Sons of Abraham

Non-Hegemonic Masculinity in Luke and Acts



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DPHIL THESIS SHORT ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a re-figuration of masculinity in Luke and Acts, arguing that central male Lukan characters defy hegemonic masculinity by adhering to a different ideal, namely, that of the pious and hospitable Abraham. In contrast to much modern scholarship, the thesis shifts the comparative method away from regarding Roman hegemonic masculinity as the only way to appear masculine. Instead, the project focuses on householders and hosts in Luke and Acts to explore masculinity associated with Abraham and Jewish virtues. While women are found, not infrequently, in Lukan households, the "sons of Abraham" fill a unique role in Luke's distinct attention to hospitality, conversion, and economy. The explicit call to discipleship and hospitality is a male trope that is cast in the image of Abraham and contains unexplored conceptions of masculinity.

The project draws on theoretical insights from gender studies and postcolonial theory, and the method applied invites socio-historical and literary exegesis of four texts from Luke and Acts: Levi's banquet (Luke 5:27–31), Abraham's eschatological banquet (Luke 16:19–31), Cornelius' hospitality (Acts 10), and the Philippian jailer's hospitality (Acts 16:11–40).

The project aims to contribute to ongoing conversations in masculinities studies by introducing new comparative optics. I build on contributions by Hebrew Bible and New Testament scholars to critically engage the conclusions of especially Brittany Wilson, who argues that Lukan men appear unmanly. I construct parts of my argument on Wilson's premise that, compared to Roman hegemonic standards, the Lukan man falls short of the ideal. However, by exploring masculine tenets that defy Roman hegemony, Luke contains stories about masculine, not unmanly, men. From the economic teachings in Luke's Gospel to the nascent *ekklēsia* in Acts, Luke presents stories of defiant men once tied to imperial institutions who are transformed into sons of Abraham.

DPHIL THESIS ABSTRACT

1 *The Argument of the Thesis*

The thesis argues that Luke and Acts contain stories about men who defy the hegemonic Roman man, challenging conceptions of masculinity promulgated by those cultural, military, and institutionalized forces that oppress and crucify these men. This hypothesis pushes against a tendency to view masculinity in Luke and Acts as primarily defined by (un)successful attempts to embody conceptions of Roman masculinity, often referred to as *hegemonic masculinity*. The term "hegemonic," when used by biblical scholars, is typically informed by Connell's definitions (1987: 86-92; 1995: 76-81), where hegemonic masculinity is understood as gendered displays and performances of power and domination that seek to subordinate others. This methodological approach has been relatively unquestioned in New Testament (NT) studies on masculinities. While some recent contributions to the study of masculinity in the Hebrew Bible have called for alternative ways of understanding what it could mean to be an ideal and masculine man in a marginalized subset of the Hellenistic world (Creangă 2019), this project offers a first exploration of the limitations and shortcomings of a predominantly hegemonic view of masculinity in the NT.

The thesis approaches hegemonic masculinity as the cultural elevation of particular gendered traits and performances, a pattern visible in both ancient and modern societies. Feminist scholarship and later contributions to the now maturing field of masculinity studies have shown that ancient masculinity was often unstable and difficult to maintain, and that in the early Principate elite men expressed manliness through domination of others. This study does not deny the reality of such hegemonic models; they operated across Jewish and Roman contexts in the first century as they do today. Instead, the argument emphasizes that marginalized groups shape their identities, including masculine identity, both through participation in these structures and through acts of resistance against them.

By shifting the comparator from hegemonic Roman masculinity to what it could mean for men in Luke and Acts to be good and ideal men based on the role models apparent in the text, I argue that Luke presents a non-hegemonic and defiant way of being masculine. Masculinity should not be considered only against Roman hegemonic categories, but could, as in my chosen passages that highlight Luke's unique attention to hospitality and meal scenes, be understood as shaped in the image of Abraham. With Abraham as the paragon of hospitality and exemplar of piety within the Jewish tradition, I trace conceptions of masculinity through banquet hosting and hospitality in Luke and Acts, a non-hegemonic type that constitutes Luke's

"sons of Abraham."

I use this category or type of character to explore the portrayals of Levi (Luke 5:27–32), Abraham (Luke 16:19–31), Cornelius (Acts 10), and finally the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:11–40). I conclude that these men share an Abrahamic ideal of what it means to be an exemplary and good man in Luke and Acts.

2 *Statement of Significance and Originality*

The significance and originality of the thesis stem from its introduction of a recalibrated way of understanding conceptions of masculinity in Luke and Acts. To my knowledge, no monograph-length study on defiant, non-hegemonic masculinity in Luke and Acts exists, and my contribution would hope to stimulate further conversations with scholars such as Wilson, Creangă, Lipka, and Mohn. The thesis explores an understudied intersection of economic issues, colonialism, and masculinity in Luke and Acts, arguing that Jewish conceptions of masculinity inform Luke's narrative and support his critique of Roman ideals.

