers of Jesus is not simply the broad ubiquity of group meals in Greco-Roman culture.

This dissertation has so far argued that the Lord’s Supper is a Graeco-Roman banquet. However, it will differ from previous studies by employing the ICM model of the prototype

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165 Smith, *Imagining Religion*, 35.


169 Hurtado, review of *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (by Smith), 784.
theory to situate the Lord’s Supper in this genre. The aim is to arrive at an understanding that prizes both the context and the concept and in that way to present the Lord’s Supper as a distinctive instantiation of the Graeco-Roman banquet. The Lord’s Supper fits the ICM of the Graeco-Roman banquet in its Gestalt structure but then departs from its prototype in some significant ways. So, this dissertation will not only be paying attention to what the Lord’s Supper has in common with other variants of the Graeco-Roman banquets (which are also prototypical instantiations of the Graeco-Roman banquet) but also the distinctive character of the Lord’s Supper. This does not make this early Christian meal less of a Graeco-Roman banquet. Rather, using the ICM understanding of the prototype theory, it will be argued that the Lord’s Supper not only belongs to the category of the Graeco-Roman banquet but is also a Graeco-Roman banquet that has survived in a remarkable way.

ICMs and the Graeco-Roman Banquet

Following the ICM understanding of categorization, I propose that the idealized cognitive model of the Graeco-Roman banquet is that of a meal in the Graeco-Roman world involving more than two individuals and in which a meaningful conversation takes place. For an individual living in any part of the Graeco-Roman world, this is the basic cognition of a banquet.

170 Smith talks presciently about an idealized model when he wrote, “In the literary data, descriptions and allusions to meals tend to presuppose an idealized model to which the meal in question is being compared. For example, the philosophical banquet, as presented in the tradition of symposion literature, becomes a dominant model to which later descriptions of banquets are consistently compared” (From Symposium to Eucharist, 8–9). Smith’s understanding of an idealized model is not equivalent to the ICMs of Lakoff, that is, the categorization model utilizing prototype effects. In my view, Smith’s understanding of the philosophical banquet here is not so much of an idealized model but a prototype.
In terms of the *Gestalt* structure, I identify the following as essential and necessary components.\(^{171}\)

1. A gathering of more than two persons with some form of prior bond
2. A meal
3. The intentionality of having a meaningful conversation.

These components should be understood against the background and culture of the Graeco-Roman world. This gathering must be of people with a form of prior bond. While it is the case that the meal does bond individuals, this *Gestalt* component means that there must be a prior form of bond that brings them together. This bonding does not occur because it precedes the meal and may (or may not) subsist after the meal.\(^{172}\) The character of their bond will be reflected

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\(^{171}\) The difference between the idea of ‘essential’ in the ICM and the Aristotelian model is that the ICM theory emphasizes the *Gestalt* character of these components. Wright likens this idea of the *Gestalt* nature as a *constellation* of elements which “exists because of a perceived relation among the individual stars, any one of which cannot on its own establish the identity of the constellation.” See Wright, “Joining the Club,” 265. Additionally, the ICM theory of categories expect “edges to blur and overlap” in a way that the distinctions are appreciated, a feature absent in the classical theory. See Sinding, “After Definitions,” 265.

\(^{172}\) An instance in which a prior bond may not subsist after the meal is when the meal ends in violence and death. This may be one of the reasons wine had to be mixed with water during the *συμπόσιον*, given the mind-altering capacity of wine which loosens the inhibitions imposed by civilization. Also, the task of the mixing of the wine is officially assigned to an individual called the *symposiarch*. Oswyn Murray notes that “the theme of violence at the feast was a major topic of ancient mythology, from the marriage feast of Peirithous and Hippodameia and the subsequent battle of the Lapiths and centaurs, to the cannibalistic feast of Thystes that began the curse on the house of Atreus.” See Oswyn Murray, “Violence at the Symposion,” in *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Werner Reiss and Garrett G. Fagan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 195–206, here 200. Cicero has an account of violence at a meal in his *Verrine Orations*. In this story, Philodamus, a Greek from Lampscus, was the host. After it had been agreed that the drinking be carried out ‘in the Greek fashion,’ trouble erupted when Philodamus was asked to summon his daughter to the drinking party. Philodamus’ reply was that “it is not the custom of the Greeks that women should recline at the *convivium* (banquets) of the men.” The violence that ensued claimed the life of one of the Romans. This eventually led to the sentencing to death of Philodamus and his son. Cf. Cicero, *The Verrine Orations* 2.1.26. 63–76. See also, Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur: Greeks and Romans on the Dining Couch,” in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, ed. Inge Nielsen and Hanne Sigismund Nielsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 81–101. For the reference on the mind-altering capacity of wine, see Hanneke Wilson, *Wine and Words in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 2003), 26. So, a bond that existed prior a meal may not persist after the meal.
in their conversation. The idea of a prior bond at this stage is a necessary emphasis. This is because very often meals are seen as a way of creating bonds. What is often overlooked, or less emphasized, is that before the participants of a formal meal come together, there is always a prior bonding. This prior bonding is not a consequence of the meal; the meal is a consequence of that prior bonding. It is true that the meal strengthens a bond, but it is important to note that it is not the meal that creates the bond. The idea of a prior bond does not mean the participants have to agree on everything. The reality of strife and disorder in the extant literature on Graeco-Roman banquets shows that they do not agree on everything. However, it does mean that there must, at least, be a form of network which has brought them together. The Passover did not create the bond among Jews; the fellowship meals did not create the bond among Graeco-Roman associations; and the Lord’s Supper did not create the bond among early Christ groups. In fact, the future of that network could depend upon the outcome of the meal, since we have cases of prior bonds dismantled after a meal. In the case of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth, the meal has become a threat to the continued existence of the community. So, it is important to emphasize that the meal is a consequence of a prior bonding. The reverse is not the case.

With regards to the meal component, this is constrained by the foods available and the food culture in the Graeco-Roman world. I have avoided making drink of any kind a significant component because it is not a part of the Gestalt structure. The focus here is the act of ingesting some form of nutrient for nourishment which is evidently linked to their prior bond. This

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173 Smith writes that “the act of dining together is considered to create a bond between the diners.” While he went ahead to acknowledge a prior bond, his focus was on the bond created by the act of dining. See, From Symposium to Eucharist, 9–10. Also, Jamir writes: “one of the features of fellowship meals is their ability to create bonding among participants.” See Jamir, Exclusion and Judgment, 62. Even in cases of sacrificial meals, the prior bond is often sealed and rarely created.
relationship between the prior bond and the meal will become evident when dealing with groups in the Graeco-Roman world.

The final component of the Gestalt structure is a conversation which is meaningful. This conversation can take multiple forms and helps in the bonding of the group and sustaining of the meal. The moment this conversation loses its hold on a meal (i.e., becomes meaningless), the meal often comes to end.

These three components as suggested in the fashion of the Gestalt structure should be seen as meaningfully and functionally related to one another. They are so basic that without them, there is no idea of a Graeco-Roman banquet. However, it should also be noted that this is a model, an ICM. To see how this model worked in the Graeco-Roman world, we need to identify at least one prototype.

The final step is identifying at least a prototype of a Graeco-Roman banquet and outlining its major characteristics. I take the classical Symposion as a significant prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet. In identifying the major characteristics of this prototype, I am drawing on the wealth of current scholarship on the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. These include:

1. The reclining of participants while eating and drinking together for several hours in the evening.
2. The order of a supper (deipnon) of eating, followed by an extended time (symposion) of drinking, conversation, and performance.
3. Marking the transition from deipnon to symposion with a ceremonial libation, almost always wine.
4. Leadership by a “President” (symposiarch) of the meal—a person not always the same, and sometimes performing a role that was contingent or disputed.

5. A variety of marginal personages, often including servants, uninvited guests, “entertainers,” and dogs.

6. The constant threat of disorder.

I have added the constant threat of disorder as a characteristic of the prototype because it is present in the symposion and in much literature on Graeco-Roman banquets, including the Lord’s Supper in Corinth, the locus of our study.\textsuperscript{174} Additionally, while current research on the Graeco-Roman banquet meal takes these characteristics as central characteristics of Hellenistic meals, I am taking them as characteristics of the prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition which is the symposion. I have chosen the symposion as the prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet because—as I will argue in the next chapter—it is the most representative of this meal tradition.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The present chapter has been concerned with elucidating the methodology of this dissertation. It argued that the traditional Aristotelian model of classification is an inadequate model of categorization. In addition, the theory of family resemblance which tries to replace the classical model can prove to be too loose a model to capture the phenomenon of categorization in human cognition. The prototype understanding of categorization suggested by Eleanor Rosch has been

\textsuperscript{174} For threat of disorder at Graeco-Roman Banquets, see for example Cicero, *The Verrine Orations* II.1. 26 §63–§76. (Greenwood, LCL). See also, Murray, “Violence at the Symposion,” 200. Sometimes, violence is not present at the banquet but looms large at the background as we have during the Last Supper of Jesus and the Book of Esther See George Steiner, “Two Suppers,” *Salmagundi* 108 (1995): 33–61.
argued to be the most enlightening in comprehending how categorization works in human cognition. It is an understanding that respects more adequately the entire process and context of human reasoning. The prototype theory has further been enhanced by the ICM model of categorization of George Lakoff, making it a useful model for this dissertation. The usefulness of the prototype theory is attested not just in the field of cognitive psychology but also in genre studies that try to appreciate the social context of instantiations of genres. Significantly, the prototype theory has also found its way into biblical studies through the research of Carol Newsom and John Collins. Newsom’s analysis of the usefulness of the prototype theory for biblical studies and Collins’s application of the same theory demonstrate how the prototype theory is useful in the field of biblical studies.

A survey of present scholarship on the Lord’s Supper in Corinth reveals that scholars still employ categories that mirror the traditional Aristotelian model of categorization when they analyze the Lord’s Supper as a member of the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. The result is that such scholarship rarely pays attention to the distinction the Lord’s Supper brings to the Graeco-Roman banquet. This chapter has argued for a theoretical framework that pays attention to the distinction of the Lord’s Supper without sacrificing the features it shares with the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. As argued here, this framework, which is the ICM understanding of the prototype theory developed in cognitive psychology, has been utilized in genre studies and biblical studies. In this chapter I applied the interdisciplinary theoretical framework of the Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) understanding of prototype theory to the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. I suggested an ICM of the Graeco-Roman banquet that outlined its Gestalt structure, and I proposed the symposion as a prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet by
highlighting several key features. In the next chapter I will analyze and evaluate the literary evidence according to this framework and these features. In light of this analysis, I will argue that the *Lord’s Supper’s* membership in the Graeco-Roman Banquet should be viewed in relation to the genre’s ICM and prototypes.
CHAPTER THREE

THE SYMPOSION AS A PROTOTYPE OF THE GRAECO-ROMAN BANQUET

Introduction

The first chapter of this dissertation surveyed current scholarship on the Lord’s Supper in its Graeco-Roman context. The conclusion of that chapter was that while the current state of scholarship had succeeded in establishing the similarities between the Lord’s Supper and other meals in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, there remains the need to argue for how the Lord’s Supper made a distinctive contribution to this meal tradition. Given that the early Christians were part of the Graeco-Roman world, the similarities in their meal tradition with the general Graeco-Roman meal tradition was expected. However, in our enthusiasm to establish the connections between the Lord’s Supper and other meals in the Graeco-Roman meal traditions, it is tempting to ignore the peculiar and distinctive ways in which these meals differed, although they looked alike and were organized similarly.1 Nevertheless, it is those things that the early Christians did differently “which demand attention, and which must be assessed within the interpretative context of ancient Mediterranean cultural systems and discourse as a whole.”² As stated in the first chapter, this dissertation will argue for the distinctive contribution of the Lord’s Supper—as practiced in the city of Corinth—to the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.


The second chapter established the methodological framework that will inform the argument of this dissertation. The arguments made in the second chapter were three-fold. First, that the current models of comparison between the Lord’s Supper and other meals in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition mirror an Aristotelian model of categorization. Second, the Aristotelian model of categorization is inadequate since it fails to properly account for the distinctiveness of the members of each category with which it deals. Third, the prototypical understanding of categorization is a better methodological tool in accounting for the similarities and differences between the Lord’s Supper and the other meals of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. However, in its use of the prototype theory, I settled for a variant that combines an Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) with a prototype of the model. Using the prototype theory, the last chapter proposed an ICM for the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. It also put forward the symposion as the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. I must clarify the idea of the prototype as it is used in this work. The prototype of any phenomenon is usually a singular-concrete realization of the phenomenon. In this work, it is to be noted that the prototype which is symposion is a cultural institution. While it is a “singular” institution, it is singular in the sense of it sharing the same characteristics as evidenced by the various attestations in the witnesses I will be employing. While it is not singular in the sense of a Robin being the prototype of a bird, it is singular in the cultural sense of which the American football can be the prototype of sports in the United States (if it is). In the sense of the above analysis, the ICM of a Graeco-Roman banquet is the mental

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3 Following Joel Relihan, when I refer to the cultural institution, it will be spelled symposion. When I write only of the literary phenomenon, it will be spelled symposium. It is to be noted that while Plato and Xenophon made the literary symposium popular, intellectual colloquies such as those described by them were naturally of rare occurrence and were even thought out of place. See Joel C. Relihan, “Rethinking the History of the Literary Symposium,” Illinois Classical Studies 17 (1992): 213–44, here 218.
picture of what a formal meal will look like, while the prototype is the best example of that mental picture in actuality.\(^4\)

With the aforementioned arguments and propositions as its foundation, the aim of this chapter is to apply our methodological framework to the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. I will proceed in two main stages. First, I will provide a detailed analysis of how the proposed ICM is represented in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. Next, I will attempt to demonstrate how the symposion best captures the ICM and how different formal meal settings in the Graeco-Roman world reflect the ICM, on the one hand, and relate to the prototype, on the other hand.

I will support the arguments in this chapter with literary sources which are philosophical, fictional, encyclopedic, and artistic in nature. I will draw these sources largely from the Graeco-Roman world (ca. 500BCE–200CE).\(^5\) This does not mean that I take these sources to be exact replica of the daily lives of the people within this period. In fact, I will argue that many of these materials are retrospective. However, widespread familiarity with the ideas in these texts and artistic representations—often repeated \textit{ad nauseum}—will be taken as having a place in these worlds and as having made a difference in the way in which individuals envisaged their own socializing. Their familiarity offered them images against which they could measure their own convivial activity.\(^6\) In that sense, these texts try to reproduce the realities of the ancient world (as

\(^4\) The emphasis here is on the words \textit{mental picture} and \textit{actuality}.

\(^5\) This timeframe (500BCE–200CE) captures the period during which the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition flourished most significantly. My concern with this timeframe will be to outline the different emphases in this tradition within timeline while the principal sources for my arguments will be largely drawn from sources (literary and material remains) in the first century of the common era.

we have in vases, art works in general and ritual texts). In some other cases, the texts try to capture the anxieties, hopes and fears these realities invoke. In all, these texts are at best approximations of ancient realities and the best we can get in engaging a past which has become a foreign country. That is, these literary descriptions grasp something real in the convivial customs of their time. It is important to note that some of these texts bear idealized visions of how meals were performed in the Graeco-Roman world. For instance, James N. Davidson opines that the picture of the classic moderate drinking-party which we see sometimes from Graeco-Roman writers (mostly, Plutarch, Plato, and Xenophon), is not to be interpreted as a mirror to the reality of Greek dinner-parties, held up to themselves by the Greeks for the benefit of posterity, but as a symptom of anxiety about how to drink properly since disturbances to the proper rhythm of drinking would be possible at all levels of the ritual. While conceding this last point, my use

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7 The idea that the past is a foreign country is from the first line of the novel *The Go-Between*. The full sentence in the novel is: “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.” This quote captures the unresolvable tension between memory and history. See L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), 9.


9 James N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 47. See for example Xenophanes’s picture of a symposion in Xenophanes; “For men of good cheer it is meet first to hymn the god with reverent tales and pure words, after pouring libations and praying for the ability to do what is right—for in truth this is a more obvious thing to do, not deeds of violence; it is meet to drink as much as you can hold and come home without an attendant unless you are very old, and to praise that man who after drinking reveals noble thoughts, so that there is a recollection of and striving for excellence; it is not meet to make an array of the wars of the Titans or Giants or Centaurs, creations of our predecessors, or violent factions—there is nothing useful in them; and it is meet always to have a good regard for the gods.” Ἐρή δὲ πρῶτον μὲν θεόν ὕμνην ὑψαρμονόμος καὶ καθαροῖς λόγοις, σπεισαντάς τε καὶ εὐξαμένους τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαιπροσερχόμεθα—ταύτα γάρ οὐν ἐστὶ προσερχόμενοι,οὖν ἱεραὶ— πίνειν δὲ ὑπόσσου κεν ἔχουν ἀρκετονοικιακά ἄνευ προπόλου μὴ πάνω γυραλέος ἀνδρόν δὲ αἰνεῖν τούτον δὲ ἐσθήλα πιόν ἀναφαίνει, ὡς ἢ μνημοσύνη καὶ τόνος ἀμφ’ ἀρετής· οὐ τις μάχας διάπεπεν Τιτήνοι οὐδὲ Γιγάντεες· Κενταύροις, πλάσμα· τον τὸν προπόλον, ἵ δέσποις σφεδάνας—τοῖς οὐδὲν χρηστονεύμενοί· θεον δὲ προμηθείναι αἰεὶ ἐχειν ἀγαθήν. Xenophanes, *Fragments*, 1.11–26; (Gerber, LCL). In this regard, Nicholas F. Hudson observes that “the surviving literary accounts might be best characterized as prescriptive, presenting idealized visions of what ought to unfold at dinner parties.” See Nicholas F. Hudson, “Changing Places: The Archaeology of the Roman *Convivium*,” *AJA* 114 (2010): 663–95, here 665.
of these ancient sources is with belief that these texts and material remains do have a symbiotic relationship with social realities of the Graeco-Roman world. On the one hand, they tell us something of the world, and on the other hand, they tell us how they think things ought to be in their world. In either case, they both fall within the realms of the expected, the possible, the probable, and the believable in the Graeco-Roman world. These realms of the expected, the possible, and the believable are also constrained by the genre of these writings. The realm of possibility in which Lucian’s *Symposium* operates will be different from the realm of possibility in which 1 Cor 11:17–34 operates. These realms are not to be taken as a hierarchical ordering of the veracity of these texts but should be seen as an aggregation of the expectations of those who encounter these witnesses in the ancient world. No greater expectation should be placed on these witnesses than the Graeco-Roman world would place on them. These witnesses (historical, material and philosophical) become more tenable when their evidence corroborate each other to help form a realistic picture (i.e., *symposion*). For example, if an evidence from a literary text has a corollary in material remains and legal texts, I will take such an evidence as one that holds

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10 I will be taking historical accounts, material remains and philosophical accounts of formal meals to be in the realms of the expected, the believable, the possible, and the probable.

11 A satirical work for instance relies on some sense of realism to work but at the same time it engages on some sense of absurdity which must not be overlooked in interpreting such texts.

12 In this regard, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill writes, “Connections need to be made between the archeological and literary evidence not only at the obvious level of finding explicit descriptions of specific objects or architectural forms but at the more difficult level of exposing the rhythms of social life that underlie and are implicit in the physical remains.” See Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculanuem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 6. Sandra R. Joshe and Lauren Hackworth Petersen note that these bits of evidence must be patched together or set in dialogue with each other in a marriage of words and things rather than using texts to fill in lacks in archeological materials and vice versa. See, Sandra R. Joshe and Lauren Hackworth Petersen, *The Material Life of Roman Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 8. In a similar vein, Katherine Shaner argues that, “comparing different rhetorics in different kinds of materials—text, image, and architecture—helps us see the fissures in these attempts at persuasion and construction.” Katherine Shaner, *Enslaved Leadership in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), Oxford Scholarship Online edition, “Epilogue.”
high interpretive value. The premise here is that why these witnesses do are not mirrors of the Graeco-Roman world, they are windows through which we can peer through what those who lived in this world think of their world.\textsuperscript{13} This means I am not taking them as completely historical accounts but as accounts that hold heuristic value for interpretation of the beliefs and ideas that float around in this world.

Of significance in this regard is \textit{The Learned Banqueters} written by Athenaeus, a Greek sophist from Naucratis in Egypt. This work of about fifteen volumes revolved around an extraordinarily extravagant dinner and drinking party, which served as a rough framework for conversations which spanned over many areas of life in the Graeco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{14} The broad way in which \textit{The Learned Banqueters} tried to capture Graeco-Roman life has made this work an indispensable resource in understanding the Graeco-Roman banquet and because of this, it will also be a resource abundantly. Since this work purports to be a historical account of a Graeco-Roman banquet with a conglomerate of genres it will be taken to also bear the marks of the expected, the possible, the believable, and the probable. Again, I will place a greater premium on aspects of the meal that can be corroborated by other textual evidence and material remains.

\textsuperscript{13} See Shaner who notes that, “Archaeological materials and their modes of display, whether ancient or modern, are not clear windows into the historical past.” Cf. Shaner, \textit{Enslaved Leadership in Early Christianity}, ch. 1, “Power in Perspectives: Interpreting Enslaved Presence in Archeological Remains.” My use metaphorical use of windows as contrasted to mirrors is an attempt to provide more interpretative options for the contemporary reader of these remains. In this sense, a mirror reflects light to reproduce an image, while a window is an opening which allows light without reproducing the image. A mirror attempts to replicate but the window furnishes you with resources to view and not with a replicated reality. I will therefore propose that what Shaner calls “clear windows” will be better captured by the image of a mirror. In the words of Rhys Isaac, a society necessarily leaves marks of use upon the terrain it occupies, and these marks (signs) communicate meanings. See Rhys Isaac, \textit{The Transformation of Virginia 1740–1790} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 19.

\textsuperscript{14} Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, “Introduction,” xii–xiii (Olson, LCL).
It is necessary to note that when reference is made here to the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, I am speaking specifically about formal meals in the Graeco-Roman world. Formal meals in the Graeco-Roman world include banquets after sacrifices, meals of associations/groups, royal banquets, marriage feasts, and birthday banquets. The formality of these meals gives them a public character that is not afforded non-formal meals (like family dinner). These meals, therefore, also create a space for the negotiation of societal values and the contestation of public honor.\textsuperscript{15}

The Idealized Cognitive Model of the Graeco-Roman Meal Tradition

The Graeco-Roman world left an abundance of footprints when it comes to the manner in which its meals were performed. While all societies in history have their own way of eating and drinking, the ancient Greek world is unparalleled in the way shared eating and drinking was institutionalized.\textsuperscript{16} The formal meal tradition among the Greeks became the vehicle through which its society was organized and comprehended. The table and the couch became literary settings for many Greek writers in the ancient world starting from Homeric era (800 BCE) going well beyond the early third century CE, when Athenaeus wrote his Deipnosophistai.\textsuperscript{17} The table


\textsuperscript{16}Greeks according to Oswyn Murray defines eras, and the characteristics of other civilizations, in terms of their own history and drinking habits. In addition to this, among the items of furniture for the Greek conviviality—which is the couch (\textit{kline})—was the most important item of furniture. In Plato, the archetypal skilled craftsman is the “couch maker.” See Oswyn Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” in \textit{A Companion to Archaic Greece}, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Hans van Wees (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 508–23, here 516; Plato, \textit{Republic} 597A (Emlyn-Jones and Preddy, LCL).

\textsuperscript{17}Douglas Olson emphasizes in his introduction to \textit{The Learned Banqueters} the role this work played in our comprehension of the Ancient world. He writes that “had \textit{The Learned Banqueters} not survived, our knowledge of classical Greek literature and its reception in the Hellenistic and Roman periods would have been immensely poorer.” See, Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, “Introduction,” ix (Olson, LCL).
became the medium through which ideas were discussed and passed down in myths, legends, and history. In this regard, Plutarch observes:

To consign to utter oblivion all that occurs at a drinking party is not only opposed to what we call the friend-making character of the dining-table, but also has the most famous of the philosophers to bear witness against it—Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Speusippus, Epicurus, Prytanis, Hieronymus and Dio of the Academy who all considered the recording of conversations held at table a task worth some effort.\(^\text{18}\)

The ancient Greeks did not struggle to find a reason to gather for a meal. These occasions varied from public and domestic sacrifices, birthdays of family members, birthdays of esteemed persons, funerals, the departure or arrival of a friend, the gaining of victory or the meetings of official and unofficial associations.\(^\text{19}\)

The gradual erosion of the political influence of the Greeks, and the rise of the Romans did not put an end to the influence of the Greek meal tradition. Rather, it marks the diffusion of this meal tradition into the Roman world and the Roman sphere of influence. Roman writers like Catullus, Horace, Cicero, Pliny the Younger, Petronius, Aulus Gellius, and Macrobius all

\(^{18}\) [Τ]ὸ δ᾽ ὅλως ἀμνημονεύει τὸν ἐν σίνῳ μὴ μόνον τῷ φιλοσοφοῦ λεγομένῳ μάχεσθαι τῆς τραπέζης, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων τοὺς ἐλλογιματάντας ἀντιμαρτυροῦντας ἔχειν, Πλάτωνα καὶ Ἑκατοννήν καὶ Αριστοτέλη καὶ Σπεύσιππον Ἐπίκουρον τε καὶ Πρύτανι καὶ Ἱερώνυμον καὶ Δίον τὸν ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας, ὡς δὲιόν τινος σπουδῆς πεποιημένους ἔργον ἀναγράφασθαι λόγους παρὰ πότῳ γενομένους. Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales. I:612D (Clement, LCL). On this issue, Nicholas R.E. Fisher writes that, “In most, if not all, societies, social relationships of all sorts tend to be sanctified and solidified by a shared taking of food and drink; but in few societies have celebrations of shared eating and drinking been so highly valued, so idealized, and stylized, so widely practiced at many levels, and so significantly used as occasions for philosophical, political, and moral discussions and their reflections in poetic and prose literature.” See Nicholas R.E. Fisher, “Greek Associations, Symposia, and Clubs,” in Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome, vol. 2. ed. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger (New York: Scribner’s, 1988a), 1167–197, here 1167.

\(^{19}\) Wilhelm Adolf Becker, Charicles: Illustrations of the Private Life of the Ancient Greeks with Notes and Excurses (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854), 314–15. I will explain my use of the nomenclature ‘unofficial associations’ in the section ‘Christ’s Groups as Unofficial Associations’ in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. For now, I will define an unofficial association in the Graeco-Roman world as a stable group of persons who do not receive funding from the city for the running of their group.
engaged in the Greek practice of recording conversations at meals.\textsuperscript{20} Katherine M.D Dunbabin observes that the meeting of the Roman and Greek cultures had a significant ideological and architectural impact upon the meal traditions of both groups.\textsuperscript{21} While she cautions that the chain of influence especially in terms of the architecture might be complicated and inextricably interwoven, she ultimately suggests that the

\begin{quote}
[C]onnection would seem to run that the Roman aristocracy adopted the fashions set by Hellenistic royalty, and in turn were copied less grandly and on a smaller scale, by the wealthy of a town like Pompeii, and doubtless elsewhere in Italy. In time, these same fashions came back to the Greek world, to the circles of men like Plutarch or whoever owned the Atrium house at Antioch as a way of adopting Roman manners.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

In spite of the complication about the chain of influence in matters like architecture, what is undeniable is that the meal tradition which later became prevalent in the Graeco-Roman world first appeared in literature among the Greeks during the Homeric period.\textsuperscript{23} The persistence of—especially—the Greek symposion even in the Roman world again points to the influence of the Greek table style in the ancient world.\textsuperscript{24} Even those who thought that the Graeco-Roman banquet

\textsuperscript{20} Jamir, \textit{Exclusion and Judgment}, 4.

\textsuperscript{21} Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” esp. 92–98.

\textsuperscript{22} Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 97.

\textsuperscript{23} For this period, the epics attributed to Homer, i.e., \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey}, should be considered remarkable sources. In the words of Luigi Enrico Rossi, “La storia della lirica è la storia del simposia.” See Luigi Enrico Rossi, “Il simposio greco arcaico e classico come spettacolo a se stesso,” in \textit{kηληθμ \δ’ \εσχοντο: Scritti editi e inedita volume 2: Letteratura}, ed. Giulio Colesanti and Roberto Nicolai (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2020), 333–40, here 340. Vanessa Cazzato and Enrico Emanuele Prodi also note that “the earliest directly preserved Greek poetry consists of songs on cups—both in the sense that they are \textit{inscribed} on cups and that they are about cups.” See Vanessa Cazzato and Enrico Emanuele Prodi, “Introduction: Continuity in Synoptic Tradition,” in \textit{The Cup of Song: Studies on Poetry and the Symposion}, ed. Vanessa Cazzato, Dirk Obbink, and Enrico Emanuele Prodi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–16, here 2.

\textsuperscript{24} I will give a comprehensive analysis of the symposion under the section on the symposion as the prototype of the meal tradition in the Graeco-Roman world in this chapter.
was rooted in idolatry and was marked by flagrant hedonism—Philo for instance—they still showed that although the Greek meal tradition might be rejected, it was impossible to ignore.\textsuperscript{25}

The spread of Greek vases and Greek pottery to many places in the ancient world attests to the popularity of the Greek meal tradition. Kathleen M. Lynch notes that:

\begin{quote}
A great number of Greek-made vases were deposited in Italian graves… It is no surprise that Greek vases are found everywhere, from Celtic sites in Western Europe, to Mesopotamia, to Persian burials in Turkey. As exports from Greece, the vases carried prestige value in these cultures, and they were often given pride of place in tombs.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

It is noteworthy to point out that the presence of Greek art did not necessarily mean the diffusion of Greek values. The example of the Etruscans, who after importing large quantities of the finest Attic pottery for symposia purposes, ended up creating a native pottery modeled on that of the Greeks, shows that caution is often needed when talking about the diffusion of Greek values.\textsuperscript{27} However, the ubiquitous presence of Greek meal art forms signifies the knowledge and

\textsuperscript{25} Relevant to this argument are the positions of Baruch Bokser, Gordon J. Bahr, Siegfried Stein, and Sandra R. Shimoff. A summary of their positions can be found in the section on “The Last Supper in Its Socio-Historical Context: Judaism,” of Chapter One of this dissertation. See also, Baruch M. Bokser, \textit{The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Gordon J. Bahr, “The Seder of Passover and the Eucharistic Words,” \textit{NovT} 12 (1970): 181–202; Siegfried Stein, “The Influence of Symposia Literature on the literary form of the Pesach Haggadah,” \textit{JJS} 8 (1957): 13–44; Sandra R. Shimoff, “Banquets: The Limits of Hellenization,” \textit{JSJ} 27 (1996): 440–52. Shimoff notes that “In a sense, then, if we want to appreciate the true extent of Hellenization among Jews in Eretz Israel, and how the rabbis reacted to Hellenization, Greco-Roman banquets are of special significance; no other Hellenistic practice was at once so culturally-attractive and so religiously-reprehensible.” (Shimoff, “Banquets: The Limits of Hellenization,” 444). For historical evidence of Judaism’s partial resistance of Hellenism, Cf. The biblical books of the Maccabees, Ezra and Nehemiah. Philo heavily criticized Greek symposia culture in \textit{De Vita Contemplativa}, and this further confirms the point that the Greek meal tradition could be rejected, not ignored. See Philo, \textit{De Vita Contemplativa}, 48–63 (Colson, LCL).

\textsuperscript{26} Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” in \textit{A Companion to Archaic Greece}, 525–42, here 540.

\textsuperscript{27} Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 522. The Greek meal patterns are different from the values inherent in the Greek meals. The meal patterns include the structure of the meal, architectural designs of the dinner space, and the utensils used during the meals while the values are the ideas these meals communicate. These values include ideas of honor, social obligation, and social quality. My argument here is that the Greek meal patterns are well-known and widespread in the ancient world, but this does not mean that those who shared the Greek meal patterns also shared the values these meals effect. For additional information on the values Greek meals communicate, see Smith, \textit{From Symposium to Eucharist}, 8–12; Klinghardt, \textit{Gemeinschaftsmahl und
popularity of Greek meal tradition in the ancient world, and an abundance of surviving literary and archeological materials suggests the Greek meal tradition was well known.\textsuperscript{28} The words of Oswyn Murray are instructive here:

> From the eighth century the chief export of Greece (in return for metals and slaves) was wine and the style of drinking that went with it: it is no chance that the presence of Greek merchants is signaled everywhere in the archaeological record by the spread of drinking cups, from the pendant semi-circle skyphoi of Euboea to Corinthian and Attic ware.\textsuperscript{29}

While the meal tradition of the Greeks was already prevalent in the ancient world, the encounter with Romans brought some cultural accommodation by the Greeks. With the literary (and artistic) power of the Greeks forming its background, there was nothing stopping Roman colonial power from spreading globally the meal tradition resulting from that encounter, which I term the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.\textsuperscript{30}

Having established the pervasiveness of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, I will now present an analysis of the Idealized Cog


\textsuperscript{28} Lynch observes that “we must be cautious using vases found outside of Greece as direct evidence for Greek values. They may be reflecting non-Greek values in a Greek artistic vocabulary.” See, Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 540–41. I agree with her that it does not necessarily mean that Greek values were being transported along Greek art. I also think that the large market that Greek art amassed for itself shows how much the tradition (including artwork) surrounding Greek meal practices stood out from its contemporaries.

\textsuperscript{29} Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 521.

\textsuperscript{30} This did not mean that the Graeco-Roman meal tradition did not borrow from other cultures. I will indicate when this is the case. However, whenever this borrowing took place, what survived in Graeco-Roman banquet is the Graeco-Roman form of that borrowing and not the original. See, Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 509. Also, to be noted is that in addition to the encounter of the Greek and Roman cultures, the spread of the various cult groups and unofficial associations—with feastings after making sacrifices— in the Roman empire also helped spread the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.
must have a *Gestalt* structure. This means that the properties of an ICM must be intrinsically related to one another.\footnote{See the section of Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) in chapter Two above. See also, Lakoff, *Women*, esp. 68–76.}

\textbf{A Gathering of More than Two Persons with Some Form of Prior Bond}

There are two parts to this property of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition ICM. First is the idea that a meal must be more than two persons to be able to capture the formal character of this tradition. As further analysis will show, a one-person meal or an informal family dinner will do no justice to the robust character of this tradition.\footnote{The works of Dennis Smith and Matthias Klinghardt are groundbreaking in this regard. See Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); Matthias Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft: Soziologie und Liturgie Frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 1996). I am in agreement with what is a near-consensus in New Testament scholarship on meals that, “there was a common meal tradition throughout the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean that lay at the basis of all active meals of the Greco Roman era, whether they be Gentile, Jewish, or Christian.” In this study, Graeco-Roman meal tradition and Graeco-Roman banquet mean the same thing. See Smith and Taussig, *Meals in the Early Christian World*, 1.}

While it is possible for a two-person meal in the Graeco-Roman world to exhibit some of the character of this meal tradition, the minimum size of a dining room imaginable in the ancient Graeco-Roman world was a three-*Kline* room, hence τὸ τρίκλινος. It is the linguistic definition of this room size that is used in this study to set the limit of the participants of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. In fact, the idea of a three-couch dinner became so pervasive that τὸ τρίκλινος (the three-couch room) came to be used for a dining room regardless of size and shape.\footnote{Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 89. In John 2 we have a similar situation in which the head of the banquet (or headwaiter) is referred to as ὁ ἀρχιτρίκλινος. See John 2:8,9. I am grateful to Dr. Christopher Skinner for drawing my attention to this reference in John 2.} The three-couch room was mainly a Roman architectural design which allowed three diners to sit per couch.\footnote{Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 89. Dunbabin notes that the Greek room structure is such that it permits the characteristic form of a dining room as having an uneven number of couches, usually seven, nine, or eleven, or sometimes more with a separate table for each couch. Each of these couches could contain one or two} Among the Greeks with regard
to room size, even a nine-couch room and a five-couch room are attested.\textsuperscript{35} In this regard, Athenaeus’ remarks about the number of couches constitute a significant ancient witness:

The ancients had rooms with space for three couches, four couches, seven couches, nine couches, and even more than that. Since there were three of you, putting you all together in a room with space for three couches.\textsuperscript{36}

Aren’t you ever going to lay out the bed-clothes in the three-couch room?\textsuperscript{37}

Everyone should dine at a single table set for an elegant meal. Let the company total three or four or at any rate no more than five; after that you would have a mess-group of rapacious mercenary soldiers.\textsuperscript{38}

Drawing from this evidence, the inhabitants of the ancient Graeco-Roman would have found it difficult if not impossible to comprehend a Graeco-Roman banquet occurring with less than three persons.\textsuperscript{39}

The second part of the first property of the ICM of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition is that there must be a prior bond between the participants of the meal. An abundance of literary guests in a reclining position. In contrast, the Romans have the standard three-couch (triclinium) with each couch holding up to three diners reclining around a single central table. See Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, “Triclinium and Stibadium,” in \textit{Dining in a Classical Context}, ed. William J. Slater (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 121–48, here 122–123.

\textsuperscript{35} See a reference in Phrynichus, “There was a splendid room with space for seven couches, and another room with nine.” ἐννεάκλινος ἑπτάκλινος ὁκός ἦν καλὸς, ἐπὶ ἑννεάκλινος ἕτερος ὁκός. Cf. Phrynichus, \textit{Testimonia and Fragments} 69 (Storey, LCL). πεντακλίνικος was used substantively as ἡ πεντακλίνος in Aristotle, \textit{On Marvellous Things Heard}, 842b.23 (Hett, LCL).

\textsuperscript{36} Οτι καὶ τρίκλινοι ὁκοὶ καὶ τετράκλινοι ἑπτάκλινοι καὶ ἑννεάκλινοι καὶ κατὰ τοὺς ἕξες ἀριθμοὺς ἦσαν παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς συναγαγόντες ὄντας εἰς τρίκλινον ὑμᾶς. Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, II.47F (Olson, LCL).

\textsuperscript{37} [Ὅ]ὐχ ὑποστρόφεας ποτέτρικλινον; Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, II.48A (Olson, LCL).

\textsuperscript{38} [Π]ρὸς δὲ μὴ πάντας δειπνεῖν ἀβρόδαιτι τραπέζῃ

ἐστωσαν δ᾿ ἢ τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρες οἱ ξυνάπταντες

ἡ τῶν πέντε γε μὴ πλείους· ἢδη γὰρ ἀν εἴη

μισθοφόρον ἄρπαξβιον σκηνὴ στρατιωτῶν. Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, I.4E (Olson, LCL).

\textsuperscript{39} In fact, among the Greek, while material evidence for three couches is rare, it does exist but we do not have evidence for a room for less than three. Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 83.
Evidence exists in the ancient world that suggests that the main participants at a banquet had prior knowledge of each other, as in the case of the participants at the symposia described by Plato, Xenophon, Athenaeus, Philo, and Plutarch.\(^{40}\) One of the first questions posed in the first century CE novel Satyricon by Petronius was: “Don’t you know your host for today?” To which the answer was: “He is Trimalchio, a man of supreme refinement. He keeps a water-clock in his dining-room, and a trumpeter at the ready, so that from time to time he can keep count of the lost hours.”\(^{41}\) Even when someone gatecrashes a dinner, as with Philip the comedian in Xenophon’s Symposium, he was familiar to the participants.\(^{42}\) Some of these intruders at meals are well known individuals and also well known for their habit of intrusion.\(^{43}\)

The documented issuance of invitations is additional evidence of a prior bond between participants at a Graeco-Roman banquet.\(^{44}\) These invitations were often given on the same day as the dinner, and usually by the host, sometimes in person as he sought out in the market place or gymnasium those whom he wished to invite.\(^{45}\) This shows that while some of these banquets

\(^{40}\) Philo, De Vita Contemplativa, (Colson, LCL); Plutarch, The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men, (Babbitt, LCL); Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, (Olsion, LCL); Plato, Symposium, (Lamb, LCL).


\(^{42}\) Xenophon, Symposium, 1.11 (Todd, revised Henderson, LCL). See also, Alcibiades in Plato, Symposium, 212E (Lamb, LCL).

\(^{43}\) Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, I.4F (Olson, LCL).


