

Problematic Parallels | A Note on Some Proposed Literary Parallels to the Imagery of Lk. 22:30

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1. Introduction¹

The juxtaposition of the image of ruling / judging and the image of the shared table fellowship in Lk. 22:30 causes exegetical problems, which are in view of the partial parallel in Mt. 19:28 commonly solved with the suggestion that Lk. 22:30b is a later addition to a logion either contained in Q or some other tradition (eventually) shared by Mt. and Lk. This common exegetical procedure has been challenged thoroughly by Kirk, who defends on the basis of a number of literary parallels the following thesis:

“[T]he combination of “eating and drinking” with “judging” is so strongly attested elsewhere that the configuration of these motifs in Q 22:30 can be seen as conventional.”²

Here, this thesis will be scrutinized by reviewing the literary parallels Kirk refers to, as some seem to be more convincing than others, since what is needed to provide a satisfactory literary parallel to the imagery of Lk. 22:30 is not merely a juxtaposition of meals and judgment / ruling, but also a kind of interrelation. This is strongly suggested by the way the imagery is used in Lk. 22:30, where the royal status which leads to the ruling position of the disciples is given to them a.o. by their table fellowship with Christ. The texts in question are the following: Ex. 24:1-14, Jer. 22:15-16, Ezek. 44:24, 1 En. 62:14, 1QS 6:2-3, Apc. 3:20-21, Hesiod, *Theog.* 793-803, and Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 6.31:1-2.13-14.

2. The Parallels

The text from Pliny the Younger will be looked at first. Relating how trials occupied him during the day and what kind of relaxations the evenings brought him, he writes the following:

“Vides, quam honesti, quam severi dies ; quos nos iucundissimae remissiones sequebantur. Adhibebamur cotidie cenae (...).”³

¹ References to further secondary literature can be found in my doctoral dissertation, Smit, Fellowship, 242-254, which was defended in Bern on 20 December 2005.

² Kirk, Composition, cf. for the argument: 291-293, the quotation is found on page 293.

Indeed, Pliny mentions trials during the day and meals in the evening, but there is no suggestion whatsoever that these two are somehow interrelated. This disqualifies the text as a literary parallel to Lk. 22:30.

Ex. 24:1-14 also discusses eating and drinking (v.11: “God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.” NRSV) as well as the ruling of Aaron and Hur (v.14: “To the elders he had said, ‘Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.’” NRSV). As can clearly be seen from the context, however, more or less the same problem arises in the text from Pliny the Younger: meal and rule are not interrelated. Rather, the meal in Ex. 24:11 is with God, whereas the rule of Aaron and Hur referred to in v.14 is conferred upon them by Moses, because the latter has a tête-à-tête with God and removes himself from the party of the seventy Elders. Apart from the fact that meal and rule are part of two different episodes in this short narrative, there is nothing to suggest that they have anything to do with each other. Thus, this literary parallel loses its relevance for the exegesis of Lk. 22:30 as well.

In Jer. 22:15-16, though not at all on an eschatological level, the combination of the two themes is clear: eating and drinking, and doing justice are presented as two parts of the balanced and good rule of king Josiah, though their interrelation goes much less far than in Lk. 22:30. In fact, it may well be doubted whether there is any intimate relationship at all, i.e.: the eating and drinking does not lead to any ruling, nor vice versa. The point of the text seems much more that the one element did exist at the cost of the other, as is suggested as a very real possibility by the text’s context. Therefore, the text is about balance, not about an interrelationship of table and scepter.

Ezek. 44:24 is nothing more than a juxtaposition of feasting and keeping the law, as it is indicated that the law should be kept during feasts as well, from which, however, nothing much can be deduced for the interpretation of Lk. 22:30.

A further text, 1 En. 62:14, offers the following imagery as far as the dining is concerned:

“They shall eat and rest and rise with that Son of Man forever and ever.”⁴

The preceding scene, 1 En. 62:1-13, is indeed one of judgment. However, again there are such significant differences with Lk. 22:30, that 1 En. 62:1-14 can hardly be regarded as a helpful parallel, in spite of the fact that eating and drinking are both in 1 En. 62:14 as well as in Lk. 22:30 used as

³ Pliny the Younger, Ep. 6.31:13, cf. Melmoth (ed.), Pliny, 522-523.