These theoretical insights build on the work of Eilberg-Schwartz, Boyarin, and Zsolnay, who explore the ambiguities of ancient Jewish masculinity. Foregrounding the centrality of Luke's meal scenes and attention to the significance of Abraham-shaped hospitality for the spreading of the gospel and the *ekklēsia* shows a masculinity that defies the hegemonic man of Rome. Instead, men in Luke and Acts appear masculine and ideal by non-hegemonic standards, what Boyarin coins a "masculinity of resistance." Economically, the sons of Abraham shift their allegiance from ties to the violent, imperial economy and are called to divest, support marginalized groups, and care for people whom a hegemonic man would have feared to be associated with.

In this way, the thesis combines insights from gender studies, postcolonialism, and biblical studies in a way that critiques the current discourse within biblical masculinity, as well as introducing new approaches to our understanding of issues related to gender, power, economics, and the influence of Jewish virtues and practices on Luke and Acts. In addition to engaging the subfields of masculinities studies and postcolonial readings of the New Testament, the project also challenges assumptions about Luke's status as an elite author, his sustained reliance on Jewish traditions even as the gospel moves into Gentile contexts, and the identity of his intended audience.

3 *Establishing Conclusions*

I establish my conclusions by introducing novel comparative categories, such as hospitality, postcolonial readings, and non-hegemonic masculinity, and then test my research questions against these by presenting a reading of four passages from Luke and Acts. I introduce the theoretical and methodological framework in two introductory chapters, showing how non-hegemonic conceptions of masculinity are valuable and understudied venues in scholarship. Subsequently, I apply these categories and investigate Levi, Abraham, Cornelius, and the Philippian jailer over four main chapters, before drawing some conclusions from the presented research. The four main chapters are divided into Part II (Luke's Gospel) and Part III (Acts).

4 *Chapter Outline*

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter lays out my primary research question: What constitutes an ideal, good, and exemplary man in Luke and Acts? First, I give a comprehensive overview of influential contributions to Masculinities Studies such as Moxnes, Conway, Wilson, showing that there is an ongoing scholarly conversation that is premised on a somewhat narrow methodological approach. I begin with the Aristotelian and later Roman and ancient physiological concept of gender to show that our conceptions of masculinity usually rest on a history written by the victor. This view is often transported to modern understandings of history, power, and sexuality by Foucault's work, resulting in a conception of masculinity associated uncritically with hegemonic tropes that glorify strength, domination, and power manifested in hard, virile bodies. This history of masculinity could benefit from being destabilized.

My methodology builds on Irigaray's concept of the *neuter*, a critical engagement of Gramsci's notion of hegemony, postcolonial theory on *hybridity*, and Burrus' argument that masculinity is often assumed or "begotten," whereas femininity is "made" from cultural conceptions. Masculine neutrality is regressive to the goals of gender studies, and if masculinity is not deconstructed alongside feminist perspectives on women in the texts, we might end up reproducing oppressive stereotypes. I develop this approach from a constructive but critical engagement with the contributions to Masculinities Studies by Anderson and Moore, Conway, D'Angelo, Robinson, and others who have contributed influential works in biblical studies

pertaining to the history of scholarship outlined above. Finally, I formulate a recalibrated approach to Lukan masculinity, defined by other conceptions of manliness than those celebrated in a hegemonic worldview. I refer to this alternative as non-hegemonic masculinity.

Chapter Two: Methodology

This chapter introduces primary and secondary material, engaging Lukan economic language and ancient hospitality in Jewish and Greco-Roman sources. Both Greek and Roman society viewed *xenophilia* or *ius hospitii* (the later Roman law of hospitality) as "an important social virtue and as a privilege of patrons" (Ahn 2010: 245). I argue that the culturally embedded practices of Greek *xenophilia* and Roman *ius hospisii* inform the broad concept of hospitality. However, contemporary Jewish and emerging NT hospitality develop certain distinctive features. Significantly, there is less focus on gaining honor, status, and power, and more on using hospitality as a way of honoring creation, mimicking God's munificence, and caring for the poor, although texts like Tobit and Sirach contain significant elements of reciprocity.

Luke seems to challenge parts of the Roman social contract where the hospitable patron would gain social standing, power, and influence, thereby promoting notions of hospitality which frequently contain elements of servility and divestment. Roman hospitality demanded merit and valued reciprocity between host and guest or patron and client, whereas Luke's hospitality more often extends hospitality to those who have little to offer in return. Luke is thus embedded in a broad Greco-Roman practice and builds on a version of Jewish hospitality (i.e. "radical hospitality") where Gentiles are eventually invited to universal table fellowship. The objective is not to present Luke's concept of hospitality as an emerging (Christian) practice that supersedes pagan or Jewish practices, but rather to point out the unique way in which Luke draws on Jewish hospitality and economic traditions. Wedged between Jewish and Roman cultural practices, Luke can be seen as conceptualizing hospitality as a third space, what Bhabha describes as *hybridity*.