\(^{45}\) Becker, Charicles, 315.
were being held in public spaces, they were not open to everyone. The dinners of most unofficial associations were not open to everyone but rather to those who had some form of bond. Sometimes, the invitation was open also to those who were being initiated as members within a particular group, but then they also were not completely unknown. In some cases, invitations could be extended by those invited; but the initial invitation always goes out to a


47 The Therapeutae described in De Vita Contemplativa, the sectarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Spartans’s sýssitia are examples. A sýssition was symposion-like meal gathering among the Spartans and Cretans. A main difference between a sýssition and the average Greek symposion is the austerity of the sýssitia characterized by moderation in the consumption of wine. The comparison between a symposion and a sýssition by Manuel Tecuşan—relying on Plato’s Laws—is quite helpful here. He writes, “It is true that both symposion and sýssition are mainly educational institutions, but both in their character and their means are rather different. Sýssitia are meant to preserve a state of mind and body which is already acquired, not to create a new one; to reveal character (as the symposion would also do), but essentially not to train or to form it. Wine is never mentioned. The archon does not fight irrational tendencies aroused in conviviality. There seems to be little of a symposiarch in him, but very much of a ruler...There is no limitation in age or anything else to suggest privacy, which would be inseparable from a sympotic group. Indeed, the sýssitoi do not form a group at all: all citizens (and maybe women and children included) are forced regularly to attend the common meal.” See Manuela Tecușan, “Logos Sympotikos: Patterns of the Irrational in Philosophical Drinking: Plato Outside the Symposium,” in Symptatica: A Symposium on the Symposium, 238–260, here 256–257. For further description of sýssitia, see Plato, Laws, I:637A; VI:781A, 762B–D, 780B, VIII:806–7 (Bury, LCL) and Plutarch, Lives: Lycurgus, XII (Perrin, LCL). David E. Aune notes that Greeklike symposia were forbidden in Sparta and Crete—hence the more moderate sýssitia. See, Aune, “Septem Sapientium Convivium (Moralia 146B–164D),” in Plutarch’s Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 51–105. The fact that many of these associations also required membership fees (used mostly for the banquets, to help members settle court cases, and for funeral expenses) proves a prior bond existed. In some cases, friends came together and contributed for the dinner, which was then known as σωμβολή. See Xenophon, Symposium, I.16 (Todd, revised by Henderson, LCL); Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueter, XIII.555A (Olson, LCL). Furthermore, in Plato’s Laws, one of the aims of a sympotic gathering was to “guard friendship.” In describing the role of the symposiarch, the Athenian interlocutor notes, “[H]e has both to preserve the friendliness which already exists among the company and to see that the present gathering promotes it still further.” ([Γ]ένεται γὰρ φύλαξ τῆς τε ὑπαρχούσης φύλαξ αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔτι πλείονος ἐπιμελητής ὅπως ἔσται διὰ τὴν τότε ξυνοισίαν). Plato, Laws, I:640D (Bury, LCL).

48 P. Mich. VIII 511 [GRA III: 240]. In P. Mich. VIII 511, Ptolemaios was an individual being initiated into the cult of Sarapis, and though being an initiate, he was tasked with a role one will expect of a full member. Kloppenborg suggests that in this case the fact that the man being initiated, though being an initiate (σωμπητικός), had enough connections or skills to be offered a managerial role. I think in this case, Ptolemaios, was not an unknown individual, which is a further evidence that individuals who meet for dinners, in a lot of cases, have prior knowledge of one another. See also, IG II² 1361. 23–24; IG II² 1369. While it is true that in Greek Homeric epics the table-talk is between visitors, often strangers or travelers, texts from historical times always underline a prior bond. See Iliad 9, 24 (Murray, LCL); Odyssey 7 (Murray, LCL). See also, Ewen L. Bowie, “Table-Talk before Plato,” A Journal of the History of Rhetoric11 (1993): 355–71.
“core” that have a prior knowledge and relationship with one another. It might then be left to this “core” to guarantee or to approve (δοκιμάζω) others whom they would invite.49 This is the case in Plato’s Symposium when Aristodemus, who himself was invited, ended up inviting—the “un-invited”—Socrates, evoking a Homeric episode between Agamemnon and Menelaus.50 Socrates replies: “have your excuse quite ready when you bring me; for I shall not confess to coming unasked, but only on your invitation.”51 In Plutarch’s The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men, Chiron was adjudged to have

[S]howed most excellent judgement when he received his invitation yesterday, in not agreeing to come until he had learned the name of every person invited. For he said that men must put up with an inconsiderate companion on shipboard or under the same tent, if necessity compels them to travel or to serve in the army, but that to trust to luck regarding the people one is to be associated with at table is not a mark of sense.52

49 IG II² 1369.


52 Plato, The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men, 148A (Babbitt, LCL). [Ο]θεν ἀρίστει Χώλαν, καλόμενος ἕχθες, οὗ πρότερον ὁμολόγησεν ἢ πυθήσασθαι τῶν κεκλημένων ἔκακτον. ἐφ’ ἀργὸν ὅτι σύμπλῶν ἀγνώμονα δεῖ φέρειν καὶ σύσκηγνον ὡς πλεῖν ἀνάγκη καὶ στρατεύεσθαι· τὸ δὲ συμπότας ἐπαυνόν ὡς ἐπίθει καταμιγνύειν οὐ νοὸν ἔχοντος ἄνδρός ἐστιν. Elsewhere, Plutarch writes: “To have the company of others forced upon one on a voyage, in the family, or in legal business, is not so unpleasant as at dinner, and there too, congenial company is most pleasant. A dinner party is a sharing of earnest and jest, of words and deeds; so, the diners must not be left to chance, but must be such as are friends and intimates of one another who will enjoy being together.” [Ο]ὔτε γὰρ τὸ συμπλεῖν ὡστ’ ἰα τὸ συνυκεῖν ὡστ’ ὃν ἢ βούλεται τις οὕτως ἰάδες ὡς τὸ συνάδειπνοι, καὶ τούτων ἦν κοινωνία γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ συνουξῆς καὶ παινίδας καὶ λόγων καὶ πράξεων τὸ συμπόσιον. ὅτιν ὅν τοὺς τυχόντας ἀλλὰ προσφυλέες εἶναι δὲ καὶ συνήθης ἀλλῆλος, ὡς ἰὰδες συνεσομένους. Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, VII:708D (Hoffleit, LCL). Cicero in Letter to Friends complains twice to Trebatius of a certain Octavius (or Cornelius) whom he does not know but kept inviting him to dinner. “There is a certain friend of yours called Cn. Octavius (or is it Cn. Cornelius?), ‘mother Earth’s son, a fine old family.’ Knowing me to be a friend of yours, he showers me with invitations to dinner. So far he has not succeeded in getting me all the way, but I am obliged just the same.” Cn. Octavius est (an Cn. Cornelius?) [Q]uidam, tuus familiaris, summum genere natus, terrae filius. is me, quia scit tuum familiarem essem, crebro ad cenam invitavit. adhuc non potuit perducere, sed mihi tamen gratum est. Cicero, Letter to Friends, VII.9 (Bailey, LCL); “If I were by way of dining out, I should not have disappointed your friend Cn. Octavius; though I did say to him after several invitations ‘Do please tell me, who are you?’ But really, in all seriousness, he is a pretty fellow. A pity you did not take him with you!” Ego, si foris cenitarem, Cn. Octavio, familiari tuo, non defuissem. cui tamen dixi, cum me aliquotiens invitaret, ‘oro te, quis tu es?’ sed mehercules, extra iocum, homo bellus est; vellem eum tecum abduxisses. Cicero, Letter to Friends, VII.16 (Bailey, LCL) The fact that
Since a banquet with total strangers was not desirable in the Graeco-Roman world, I contend that the first core element of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition is that participants of a banquet must involve at least of three people who have some kind of a prior relationship.

A Meal (and Drink)

The second property of the ICM of a Graeco-Roman meal tradition is the presence of something to eat and imbibe. The food and drink appearing at every formal banquet in the Graeco-Roman world depended upon the available food in each region, the possibility of import, and ritual restrictions. It is significant to note that while wine is a significant part of the *symposion*, I do not consider it to represent a core requirement of the ICM of the Graeco-Roman meal banquet tradition.53 This is because there are groups in the Graeco-Roman world who held banquets but did not drink wine.54 This may be for religious or economic reasons. Andrew McGowan has provided evidence for some early Christians who celebrated their common meal with water and not wine.55 While it is true that beer was not generally favored by those who understood themselves to belong to the empire and to the Greek culture generally, it was still the prevalent beverage in Egypt, since neither Egypt nor Mesopotamia exhibits the type of climate dinners can also quickly degenerate into chaos could also be one of the reasons there is a premium on some sort of prior bond.

53 Smith’s question, "Could there be a *deipnon* without a *symposion*?"—which he answers in the negative because “Certainly it would be difficult to imagine a formal meal where there is no drinking of wine”—is valid as long as it is applied to the *symposion*. I argue here that the *symposion* is a prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. It does not, however, encompass this tradition. In fact, as I have argued here, there were *deipna* without the consumption of wine. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 31.

54 Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*, 73–74 (Colson, LCL).

necessary for large-scale wine production.\textsuperscript{56} There is, for instance, an account of the list of beer supplied to Psoiphis son Onnophris, president of the association of priests, by the beer merchant of Tebtynis.\textsuperscript{57} In another text of the association of salt merchants in the same city of Tebtynis, it was agreed that members shall drink always on the 25th of each month a chous (approximately 3.25 liters) of beer.\textsuperscript{58} Furthermore, Fabian Reiter analyzes some ostraca beer receipts from Tebtynis and argues that they provided evidence of beer consumption by associations in Tebtynis.\textsuperscript{59} The consumption of beer (and not wine) by associations in the Graeco-Roman world is a neglected topic in the scholarship on the Graeco-Roman meal tradition since most discussions have been overshadowed by the consumption of wine.

The emphasis on wine (as in the \textit{symposion}) means also that the importance of the food in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition is largely neglected. Yet the employment of trained cooks at some of these banquets is evidence that the food (and its preparation) at the formal dinners was

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{56} McGowan, \textit{Ascetic Eucharists}, 43. See also, Victor H. Matthews, “Treading the Wine Press: Actual and Metaphorical Viticulture in Ancient Near East,” in \textit{Food and Drink in the Biblical Worlds}, ed. Athalya Brenner and Jan Willem van Henten, (Semeia 86; Atlanta: SBL Press, 1999), 19–32. Margen Broshi notes that while wine was common in Syro-Palestine, beer was the staple intoxicating beverage in Mesopotamia and Egypt. The difference between these two regions is such that if “Jesus had been born in Egypt rather than in Palestine, the Christian ritual would use beer instead of wine [in the Sacrament of the Eucharist] to this very day.” See Margen Broshi, \textit{Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls}, JSPSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 145. For an additional reference on beer, see \textit{The Learned Banqueters} where it was noted that poorer people drank wheat-beer with honey added, or in most cases without it; they refer to this as korma [κόρμα]. Cf. Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, IV.152C (Olson, LCL).
\item \textsuperscript{57} P. Mich. V 332b [GRA III: 220].
\item \textsuperscript{58} P. Mich. V 245:35 [GRA III:219]. See also, P. CairDem 30606; AGRW 299.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
of great importance. The *symposion* is incomprehensible without the eating which precedes it. It is important to emphasize this property of the ICM because, first, it acknowledges that the texts we have do value the consumption of food more than would be suggested by the commentary on these texts. Second, it also recognizes the fact that there were dinners that did not entail the consumption of wine as appears to be central to the popular *symposia*. Wineless dinners need to be recognized as a part of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

The Intentionality of Having a Meaningful Conversation

Conversation was sustained and provided some form of entertainment during meals. This property of the ICM was expressed in a variety of ways over the course of time. The form of conversations that dominated the archaic era (i.e., *skolia*) greatly differed from that of the classic era (i.e., philosophical discussions). In some other cases, it was the religious configuration of the association that determined the nature of the conversation. Conversations were either moralizing, dogmatic, philosophical, or didactic. Even games such as the solving of riddles and *skolia* should...
be considered as a form of conversation since they were accompanied by some form of table-talk.\textsuperscript{62}

In the case of riddles, they were propounded to the guests in succession. Those who solved these riddles would win a round of applause, a crown, or kisses, and those who failed would have to drink their wine neat, mixed with brine, or drain their cups without taking a breath.\textsuperscript{63} The \textit{skolia} was another game that sustained conversations at meals. It was a form of singing which required everyone to know the lyrics of the poems.\textsuperscript{64} The earliest instance of the term is found in Pindar.\textsuperscript{65} In essence, \textit{skolia} is a game of “capping verses.”\textsuperscript{66} François Lissarrague notes that the “poem circulates among the guests in a relay, as they pass the lyre from hand to hand. But each one has enough poetic expertise to take up a familiar theme, recite a classic passage, or improvise for the occasion.”\textsuperscript{67} Plutarch describes \textit{skolia} thus:

As for the scolia, some say that they do not belong to a type of obscurely constructed songs, but that first the guests would sing the god’s song together, all raising their hymn with one voice, and next when to each in turn was given the myrtle spray (which they called aisakos, I think, because the man to receive it sings) and too the lyre was passed around, the guest who could play the instrument would take it and tune it and sing, while the unmusical would refuse, and thus the scolium owes its name to the fact that it is not sung by all and is not easy. But others say that the myrtle spray did not proceed from each guest to his neighbour in orderly sequence, but was passed across from couch to couch each time, that the first man to sing sent it over to the first man on the second couch,

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  \item \textsuperscript{62} Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, X.457E–459C (Olson, LCL).
  \item \textsuperscript{63} Alan Cameron, \textit{Callimachus and His Critics} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 80.
  \item \textsuperscript{64} Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 531.
  \item \textsuperscript{65} Pindar, \textit{For Xenophon of Corinth}, fr. 122.13–15. (Race, LCL). See also, Derek Collins, \textit{Master of the Genre: Competition and Performance in Greek Poetry} (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2004), 84.
  \item \textsuperscript{66} Collins, \textit{Master of the Genre}, 85.
  \item \textsuperscript{67} François Lissarrague, \textit{The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet: Images of Wine and Ritual} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 129.
\end{itemize}
and the latter to the first man on the third couch, then the second man to the second on the neighbouring couch, and so on; so, they say, it seems the song was named scolium because of the intricate and twisted character of its path.\textsuperscript{68}

Another game of prominence at formal banquets was the kottabos.\textsuperscript{69} Of all the games at the symposion, the kottabos takes place of pride. Kottabos entailed “the art of flicking drops of wine at a target such as a metal pan, so as to make it fall off its stand.”\textsuperscript{70} Reputed to be of a Sicilian origin, it became so a popular a game that prizes known as kottabeia were devoted to it and bowls known as kottabides were constructed specially for the game.\textsuperscript{71}

Within Plato and Xenophon’s Symposia and Plutarch’s Quaestiones Convivales, a thematic conversation known as logos sympotikos dominated the meal. The logos sympotikos

\textsuperscript{68} “Ἐπεί τοι καὶ τὰ σκολία φασίν οὐ γένος ἁσμάτων εἶναι πεποιημένων ἀσαφῶς, ἀλλ’ ὅτι πρῶτον μὲν ἦδον ώδήν τοῦ θεοῦ κοινός ἀπαντεῖ μιᾷ φωνῇ παιανίζοντες, δεύτερον δ’ ἐφεξῆς ἐκάτερο μυρώνης παραδομένης, ἂν αἰσχακὸν οἴμα πᾶσιν ὑδάει τοῦ δεξαμένου ἐκάλουσι, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦτο λύρας περιφερομένης ὁ μὲν πεπαιδευμένος έλάμβανε καὶ ἦδειν ἀρμοζόμενος, τὸν δ’ ἀμοίβαν οὐ προσεμεῖσαν σκολίων ὁμομάθητο ἡ μῆ αὐτοῦ μὴν ῥᾴδιον. ἀλλοί δὲ φαινεῖ τὴν μυρώνην οὐ καθεξῆς βαδίζουσιν, ἄλλα καθ’ ἐκάστοις ἐπὶ κλίνης ἐπὶ Σκλήνης διαφέρονται τὸν γὰρ πρῶτον ἄσαντα τῷ πρῶτῳ τῆς δεύτερῃς κλίνης ἀποστέλλειν, ἐκεῖνον δὲ τῷ πρῶτῳ τῆς τρίτης, εἶτα τὸν δεύτερον ὁμοίως τῷ δεύτερῳ, καὶ τὸ ποικίλον καὶ πολυκαμπῆς ὡς ἔοικε τῆς περίοδος σκολίων ὁμομάθητο.” Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, I:615B–C (Clement, LCL). See Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, XV.694A–695A for three ways the skolia can be performed, i.e.: “The first was the type that everyone customarily sang; the second was the type that everyone sang, not (in a group), however, but in rotation, one after another; and the third type came after all the others, and not everyone participated at this point, but only those regarded as intelligent, regardless of where they happened to be sitting.” [Ὡ]ν τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἦδον ώδῃ δὲ πάντες ἦδον νόμος ἦν, τὸ δὲ δεύτερον δ’ ἦδεὶ πάντες μὲν ἦδονoring, οὐ μὴν γάλλα γε κατὰ τινὰ περίοδον ἐξ ὑπαδοχῆς, <τῶν> τρίτου δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ πάσιν εἶχον, οὐ μετέχον οὐκετί πάντες, ἄλλ’ οἱ συνετοὶ δοκοῦντες εἶναι μόνοι, καὶ κατὰ τόπον τινὰ πάντας τὸν καὶ τοὺς ὄντες· διόπερ ως ἀπαλλήν τινὰ μόνον παρὰ τάλλα ἔχον τὸ μῆθ’ ἀμα μῆθ’ ἐξῆς γνώμενον, ἄλλ’ ὅπου ἔτυχον εἶναι σκολίων ἐκλήθη. Collins argues that skolion can be divided into three categories to which he adds a fourth. The first three categories are: (1) Lyric compositions from Terpander, Sappho, Alcaeus, Pindar, and Anacreon; (2) short compositions containing Aeolic meters and (3) subject-based lyric compositions. To these categories, Collins adds the category of improvised, off-the-cuff or adapted poetry. See Collins, Master of the Genre, 91–93. See also, Aristophanes, Wasps 1219–249 (Henderson, LCL). We also have representations of the skolia on the vases. Cf. François Lissarrague, The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet, 123–139; Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 531.

\textsuperscript{69} Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, X.457 (Olson, LCL); see also, Lissarrague, The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet, 68–86.

\textsuperscript{70} Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 518. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, XV.665–68 (Olson, LCL).

\textsuperscript{71} Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, X.427D; XI 479D–E; XV.665D (Olson, LCL).
developed rules for an elaborate system of communication which shows very distinctive modes of statement and response.72 According to Tecușan, “a good symposion should consist in each person making individual speeches in turn.”73 This discursive style reached its most expansive form with Athenaeus’ The Learned Banqueters. Among the philosophers, some form of philosophical conversations took place; and among the politicians, some political talk.74 Apart from this, it has been suggested that some of the lyric poetry came from sympotic performances, or at least, they were performed at symposia.75 All these forms of conversation which were all in the mode of speaking in turn all fall under the logos sympotikos.76

In the Hellenistic era the proliferation of cults also brought an increase in the appearance of religious conversation—different from logos sympotikos—during meal. Judaism and various other cults of the Hellenistic period held dinners with extended religious conversations. The


74 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters (Olson, LCL); Lucian The Carousel (Symposium) or The Lapiths (Harmon, LCL).


76 Pellizer, “Outlines of a Morphology,” 179. On the topic of conversations at symposia, Plutarch writes, “So it is with the conversation; some topics are accepted by the average run of men as the proper business of drinking-parties, while other topics are entertained because they possess an attractive theme more suitable to the moment than pipe and lyre. Examples of these were mixed together in my first book. To the first category belong the conversation on philosophical talk at drinking-parties, that on the subject whether the host himself assigns places or allows the guests to take their own, and such matters to the second category belong the conversation on the poetical disposition of lovers and the one concerned with the phyle Aiantis. The first group indeed I also call specifically drinking-party topics, but both together generally suitable table-talk.” (οизаторς δη και τον λογον τους μεν επι χειτα τη περι τα συμποσια παραλαμβανουσιν οι μετριους, τοις δ’ άλλους δεχονται θεωριαι πιθανην και τη κυριω μαλλον αυλον και μπαρμπεπον ερχοντας ον και το πρωτον ημιν βιβλιον εχε μεμιγμενα δεσματα, του μεν προτερου γενους το περι του φιλοσοφειν παρα πιτον και περι τοις διανεμων αυτουν η τους δειπνουσιν εριμεν τας κλησεις και τα τοι ανετα του δε δευτερου περι τους έρωντας ποιητικος ειναι και περι της Αιαντιδος φυλης, ον τα μεν καλω δητα και αυτος ιδια σμικετικα τα δε συναμφιοστερα κοινος συμποσιακα). Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, II:629D (Clement, LCL)
Therapeutae, the sectarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls, early Christ groups, and other cults held conversations that reflected the particular identity of their groupings. For instance, the sectarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls focused upon the study of the Torah as did many other Jewish groups of this timeframe with each group framing its identity according to its interpretation of these texts. The early Christ groups explored the reading of the Scriptures and writings by their foremost leaders like the apostles. Similarly, among Bacchic associations it was one of the duties of the priest to give a theologia which was a theological discourse on the god. For some of these

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77 The evidence that the Torah has a pride of place for sectarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls can be found in 1QS 5:1–2, 8–9; 6:6–7. The Torah also has a significant place at the Jewish Passover with the Passover Haggadah infused with reference to the Torah. See m. Pesah 10:1–9; Philo, On the Special Laws, II:145–149 (Colson, LCL). On the idea of what the Torah might possibly mean in texts of the Hellenistic era, see Shaya Shleifer, in “From Nomos to Logos: Torah in First-Century Jewish Texts,” in The Message of Paul the Apostle with Second Temple Judaism, ed. František Ěbel (Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2019), 61–74.

78 See Acts 2:42–47; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34; Justin the Martyr calls these texts, “memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets.” See Justin the Martyr, First Apology LXVI–LXVII esp. LXVII. Valeriy Alikin’s position on the discursive role of reading texts at the gatherings of early Christ groups is relevant in this regard. See Valeriy Alikin, “The Reading of Texts at the Graeco-Roman Symposium and in the Christian Gathering,” in Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch, ed. José Ribeiro Ferreira, Delfim Leão, Manuel Tröster and Paula Barata Dias (Coimbra: Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanisticos da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009), 103–12.

79 Walter Burkert observes that “in general, each divinity of a mystery cult has a special myth to which he or she is intimately bound. Usually, the general outlines are well known; some details though, are said to be ‘sacred,’ and are allegedly kept secret… thus in general and in detail, in correspondence and opposition, myth provided a framework for verbalizing more or less important aspects of the mysteries. This is ‘speaking about god’ theologia, yet it remains experimental, allusive, and incidental—far from systematic theology.” Walter Burkert, Ancient Mysteries (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 73, 78. See also, IG II 1368.115, and ISmyrna 653, 654 which both record honors being accorded to two female theologians. ISmyrna 500 records a theologian who was also a singer. For similar references to theologians, see I Eph 47, 645, 1023, 3015, 3074. Philip A. Harland describes these theologians as “functionaries who composed or performed discourses, stories, poems about the gods.” Our sources mainly speak about men but there are at least two instances of women cited earlier (ISmyrna 653, 654). See Philip A. Harland in GRA II 138. Relatedly, Jason König’s evaluation of Jesus’ discourse style at a meal in Luke 12:1–14 is valid only if every meal is considered to be a replica of the symposion. He writes that “the miraculous, unspoken response Jesus gives to his own question is entirely alien to Greco-Roman symptic traditions of rational talk. And the attitude of the Pharisees is itself a travesty of ideal sympotic behavior; they are watching him not out of admiration, as Plutarch’s dinner guests watch their elders, but in a spirit of hostility, desperate for him to incriminate himself. Admittedly, the classical symposium had always been a place for scrutiny of one’s fellow diners, a place where the symposiast’s true nature was revealed, a place where a chance slip could lead to embarrassment.” See König, Saints and Symposiasts, 133. As I will argue in the following pages, while the symposion is the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, any dissimilarity from it should not make a meal less Graeco-Roman. The first yardstick should be the ICM presented here. If there are deviations from the prototype, the meal itself becomes an instantiation of the prototype.
associations, such conversations were regarded as sacred and were not to be revealed to the uninitiated. Among theologiae should be considered the Passover Haggadah, and the ‘words of Institution of the Eucharist.’ Usually, these conversations coincided with the drinking of some beverage after dinner (symposion). However, in Judaism and early Christianity this combination of wine drinking and extended conversation after dinner was not necessarily the case. The significance of these conversations at these meal settings is that they are the windows through which we can discern the identity of the group meeting for a meal. Hence, these conversations were group-defining.

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80 Diodorus Siculus, Library of History, II.53–IV58 (Oldfather, LCL); Apuleius, Metamorphoses, XI.23 (Hanson, LCL).

81 See, IG II² 1368. See also, The Last Supper narratives in Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–23; Lord’s Supper in 1 Cor 11:17–34; Didache 9–10; Joseph Tabory, JPS Commentary on the Haggadah: Historical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2008). See also Baruch M. Bokser, The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Siegfried Stein, “The Influence of Symposia Literature on the Literary Form of the Pesach Haggadah,” JJS 8 (1957): 13–44. While there is no evidence that Paul expects the Christ-followers in Corinth to recite the words of institution during their meeting, the Paschal event of Jesus would have been the content of their theologiae. I will agree with McGowan that at this stage, like all theologia in similar association, the role of these texts was primarily catechetical in nature. See Andrew McGowan, “Is There a Liturgical Text in This Gospel?: The Institution Narratives and Their Early Interpretive Communities,” JBL 118 (1999): 73–87. Justin’s Apology in the second century certainly shows that there were some theologiae at Christian gatherings. Angela Standhartinger opines that the fact that every single author who cited these words up to the third century felt a need to reformulate them suggests they were in current use in some communities. See Angela Standhartinger, “Bringing Back to Life: Laments and the Origin of the So-Called Words of Institution,” in Coming Back to Life: The Permeability of Past and Present, Mortality and Immortality, Death and Life in the Ancient Mediterranean, ed. Frederick S. Tappenden and Carly Daniel-Hughes (Montreal, QC: McGill, 2017), 71–101. See Edward Yarnold, “Anaphoras without the Institution Narratives,” in Studia Patristica volume XXI: Papers presented at the Twelfth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1995, ed. Elizabeth A Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 395–410.

82 The Passover contains some didactic activity at significant junctures of the whole dinner. If the narrative by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 was already a formula at dinner in Corinth, they seemed to have followed Jesus’ pattern in which some words were spoken over the bread and then, after dinner, over the cup. Also, in Cicero’s The Verrine Orations, it seems to be the case that the conversation took place (more appropriately started) before the drinking. Cicero, The Verrine Orations, 2.1.26 §66 (Greenwood, LCL).

83 Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 531.
In all, the Graeco-Roman meal tradition entailed the remarkable intentionality of having a meaningful conversation.\textsuperscript{84} It is this conversational dimension that sealed the perennial cultural significance of this meal tradition. It was this property that revealed to later generations these cultures, their identities, their education, their politics, their histories, their myths, their legends, their wars, and the identities of the other cultures with which they interacted.\textsuperscript{85} For the Jews, conversations at meals—especially at the Passover—helped sustain their Jewish identity. The meal became for the Jews a place to perform the communal memory of their people. For the early Christ groups, and in latter expressions of Christianity, conversations about the common meal and discourses around it shaped their understanding of themselves through the ages.\textsuperscript{86} For this reason—of conversation at meals having a group defining characteristic—I argue that this discursive property completes the definition of the ICM of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

To conclude this section, I would like to restate that these three properties of the ICM of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition discussed here are intrinsically related. They are, together, not

\textsuperscript{84} Fiona Hobden, \textit{The Symposion in Ancient Greek Society and Thought} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 251–52.


\textsuperscript{86} L. Michael White argues persuasively that the communal meal of the early Christians shaped the architecture of their communal space. This is evidenced in the fact that “the separation of the eucharist from the \textit{agape} meal coincided with a fundamental shift in the physical locus and social pattern of Christian assembly when renovation of Church edifices began to develop into halls of assembly. At this point, the gathering for worship no longer reflects the meal setting, even though the \textit{Lord’s Supper} tradition still stands at the center of the worship. Both the archeological and literary evidence suggests that this shift began around the turn of the third century.” See L. Michael White, “Regulating Fellowship in the Communal Meal: Early Jewish and Christian Evidence,” in \textit{Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World}, ed. Inge Nielsen and Hanne Sigismund Nielsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 177–205. Stephen C. Barton explores the concept of space (\textit{oikos} versus \textit{ekklesia}) in Corinth and concludes that “[I]t is clear that Paul’s wish is to differentiate between commensality in church and at home.” See Stephen C. Barton, “Paul’s Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth,” \textit{NTS} 32 (1986): 225–46, here 237.
singly, indispensable for the Graeco-Roman banquet to qualify as part of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. A point that is also worth repeating here is that a Graeco-Roman banquet may contain differences from the symposion (prototype) and still qualify as a member of this meal tradition, provided it did not deviate from the ICM. The symposion is the best example but not the only example of this tradition’s ICM. Various examples of meals in the Graeco-Roman world should invite us to distinguish between differing practices which co-exist and often coalesce and together will help us understand this tradition in its rich diversity.

The next step now is to argue for the symposion as the prototype, that is, the best example of this meal tradition. The relationship between the ICM—the basic idea of a meal (banquet) that exists in the Graeco-Roman world—and the symposion as the prototype of that basic idea is best captured by the reasoning of Robert Williamson, that within a culture where the idealized cognitive model of a bird is a small, winged creature that flies and sings, a robin or sparrow will

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87 Relihan argues in König’s fashion when he writes that “it is good to remember that philosophical debate is itself a violation of sympotic norms.” See Relihan, “Rethinking the History of the Literary Symposium,” 224. As I earlier noted, this is a narrow interpretation of available evidence which is both diverse and distinctly meaningful.

88 Pauline Schmitt-Pantel suggests that the best way to preserve the integrity of the diversity we have in our sources is to speak of ‘rituals of conviviality.’ See Pauline Schmitt-Pantel, “Sacrificial Meal and Symposion,” in Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposium ed. Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Clarendon: 1990), 14–33, here 24. Also, Lynch argues for a ‘stricter use of the term symposion’ that will elucidate the extraordinary focus on the wine alone. According to her, it is unhelpful to lump together all eating and drinking done while reclining under the symposion or to use ‘banquet’ as a synonym for symposion, since a banquet that occurred with religious feasts and weddings shared the features of the symposion and its equipment but is not symposia. See Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 533. In terms of linguistic usage and artistic representations the ancient sources do not sometimes make the differences between a dinner and a symposion clear. Not only are the contexts for many artistic representations difficult to interpret, the word for dinner (δείπνον) and reclining (κατακλίνω) also had more frequency than the word for symposion. Also, sometimes δείπνον and συμποσίον were used interchangeably adding to the confusion. In some cases, as we have in Plato’s Symposium, the word δείπνον was used in describing a sympotic setting. Cf. Plato, Symposium, 176A (Lamb, LCL). See also, Josephus Antiquities 6.163; Luke 7:36; Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, I.1, 2, 3, 8, 18 (Olson, LCL); P. Oxy XXXI 2529. Hence, Lynch’s call for a careful distinction that pays attention to the different meal patterns that co-exist in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, of which the symposion is the prototype and is at the core of my argument.
seem like a prototypical bird. However, within a culture in which a winged animal neither flies nor sings, the idealized model of a bird would much more closely resemble a penguin.\footnote{Williamson, “Pesher: A Cognitive Model of the Genre,” 316.}

I have chosen the \textit{symposion} as the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition following the methodology of selecting a prototype outlined by Eleanor Rosch. Rosch argues that to be most representative of, or informative about, items in the category, the best examples of the category should be items that are most like other category members. This means the prototype example occupies the most central position of a category. It is therefore not a question of frequency but one of an internal structure, since members of a set of patterns resemble one another because they are variants of the same prototype.\footnote{See the section on “Prototype Theory” in chapter Two.} It is worth repeating here that my idea of the \textit{symposion} as the prototype is the \textit{symposion} as a cultural institution that was well known in the Graeco-Roman world. It is a singular institution in the way an institution that has multiple manifestations can be singular with some notable and identifiable characteristics.

\textbf{The \textit{Symposion} as the Prototype of the Graeco-Roman Meal Tradition’s ICM}

Of all the possible expressions of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, the \textit{symposion} is arguably the most popular, and the most discussed. The \textit{symposion} is on the brushes of all the painters, on the lips of poets—so they say.\footnote{Schmitt-Pantel, “Sacrificial Meal and \textit{Symposion},” 16.} In its strict etymological sense, \textit{symposion} denoted the time after the meal when communal drinking took place.\footnote{Schmitt-Pantel, “Sacrificial Meal and \textit{Symposion},” 16.} It was the invitation to drink that forms the basic building-block of the sympotic interaction, the irreducible element of the \textit{symposion}.\footnote{Cazzato and Prodi, “Introduction: Continuity in Synoptic Tradition,” 6.} However,
this term assumed a broader significance in the Graeco-Roman world, thanks to the Symposia of Plato and Xenophon, where it came to refer to a distinctive style of philosophical conversation.⁹⁴ Before Plato and Xenophon, however, the symposion had started to gain notoriety as a social expression of an aspect of the Greek meal culture. The Greeks recognized a “more or less clear distinction between aspects of commensality, eating and drinking, and seem to have privileged the second, the consumption of alcohol, above the first.”⁹⁵ Murray notes:

It is rather the consumption of wine at the symposion after the deipnon that became the focus of elaborate ritualization, concerning the obligatory mixing of wine with water, the objects for use at the symposion the serving of the drink, the order and character of singing or speaking, and the entertainments evolved.⁹⁶

Literary and artistic evidence from the Graeco-Roman world show that the symposion was a stable, if fluid and malleable space, in which individuals could talk about or construct themselves and the world around them.⁹⁷ In scholarship, the symposion has become a major social institution through which the Graeco-Roman world can be comprehended. So, we have here two realities, the cultural institution of the symposion and the literary genre which is the symposium and its understanding by later scholars.⁹⁸ The cultural institution of the symposion covers literary evidence, architectural footprints, and artistic representations. It is a place where

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⁹⁴ Hobden, The Symposion in Ancient Greek Society and Thought, 7, 201. Symposion is formed from two words σών (with) and πόσις (drink). The literal translation would be “drink with” and the loose translation would be “drinking with (someone).”


⁹⁷ Hobden, The Symposion in Ancient Greek Society and Thought, 7. This refers to the third property of the ICM explained earlier. The third property of the ICM emphasizes the identity defining character of the Graeco-Roman meal banquet.

the social and literary practices intersect. Similarly, Relihan defines the literary *symposium* as a “dialogue that takes place at some time in the course of that ancient ritual of dining, drinking, and conversation.”

According to Murray, historically, the *symposion* “seems to have originated in the seventh century, during the orientalizing period of Greek culture and under eastern influences.” The earliest evidence of a drinking culture (or a drinking “club”) in extant literature coalesces around the word *marzēaḥ*, which appears in Near Eastern texts from the third millennium BCE to the sixth century CE. According to Marvin Pope,


100 Relihan, “Rethinking the History of the Literary Symposium,” 218–19.

101 Murray, “Symposion and Männerbund,” in *The Symposium: Drinking Greek Style*, 25–29. It is important to distinguish the orientalizing period in Greek history from the modern use of the term “oriental.” The modern use of the term “oriental” is in reference to the peoples and cultures of East Asia. Apart from the fact that this term is derogatory, it is also a misapplication. However, the orientalizing period of Greek history refers to the roughly 100-year period in which Greek art was greatly influenced by Eastern, and specifically Near Eastern and Egyptian, ideas, myths and decorative styles. This started around the mid-8th till around mid-7th BCE. See Jessika Akmenkalns, Gina Hander, Stephanie Ann Smith, and Debby Sneed, “The Orientalizing Period in Ancient Greece,” https://www.colorado.edu/classics/2018/06/15/orientalizing-period-ancient-greece#:~:text=The%20Orientalizing%20period%20in%20Greece%20seems%20to%20have%20originated%20in%20the%20seventh%20century%20CE. See also, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

Considerable data on the *marzēaḥ* comes from Palmyra when we have dedicatory inscriptions by principals in such affairs and numerous tessarae decorated with a banquet scene and bearing an inscription mentioning a *marzēaḥ*. The participants were termed “members [lit. sons] of the *marzēaḥ*,” *bny-ḥmrz*, and a specific deity was usually designated, for example, *bny ḫmrz Nbḥ*, “members of the *marzēaḥ* of Nabu.” The most popular *marzēaḥ* at Palmyra was apparently that of Bel (Baal), to judge from the numerous tessarae which mention “the priests of Bel.” Each *marzēaḥ* had a chief, *rb ḫmrz*, who served for an unspecified term, although one inscription erected “on the occasion of the leadership of the *marzēaḥ* (of/by) Yarḥai Agrippa” indicates that he served for a whole year and provided the priests with old wine for a whole year.\(^{103}\)

In these texts, the *marzēaḥ* is related to an association of men and a meeting-place, or the feast itself.\(^{104}\) Pope further notes that, “from the various strands of evidence, we gather that the *marzēaḥ* was a religious institution which included families and owned houses for meetings and vineyards for supply of wine, that the groups met periodically to celebrate seven-day feasts with rich food and drink and sometimes with sexual orgies.”\(^{105}\) In majority of the texts from Ugarit, *marzēaḥ* seems to refer to an organization of some kind.\(^{106}\) This *marzēaḥ* organization has property including vineyards, fields, storerooms, and there is always a house called *bēt marzēaḥ*.\(^{107}\) This *bēt marzēaḥ* occurs in almost every text and seems to be the meeting-place for the organization. It was presumably owned by the organization or maybe loaned and paid for out

\(^{103}\) Pope, “A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,” 191. Conrad L’Heureux notes that *marzēaḥ* seems to be a cultic guild under the patronage of a god and the word is often used to designate the banquet celebrated by such a guild. See Conrad L’Heureux, “The Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim,” *HTR 67* (1974): 265–74, here 266.


\(^{105}\) Pope, *Song of Songs*, 219–220.

\(^{106}\) Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 83.

\(^{107}\) Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 83.
of membership dues. Murray, in making use of the studies by John L. McLaughlin, defines the *marzēaḥ* as “as a stable group capable of owning property, with a rich or upper-class membership and a varied religious connection, centered on the consumption of alcohol.”

A major debate in scholarship on *marzēaḥ* has been on its relationship with funerary cults. Pope argues that, “the connection between the *marzēaḥ* and the funeral feast, attested in both biblical and rabbinic references, is confirmed by Ugarit data.” He further observes that, “funeral feasts in the ancient Near East were love feasts celebrated with wine, women, and song.” Theodore J. Lewis agrees with Pope that Jeremiah 16:5 contains the strongest evidence

108 Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 83.


111 Pope, *Song of Songs*, 219. Pope further notes that, “although there are no explicit references to the funeral character of the sacrificial banquet in which all the gods become drunk but El sits in his *mrzḥ* and topes till he sinks down as if dead, and although there are no hints of sexual activities in connection with this occasion which centers on El’s hangover and its medicinal relief, there are elsewhere hints of sexual activity in connection with funeral feasts at Ugarit. The so-called Rephaim Texts (20–22[121–124]), thus designated because of the frequent occurrence of the term (*rpm* in the nominative case and *rpm* in the oblique cases), which in biblical usage is connected with the departed dead, denizens of the netherworld (cf. Isa 14:9, 26:14, 19; Ps 88:11; Prov 2:18, 9:18, 21:16; Job 26:5), supply all the elements of a *marzēaḥ*, a funeral feast to which the gods and the deified dead are invited to join with the mourners in a seven-day celebration with flesh and wine and with hints, at least, of sexual activity.” (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 219). Elsewhere Pope writes, “Despite unfounded scepticism in some quarters, there is scant reason to doubt that the West Semitic Marzeah was a feast for and with the departed ancestors.” See, Marvin H. Pope, “The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit,” in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, Proceedings of the Symposium of the same title held at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, February 26, 1979, under the auspices of the Middle West Branch of the American Oriental Society and the Mid-West Region of the Society of Biblical Literature, ed. Gordon Douglas Young, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 159–79, here 176.