⁴ Trans.: Isaac, 1 Enoch, ad loc.

symbols for the blissful existence of the redeemed. In doing this they share in a relatively widespread image and their emphases differ considerably. Again, meal and judgment are juxtaposed in 1 En. 62:1-14, but they are not interrelated. For example, not the same protagonists are judging and eating, as would be needed for a parallel with Lk. 22:30 (and as is for example the case in the text from Pliny's letter). In fact, the oppressed righteous, who are redeemed through the judgment on their behalf in 1 En. 62:1-13, do not receive any kind of rule anywhere, not even through their participation in the meal of the Son of Man in 1 En. 62:14.

The value of Apc. 3:20-21 as a parallel depends on the evaluation of the connection between v.20 and v.21, which is in terms of the imagery evoked there at least as problematic as Lk. 22:30, precisely because other relevant parallels to the combination of meal fellowship and enthronization are hard to find. What seems to be the case in Apc. 3:20-21 is that earthly (meal) fellowship with Christ opens the door to eschatological enthronization. Interestingly enough, however, both images are also clearly separated from each other, as the reference to the meal is still part of the body of the letter, whereas the reference to enthronization is part of the *Siegerspruch* at the end of the letter, which, as can be learned from the other six letters in Apc. 2-3, constitutes a highly independent element in the structure of these letters, without an obvious relationship to their bodies. Thus, Apc. 3:20-21 is a parallel to Lk. 22:30, but one with significant problems in its own right, again pertaining to the connection between meal and rule. Also it is probably not insignificant that the Apc. is a younger writing than Lk., what makes the suggestion of a tradition-historical trajectory from Lk. 22:30 to Apc. 3:20-21, however difficult to prove, more plausible than the proposal of an influence the other way around.

1QS 6:2-3 is the next text that is called upon by Kirk and which should be looked at here. Indeed, here יועצו (v.3, take counsel) occurs in combination with יאכלו (v.2, to eat), through which both topics are combined. Nevertheless, once more the question should be asked how the two are interrelated. In fact, by means of the repeated יחד in this context, it seems that the emphasis of the text, befitting its general outlook, is much more on doing everything together than on the interrelation of meal and judgment. It may be argued, however, and that would make 1 QS 6:2-3 a closer parallel indeed, that the shared rule is a consequence of the shared table, as one could defend very well on the basis of the in the Mediterranean world not uncommon notion of community being established by the meal in the first place.

Also the reference to Hesiod, *Theog.* 793-803 is, probably along the same lines as 1 QS 6:2-3, of considerable relevance, as the description of the banishments of the deity from the Olymp contains within one breath the ba-

nishment from both the councils and the feasts on the Olymp, which are presented as one and the same thing.

3. Concluding Observations

When reviewing the considerations presented above, the first thing that must be said, is that Kirk's thesis that the kind of combination of ruling and table fellowship as it occurs in Lk. 22:30 is highly conventional and well-attested cannot be supported by most of the parallels he refers to. It may well be a conventional combination, but other evidence is needed for it. In fact, the only texts that do provide clear parallels are the 1 QS 6:2-3 and Hesiod, *Theog.* 793-803. In both texts, which may well share a certain utopian outlook (the one in a prescriptive sense, the other in its description of the divine world), which brings them close to Luke's eschatological thinking, the connection between ruling and table fellowship is effectuated by the close connection between community and meal community as such, from which sharing the rule could apparently be a result.

Nevertheless, this connection between community and meal fellowship is in the Hellenistic world, as well as before and afterwards, so widespread, and especially so well-known to Lk., that these two remaining (and still partial) parallels do little to question the more traditional solution of the problematic imagery in Lk. 22:30 in terms of Lk. redactional activity. This result should not so much be regarded as a slightly awkward combination of images, but rather as a profound and original statement of the full consequences of faithful (cf. Lk. 22:28) meal fellowship with Christ, on earth (cf. Lk. 22:19), as it is in heaven (Lk. 22:30).

Summary

The unusual combination of the images of table fellowship and judging / ruling in Lk. 22:30 constitutes an exegetical problem that is often solved by means of the assumption of Lk. redaction. This note discusses some parallels to Lk. 22:30 that have been proposed recently in order to make the hypothesis of Lk. redaction superfluous. The note concludes, however, that these parallels are not up to this task.

Zusammenfassung

Die ungewöhnliche Kombination der Bilder der Mahlgemeinschaft und des Richtens / Herrschens in Lk. 22:30 stellt ein exegetisches Problem dar, das häufig durch eine quellenkritische Hypothese gelöst wird. In dieser Notiz werden einige neuerdings vorgeschlagene Parallelen zu der Bildersprache von Lk. 22:30 besprochen, die eine solche Hypothese überflüssig machen würden. Die Schlussfolgerung ist aber, dass die Parallelen zu diesem Zweck nicht ausreichen.

Bibliographie

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