Chapter Three: Levi's Hospitality and Non-hegemonic Masculinity in Luke

This chapter introduces the first Lukan character who embodies the intersection of economic themes and a refiguration of masculinity based on Jewish tenets of Abraham-shaped hospitality and table fellowship. Significantly, Levi's former vocation as a tax collector tied him to oppressive forces in rural Galilee that would have made him unpopular to fellow Jews, who potentially questioned his moral purity (by the Pharisees). I argue that Levi's calling and banquet (Luke 5:27–32) should be considered programmatic for the hospitable host disciples

in Luke, supplementing the Nazareth manifesto proclaimed to the poor in Luke 4:16–30. The good news to the poor is pragmatically brought about by calling sinners to host banquets for them, and here I engage scholars such as Wolter, Darr, and Theobald.

The significance of the household and table fellowship is essential to this task. By tying Levi's past to other references to tax collectors and dubious economic practices, his conversion marks a break away from masculine conceptions that could potentially have gained him some status in imperial circles but rendered him sinful by fellow Jews. This is what is changed when he is called to be a banquet host and offer hospitality to Jesus and his followers. Engaging masculinities scholars such as Thurman and Økland, I present Levi as a defiant man against an oppressive economy perpetrated by the Roman Empire, exploring economic intersections with masculinity in conversation with Adams and Murphy.

Chapter Four: The Rich man and Abraham in Luke 16:19–31

This chapter present an original reading of one of Luke's most enigmatic parables, arguing that the characterization of Abraham in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus could be seen as exemplary for ways of being a man in Luke and Acts. As the host of the eschatological banquet, Abraham represents an ideal figure for other Lukan hosts, those whom I call sons of Abraham. The chapter presents the prism through which the other hospitable Lukan characters can be seen, but I place it after the chapter on Levi to follow a natural progression through Luke's two-volume work, situating the pericope at the peak of Luke's teaching on wealth and discipleship.

I engage concurrent stories about Abraham from the Pseudepigrapha, Jubilees, Genesis, Hebrews, Philo and Josephus, arguing that the patriarch functions as the paragon of piety and hospitality, and I use this as the template for Jewish masculinity in Luke's cultural milieu. Scholars who engage in non-hegemonic masculinity are welcome conversation partners, such as El Mansy, Lipka, and Graybill. My conclusions push against the claim presented by Conway, Robinson, and Wilson, who argue that Lukan men are weighed on the scale of Roman hegemonic masculinity, found either tilting the scale towards the hypermasculine imperial ideal, or the penetrated, subordinate, and emasculated. This dichotomy of manly/unmanly can be broken up by considering non-hegemonic ideals like Abraham.

Chapter Five: Hybrid Masculinities in Acts 10:1–48

In chapter five, I explore how the figurations of hospitality and masculinity from Luke's Gospel can be traced in the Acts of the Apostles. The story of Peter and Cornelius shows that Luke continues to radicalize his Abraham-shaped hospitality and masculine ideal in Acts by

extending table fellowship and hospitality to Godfearers and Gentiles. Drawing on the works of Flessen, Burrus, and Gleason, I argue that the tension between almsgiving, prayer, and inclusive hospitality, on the one hand, and the conversion of a Roman officer, on the other, has significant implications for conceptions of masculinity on Acts.

As argued by Flessen, while Cornelius had ties to Roman hegemonic masculinity, he is primarily characterized by Jewish virtues. The combination of introducing table fellowship with Godfearers and a pious, hospitable Roman soldier makes Cornelius an essential part of my study. In dialogue with scholars such as Moxnes, Friis, and Wilson, I explore the gendered implications of Cornelius' past and present as the first Godfearing householder, and the first clash of a Roman hegemonic man with a non-hegemonic masculine ideal.

Chapter Six: Sons of Abraham in Roman Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

Chapter Six argues that the intersection of hospitality and masculine behavior is also exemplified in the story of the Philippian jailer, a Gentile converted from being an instrument of imperial violence, power, and domination, to a son of Abraham. By considering the emasculating effects of a suicide against the Abraham-shaped hospitality he embraces after having been converted, the chapter argues that Luke's ideal man should not be considered alongside the hegemonic masculine categories of power, domination, and control, but rather informed by Abraham-shaped hospitality and faith.

Luke's attention to the jailer's suicidal state has emasculating implications in his former life as an employee (or enslaved person) in the Roman carceral system. Interestingly, when the jailer is subsequently baptized into Paul's Philippian *ekklēsia*, Luke's portrayal of the jailer focuses on his hospitality. The jailer acts in line with Abraham-shaped ideals, forwarding Luke's suggested behavior for those who have possessions, such as offering shelter and food, as well as cleaning Paul's and Silas' wounds.

I engage Bockmuehl, Rapske, and Pilhofer's contributions to situating first-century Philippi, the Roman prison system, and the significance of a Jewish Messiah reaching Gentile shores for the first time. I also engage MacDonald, Matthews, and Parsons to discuss the significance of Lydia, arguing that female followers show how being a man in Luke is not antithetical to feminine gender roles. As argued by Zsolnay, non-hegemonic masculinity embodies ideals without rejecting women's access to spaces, voices, and experiences in proximity to the masculine ideal. Finally, I engage Stewart-Lester's work on *Sib.Or* to explore the gendered language in Paul's vision of a Macedonian man, an enslaved girl, and the imperial men of Rome's judicial and prison systems.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

In the conclusion, I revert to the opening question, what characterizes a good, ideal, and exemplary man in Luke and Acts? Based on the findings outlined above, I surmise that good men in Luke and Acts appear strikingly antithetical to hegemonic expectations. Instead, the good men in Luke's narratives are marked by performances, behaviors, and traits that challenge the dominating power of the Roman Empire—Jewish piety, radical hospitality, and table fellowship with marginalized groups—thereby carving out a hitherto understudied, non-hegemonic masculine ideal.