112 Pope, *Song of Songs*, 228. See also his observation that the terms “marzēaḥ -house,” *bēṯ marzēaḥ*, and “drinking-house,” *bēṯ mišteh*, appear to be roughly synonymous as “designations of a place in which banquets were held in both mourning and revelry for the dead, with drunkenness and sacral sexual intercourse. The mention of ivory beds, feasting, music and song, wine bibbing, and perfume oil in Amos 6:4–7 and of mourning and lamentation, eating and drinking, the sounds of exultation and joy, and the sounds of groom and bride in Jer 16:6–9 are all features of the funeral feast in the *marzēaḥ* (-house), or the drinking-house…The drowning of sorrow in the cup of consolation is a practice older than the Irish wake.” (Pope, *Song of Songs*, 228).
for the *marzēaḥ* as a funerary banquet as the context is undeniably one of mourning and bereavement over the dead.\(^{113}\) However, Lewis disagrees with Pope that Amos 6:7 contains a reference to a funerary cult as the *marzēaḥ* in Amos 6:7 reflects a luxurious banquet with no hint of funerary imagery.\(^ {114}\) Lewis therefore concludes that “the biblical evidence further confirms our conclusions about the *marzēaḥ* at Ugarit. The common denominator between the *marzēaḥ* in Amos and Jeremiah is once again not its funerary characteristics, but its association with drinking.”\(^ {115}\)

Either as a funerary banquet or as a club banquet, scholars believe that there is a plausible link between *marzēaḥ* and the Graeco-Roman banquet. Pope writes, “whatever the etymology, it is apparent that the *marziḥ* designated a bacchanalian celebration roughly synonymous with the Greek *thiasos* and *symposion*.”\(^ {116}\) The link between that *marzēaḥ* and the *symposion* is further buttressed by the fact that “in the Greek of some of the bilingual inscriptions from Palmyra, the leader of the *marzēaḥ* is called the symposiarch and we know something of the Greek symposia and the role of the symposiarch as king of the feast.”\(^ {117}\) We can therefore, “assume at least rough

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\(^{113}\) Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 89.

\(^{114}\) Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 89.

\(^{115}\) Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 89. Albeit Lewis adds that “this should not in any way detract from the fact that the *marzēaḥ* was at home in funerary rituals and functioned, as Jeremiah 16:5ff shows, to console the mourners,” his eventual position is that “the conclusions stated in the above survey support the notion that the *marzēaḥ* was an organization known for its drinking festivals (in other words, a “drinking club”) which in some cases came to be associated with funeral feasts. The evidence does not demonstrate that the *mrzh* can ever be disassociated from funerary ritual. Yet the case for the *mrzh* as always involving a funerary banquet is quite weak.” (Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 89, 94).

\(^{116}\) Pope, *Song of Songs*, 221.

\(^{117}\) Pope, *A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,*” 191.
similarities between the *marzēaḥ* and the symposia."¹¹⁸ What is interesting, in this regard, is that the Septuagint translates the word *marzēaḥ* with the Greek *thiasos* (Jer 16:5–9), which is one of the words used for some Graeco-Roman unofficial associations that placed high a premium on the cultural *symposion*.¹¹⁹ Murray however cautions that while this suggests the possibility of a relationship between social practices such as the *marzēaḥ* and the Greek *symposion*, more needs to be done in this regard to place their relationship on a firmer grounding.¹²⁰

The analysis of the *marzēaḥ* shows that a drinking club or event as an institution was not an invention of the Greeks or Romans. In this case, the Greeks seem to have been influenced by the East. However, whatever the influence the Eastern culture of drinking had on the Greek was surpassed by what the Greeks made of the culture of drinking as they transformed drinking after

¹¹⁸ Pope, A Divine Banquet at Ugarit," 192. Pope writes, “The Ugaritic text here discussed [RS 24.258] is nearly a millennium older than the earliest data on the *marzēaḥ* previously available to us and approximately two millennia older than the remarks of the rabbis on the subject. In spite of the great gap in time, the evidence, the early and late, conform to clarify our understanding of the puzzling term *marzēaḥ*.” (Pope, A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,” 202).


¹²⁰ Murray, “The Symposion between East and West,” 24–25. Pope seems to observe that the *marzēaḥ* is not only related to the *symposion* but also to the Christian Eucharist. For instance, he writes, “The application of the term *sacrifice* to the Christian Eucharist, first attested in the Didaché (14.2–3), was nor merely a development from Paul’s concept of spiritual sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), but had a very ancient background in pre-Israelite paganism, as illustrated by the Ugaritic use of the term with reference to the gods’ eating and drinking among themselves.” See Pope, “A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,” 174. Elsewhere, Pope attests, “It is apparent that the Christian Eucharist and Love-Feast, as well as the Jewish Qiddush, represent radical reformations of the ancient funeral feasts with elimination of such gross features as cannibalism, drunkenness, and sexual license.” Pope, *Song of Songs*, 220. However, Pope sometimes is more cautious in his attempt to link these meals in a genealogical sequence. One instance of this is when he writes that, “The tracing of connections of the Marzeah with the central Christian rite, the Eucharist as communion sacrifice and memorial will require special scholarly sensitivity and daring.” See Pope, “The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit,” 179. Given that there is little textual or material evidence of the link between the *marzēaḥ* and the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth, —in addition to the time difference—I do not see any link between these two festal gatherings.
a meal to the stable institution of the symposion. Murray has a list of the more significant aspects of the Greek symposion. These include:

a. It is an all-male gathering
b. Its members are aristocratic or of high social ties
c. The principle of equality between participants is observed
d. The emphasis is on drinking rather than eating, though both occur
e. Normally the property relationship enters only in terms of each member contributing equally from his private property to the common table.121

In addition to the aspects of the Greek symposion listed above, a Greek influence on other cultures with regard to the drinking wine is the mixing of wine with water, normally diluting it by at least a half. It was considered barbarian to drink wine neat, thereby infringing on the prerogatives of the gods.122 It was a peculiar custom of the Greeks, not shared by other ancient

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121 Murray, “Symposion and Männerbund,” 28. On the symposion being limited to men alone among the Greeks, the Attic Orator Isaeus tells a jury that, “Yet no one, I presume, would dare to serenade a married woman, nor do married women accompany their husbands to banquets or think of feasting in the company of strangers, especially mere chance comers.” καίτοι οὐ δή ποί γε ἐπὶ γαμετὰς γυναῖκας οὐδὲς ἄν κοιμάζειν τολμήσεν· οὐδέ αἱ γαμεται γυναῖκες ἐρχονται μετὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐπὶ τὰ δείπνα, οὐδὲ συνδεπνεῖν ἄξιον μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων, καὶ ταῦτα μετὰ τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων. Isaeus, *On the Estate of Pyrrhus*, 3.14 (Forster, LCL). Perhaps the most significant marker of the male-orientation of the Greek symposion is the name given to the space for the symposion, which is andron, and this simply translates as “men’s room.” See, Plutarch, *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, 148D (Babbitt, LCL); Murray, “Symptotic History,” 6; Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 82–89; Lee, *The Lord’s Supper in Corinth*, 9. David E. Aune argues that while women were not excluded from state cults, the inclusion of women in religious societies (notably religious symposia) constituted a considerable innovation. See Aune, “Septem Sapientium Convivium (Moralia 146B–164D),” 72. For a more nuanced position on the absence of women at Greek symposia, see Joan Burton, “Women’s Commensality in the Ancient Greek World,” *GR* 45 (1988): 143–65. Burton gives an excellent survey on women’s presence at the symposia, women holding their own symposia in addition to women being depicted on Greek vases. Burton’s paper indicates that the absence of women at the Greek symposion may have become a cliché that could benefit from a closer analysis since the evidence is more varied than acknowledged. See also, Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 81. Maren Wecowski defines symposion as “a strictly egalitarian gathering, as a nocturnal wine party attended by male aristocrats, as a drinking occasion strictly separated from feasting that involved more solid food, and as a party full of musical and poetic entertainment” (Wecowski, “When Did the Symposion Die?” 257).

122 Murray, “Symptotic History,” 6. Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, II.36C–39B, X.426D–430F (Olson, LCL); Becker, *Charicles*, 96. According to Murray, “Unmixed wine was reserved for the gods and heroes; among mortals it was regarded as a sign of barbarian uncouthness and likely to lead to madness” (Murray, “The
wine-drinking cultures, to add water to wine.\footnote{123}{In this regard, one of the most essential items at a Greek symposium was the “mixing bowl” for water and wine called the krater.\footnote{124}{Indeed, one of the most important persons at the symposium is the symposiarch, one of whose main responsibilities is related to the mixing of water and wine.\footnote{125}{The symposium practiced in Rome—called convivium—was largely based on the Greek model. According to Murray, the characteristics of the Roman symposium are: a. The Roman feasting group is characteristically a mixed one b. The principle of equality between participants is seldom observed c. The emphasis is on the eating more than the drinking d. The entertainment is often given by one man for his retainers.\footnote{126}{Culture of the Symposion,” 515).} See Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, X.434B, where Alexander drank unmixed wine and it led to his death. However, neat wine is permitted as part of a toast in a ritual connected to homosexual pairing between the ἐραστής (lover) and the ἐρώμενος (beloved). For this, see Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion.” 515.}\footnote{124}{Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 537. The Eurytos krater—made in Corinth—provides the earliest depiction of drinkers reclining. Lissarrague, in his work, The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet, traces the etymological origin of the krater. Wine in its pure essence is called ἀκράτος, unmixed. Pure wine is therefore defined in Greek by a negative term formed from the alpha-privative and the word kratos, hence the name for the mixing bowl, krater. Modern Greek calls wine krasí. See Lissarrague, The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet, 6.}\footnote{125}{Soham Al-Suadi, “Dining Social Alternatives: Paul’s Dealing with the Emotional Diversity of the Hellenistic Meal,” in Judaism and Emotion: Texts, Performance, Experience, ed. Sarah Ross (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 21–42, esp. 33–34; Davidson, Courtesans and Fishcakes, 46.}\footnote{126}{For the sake of convenience in reference, I will refer to the Roman convivium also as a symposium. See, Murray, “Symposium and Männerbund,” 29; Lee, The Lord’s Supper in Corinth, 10. That the Romans allowed}
The differences between the Greek and Roman drinking styles cannot be overemphasized. This is perhaps captured best by Cicero, who, while encouraging his friend Papirius to take to more conviviality, writes:

In this respect our countrymen are wiser than the Greeks. They use words meaning literally ‘co-drinkings’ or ‘co-dinings,’ but we say ‘co-livings,’ because at dinner parties more than anywhere else life is lived in company. You see how I try to bring you back to dinners by philosophizing!\(^{127}\)

Encounters between Greeks and Romans sometimes meant that the style of drinking had to be well defined before drinking started to avoid friction. Evidence for such an effort to avoid frictions comes from the end of the second century, during a banquet held in a gymnasium by one Kritalaos. After the listing of the arrangements for the Greeks at the event, it specified that the Romans and their sons recline separately κατὰ ἑννέα (groups of nine) which is the traditional Roman *triclinium* format. Dunbabin notes “It is striking both that there are enough Romans

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women at their ‘symposium’ is well attested in our sources, literary and artistic. Fisher argues that the Romans shared this practice with the Etruscans, who also allowed their wives to attend their dinner parties. Also, “archaeological evidence of the seventh century in Rome suggests that from the time that wine and viticulture were imported into Latium (traditionally associated with Numa Pompilius, 714 B.C.) aristocratic women could be buried with wine amphorae and cups.” On this, see Nicholas R.E. Fisher, “Roman Associations, Dinner Parties, and Clubs,” in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, vol. 2, 1199–225, here 1202; Lee, *The Lord’s Supper in Corinth*, 10. Fisher questions Athenaeus’ references in *The Learned Banqueters*, X.429B and 440E about Roman women being subjected to the kiss test—meaning they could not attend the *symposion*—as a reconstruction or at least problematic (Fisher, “Roman Associations, Dinner Parties, and Clubs,” 1202). The *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius mentions the ‘kiss’ test but suggests that “women were accustomed to drink the second brewing, raisin wine, spiced wine and other sweet-tasting drinks of that kind.” (Bibere autem solitas ferunt lorem, passum, murrinam et quae id genus sapiant potu dulcia). Gellius. *Attic Nights*, X. XXIII.2–3 (Rolfé, LCL). While there might have been attempts to restrict women drinking in the Roman world and their presence at the dinner parties, literary and archeological evidence suggest that they did drink at dinner parties, and mostly wine. See also IG II² 1297; IG II² 2354; IG II² 1292 where women were listed as members of *thiasotai*. The situation in Graeco-Roman Egypt is varied. We have dinner invitations by both men (P. Oxy. 1755) and women (P. Oxy. XII 1579; P. Coll. Youtie). See Youssri Ezzat Hussein Abdelwahed, *Houses in Graeco-Roman Egypt: Arenas for Ritual Activity* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2016); S. R. Llewelyn “Invitations to a Wedding.” *NewDocs* 9.63–64. Cicero in a letter to his friend Papirius writes about a certain lady, Cytheris, lying down next to Eutrapelus. See Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, IX.26 (Bailey, LCL).

\(^{127}\) “Quis in conviviis dulcissimus, ut sapientius nostri quam Graeci; illi ‘συμπόσια’ aut ‘σύνδειπνα,’ id est comapotiones aut concenationes, nos ‘convivia,’ quod tum maxime simul vivitur. vides ut te philosophando revocare coner ad cenas.” Cicero, *Letters to Friends* (To Papirius Paetus), IX.24.3 (Bailey, LCL).
(presumably merchants) expected to be present to justify special arrangements, and that there is a consciousness that they should not be expected to recline in the same manner as the rest of the populace."

Yet it did not end well for the Greek man from Lampsacus called Philodamus. This story narrated by Cicero captures the tragic incident that led to the death of Philodamus and his son. Rubrius, a Roman and a friend of Verres, had connived to get a look at the daughter of Philodamus, whom Verres secretly lusted after. A dinner invitation was contrived. When the dinner party started and conversation began, it was agreed that they should drink in the Greek fashion. As the dinner progressed, true to his aim, Rubrius (Verres’s helper and confidant in matters of this kind, according to Cicero) asked Philodamus to tell his daughter to come and see them. Philodamus’ initial reply was an astonishing silence. Yet Rubrius persisted. Finally, Philodamus replies that “it is not the custom of the Greeks that women should recline at the convivium of men." Thereafter, a fight ensued, and one of the Romans at the dinner party was

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128 Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 92. See SEG 30.1084; IG XII, 7.57. According to Michele George, [W]e should expect to find difference in the Roman dinner party, or the Greek symposion, between large metropolis, like Alexandria, Antioch or Ephesos, and small towns or villages. There were probably differences of rank and attitude as well between, on the one hand the local elite who sought with care to imitate Roman customs as a way to advance their careers, and on the other hand, the middle and lower classes, or those who simply did not aspire to play the Roman game and who defined their social status in other ways, preferably to maintain and preserve pre-Roman social practices and cultural attitudes.” See Michele George, “Domestic Architecture and Household Relations: Pompeii and Roman Ephesus,” JSNT 27 (2004): 7–25, here 23.

129 Fit sermo inter eos… et invitatio ut Graeco more biberetur. Cf. Cicero, The Verrine Orations, 2.1.26 §66

130 “Quaeso” inquit, “Philodame, cur ad nos filiam tuam non intro vocari iubes? Cf. Cicero, The Verrine Orations, 2.1.26 §66

killed, after which, a massive brawl broke out. Philodamus and his son were sentenced to death.\textsuperscript{132}

Dunbabin therefore cautions that there is always the need to stress the differences between Greek and Roman customs, even in their later Hellenistic manifestations. Another example of this difference comes from architecture. The Romans took their name for a dining room from the Greek, but they did this in a very specific form. Among the Romans, there is no mention of the various seven-couch rooms or eleven-couch rooms but only of three.\textsuperscript{133} Gil P. Klein summarizes the archeological implications thus:

\begin{quote}
In comparison to the Greek \textit{andron}, the \textit{triclinium} instituted a clearer separation between the banqueters and the evening’s entertainers. While the \textit{andron} facilitated participation in performance and generated a sense of unity and equality through concentric arrangement of couches, the triclinium established a different form of presentation and representation.\textsuperscript{134}
\end{quote}

This relationship between reclining and the hierarchy is manifest also in the Latin names given to the three couches. The highest couch was called \textit{lectus summus}, the one in the center, the middle couch was called \textit{lectus medius}, and lowest couch called \textit{lectus imus}. Klein notes that these terms do not represent a physical difference in height but rather a complex power structure.\textsuperscript{135}

Also, in the use of \textit{kraters}, the Romans seem to have a different way of mixing their wine. Dunbabin notes that the use of heaters (\textit{cauldron}) for hot water (\textit{calda}) to be mixed with

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{132} Cicero, \textit{The Verrine Orations}, 2.1.26 §63–§76 (Greenwood, LCL).
\textsuperscript{133} Dunbabin, “Ut Graeco More Biberetur,” 89. See also, idem, “\textit{Triclinium and Stibadium},” 121–48.
\textsuperscript{135} Klein, “Torah in Triclinia,” 332.
\end{footnotes}
wine was already recognized in antiquity as a specifically Roman custom. According to her, “these heaters indicate a fundamental difference in the Roman way of handling wine and water from that of the Greeks. Texts from the late republic onwards speak frequently of mixing of *calda*, and, rather less often, of *frigida*, with the wine.” While Athenaeus has an extensive coverage of the rules on the correct measure of water and wine, the Roman sources are largely silent on the subject. In Roman sources, what seem to be more important was not the proportions of mixture but the quantity of the wine drunk. In addition to this, the Romans did not have a clear cut demarcation between drinking and eating at their *symposia*. The story by Cicero on Philodamus referenced earlier, for instance, was completely silent on that demarcation.

While scholarship focused primarily on the *symposion* as a cultural phenomenon (e.g., Dunbabin, Lynch and Murray), shows a tendency to point out and respect these differences, scholarship on meals in the New Testament, even when employing the same sources, often seems to consider the differences as negligible. This in turn makes for some interpretations of these sources that are incomplete. Such interpretations are fair when the differences are truly minor, but the case of Philodamus shows the seriousness with which the ancients might take

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139 Dunbabin, “Wine and Water at the Roman Convivium,” 129.

them. Inability to respect distinctions such as these lie at the heart of the crisis among the early Christ group(s) in Corinth.

Acknowledging differences in customs such as those noted above, I will now construct a Graeco-Roman symposion as the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. Asymmetries (differences) should be expected when we place members of the category of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition against the prototype. However, one can, with the help of the ICM—in the background—organize and authorize the extension from the prototypical cases to those less typical.

Characteristics of the Symposion as a Prototype

As noted in chapter two, New Testament and early Christianity scholarship generally hold that that there are five central characteristics in Hellenistic meals. I agree with this list but I am adding a sixth and rearranging the order by making “the order of the meal” itself first in this list. Usually, it comes second in the lists after the feature of “reclining.” This rearrangement has no formal impact on the characteristics of the symposion. These six characteristics are what make up the cultural institution of the symposion which is our prototype. There may be some

141 In this sense, I take a different position from that of Smith when he writes: “Of course, there were variations here and there. In fact, ancient writers such as Plutarch and Athenaeus paid a great deal of attention to variations in table customs… yet those variations that did appear tended to be minor compared to the larger aspects of customs held in common.” Smith, From Symposium to Eucharist, 19, (emphasis mine). I find David E. Aune’s take more helpful when he writes that, “[G]reek symposia of the Graeco-Roman era, while retaining a basically formal structure, were characterized by immense variety with regard to the constitutive elements.” (Aune, “Septem Sapientum Convivium,” 74).


differences in their performance but there are always present in a symposion. In the instances of the prototype, these characteristics may or may not be present. Even when they are present, they are adaptations of this prototype.

**The Order of a Supper**

The formal banquet consisted of two sections: the deipnon and the symposion. Hence, Murray remarks that “the symposion began with the clearing away of the remains of the deipnon, and the arrival of the second tables (deuterai trapezai).” The period of eating during the meal was called the deipnon by the Greeks and cena by the Romans. While the Greeks called the drinking period of the meal the symposion, among the Romans it was called the comissatio or convivium.

One must also immediately note that there are instances of this sequence not being present or being treated as inconsequential. As remarked earlier, the distinction was very clear among the Greeks while among the Romans it appears to be less clear, or in some cases, non-

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145 Sven-Tage Teodorsson, “The Place of Plutarch in the Literary Genre of Symposium” in *Symposion and Philanthropia in Plutarch*, 3–16, here 3; see also Cosgrove who notes that the division of a meal into deipnon and symposion arose during the time of Plato and Xenophon in whose work were the first attestations. See Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine,” 300–01.


147 Aune, “Septem Sapientum Convivium,” 7

148 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 27.
existent. The Jewish Passover does not seem to place much emphasis on this sequential structure; and the sequence does not seem to apply to the sectarians in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in, for example 1QSa, where the bread and wine appear to be set out together even as the emphasis was on order of hierarchical precedence in the ritual of eating. Philo’s *Therapeutae* did not treat the *deipnon-symposion* sequence as important, although in this particular work Philo suggests that the meal of this community mirrors if not surpass the cultural Graeco-Roman *symposion*. Among the Greeks, there is also reason to believe that at some banquets, drinking while eating was not completely frowned upon. In Lucian’s *Lapiths*, the wine was also served while eating was going on.

Relatedly, and to be subsumed under this sequence, is the ICM’s property of an extended meaningful conversation. As earlier noted, when discussing this property of the ICM, these are conversations that reveal something about the identity of those who have gathered for the *symposion*. Of all conversations at the dinner, the *symposia* of Plato and Xenophon attained some exceptionality in their framework and relevance since they became points of reference for subsequent literary *symposia*. In this category of extended conversations at *symposion* is Plutarch’s *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*. However, Athenaeus’ *The Learned Banqueters*

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149 1QSa 2.17–22. Cosgrove references Josephus’ descriptions of Artaxerxes and Herod drinking while eating—

Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11.5§163–§164; 16.8.1§230 (Thackeray, LCL); Jewish War 1.25§448 (Thackeray, LCL). It is however not clear if these examples are from banquets. Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine,” 302.

150 Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*, 73–74 (Colson, LCL)

151 Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, III.125F (Olson, LCL).

152 Lucian, *The Carousel (Symposium)*, 14 (Harmon, LCL).
reached a level that can be matched but arguably cannot be surpassed. One can therefore say the typical symposion was one in which there was a sequentially ritualized form of eating and drinking. However, we have instances in which both rituals go on simultaneously or in which this sequence was not important to the participants at the formal meal.

The Reclining of Participants

Reclining on couches at formal dinners was a regular feature of the symposion. Couches were often covered with pillows to make them more comfortable, and diners were arranged on their left elbows so they could eat with their right hands. This posture indicated the aristocratic need to be served and the leisure of the occasion. Literary evidence and artistic representations attest to this posture at many dinners in the Graeco-Roman world. Linguistic witnesses to reclining are attested by the use of the Greek verb katalinô and/or the substantive kataklisis. At other times, the feast itself is described using a kline term.

Attestations of reclining at banquets among the Greeks first appear in the seventh century BCE. The first artistic representation appear on the Corinthian kraters of the late seventh century. The posture during the Homeric period is for one to sit down to eat. The first Greek

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153 Smith, From Symposium to Eucharist, 26. These couches are either permanent (of masonry) or moveable. They are often arranged anticlockwise around the wall. The average length of each couch is between 1.70 to 1.90 meters long while the average width is between 0.8 to 0.9 meters wide. See Dunbabin, “Triclinium and Stibadium,” 122–23; Klein, “Torah in Triclinia,” 331.


155 Xenophon, Symposium, 1.5.8; (Todd, revised by Henderson, LCL); Luke 9:14; Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, I.17F (Olson, LCL); Philo, De Contemplativa, IX.69. (Colson, LCL)

156 IG II² 1315.9; P. Lond. VII 2193; P. Oxy. XXXI 2592.


158 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, I.11–12; IV.149C–D (Olson, LCL); V.188.C (Olson, LCL)
poet to describe reclining was the 7th century poet, Alcman.\textsuperscript{159} However, Murray argues that the main influences of the Greek culture from the East seemed to have been earlier and to have started in the late eighth century.\textsuperscript{160} In Murray’s opinion, one of the earliest Greek inscriptions, on ‘Nestor’s cup’ of about 725 BCE, provides evidence of a fully developed culture that is centered on the pursuit of the pleasures associated with the \textit{symposion} and by implication the existence before then of the practice of reclining at a feast.\textsuperscript{161} So ‘Nestor’s cup’ with its emphasis on Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of pleasure, is a confirmation of the \textit{sympotic} culture, not its advent.

While the date of the orientalizing influence of the Greek reclining is not evident, what is clear is that this influence came from the East. The earliest dateable artistic representation of the practice of reclining at a feast is “the seventh-century scene of the victorious King Assurbanipal in glory reclining alone with attendants and musicians beside a tree decorated with the heads of his enemies in the palace of Nimrud.”\textsuperscript{162} A little earlier, we have possibly the earliest historical evidence of reclining from the eighth-century prophet from Judah, Amos. He describes reclining

\textsuperscript{159} Murray, “The Symposion between East and West,” 20.

\textsuperscript{160} Murray, “The Symposion between East and West,” 20.

\textsuperscript{161} Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 514. Murray’s argument for an earlier time for the \textit{sympotic} culture among the Greek is based on the potential flow of historical influence. According to Murray, the historical evidence of the \textit{symposion} favors an Eastern provenance as a practice picked up by the Greeks whose trade with central Italy impacted the Etruscan city–state cultures, and who in turn according to Athenaeus impacted the Romans. See, Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, IV.154A (Olson, LCL). The finding of the Corinthian \textit{Krater} in Cerveteri (former Etruria) in the 7th century should therefore point to an earlier period in the development of the \textit{sympotic} culture in Greece (late 8th–early 7th centuries). Cf. Murray, “The Symposion between East and West,” 17–28.

\textsuperscript{162} Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 514
as part of a set of social customs he was condemning. He denounces the Jews of Samaria for their debauchery, characterized by feasting and reclining on couches.

Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! Therefore, they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away. (Amos 6:4–7).

The emphasis on reclining in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition does not mean that seating was outlawed, it only means it was the standard practice at *symposia*. We have instances in which there is clear evidence of sitting at a Graeco-Roman banquet by at least one of the participants. A significant example is that of Autolycus who during Xenophon’s *Symposium* “took a seat by his father’s side” while the others of course reclined. What is remarkable about this instance is that the dinner was given in honor of the boy Autolycus and his father Lycon, by

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163 Murray, “Conclusion: Greek Form of Sociality,” in *The Symposium: Drinking Greek Style*, 283–309, here 288. Biblical records associate reclining with “royal circles and degenerate aristocracy.” See Stein, “The Influence of Symposia Literature,” 17. See also the Mishnah, “Even the poorest of Jews should not eat the meal on Passover night until he reclines on his left side, as free and wealthy people recline when they eat” (m. Pesah 10.1).

164 Οἱ καθεύδοντες ἐπὶ κλινόν ἐλεφαντίνων, καὶ κατασταλοῦντες ἐπὶ ταῖς στρομναῖς αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔσθοντες ἐρίφους ἐκ ποιμνίων, καὶ μοσχάρια ἐκ μέσου βουκολίων γαλαθήνα, οἱ ἐπικροτοῦντες πρὸς τὴν φανήν τῶν ἄργανον, ὡς ἐστηκότα ἐλεφάντινω, καὶ οὐχ ὡς ὕπογοντα, οἱ πίνοντες τὸν διλισμένον ὦν, καὶ τὰ πρῶτα μῦρα χρίμενοι, καὶ οὐκ ἔπαυσαν οὐδὲν ἐπὶ τῇ συντριβῇ ἱερᾶς. Διὰ τούτῳ νῦν αἰχμαλώτοι ἐσονται ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς δυναστῶν, καὶ ἐξαρθήσεται χρεμετίσμος ἑπον ὡς Εφραίμ. (Amos 6:6–7 emphasis mine).

165 Notably, the architectural design of dining rooms in the Graeco-Roman world assume that reclining is the standard posture. See, Dunbabin, “*Triclinium and Stibadium,*” 121–48; Murphy-O’Connor, *St Paul’s Corinth*, 177–91.

166 Αὐτόλικος μὲν οὖν παρὰ τὸν πατέρα ἐκαθέζετο, οἱ δ’ ἄλλοι ὅπερ εἰκῶς κατεκλήθησαν. Xenophon, *Symposium*, 1.5.8 (Todd, revised by Henderson, LCL).
Callias (an admirer) after Autolycus had won a great Panathenaic victory in the pankration. Yet the boy did not (or could not) recline.¹⁶⁷ Athenaeus supplies a witness from Hugesander that:

[I]t was not the custom in Macedon for anyone to recline at dinner unless he had speared a wild boar without using hunting-nets; until they did that, they ate sitting up. Therefore Cassander, although he was 35 years old, used to sit next to his father at dinner, since he was unable to accomplish this feat, despite being brave and a good hunter.¹⁶⁸

We also have the case of Alcidamas the Cynic who ‘romped in uninvited’ in Lucian’s Symposium. Since there was no longer a couch for Alcidamas to recline Lucian notes that,

Aristaenetus commended him and bade him take a chair and sit beside Histiaeus and Dionysodorus. “Get out with you!” said he. “What you tell me to do is womanish and weak, to sit on a chair or on a stool, like yourselves on that soft bed, lying almost flat on your backs while you feast, with purple cloths under you. I shall take my dinner on my feet as I walk about the dining-room, and if I get tired I’ll lie on the floor, leaning on my elbow, with my cloak under me, like Heracles in the pictures they paint of him,” “Very well,” said Aristaenetus; “if you prefer it that way.”¹⁶⁹

To be added to the list of dinners where people were seated and did not recline is the communal meal in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this community, members sat for the banquet.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Xenophon, Symposium, I.2–4 (Todd, revised by Henderson, LCL).

¹⁶⁸ Ὑγίσανδρος δὲ φησιν σῦδε ἔδω εἶναι ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ κατακλίνεσθαι τινα ἐν δείπνῳ, εἰ μὴ τις ἔξερ χίλιον ὑπὸ κεντῆσαι· ἔδω τὸ καθήμενον ἐδειπνοῦν. Κάσανδρος οὖν πέντε καὶ τριάκοντα ὅπως ἑτοίν ἐδειπνεῖ παρὰ τῷ πατρί καθήμενος, οὐ δυνάμενος τὸν ἱβλὸν ἐκτελέσαι κατὰ ἀνόρθος γεγονός καὶ κυνηγός ἀγαθός. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, I.18A (Olson, LCL).


Lucian, The Carousal (Symposium) 8 and 13 (Harmon, LCL). Alcidamas’s comments that to sit down is womanish may suggest that women often sat down at formal dinners, at least in Greece. See The Learned Banqueters where the event was called a γαμικὸ συμπόσιο, a wedding symposium and one of the participants was Helen, described as sitting (παρακαθημένης). Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, V.188C (Olson, LCL)

¹⁷⁰ 1QS 6:4; IQSa 2:15; See also Antonissen, “The Banquet Culture in New Jerusalem,” 70 where he makes the same observation.
Therefore, while it is the case that the *symposion* as the prototype was performed reclining, there are instances of this prototype where the eating and drinking were performed seated. The reasons for sitting at a formal banquet will vary from one setting to the other. For example, sometimes the aristocratic style which demanded reclining would not suit settings that emphasized the equality of participants. Another reason could be space. While a reclining banquet has a limit to the number of participants because of the dynamics of the sympotic space (entertainment and architecture), a seated banquet has ‘no limit’ to the number of its participants. Therefore, groups with less funds—including funds for renting out dining rooms—will make do with spaces without facilities for reclining.

**Libation**

The most enduring memory of libation as a ritual is that it was the marker of the transition between the *deipnon* and *symposion*. Plutarch recalls that, “after the tables had been cleared away, and garlands distributed by Melissa, and we had poured libations, and the flute girl, after playing a brief accompaniment for our libations, had withdrawn.” Sometimes, too,

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171 Reclining principally demanded that the reclined be served. See Murray, “The *Symposion* and Social Status” in *The Symposium: Drinking Greek Style*, 139–53.


173 Plutarch, *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, 150D (Babbitt, LCL). See also, Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, I.15E (Olson, LCL); IV.149C; Lucian, *The Carousel (Symposium)*, 1.16 (Harmon, LCL); Plato *Symposium*, 176A (Lamb, LCL); Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1217 (Henderson, LCL).
the libation occurs at the end of the meal. The libation ritual entails the use of an equipment—what is called a *phiale* (φιάλη)—dedicated to it.

Historically, the ritual of libation originated in sacrificial events. It entailed pouring the liquid (usually) wine into the *phiale*, from which the liquid was now poured into a significant spot on the altar, a rock or the ground, into a grave or a hole. At sacrificial events, there were two forms of libation. The first was the *spondai*, in which a small quantity of the liquid was poured out from a drinking vessel and then the worshipper drank the rest. Then there was the *choai*, in which everything was poured out. Libations during sacrifices took place at various points “punctuating and accenting the procedure.” However, libations were not limited to sacrifices. They were also used to seal treaties so much so, that the term *spondai* even came to be used for such agreements.

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176 Jameson, “Sacrifice and Ritual,” 965. Water, oil, milk, oil, or honey may be used instead of wine. My culture, the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria still practice libation. Wine is usually used, and it is said to be for the ancestors to drink as a sign that they are participating in the event, be it marriage or housewarming, but usually a joyful event. See also, Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, III.125F (Olson, LCL). Archaeological evidence in the Graeco-Roman world also support the position that libation must be poured into a surface or spot. There is for instance, material evidence in the Vatican necropolis, where at Tomb F there are small marble slabs pierced with a hole for pouring libations. See, J.M.C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), 50–52. See also, Paul Corby Finney, *The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 2:56.


The libation, alongside the mixing of wine with water, was celebrated in legends as linked directly to the gift of the wine from the gods. Athenaeus narrates a tale about the origin of the ritual of libation. According to him,

The physician Philonides says in his On Perfumes and Garlands: After Dionysus introduced the grapevine to Greece from the area around the Red Sea, and many people misguidedely enjoyed unlimited quantities of wine and consumed it unmixed, some of them became delirious and began to act like madmen, while others grew drowsy and resembled corpses. When a group of them were drinking on the seashore, a sudden rainstorm broke up the party and filled their mixing-bowl, which contained a small quantity of left-over wine, with water. After the sky cleared, they returned to the same place, and when they tasted the mixture, they derived a soothing, painless pleasure from it. As a consequence of this, the Greeks invoke the Good Divinity when unmixed wine is distributed at their dinner parties, as a way of offering the deity—that is, Dionysus—who discovered it. And when they are offered the first cup of mixed wine after dinner, they call upon Zeus the Savior, since they regard him, in his capacity as marshaller of the storms, as responsible for the painless mixing that results from mingling (wine and water).181

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181 Φιλονίδης δ’ ο ἵπτρος ἐν τῷ Περὶ Μύρων καὶ Στεφάνων, ἕκ τῆς Ἑροθέας, φησίν, θαλάσσης ὑπὸ Διονύσου μετενεχθείς εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα τῆς ἀμέλειας καὶ πρὸς ἁμετρὰν ἀπόλαυσιν τῶν πολλῶν ἐκτρεπομένων ἀκρατῶν τε προσφερομένων αὐτῶν, οἱ μὲν μανιωδὸς ἐκτρεπομένοι παρέπαινοι, οἱ δὲ νεφροῖς ἐκέεσαν ἀπὸ τῆς καρδίας. ἐπ’ ἀκτῆς δ’ τινὸς πινόντων ὕππεσον ὁμήρος τὸ μὲν συμπόσιον διέλεισεν, τὸν δὲ κρατήρα, δς εἶχον ὀλίγον ὁνὸν ὑπολειμμένον, ἐπλήρωσεν δότας. γενομένης δ’ αἴθριας εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ὑποστρέφοντας τόπον, γευσάμενοι τοῦ μίγματος προσην οὗτον ἐκέεσαν καὶ ἀλώπων ἔσχατον ἐπάλαυσαν. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ο’ ἔλλης τὸ μὲν παρὰ δέσπον ἀκράτω προσδιδομένῳ τὸν Ἀγαθὸν ἐπιφανοσίας Δία μονα, τιμῶντες τὸν εὐφόρον δαίμονα ἰν δ’ οὕτως ὁ Διόνυσος, τὸ δὲ μετὰ δέσπον κεκραμένῳ πρῶτον διδομένῳ ποτήριῳ Δία Σοτήρα ἐπιλέγουσι, τῆς ἐκ τοῦ μίγματος ἀλώπου κράσας τὸν καὶ τὸν ὄμβρον ἀρχηγὸν ἀπίτω υπολαβόντε. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, XV.675A–D (Olson, LCL).

Athenaeus then went further in his explanation elsewhere that: "Theophrastus says in his On Drunkenness (fr. 572 Fortenbaugh): “As for the unmixed wine offered after dinner, which they identify as a toast in honor of the Good Divinity, they consume only a little, as if the taste was merely a reminder to them of how strong it is and of the god’s generosity; and they offer it once everyone is already full, so that as little as possible of it will be drunk. After they show their respects to him three times, they remove it from the table, as if they were begging the god to guarantee that they engage in no ugly behavior and that they feel no overwhelming desire to drink this, but receive only what is good and beneficial from him.” Θεοφράστης δ’ ἐν τῷ Περὶ Μεθής, τὸν ἀκρατόν, φησίν, ὁνὸν τὸν ἐπὶ τὸ δέσπον διδομένον, ἐν δὴ ἀλέγουσιν Ἀγαθὸν Δαίμονα εἰνὰ πρόποσιν, ὀλίγον τε προσφέρουσιν, ἀπλεύρωσιν τὸν μίγματος, ὁσπερ ἀναμιμήνθησατο τὸν τῇ γεύσιν ὅ πλεξ ἐκ τοῦ σωτηρίου καὶ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ δωρεάν, καὶ μετὰ τὴν πλήρωσιν διδομένων ὅπως ἐλάχιστον ἢ τὸ πινόμενον τε καὶ τριπλόν προσκυνησάτον λαμβάνοντο ἀπὸ τῆς τριπλίζης, ὁσπερ ἱκετεῖαν τινὰ ποιούμενοι τὸν θεοῦ μηθὲν ἀσχημονεῖν μὴ δ’ ἔχειν ἄμετραν ἐπιθυμημαν τὸν πότε τοῦ τούτου καὶ λαμβάνον ἐξ ἀυτοῦ τὰ καλὰ καὶ χρήσιμα. See, Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, XV.693D. See also, Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, X.447F, 465A (Olson, LCL)."
What is obvious here is the direct linkage of the wine to the god Dionysus. Wine is thought of as a gift of that grain is a gift of Demeter.\textsuperscript{182} Frequently, this close connection between Dionysus and the wine, as well as his power over the production of the wine, is depicted on vases and drinking vessels.\textsuperscript{183} Potters who produced these vases show that they owed their wealth to Dionysus by depicting this wine-god on their vases.\textsuperscript{184} We also have wine associations dedicated to Dionysus.\textsuperscript{185} So, in the ritual of libation Dionysus is acknowledged as the god of wine and the only one who can drink without any danger.\textsuperscript{186}

In some cases, a libation was also poured to other gods. Plutarch in Athenaeus quotes Ion of Chios as saying, “Let us pour holy libations to Heracles and Alceme and to Procles and the

\textsuperscript{182} Lissarrague, \textit{The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet}, 4.

\textsuperscript{183} Lissarrague, \textit{The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet}, 16.

\textsuperscript{184} Pausanias makes this connection when he provides the etymology of the “potters” quarters in Athens. “The district of the Ceramicus has its name from the hero Ceramus, he too being the reputed son of Dionysus and Ariadne: Τὸ δὲ χοριόν ὁ Κεραμεικὸς τὸ μὲν δὸνομα ἔχει ἀπὸ Ἴρως Κεράμου, Διόνυσον τε εἶναι καὶ Αριάδνης καὶ τούτου λεγομένου.” Pausanias, \textit{Description of Greece}, I.III.1. (Jones, LCL). Lynch notes that “Archaeological evidence from houses in Athens shows that pottery made exclusively for use in the \textit{symposion} can account for over 40% of a house’s ceramic content.” Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 534.

\textsuperscript{185} IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1325; IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1326; IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1368; SEG 32.488; IG IX/1\textsuperscript{2} 670; IG IX/1\textsuperscript{2} 218; Ikyme 17; I Eph 275.

\textsuperscript{186} Lissarrague, \textit{The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet}, 37. Tiresias in the \textit{Bacchae} captures this relationship between libation and Dionysus: “Two things are chief among mortals, young man: the goddess Demeter—she is Earth but call her either name you like—nourishes mortals with dry food. But he who came next, the son of Semele, discovered as its counterpart the drink that flows from the grape cluster and introduced it to mortals. It is this that frees trouble-laden mortals from their pain—when they fill themselves with the juice of the vine—this that gives sleep to make one forget the day’s troubles: there is no other treatment for misery. Himself a god, he is poured out in libations to the gods, and so it is because of him that men win blessings from them.” Δίοι γάρ, ὦ νεανία, τὰ πρῶτά ἐν ἀνθρώποις: Δημήτηρ θέα—Γήδε ἔστιν, δὸνομα δ’ ὀπώτερον βούλη κάλει αὐτή μὲν ἐν ἔξοχοις ἑκτέρεια βροτοῦς; δ’ ἡ λ’ ἔστιν, ἀντίσελεν ὁ Σεμέλης γόνον ἄρχον ποιμήν ἡμερής κάσμην ἄψευσαν, ὃ παντεί τῶν ταλαιπώρων βροτοῦξεν, ὅταν πληρήθητεν ἀμπέλου ροίς, ὅταν τε λήθην τῶν καθ’ ἡμέραν κακοῦδιδοσαίν, οὐδ’ ἔστιν ἀλλ’ ἀλφαίον πόνον οὐτος θεοίς σπέντεται θεός γεγούς, ὡστε διὰ τούτου τάγαθ’ ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν. Euripides, \textit{Bacchae}, 270–285 (Kovacs, LCL).
descendants of Perseus.”

Theognis speaks about pouring libations to Zeus and Apollo and other gods.

May Zeus who dwells in the sky ever hold his right hand over this city to keep off harm and may the other blessed immortal gods (do likewise); and may Apollo make straight our tongue and mind. Let the lyre sound forth holy song and the pipe also, and after offering libations satisfying to the gods let us drink, making pleasant conversation with one another and fearing not the Median war.

The only god who possibly will have nothing to do with wine is Helios, since the one who maintains and governs the universe, and who travels from one end of the world to another, has nothing to with drunkenness. Instead, honey is brought to his altar.

In addition, the imperial cult involved some libation to the genius of the Emperor. Dio Cassius records that during the time of Augustus, the Senate passed a law that demanded that “at all banquets, not only public but private as well, everybody was to pour a libation to him.”

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188 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, XI.783B (Olson, LCL).
189 Ζεὺς μὲν τῆςδε πόλεως ὑπερέχει αἰθέρι naionvaiε δεξιερῆν χεῖρ’ ἐπ’ ἀπομοσφόνηλλοι τ’ ἀθάνατοι μάκαρες θεοί· αὐτῶν Ἀπόλλων 760 ἀγγέλθησαι γιλόσαι καὶ λῦν ἡμέτερον φόρμιμης δ’ αὐθέγγοιν’ λείφον μέλος ήδε κατιπλός ἠμείς δε σπονδᾶς θεοῦν ἀρεσσάμενοι πίνωμεν χαρίσται μετ’ ἀλλήλοις λέγοντες, μηδὲν τὸν Μήδος δειδύτες πόλεμον. Theognis, Elegiac Poems, 757–64 (Gerber, LCL).
190 “When they sacrifice to the Sun in Emesa, according to Phylarchus in Book XII of his History (FGrH 81 F 25), they pour libations of honey, but they bring no wine to the altars, since they say that the god who maintains and governs the universe, and who travels constantly from one end of the world to the other, has nothing to do with drunkenness.”  
As popular as the libation was, however, some groups do not appear to have practised libations at their meals; or, if they did, they did not consider them important enough to make a remark about them. A few examples will suffice to illustrate. The first is from Athenaeus, where at the end of a meal, there were prayers offered to gods, and there was mixing of wine and giving honor to Dionysus or some other deity. Libation was not explicitly mentioned. Here we can, however, still assume it is present. However, with Lucian’s Symposium no mention is made of libation at the end of dinner. This is also the case with Trimalchio’s dinner when food and wine were served throughout. Charles H. Cosgrove has a compilation of works, both from Roman and Greek authors, in which libatio is explicitly absent during banquets. While it is true that these works are mainly fictitious, they likely reflect the everyday life of the Graeco-Roman world even though they do not function as ‘mirrors’ of everyday reality.

192 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, X.423B (Olson, LCL).


194 Petronius, The Satyricon, 60 (Schmeling, LCL). There was a shout of “Health to Augustus,” and this took place during the meal. The closest to a libation was when “three lads came in, with their white shirts tucked high. Two of them placed on the table statues of the Lares with medals round their necks, while the third carried round a wine-bowl, shouting out ‘Gods, have mercy. He said that one was Gain, the second Luck, and the third Profit’ [I]nter haec tres pueri candidas succincti tunicas intraverunt, quorum duo Lares bullatos super mensam posuerunt, unus pateram vini circumferens “dii propitii” clamabat <. . .> aiebat autem unum Cerdonem, alterum Felicionem, tertium Lucrionem vocari. The commentary notes that “Gods, have mercy” was a prayer that often followed the main course. Yet, this was neither a toast nor a libation. See also, Petronius, Satyricon, 60.8 (Schmeling, LCL). See a related reference in the Aeneid which has an extended ceremony that explicitly included a libation. Cf. Virgil, Aeneid, I.725–745 (Fairclough revised by Goold, LCL).

195 Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine,” 303–311. Work referenced by Cosgrove included Letter of Aristeas, Josephus, Antiquities, Lucian Toxaris, Achilles Tatius, Leucippe and Clitophon, Heliodorus, An Ethiopian Story and Acts of Paul and Thecla. While it is true that the explicit mention of libation in some of these texts can be construed as an argument from silence, the presence of other cultural factors—such as some Jews who abstained from wine—show that there are instances in which the absence of the libation ritual is intentional. Therefore, I think some caution needs to be exercised when we talk about libation at the Graeco-Roman banquets.

Apart from this explicit absence of libation from some Greek and Roman authors, ancient Jews generally, and especially some sects within Judaism, had an ambiguous relationship with wine and its association with Dionysus. Since wine was the main intoxicant suitable for idolatrous libation, the Tannaim were concerned that, at any moment, a non-Jew would overtly or covertly offer a portion of wine to a deity.\textsuperscript{197} This fear appears confirmed when one turns to some non-Jewish writers who perceive no difference between the Sabbath and a Dionysian feast. Plutarch writes,

\begin{quote}
I believe that even the feast of the Sabbath is not completely unrelated to Dionysus… The Jews themselves testify to a connection with Dionysus when they keep the Sabbath by inviting each other to drink and enjoy wine.\textsuperscript{198}
\end{quote}

It is therefore not surprising that Tannaitic literature contains a series of prohibitions against wine and wine related products.\textsuperscript{199} This means that some Jews were cautious about the consumption of wine, at least based as some Jewish writers discuss its consumption.\textsuperscript{200} This cautious attitude is evident in their use of the circumlocution “the cup” for “wine.”\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{197} Jordan D. Rosenblum, \textit{Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010), 81.

\textsuperscript{198} ὸξεῖ μα δὲ καὶ τὴν τῶν σαββάτων ἔορτήν μὴ παντάπασιν ἀπροσδιόνυσον εἶναι… αὐτοὶ δὲ τὸ λόγον μαρτυροῦσιν, ὅταν σάββατα τελῶσί, μάλιστα μὲν πίνειν καὶ οἰνοθήκηρ παρακαλοῦντες ἁλλήλους. Plutarch, \textit{Quaestiones Convivales}, IV:671F–72A (Hoffleit, LCL).

\textsuperscript{199} Rosenblum, \textit{Food, and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism}, 81–82. See y. Šab. 1.4; Avodah Zarah 5.5.

\textsuperscript{200} The Nazarites are the most significant example of some Jews who avoided wine. In this case, it was to fulfil an ancestral promise. See the Rechabites in Jeremiah 35. See Huffmon Herbert B., “The Rechabites in the Book of Jeremiah and their Historical Roots in Israel,” in \textit{The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception and Interpretation}, VTSup 178 ed. Jack R. Lundbom, Craig A. Evans, and Bradford A. Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 191–210; Knights Chris, “Who were the Rechabites,” \textit{ExpTim} 107 (1996): 137–40. See also Samson in Judges 13–16 and Paul in Acts 18:18 for similar examples.

\textsuperscript{201} A good example is the four cups at the Passover. One of the cups at the Passover is known as the ‘cup of praise,’ or ‘cup of blessing’ or the ‘blessing cup.’ Here it is clear that while wine is being drunk, the mention of the word itself is avoided. Otfried Hofius notes that this ‘cup of blessing, which in rabbinic literature, when the context is clear, can be designated simply as “the cup” is always and exclusively the cup of wine over which the blessing after the meal is recited.” See Otfried Hofius, “The Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Supper Tradition: Reflections on 1
Unsurprisingly, references to libation are rare during formal banquets among Jewish groups in the Graeco-Roman world.202

Some scholars have equated libation in the *symposion* with prayers at formal banquets in Jewish settings. We have an example of this in Valeriy Alikin’s position that “the prayer said at the beginning of Jewish meals…can be considered the counterpart of the libation which often preceded suppers among the gentiles.”203 Alikin’s equivalence in this case misses out on the mechanism of a libation. Libation, as an act, entailed not just prayers, but also pouring out of the liquid upon the ground. The two parts are indispensable; and the Greek verb for pouring σπένδω (frequently in the infinitive) is often used to express the stage of the action in these settings.204 If

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202 Philo’s *Therapeutae*, the sectarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the early Christ groups make no mention of the libation ritual. This point has been well argued by Cosgrove. See, Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine,” 303–311.


the pouring of the liquid is absent, there is no libation. Cosgrove argues along the line that libation should not be equated with prayers at formal banquet when he states that,

[O]ne can agree that the prayer over the eucharistic cup belongs to the same larger category as the libation prayer if all that means is that both are rituals of wine that honor the deity. But that is different from the claim that something more specific about the libation prayer is assumed for the eucharistic blessing (Klinghardt) or that something about that prayer or paean is being protested by the blessing (Taussig).205

To conclude, we have here another characteristic of the prototype which is central to the prototype but can be absent from individual instances of the prototype.

Leadership by a “President”: Symposiarch

The position of a leader who oversees the proceedings at a symposion is well attested in textual witnesses. This leader—who is rarely the host—is often called the symposiarch (συμποσίαρχος). The main responsibilities of the symposiarch are (1) to decide the wine-to-water ratio for the symposion, and (2) to select a topic for conversation if it was not pre-determined.206

Plutarch insists that the office of the symposiarch should not be altogether abandoned. For him, “this traditional authority of the office in regard to drinking-parties and their regulation

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205 Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine,” 311. See also, Klinghardt, Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft, 101, 309; Taussig, In the Beginning was the Meal, 109–12. Klinghardt interprets the saying over the cup as the libation ceremony. See, Matthias Klinghardt, “The So-Called ‘Eucharistic Words’ in the Context of Greco-Roman Meals: An Outline of Their Meaning in the Light of the Seminar’s Achievements” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, Atlanta, 2010), 1–19.

206 Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 531. Lissarrague, The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet, 8. See also Plato’s idea of a symposiarch. “[T]he man who is to mould them is the good legislator; he must lay down banqueting laws, able to control that banqueter who becomes confident and bold and unduly shameless, and unwilling to submit to the proper limits of silence and speech, of drinking and of music, making him consent to do in all ways the opposite,—laws able also, with the aid of justice, to fight against the entrance of such ignoble audacity, by bringing in that most noble fear which we have named “modesty” and “shame” [Τ]οῦτον δ’ εἶναι τὸν πλάστην τὸν αὐτὸν ὀσπερ τότε, τὸν ἀγαθὸν νομοθέτην, οὐ νόμους εἰναι δὲ συμποτικοὺς, δυναμένους τὸν εἰδέλπιν καὶ θαρραλέον ἔκχειν γνώμην καὶ ἀνασχυντότερον τὸν δόντος, καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουτα τὰξιν καὶ τὸ κατὰ μέρος σηχῆς καὶ λόγου καὶ πόσεως καὶ ὑπόψεως ύπομενεν, ἐθέλειν ποιεν πάντα τοῦτος τάναντά, Δκαὶ εἰσίοντι τῇ μὴ καλῷ θαρρεῖ τὸν κάλλιστὸν διαμαχομένους φόβον εἰσπέμπειν οίους τ’ εἶναι μετὰ δίκης, ὅν αἰών τε καὶ αἰσχύνην [θείον φόβον] ὄνομάκαμεν.” Plato, Laws, II:671C–D (Bury, LCL).
should be revived and established.” He, therefore, dedicates an entire talk to the subject, entitled, “What sort of man the symposiarch must be?” Ben Sirach, a Jewish author from the third century BCE, also left advice on how to be a good symposiarch.

If they make you master of the feast, do not exalt yourself; be among them as one of their number. Take care of them first and then sit down; when you have fulfilled all your duties, take your place, so that you may be merry along with them and receive a wreath for your excellent leadership (Ben Sira 32:1–2).

Ἡγούμενον σε κατέστησαν; μη ἐπαίρου, γίνου ἐν αὐτοῖς ὡς εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν. φρόντισον αὐτῶν, καὶ οὕτω κάθισον, καὶ πάσαν τὴν χρείαν σου ποιήσας ἀνάπεσε, ἵνα εὐφρανθῇς δι’ αὐτοὺς, καὶ εὐκοσμίας χάριν λάβῃς στέφανον (Ben Sira 35:1–2 LXX).

However, not every Graeco-Roman banquet that had a symposiarch. In Plato’s Symposium, it was agreed that they should drink with moderation, because a good number of them got drunk the previous day. One of the symposiasts, Eryximachus suggests they talk on the theme of love. It was when Alcibiades—who was drunk—arrived that he made himself “president of this drinking party.”

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207 οἴόμενοι με δεῖν στεφανηφοροῦντα μή περιυδεῖν παλαιὸν ἔθος ἐκλειψθέν παντάπασιν, ἀλλʼ ἀνακαλεῖν καὶ καταστῆσαι πάλιν τῆς ἄρχης τὴν νενομιμημένην ἐπιστασίαν περὶ τὰ συμπόσια καὶ διακόσμησιν. Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, I:620A (Clement, LCL).

208 “Ποῖον τινα δεῖ τὸν συμποσίαρχον εἶναι;” Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales I.620–622B (Clement, LCL). See also the debate on who leads the army of the Spartans when Agasias stood up with an analogy: “Will the Lacedaemonians also be angry,” he said, “if guests at dinner come together and fail to choose a Lacedaemonian as master of the feast (συμποσίαρχον)?”: ἢ ὁργιοῦνται Λακεδαίμονι καὶ ἢὲν σύνδεπνοι συνέλθοντες μη Λακεδαίμονι συμποσίαρχον αἱρόνται; See Xenophon, Anabasis, VI.1.30 (Dillery, LCL).

209 See also, Plato, Symposium, 213E; 176E (Lamb, LCL). Plato does not use συμποσίαρχος but ἀρχοντα οὖν αἱροῦμαι τῆς πόσσος. Plato’s description of the head of the feast here coheres with the notions of the symposiarch that appear in other extant literature.
While there is the idea of symposiarch in Ben Sirach, other Jewish writings rarely referred to the office or the idea.\textsuperscript{210} It is also absent in early Christian writings. Inscriptional evidence for the office among unofficial associations is scanty at best. Possible instances of the word symposiarch in ancient inscriptions are reconstructed alternate readings for the word δημοσίακος. This word—δημοσίακος—occurs three times in a particular text (SB XXIV 16296) but since δημοσίακος is unattested in any other source, David Martinez and Mary Williams suggest reading συμποσίαρχος instead.\textsuperscript{211}

There were several ways in which associations in the Graeco-Roman world maintained discipline in their meetings and symposia in the absence of a symposiarch. These included creating offices that took over the functions of a symposiarch, having by-laws which were renewed annually, imposing fines or expulsion of erring members and placing the meal under the banner of the gods with corresponding threats.\textsuperscript{212} Sometimes, too, the state or the city intervened.

\textsuperscript{210} Although Ben Sirach did not use the Greek word συμποσίαρχος but a different word, ἡγέομαι (to be in a leading capacity). As with Plato in Symposion, 176E; 213E, Ben Sirach’s description of the head of the feast here mirrors the notions of the symposiarch that appear in extant literature.


\textsuperscript{212} For the office of the President/Patron (προστατήσας), see: IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1369; BGU VIII 1741, 1742, 1743 + XIV 2368; I. Prose I 49; I. Th. Sy. 303; συναγωγός (President of the Synagogue): I Fayum III 204; I. Fayum III 205; Presiding Officer: ἀρχισυνάγωγος: IJO II 168-(πρόεδρος); IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1368; For a watchman or a bouncer (παννυχιστής): SEG 31.122. For rules (νομοί), see IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1369; LSAM 80; IG II 1368; IG XII/ 3 330; TAM V 1539; Smyrna 728; P. Mich. V 244; P. Mich. V 245; BGU XIV 2371; SEG 31.122; IG X/2.1 259; PLond VII 2193; I Fayum III; CIL XIV 2112; 1QS 6:16 –7.25; IQSa 2:11–22. For fines, see BGU V 1210; LSAM 80; SEG 31.122; TAM V 1539; P. Mich. V 244; P. Mich. V 245; BGU XIV 2371; SEG 31.122; IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1368; CIL XIV 2112. For expulsions, see: IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1368; 1QS 6:16 –7.25. For threats from the gods: TAM V 1539; IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1365+1366.
to impose order. Much of the evidence for these disciplinary measures come from inscriptive evidence of associations in the Graeco-Roman world.

The symposiarch and ‘symposiarch-like’ offices come with some stability, especially in the associations. John Ryan Olfert notes that presidents of associations usually served for a single year. It is plausible that this also applied to other offices charged with the maintenance of order at meals. John Kloppenborg argues that these associations practiced a “flat hierarchy” in which governance is impermanent and rotating. The office of the symposiarch should therefore be seen in the light of the overall attempt to impose order during Graeco-Roman banquets, and that took several forms.

**A Variety of “Associative” Personages**

I have chosen to use the adjective ‘associative’ and not ‘marginal’ to qualify individuals who were not primary participants at the symposion, because the presence of these personages

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214 Aristotle remarks that these associations have pleasure as their main aim. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 612 D–E (Rackham, LCL).

215 *IG II²* 1368.

216 BGU VIII 1743 + BGU XIV 2368 [GRA III: 250].

was anything but marginal.218 The overall performance and architecture of the symposion is less comprehensible with these individuals absent.219

The first of these is the flute players; the auletes and the auletris. Chester Starr notes that it was during the 7th century that the aulos (flute) became a part of the symposia.220 Initially, it was a male profession. While in Sparta the profession was hereditary, in Rome, the tibicines (flute players) were one of the original guilds attributed to Numa, the second legendary King of the city.221 The auletrides who were to be hired for the symposia had to be trained adequately.222 At least in Athens by the fourth century BCE, a regular school for female entertainers is attested. Isocrates in his complaints about the habits of young men revealed that “you see some of them chilling their wine at the “Nine-fountains”; others, drinking in taverns; others, tossing dice in

218 See Taussig, “Elaborating a New Paradigm,” 25–40; Al-Suadi, “The Power of An Invitation: Early Christian Meals in their Cultural Context,” 136. These typologies include as the fifth characteristic of Hellenistic Meals “a variety of marginal personages.” Plutarch’s idea of these personages should be seen as an idealized version since the symptic space and text note the importance of these personages to the symposion. Plutarch writes, “Others are diversions introduced for pleasure’s sake, and no essential function attaches to them; such are music, spectacles, and any buffooning Philip-at-Callias’s. With these latter, if they are present, the guests are pleased, but if they are absent, the guests do not very much desire them or criticize the party as being very deficient” τὰ δὲ ἐπιστῶδα γέγονεν ἡδονῆς ἐνεκεν, χρείας μὴ συναιγομένης, ὀσπερ ἀκροάματα καὶ θεάματα καὶ γελωτοποιίας τις ἐν Καλλίδῳ Φίλιππος, οἷς παρόντε μὲν ἰδοντα, μὴ παρόντα δὲ οὐ πᾶν ποθοῦσιν οὐδ’ αἰτήσων τὴν συνουσίαν ὡς ἐνδέκτερον ἔχουσαν. Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, II:629C (Clement, LCL).


220 Starr, “An Evening with the Flute Girls,” 402. See also, Aristophanes who writes: “Water for our hands; serve the tables; now we’re dining; now we’ve cleaned up; now it’s time to pour the wine. Good heavens, are we dining on dream food?...The girl piper has started to play.”: ὤδος κατὰ χειρὸς τὰς τραπέζας εἰσφέρειν δεπνοῦμεν ἀπονεῖμιμεθ’ ἥδη σπένδομεν. πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἐνύψιν ἐστόμεθα...ἀδήλητρις ἐνεφυσησεν. Aristophanes, Wasps, 1212–1218 (Henderson, LCL). It is important to note that many other instruments were played at the Symposia. Athenaeus devotes a significant portion of his work to discussing instruments. See Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, VII.628A–639A (Olson, LCL).


222 Starr, “An Evening with the Flute Girls,” 404. Athenaeus writes that “no woman may enter the Prytaneion except the pipe girl.”: γυναῖκα δὲ οὐκ ἔχεστιν εἰσίναι εἰς τὸ πρυτανεῖον ἢ μόνη τῇ αὐλητρίδι. See Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, IV.150A (Olson, LCL). The Prytaneis was a subgroup of 50 members of the Athenian council who ran city affairs on a daily basis and took their meal together in the tholos, which served as the dining hall. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, V.186A (Olson, LCL).
gambling dens; and many, hanging about the training-schools (τῶν αὐλητριδῶν) of the flute girls.”223 Aristotle notes that the city even had to fix a ‘minimum wage’ for flute players.

These then are the matters administered by the Council. Also ten men are elected by lot as Restorers of Temples, who draw 30 minae from the Receivers and repair the temples that most require it; and ten City Controllers, five of whom hold office in Peiraeus and five in the city; it is they who supervise the flute girls and harp girls and lyre-girls to prevent their receiving fees of more than two drachmas, and if several persons want to take the same girl these officials cast lots between them and hire her out to the winner.224

While flute girls mainly played during the symposion it was not unusual for them to be auctioned off to the highest bidder after the dinner party as sexual property. Athenaeus narrates an incident that ended in a brawl.

When a pipe-girl came in and wanted to sit beside one of the philosophers who was drinking with us, he refused to let her, even though there was plenty of room next to him and acted like a tough guy. Then later on, when the pipe-girl was being auctioned off, as commonly happens at drinking parties, he acted like a wild young man as the bidding was going on, and when the auctioneer awarded her prematurely to someone else, he argued with him and claimed that the sale was invalid. In the end our tough-guy philosopher found himself involved in a fistfight—even though he initially refused even to let the pipe-girl sit down next to him!225

223 Isocrates, Antidosis, 15.287 (Norlin, LCL).

224 Τὰ μὲν οὖν ὑπὸ τῆς βουλῆς διοικούμενα ταῦτα ἐστίν. κληροῦνται δὲ καὶ ἱερῶν ἐπισκευασταὶ δέκα ἀνδρείς, οἱ λαμβάνοντες τριάκοντα μαζὶ παρὰ τῶν ἀποδεκτῶν ἐπισκευασμέναν τὰ μᾶλλον δεόμενα τῶν ἱερῶν, καὶ ἀστυνόμοι δέκα· τούτων δὲ ε´ μὲν ἄρχουσιν ἐν Πειραιᾷ πέντε δ´ ἐν ἀστεί, καὶ τὰς αὐλητρίδας καὶ τὰς ψαλτρίδας καὶ τὰς καθαριστρίας οὕτω σκοποῦσιν ὅπως μὴ πλέονος ἢ δευτέρας δραχμὰς μεσθοθήσονται, κἂν πλείους τὴν αὐτήν σπουδάσωσι λαβεῖν οὕτω διακληροῦσι καὶ τὸ λαχόντο μισθοῦσιν. Aristotle Athenian Constitution, L (Rackham, LCL). Hypereides notes in a series of accusations that “Diognides and Antidorus the metic are impeached on a charge of hiring out flute girls at a higher price than that fixed by law.”: Διογνίδης μὲν καὶ Ἀντίδωρος ὁ μέτοικος εἰσαγγέλλονται ὡς πλέονος μισθοῦντες τὰς αὐλητρίδας ἢ ὁ νόμος κελεῦσα. Hyperides, In Defense of Euxenippus,3.3 (Burtt, LCL).

225 τῶν φιλοσόφων δὲ τὶς συμπίνων ἦμαν εἰσελθούσης αὐλητρίδος καὶ οὗτος εὐρυχωρίας παρ´ αὐτῷ, βουλομένης τῆς παιδίσκης παρακαθίασι οὐκ ἐπέτρεψεν, ἀλλὰ σκληρὸν αὐτὸν εἰσήγην. εἶθα ὁστρον πωλουμένης τῆς αὐλητρίδος, καθάperi ἤθος ἐστίν ἐν τοῖς πόσοις γίνεσθαι, εἴη τοῦ ἐγκαταίρησι πάνω νεανίκος ἢ καὶ τὸ πωλοῦντι ἄλλο τινὶ βάπτην προσθένη ἡμιφθοίητι καὶ οὐκ ἑρε ἱερὸν πεπρακάνει· καὶ τέλος εἰς πυγμάς ἢθεν ὁ σκληρὸς ἐκείνος φιλοσόφος καὶ ἐν ἄρχῃ οὖδ´ ἄν παρακαθίεται ἐπιτρέπον τῇ αὐλητρίδῃ. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, XIII.607D. (Olson, LCL) Shortly after this episode, Persaeus was accused of being the character who exchanged punches. “Perhaps the man who traded punches over the pipe-girl was Persaeus himself... When Persaeus was the high bidder for a pipe-girl at a drinking party but was reluctant to take her home because he lived in the same house as Zeno of Citium, Zeno realized what was going on, dragged the girl inside, and locked her up with Persaeus.”
Incidents like this probably inspired Eryximachus to suggest that the flute girl be dismissed in Plato’s *Symposium.* Starr, however, argues, that this does not mean that the flute girls are also prostitutes, since as our “sources mentioned both musicians together, but they are separately itemized.” Yet James N. Davidson remarks that later, that is by “the fourth century, *auletris* is used almost as a synonym for “cheap prostitute.”

The *hetairai*—often shown naked on the vases—were companions of the main participants at the *symposia.* These were slave girls hired out by their masters and expected to engage in sex. Davidson notes that for the *symposia,* getting hold of these women “was as much a part of preparations for a dinner party as going shopping for fish, wine and perfume.” Rather than being merely prostitutes, these girls, who were highly trained in the *symposia* skills, commanded prestige and were often procured at high prices. They accompany the *symposiasts* to the *symposion.* They were owned by individuals and often shared between a couple of men. Getting rid of one’s *heitaira* upon marriage was often seen as the appropriate thing to do.

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228 Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes,* 81.

229 Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 518. Engagement with sex occurred after the *symposia*.

230 Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes,* 92.


232 Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 519. Demeas on Menander’s play *Samia* accused Chrysis, his courtesan, of sleeping with his son. He exclaims: “Superstar! In town you’ll see exactly what you are! The others of your type dash to their parties, where they charge a mere ten drachmas and knock back strong wine until they die—
symposion became a civil space where beautiful and witty girls exchanged jokes and double-entendres with artists and politicians; and these scenes are commonly depicted and celebrated on drinking cups and mixing bowls. Collections of these obscene witticisms by hetaeras and their male counterparts, the gate-crashers or ‘parasites,’ were so popular that it almost represents a sub-genre of literature.

Another set of personages at the symposion was comprised by the young male partners of the symposiasts. Nowhere is homosexual love celebrated more in the Graeco-Roman world than at the Symposia. In Plato’s Symposium, we see Alcibiades propose his love to Socrates. The beauty of the boy Autolycus was commented upon by Xenophon, because his beauty “compelled everyone to look at him... there was no one who did not feel his soul stirred by the boy.” In talking about love and beauty, Athenaeus’ banqueters talked considerably about homosexual love and made a telling remark: “Whenever a young man learns how to go inside to eat what or else they starve, if what they do is not quick and willing. But I’m sure you’ll know this just as well as anyone. You’ll find out what you are and how you blundered! Stay there.”

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233 Davidson, Courtesans and Fishcakes, 93

234 Davidson, Courtesans and Fishcakes, 93.

235 Plato, Symposium, 218C–D (Lamb, LCL).

236 πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὄσπερ ὅταν φέγγος τι ἐν νυκτὶ φανῇ, πάντων προσάγεται τὰ ὀμματα, οὕτω καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἀυτολίκου τὸ κάλλος πάντων εἶλε τὰς ὀφείς πρὸς αὐτόν. Ἐπειτα τῶν ὀρώντων οὐδείς οὐκ ἐπασχέ τι τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπ’ ἐκείνου. Xenophon, Symposium, 1.8–10; 8.42 (Todd, revised by Henderson, LCL).
another person’s serving and to put a hand that hasn’t contributed anything on the food, you can assume he’s paying off his debt at night.”

However, homosexual love between the lover (*erastes*) and the beloved (*eromenos*) was not all exploitative or transactional in the *Symposia*. According to Murray, while sexual activity cannot be ruled out, the relationship was essentially an educational one. Relationships between an older man and a young man would help to socialize the young man and give him a model for citizenship and values. Young men sat among the participants and were admired simply for their beauty (viz., Plato’s Autolycus), becoming objects of desire but named as equals rather than remaining anonymous. Many sympotic vases from Athens bear a painted inscription of the formula ‘so and so is *kalos* (beautiful).’ *Kalos* in this sense is more than physical beauty. It also captured mental and social excellence. For *kottabos*, the drinkers often

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237 ὅταν γὰρ ὣν νέος ἄλλοτρων εἰςελθὼν ὅπως ἔσθησιν μάθησασίμβολον τε χεῖρα προσβήλη βορᾶ, διδόναι νόμιζ' αὐτὸν σὺ τῆς νυκτὸς λόγον. Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, XIII.572C (Olson, LCL).

238 Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 519. Athenaeus writes: ‘Many people wholeheartedly prefer love-affairs with boys to those of women; for the Greek cities that are best governed in comparison with the others engaged vigorously in this practice.’: ὅλως δὲ τοὺς παιδικοὺς ἔρωτας τῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς θηλείαις προκρίνουσι πολλοὶ παρὰ γὰρ τὰς ἄλλας τὰς εὐνομομένας πόλεις ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος σπουδασθῆναι τόδε τὸ ἔθος. Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, XIII.601E. He also writes about the “Sacred Band” in Thebes which consists of 150 pairs of male lovers. Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, XIII.602A (Olson, LCL).

239 Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 519. Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,”537. Clinias in Plato’s *Laws* implies that education has a place in the symposion when he asked, “You are implying, my friend, a statement which seems to us, that the convivial gathering, when rightly conducted, is an important element in education: Δοκεῖς ἡμῖν, ὦ φίλε, τὴν ἐν τοῖς οἴνους Δκοινῆν διατηρήσῃ ὡς εἰς παιδείας μεγάλην μοίραν τείνουσαι λέγειν, ἓν ὀρθὸς γίγνηται.” Clinias’s Athenian interlocutor has an affirmative answer to this question: “Τί μὴν: Assuredly.” See, Plato, *Laws*, 1:641D (Bury, LCL).

240 Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 520.

241 Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 537. Aune notes: “Various forms of sexual promiscuity appear to have been common and every conceivable form of sexual liaison is depicted at such gathering on vase paintings.” Aune, “Septem Sapientium Convivium,” 74.
flung drops of wine at a target calling out the name of a boy they desired.\textsuperscript{242} Because of the open display of affection and love combined with the visual of naked bodies, that literary descriptions of the \textit{symposion} regularly emphasize sex and sexual desires.\textsuperscript{243} This was taking place right before the eyes of guests.

Another personage that became a literary trope is the individual who comes to the \textit{symposion} uninvited. The most popular example of this is probably Alcibiades in Plato’s \textit{Symposium}, who ends up appointing himself the president of the drinking party. The \textit{akletos}, or the one who comes in uninvited, according to Murray, became a regular feature in the wake of the literary character Odysseus disguising as a beggar. Today, the only surviving modern example of the \textit{akletos} occurs in the context of the Jewish \textit{Seder}.\textsuperscript{244} The \textit{akletos}, at least in literary descriptions, is always different from those who were simply latecomers, even if they also frequently come after the dinner has started. The \textit{akletos} in literary descriptions was expected to entertain the drinkers in the manner of a licensed fool.\textsuperscript{245}

An \textit{akletos} could also be a busy body looking for something to eat. Athenaeus remarks that “these fellows are always on the lookout for dinner parties held by the city’s inhabitants, and

\textsuperscript{242} Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,”537.

\textsuperscript{243} Murray, “The Culture of the Symposion,” 520.


\textsuperscript{245} Two examples of \textit{akletos}, both from Xenophon’s \textit{Symposium}, are Philip the Comedian in I.11 and the man from Syracuse in II.1. See Xenophon, \textit{Symposium}, (Todd, revised by Henderson, LCL)
they shrewdly fly off to them uninvited.” Yet it is also possible that the akletos comes uninvited because he never wanted to contribute money for the dinner. In this regard, Archilochus remarks, “although you drink much unmixed wine, you neither contributed any money and you came uninvited, as a friend would do but your belly led your mind and heart astray into shamelessness.” In any case, the akletos became a staple of the symposia literature.

Other significant personages at the symposia included servants, dancers, and dogs. Each of these personages played a role—usually an entertaining one—within the symposia and were not forgotten either in literature or in artistic descriptions. The various instances of the symposion differed in the way they welcomed these associative personages. Since many of these unofficial associations had feasts, they often included some form of entertainment. Many of the associations had entertainments that aligned with their goals. For example, in Philo’s Therapeutae there is an in-house arrangement for singing. This was also expected in early Christ groups and sectarians of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

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246 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, I.4F (Olson, LCL).

247 πολλὸν δὲ πίνων καὶ χαλίκρητον μέθο, οὔτε τίμων εἰσενεῖκας < . . . >οὔδὲ μὲν κληθείς < . . . > ἦλθες οὐδὲ δὴ φίλος, ἀλλὰ σεο γαστήρ νόον τε καὶ φρένας παρῆγγελναις ἀναιδείην. See Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, I.8B–D (Olson, LCL).


249 Μουσική (singer) in Icarias 162.21; ὑμνοδιδάκαλοι (Hymn-teachers): IPergamon 485.26; χορηγός (chorus leader) IPergamon 485.32; υμνοδόδοι (hymn-singers): IPergamon 374.3.

250 Philo, De Contemplativa, IX.80. Philo condemns the luxurious nature of the Graeco-Roman symposia. He had a problem especially with the drinking and the forms of entertainment. He also thought the Spartan model was too austere, so his Therapeutae were for him, a median. See also, De Contemplativa, IX.69 (Colson, LCL). Pope argues for a sexual connotation of dogs at meals. See Pope, “A Divine Banquet at Ugarit,” 181–89.

participants provided the singing which was their form of entertainment. It was also expected that in the Jewish settings (Judaism and early Christ groups), the erotic forms of entertainment supplied at some of the symposia were discouraged. Philo in his Therapeutae was a critic of the entertainment offered by the Graeco-Roman symposia. At the same time, the financial implication of hiring entertainers could also have played in a role in some of the associations having to provide in-house entertainment. In addition to this, it could also be a reflection of the exclusive nature of some of these groups.

The Possibility of Chaos

While scholars often acknowledge both the possibility and the reality of violence at the symposion, it has not been considered an integral characteristic. I do take it as a characteristic

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253 Philo, De Contemplativa, IX.70. (Colson, LCL): “They do not have slaves to wait upon them as they consider the ownership of servants is entirely against nature.”: διακονοῦνται δὲ οὐχ ὑπ᾽ ἀνδριπόδων, ἠγούμενοι συνόλος τὴν θεραπόντων κτήσιν εἶναι παρὰ φύσιν. The evidence for servants at early Christian communal meals in the New Testament is non-existent (explicitly) but we do have evidence that some Christians owned slaves. The early Christian attitude towards slavery is complicated and therefore it is difficult to construct what the role of a slave could have been at such communal meals. Cf. Philemon 16 Athenaeus also makes it clear that it is not uncommon to find slaves and masters at the same symposion among the Arcadians. Cf. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, IV.149D (Olson, LCL). The sectarians of the Dead Sea scrolls are exclusive though hierarchical. There is no evidence for servants at dinner. See 1QS 6:1–5 and 1QSa 2:11–11. Katherine Shaner has persuasively argued that slaves sometimes held positions of authority in religious groups of the Graeco-Roman world, including early Christian groups. These positions she maintains often brought them into conflict with their masters and call into question the stable definitions of the slave status. Her argument further complicates the evidence of early Christ groups with regards to meals and substantiates my argument that some diversity is needed when we approach these ancient witnesses. See Katherine Shaner, Enslaved Leadership in Early Christianity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), Oxford Scholarship Online edition.

254 Jamir, Exclusion and Judgment, 17. The reality of violence is widespread in literature on the symposion. See Lucian, The Carousal (Symposium) (Harmon, LCL); Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, 1:618C (Clement, LCL). Plutarch, Quaestiones Convivales, VIII:716F (Minar, LCL). Cicero, The Verrine Orations, 2.1.26. §66 (Greenwood, LCL). Petronius, The Satyricon, 28. In Sparta, symposia were prohibited and instead they adopted syssitia, which were compulsory meals taken in common where these were known for their austerity and temperance. At syssitia, wine was still consumed but in moderation, since drunkenness was prohibited. Cf. Lissarrague, The Aesthetic of the Greek Banquet, 9. Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” 529. In one of Sophocles’ plays, Snydeipnoi (Those who Dine), one of the diners, received contents of the chamber pot on his head. “But in his anger, he hurled at me the stinking chamber pot, nor did he miss; and the vessel, which did not smell of myrrh, broke about my head, and I was shocked by the unpleasing smell: ἀλλ᾽ ἀμφὶ θημὸ τὴν κάκοσμον οὐράνηνερωμένον οὐδ᾽ ἡμαρτε περὶ δ᾽ ἐμῷ κάρφωται
because the unofficial associations in the Graeco-Roman world had stable offices to curtail chaos and commotion in their meetings and meals. Some examples of chaotic situations at meals are notable. Livy narrates the story of how Cato expelled seven senators, among whom was “one well-known both because of his noble birth and the offices he had held: the ex-consul Lucius Quinctius Flamininus.”

Lucius was accused by Cato of having killed a Celt for the pleasure of his male partner. Nicholas R. E. Fisher notes that this display by Lucius was not an isolated act of sympotic brutality. The account of the beheading of John the Baptist in the Gospels is perhaps another witness to the reality of chaos, violence, and death which often were not far from the symposion. It is also telling that one of the earliest depictions of the symposion is also one of violence depicting Herakles’ killings at Eurytos. According to Murray, it is not a...

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256 Fisher, “Roman Associations, Dinner Parties, and Clubs,” 1203. Fisher further notes that “historians assert that beginning in Campania (where gladiatorial games first began) and spreading to Rome, it became a habit to hire a few gladiators to enliven after-dinner entertainment with blood and death.” There were therefore laws in the years 182, 161, 143, 131 and 115 BCE to curb such excesses that characterized the symposia. Though these were impossible to implement, the existence of such laws exhibits some genuine concern for order at these assemblies. (Fisher, “Roman Associations, Dinner Parties, and Clubs,” 1203). See also, Aelius Gellius, Attic Nights, II.XXIV (Rolfe, LCL) for a series of such laws.

257 Matthew 14:1–12; Mark 6: 12–17. See also the Athenian interlocutor in Plato’s Laws who notes that, “such a gathering inevitably tends, as the drinking proceeds, to grow ever more and more uproarious; and in the case of the present-day gatherings that is, as we said at the outset, an inevitable result” θεωροῦσις μὲν ποιών ὁ ξύλλογος ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐξ ἀνὰγκης προφυόσης τῆς πόσεως ἐπὶ μᾶλλον ἀεὶ ἐξεμβαίνει γνώσεως, οὗτος ὑπεθέμεθα κατʼ ἄρχας ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι Βγίνεσθαι περὶ τῶν νῦν συγγεγραμένων. Plato, Laws, II:671A–B (Bury, LCL).