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Part I: Introduction and Methodology

Chapter One: Introduction

1 Chapter Road Map

This chapter introduces the thesis in three steps. First, I include a practical overview of the structure of the thesis. Then, I introduce the history of scholarship that situates the project in the discourse of masculinity studies on Luke and Acts and the New Testament. Finally, I offer some reflections on Luke's two-volume work, what unique challenges and opportunities these texts provide for my project, as well as a consideration of some overarching Lukan themes, the authorship of the two books, and their context. I conclude the chapter by proposing that non-hegemonic Jewish masculine conceptions might be helpful in reshaping how masculinity is constructed in Luke and Acts. In the conclusion of the chapter, I engage with Aliyah El Mansy's recent contribution on hegemonic masculinity and Abraham's family, which sets the stage for introducing postcolonial theory and my approach to non-hegemonic masculinity in Chapter Two.

2 Thesis Road Map

The thesis is structured into three parts. In Part I, I introduce the history of scholarship on gender studies and my approach to the study of Luke and Acts (Chapter One), before introducing postcolonial theory and a selection of Jewish texts that will function as my primary interlocutors in Parts II and III (Chapter Two). Then, in Part II, I examine Levi's Banquet (Luke 5:27–32) and the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) to present an ideal man in Luke's narrative as a "son of Abraham," marked by hospitality, charitable deeds, and piety (Chapters Three and Four).[1] Finally, in Part III, I offer a reading of the stories of Cornelius (Acts 10:1–48) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:16–40) to consider how Luke writes about Godfearing and Gentile Roman men who convert to the Way. I conclude that the Abraham-like masculine ideal continues to shape men throughout Luke and Acts. Reading Luke and Acts through a gendered and postcolonial lens has implications for how we think about central Lukan issues such as wealth ethics, table fellowship, almsgiving, and reversal, as well as understanding issues of power, hegemony, and masculinity in the ancient world.

[1] Unless otherwise noted, biblical translations are my own. Where cited, quotations from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue, 2021) are used, and references follow its versification unless otherwise specified.

3 Situating the Project

This thesis argues that conceptions of masculinity in Luke and Acts challenge the hegemonic ideals of the Roman Empire. Contrary to scholarly arguments that see Lukan or New Testament masculinities as conforming or subordinate to these ideals, or, on the other hand, deliberately unmanly compared to the hegemonic man, I argue that the comparative framework is unsatisfactory. Instead, I propose that masculinity in Luke and Acts should be understood primarily as drawing on non-hegemonic conceptions, rooted to a large extent in Jewish ideals. Luke's stories contain a plethora of Jewish men who conceptualize ways of appearing masculine that are fundamentally non-hegemonic, while the Roman man is presented as either a convert (such as Cornelius) or as the oppressor who wields the authority to demand censuses and taxation, military suppression, and ultimately to crucify and kill. While the author of Luke and Acts is undoubtedly "at home" in Greco-Roman literary conventions and would be aware of how Roman men appeared masculine or unmanly, the stories are in large part about men who encounter the imperial power from its underside.[2] Crucially, it is *because* the texts show familiarity with Roman conventions and conceptions that they might challenge their authority and their claim to power over subjugated people such as Galilean Jews in the first century CE.[3]

On the one hand, Luke and Acts are full of men who challenge, convert from, and defy the colonial power that the Roman Empire posed for Jews and Jesus followers in Luke's stories (Luke 3:12–14; Acts 16:25–34). When soldiers and prison guards lay aside their allegiance to Caesar and follow the Way, they also lay aside claims to certain conceptions of masculinity (Luke 19:8–10; Acts 10:1–2). Servility becomes a more highly esteemed virtue than domination. Or, when Luke's banquet hosts are called to invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind (Luke 14:13), hierarchies and honor codes are challenged by different ideals for the Lukan men (Luke 14:12–14).

On the other hand, Jewish men are not monolithically portrayed as "good men," but occupy roles of the megalomaniac king Herod (Acts 12:1–3), the lynch mob in Jerusalem that demands Jesus' crucifixion (Luke 23:13–21), hypocritical Pharisees (Luke 11:39–44; Luke

[2] Scholars frequently point to Luke's writings as representative of how the New Testament is situated in the broader literary environment and cultural context from which it was produced. See, e.g., Bovon 2002: 15–25. For my purposes this makes Luke's writings suitable for a postcolonial study of men and masculinity because it places the stories of often marginalized Jewish men and Gentile converts in tension with the structures that oppress them.

[3] This perspective invites a postcolonial reading of the gender issues present in Luke and Acts, and I will introduce these theoretical concepts in Chapter Two.