258 The Corinthian krater. Cf. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, IV.157F–158A (Olson, LCL) Notably, one of the banqueters remarks that, “Our temperament is different, even if we imitate Heracles in every way.”; [Ο]ὐ τοιοῦτοι οὖν τὸν θυμὸν ἡμεῖς, καὶ πάντα Ἡρακλέους ξηλοται. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, IV.158A (Olson, LCL).
surprise that the ultimate form of violence—"murder at the symposion"—was a prominent theme in sympotic literature.259

Violence at the symposion has been partly attributed to wine. In a section on wine and its effects, one of the banqueters of Athenaeus, quoting Eubulus, reflects on the link between wine and the possibility of chaos at a symposion:

Because I mix up only three bowls of wine for sensible people. One is dedicated to good health, and they drink it first. The second is dedicated to love and pleasure, and the third to sleep; wise guests finish it up and go home. The fourth bowl no longer belongs to me but to outrage. The fifth belongs to arguments; the sixth to wandering drunk through the streets; the seventh to black eyes; the eighth to the bailiff; the ninth to an ugly black humor; and the tenth to madness extreme enough to make people throw stones. For a great deal of wine poured into one little jar easily knocks drunks’ legs out from under them.260

The ritual of violence and chaos that attended the end of the symposion was known as komos.261 Komos was originally used for a band of revelers.262 With the symposia, it became an exhibition of violence and a display of drunken behavior at the end of the party.263 Hence, it was no longer


260 Τρεῖς γὰρ μόνον κρατήρας ἐγκεραννύωτος εὗ ἁρνοῦσι· τὸν μὲν ἔχειας ἕνα, δόν πρῶτον ἐκπίνουσι, τὸν δὲ δεύτερον ἐρωτος ἡδονῆς τε· τὸν τρίτον δ᾿ ὑπανοῦ, ὅν ἐκπίνει τοῖς σοφοῖς κακλημένοιοιδια βιαίζουσι. ὁ δὲ τέταρτος οὐκέτα ἡμέτερος ἐστί, ἀλλ’ ὄβρεος· ὁ δὲ πέμπτος βοηθος ἐκτος δὲ κώμων· ἔβδομος δ᾿ ὑποτίον· ὁ δὲ ἐνατος χολης δεκατος δὲ μανίας· ὦστε καὶ βάλλειν ποιεῖ πολύς γὰρ εἰς ἐν μικρῶν ἕγειον χοινεύσασκελίζει μᾶς τοὺς πεπωκότας. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, II.36C–D (Olson, LCL)

261 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, II.36C–D (Olson, LCL): “A sacrifice leads to a feast, and a feast leads to drinking. Sounds good to me, at least! But drinking leads to wandering the streets drunk and being found guilty, and being found guilty leads to shackles, stocks, and a fine.” ἐκ μὲν θυσίας θοίνα <...>, δέκ δέ θοίνας πόσις ἐγένετο. χαρίν, ὅς γ´ ἵμα <δοκεῖ>, ἐκ δὲ πόσις κώμος. ἐκ κώμου δ´ ἐγένεθ’ ὑπνία, ἐκ δ´ ὑπνίας δίκα, <κ δίκας δ´ ἐγένετοκαταδίκα>, ἐκ δὲ καταδίκας πέσα τε καὶ σφαλὸς καὶ ζωμία.

262 LSJ. 1018. s.v. κώμος.

a normal dance but a drunken procession. Murray suggests that this ritual drunken riot was often a performance enacted to display the power and lawlessness of the drinking group. This claim is perhaps best exemplified in the story of Conon, his son, and some others, who met at the house of Pamphilus, as narrated in Demosthenes’ speech Against Conon. In his address to the jury, Demosthenes accuses this group of attacking him and Phanostratus of Cephisia, stripping him naked in an apparent display of power. As he claimed, these men normally put on a sober appearance and pretend to play the Spartan by wearing ascetic-looking short cloaks and single-soled shoes, but when they got together for their dinner parties they leave no “form of wickedness or indecency untried.” Demosthenes insists:

> There are many people in the city, sons of respectable persons, who in sport, after the manner of young men, have given themselves nicknames, such as Ithyphalli or Autolecythi, and that some of them are infatuated with mistresses…that things of this sort are natural for young men.

In Aristophanes’ Wasps, Philokleon learns how to behave at the symposion, and the result was that he returns home abducting a flute girl and was pursued by angry citizens who claimed

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265 Murray, “The Affair of the Mysteries: Democracy and the Drinking Group,” in *Sympotica*, 149–61, here 150. Murray adds that to a fifth century Athenian audience, the symposion is an alien world of license and misbehavior, far removed from the decorous religious or philosophical group envisaged by Xenophanes. See idem, “The Affairs of the Mysteries,” 150.

266 Demosthenes, *Against Conon*, LIV (Murray, LCL).

267 Ἀν ἔρειν ὡς εἰσίν ἐν τῇ πόλει πολλοὶ, καλῶν κἀγαθῶν ἄνδρῶν υἱῶτες, οἱ παῖζοντες οἳ ἄνθρωποι νέοι σφίσαν αὐτοῖς ἐπονυμίας πεποίηται, καὶ καλοῦσι τοὺς μὲν ἰθυφάλλους, τοὺς δὲ ἀυτοληκθοὺς, ἐρῶσι δὲ ἐκ τοῦτον ἔταιρὸν τινὲς, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὸν ἔαυτον εἶναι τούτων ἕνα, καὶ πολλάκις περὶ ἑταίρις καὶ εἰληφέναι καὶ δεδομέναι πληγὰς, καὶ ταῦτα εἶναι νέοιν ἄνθρωποιν. Demosthenes, *Against Conon*, LIV.14–17 (Murray, LCL). See also Murray, “The Affairs of the Mysteries,” 157. Here Murray notes by using the words Ithyphalli (Erections) or Autolecythi (Wankers), the plaintiff in this case is suggesting that these young men were practising unspeakable forms of sexual initiation. This highlights how these banquets can go out of hand.
damages for assault and destruction of their property.\textsuperscript{268} It was not mere coincidence therefore that in Lesbos, as in Athens, civil law prescribes a double penalty for offences committed when drunk.\textsuperscript{269} Anxiety about maintaining order in inscriptions points to possible situations of violence occurring during the banquet meetings.\textsuperscript{270}

For these meals, it is not the case that violence always erupts, but that the possibility of chaos is always lurking at the background and that must be acknowledged. An impending implosion at the common meal was simply one of the issues Paul dealt with in Corinth.

\textbf{Summary and Conclusion}

This chapter has sought to apply my previously developed methodological framework to the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. To this end, I started by analyzing how the Idealized Cognitive Model is discernible in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition of the banquet. Once this was established, I identified and evaluated the \textit{symposion} as the prototype of the Idealized Cognitive Model of the Graeco-Roman banquet. In evaluating the \textit{symposion}, I attempt to demonstrate repeatedly that there were instances of the prototype exhibiting asymmetries in their relationship

\textsuperscript{268} Murray, “Violence at the Symposion,” 199. See also, Aristophanes, \textit{Wasps}, 1325–1449 (Henderson, LCL). Davidson notes that “it was outside, on the street, that the flute girls really came into their element, in the \textit{komos}, a conga of revelers that took the drinking-party out into the city on expeditions of riot and debauch.” Davidson, \textit{Courtesans and Fishcakes}, 81.

\textsuperscript{269} Murray, “Violence at the Symposion,” 199; Murray, “The Culture of the \textit{Symposion},” 520.

\textsuperscript{270} IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1368.63–90 envisages a situation where there could be a disturbance, a fight or exchange of blows. I consider the concerns about order and hierarchy in the eating of food in the documents of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS and 1QSa) in the same light. Relatedly, John D’Arms captures this anxiety when he writes that “poets and historians artfully contrive to associate the dreadful with the dinner: imaginations—and not only those of Rome—have tended always to be responsive to situations in which misfortune blasts people at the very moment when their well-being seems most assured.” See John D’Arms, “The Roman \textit{Convivium} and the Idea of Equality,” in \textit{Sympotica}, 308–20, here 314. Susan Marks notes that: “since many meals included rowdy behavior, an enforcer of civility was often necessary.” See Susan Marks, “How Ancient Greeks, Romans, Jews and Christians Drank Their Wine,” in \textit{Feasting and Fasting: The History and Ethics of Jewish Food}, ed. Aaron S. Gross, Jody Myers, and Jordan D. Rosenblum (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 170–87, here 175.
with some of the characteristics of the prototype. With the completion of this analysis of the symposion as the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, it now becomes important to demonstrate how this relates to the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. Notably, I will argue that the Lord’s Supper in Corinth is not modelled after any of the known Symposia. In other words, the relationship between the Lord’s Supper in Corinth and the symposia is not causal in the sense that the former was inspired by the latter. It is a relationship of “family resemblance” to other members of the family of the prototype, symposion.

The next chapter will consider, then, how a particular banquet in the Graeco-Roman world — the Lord’s Supper in Corinth—instantiated the symposion which is the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.
CHAPTER FOUR

LORD’S SUPPER IN CORINTH AS A PROTOTYPICAL INSTANTIATION OF THE

GRAECO-ROMAN BANQUET

Introduction

In this chapter, I will be making a comparison between the proposed prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet genre—Symposion— and the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. The goal of this comparison is to elucidate what the Lord’s Supper in Corinth had in common with the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition and to identify distinctive features that set it apart.¹ It is important to restate that I am not arguing for the uniqueness of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. To do that is to betray the abundant evidence that shows that the early Christians were people of their own time and space.² However, in arguing for the distinctive contribution of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth, my argument seeks to illuminate what early Christians thought of their meal. It is this comparison that will, in the end, make obvious both the distinctive character of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth and its distinctive contribution to the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition. This


comparison will also confirm the thesis that the Lord’s Supper in Corinth is a remarkable instantiation of the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

In this chapter I will argue that the Lord’s Supper is an instantiation of the Graeco-Roman banquet in two distinct ways. First, the Lord’s Supper is a distinct space in which sacrilege is possible. This in turn will lead to disastrous consequences. The second way in which this meal is distinct is in its eschatological outlook. The argument of this chapter will then evolve in five different steps. The first step is to classify early Christ groups as unofficial associations. The purpose of this classification is to concretely ground the Lord’s Supper as a meal that is similar to communal meals of associations in the Graeco-Roman world. This step will be followed with a description of some dynamics at work in the city of Corinth. These dynamics will be revealed mostly in the diversity of ethnic groupings in Corinth. The understanding of this city and its history is crucial to showing that the Christ group has a place in this city. This will lead to the third step which will be an analysis of the structure of 1 Corinthians. This structural analysis will help situate our pericope, 1 Cor 11:17–34, within the overall thematic aim of Paul as he addresses several crises within the Christ group in Corinth. This will be followed with the comparison of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth with the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. Shortly before the communal meal in Corinth is compared with the prototype, this meal will be shown to exhibit all the properties of the Idealized Cognitive Model of the Graeco-Roman banquet. The fifth and final step will be to outline and explain the two features that make

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3 Subsequently, I will refer to 1 Cor 11:17–34 as “our pericope. Also, in this chapter, genre and tradition will be used interchangeably, and they carry the same meaning when they are used to qualify the Graeco-Roman formal meal events. The argument (and utility) for the possibility of this overlap has been made in the second chapter of this dissertation, where genre was understood as not being an exclusively textual phenomenon. See the section “Prototype Theory and Genre Studies” in chapter two.
the *Lord’s Supper* distinct as an instantiation of the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition: its potential as an occasion for sacrilege and its eschatological outlook.

**Christ Groups as Unofficial Associations**

Life in the Graeco-Roman world subsisted between the *polis* and one’s immediate family. The *polis* had its own structures—civil and religious—and one’s place in the *polis* was based on legal status, ascribed and achieved honor, wealth and other complex negotiations. The family partakes in the civil and religious aspects of the *polis* but sometimes displays devotions to gods and goddesses of their own. However, between the *polis* and the family there existed many unofficial associations which mainly served social needs. Philo in *In Flaccum* 136 derisively notes that:

> In the city there are *clubs* with a large membership, whose fellowship is founded on no sound principle but on strong liquor and drunkenness and sottish carousing and their offspring, wantonness. “Synods” and “divans” are the particular names given to them by the people of the country.

Philo’s negative description notwithstanding, his statement should be taken as acknowledgment that these associations were common in the Graeco-Roman world. These associations differed from the official groupings by the state or city. The official groupings of the

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6 Ὑπὸ τῶν ἐγχωρίων. *Philoi Against Flaccus* XVII.136 (Colson, LCL)
state and city primarily included “boards of civic functionaries, board of priests or priestesses connected with the temples, and youth-based organizations connected with the gymasia.”

In terms of the nomenclature of the various associations in the Graeco-Roman world, I will be using the terms ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ association following the typology of Richard Last and Philip Harland. I find compelling their argument that this typology is most useful and all-inclusive in understanding associations in the Graeco-Roman world, since it avoids the pitfalls of previous typologies that often sought to base classification on some primary purpose. They define ‘unofficial’ associations as “certain groupings located socially between the structures of the family and the official structures of the city or village in the eastern Mediterranean.” The adjective “unofficial” in the phrase “simply mean[s] that such associations were not consistently sustained by resources from civic or imperial institutions and that their membership was not defined primarily in terms of citizenship or in terms of belonging within civic subdivisions.”

Tracing the phenomenon of these associations, Kloppenborg notes: Voluntary associations—collegia in Latin, thiasoi, koina, orgeones, eranoi, and a variety of other terms in Greek—are essentially phenomena of the Hellenistic period, of the urban centers and of the urban poor. Although the mention of hieron orgeones and thiasotai in Solon’s laws indicates that associations were in existence in sixth-century Athens, it was the age after Alexander that witnessed the striking proliferation of these associations.

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Therefore, I will treat the Christ group in Corinth as an unofficial association in the Graeco-Roman world. This insight is not a new one since pagan writers also saw early Christ groups as resembling Graeco-Roman associations. For example, Pliny the Younger used the word ‘collegia’ to classify the early Christ groups and Lucian describes them as a new mystery (καινὴν τελετὴν). This means Christ groups share the associative practices in its milieu in first century Corinth. These practices include their attitudes in matters of finance, relations to the polis, frequency of meetings, burial practices, provision of relief, patronage system, common meals, and conflict management. In using this categorization, my argument benefits from one of the most fruitful results on the study of early Christianity in its environment. Many of these unofficial associations were based on shared cult, political interests, occupation, neighborhood, ethnicity, and social needs. The presence and ubiquity of these associations is illuminated in part by literary evidence but much more by the innumerable inscriptive records by these associations. The understanding of the early Christian groups as an association in the Graeco-

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11 Pliny, Letters, 10.96 (Radice, LCL); The Passing of Peregrinus, 11(Harmon, LCL).


14 Fisher, “Greek Associations,” 1168. See also Kloppenborg and Ascough, Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations and Commentary I; Philip A. Harland, Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary II: North Coast of the Black Sea, Asia Minor (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014); John S. Kloppenborg, Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary III: Ptolemaic and Early Roman Egypt (Berlin:
Roman world is today a near consensus in New Testament scholarship. This consensus is captured by Kloppenborg and Ascough when they note that:

The dossier represented by associations form an essential component for thinking about the associative practice of early Christ-groups as they arose in the cities of the East and eventually in Rome and throughout the Empire. Christ groups did not originate or flourish in a cultural vacuum; given the density and distribution of associations throughout the Mediterranean; it is inevitable that Christ-groups came into contact with numerous associations.15

Also, important to note with regard to this study is that “common meals were among the most consistent practices of associations and guilds on the ancient Mediterranean.”16 It is with this background idea of the Graeco-Roman unofficial associations that we now survey the city of Corinth.

The City of Corinth

The city of Corinth is a near-perfect example of where the diverse nature of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition can be seen at work. Corinth was originally established as a Greek city in the Neolithic period (ca. 6500 – 5000 BCE) and was occupied by the Myceneans.17 Corinth’s prominence in the ancient world is well attested in literature. Strabo for instance, writes that,

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16 Kloppenborg, Christ’s Associations, 209–43.

Corinth is called “wealthy” because of its commerce, since it is situated on the Isthmus and is master of two harbours, of which the one leads straight to Asia, and the other to Italy; and it makes easy the exchange of merchandise from both countries that are so far distant from each other.\textsuperscript{18}

The Greek city of Corinth was destroyed in 146 BCE by the soldiers of Lucius Mummius to put an end to a revolt by the local population. Diodorus Siculus has a record of this destruction of the city:

Of Corinth the poets had sung in earlier time: Corinth, bright star of Hellas. This was the city that, to the dismay of later ages, was now wiped out by her conquerors. Nor was it only at the time of her downfall that Corinth evoked great compassion from those that saw her; even in later times, when they saw the city levelled to the ground, all who looked upon her were moved to pity. No traveller passing by but wept, though he beheld but a few scant relics of her past prosperity and glory.\textsuperscript{19}

Just before he died, Caesar established a Roman colony in 44 BCE on the spot where Greek Corinth, destroyed in 146 BCE, once laid.\textsuperscript{20} Though this new Corinth was established as a Roman colony, the population of Roman Corinth was ethnically and socially diverse from its inception.\textsuperscript{21} While it is reasonable to assume that the first colonists were Roman citizens, Marcin Pawlak observes that, “with time, natural demographic processes started to take place, which on

\textsuperscript{18} Strabo, \textit{Geography}, 8.20 (Jones, LCL). See also, Pausanias, \textit{Description of Greece: Book 2} (Jones, LCL).

\textsuperscript{19} Diodorus Siculus, \textit{Library of History}, 32.27 (Walton, LCL). See also Pausanias, \textit{Description of Greece} 7.16.7, 9. (Jones, LCL).


\textsuperscript{21} Pawlak, “Corinth after 44 BC,” 146.
the one hand increased the original diversity, and on the other hand reinforced the strongest element of this diversity, i.e. Greekness.”

In the words of James Harrison,

It would be naïve to assume that aspects of the Greek culture and traditional mythology associated with the pre–146 BCE city were not revived in the new Roman colony. It would be equally naïve to assume that Roman and Greek identities in the colony did not somehow intersect to create elements of (what some scholars, drawing on Homi K. Bhabha’s sociological research, have called) hybrid identity for its inhabitants.

This phenomenon of diversity also occurred on the level of language as the initially dominant Latin gave way to Greek. Despite the significant evidence we have of public Latin inscriptions (a normal feature in a Roman colony), eventually, Greek graffiti or writings on pottery were more numerous than Latin ones. That Paul, for instance, wrote his letter to the Christian community in Corinth in Greek, in a bid to reach a greater number of people, is an attestation to the popularity of Greek in this Roman colony.

The diversity of Corinth is not limited to its Greek and Latin cultures. The pantheon of Roman Corinth was filled with cults from the Near East, with Judaism and Christianity entering the fold. The Egyptian cult of Isis was not left out, capturing the literary imagination, as the initiation of Lucius into the mysteries of Isis in the second century Latin novel, Metamorphoses,

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22 Pawlak, “Corinth after 44 BC,” 146, 147, 158. In 150 years, according to Pawlak, referencing Aristeides (second century), Corinth has evolved into Greece’s largest city. Pawlak notes that coins from the first year of the colony’s existence already showed scenes that referred to local traditions and myths from the times of Greek Corinth. One can therefore argue that the early colonists displayed a clear commitment to Roman culture as well as a significant attachment to Hellenistic heritage. See also, Friesen “Introduction: Context, Comparison,” in Corinth in Context, 1–9.


24 Pawlak, “Corinth after 44 BC,” 156.

took place at Kenchreai, the eastern port of Corinth. So, in the end, Roman Corinth was not too Roman after all. It became a cosmopolitan Graeco-Roman city. Not only does Corinthian diversity make it a significant site to study the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, but the city—alongside Athens—also had a significant impact on meal traditions in the Graeco-Roman world. In particular, pottery from Corinth was well regarded in the ancient world. Kathleen Lynch notes that “the Eurytos krater provides the earliest description of drinkers reclining. Interestingly, this vase was made in Corinth but found in an Etruscan tomb in Cerveteri, Italy.”

All this means that the city of Corinth was a perfect place for an argument about a meal tradition to break out, especially given the possibility of diverse meal ideologies operating in the city. Richard Ascough notes the data we have is sufficient “to assume that Corinth was similar to cities across the Greek and Roman empires in having an array of associations populating the

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27 Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, III.128d; V.199c; V.205c (Olson, LCL)

28 Kathleen M. Lynch, “Drinking and Dining,” in *A Companion to Greek Art*, ed. Tyler Jo Smith and Dimitris Plantzos (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2018), 525–42, here 537. This krater is now in the Louvre. In an article on the site Padel-Imbaud Sophie describes the krater as depicting the myth of Heracles at the palace of Eurytos. According to Padel-Imbaud: “The inscriptions indicate that the banquet illustrated on side A is a minor episode from the Herakles cycle. After completing his labors for Eurystheus, Herakles arrived at the court of King Eurytos, who was holding an archery contest with the hand of his daughter Iole as the prize. Herakles won the contest, but a dispute then broke out, during the course of which Herakles slew Iphitos, one of the sons of Eurytos. The artist has chosen to illustrate the scene before the tragedy, when everyone is present at the banquet. Herakles - only recognizable thanks to his short hair - is shown on the far right. He appears to be conversing with his neighbor Iphitos, while Eurytos is facing his other guests. If the inscriptions and the presence of Iole did not help identify the episode, the scene could have been illustrating any aristocratic banquet, where noblemen gathered together, semi-reclining on couches placed alongside low tables groaning with food and drink.” Padel-Imbaud Sophie, “Corinthian Column Krater: Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities: Archaic Greek Art (7th–6th centuries BC),” [https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/corinthian-column-krater](https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/corinthian-column-krater) See also, Oswyn Murray, “Violence at the Symposium,” in *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Werner Reiss and Garrett G. Fagan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 195–206.
urban landscape.” Paul’s remark at the beginning of this letter asking the Christ followers to “consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth” (1:26) should be interpreted as a remark about the diversity not just of the Christ group (i.e., that some were educated and some were wealthy) but also of the city of Corinth. Moreover, the presence of people of diverse cultures, different cults, and multiple languages intensified the competing ideologies at work in the city of Corinth. By placing the Christ group in Corinth side by side with other unofficial associations in the Graeco-Roman world which also existed in this diverse city, we get a sense of the extent of their conversation(s) in these unofficial associations and how the Christ group retained some practices of these associations and moved away from others. However, before we do that, we will take a look at how Paul structured his letter to the Christ group in Corinth and how this structuring impacts our interpretation of the section on the Lord’s Supper.

1 Corinthians: Themes and Structure

The Christian community at Corinth was founded by Paul in 51 CE, during his second missionary journey. The various letters to the Corinthians were written, however, on Paul’s

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30 1 Cor 1:26: Βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλήσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς.

31 Ascough, “What are they Now saying about Christ Groups and Associations?” 209.


third missionary journey. The first letter to the Corinthians was probably written during the spring or autumn of 54 CE from Ephesus. The present first letter as we have it was not, however, the first letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Neither was this letter the last. Paul wrote of an earlier letter in what we know today as 1 Cor. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor also notes the painful letter hinted at in 2 Cor 2:4. According to Murphy-O’Connor, “the intensity of Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians is illustrated by the fact that he wrote more letters to them than to any other church.” In total we therefore have evidence for at least four letters.

Paul’s relationship to the Christ group at Corinth was both complex and rocky. After he left the city, Paul kept himself up to date with happenings in Corinth from a variety of sources. The information on which he based the first part of his letter came from “Chloe’s people” (1 Cor 1:11). The third part of the letter—where the subject matter of my argument lies—seems to have

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34 Murphy-O’Connor also dates the writing of this letter to April or May 54 CE. See, Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, 30

35 On this, Raymond Collins writes, “Although it is called the first letter to the Corinthians it was not the first letter Paul had written to that assembly (see 5:9), nor would it be the last. The NT canon contains another letter of Paul to the Corinthians, our canonical 2 Corinthians. Traditionally this first letter to the Corinthians is called first in comparison with the second letter to the Corinthians. According to the stylistic principle of compiling the NT texts, the longer texts are called ‘first’ (1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 1 Peter, 1 John) with respect to the shorter texts that are called ‘second.’ See Raymond F. Collins, *Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 4. See also, Arthur J. Dewey, Roy W. Hoover, Lane C. McGeugh, Daryl D. Schmidt, *The Authentic Letters of Paul: A New Reading of Paul’s Rhetoric and Meaning* (Salem, OR: Polebridge, 2010), 73.

36 1 Cor 5:9: “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons.”

37 “For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.” See Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, 252.


been a response to specific questions raised by the Corinthians themselves in a letter to Paul (1 Cor 7:1). Finally, some information also seems to have come to Paul through Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, members of the Corinthian community who had recently come to Paul in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:15–18).\footnote{Collins, \textit{Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians}, 16–17.}

In 1 Corinthians it would appear that Paul was responding in a disorderly manner to a random set of questions and problems connected with the Corinthian community. However, on a closer inspection, there is a rough unity to the problems dealt with by Paul as well as to his approach to their solution.\footnote{Murphy-O’Connor describes the unity of the letter as owing more “to the aesthetic sense of the scholar than to any objective factor.” Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul: A Critical Life}, 253.} The problems experienced by the Corinthian Christ group revolves around the proper understanding of the ideas of wisdom, freedom, enthusiasm, and the consequences of these ideas on their lives. The Christ group in Corinth or at least some individuals in this group seem to have experienced themselves as already “perfect,” that is as already having been taken over by the power of God in consequence of their becoming followers of Christ.\footnote{Thomas H. Tobin writes, “[S]ome Corinthians were also apparently convinced that, through their reception of the Spirit in their baptism into the risen body of Christ (12:12–13), they were already ‘raised’ from the dead (1 Cor 15) and possessed special divine wisdom.” See Thomas H. Tobin, \textit{Paul’s Rhetoric in its Contexts: The Argument of Romans}, 75. See also, White, \textit{From Jesus to Christianity}, 182.} To some of these followers, their baptism had granted them a ‘resurrection’ with Christ. This they translated existentially to mean that they were no longer bound by any specific code of behavior. Paul, therefore, spent much of this letter showing these so-called “perfect” Corinthians that they are called as Christ’s followers to be solicitous of the needs and sensitivities of their neighbors, and that proper conduct is important and should not be dispensed
with. Most importantly, he emphasizes in a very long section, at the end, that resurrection is a future reality. In view of this future resurrection, their present lives mattered, since they are still in the world and how they act in the world is important for their Christian lives and their future reality.\textsuperscript{44} Thus, in 1 Corinthians, Paul shows that faith and belief has to do with how one lives one’s life in the light of Christ. The great attraction of this letter is that Paul is dealing with how one lives and not simply with how one thinks.\textsuperscript{45}

In terms of structure, our pericope, 1 Cor 11:17–34, is a part of the third section (7:1—16:18).\textsuperscript{46} This section of the letter deals with specific questions the Corinthians wrote to Paul about seeking his opinions (or decisions). This whole section starts with Paul writing, “Now concerning the matters about which you wrote.” (1 Cor 7:1). He then goes on to attend to numerous questions, which range from sexual relations and marital status to food being offered to idols, resurrection from the dead, and questions of worship. The subsection that covers the questions of worship treat, then, the role of women in worship, spiritual gifts, and the community meal. Our pericope—focusing on the community meal—falls under the subsection which

\textsuperscript{44} Tobin notes that Paul “[C]onsistently tried to show in 1 Corinthians that the guidance of the Spirit was meant to lead to unity in the community over the exercise of one’s individual ‘rights.’ Finally, he argued for the reality of a bodily resurrection, but this bodily resurrection was still in the future.” See Tobin, \textit{Paul’s Rhetoric in its Contexts: The Argument of Romans}, 76.

\textsuperscript{45} Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{Paul: A Critical Life}, 251–322.

\textsuperscript{46} In terms of structure, I see the outline of 1 Cor thus: Introduction: 1:1–9; Part I: Christian Wisdom and Divisions in the Community: 1:10—4:21; Part II: Further abuses in Corinth: 5:1—6:20; Part III: Specific Questions: 7:1—16:23. In this structure, I am following Tobin’s analysis. While acknowledging the contribution of Mitchell in seeing 1 Corinthians as a whole as a deliberative speech towards unity, I do not think 1 Corinthians has one single controlling theme. For example, Mitchell’s treatment of resurrection in 1 Cor 15 does not fully explain how the event of resurrection relates to the theme of unity. Rather, I think Paul’s aim in 1 Corinthians is to respond to a series of issues that have come up in his interactions with the Christ group in Corinth. Unity is an important part of the letter, \textit{among many other themes}. See Margaret M. Mitchell, \textit{Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation}, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991) especially x–xi and 283–90.
addresses questions of divine worship. This structure in itself—Paul’s grouping of the question of the crises involving the community meal under the section on divine worship—is an indication that Paul considers the community meal as a part of a divine event/drama. This structuring of the material by Paul should therefore be regarded as important in defining the nature of the community meal at Corinth.

1 Cor 11:17–34 and the ICM of a Graeco-Roman Banquet

Before we describe how the Lord’s Supper instantiates the prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet, it is important that we situate it within the cognitive model of a banquet in the Graeco-Roman world. The meal described in the group meeting in our pericope meets the criteria of the Idealized Cognitive Model of the Graeco-Roman Banquet in the following ways.

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47 Hans Conzelmann also sees the structure of 11:17–34 as a part of the third part of the letter (chapters 7–15) attending to ‘Answers to Questions.’ See Hans Conzelmann, *I Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), vii–viii; James Dunn extends his view of this section containing 11:17–34 to include the end of chapter 16. Dunn considers these chapters as all dealing with ‘Church and God: Problems of Worship and Belief.’ I think chapter 16 is dealing with an entirely different issue and should be left out of the section dealing with public worship. See James D.G. Dunn, *I Corinthians* (London: T&T Clark, 1999), 5. Joseph Fitzmyer is of the same opinion as Conzelmann, since he puts 11:17–34 as a part of the third section (7:1–14:40) dealing with ‘Answers to Queries about Moral and Liturgical Problems.’ See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* AYBC: 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), viii–x. Margaret M. Mitchell’s rhetorical structure sees 11:17–34 as a slightly separate section dealing with issues of public worship: This part, 11:2—14:40, Mitchell sees the third section of third part of the letter as taking up some rhetorical proofs concerning ‘Manifestations of Corinthian factionalism when Coming together.’ See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, x–xi. Raymond Collins sees a similar structuring as Mitchell, since he sees 11:17–34 as a part of the fourth rhetorical demonstration (11:2–24). See, Collins, *Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians*, vii–x; Anthony C. Thiselton has a slightly different title for the structure and makes 1 Cor 11:17–34 part of a section on ‘Freedom, Status, Reciprocity and Respect for the Other in the Ordering of Public Worship and in Attitudes toward Spiritual Gifts.’ (11:2—14:40); See Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text: NIGTC*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), v–xiii; Gordon D. Fee thinks 11:17–34 is a stand-alone section. See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), vii–xi. Many scholars therefore see our pericope (11:17–34) as a part of the section that focuses on varying questions (chapters 7–14/15) or as a part of a little more restricted section of the letter attending to public worship (11:2—14:40). While this study sees our pericope as a part of the extended section of answers to various questions, (7:1—14:40), with regard to Conzelmann and Fitzmyer, either position makes little or no impact on our understanding of 11:17–34 since both analyses of the structure end up acknowledging that our pericope is within the divine worship section.
A Gathering of More Than Two Persons.

This letter mentions at least seven individuals in the church at Corinth with some of these individuals belonging to households. These include Chloe and her people: 1.11; Crispus and Gaius 1:14; Apollo, who would also have been in Corinth for some time: 1:12; the household of Stephanas 16:15; Fortunatus: 16.17; and Achaicus: 16.17. Also mentioned in this letter are the couple, Aquila and Priscilla (16:19), who according to the narrator of The Acts of the Apostles (18:1–2) moved to Corinth when Emperor Claudius ordered all Jews to leave Rome, an event dated by Suetonius to 49 CE.48

A Meal and Drink

There was also a meal involved. Specifically, only bread is mentioned. (11:24). While only the cup is mentioned, scholars have always assumed that the content of this cup is wine (11:25). The Lord’s Supper narrative in 1 Corinthians is not alone in failing to reveal the contents of the cup. In the texts of the Last Supper narrative, there is no single reference to the contents of the ποτήριον. Additionally, there is also not a single occurrence of the word for wine (οἶνος) in the texts of the Last Supper narrative in the New Testament. While it is safe to assume that the cup does contain wine, the lack of explicitness does not mean, as Fergus King argues, that the “individual writer’s focus on either the cup or contents is irrelevant or of secondary

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importance.” It also not enough to argue that “the cup is not the focus but its contents,” when we are not even told what the contents were.\textsuperscript{50} We know for a fact that some groups of Christians in the first centuries of the movement used water and not wine in their common meals.\textsuperscript{51} What this means is that while in all cases there was some food and drink at least, there was also considerable variety in the content of the meal from one community to another.

The Intentionality of a Meaningful Conversation:

I take the words of the institution narrative in our pericope as fulfilling the requirement of the intentionality of a meaningful conversation. The institution narratives in 11:24–25—which at this stage were not fixed formulas—should be seen as a form of the \textit{theologiae} that were also attested in other unofficial associations.\textsuperscript{52} Like all \textit{theologiae} in similar associations, the role of these narratives was primarily catechetical in nature. That \textit{theologiae} were catechetical in nature will also mean they have come to assume a form of the tradition known to the community and can therefore be handed on. The passing-on of tradition in a structured form is something that was very much alive and practiced in Judaism as well as in other societies in the Graeco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{49} Fergus, King, “Travesty or Taboo? “Drinking Blood” and Revelation 17: 2–6,” \textit{Neot} 38 (2004): 303–25, here 310. It is my view that the omission of the word for wine in the Last Supper narratives was most likely deliberate and theologically motivated.


\textsuperscript{52} IG II\textsuperscript{1} 1368. See the Last Supper narratives in Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–23. See also, McGowan, “Is There a Liturgical Text in This Gospel?” 73–87.

Having established that the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth possessed the properties of the ICM of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition, I will now analyze how this meal instantiates the prototype by analyzing the characteristics of the prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet vis-à-vis the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth.

**1 Cor 11:17–34 and the characteristics of the Symposion**

The Reclining of the Participants

1 Corinthians 11:17–34 does not make any reference to the reclining of the participants at the community meal, as neither the nominal nor verbal forms for reclining appear in this pericope. However, the community at Corinth and Paul are familiar with this posture. When warning the Corinthians against false idols Paul writes,

> ἕαν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σὲ τὸν ἐχοντα γνώσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἢ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοὺς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθῆσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα ἔσθειν

For if someone sees you, who possess knowledge, reclining in the temple of an idol, will this person having a weak conscience not be encouraged (literarily build up) to eat food sacrificed to idols? 1 Cor 8:18 (Translation mine).

It is sometimes difficult to interpret the actual reality of the verbal forms denoting reclining in translating the passages in the New Testament. For instance, the various pericopes on the feeding of the Five thousand all use verbs for reclining at an event in which that would have been impossible. However, in 1 Corinthians, the fact that the context makes reference to the

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precincts of a temple makes it very likely that κατακείμενον does mean reclining and that this was the sense in which the Corinthians must have understood it.\textsuperscript{56} Since Corinth was both an intellectual and cultural center, as well as a vital link in the commercial network of the eastern Mediterranean where it served as capital for the senatorial province of Achaea, it was an ideal place to display the elitist posture of reclining.\textsuperscript{57} In this light, it is safe to assume that some members of the Christ groups in Corinth were wealthy enough to own couches in their homes.\textsuperscript{58} Therefore, the possibility of reclining for at least some at the \textit{Lord’s Supper} becomes more realistic. Additionally, Jesus’ instructions to his disciples in Mark 14:12–16 (cf. Matt 26:17–19; Luke 22:8–18) to prepare for the Passover by going to “the owner of a house to prepare a room upstairs, furnished and ready” seem to point to a room that might have couches for reclining that

\textsuperscript{56} Some of the temples in the Graeco-Roman world do have dining rooms. The temple of Asclepius in Corinth, for instance, does have extensive dining halls. See. Murphy-O’Connor, \textit{St Paul’s Corinth: Texts and Archeology}, 177–91.

\textsuperscript{57} Donald Engels, \textit{Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8. Murray consistently argues that reclining was associated with the elite and was often a performance to be seen. See Murray, “The \textit{Symposion} and Social Status,” 139–253. Marek Wecowski also calls the \textit{Symposion} a strictly egalitarian gathering which served as a “forum for the natural selection of Greek aristocracy, sealing the ascendancy of an ambitious and successful individual.” According to Wecowski, the understanding of who an elite is in the Greek society changed as the society moved from an oligarchy to a democracy, but the symposion never ceased to be perceived as an elite gathering. See, Wecowski, “When Did the Symposion Die?” 258.

\textsuperscript{58} Raymond Collins observes that the community was not a socially homogenous one as the use of “powerful” and “well-born” in 1:26 clearly describes an upper class of people, a social elite. This does not mean everyone in the community was rich; but this description by Paul points to the possibility that some were. Again, Paul wrote about Fortunatus and Achaicus, who have Latin names, and this might suggest that they belonged to the Roman colonists in Corinth. That they were also able to travel with Stephanus suggests they might have been of some means, maybe not of their own, or possibly, they were freedmen with Stephanus. See, Collins, \textit{Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians}, 603. For a different position, see Justin J. Meggitt, who argues that the three phrases often used as evidence of the upper class in Early Christianity (σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δύνατοι, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς) do not mean much when it comes to determining the social class of Christians in Corinth. Since “by itself Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 1:26 can tell us nothing concrete about the social constituency of the congregation he addresses except that a small number were more fortunate than the others.” See Meggitt, Paul, \textit{Poverty and Survival}, 105–6. While these words by themselves mean little, the idea of reclining—combined with the fact that Paul would use the example of reclining while dining in a temple although reclining was elitist-- suggests that the more fortunate ones of Meggitt had some means, at least, financially.
were owned by a benefactor of Jesus. All these suggest that reclining is a posture the Corinthians must have been aware of and taken at meals.

However, it is also possible that some would have to sit during the dinner. At the dinner in Lazarus’s house, Mary was described as sitting (i.e., παρακαθέζομαι) at the feet of Jesus. Relatedly, it is possible that at this meal some would have reclined, and others would have sat, since it was not unusual to find both reclining and sitting as alternative postures at the same dinner in the Graeco-Roman world. Autolycus was described by Xenophon as sitting (καθίζω) by his father Lycon. While our text is silent about the posture at the dinner of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth, we can say that the most likely scenario would be that some members would have reclined, while others would have been seated. In this regard, the Lord’s Supper in Corinth shares the feature of reclining that is an element of the prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet.

The Order of the Lord’s Supper.

On this characteristic of the prototype, our pericope is very clear that there were two parts of the meal and these were denoted as the eating and the drinking. Paul, while redescribing the Last Supper, echoes the words of Jesus, as he notes that Jesus picked the cup after supper. Paul’s words are worth recounting in full here.

Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἐπὶ παρεδίδετο ἐλαβεν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ εἶπεν· Τοῦτό

59 Murphy O’Connor’s argument—though largely speculative—that the divisions among the Christ group in Corinth were rooted in the impossibility of getting all members of the community into a single space is a brilliant understanding of how the structure and seating arrangements could intersect in strengthening social divisions in the Graeco-Roman world. See Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 189.

60 See Benedikt Eckhardt who writes that “while participants in Greco-Roman symposia normally reclined, it has been argued that the members of the Yahad were sitting. While this can, in my opinion, not be proven from the texts, the acceptance of the hypothesis is not problematic, because there are instances of sitting in the symposion in the Greco Roman sources as well.” Benedikt Eckhardt, “Meals and Politics in the “Yahad”: A Reconsideration,” Dead Sea Discoveries 17 (2010): 180–209, here 197.
μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δείπνησαι λέγων Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστίν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὅσακε ἕαν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me,” (1 Cor 11:23–25).