18:9–14; Luke 20:46–47) and Saul, the violent persecutor who later becomes a main protagonist in Acts (Acts 7:58–60; Acts 8:1–3; Acts 9:1–6; Acts 22:4–5). In other words, Luke is not conscientiously constructing a narrative that portrays Jewish men as pitted against Roman men, with one as the ideal and the other a group of evil stock characters. My research question is rather, what constitutes an ideal, exemplary, and good man in Luke's stories? To approach this question, I first offer some methodological considerations about the field of gender studies and the approach to researching masculinity.

Gender studies are fundamentally concerned with a deconstruction of ideas about men, women, sexuality, bodies, and identity formation that presume a natural or neutral subject.[4] Conceptions of manliness, womanhood, and other gender constructs are socially constructed parts of cultural identities. This is an underlying insight championed by feminist and womanist scholars and intellectuals who demand that being a woman is not exclusively tied to biological sex, but in large parts shaped by man-made cultural expectations.[5] This is a defiant task, asking questions and rejecting absolute answers. A woman should not be tied to any definition of what her gender is or should be.[6] This is the point at which masculinity studies receive the torch and can begin to deconstruct what it means to be masculine, ideal, and "true men." Does it have to be dictated only by historically determined hierarchies, patriarchy, hegemony, and power? In the Greco-Roman world, masculinity was associated with and conceptualized from notions that at their core seek to establish dominance over others. Brittany Wilson argues: "Men, or at least 'true' men, were characterized as being dominant, active, and self-controlled, whereas women were characterized as being subordinate, passive, and excessive, especially in terms of displaying emotion, loving luxury, and being overly concerned with their appearance."[7]

Violence, power, and subjugation are, however, not the only available tenets of masculinity, neither in history nor today, even though they shaped much of the culture

[4] Butler 2007 [1990]: 89–106; 194–203.

[5] See especially Butler 2007 [1990]: 101–80; 2011 [1993]: 27–56.

[6] Early contributions to the study of masculinity interestingly define the cultural constructions of masculinity throughout history as using the feminine as its counterpoint. In other words, masculinity is a struggle to achieve that which is not womanhood. See Gilmore 1990: 1, and Satlow 1996: 19–21, who broadly argue that this is true for Greek, Roman, Christian, as well as both early and Rabbinic Jewish traditions. I suspect that these early hypotheses derive much of their broad claims from a Western European tendency to valorize especially Greek and Roman hegemonic conceptions of masculinity, and these are some of the underlying presumptions that this thesis push against.

[7] Wilson 2015: 40. Wilson (2015: 257) further sees Luke and Jewish Scriptures as conceptualizing the God of Israel in this way, arguing, "Like Jewish scriptural texts in particular, Luke also depicts God instigating punitive miracles in a manner that renders humans subordinate in the domination-subordination schema. Such displays of power, viewed in isolation at least, do appear to cast God as a hypermasculine, Priapic figure who inflicts bodily impairments on those who 'exceed their station.' Luke may disassociate power from male humans (both elite and nonelite), but he transfers that power to God." See further discussion in Chapter Five.

concurrent with Luke's writings. Luke and Acts are highly relevant to explore other conceptions of masculinity, because they contain stories about men who struggle under the violent grip of other, often powerful men. The deconstructive work done by feminist scholars thus allows us to hypothesize about what alternative masculinities might look like if we combine a gendered approach with theories that explore the implications of colonial power and imperialism. The underpinnings of such a hypothesis push against a tendency to view masculinity in Luke and the New Testament as primarily defined by more or less (un)successful attempts to live up to the broader Greco-Roman notions of manliness, often referred to as *hegemonic masculinity*.[8] While some recent contributions to the study of masculinity in the Hebrew Bible have called for alternative ways of understanding what it could mean to be masculine in a marginalized subset of the ancient Hellenistic world, studies of New Testament masculinities that explore the limitations and shortcomings of a predominantly hegemonic view of masculinity has yet to appear.[9] Finally, while I also compare what I argue are different conceptions of masculinity to the hegemonic Roman ideal of a man, my interest lies primarily in asking how we might think about masculinity when hegemony is not the comparator. This distinction—that non-hegemonic masculinity will, naturally, also be seen in comparison to hegemonic ideals yet other ways of appearing masculine might have existed for first century Jews—is significant. My hypothesis is that when Lukan men are compared to hegemonic ideals, they appear either masculine or unmanly by the standards required for hegemonic men. However, because the field lacks vocabulary or specific tenets for understanding masculinity without adopting a hegemonic view of masculinity, men in Luke and Acts have not been considered masculine from a Jewish, non-hegemonic perspective. In other words, even though a man might appear unmanly from a Roman perspective, the same man might appear masculine, even ideal, if the perspective and comparator is changed. In this way, the attempt to scope out alternative ways of thinking about men and how they appear masculine, especially those who face oppression from hegemonic men, requires a level of comparison (non-hegemonic compared to hegemonic masculinity), but it also requires thinking outside the box called hegemonic masculinity, if we are to entertain the possibility that a marginalized group,

[8] Originally a term borrowed from sociology, hegemonic masculinity can be defined as a cultural tendency to value a certain masculine performance. In Roman culture during the time-period of Jesus of Nazareth and the writing of the books that came to be known to us today as the New Testament, these masculine mores consisted largely of valorizing that which subjugates all other men, women, enslaved people, and children, attested primarily in military, sexual, bodily, and social domination, honor, and (self-)control. I discuss the term in more detail below in Chapter Two. See Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832–47.

[9] The contributed chapters to Creangă 2019 are framed as an attempt to push against the limits and limitations of hegemonic masculinity.

in our case Jewish and Christ-following men living under Roman hegemony, would conceptualize masculinity in ways that opposed the domination enforced upon them.

Hegemonic masculinity implies that cultures, ancient and modern, tend to laud certain conceptions, traits, and performances and assign them cultural hegemony. We know from feminist and gender studies that masculinity has been perceived as an elusive concept in many cultures throughout history, fragile and unsustainable for most without the means to perform and attain culturally valued ideals.[10] The fluidity and diversity of masculinity and the hegemonic ideal of a given culture merit some methodological clarification. For one, this project is not saying that hegemonic masculinities are misconceptualized or unreal. They exist and have existed in any culture, Jewish as well as Greco-Roman, in the first century and today.[11] Other claims to masculinity that reject or are rejected by hegemonic claims to what it means to be a "true man" are usually referred to as complicit, marginalized, subordinate, non-hegemonic, or defiant. What I do want to push against in this thesis, however, is a methodological tendency to apply the hegemonic Roman conceptions of masculinity as the comparative tool when analyzing masculinity in Luke and Acts. In these texts, the hegemonic man of Rome often appears not as an ideal, but as the destructive and oppressive force that ultimately crucifies Jesus by nailing him to a tree. As I noted above, Jewish men living under Roman occupation in the first century would have had different comparators and ideals of what it meant to be masculine. One of these ideals, I shall argue, was Abraham. Praised for his piety and hospitality by ancient Jews and early Christians, the patriarch embodies strikingly different tenets of masculinity compared to the "impenetrable penetrator" of Rome.[12] This is the lacuna that the present work seeks to explore. By shifting the comparator from hegemonic masculinity to explore non-hegemonic Jewish conceptions of masculinity, I argue that Luke presents a masculinity shaped in the image of Abraham. With Abraham as the paragon of hospitality and piety, I thus present the "son of Abraham" as a non-hegemonic masculine trope in Luke and Acts. Before exploring how an Abraham-centered masculinity might challenge a comparative framework based on hegemonic masculinity, I offer some brief clarifications on how I apply the theme and concept of ancient hospitality throughout this project.

Critically examining how men appear to be idealized or criticized in Luke and Acts

[10] Williams 2010: 156, cf. Wilson 2015: 43.

[11] I return to the theoretical underpinnings of hegemonic masculinity in Chapter Two.

[12] Walters (1997: 30) notes that the term "hegemonic masculinity" is used to describe the masculinity that was achieved by military prowess (penetrating your enemy with a weapon and avoiding the same by being hard and courageous) and sexual domination (penetrating wives, enslaved people, men and women, as long as being the active/penetrating part). A crucified Jesus is quite literally "unmanned" if viewed against this ideal of masculinity when he is nailed to the cross, as noticed by Wilson (2015: 190–242).

offers a range of possible points of entry. Natural starting points for contributors to gendered readings of these texts have, as we have seen, often been tied to conceptions of masculinity prevalent in the dominant culture.

In my attempt to ask how Lukan men might appear as men to be emulated and followed from a perspective where the hegemonic man is not the ideal but often the antagonist or even the oppressor, Luke's use of hospitality as a prominent theme and characteristic trait might offer a relevant point of entry into the texts. It may also provide a way forward for a conversation about what masculinity might look like beyond its ties to hegemonic tenets.

The justification for applying hospitality as a unique approach to masculine conceptions in Luke and Acts can be tied to three significant observations. First, hospitality was a central cultural script in both Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions around the time of Luke and Acts, deeply embedded in social, ethical, and religious norms.[13] If hospitality can be seen as a somewhat shared cultural practice that most ancient people would associate with virtue, piety, or otherwise worthy of praise, it is a theme and character trait that is well suited to capture tensions where different traditions meet. If Luke and Acts can be seen as texts about the Jewish God, his Messiah, Jewish men and converted Gentiles, written to a predominantly Gentile audience, as argued below, then hospitality is an excellent intersection between the Jewish and Gentile traditions present in the text. From a postcolonial perspective, this allows us to explore how hospitality can function as mimicry and opening hybrid spaces for men to appear ideal while also challenging the ideals of the dominant culture.

Secondly, there are distinct features of Jewish and Lukan hospitality that allow me to explore how offering and receiving hospitality in the text can tell us something about the Lukan man. According to Joshua Jipp, Jewish hospitality is legally grounded, theologically motivated, and distinctly directed toward the vulnerable, even as it participates in a broader ancient Mediterranean script of expected hospitality.[14] Moreover, it seems like these Jewish conceptions shape Luke's portrayal of hospitable men, in ways that present masculinity as rooted in a covenantal responsibility rather than honor-based reciprocity. Significantly, Luke can borrow imagery from Greek and Roman banquet scenes while upholding a distinct focus on care for the poor, salvation, and discipleship rooted in Jewish Scripture. In Chapter Four on Abraham in Luke's parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, this becomes apparent as the parable

[13] Jipp 2013: 112–13; 2017: 216. See further Pohl 1999: 7–8. Jipp's contributions trace the theme of hospitality from its Homeric conceptions through Greek and Roman literature, as well as detailing its distance and proximity to Jewish practices in the ancient world.