The defining phrase here is μετὰ τὸ δείπνησαι “after supper” and that shows that the drinking was after supper (δείπνον). Luke in 22:20 has ‘μετὰ τὸ δείπνησαι,’ the same phrasing as in 1 Cor 11:25, to show that the drinking was after supper. The two other narratives of the Last Supper have phrasings different from Paul and Luke: ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν in Matt 26:26 and ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν in Mark 14:22. This may denote communities that did not have the resources for the luxury of reclining. More likely however is that these phrasings might be reflecting the fluidity of the texts of the institution narrative, which at this stage were not strictly formulaic.

In both cases (Matthew and Mark), the absence of μετὰ τὸ δείπνησαι is not a decisive argument against the division of the meal into two parts. The acts of eating and drinking were still described as two different aspects of the Last Supper in all the narratives describing the meal in the New Testament.

Relatedly, some have argued that early Christians had two separate meals (and not two sequential events within a meal) at the Lord’s Supper. These meals were called the agape (communal feasting), and the Lord’s Supper proper. However, there is little evidence for two

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separate meals in Paul’s letter to Corinth.⁶³ Joseph Fitzmyer’s argument that early Christ groups had both the agape and Lord’s Supper is based on literary evidence from Pliny the Younger, Jude, and Ignatius.⁶⁴ However, his evidence from Jude, Ignatius, and Pliny the Younger calls for caution, since it comes from texts that are much later than our pericope. Additionally, the text from Pliny the Younger did not state that they met twice for meals. It does say they met first before dawn—with no mention of meal—and then gathered again for the common meal.

However, there is evidence for two separate meals at gatherings of Christians. This was much later and not earlier than the fourth century.⁶⁵ According to Andrew McGowan, it was in the fourth century that substantial meals in households and in other small, settings were

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⁶³ See Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity*, 77. To make this interpretation, Nock notes that the whole of the Lord’s Supper took place ‘after supper’ μετὰ τὸ δείπνησαι. As argued here based on the text, μετὰ τὸ δείπνησαι divides the meal into two parts like a normal Graeco-Roman meal; it does not signify a whole ‘new’ meal. In Athenaeus’ *The Learned Banqueters*, there was an extended conversation on what it means to have finished the dinner (δεδειπνημένη) before the topic of wine was introduced. See, Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, X.422E–423A (Olson, LCL). See also, Box, “The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist,” 357–69. For an argument similar to Nock, see Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 599–600.

⁶⁴ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 429; Jude 12, Ignatius Smyrna 8.2 (Ehrman, LCL) and a variant reading in some manuscripts of 2 Peter 2:13. Pliny the Younger writes:

Adfirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpae suae vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, camenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furtà ne latrocinia ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum adpellati abnegarent. Quibus peractis morem sibi discendendi fuisse rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium.

They also declared that the sum total of their guilt or error amounted to no more than this: they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honor of Christ as if to a god, and also to bind themselves by oath, not for any criminal purpose, but to abstain from theft, robbery and adultery, to commit no breach of trust and not to deny a deposit when called upon to restore it. After this ceremony it had been their custom to disperse and reassemble later to take food of an ordinary, harmless kind. Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10:96:7–8 (Radice, LCL).

⁶⁵ Fitzmyer, who argues that there were separate meals, suggested that clearest distinction of both meals was in the 3rd century at the time of Cyprian of Carthage (ca. 258CE). Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 429.
distinguished clearly from eucharistic gatherings of whole Christian communities.\textsuperscript{66} This then resulted in these domestic gatherings of select Christian invitees being called \textit{agape}, a term that had previously been applied to eucharistic banquets of wider Christian community.\textsuperscript{67} However, in earlier our evidence both “eucharist” and “\textit{agape}” were “terms by which particular communities referred to their whole meal tradition, rather than to specific and clearly defined alternative procedures.”\textsuperscript{68}

On the subject of the menu of the meal, our text is terse. The menu could have been solely bread or bread eaten with another set of foods, with the offering of the bread in this latter case starting off the meal. The ubiquity of bread in meals in the Graeco-Roman world is well attested in many sources, and the popularity of the worship of Demeter as the giver of the grain also substantiates the fame of the grain.\textsuperscript{69} Lynceus of Samos was quoted in \textit{The Learned Banqueters} as saying that an enormous amount of bread was served at the beginning and at the middle of meals.\textsuperscript{70}

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\textsuperscript{67} McGowan, “Food, Ritual and Power,”156.

\textsuperscript{68} McGowan, “Food, Ritual and Power,”156.

\textsuperscript{69} Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, III.109A (Olson, LCL); \textit{Homerig Hymns: To Demeter}, 54 (West, LCL).

\textsuperscript{70} Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, III.109D–E (Olson, LCL). Athenaeus spends a whole section on types of loaves. Cf. Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters} III.109A–116A (Olson, LCL); it was after this lengthy discussion of bread that the decision was made to dine: Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters} III.116A (Olson, LCL). One of the epithets of Demeter is Achaia, the senatorial province in which Corinth was located. There was also dedicated to Demeter and her daughter the festival “Megalarita” (large loaf Festival): Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters} III.109E (Olson, LCL).
The eating of bread as a first act of the meal is attested during Jewish meals, especially the Jewish Passover. The act of blessing and breaking of bread was the first act of many Jewish meals, and this action came to stand as a term for the whole meal. In the insessional evidence we have bread is also an important food.

As earlier noted, the content of the cup in this pericope is not disclosed but the popularity of wine in the Graeco-Roman world—with the worship of Dionysus—and the use of the phrase ‘this fruit of the vine’—τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου—in a parallel passage (Matt 26:29) suggests that the content of the cup likely was wine. Wine was also attested in Jewish meals including during the Passover, in the communal meals in the Dead Sea scrolls and in some inscriptions of the Graeco-Roman world. However, some caution should be exercised here about the contents of the cup, since McGowan points out that,

While the relative ease of access to wine of at least some quality, as well as the conventions related to both Jewish and pagan religious traditions, might suggest that silence regarding the contents of the cup should be interpreted in favour of the presence of wine, there are in fact numerous indications that the use of wine was controversial in early Christian communities. Not only are there plentiful examples of eucharistic meals involving water, but there are also others where no cup is found at all.

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71 1QSa 6:5; 1QSa 6:17–19.
72 Dunn, 1 Corinthians, 77; Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words, 49. See also, Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 599–600.
73 P. Petr. III 136; IG X/2.1 259; IPergamon 374; IJO II 196; TAM V 966; SEG 31.983.
74 1QSa 2:17–20; Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words, 50–51; IPergamon 374; IHistria; IEph 2115; IEph 728; P. Athen 41; SEG 31.983; P. Mich. II.127; P. Oxy. LIV 3740; P. Oxy. LIV 3762; P. Tebt. I 118; P. Tebt. I 177; SB III 7182; P. Tebt. III/2 894: IG II² 1368.
75 McGowan, Ascetic Eucharists, 93.
From the above analysis, it is obvious that the Lord’s Supper in Corinth follows the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition in its sequential order and in the menu of the meal. The sequence is not unique, and menu is not extraordinary.

Libation

This characteristic of the prototype is absent in Paul’s description of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. There have been attempts to link the ritual of the cup to the ritual of libation.\(^{76}\) I am arguing that this link is neither based in the text nor does this link fit the idea of libation in the Graeco-Roman world. However, some points will be helpful in establishing this argument.

First, the word often used for libation to capture the main action of a libation— which is pouring—in Graeco-Roman text (\(\sigma\pi\epsilon\nu\delta\omega\)) is absent from this passage and there is no reference to any pouring in our pericope.\(^{77}\) Remarkably in passages of the institution narrative that parallel our pericope this word (\(\sigma\pi\epsilon\nu\delta\omega\)) is also absent. The \(\sigma\pi\epsilon\nu\delta\omega\) is also always in honor of the gods and there is no evidence of such in the early Christ groups’ common meals.\(^{78}\) The verb used in

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\(^{76}\) Klinghardt writes, “All four accounts of the Last Supper qualify the cup as the cup of libation ceremony” adding that it is the one cup scooped from the krater after the meal. Matthias Klinghardt, “The So-Called “Eucharistic Words” in the Context of Greco-Roman Meals: An outline of their Meaning in the Light of the Seminar’s Achievements” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, Atlanta, 2010), 1–19, here 7. See Taussig, In the Beginning was the Meal, 47.

\(^{77}\) Milette Gaifman defines libation in Greek antiquity as “the intentional pouring of a liquid, whether water, wine, oil, milk, or honey, onto the ground, the sea, or another body of water; or an object typically an altar of a tomb.” Milette Gaifman, The Art of Libation in Classical Athens (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018),1. Emphasis mine.

\(^{78}\) τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν: Luke 22:20; περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον; Matt 26. 28: τὸ ἐκχυνόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν; Mark 14:24. See also \(IG\) II\(^{2}\) 1368. Sometimes the libation can be carried out in honor of a benefactor. See IEph 22, P. Oxy. XLIV 3164. See also, Valeriy A. Alikin who writes that: “The libation was a ceremony in which a special cup of wine, customarily the first of the course, was dedicated to a specific deity, often Zeus, Soter, or a manifestation of Dionysus. During the libation, an acclamation such as ‘To the Good Deity’ was spoken and a small quantity of wine poured out of the cup on the ground.” Valeriy A. Alikin, The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering, 19.
these parallel passages for the pouring is the participial form of ἐκχέω.  

An analysis of the liquid offering at cultic rituals show that the New Testament writers have settled for a verbal form associated with blood rituals and not the verbal form association with wine rituals (libation). While the Israelite blood ritual is sometimes thought of and associated with libation, it is entirely different. Not only are these two ideas different for the ancient Jews, but the linguistic terminology is also different. The Israelite blood ritual is often in relation to the cleansing of impurity, and it is rooted in the notions of bloodguilt and its expiation. The Graeco-Roman libation on the other hand is either an acknowledgment of the gods as a giver of the liquid being poured or as a token to the gods invoking them to have their share in the meal.

Northwest Semitic (Hebrew and Aramaic are included in this grouping) often use the word תַפָה (šāpāḵ) when talking of “pouring” and particularly of “spilling” blood. Bo Johnson writes that for the blood cult in Israel, the most common verb is špk. The only deviation from this pattern of usage for špk is found in Lev 8:15; 9:9—the narrative of Aaron’s consecration and first sacrifice—where another verb for pouring—γυγια—was used in the same construction as the

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79 The pouring referred to in these parallel passages was referenced when Jesus metaphorically described the effect of the contents of the cup. It was not an actual act of pouring.

80 For more on the different terms used in the blood ritual and libation in Jewish ritual settings, See, C. Dohmen, ‘‘םוֹט nāsak; יָנְס nesek; יָנְס nāsīk; יָנְס massēkā; יָנְס masseket; יָנְסIl sūk; יָנְס ‘āsūk” TDOT 9: 455–60; idem, ‘‘תַנְמָז nizbēah,” TDOT 8:209–25.

81 Yitzhaq Feder, Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual Origin, WAWSup 2 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 247. Naphtali S. Meshel also notes that blood rituals are understood as “indicative of a process of purgation or merely disposal, that it serves to withhold blood from human consumption, and that it implies that the blood belongs to YHWH a priori, and therefore cannot be part of the offerer’s sacrificial gift. See Naphtali S. Meshel, “The Form and Function of a Biblical Blood Ritual,” VT 63 (2013): 276–89, here 288.


83 R. Liwak, “תַפָה šāpāḵ; יָנְס šēpek; יָנְס šōpāḵ” TDOT 15:431–442.
usual špk.\(^84\) One very interesting linguistic observation is that יַצָי (šāpāḵ)—the word used in connection with the spilling or pouring of blood—was as a rule translated in the LXX using a Greek verbal form of ἐκχύσω, which was the same word used in connection with the cup at the Lord’s Supper.\(^85\) For example, in 1 Kgs 18:28, the LXX uses the nominal form ἐκχύσεως (ἐκχύσις) for the infinitive of špk and in Lev 4:12, the LXX repeats the same word—ἐκχύσεως—for the nominal form of šepek.\(^86\) The importance of the narratives of the Lord’s Supper using ἐκχύσεως, the word that translates the Hebrew word for the outpouring of blood ritual, is that this places the Lord’s Supper in the category of a Jewish blood ritual.\(^87\)

That libation and the verbal form of σπένδω were known to the Jews is shown in some references in the Old Testament where the verb σπένδω is used, mainly in a ritual context translating the Hebrew root word יָסַּק (nšk).\(^88\) Σπένδω was known to the Jews and it was used to

\(^84\)Bo Johnson, “יָסַק yāṣaq; יָסִיעַת šitq; יָסָק ṣaq; יָסָק qāṣ; יָסָק ṣaq II; יָסָק qāṣ II; יָסָק māṣī” TDOT 6: 254–57. Johnson explains the nuances of the various verbal forms as follows: “When it is compared with other roots of similar meaning (such as nšk, ntk, and špk), the semantic fields are often found to overlap. What primarily distinguishes yṣq is its reference to pouring upon or into something. While nšk is especially common with a drink offering as its object, špk refers to pouring in general; what is poured out is not collected in some kind of vessel but falls upon the ground and drains away. (6: 254). The root yṣq, on the other hand, is used primarily in cases where the liquid being poured has a particular destination such as a container or a part of the body to be anointed.” See also, Dohmen, “םיזבאת mizbēaḥ,” TDOT: 8: 209–225. See especially in this last reference the section on blood rite (3a). See also, Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, trans. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), Logos edition. 427. s.v. יָסַק; 651. s.v. יָסָק; 1049–50. s.v. יָסַּק.

\(^85\)Liwak, “ןַצָי šāpāḵ” TDOT 441. Further examples include Exod 24:7; Deut 12:16; Isa 59:7; Num 35:33.

\(^86\)Liwak, “ןַצָי šāpāḵ.” TDOT 441.

\(^87\)While the cup ritual at the Last Supper is to be placed in the category of a Jewish blood ritual, this categorization calls for a caveat. The reason for a caveat here is that while the Jewish blood ritual is actually poured out and never drunk (since Jews are prohibited from tasting blood i.e., Lev 17:10), the cup at the Last Supper was never actually poured out but drunk. So, while there is the linguistic correlation between the cup at the Last Supper and Jewish blood ritual, there remains a difference. However, the linguistic relationship between these two suggests similar or close interpretations (at least metaphorical) of the two. This means the cup at the Lord’s Supper shares a more of a kinship with the blood ritual rather than the Graeco-Roman libation ritual.

describe the ritual pouring of liquids (except blood). While σπένω is used twice in the New Testament, it is not in the context of a meal or ritual but in the metaphorical context of Paul pouring out his life as a libation. As pointed out in chapter three, a libation must always involve a pouring out on a surface, an activity which the term σπένω best captured. This act of pouring out of the liquid on a surface is again absent from our texts on the Last Supper and especially as it relates to the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. Additionally, Paul never referenced libations or compared the cup to it. Charles H. Cosgrove rightly asks if there is a sufficient basis for making libation and the blessing of the cup in the Lord’s Supper in Corinth equivalent.

While one admits this verbal link between the Jewish blood ritual and the cup in the texts of the institution narratives, one must always note that this link is metaphorical since in our pericope and its parallel passages, there was no actual act of pouring and the contents of the cup according to Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, was the Sukkot Wine Libation. Each day during this festival, a priest will pour a double libation of water and wine upon the altar. The water for libation was drawn from the Pool of Siloam and then carried in a formal procession to the Temple and then placed in a bowl on the southwestern corner of the altar. The Priest, thereafter, will pour a libation of wine into a second bowl in such a way that both libations of water and wine flowed into the altar simultaneously. Cf. Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, “The Sukkot Wine Libation,” in Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine, ed. Robert Chazan, William W. Halo, and L.H. Schiffman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 575–91, here 575.

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90 Philippians 2:16, 4:5.


92 Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine,” 312. See McGowan who writes, “although opening toasts or libations were not unknown in other Greco-Roman settings, these Jewish and Christian meals also seem to omit together the typical mixing and drinking of wine after the food.” McGowan, “Rethinking Eucharistic Origins,” 187.

93 Cosgrove, “Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine,” 312.
was drunk. Jews have a ritual reason to avoid the consumption of blood.\textsuperscript{94} While I argue that the cup in the \textit{Lord’s Supper} at Corinth is not a cup of libation but has more to do with the Jewish blood ritual, this link with the blood ritual is a metaphorical link and not to be taken literally. Therefore, if comparisons between the \textit{Lord’s Supper} and other Graeco-Roman meals cannot identify a subtle difference such as this between libation and the cup in the \textit{Lord’s Supper} at Corinth, the meaning and the distinctive character of the latter is lost.

One reason why the cup in the texts of the institution narrative is often equated with the act of libation is because it is believed that libation grounds the religious character of the \textit{Symposion}. However, the question of whether libation makes the \textit{symposion} a religious event is one that needs to be answered on its own. In this regard, it has often been argued that the Graeco-Roman world did not make a separation between the sacred and the profane—or at least, the ‘sacred versus secular or profane’ model is not applicable to ancient meals.\textsuperscript{95} The major evidence adduced for this argument is the ritual of libation in formal meal contexts.\textsuperscript{96}

While not denying that the libation gives the beginning of the \textit{symposion} a religious character, it does not establish the \textit{symposion} (or any meal) as a religious event. In fact, libation


\textsuperscript{95} Smith, \textit{From Symposium to Eucharist}, 6. See also, Stein who writes “There was thus no strict demarcation line between the sacred and the profane in this type of literature and in the pattern of life it tried to depict.” Stein, “The Influence of Symposia Literature,” 26. See Schmitt-Pantel who also argues that “the ‘insertion of the religious element’ is clear in all the collective practices … whether \textit{symposion}, meal of hospitality, or sacrificial banquet and the sacred-profane distinction seems inapplicable here.” Schmitt-Pantel, “Sacrificial Meal and \textit{Symposion},” 24. Mark Mueller writes—in his comments on the Inscription, P. Oxy. XXXI 2592—that: “We must keep in mind that religious observance was not separated out from life’s more mundane activities or social institutions; it was deeply embedded in daily activity in the ancient world.” Mueller, “P. Oxy. XXXI 2592: Invitation to a Cultic Banquet,” in \textit{GRA III:} 423–27. See also McGowan who writes that, “The difference between the religious character of one meal and another should usually be seen as a matter of degree rather than one of distinction, even if we sometimes allow a certain cynicism or complacency in their execution.” McGowan, \textit{Ascetic Eucharists}, 47.

\textsuperscript{96} Jamir, \textit{Exclusion and Judgment}, 15.
takes place when the first part of the meal has been concluded, as a form of transition between
the two acts of the meal event. Libation itself is the only part of the meal that references the
gods, not the symposion as a whole. Once the gods have been given their due, the symposion
itself assumes a non-sacral character. Libation links the act of pouring to the gods; it does not
link the whole meal event to the gods. Even Demeter, the goddess of grain—in spite of the
popularity of bread in the Graeco-Roman world—has no space in the dinner before the
Symposion. Religious feasting, in the words of Oswyn Murray, belongs elsewhere and not in the
symposion. In spite of the ritual of libation, the gods do not assume any significance during the
symposion, which was often characterized by excessive drinking and wasting of the rest of the
wine on playing kottabos. The libation to the gods reflects the beliefs of those at the symposion
about the relationship of the wine element and the gods. It does not reveal anything about the
religious character of the symposion itself. Libation tells us more about the contemporary
beliefs about wine and not about the religious character of the symposion.

In the Learned Banqueters, Athenaeus describes dinners in Alexandria in which people
shout, scream and swear at the wine-steward, the waiter, and the cook, while their slaves cry out

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97 Compare this to Jewish meals in which the breaking of bread that started the whole meal is preceded by
some prayers of blessing. The reference to Demeter at the beginning of the meal to sanctify the bread is absent in
our sources except during her festivals. Dohmen in this regard writes: “it is noteworthy that libation almost never
appears as an independent sacrificial act; to the extent that it is not part of a divine meal, it is usually an ancillary or
preliminary offering with a specific symbolic function.” See Dohmen, “נָסָק” TDOT 9:458.

98 Murray, “Conclusion: Greek forms of Sociality,” 283–309.

99 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, XI.782B (Olson, LCL). See also, Xenophanes, Fragments 1: 1–26
(Gerber, LCL).

100 See the section on Libation in chapter three where I laid out this relationship.

101 Now, this takes another significant meaning if the symposion is cultic.
in pain from the mistreatment they received during the course of the dinner. His conclusion is that:

And not only are the guests thoroughly disgusted as they consume their meal but if this is a sacrificial rite (ἀλλὰ κἂν τύχῃ θυσία τις οὖσα), the god will cover his face (ὁ θεὸς οἰχήσεται) and leave, abandoning not just the house, but the entire city; for it is ridiculous that the same person who called for words of good omen only is now cursing his wife and his children.  

Athenaeus’ conditional statement about the presence of the gods in this remark shows that some in the Graeco-Roman world did not regard the presence of the gods as consequential at some banquets even after ‘words of good omen’ have been recited. For the Lord’s Supper because the Lord is present, the behavior of the participants has consequences. The Graeco-Roman world’s attitudes to the gods are definitely more complex than our neat separation of church and state presumes—a distinction which is not as neat as we often claim. Tim Whitmarsh notes, for instance, that the idea that everything in the ancient world is immersed in a

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102 Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, X.420E (Olson, LCL).

103 Καὶ οὐχ ὁδὸν οἱ κεκλημένοι μετὰ πάσης ἀράδιας δειπνοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ κἂν τύχῃ θυσία τις οὖσα, παρακλησάμενοι ὁ θεὸς οἰχήσεται καταλιπὼν οὐ μόνον τὸν οἶκον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἀπασαν γελοῦν γάρ ἐστιν αὐτὸν <τῶν> εὐφημίαν κηρύσσαντα καταράσθαι τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις. Athenaeus, The Learned Banqueters, X.420E–F (Olson, LCL).

104 In this case, a future more vivid conditional statement [κ]ἂν in the protasis with the subjunctive (τύχη) and in the apodosis, the future indicative or any other form referring to future time (οἰχήσεται). Cf. Herbert Weir Smyth, Greek Grammar, rev. Gordon M. Messing, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956),523–26. (§2323–§2328). According to Smyth, “With the vivid Future the speaker sets forth a thought as prominent and distinct in his mind; and for any one or more of various reasons. Thus, he may (and generally does) regard the conclusion as more likely to be realized; but even an impossible or dreaded result may be expressed by this form if the speaker chooses to picture the result vividly and distinctly. The More Vivid Future is thus used whenever the speaker clearly desires to be graphic, impressive, emphatic, and to anticipate a future result with the distinctness of the present.” 522–23. (§2322).

105 Relatedly Saba Mahmood writes, “Even if we understand secularism in its most narrow sense—as the doctrinal separation of religion and state—it is worth noting that this separation has been negotiated in a variety of ways. See Saba Mahmood, Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 77.
religion/religious climate does not recognize that there were those in the Graeco-Roman world who held opinions that we today might consider atheistic or agnostic. Whitmarsh writes,

> It is of course undeniable that religion has dominated human culture as far back as we can trace it. The problem lies with the normative claims built on that observation. Too often religious practice is imagined to be the regular state of affair, needing no explanation whereas any kind of deviation is seen as weird or remarkable.106

In relation to meals, Fergus King captures this need to be careful in dealing with the religious complexity of the ancient world when he writes that “meals in ancient societies can include what we might differentiate as both sacred, that is eaten in a religious context, and secular. However, this distinction need not conform to ours.”107

This study sees the relationship between a sacred and a ‘non-sacred’ space in the Graeco-Roman world in terms of sacral and non-sacral rather than sacred and profane.108 It is within this distinction that the sacred and religious character of a meal should be evaluated. A sacred event

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106 Tim Whitmarsh, Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World (New York: Knopf, 2015), 4–5. Whitmarsh’s position on atheism in the ancient has been duly criticized for lacking clear examples. His failure to also define what he means by atheism—which I think is a significant oversight on his part—has also come under some criticism. While I agree with these criticisms, I still think that Whitmarsh’s call that we should be cautious about brushing the ancient world with a religious brush is one that should be heeded. For criticisms of Whitmarsh’s work, see Jan N. Bremmer, a review of Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World, by Tim Whitmarsh, CP 113 (2018): 373–79 and Kenneth W. Yu, a review of Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World, by Tim Whitmarsh, JR (2017): 446–48.

107 King, More Than a Passover, 55–56. As an example, there are many instances even in our secular world in which sportsmen and women make religious gestures before a game. That gesture does not signify that that event is religious. Relatedly, a Christian family saying the ‘Grace before meal’ does not make the dinner a religious event. It does reveal their beliefs about the food and its sources, but the dinner is primarily non-sacral. That distinction needs to be made clearly and understood.

is governed by the rules of piety. In such a space, sacrilege is possible and often there are warnings against sacrilegious acts.

A non-sacral event does not mean that that event is not under the eyes of the gods, but that the event is not described as primarily the space of the gods but the space of mortals. A non-sacral event does not deny the presence of the gods, but in such events the primary focus is not on the honor and power of the gods but relationship among mortals. While a sacred event—including all sacred meals—are primarily the space of the gods, non-sacral events are secondarily so. In a sacred event, the honor and power of the gods assume the center stage, and this opens the door for a possible sacrilege. This relationship in Greek can be captured—though imperfectly—in the *ta hiera* (things of the gods) and *ta hosia* (human sphere) distinction.\(^{109}\)

While sacrilege and injustice are possible within a *ta hiera* sphere, injustice is the vice conceivable in a *ta hosia* sphere.\(^{110}\)

This distinction between *ta hiera* and *ta hosia* is made clear in some Greek sources. In Demosthenes’s argument *Against Timocrates*, he notes that:

To think that, when he and Androtion were in office, he never had any compassion for the great body of your fellow-citizens, who were exhausted with paying income-tax, and that then when Androtion was called upon to refund money, *both sacred and civil*, which he had long before stolen from the State, he must needs propose a law to deprive you of the double repayment of civil, and the tenfold repayment of sacred, liabilities! Thus, the whole mass of you citizens has been attacked by a man who was immediately afterwards to pretend that he had framed his law as a friend of the people.

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\(^{110}\) “There is nothing among mankind better than a father and a mother, Cyrmus, who care about holy justice.”

οὐδὲν ἐν ἀνθρώποις πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς ἁμεινονεῖλθ’, ὁσοὶς ὁσίη, Κύρνε, μέμηλε δίκη. Theognis, *Elegiac Poems* 130–131 (Gerber, LCL)
A close analogy to this *ta hiera* and *ta hosia* relationship can be seen in the Ten commandments of Judaism. The *ta hiera* will be the rules that discuss respecting God, while the *ta hosia* will be the rules that prescribe fundamental rules of conduct between humans.\(^\text{112}\)

What this means for my argument is that we must take a closer look at the distinction between what was sacred and what was not sacred in the Graeco-Roman world. Libation does not make a meal sacred. This distinction between what is sacred and what is civil needs to be maintained especially in civil meals that appear to be sacred but are not. This distinction will help us to interpret what goes on in formal meals in the Graeco-Roman world that are non-sacral but nevertheless have libation.\(^\text{113}\) The interpretation of the incidence of sickness and death in Corinth among the Christ group in this city is incomprehensible if this distinction is erased or blurred. At work in Corinth in Paul’s interpretation of the misfortunes occurring in the community is an understanding of sacrilege, one that regards the meal as taking place in a sacred space. The *Symposion*—either as a prototype, a cultural or a literary institution—was not a sacred meal *because* of the libation ritual.

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\(^{111}\) Demosthenes, *Orationes: Against Timocrates* 82.111 (Vince, LCL). See Plato, *Republic*, 344A (Emlyn-Jones and Preddy, LCL); See also, Lysias, *Against Nichomachus*, 25 (Lamb, LCL)

\(^{112}\) Blok, “A ‘Covenant’ between Gods and Men,” 25

\(^{113}\) Scholars who argue that there is no demarcation between the sacred and the non-sacred often claimed that the religious character of a meal in the ancient world was a matter of degree not of quality. However, difficulty arises when one tries to outline where the degree of the divine presence starts and end.
The Symposiarch

Our text is silent on a leader for the dinner party. In this regard, Fitzmyer notes that while Paul was aware of someone presiding over the early communities, in the case of the community at Corinth, “nothing is said about the nature of such presiding or whether it is envisaged as a eucharistic assembly.” It is possible to assume that this community would have some leadership structure like we have for other unofficial associations, but it is not clear what sort of impact this would have on the communal meal. Additionally, the fact that the crisis at the meal (and many other crises) was being reported to Paul shows that some in the community still felt that Paul—though not living in Corinth—has some authority in Corinth.

Richard Last and Jin Hwan Lee both ingeniously suggest that it was the election of leaders for the administration of the Lord’s Supper that caused the problems at the common meal in Corinth. Last sees a problem in the traditional translation of 11:19,

Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine … (δεὶ γὰρ καὶ αἱρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν εἶναι, ἢν [καὶ] οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν)

He argues that this translation does not capture the reality on the ground in Corinth. For him, the crisis in the Corinthian meal is one occasioned by a change of leadership in the community. Occasional crises over leadership were not rare in other Graeco-Roman associations. To capture the leadership crisis in Corinth, Last proposes that this verse be translated thus:

There needs to be elections among you in order that the approved ones become persons of distinction.

114 Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 431–32. One of such examples is the *Proïstamenos*, “someone standing at the head.” Cf. 1 Thess 5:12 and Rom 12:8.

Unfortunately, Last’s remarkable translation and argument have no support in the text. There is neither any evidence of elections nor of a crisis resulting from elections among the early Christ groups. Additionally, not every association or group in the Graeco-Roman world saw such elections as a means of selecting their leaders, especially at their meals. Bestowing honors, first seats, or leadership positions were quite common among these unofficial associations, including Judean associations.\textsuperscript{116} In some cases, the honor of a leadership position was even extended to the sons of a foremost member of the association.\textsuperscript{117} Let us even assume that the argument holds—that the Christ group had elections of officers at Corinth and this resulted in the crisis at the communal meal—it is neither clear that the presiding officers were the same as the presiders of the community meal nor do we have an idea of the roles of the elected officers. That Paul consistently addresses the community as a whole—he consistently used plural of the second person pronoun (ὑμῖν)—is an indication that if there was a concept of leadership at Corinth, it was either insignificant to his argument or inconsequential to his overarching authority (11:34).

Lee’s argument is similar but, in some ways, distinct from that of Last. He argues that the crisis at Corinth was caused by some highly ranking members of the community—old officers—who rejected the elections of the poorer members who were the new officers.\textsuperscript{118} As earlier argued with regard to Last, we do not have enough literary evidence for electoral issues and concerns in these associations to extrapolate a situation unattested in Paul’s letters for the community at Corinth.

\textsuperscript{116} LIO II 36; IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1326.

\textsuperscript{117} IG II\textsuperscript{2} 1326.

\textsuperscript{118} Lee, The Lord’s Supper in Corinth, 143, 174.
Also, while it is true that there were electoral issues in some Graeco-Roman associations, many of these associations had guiding statutes to handle such issues. In this case, Paul does not appeal to any statutes but tries to resolve the crisis by appealing to tradition. He then concludes by telling them to wait for his impending arrival. \(^{119}\) This does not appear to be an electoral crisis. As Gerd Theissen argues, we have enough evidence in the text to reliably suggest that the crises in Corinth were a result of there being some who had the means to provide for their own supper, \((	ò ἵδιον δὲ ἐδειπνον v. 21),\) and some who did not \((	οὐς μὴ ἔχοντας v. 22).\) \(^{120}\) It therefore appears to be a question of means and not a question of access to power.

While the position of a symposiarch is attested in the *Symposion*, it is not indispensable for its instantiation. Therefore, the presence of a symposiarch, or its absence, does not affect the position that the *Lord’s Supper* has a place in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

**Associative Personages**

This is a feature that is attested in our text but not as we have it in the *symposion*. The participants at the *Lord’s Supper* were those who have come to associate themselves with the Christ cult in Corinth. There seemed to be no room for personages such as flute-players, courtesans, dancers, or male homosexual partners as we have with civil banquets. This capacity for a group to determine its associate personages at a meal is not unique to the Christ group as

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\(^{119}\) P. Lond. VII 2198; *IG* II\(^2\) 1368;1Qs;1QSa.

\(^{120}\) Theissen, “Social Integration and Sacramental Activity,” 145–74. Brookins also argues persuasively that there is sufficient contextual evidence in this text to establish eschatological context for both σχίσματα and αἱρέσεις (and not an electoral context) in the common meal at Corinth. See, Brookins, “The Supposed Election of Officers in 1 Cor 11.19,” 423–32. See also Fergus J. King who argues that the poor in the community is a reference to the righteous, or those who have a correct view of faith and practice.” Fergus J. King, “Eating in Corinth: Full Meal or Token Meal?” *IBS* 19 (1997): 161–73, here 168.
many of the unofficial associations were “semi-exclusive.”"¹²¹ Often groups extended participation at meetings and meals not only to their members but also to initiates. With regard to the entertainment at the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth—on which our pericope is silent—this seemed to have been provided by members of the group, i.e., “in house.” Parallel evidence among early Christ groups supports this position. Attestations of the practice of “in-house entertainment” included the example of Jesus and his disciples singing hymns in the context of the *Last Supper*. Later on, Pliny would note that the Christ group chanted alternately a hymn to Christ as to a god.¹²²

The Threat of Chaos

This is a characteristic that is attested in the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth. The chaotic nature the meal was descending into is confirmed with the use of the words σχίσματα (divisions v.18) and αἵρεσεῖς (factions v.19).¹²³ Scholarship on this passage traditionally takes these two terms to have eschatological implications. This means that Paul sees these divisions in Corinth as signs of the end times. For Gordon Fee, these terms are more than sociological because these present divisions are an “inevitable part of the eschaton.”¹²⁴ The eschatological inevitability of these divisions is always linked to Paul’s use of δεῖ (It is necessary/there has to be). This for interpreters meant there was a divine necessity to these divisions.¹²⁵ In this line of thought, these divisions

¹²¹ By semi-exclusive I mean these associations’ meals were open to members and aspiring members.


were to be seen in the light of the teaching of Jesus about divisions in the household at the end times.\textsuperscript{126}

However, the eschatological force of δεῖ in this verse is not as clear as sometimes argued.\textsuperscript{127} While it is known that early Christians saw divisions as not only a necessary but also a penultimate reality, this verse may be seen as having some sense of irony along with some sense of resignation by Paul.\textsuperscript{128} While it is possible these divisions could be interpreted eschatologically, they seem to be reflecting more of a local crisis relating to the seating arrangements at dinners or the kind of food served.\textsuperscript{129}

If one sees the divisions and factions as an evidence of a local crisis, the Christ group in Corinth will be seen as sharing in a possibility known to occur all too frequently at the sympotic gatherings of other unofficial associations in the Graeco-Roman world. Already Paul indicates at the start of the letter that a number of crises among the Christ group at Corinth were faction-based.\textsuperscript{130} Paul’s notion of the divisions in this community should not be divorced from his

\begin{footnotes}
\item Fee,\textit{ The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 596–97. See Matt 10:34–37; Eph 5:19; 1 Cor 14:26; Col 3:16.
\item Fitzmyer,\textit{ First Corinthians}, 431–32. Murphy-O’Connor notes that the interpretation of ‘divine necessity’ in this case in no way makes real sense in the overall context of the pericope. See, Murphy-O’Connor,\textit{ Key to First Corinthians}, 218.
\item Fitzmyer,\textit{ First Corinthians}, 431. See also, Martial\textit{ Epigrams} 3.60; Younger Pliny,\textit{ Letters}, II.6 (Radice, LCL); Juvenal,\textit{ Satire}, 5.162 (Braund, LCL).
\item 1 Cor. 1: 10–16. See Fee who argues that the divisions at the communal meal here are different from the ones earlier mentioned in 1:10–16. (Fee,\textit{ The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 595–96). Mitchell also argues that the overarching theme of the letter is reconciliation and that these divisions are related. For her, the concern of Paul here (11:17–34) is the way the σχίσματα is manifested in their coming together (συνερχομένων). Therefore, there is no need to separate the number of divisions existing among the Christ group in Corinth from local realities. (Mitchell,\textit{ Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation}, 151–57). For a contrary opinion, see Thiselton, who argues that “the educated and sophisticated ‘strong’ at Corinth… appealed to an eschatological maxim “dissensions are unavoidable.” (Thiselton,\textit{ The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 858–86). Murphy-O’Connor echoes this idea of Thiselton and writes that “it is simply a proverbial summary of the way things are.” (Murphy-O’Connor,\textit{ Key to First Corinthians}, 858–86).
\end{footnotes}
experiences among other Christ groups which he founded in Galatia and Philippi. In our pericope, Paul was interpreting the divisions as signifiers of who was in the right and who was in the wrong as it relates to the common meal. The divisions help identify and differentiate those who understand the nature of the meal and those who do not. An eschatological interpretation of the divisions in Corinth is possible but not necessary. Paul’s note at the end of our pericope that he will be giving further instructions is an additional testimony that the divisions were not necessarily eschatological. These are existential issues which can and will be resolved. The divisions at Corinth show that the Lord’s Supper at Corinth has the possibility of chaos, characteristic of the symposion, the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

As can be seen so far, the Lord’s Supper in Corinth mostly follows the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal traditions in its characteristics. The next step to be seen is what this meal brings to the meal tradition: that is, the ways in which this meal is distinct.

\footnote{First Corinthians, 221). Regarding this idea of a maxim, I think it is too speculative to draw from this pericope quotations of the parties involved in the crisis with the community meal. My position is that the divisions at the communal meal are a manifestation of the general local divisions at Corinth earlier hinted by Paul in 1:1–16.}

\footnote{Gal 1:7; 2:11–12; 6:12. Phil 1:12–18. It should be noted that chaos in Corinth is capable of being interpreted at multiple levels. At one level, the deaths, illness and sickness in Corinth is also a form of chaos but that is not my immediate concern in this dissertation. I am more interested in seeing the divisions in Corinth as a form on chaos introduced by human agents. Also, while chaos might take the form of violence in its extreme, it does not always take the form of violence.}

\footnote{For rules (νομοί), see: IG II² 1369; LSAM 80; IG II 1368; IG XII, 3 330; TAM V 1539; ISmyrna 728; P. Mich. V 244; P. Mich. V 245; BGU XIV 2371; SEG 31:122; IG X/2.1 259; IFayum III; CIL XIV 2112; 1QS 6:16 – 7.25; 1QSa 2:11–22. For fines, see: BGU V 1210; LSAM 80; SEG 31:122; TAM V 1539; P. Mich. V 244; P. Mich. V 245; BGU XIV 2371; IG II² 1368; CIL XIV 2112; P. Lille. Dem. I 29; PSI XII 1265; For expulsions, see: IG II² 1368; 1QS 6:16 – 7.25.}
Notable Distinctions of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth as an Instantiation of the Prototype

The Possibility of Sacrilege

The first distinction which brings to light the nature of this meal is the interpretation that Paul gives to the sickness and death experienced in the community. He sees these tragic events as divine punishment for the sacrilegious abuse of the “body of the Lord.” Paul writes that it is,

διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἁρσθενεῖς καὶ ἀρρωστοὶ καὶ κοιμώνται ἱκανοί (v. 30)

For this reason, many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.¹³³

Paul’s attribution of the illnesses and death in the community at Corinth to their abuse of what the bread and cup signified—the Lord’s body and blood—is not only strange but bewildering in the context of a formal meal in an unofficial association.¹³⁴ What we have in this pericope is an

¹³³ Fee notes that attempt by “S. Schneider to understand these terms metaphorically has (rightly) fallen on deaf ears.” According to him, Schneider—almost alone—“argues that the three key words ἁρσθενεῖς, ἀρρωστοὶ, and κοιμώνται are used metaphorically, not physically, to denote weak in faith, spiritually sick, and asleep or lethargic, to convey the cumulative sense of having a moribund faith.” See Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 625. For Schneider’s position, see Sebastian Schneider, “Glaubensmängel in Korinth. Eine neue Deutung der ‘Schwachen, Kranken, Schlafenden’ in 1 Kor 11:30,” Filologia Neotestamentaria 9 (1996): 3–19. See also, Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 894. See also the interesting but unconvincing view of Calvin L. Porter, who interprets this verse to mean “Instead of ‘and some have died’ I take the text to be saying that ‘some have fallen asleep’ in the sense that they are roaming about in their own private world and failing to use their intelligence.” See Calvin L. Porter, “An Interpretation of Paul’s Lord’s Supper Texts: 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 and 11:17–34,” Enc 50 (1989): 29–45, here 36. In the words of Judith M. Gundry, “We need not presuppose some magical effect of the eucharistic elements as a φάρμακον θανασίας. But neither do the sicknesses and deaths have merely natural causes (here, for example, gluttony). For they result from divine chastening (ὑπὸ [τοῦ] κυρίου παθωτόμεθα). God has dealt our corporeal punishments as the ‘material consequences of guilt for defiling the Lord’s Supper’. ” See Judith M. Gundry [Volf], Paul, and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 103.