[14] Jipp 2017: 37–40, cf. Alexander 1985: 289–91.

carries imagery reminiscent of a typical banquet scene, while maintaining a focus on the Law, Moses, Abraham, care for the poor, and salvation.

Finally, hospitality overlaps with central Lukan stories about men who are idealized or criticized based on how they relate to the giving or receiving of hospitality.[15] In other words, a good Lukan man is often hospitable, and this issue is regularly tied to overarching themes such as salvation and repentance, as noticed by Jipp:

> Both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles […] connect salvation with hospitality. In Luke Jesus is frequently depicted as a guest or a traveler, and those who experience salvation and the blessings of the kingdom are those who welcome Jesus into their home and demonstrate loving hospitality to him and his disciples (see, for example, 5:27–32; 7:36–50; 10:1–16; 19:1–10). Alternatively, those who reject Jesus and the kingdom manifest this rejection through inhospitality toward Jesus (7:36–39; 9:51–56; 11:37–41; 14:1–6; 19:41–44). None of this is to deny the importance of responding to Jesus with faith (see, for instance, 5:20; 7:9; 7:50), but it is to say that hospitality to Jesus appears to function in the Gospel as a sign that one has embraced the message and person of Jesus. In the Acts of the Apostles' description of Paul and Silas's missionary journey, Lydia (16:11–15), the Philippian jailer (16:25–34), Jason (17:5–8), and Titius Justus (18:7–8) all manifest their receptivity to the gospel through welcoming and hosting Paul and Silas in their homes.[16]

Applying hospitality as a lens for exploring imperial critique and masculinity opens a distinctive avenue for examining how Luke's householders and hosts navigate the space between hegemonic and non-hegemonic ideals of manhood. In the main chapters of this thesis, I use hospitality as a point of entry into scenes where men confront hegemonic expectations, showing how Luke portrays figures who embody non-hegemonic forms of masculinity without appearing subordinate or unmanly.

Thus, the title of this project is an attempt to capture a type of masculinity that is neither subordinate nor hegemonic. Being a son of Abraham is tied to certain qualities, virtues, and behaviors that sit at the heart of the ideal man in Luke and Acts. Instead of presenting hegemonic or emasculated men, Luke applies specific notions of hospitality, piety, righteousness, and charitable deeds from Jewish traditions and epitomizes these in his characterization of Abraham. Subsequently, those who imitate the patriarch can be seen as sons of Abraham and, by extension, men less defined by Roman imperial expectations, cast instead in light of Abraham's radical hospitality. Now, although I do not devote a chapter to Zacchaeus,

[15] As argued by Chadwick (1961: 281–85), early Christian theology often linked hospitality with salvation, especially in the early church.

[16] Jipp 2017: 14-15.

he is worth mentioning as a way of introducing the theme, the only man to be explicitly referred to as a son of Abraham in Luke and Acts.[17]

During the final stages of the Galilean ministry on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus meets a man called Zacchaeus. At this point in the narrative (Luke 19:1–10), Jesus' teaching on what it means to follow the Son of Man has reached its peak after Luke's extended Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51–19:44), and he is passing through the city of Jericho. There, amid a now familiar scene of turmoil and large crowds gathering to see Jesus, Zacchaeus climbs a tree. We learn that he is a chief tax collector (ἀρχιτελώνης, Luke 19:2), rich (πλούσιος, Luke 19:2), short of stature (ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς, Luke 19:3),[18] and a sinful man (ἁμαρτωλῷ ἀνδρὶ, Luke 19:7).[19] Anthony Giambrone notes that similar to the crippled woman raised up in Luke 13:10–17, Zacchaeus' short stature is raised up in the sycamore tree to see Jesus passing by.[20] His occupation and affluence would place him among the recipients of Jesus' most stern teaching on repentance and reversal. Being short of stature would have had further emasculating connotations in both Jewish and Roman culture. Seemingly unprovoked, Jesus addresses the little man in the tree, asking him to come down quickly and offer him hospitality.

The onlookers grumble, knowing Zacchaeus for a sinner, but Jesus proclaims salvation on his household (οἶκος) when Zacchaeus tells him that he has given half his money to the poor and is prepared to pay back fourfold whatever he still owes.[21] Jesus proceeds to call Zacchaeus by the title of this thesis, namely a son of Abraham. The short-statured tax collector has fulfilled the central commandments of anyone who wants to be a disciple. He has offered hospitality to the rejected Son of Man, and he has put forward his possessions to benefit the poor. It is relatively unproblematic to envision Zacchaeus as a model follower of Jesus. If anything, scholars have taken issue with the apparent detail that he only gives away half of his

[17] Note the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3:34 ([ὢν υἱός] τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ) and Paul's address to the synagogue in Antioch in Pisida in Acts 13:26 (Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραὰμ).