¹³⁴ Jamir’s argument that the references to the cup (and the bread by implication) implied that the interpretation is not attached to the elements but to the act of administration overlooks Paul’s linking of the content of the cup with the ‘blood of the Lord,’ which Paul used sometimes interchangeably (see 11:25–29). Jamir is making this point because he sees that elements are sacred species. One need to deny that Paul’s identification of the elements of the meal with the body and blood of the Lord to establish that the administration of the elements is significant for Paul. Committing sacrilege at this communal meal is not dependent on the elements being ‘consecrated elements.’ A human provoking a god or a god’s perceived presence is a sufficient case for sacrilege in the first century. See Jamir, Exclusion and Judgment, 157. See also Mitchell who writes that “The Corinthian factions, especially as manifested in their cultic assemblies, are an affront to Christ.” Mitchell, Paul, and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, 157.
approach to, or an interpretation of, a chaotic situation at meals that is different from what is observable in the various associations in the Graeco-Roman world. While there were hints of misbehavior and fights at these associations, these disciplinary issues were often dealt with either by fine or expulsion. We do not have an interpretation of death being connected with misbehavior at their meals. In making this interpretation, Paul was accusing the Christ group in Corinth of sacrilege.

Sacrilege in the ancient world entails dishonorin and disrespecting the power and presence of the gods, especially by taking what belongs to the god. This idea of a sacrilege being an affront to the gods is captured in some early definitions of the word sacrilege. Cicero sees a sacrilege as “the theft not merely of what is sacred, but also of anything entrusted to what is sacred.” Quintilian defines a sacrilege as the stealing of sacred property from the temple. Legally, “sacrilege may be defined as stealing from a temple some sacred object which, according to the State prescriptions, has been duly and officially dedicated to the gods.” Among the Greeks, the word for sacrilege (ἱεροσολησις) also captures this basic notion of theft

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135 Some of the common issues that show up in inscriptions of the Graeco-Roman world include, “seat stealing, litigation against fellows, verbal abuse and non-attendance at banquets.” See Kloppenborg, “Greco-Roman Thiasoi, the Ekklesia at Corinth, and Conflict Management,” 211. Also, Kloppenborg states that though there is no evidence of the Corinthian group fining members, “Paul appears to know and invoke a scenario of reward and fining that was typical of the behavior of associations.” Cf. Kloppenborg, “Greco-Roman Thiasoi, the Ekklesia at Corinth, and Conflict Management,” 214. Also, Rachel M. Mcrae argues that “whereas some associations used fines, floggings, and expulsion to punish aberrant behavior, Paul attempts to shame the Corinthian community into better treatment of the disadvantaged at the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:22), even though he deplored the honor/shame code.” Mrae, “Eating with Honor,” 175. Unfortunately for the Corinthians—according to Paul—given the records of deaths, this is probably more than an issue of the honor/shame code.

136 qui sacrum abstulerit, sed etiam ei, qui sacro commendatum Cicero De Legibus 2.16.41 (Keyes, LCL).

137 “It is sacrilege to steal sacred property from a temple”: Sacrilegium est rem sacrum de templo surripere. Quintilian, The Orator’s Education (Institutio Oratoria), 7.3.10 (Russell, LCL).

in a sacred space. Even when these words are absent, events that capture this sense attract the anger of the gods. Herodotus narrates the story of Alyattes, the Lydian king, whose army inadvertently set fire and burned the temple of Athene while burning crops. The result of this was the sickness that befell Alyattes and which “lasted longer than it should.” In the end, Alyattes atoned by building two temples for Athene. In Hebrew, the closest word to capturing the idea of sacrilege in the Hebrew Bible is the word *ma’al* (מָעַל). This was the word used to describe the sin of Achan who stole things consecrated to God and who was stoned to death. Similarly, king Uzziah committed sacrilege by arrogating to himself the duties of priests and was a leper till he died. And although later than our pericope, the story of Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5:1-11), the couple who kept back some proceeds of the sale of their property and lied to the Apostles about the total amount accrued from the sale of their property, should also be read in the light of sacrilege. In reality, in the Graeco-Roman world sacrilege came to cover any

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139 LSJ, 822. s.v. *ἱεροσύλησις*. See also, 2 Macc 4:39: “When many acts of sacrilege had been committed in the city by Lysimachus with the connivance of Menelaus, and when report of them had spread abroad, the populace gathered against Lysimachus, because many of the gold vessels had already been stolen.” Γενομένων δὲ πολλῶν ἱεροσυλημάτων κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ὑπὸ τοῦ Λυσιμάχου μετὰ τῆς τοῦ Μενελάου γνώμης, καὶ διαδοθείσης ἐξο τῆς φήμης, ἑπισυνήχθη τὸ πλῆθος ἐπὶ τὸν Λυσίμαχον, χρυσωμάτων ἢδη πολλὸν διενηνεγμένων.


141 F. S. Naiden notes “Because others who commit sacrilege in Herodotus fall ill and fail to recover, this example is the most striking in Greek literature. Herodotus is setting forth an implicit rule: leniency towards those guilty of inadvertent *hierosulia* on two conditions, atonement, and reparation.” F.S. Naiden, “Rejected Sacrifice in Greek and Hebrew Religion,” *JANER* 6 (2006): 189–223, here 210.


143 Joshua 7:1

144 2 Chr 26.
misuse of sacred things including, inappropriate rituals and profanation. This misuse, or abuse, all indicate stealing from the gods, whether of their property or honor. Sometimes the affront on the gods may even be inadvertent, such as what we have in the case of Alyattes. In such a case, the consultation of an oracle (i.e., Alyattes) or the interpretation by a representative of the god (like Paul is doing in Corinth) is required to identify the sacrilegious act. That sacrilege covers a wide notion of dishonor to the gods is evident in a story narrated by Plutarch, in which a priestess ignored omens from the gods and went ahead with consulting the Delphi oracle. The story is worth recounting here.

Whenever, then, the imaginative and prophetic faculty is in a state of proper adjustment for attempering itself to the spirit as to a drug, inspiration in those who foretell the future is bound to come; and whenever the conditions are not thus, it is bound not to come, or when it does come to be misleading, abnormal, and

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146 Divine punishment by the gods followed by confessions of wrong-doing in the ancient world is best recorded not in Rome or Greece, but in the confessional inscriptions from parts of Lydia and Phrygia. These come mostly from the first three centuries of the common era. These texts were mainly preserved on stone and set up in sanctuaries. They were not made voluntarily, but those who made them were forced to set them up by the gods through illness, accident, death, or the destruction of property. See, Angelos Chaniotis, “Under the Watchful Eyes of the Gods: Divine Justice in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor,” in The Graeco-Roman East: Politics, Culture, Society, vol. XXXI ed. Stephen Colvin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–43. See also Simon Pembroke, “Last of Matriarchs: A Study in the Inscriptions of Lycia,” JESHO 8 (1965): 217–47; Angelos Chaniotis, “Constructing the Fear of Gods: Epigraphical Evidence from Sanctuaries of Asia Minor,” in Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World, ed. Angelos Chaniotis (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012), 205–34. Also, S.R. Llewelyn notes that the element of confession with the function of offering direct witness to the powers of the deity was introduced into the Graeco-Roman world with the coming of Eastern religion. In addition to this, Llewelyn, following the argument of Frisch, argues that confessional practice shows a number of contacts with Augustine’s Confessions. However, absent in these confessional inscriptions—in contrast to that of Augustine—is the idea of an introspective conscience. This means that “it is not events in the inner world of the conscience which prompt the confession, but an external misfortune or illness.” The point here is that a Greek could experience misfortune in the form of disease without necessarily searching his conscience with anxiety for a possible cause. Paul, in contrast, asked the Corinthians to each examine themselves (δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν). Cf. Llewelyn, “Magic, Medicine and Cults,” NewDocs 6: 195. Cf. idem, “A Confessional Inscription,” NewDocs 8:173–75, here 175. See also, Horsley, “Doctors in the Graeco-Roman world,” NewDocs 2:10–24; K. Stendhal, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” HTR 56 (1963): 199–215; Raffaele Pettazzoni, “Confession of Sins and the Classics,” HTR 30 (1937): 1–14; H.S. Versnel, Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion: Ter Unus: Isis, Dionysos, Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism I (Leiden: Brill, 1990); IG IV2.1.121–22; Wendy Cotter, Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook (London: Routledge, 1999), 11–30.
confusing, as we know in the case of the priestess who died not so long ago. As it happened, a deputation from abroad had arrived to consult the oracle. The victim, it is said, remained unmoved and unaffected in any way by the first libations; but the priests, in their eagerness to please, went far beyond their wonted usage, and only after the victim had been subjected to a deluge and nearly drowned did it at last give in. What, then, was the result touching the priestess? She went down into the oracle unwillingly, they say, and halfheartedly; and at her first responses it was at once plain from the harshness of her voice that she was not responding properly; she was like a labouring ship and was filled with a mighty and baleful spirit. Finally, she became hysterical and with a frightful shriek rushed towards the exit and threw herself down, with the result that not only the members of the deputation fled, but also the oracle-interpreter Nicander and those holy men that were present. However, after a little, they went in and took her up, still conscious; and she lived on for a few days.\footnote{147}

My concern here is not the veracity of the events narrated but how the understanding of sacrilege can work for a Graeco-Roman individual. The result of a sacrilegious act is death, either at hands of the gods or human beings acting on the basis in civil laws.\footnote{148} Sacrilege often entails “a deviant gesture directed towards god as much as man, daring Him to punish and half expecting Him to do so.”\footnote{149} Sacrilege involves the theft, abuse, profanation and misappropriation

\footnote{147} Ὅταν οὖν ἄριστος ἔχῃ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ὄσπερ φαρμάκου κράτην ἢ φανταστική καὶ μαντικὴ δύναμις, ἐν τοῖς προφητεύουσιν ἀνάγκη ἔγνεσαι τὸν ἐνθουσιασμὸν· ὅταν δὲ μὴ οὕτως, μὴ γίγνεσαι, ἢ γίγνεσαι παράφωρον καὶ οὐκ ἀκέραιον καὶ ταρακτικὸν, ὄσπερ ἵσμεν ἐπί τῆς ἐναγχαὶς ἀποθανοφορίας Πυθίας. θεοπρόποιον γὰρ ἀπὸ ἐξῆς παραγχομένων, λέγεται τὰς πρῶτας κατασπερίς ἀκίνητον ὑπομένει καὶ ἀκαθές τὸ ιερέων· ύπερβαλλομένων δὲ φιλοσοφία τῶν ιερεῶν καὶ προσλαταροῦντων, Βύσσας ὑπομονῆσθαι καὶ κατακλυσθεῖν ἐνδοῦναι, τί οὖν συνέβη περὶ τὴν Πυθίαν; κατέβη μὲν εἰς τὸ μαντεῖον ὡς φαίνει ἄκουσα καὶ ἀπρόθυμος, καθὼς δὲ περὶ τὰς πρῶτας ἀποκρίσεις ἢν καταφανῆς τῇ πραγματείᾳ τῆς φωνῆς οὐκ ἀναφέρωσα δίκην νεώς ἐπειγομένης, ἀλλὰ καὶ κακοῦ πνεύματος ὡς πλήρης· τέλος δὲ παντάπασιν ἐκταραχθείσα καὶ μετὰ κραυγῆς ἀσίμοι καὶ φοβερὰς φερομένη πρὸς τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔρριψαν ἑαυτὴν, ὡστε φοβεῖν μὴ μόνον τοὺς θεοπρόπους ἄλλα καὶ τὸν προφήτην Νικανόρον καὶ τοὺς παρόντας τῶν ὁσίων. ἀνεύλοντο μέντοι μετὰ μικρὸν αὐτὴν εἰσελθόντες τῇ ἐμφάνει καὶ διεβίωσαν ὅλιγας ἡμέρας. Plutarch, De Defectu Oraculorum 438 A–C (Babbitt, LCL).


\footnote{149} Murray, “The Affairs of the Mysteries: Democracy and the Drinking Group,” in The Symposium: Drinking Greek Style, 237–49, here 247. Murphy-O’Connor also argues for the possibility of sacrilege in meal settings while explaining 1 Cor 11:17-34, although his work differs from my argument in his understanding that this passage was explicit in explaining the elements of the meal as ‘sacramental species.’ Murphy-O’Connor admits the difficulty in his understanding, when he notes that his interpretation depends on the participle ‘profanizing,’ which is absent in the Textus Receptus. It is possible that this understanding of Murphy-O’Connor is correct; but the text is
of things that belong personally to a god. The fact that it is the body of the Lord that is being abused in Corinth, qualifies as sacrilege, which is the accusation leveled by Paul against the Christ group in the city. What I intend to do next is to outline some instances that could be interpreted as sacrilege within meal settings in the Graeco-Roman world. I will also show how these instances fail to capture the idea of a sacrilege within an association’s meal context.

There is evidence that abuses of the mysteries and violations of ritual decorum were heavily consequential, but these cases were not in the context (or as a result) of a Graeco-Roman banquet. An instance that may be cited is the destruction of the Hermai in Athens in 415 BCE, a case taken up by the city. In this case, the crime was not of feasting but that of profaning the Eleusinian mysteries and the mutilation of the Hermai. According to Murray, this “profanation could not be excused by drunkenness; not even Dionysus would take away the wits of his devotees so as to make them commit that particular sacrilege, even if he had been intent on destroying them.”\textsuperscript{150} The profanation could not have been as a result of the normal entertainment of a symposic setting, for although religious ritual has a place in the symposion, it is limited mostly to libation, while the rest is civil and non-sacral.\textsuperscript{151} The profanation of the hermai involved the performance of a religious ritual of a wholly different nature to a symposion.\textsuperscript{152}

Also, Athenaeus narrates the case of Apollodorus, Mystalides, and Lysisthenes, those whom he calls the troublemakers or bad boys (κακοδαιμονιστά). These three men are in the habit

\textsuperscript{150} Murray, “The Affairs of the Mysteries,” 242.

\textsuperscript{151} Murray, “The Affairs of the Mysteries,” 246.

\textsuperscript{152} Murray, “The Affairs of the Mysteries,” 246.
of having feasts with a certain impious Cinesias. All of them died except one who would have wished himself dead. The fate of this last individual who was likely Cinesias was described as follows:

Because dying and suffering from ordinary diseases is an experience we all share; but to go on like this for so long, and to be dying every day, but nonetheless unable to bring one’s life to an end—that is reserved exclusively for people who commit the sort of crimes this man did.\textsuperscript{153}

Though these κακοδαιμονιστα had feasts, it was not the feasts that caused their downfall but their choice of the day for the feasts, for they set aside for themselves an unlucky day of the month for this. They dared the gods with their choice of the day and that was the source of their undoing, not their feasting.\textsuperscript{154} Moreover, the death of Alexander, which was acknowledged as coming as a result of heavy drinking, was attributed to Dionysius’s anger—not to heavy drinking—directed at Alexander for besieging Dionysius’ native town of Thebes.\textsuperscript{155}

There is also a story in the imperial inscription from Pisidia about the god Zeus Trosos who struck, not the offenders (servants of Meidon), but their master for eating unsacrificed meat.\textsuperscript{156} Meidon was cured only after he was told in a dream to record the incident for the future three months later. While it is true that the incident is related to eating in relationship with the gods, it took place outside of the setting of an association or a sympotic setting. What is important to note here is that while it was assumed that the gods can strike and do strike at

\begin{footnotes}
\item[153] Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, XII.551F–552A (Olson, LCL).
\item[154] It is possible to argue that the date of feasting itself is a choice that is part of the feasting. However, that argument is vitiated by Athenaeus’s decision to specifically state the reason for their misadventure.
\item[155] Athenaeus, \textit{The Learned Banqueters}, X.434B (Olson, LCL).
\end{footnotes}
festivals or cultic settings, striking at a communal meal of an association, even of associations dedicated to the gods—a civil space—was not known.\textsuperscript{157}

In spite of the popularity of the rowdy komos at the symposion— at least in literature—there was rarely a punishment by any of the gods. Even Plato, as referenced by Athenaeus, would note that drinking until being intoxicated is a good way to celebrate the gods who gave the wine.\textsuperscript{158} The sympotic gathering was an area civil enough for people to express themselves and display their status and not their piety. It was not a sphere of the sacred. The very idea of bringing down the wrath of god (in this case, illness, and death) upon a sympotic scene as a result of offending the god is unusual in Graeco-Roman sympotic settings and something distinct about the meal at the Christ group in Corinth. Paul’s understanding of how the conduct of the Corinthians during the meal is an abuse of the Lord’s body is an interpretation that marks this meal as distinct.

The immediate implication here is that Paul was telling the Christ-group in Corinth that the Lord’s Supper is not the normal sympotic meal they were used to. It was one that was conducted in a sacred space and Jesus was present with them.\textsuperscript{159} That is why he spent the


\textsuperscript{159} David E. Aune notes that “the fundamental conviction of early Christianity was that the divine presence was actualized in its most powerful form in and through the empirical assembly of christians united for worship ‘in the name of Jesus.’” (Matt 18:20).” Aune, “The Presence of God in the Community,” 454.
preceding section of this pericope placing the *Lord’s Supper* in sacrificial terms. It was to prepare them for the very implications he was about to draw in our pericope (see 1 Cor 10:16–22). He therefore prepared their minds before he introduced the judgement of the Lord in 1 Cor 11:30. He even advised that “if you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation” (1 Cor 11:34).

To understand this interpretation of Paul, it is essential to unpack what the Lord’s body means for Paul and some members of the community. The significance of my analysis will be in establishing the direct relationship between the abuse of body of the Lord and an interpretation

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161 I use the phrase “some members of the community” since it is clear that some were not on the same page as Paul.
of divine punishment by Paul.162 When the idea of the body is understood, then the nature of the abuse of the body becomes comprehensible.163

Scholars have taken several positions on what the body of the Lord means in this pericope. One interpretation of the ‘body’ being abused (24, 27, 29) takes it to mean the group in Corinth as a body.164 Others have identified this ‘body’ with the actual body of Jesus. Fee, for

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162 Some have argued that the deaths and illness in Corinth may have been caused by either a famine or fear of famine (B. Winter, B. Blue) or a sporadic epidemic (O’Connor). The argument for the occurrence of famine in Corinth is best evidenced by the appointment of a curator annonae (curator of grain supply) to cope with the actual or imminent threat of a famine. This office was not an annual appointment, but one based on exigencies. There is epigraphic evidence of the appointment of one Tiberius Claudius Dinippus at least three times at Corinth. A weakness of the famine argument is that the historical attestation of famine in Corinth (at least with the appointment of Dinippus) is a few years off when calculated in line with Paul’s mission and the writing of the first letter. The consensus of scholars is that Paul’s first visit to Corinth was in 51 CE and his first letter was about 54/55 CE. The famine which would be closest to Paul’s missionary activity has also been dated to 51 CE. Hence, there is a need to align the dates, at least approximately. The other challenge is how Paul does not seem to refer to the famine at all even when he spoke about collection for the poor in Jerusalem in the same letter (1 Cor 16:1–4; see also, 2 Cor 8–9; Rom 15:25–27). Bruce Winter tries to resolve this dilemma by arguing that early Christ groups have two different unique approaches for famine for the Jews and the Gentiles. There is no evidence for this dual-approach to the poor among these groups. One even wonders how the poor Christ-followers in Corinth will feel when there is a collection for Jerusalem, while they were being over-looked or all they have to do is to rely on the curator annonae after Paul had encouraged the idea that crises should be resolved internally (see 1 Cor 6:1–8). For more on these issues related to famine in Paul’s correspondence with the Corinthians, see the following: O’Connor, Key to First Corinthians, 229; Thieselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 852; Andrew D. Clarke, Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Social-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6 (Exeter: Paternoster, 2006), 18; Bruce W. Winter “Secular and Christian Responses to Corinthian Famines,” TynBul 40 (1989): 86–106; Bradley B. Blue, “The House Church at Corinth and the Lord’s Supper: Famine, Food Supply, and The Present Distress,” CTR 5 (1991): 221–39. The most comprehensive and convincing dating of Paul’s interaction with the Corinthians is by Jerome Murphy-O’Connor. See Murphy-O’Connor, St. Paul’s Corinth, 161–74; idem, Paul: A Critical Life, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). For a summary of the dating of Paul’s interaction with the Corinthians by several other authors, see Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 31–32.

163 The idea that a god can have a body is common in the Graeco-Roman world. According to Christoph Markschies, although “in both the collective consciousness and scholarly texts of the modern era, God possesses neither a body nor a form in the material sense, save in the beliefs of some particular groups as disparate as the Mormons and Pantheists,” this view was not popular in the ancient world. He further notes that “according to the classical, conventional form of Christian dogma developed in Antiquity, Christ not only possessed a body as he walked the earth in human form after the incarnation but was also corporeally enthroned at the Father’s right hand in heaven following his death and resurrection, a notion propagated in Christian art and music.” Christoph Markschies, God’s Body: Jewish, Christian, and Pagan Images of God, trans Alexander Johannes Edmonds (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2019), 1. Also, Benjamin Sommer writes “The God of the Hebrew Bible has a body. This must be stated at the outset because so many people, including scholars, assume otherwise.” Benjamin Sommer, The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

164 See William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther who write, “Thus, the body of the Lord equals ourselves, in this context distinguished by common participation in eating his supper. Failure to discriminate his body is the same as failure to discriminate ourselves, and this means failure to recognize that people together in the church
example, argues that the body “refers to his actual body, which was about to be given over in death. If there is an analogy, it is with the sacrificial victim, whose ‘body’ (carcass) was placed on the altar after the blood had been poured out.”\textsuperscript{165} W. Robertson Nicoll contends that “the bread, \textit{standing for} the body, ‘is the body’ representatively; broken for Christ’s disciples, it serves materially in the Supper the part which His slain body is about to serve spiritually ‘for the life of the world.’”\textsuperscript{166} Scholars who have identified the “body of the Lord” with the actual Jesus usually interpret this body of Jesus as the salvific body of Jesus, which is to say the Passover lamb. This is clear for C.K Barrett, who writes that:

Paul does not think of these as physically or substantially present, for he does not identify the wine with the Lord’s blood, and, as we have seen, the identification of the bread with the body means that the bread is a means of partaking of the benefits of Christ’s work. That \textit{body} is not to be interpreted here as equivalent to \textit{church} is shown by the addition of \textit{blood}. It seems necessary to interpret verse 27 in the light of verse 26. The eating and drinking are accompanied, and interpreted, by the proclamation of the Lord’s death, in virtue of which his body and his blood are understood to be \textit{for us}. But to eat and drink \textit{unworthily} (in the sense indicated above) is to contradict both the purpose of Christ’s self-offering, and the spirit in

constitute the very presence of Christ and are to be treated appropriately. The identity of the church with the body of Christ leads Paul to attribute physical problems of the Christians to the violation of this body. This violation hampers and restricts the redemptive and healing nature of the fellowship wherein the poor are fed, the lonely are befriended, the sick are visited, the grieving are comforted, and sinners are forgiven. Such a redemptive fellowship can produce both spiritual and physical health, while the breaking of the fellowship may cause the converse. So serious is this situation in Corinth that Paul posits a connection between it and the death rate there—a relationship that is difficult to interpret except in very general terms.” Cf. William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, \textit{I Corinthians: A New Translation, Introduction, with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes, and Commentary}, AYBC 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press), 274. Conzelmann disagrees with Lietzmann that the body of the Lord means the body and blood of Christ are consumed since the understanding of the sacrament in this passage is not oriented to the “sacramental substance, but to the act of administration and of participation in the Supper.” Conzelmann further notes that, “[T]he man who offends against the elements, offends against the Lord himself. If we are to understand this, we must bear in mind that the idea of the church as the body of the Lord has a part to play.” See Conzelmann, \textit{I Corinthians}, 202. Mark Taylor also argues that, “the whole point of 11:17–34 “is to correct a considerable abuse of the church as it is visibly portrayed at the Lord’s Supper. The problem was that they were despising the church of God by their actions.” See Mark Taylor, \textit{I Corinthians: The New American Commentary} 28 ed. E. Ray Clendenen, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2014), 274–75.

\textsuperscript{165} Fee, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 609–10.

\textsuperscript{166} W. Robertson Nicoll, \textit{The Expositor’s Greek Testament: Commentary} 2 (New York: George H. Doran), 880.
which it was made, and thus to place oneself among those who were responsible for the crucifixion, and not among those who by faith receive the fruit of it.\footnote{C.K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, BNCT (London: Continuum, 1968) 272–73. For Thiselton, “The syntax therefore implies not a sacrilege against the elements of the Lord’s Supper but answerability or being held accountable for the sin against Christ of claiming identification with him while using the celebration of the meal as an occasion for social enjoyment or status enhancement without regard to what sharing in what the Lord’s Supper proclaims.” See Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 890. I must also note that I understand Barrett’s separation of the body and blood in our pericope as insufficient for capturing the background of such a phrase. I take the use of the “body and blood” as a semiticism. My understanding of this phrase is best captured in Richard A. Freund’s analysis of “Land of Milk and Honey.” According to Freund, this expression (Land of Milk and Honey) is a format similar to other biblical idiomatic expression which present an idiom in a complex of “x and y.” He writes, “Idiomatic expressions in Biblical Hebrew are a well-known phenomenon which usually involved two elements which were set side by side either in a vague form of comparative language or to create a point-counterpoint for meter or emphasis. In general, the sum of the whole expression was usually less than the parts.” See Richard A Freund, “The Land which Bled Forth its Bounty: An Exile Image of the Land of Israel,” SJOT 13 (1999): 284–97, here 290. A similar phrasing is to be found in Rev 1:8 and 22:13 (alpha and omega). On this Craig Koester writes “using the letters alpha and omega as equivalent to “first” and “last” could have precedents in Jewish sources, where the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet (aleph and tau) indicate completeness, though the sources are late.” See Craig R. Koester, Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AYBC 38A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 220. G.K Beale also notes that, “τὸ Ἀλφά καὶ τὸ Ω (‘the Alpha and the Omega’) is a figure of speech called a merism (a merism states polar opposites in order to highlight everything between the opposites). Similar merisms are ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος (‘the Beginning and the End,’ 21:6; 22:13) and πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἐσχάτος (‘the First and the Last,’ 22:13; cf. 1:17). These merisms express God’s control of all history, especially by bringing it to an end in salvation and judgment. The use of the first and last letters of the alphabet was typical of the ancients in expressing merisms. Jews could, for instance, refer thus, using the Hebrew alphabet, to the whole law, saying that it should be kept ‘from aleph to tau.’” See G.K. Beale, The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 199. I therefore take “body and blood” in our pericope as expressing the same idea (the presence of Christ in the meal event) rather than two separate ideas.}

What is interesting in this interpretation by Fee, Nicoll, and Barrett is that they have identified the body primarily with an activity or the benefits of an activity. In this case, this activity (or benefits in the words of Barrett) is generated by the actual body of Jesus. The reading often adduced for this soteriological understanding of the body of Jesus is τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ύμῶν—body for you—in 1 Cor 11:24 (Τοῦτο μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ύμῶν). This type of argument brings the whole debate of the body to a christological-soteriological level that is difficult to locate in our pericope. While this sort of argument can be drawn from the writings of Paul, we are hard-pressed to identify this argument in our pericope. It is also possible to interpret our
pericope in the light of the Passover since parallel texts of the institution narrative locate the death of Jesus around the Passover time. However, since the Jewish Passover is not the primary motif of our pericope. I therefore think identifying the body of the Lord in our pericope with the soteriological benefits or activity generated by the passion of Jesus is a second-level interpretation that does not reflect the way Paul uses it in our pericope. While Paul did interpret Jesus’s death as having salvific benefits (see Galatians 3:7), he rarely speaks of the body of Jesus in soteriological terms but more often in an ecclesial sense.

While it is possible to take the construction τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν—body for you—in 1 Cor 11:24 (Toῦτό μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν) to mean that Paul is using σῶμα with a soteriological meaning, that interpretation is not necessary. A few examples of scholars’ use of this verse to ground a soteriological interpretation of the body of Jesus are instructive here.

Thiselton writes:

The phrase τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, which is for you, characterizes both the early Pauline and the Lukan tradition, and may well reflect the “for you” of Isa 53:12. The work

168 See 1 Cor 5:7. Also, note that at the start of the description of the Lord’s Supper in our pericope, Paul does not identify the night of Jesus being “handed over” with the Passover.

169 For all the uses of σῶμα (body) in Paul’s writings see: Rom 4:19; 6:6; 8:8; 12:5; 1 Cor 6:13, 16, 18, 19; 9:27; 10:17; 11:24, 29; 12:12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 24, 27; 13:3; 15:37, 38, 44; Eph 1:23; 4:4; 4:16; Phil 3:21; Col 2:17, 19; 1 Thess 5:23. In all these instances, Paul did not use σῶμα (body) in terms of the body of Jesus as the realm of salvific benefits as suggested by Fee, Nicoll, Barrett and Thiselton. Paul often refers to the “death” and “resurrection” of Christ when he wants to talk about the salvific benefits of Jesus. See Rom 5; 8:11; 1 Cor 15. Paul also refers to the Spirit when he talks about the benefits of Christ’s death. See Gal 3:1–29; 5—6.

170 The debate over the meaning of τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν is not recent, as the history of manuscripts also shows. Bruce Metzger notes that “the concise expression τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, read by Ψ 46 κ* A B C* 6 33 424 1739* arm Origen, Cyprian, et al, is characteristic of Paul’s style. Attempts to explicate the meaning of the words resulted in the addition of various participles: (a) θρυπτόμενον (Dgr*); (b) κλώμενον (א c C 3 D b G K P Ψ 81 614 1739* Byz Lect it* syr*h goth al), derived from the preceding ἐκλάσειν; (c) διδόμενον (vg cop* sa, bo 61 quod tradidi pro vobis), assimilated to Lk 22.19.” See Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, 3d ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1971), 562.
of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 oscillates between identification and substitution, as does σῶμα here.\textsuperscript{171}

Thiselton later continues in relation to the cup, “in the context of the cup Paul will repeat the tradition of the frame of covenantal promise within which this is to be more fully understood.”\textsuperscript{172} This soteriological understanding of 1 Cor 11:24 is also found in Fee as he writes:

The words ‘for you’ are an adaptation of the language of Isaiah, where the Suffering Servant ‘bore sin for many’ (53:12). Thus, for Jesus himself this was almost certainly a prophetic symbolic action, by which he anticipated his death and interpreted it in light of the Isaiah passage as on behalf of others. By giving them a share in ‘his body’ in this way, he invited his disciples to participate in the meaning and benefits of that death.\textsuperscript{173}

For Hofius:

The gift of which the word on the bread in 1 Cor 11:24b speaks is a participation in the σῶμα of Jesus. As in Romans 7:4, so here also (and then similarly in 11:27 and 11:29) σῶμα means the body of Jesus Christ given over to death on the cross, and the prepositional attributive τῷ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν specifies Jesus’ self-surrender unto death as expiatory and reconciliatory event. To this event the word over the cup likewise refers, for ἀἷμα designates here (and in 11:27)—as in Rom 3:25; 5:9—the expiatory blood of Jesus shed on the cross.\textsuperscript{174}

And for Collins:

In cultic language hyper (‘for [your] sake’) specifies the beneficiaries of the sacrifice or dedication. More than thirty NT texts use the preposition in reference to Jesus’ death (cf. 1:13; 15:3). The interpretive phrase ‘that is for your sake’ is absent from the Markan-Matthean narrative (Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22), but it

\textsuperscript{171} Thiselton, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 878. In fact, the passage from Isaiah 53:12 often used to give 1 Cor 11:24 a soteriological slant primarily talks about the suffering and death of the Suffering Servant and not “body.”

\textsuperscript{172} Thiselton, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 878.

\textsuperscript{173} Fee, \textit{The First Epistle to the Corinthians}, 610.

undoubtedly belonged to pre-Pauline tradition. For Jesus to have identified the bread with his body without some interpretive remark such as that succinctly summarized in Paul’s ‘for your sake’ would have been virtually unintelligible in a Jewish context. It would have been all the more difficult to interpret if the cup, with its own interpretive word, was not shared until much later in the meal, as Paul indicates that it was.\(^{175}\)

However, I suggest that the use of \(σῶμα\) in this verse (1 Cor 11:24) should be derived from the context of the Lord’s Supper and the use of \(σῶμα\) in the letters of Paul. In this case Jesus, having established the link with his body and the bread, is saying the bread (which is now his body) is there for his disciples to consume. Earlier Paul had noted that the bread that the community breaks is a sharing in the body of Christ and because of that, “we who are many are one body, for we partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:16–17). It is therefore not necessary to take 1 Cor 11:24 in a soteriological sense. The context of the meal is for the primary purpose of communion, and this a point Hofius even admits as he writes,

Both for the word over the bread and for the word over the cup, the predicate introduced by \(ἐστιν\) bears on the totality of “element,” blessing, distribution, and communion, which is conceived as a unity. To understand this \(ἐστιν\), a glance at the parallel in 1 Cor 10:16 is instructive. Here the formula \(κοινωνία ἐστὶν\) and \(κοινωνία\) with the genitive of the thing expresses real participation (i.e., the real gaining of a share/having of a share) in the reality named in the genitive.\(^{176}\)

To be clear, I am not saying that the death of Jesus does not confer soteriological benefits. My argument here (1 Cor 11:24) is that when Paul writes about the soteriological benefits of Jesus, he uses the language of “death” and not “body.” This subtle distinction is probably overlooked due to doctrinal influences and the influence of John—a gospel without an Institution Narrative—and the Letter to the Hebrews, two writings where the conception of body

\(^{175}\) Collins, *Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians*, 432.

\(^{176}\) See Hofius, “The Lord’s Supper and the Lord’s Supper Tradition,” 97.
functions differently than in the writings of Paul. I suggest this distinction be maintained. One does not need this soteriological notion of the body of the Lord before we can understand the nature of the abuse of the body going on in Corinth. It is therefore my view that this soteriological understanding of the body is foreign to 1 Cor 11:17–34.

In addition to the soteriological understanding of the body of Jesus, an earlier interpretation of the “body of the Lord,” identified the body with the food elements which were then interpreted as sacred elements. In this case, the abuse of the ‘body’ was a form of desecration or profanation of these sacred elements. Thiselton rejects this idea by calling it a quasiphysical “mystical” or unduly sacramentalist interpretation. In this regard, I think Thiselton’s position is more in line with text of our pericope. A variant of this interpretation

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177 My argument here is that in 1 Cor 11:17–34, the use of the “body” is for κοινωνία. That was why Paul expended so much energy to show that eating foods sacrificed to the idols means communion with idols with no hint of any soteriological implication derived from meals with the idols. [Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is any thing? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? βλέπετε τὸν Ἰσραήλ, κατά σάρκα: οὐν οἱ ἐσθιόντες τὰς θυσίας κοινονοῦν τοῦ θυσιαστήριου εἰσίν; Τί οὖν φημι; ὅτι εἰδολοθυτὸν τί ἐστιν ἢ ὅτι εἰδολον τί ἐστιν ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι ἐθύσασθα, δαιμονίως καὶ οὐ θεό [θύσαιν]: οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοῦς τῶν δαμασίων γίνεσθαι. οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαμασίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαμασίων. ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον; μὴ ἰησοῦσθε δεῦτε ὑμῖν ὑπὲρ τῶν κακῶν τῆς κυρίου.]

178 Fitzmyer notes that this was the interpretation of many medieval interpreters. Among modern interpreters, he lists the following as taking this interpretation: Weiss, Allo, and Lietzmann. Fitzmyer further notes that this interpretation seems to be foreign to the present context. See, Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 446. See also Allo E.-B, Allo, Première Épître aux Corinthiens, (Paris: Gabalda, 1934), 253; Johannes Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1977), 290–91; J. Weiss, Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30–150, ed. F.C. Grant (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1959), 2:648; Hans Lietzmann, An die Korinther I–II HNT 9, ed. W. G. Kümmel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949), 59; Murphy-O’Connor, Key to First Corinthians, 210, 214 –15. This interpretation of the food elements as being sacred depends on the participle ‘profaning’ which is absent in Textus receptus, a fact now acknowledged in more recent translations of this text. In this case, see the Revised Standard Version’s translation of 11:27: “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord” and compare with the New Revised Standard Version: “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.”

179 Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 766.
identified the ‘body’ with both Jesus and the community. Jesus in this case is the head of the community, with the rest of the community as the body.

Some of these interpretations of “the body of the Lord” are consistent with early Christian literary evidence. For example, the final interpretation, which is Christ’s self-identification with his disciples, or the body of his disciples (the ‘church’), is evidenced in the New Testament (Matt 10:40; 25:40, 45; Luke 10:16; Acts 9:4–5; 22:7–8; 26:14–15; Eph 5:25–32). The purpose, or context, of the identification of the community as the body of Christ was often in missionary or paraenetic material (1 Cor 6:15; 12:12; Gal 3:26–27). This self-identification of Christ with the entire group should be “considered to have formed part of Paul’s habitual vocabulary.”

Christ was also identified consistently with the bread and the cup at the Last Supper in all the institution narratives and then in a cultic context (1 Cor 10:16). In 1 Cor 11, we have the context of the Last Supper, which also doubles as a cultic context.

It will seem that in 1 Cor 11, the ‘body’ being abused is both the Lord’s body in the Lord’s Supper and in his self-identification with the entire group. At one level (cultic), this interpretation is consistent with the text and context which maintained the linkage between the bread and cup and the Lord’s body. There is further evidence in the letter to believe that Paul is convinced that there exists a relationship between the Lord’s body and the cup and the bread.

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180 Collins writes “The [Lord’s] body has as its referent the eucharistic body, but Paul also alludes to the community.” See Collins, *Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians*, 439.

181 Murphy-O’Connor, *Key to First Corinthians*, 198.

182 This is not the same thing as the interpretation which sees the elements of the meal as sacred species.

183 1 Cor 11:23–26.
Earlier in the letter, Paul writes that “the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?”\textsuperscript{184} The emphasis is one of communion/sharing (\textit{koinōnia}) and not of soteriology. The body is for \textit{koinōnia} and not soteriology. This idea of the worshippers of a god having a \textit{koinōnia} with their god as symbolized by the sharing of a meal is well known in the Graeco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{185}

That the bread and the cup signified the body and blood of the Lord—with whom they were having a \textit{koinōnia}—for Paul was therefore a matter to be taken seriously. This fact is clear enough from the consequences of not discerning the ‘body.’ To back up his claims, Paul appeals to the tradition of the institution narrative. According to Paul, overlooking what the bread and cup signify can lead (and has led) to illnesses and deaths. The reference to "discerning the body" is not an invitation to think about the metaphysical reality of the bread and wine along the lines of the Church’s later understandings (e.g., transubstantiation) but to the body of Christ in the community and what effect their conduct in relation to this body.\textsuperscript{186} Paul’s concern was not the elucidation of doctrinal positions but of practical socio-ethical concerns among the Christ group in Corinth and the inequality and disorder at the communal meal.\textsuperscript{187} However, while it is obvious

\textsuperscript{184} “Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὁ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ὃ ἔστιν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸν ἄρτον δὲ κλώμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστιν;” 1 Cor 10:16. My concern here is with the self-identification of the bread and the cup with the Lord. The question of the sequence (cup before bread) is beyond the scope of this dissertation.


\textsuperscript{186} Peter Lampe who writes that “For Paul, the ethical implications of the Eucharist were far more vital than the later intricate theological discussions of \textit{how} Christ might be present in the Lord’s Supper. The fact \textit{that} Christ is present matters for Paul.” See Peter Lampe, “The Eucharist: Identifying with Christ in the Cross,” \textit{Int} 48 (1994): 36–49, here 43.

\textsuperscript{187} Aune, “Septem Sapientium Convivium,” 76.
at this stage that Paul was not talking about “the body and blood of the Lord” in sacramental terms, he nevertheless seems to be suggesting that there is a level of sacrality involved in this meal that is not to be taken lightly.\(^{188}\) He is clear about the effects and implications of sharing this “body and blood of the Lord:” both κοινωνία and the possibility of sacrilege.

In a way that links these two aforementioned interpretations together, in 1 Cor 10:17, Paul writes, “because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”\(^{189}\) In this last pericope, Paul seems to be grounding the source and origin of the community in the partaking of the bread. In the words of Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, “this union into one body through participation in the one bread could not take place unless this bread were κοινωνία with the body of Christ, which is just that which produces the one body—that which constitutes the many into this unity.”\(^{190}\) Fee also admits this reality when he writes that, “Here Paul argues from the fact that one loaf was broken and distributed to the consequence that those who partake of the one loaf are notwithstanding their plurality one body (cf. Didache ix. 4). The reality behind the argument (which may seem speculative enough) is in each case that the men in question have been actually united with Christ.”\(^{191}\) Though the first part of Fee’s sentence argues for a communitarian result from the partaking in one bread, he “speculatively”—

\(^{188}\) See Chelcent Fuad, who argues that “the use of the adjective κυριακὸν should be read as referring to the meal pertaining to the Lord, which is Jesus in this context. The identification of this meal with Jesus, who is the ‘deity’ in Pauline theology, is a strong indication that this should be understood as more than simply a general feast meal.” Chelcent Fuad, “The Practice of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 as a Socio-Religious Ritual Failure” ExpTim 130 (2019): 202–14, here 209.

\(^{189}\) ὅτι εἰς ἅρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοί ἔσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἅρτου μετέχομεν.


\(^{191}\) Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 518–19.
in his own words—re-interprets this communitarian dimension in an individualistic manner, reflective of later theological controversies. Once again, we find an interpretation (Fee calls it in this case the “reality behind the argument”) that is secondary to the pericope. I take as more convincing J. Smit’s understanding of this pericope when he notes that the unity suggested in this passage (1 Cor 10:17) is “brought about by their partaking in the one loaf.” In this particular verse (1 Cor 10:17), I take the particle γὰρ in its primary sense of being causal and in that sense the unity of the community is grounded and caused by the one bread.

My interpretation of the body of the Lord therefore encompasses both the self-identification of Jesus with the bread and cup on the one hand and the community as a result of the Lord’s Supper on the other hand. It is because the “body of the Lord” involves both understandings that their conduct at the meals becomes important and consequential. Those who have abused the body are therefore abusing it in a double manner. In understanding the possibility of a metaphor to bear multiple significations (or meanings), I resort to Paul Ricoeur’s idea of split sense and split reference. Split reference in this sense is the “use of discourse where several things are specified at the same time and where the reader is not required to

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193 J. D. Denniston explains that the particle γὰρ can give ground for belief, or the motive for action. While this usage can be found on any page of any Greek author, Denniston argues that “it is commoner in writers whose mode of thought is simple than those whose logical facilities are more fully developed. The former tend [sic] to state a fact before investigating its reason while the latter more frequently follow the logical order, cause and effect.” J. D. Denniston, The Greek Particles 2nd ed. rev. K.J. Dover (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1950), 56–114, here 58. Smyth also notes that “γὰρ is a confirmatory adverb and a causal conjunction.” Cf. Smyth, Greek Grammar, 637–47, here 637, (§2803). See also 1 Cor 11:26 for a similar use of the particle, γὰρ.

choose among them.”195 Following Max Black, Ricoeur argues that “a memorable metaphor has the power to bring two separate domains into cognitive and emotional relations by using language directly appropriate for the one as a lens for seeing the other.”196 In relation to a metaphor, Ricoeur suggests that, “the metaphorical interpretation presupposes a literal interpretation which self-destructs in a significant contradiction. It is this process of self-destruction, or transformation, which imposes a sort of twist on the words, an extension of meaning thanks to which we can make sense where a literal interpretation would be literally nonsensical.”197 While dealing with the “body of the Lord” in our pericope, we are therefore dealing with surplus of meaning that refers to the two major referents (Jesus’s self-identification with the bread and cup and with the community). In using the idea of split reference (split sense), my primary concern is not the metaphorical (or non-metaphorical) understanding of the “body of the Lord” in these verses. In employing Ricoeur’s language, my concern is to demonstrate how “body of the Lord” operates in these verses.198 In the Lord’s Supper at Corinth, the Lord is present. He is present in a meal inaugurated by him and in the “memory” of him in the community.199 As such, the conduct of those who participate in this meal is a matter whose


197 Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, 47. He also writes, “Metaphor is an idyll with a new partner who resists while giving in” (Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, 56).

198 A similar idea to split reference is the idea of multitasking—meaning someone carrying out multiple tasks at the same time—or split or dual screen meaning the ability of the screen of an electronic device—cell phone or computer—to display simultaneously multiple images.

199 See Murphy-O’Connor in Key to First Corinthians where he writes: “Christ is not only the founder of the community of believers, but in a real sense he is in the community” (Murphy-O’Connor, Key to First Corinthians, 208). That the whole event of a meal can be seen as a sacred event is not strange to Jewish thought. The prophet Malachi speaks of the Lord’s table to capture the whole event of the sacrificing to God (Mal 1:1–14). See
seriousness goes far beyond anything seen in a conventional meal, as we shall see. That is not what someone showing up for a conventional Graeco-Roman symposion in the first century expects who has come to eat their fill, and possibly contributed to the group’s dinner, expects to hear. It is one thing to die as a result your behavior at a sacrificial meal. It is a wholly different thing to die as a result of your behavior at an association-like sympotic dinner. While deaths from bad behavior at a sacrificial meal can be quite understandable, death resulting from bad behavior at a sympotic-like meal needs an explanation. Stephen C. Barton notes that in this pericope (11:17–34), Paul juxtaposes three bodies: the body of the individual, the ecclesial body, and the body of Christ. These bodies are syntagmatically related by the Lord’s Supper. Barton further explains that this meal is a “supernatural meal because ‘the Lord’ is present: it is the Lord’s meal; the bread is his body, and the wine is his blood.”

The Lord’s Supper in terms of its potential for serious consequences resulting from bad behavior was not a regular sympotic experience. In this meal, as against other sympotic-like meals in the Graeco-Roman world, sacrilege with its consequences is possible. Sacrilege at this meal does not depend on whether the elements of the meal are sacred or not. The sacrilege in this case occurs d when some members of the community show contempt for the “body of the

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also, the Talmud’s commentary on Ezekiel 41:22: “And He said unto me: this is the table that is before the Lord. The language of this verse is difficult, as it begins with the altar and concludes with the table. Rather, Rabbi Yohana and Rabbi Elazar both say: As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel’s transgressions. Now that it is destroyed, a person’s table atones for his transgressions.” Cf. b. Ber. 55a.

Lord.” It is this disgrace of the “body of the Lord” that constitutes a sacrilege. To eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner is akin to stealing what belongs to the Lord (i.e., his honor) and can also be likened to profanation (“ritual gone wrong”). In our pericope, “the better-off in Corinth have behaved exactly like Ananias and Sapphira: they have treated common property consecrated to God, as if it were private property.” This is a misappropriation of something consecrated to God. To lose sight of that is to misunderstand the whole meal. The “individual performance of status,” which was the hallmark of Graeco-Roman dinner parties in a place like Corinth, has no place in the Lord’s Supper. According to Stanley K. Stowers, Paul’s account of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth is a specification of a genre, for Paul is saying that they have confused a genre of eating that focuses on food and drink and produces a certain pattern of social differentiation, with the genre of the Lord’s Supper. Paul, being a Hellenistic Jew, understands fully the idea of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. He

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201 If there is anyone who understands what it means to be punished for violating the “body of the Lord” in the sense of Jesus self-identification with his ekklesia, it is Paul. As narrated by the early Church historian in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul was asked by Jesus, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Paul’s inquisitive statement of “Who are you Sir?” was followed the response, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” See Acts 9:4-5; 22:7-8; 26:14-15; Phil 3:6. The apologetic bent of the historian of the Acts of Apostles sometimes means that his historical accounts could be for rhetorical purposes. However, when we compare the accounts in the Acts with that of Paul, we have some interesting agreements. Tobin notes that “Both Paul and the account in Acts 9 agree that prior to this point, Paul persecuted the followers of Jesus (Acts 9:1–2; Gal 1:13–14). Both also agree on the fact that Paul’s overpowering experience of Christ took place on the way to Damascus. Finally, both agree that Paul had a crucial role to play in preaching to the Gentiles.” Tobin, The Spirituality of Paul, 51

202 Relatedly, Paul writes to the Christ group in Corinth that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). If the Holy Spirit has made their bodies its abode, then this makes the community meal a gathering in which the Divine is particularly present.

203 Schottroff, “Holiness and Justice,” 54.

204 Schottroff, “Holiness and Justice,” 59.

205 Kloppenborg, Christ’s Associations, 242.

knows full well that the *Lord’s Supper* is a member of that tradition, but it is a member with a different script. To get them in line with that script, he reminds them of the tradition and highlights the consequences of running the meal with an incorrect script.

**Eschatology**

The verse with the most obvious bearing on eschatology was when Paul writes, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (11:26). This verse has also been traditionally recognized to be Paul’s own interpretation. It suggests that Paul knows of “the traditional eschatological saying that made a link between the meal and the eschatological banquet that were referenced in the traditions of Matthew (26:29) and Mark (14:25).” Paul’s use of ἀρθρόω followed by the aorist subjunctive to introduce an eschatological context is in line with common New Testament usage. According to Wainwright:

When Paul writes to the Corinthians that the Lord’s Supper is a proclamation of the Lord’s death *until he comes* (I Cor 11:26), he is not merely giving them a negative warning that the eucharist is not a celebration of unbridled eschatological joy but is under the banner of the Lord’s death until his final advent: he is also opening up the prospect of the realization of the purposes of God and is setting the eucharist in that context.

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In the words of Thiselton:

The eschatological tone should not surprise us when in addition to playing a role in the common tradition, eschatology in this epistle serves to remind complacent groups within the congregation at Corinth of their fallibility, vulnerability, and status as pilgrims or travelers still en route to their final goal.\(^{212}\)

This eschatological atmosphere is completely absent in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. F.P Retief notes that, “there was never complete Pan-Hellenic uniformity on the concept of hereafter or more specifically Hades, but there were reasonably widely accepted mainstream thoughts and theories which reveal a clear line of development from the time of Homer to the classical era.”\(^{213}\) The idea of “eschatology” in Graeco-Roman religion and philosophy covers several themes from death and the afterlife, (with focus on the fate of the individual) to cosmic destruction and renewal.\(^{214}\) While the afterlife was sometimes painted as bleak and sombre, it was elsewhere described in joyful terms, as in the case of Pythagoreans’ ‘symposium of the pure’ in which souls that have completed their reincarnations will become table-companions with the gods.\(^{215}\)

The mystery cults played an important role in the Graeco-Roman world’s development of their ideas of afterlife, as it was these mysteries—apart from the cult of the dead and

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\(^{212}\) Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 888.


\(^{214}\) King, *More Than a Passover*, 159.

necromancy—that became the most significant means for the formation and transmission of ideas about afterlife in Graeco-Roman religion.\footnote{Cicero, De Legibus, 2.36 (Keyes, LCL). See also, Apuleius, Metamorphosis, 6, 21, 23–24 (Hanson, LCL); Stanley K. Stowers, “A Cult from Philadelphia: Oikos or Cultic Association,” in The Early Church in its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris, and James W. Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 287–301. See also, Debbie Felton, “The Undead and the Eternal: Afterlife Eschatology in Classical Antiquity,” in A Cultural History of Death in Antiquity (500 BCE–800CE) ed. Mario Erasmo (London: Bloomsbury, 2020): 1–61. See also, a quotation of by Bremmer “Thrice Blessed are those mortals who have been these trials and thus enter Hades; for them alone there is life, for the others, all is misery (F. 837. Radt).” Cf. Bremmer, The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife, 6. Also, in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter we have, “Blessed is he of men on earth who has beheld them, whereas he that is unininitiated in the rites, or he that has no part in them, never enjoys a similar lot down in the musty dark when he is dead.” (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 480–2, West, LCL)} In this case, Cicero’s testimony is sufficient:

For among the many excellent and indeed divine institutions which your Athens has brought forth and contributed to human life, none, in my opinion, is better than those mysteries. For by their means, we have been brought out of our barbarous and savage mode of life and educated and refined to a state of civilization; and as the rites are called “initiations,” so in very truth we have learned from them the beginnings of life and have gained the power not only to live happily, but also to die with a better hope.\footnote{Cicero, De Legibus, 2.36 (Keyes, LCL). See also, Apuleius, Metamorphosis, 6, 21, 23–24 (Hanson, LCL); Stanley K. Stowers, “A Cult from Philadelphia: Oikos or Cultic Association,” in The Early Church in its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris, and James W. Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 287–301. See also, Debbie Felton, “The Undead and the Eternal: Afterlife Eschatology in Classical Antiquity,” in A Cultural History of Death in Antiquity (500 BCE–800CE) ed. Mario Erasmo (London: Bloomsbury, 2020): 1–61. See also, a quotation of by Bremmer “Thrice Blessed are those mortals who have been these trials and thus enter Hades; for them alone there is life, for the others, all is misery (F. 837. Radt).” Cf. Bremmer, The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife, 6. Also, in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter we have, “Blessed is he of men on earth who has beheld them, whereas he that is unininitiated in the rites, or he that has no part in them, never enjoys a similar lot down in the musty dark when he is dead.” (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 480–2, West, LCL)}

However, in spite of this rich variety of thought on the afterlife among the Greeks and Romans, an element their eschatological thought never entertained was the idea of the Messiah\footnote{Cicero, De Legibus, 2.36 (Keyes, LCL). See also, Apuleius, Metamorphosis, 6, 21, 23–24 (Hanson, LCL); Stanley K. Stowers, “A Cult from Philadelphia: Oikos or Cultic Association,” in The Early Church in its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris, and James W. Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 287–301. See also, Debbie Felton, “The Undead and the Eternal: Afterlife Eschatology in Classical Antiquity,” in A Cultural History of Death in Antiquity (500 BCE–800CE) ed. Mario Erasmo (London: Bloomsbury, 2020): 1–61. See also, a quotation of by Bremmer “Thrice Blessed are those mortals who have been these trials and thus enter Hades; for them alone there is life, for the others, all is misery (F. 837. Radt).” Cf. Bremmer, The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife, 6. Also, in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter we have, “Blessed is he of men on earth who has beheld them, whereas he that is unininitiated in the rites, or he that has no part in them, never enjoys a similar lot down in the musty dark when he is dead.” (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 480–2, West, LCL)} King explains that meal imagery with communal eschatological implication is more clearly evident in Jewish contexts that shaped the first Christian writers.\footnote{Cicero, De Legibus, 2.36 (Keyes, LCL). See also, Apuleius, Metamorphosis, 6, 21, 23–24 (Hanson, LCL); Stanley K. Stowers, “A Cult from Philadelphia: Oikos or Cultic Association,” in The Early Church in its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris, and James W. Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 287–301. See also, Debbie Felton, “The Undead and the Eternal: Afterlife Eschatology in Classical Antiquity,” in A Cultural History of Death in Antiquity (500 BCE–800CE) ed. Mario Erasmo (London: Bloomsbury, 2020): 1–61. See also, a quotation of by Bremmer “Thrice Blessed are those mortals who have been these trials and thus enter Hades; for them alone there is life, for the others, all is misery (F. 837. Radt).” Cf. Bremmer, The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife, 6. Also, in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter we have, “Blessed is he of men on earth who has beheld them, whereas he that is unininitiated in the rites, or he that has no part in them, never enjoys a similar lot down in the musty dark when he is dead.” (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 480–2, West, LCL)} It is this connection of the meal ritual with expectations of the return of the messiah, and specifically of Jesus, that also makes the Lord’s Supper distinct among the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.\footnote{Cicero, De Legibus, 2.36 (Keyes, LCL). See also, Apuleius, Metamorphosis, 6, 21, 23–24 (Hanson, LCL); Stanley K. Stowers, “A Cult from Philadelphia: Oikos or Cultic Association,” in The Early Church in its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris, and James W. Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 287–301. See also, Debbie Felton, “The Undead and the Eternal: Afterlife Eschatology in Classical Antiquity,” in A Cultural History of Death in Antiquity (500 BCE–800CE) ed. Mario Erasmo (London: Bloomsbury, 2020): 1–61. See also, a quotation of by Bremmer “Thrice Blessed are those mortals who have been these trials and thus enter Hades; for them alone there is life, for the others, all is misery (F. 837. Radt).” Cf. Bremmer, The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife, 6. Also, in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter we have, “Blessed is he of men on earth who has beheld them, whereas he that is unininitiated in the rites, or he that has no part in them, never enjoys a similar lot down in the musty dark when he is dead.” (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 480–2, West, LCL)} According to

Luise Schottroff, “the eschatological idea gives us the key to the ecclesiological level of the interpretation of the Lord’s Supper.”

The idea of eschatology espoused in New Testament texts or in other Jewish texts is not the same as the idea of the immortality of the soul as we have it in the Graeco-Roman world. In the late second Temple, Jewish eschatology saw the emergence of discussions centered on the appearance of an individual person (an agent of God, or God himself in his agent), on the world stage. Often this person leads an eschatological battle that will separate the righteous from the unrighteous and give the righteous the reward they have always longed for. It is this Messiah—a truly unique Jewish idea—who ushers in the eschatological age. The arrival of this individual will signify the vindication of the righteous. The most important feature of this Jewish hope of eschatology is not the physical resurrection of the body, nor a transformation of the earth, nor the ushering in of a new age, but the transition from one sphere of life to another, a better one for the righteous. Significantly, the idea of the messiah in Hellenistic Judaism was

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223 Examples of such eschatological thinking are found in 4 Ezra and Revelation. See the following examples:

“Did not the souls of the righteous in their chambers ask about these matters, saying, ‘How long are we to remain here? And when will the harvest of our reward come?’ And the archangel Jeremiel answered and said, ‘When the number of those like yourselves is completed; for he has weighed the age in the balance and measured the times by measure and numbered the times by number; and he will not move or arouse them until that measure is fulfilled.’” (4 Ezra 4:35–37).

“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; they cried out with a loud voice, ‘Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?’ They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.” (Rev 6:9–11).

224 Collins, “Apocalyptic Eschatology as Transcendence of Death,” 37. Collins called for an understanding of the eschatological life as a two-storey universe rather than two world ages.
typically functional and should be seen and interpreted in the context of Israel’s final restoration.225 This means the theology of the messiah is intrinsically linked to the restoration of the Jewish people as God’s chosen people. In Hellenistic Jewish views of the duration of the messianic rule, there is not a uniform timeline, but the idea was that it was not expected to last forever.226 Hence Collins states that it suffices to say, “the messianic kingdom is a necessary stage in the fulfilment of prophecy, but it is not necessarily the end of history.”227

The idea of the Messiah among early Christ groups as evidenced in the Lord’s Supper has a close parallel in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In one of the texts of the scrolls—1QSa—the eschatological agenda and outlook can be seen clearly on the very first pages of the document, as it begins with the line: “This is the rule for all the congregation of Israel in the Last Days when they mobilized to join the Yahad.”228 Michael Wise notes that the future banquet described in 1QSa was an idealization of the ordinary meal practice among the movement behind the Dead

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226 In 4 Ezra, we have: “For my son, the messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years. After those years my son the messiah shall die and all who draw human breath. Then the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days as it was at the first beginnings, so that no one shall be left” (4 Ezra 7:28–30 NRSV). In Revelation we have: “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be let out for a little while.” Revelation 20:1–6.

227 See also Collins, “What was Distinctive about Messianic Expectation at Qumran?”87.

228 1QSa 1:1. For this translation of 1QSa, see Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, and Edward Cook, eds., The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 143–47, here 144.
Based on similar eschatological expectations, it is possible to compare the expectation of the messiahs in 1QSa with the eschatological hope of 1 Cor 11:26. 1QSa also indicates that two messiahs were expected: “the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.” Not only is the idea of a messiah present in the scrolls, but the ritual meal described therein is filled with eschatological hope closely tied to the Messiah(s). On the ordinary communal meals in the Scrolls, Lawrence H. Schiffman notes that these were connected with the future expectations of the group and stemmed from their deep messianic consciousness. While Schiffman denies these communal meals are sacred, he does admit that they were “a form of preparation for the soon-to-dawn eschaton and for the Messianic banquet to occur in the end of days.” The communal meals of this movement were filled with this atmosphere of the “end days” and in light of this, the movement structured its life in “the present” in accord with its view

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230 1QS 9:11. See Martin G. Abegg, “The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double,” *DSD* 2 (1995): 125–44, who argues that the ideal of a dual messiah in the scrolls should be tempered because the overriding theme is that of one royal messiah. (143). John J. Collins argues that “it is of course true that not all messianic texts found in Qumran mention two messiahs. But several do and the dual messianism is especially characteristic of the two major rule books, the Rule of the Community and Damascus Document.” Collins, “Messianic Expectation at Qumran,” 84.


233 Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony and the Penal Code* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 1983), 200. As I argued in chapter one, the strict order of events in the meal described in IQSa shows that it is a ritualized event and hence the meal, for me, is sacred. See also Pyke, “Sacraments,” 550. See also, Claudia D. Bergmann who recognizes that only the ritually clean could partake of the meal but denies that it is a Messianic banquet. Cf. Claudia D. Bergmann “Meals at Qumran: Literary Fiction, Liturgical Anticipation, or Performed Ritual,” in *T & T Clark Handbook to Early Christian Meals in the Greco-Roman World*, 44–55.
of the days to come. According to Schiffman, we might say that they lived with one foot in this world and the other in the next, and nowhere is this more evident than the Messianic banquet anticipating the coming of the eschatological times. In such an anticipation, they had communal meals on some kind of regular basis, thus acting out the future messianic banquet. The Messianic banquet according to Rabbinic sources was to be a one-time affair inaugurating the Messianic era, but the Dead Sea community may have looked forward to a regular series of such banquets to be held in the days to come. According to Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn one of the characteristics both meals—the Lord’s Supper and the community meal in the Dead Sea Scrolls—in this community shared is the eschatological expectation, an expectation rooted in Jewish tradition. It therefore seems reasonable to argue that the movement behind the Dead Sea Scrolls understood their regular communal meals as anticipations of the great meal which would be celebrated when the Messiah appeared among them and in this sense can be a suggestive parallel to the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. Nowhere in the ancient world do we have instances of banquets or formal meals anticipating the end times, with a focus on the coming of a figure(s), other than in these two meals. Rabbinic tradition also picked up the idea of incorporating eschatological themes in the banquet. As Sandra R. Shimoff notes, “the Rabbis not

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237 Kuhn, “The Qumran Meal and the Lord’s Supper,” 238. Relatedly and significantly, one of the “gifts” of the Jews to the Graeco-Roman world is the seven-day week. See Kloppenborg, “Greco-Roman Thiasoi,” 200. Collins also argues that in Judaism, Apocalyptic Eschatology is the child of biblical prophecy. See Collins, “Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Ancient World,” 44.
only accepted the Hellenistic banquet, they elevated it to new levels of theological significance by incorporating it into their eschatological scheme!"\(^{239}\) However, the Rabbinic use of eschatological traditions in their meals are always dated later than 1 Cor and 1QSa.\(^{240}\)

All the same, the major difference between the idea of the messiah in 1QSa and in Paul is the person of Jesus. For Paul, the messiah is Jesus. He had come, he was crucified and died, he rose from the dead (a reality his followers will share at point), ascended, and will someday return.\(^{241}\) The death of the messiah was foreseen in 4 Ezra, but his resurrection, ascension, and eventual return was neither foreseen nor provided for in any other text of Hellenistic Judaism, except early Christian texts, of course.\(^{242}\) It was this fact of Jesus’ imminent return that drove Paul to tireless missionary activity and the founding of communities, so that the number of Christ followers might increase and no one would have an excuse for not having heard the message.

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\(^{239}\) Shimoff, “Banquets,” 447.

\(^{240}\) While it is agreed that the Mishnah and the Tosefta (the foundation of the rabbinic tradition) have a prior oral tradition, they are commonly dated to early 3rd century C.E. See Charlotte Elishave Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee, “Introduction: The Talmud, Rabbinic Literature, and Jewish Culture,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Charlotte Elishave Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–14, here 5–6.

\(^{241}\) Michael J. Townsend writes, “In the Christian Eucharist, however, the eschatology is of a different character. It is then defined by what has already taken place, that is the death and resurrection of the Messiah. That which is hoped for at Qumran as a rule for the ‘last days’ has come to pass; the Church is the eschatological community, even if the meaning of its crying ‘maranatha’ is to indicate that its eschatological expectations are not yet fully realized.” See Michael J. Townsend, “Exit the Agape?” *ExpTim* 90 (1979): 356–61, here 359.

\(^{242}\) H. J Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 106. Another point to be noted is that the meal in 1QSa demands a ritual purity not present in the Corinthian pericope. It is only the ritually clean who get to enjoy the full meal of the community. In addition to this, the hierarchical structure of the community in the scroll is foreign to Paul’s idea of the community meal in Corinth. At Corinth, Paul emphasizes equality.
(Rom 10:18). The communal meal especially became a reminder for the Christ group in Corinth that there is yet a future for themselves and for all God’s people.

The Lord’s Supper at Corinth and the judgment of the community is only comprehensible in the light of this future in which the messiah is returning. This future hope is what transformed the present and placed it in a framework that makes waiting its main goal. In this waiting period, the community have become a part of the eschatological drama and will share in the separation of the righteous from the unrighteous at the end of the world.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued in detail how the Lord’s Supper in Corinth was an instantiation of the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. This prototype—Symposium—of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition is one that can easily be recognized at private dinners, public feasts after sacrifices, royal banquets, imperial banquets, and banquets of official and unofficial associations in the Graeco-Roman world from Rome to Judah to Athens, and to Oxyrhynchus in Egypt. Since Christ groups in the first century shared a lot of the characteristics of unofficial associations in the Graeco-Roman world, I classified the group in Corinth as an unofficial association. This gave a restricted but firm ground for the comparisons made between the Lord’s Supper and the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

244 Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 617. Schweizer notes that, “a fervent eschatology appears also in Didache 16, so that the preference for the eschatological dimension in the Lord’s Supper may go back to the author or the church of his time and not to an older stratum of the tradition. Schweizer, The Lord’s Supper, 22.
My argument eventually comes down to two major points. First, that the Lord’s Supper in Corinth is an instantiation of *symposion* which in itself is the prototype of the Graeco-Roman banquet. I have shown that apart from the ritual of libation, the Lord’s Supper in Corinth is very much like its prototype. However, as I have argued throughout this work, similarities do not mean sameness. The understanding of Lord’s Supper in Corinth is therefore to be sought in those ways in which it differed from other members of the tradition, since the creation of meaning is a matter of the articulation of opposites. This conviction that the Lord’s Supper in Corinth is an instantiation of the *symposion* led me to argue secondly, that the Lord’s Supper has some differences which make it a distinct member of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

The first of these differences as argued in this chapter is that while sacrilege is not possible at the *symposion*, it is possible at the Lord’s Supper. I demonstrated this point by showing that in contrast to the *symposion* and other instances of the Graeco-Roman banquet, the Lord’s Supper was understood and interpreted by Paul to have a divine presence that is real and filled with potential consequences. While non-fatal disciplinary measures are often the result of misbehavior at the *symposion*, the consequences of misbehavior at the Lord’s Supper at Corinth were fatal.

The second difference that I argued for in this chapter is that in contrast to the *symposion* the Lord’s Supper has an eschatological dimension. This eschatological dimension means that this meal is being held on two planes. The first plane is that of present life. The other plane is that of

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246 Lori Hope Lefkovitz, “Creating the World: Structuralism and Semiotics,” in *Contemporary Literary Theory*, ed. G. Douglas Atkins and Laura Morrow (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 60–80 here 62, 72. See also Meggitt who argues that the Lord’s Supper was not a “normal meal.” Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, 189–93. While I do not share Meggitt’s idea that there were two separate meals in Corinth, I agree with him the meal at Corinth has some differences from the Graeco-Roman banquet. Gerd Theissen also notes that “the elements are, for Paul, more than graphic representations. Bread and wine become something special in the Lord’s Supper.” See Theissen, “Social Integration and Sacramental Activity,” 165.
the world to come.\textsuperscript{247} This eschatological dimension of the \textit{Lord’s Supper} in Corinth, as I stated in this chapter, is only paralleled in communal meals represented in 1QSa.

By utilizing some data from literary evidence, inscriptions, and artistic representations, I have over the course of this study shown the similarities of the \textit{Lord’s Supper} with other formal meals in the Graeco-Roman tradition. Also, I have recognized and explained two distinctive features of the \textit{Lord’s Supper} in the city of Corinth. Therefore, I contend that the idea that there is “no difference between Hellenistic-pagan and Jewish community meals” needs to be abandoned.\textsuperscript{248} Paul’s main aim of writing 1 Cor 11:17–34 is because some members of the community in Corinth are ill and dead because they cannot tell the difference between the \textit{Lord’s Supper} and the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. My point is the same as that of Paul in 1 Cor 11:17–34, that there is a difference.\textsuperscript{249}

The next chapter will summarize the arguments of this study, restate the contributions of this study to scholarship, and suggest ways in which our findings can be helpful to New Testament scholarship going forward.


\textsuperscript{248} Taussig, “Elaborating a New Paradigm,” 25–40. Also, problematic and to be abandoned is the idea that “The most one can say is that the Christian variant of the Hellenistic community supper betrays Jewish influence in two \textit{Christian Gathering}, 37, 77).

\textsuperscript{249} In the words of Smit and Al-Suadi, “In other words: although all these meals can be seen as variations on a common theme, these variations do matter a lot!” Smit and Al-Suadi, “Introduction,” in \textit{T&T Clark Handbook to Early Christian Meals in the Greco-Roman World},” 1–5, here 2.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

The thesis of this study is that the Lord’s Supper in the city of Corinth—a communal meal of an early Christ group—is a distinct expression of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. Previous scholarship on communal meals among early Christ groups have amply demonstrated that conviviality among Christ groups shares much in common with other groups in the Graeco-Roman world. However, the differences exhibited by the Lord’s Supper within the meal tradition—namely the possibility of a sacrilege and the eschatological outlook—has largely been overlooked by scholarship. This study has argued that the reason for this neglect in scholarship is that the current method of comparison between these meals is not equipped to explain both the similarities and the differences of both phenomena equally. This method of comparison, which is Aristotelian in outlook, by default pays more attention—in some cases exclusively—to the similarities to the near exclusion of the differences. To explain the differences between these meals, there is therefore the need for another comparative tool.

This study proposed and argued for a prototypical understanding of categorization which has the Idealized Cognitive Model (ICM) at its background. This understanding of categorization, which was developed in cognitive psychology and has been used in genre

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1 Smith, From Symposium to Eucharist; Smith and Taussig, Meals in the Early Christian World.

2 The result of this method of comparison on Graeco-Roman meals is now called the Smith/Klinghardt. Cf. Al-Suadi and Ben-Smit, “Introduction” in T & T Clark Handbook to Early Christian Meals in the Greco-Roman World, 2.
analysis, recognizes that there is always a central member of a category to which other members of that category can be compared. This privileged member of the category is known as the prototype. Comparisons using the prototype theory recognize that in a category, there are similarities and differences, and these asymmetries can be explained on the basis of the relationship of each member to the prototype. That a member of a category does not share every feature of the prototype does not mean it is not a member of that category. It might mean that it is a non-prototypical member of the category. That an ostrich cannot fly does not make it less of a bird. However, it may not be the first example of a bird that would be produced in a list of birds. Therefore, the prototypical understanding of categorization recognizes the differential character of each member of a group, and most importantly provides an explanation for that difference.

This understanding of categorization was then applied to the Lord’s Supper, a member of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. First, the symposion was identified as the prototype of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. The Lord’s Supper in Corinth was quite like the prototype. The major deviation of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth from this prototype is the absence of the ritual of libation. The reason for this is because the main object of the libation ritual—Dionysus or any Graeco-Roman deity—has no place at the Lord’s Supper. While some scholars interpret the cup at the Lord’s Supper as evidence of a libation, this study argues that a sufficient understanding of this ritual shows that the cup at the Lord’s Supper is not a cup of libation. However, the absence of the libation ritual does not mean that this communal meal of the early Christ group was not a part of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. It means that the Lord’s Supper was a non-prototypical member of this tradition. This position—the non-prototypical nature of the meal—is further
enhanced by two features of the *Lord’s Supper* which are not attested in the Graeco-Roman meal tradition.

The first of these features is Paul’s interpretation of the misfortunes of some members of the community in Corinth as a sacrilege. Sacrilege in this case occurs as a result of the abuse of the body of the Lord in a space that primarily belongs to the Deity (communal meal). Paul understands the illness and death in the community to be the result of the sacrilegious act of the community, which consists in an unworthy celebration of the communal meal. The unworthy celebration of this meal—an insult to the God—has drawn the ire of the God who has responded as gods in the Graeco-Roman world often react to such mortal confrontations. While it is true that meals of associations in the Graeco-Roman world were often placed under the patronage and benefaction of the gods, we do not have evidence of the gods striking at these meals, outside of the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth in Paul’s understanding. Communal meals among associations in the Graeco-Roman world were not spaces to display piety with regard to the gods, but spaces to display and contest honor among human beings. However, Paul’s interpretation of this meal—which was the main point in the pericope of this study—is that there is a difference between the *Lord’s Supper* and its Graeco-Roman counterparts, a difference which if overlooked, according to Paul, has fatal consequences. The argument, therefore, is not that the *Lord’s Supper* is unique; it is similar to other banquets in the Graeco-Roman world, but it also encodes subtle and significant differences from other banquets in the Graeco-Roman world.

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The second feature of this meal which was not attested in the Graeco-Roman tradition is the eschatological outlook. This outlook—specifically Jewish—imposes a futuristic interpretation and value on the *Lord’s Supper* in Corinth. This interpretation and value impact the spatial and temporal dimensions of the meal. The *Lord’s Supper* according to Paul was instituted by Jesus—the Messiah—whose presence at every communal meal brings the meal under divine strictures that also entail the potential for judgment by Jesus. Jesus, he messiah, is the same figure who will come again and whose imminent arrival is anticipated by this meal. The meal will be celebrated until the messiah comes again.4

To celebrate a meal in honor of a hero or an event was a common occurrence in the Graeco-Roman world. Two examples suffice here. The first is a meal in honor of Epicurus by his disciples as narrated by Diogenes Laertius.

And from the revenues made over by me to Amynomachus and Timocrates let them to the best of their power in consultation with Hermarchus make separate provision (1) for the funeral offerings to my father, mother, and brothers, and (2) for the customary celebration of my birthday on the tenth day of Gamelion in each year, and for the meeting of all my school held every month on the twentieth day to commemorate Metrodorus and myself according to the rules now in force. Let them also join in celebrating the day in Poseideon which commemorates my brothers, and likewise the day in Metageitnion which commemorates Polyaenus, as I have done hitherto.5

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4 ἄρχει ὁ ἀληθής 1 Cor 11:26.

5 Ἐκ δὲ τῶν γινομένων προσόδων τῶν δεδομένων ἀφ’ ἡμῶν Ἀμνομάχῳ καὶ Τιμοκράτει κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν μεριζόμεθαν μεθ’ Ἐρμάρχῳ σκοποῦμενοι εἰς τὰ τὰ ἐναγχίατα τῷ τε πατρὶ καὶ τῇ νηρῇ καὶ τοῖς ἁδελφοῖς καὶ ἡμῖν εἰς τὴν εἰσηγημένην ἀγεθίαν γενέθλιον ἥμεραν εἰς τὸν ἐκάστος ἐπόν τῇ προέτερα δεκάτῃ τοῦ Γαμήλιων, ἠσπαρ καὶ εἰς τὴν γινομένην σύνωδον εἰκάς τοῖς συμφιλοςοφοῦντος ἡμῖν εἰς τὴν ἡμῶν τε καὶ Μητροδότῳ <μνήμην> κατατεταγμένην. συντελεῖται δε καὶ τὴν τῶν ἁδελφῶν ἡμέραν τοῦ Ποσειδέαντος συντελείτουσαν δὲ καὶ τὴν Πολυάνου τοῦ Μεταγειτνίου καθάτερ καὶ ἡμεῖς. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers: Epicurus* 10:18 (Hicks, LCL).
Similarly, both Cicero and Pliny the Elder have records of the disciples of Epicurus observing his birthday in his honor with a meal. According to Pliny the Elder:

The same people decorate even their own anointing-rooms with portraits of athletes of the wrestling-ring, and display all round their bedrooms and carry about with them likenesses of Epicurus; they offer sacrifices on his birthday, and keep his festival, which they call the eikas on the 20th day of every month—these of all people, whose desire it is not to be known even when alive!  

The second example can be found in the inscription of Epikteta of Thera, which is a testament of about two hundred lines. This inscription mandates the completion of the shrine dedicated to the Muses started by Epikteta’s late husband Phoinix and the establishment of a three-day yearly festival. On the first day, sacrifices are to be offered to the Muses, on the second day, to Phoinix and Epikteta, and on the third day, to their sons, Kratesilochos and Andragoras.  

Across the Graeco-Roman world, there were other groups who held celebrations in honor of their heroes or remarkable events. The various Bacchic associations formed in honor of Dionysus are another of these groups. However, in none of these do we have an expectation of the return of the hero/protagonist at the center point of the communal meal as we have it in the Lord’s Supper in Corinth. Thus, this feature of the eschatological expectation of the messiah—the hero in the story

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6 *IIdem palaestrae athletarum imagi nibus et ceromata sua exornant, Epicuri voltus per cubicula gestant ac circumferunt secum. natali eius sacrificant, feriasque omni mense vicesima luna custodiunt, quas icadas vocant, ii maxime, qui se ne viventes quidem nosci volunt* Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* XXXV.5 (Rackham, LCL). Cicero notes that Epicurus’ heirs, “Amynochus and Timocrates, shall after consultation with Hermarchus assign a sufficient sum to celebrate his birthday every year in the month of Gamelion, and also on the twentieth day of every month shall assign a sum for a banquet to his fellow-students in philosophy, in order to keep alive the memory of himself and of Metrodorus.” *Amynomachus et Timocrates, heredes sui, de Hermarchi sententia dent quod satis sit ad diem agendum natalem suum quintannis mense Gamelione, itemque omnibus mensibus vicesimo die lunae dent ad eorum epulas qui una secum philosophati sint, ut et sui et Metrodori memoria colatur.* See Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* II :101–102 (Rackham, LCL).

7 *IG XII/3 330. For other bequest in honor of heroes/individuals see: IG X/2.1 259; IG X/2.1 260; Philippi II 133/G44; IJO II 196; IHierapJ 133; OGIS 326.*

8 *GRA 36.*
of the early Christ groups—is a significant part of understanding the *Lord’s Supper* which is absent in the prototype and other meals in the Graeco-Roman banquet tradition.

My argument therefore holds that Paul’s interpretation of the misfortunes in the Corinthian community as the result of sacrilegious behavior and the eschatological outlook of the *Lord’s Supper* make this meal a distinctive member of the Graeco-Roman meal tradition. Distinctiveness in this sense does not mean uniqueness. As a matter of fact, the *Lord’s Supper* is so similar to other banquets that, according to Paul, a confusion (with fatal consequences) between the two phenomena is possible. There would be no confusion if there were no similarities and there would be no fatal consequences if there were no differences. In the background of the distinctive character of this meal are the similarities it shares with other meals of the Graeco-Roman world. In fact, the similarities this meal shares with the other meals are what makes the distinctive character of the meal more significant, for it enriched the meal tradition.

It is my hope that future research on the background of early Christianity in the Graeco-Roman world will employ comparative methodological tools that pay attention not only to what the early Christ groups share with other meal practices among associations in the Graeco-Roman world but also the subtle, distinct ways in which these groups differ from these associations. If these differences are ignored, scholars will fail to do justice to the contributions of the early Christ groups to the Graeco-Roman world.
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VITA

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