[18] While the vast majority of scholars agree that Zacchaeus is the one described as "short" in the passage, Isaac Soon has recently argued that Jesus is the short one and that Zacchaeus has to climb the tree to spot him in the crowd of taller people. See Soon 2023: 151–70 [152] for selected references to the scholarly consensus.

[19] See further Solevåg (2020: 225–40), who argues that Zacchaeus is presented as an archetypal "other" in the Lukan story, drawing on Greco-Roman tropes where people of short stature provided comic relief through their physical appearance and social behavior, exemplified in Luke's story by climbing the tree. She notes that Luke reverses these expectations when Zacchaeus becomes part of the "in-group" of Jesus' followers, but her argument could be pushed further by seeing Zacchaeus not as a part, but a leading figure in the movement which might be suggested in light of his economic behavior and status as a "son of Abraham."

[20] Giambrone 2017: 113.

[21] Wojtkowiak (2023: 22–52) argues that Luke has a positive view of money; even interest and profit, considering texts such as the Parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8–10), the Widow's Mite (Luke 21:1–4), the Parable of the Talents (Luke 19:11–27/Matt 25:14–30), and the stories of Barnabas, Ananias, and Sapphira in Acts (Acts 4:32–5:11).

possessions, contrary to Jesus' command to the rich ruler some verses before (Luke 18:18–28) who is told to give away everything.[22] Apart from this one wealth ethical detail, which can probably be explained by the fact that he is prepared to pay back fourfold (ἀποδίδωμι τετραπλοῦν, Luke 19:8) anyone whom he has defrauded, he is a model Lukan convert.[23] As Jesus explains in the last verse, "the Son of Man has come to seek out and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). However, to claim that Zacchaeus is particularly masculine by any ancient Mediterranean standard is perhaps not as self-evident.

4 Rethinking Masculinity

The story of Zacchaeus elucidates a key aspect of the present study, namely that masculinity in Luke and Acts is not measured against hegemonic conceptions, which would have rendered Zacchaeus unmanly because of his physical limitations. Just as Jesus can be likened to a mother hen (Luke 13:34), an image that would have been inherently unmanly in a culture that defined masculinity as antithetical to anything associated with the female, in this case motherhood, hegemonic masculinity does not seem to set the premises for what is considered masculine or unmanly in Luke's stories. Instead, masculinity in the story of Zacchaeus can be seen as modeled on Abraham, particularly on how the patriarch is portrayed in the parable of the rich man in Luke 16:19–31. In Chapter Four, I explore how Abraham might be characterized as antithetical to the rich man in the parable, thus functioning as an ideal man hosting an eschatological banquet. Abraham's role in the parable as an ideal for disciples and readers with a surplus of possessions and who are called to be banquet hosts is both a relatively unexplored venue in scholarship and key to my reading of Luke's householders.[24]

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[22] Jean Gérard (1995: 92) argues that Zacchaeus proves an inconsistency in Luke's soteriology for the rich, "Si le notable riche sert, dans l'évangile Lucanien, de modèle négatif, on ne peut en dire autant pour le percepteur Zachée." However, Zacchaeus' intention to pay back fourfold those he has potentially defrauded could imply that the sum of these divestments would account for a complete divestment. Wojtkowiak (2023: 36) notes that the Parable of the Talents, immediately following the Zacchaeus story in Luke 19:11–27 provides the only New Testament text where the increase of monetary possessions is rewarded: "Lukas kann ein Gleichnis verwenden, in dem Umgang mit Geld, und zwar explizit dessen Vermehrung, positiv gewertet wird."

[23] Hays (2010: 184–85) argues that "giving away everything" (ἀποτάσσεται πᾶσιν, Luke 14:33) means different things depending on each disciple's mode of living. While my own research owes much to Hays' work, I read Luke as being intentionally hyperbolic in passages such as Luke 14:33 and 18:18–28. In line with Gérard and Wojtkowiak's argument, wealthy characters in Luke and Acts exhibit a wide range of behavior, degrees of divestment, and ethical responses to Jesus or the apostles' teaching. Therefore, I do not hinge too much on Luke's deliberately exaggerated ideal of divestment that occurs in Jesus' most uncompromising teachings on what it means financially to be a disciple.

[24] Moessner (1989: 174) argues that "*at table* Jesus reveals himself as the Lord-Host of the Heavenly Banquet which is now dynamically being fulfilled in his journeying to Jerusalem." While Jesus can be seen as both Lord and host in Luke's gospel, there are no references to him being the host at the eschatological banquet. Rather, Luke can be seen assigning this role to Abraham in both Luke 13:28–29 and 16:22. Jesus, on the other

To be a son of Abraham can be seen as a major theme that develops throughout Luke and Acts, and I will trace this *leitmotif* by offering a close reading of key texts from both Luke and Acts. Tying masculinity to notions of certain radical aspects of hospitality that Luke applies in a unique way in both the Third Gospel and Acts, presents a counter-cultural ideal against the ubiquitous influence of the imperial hegemonic man.[25] I aim to show that the now substantially researched aspects of this concept of masculinity have perhaps been given an inflated status in studies on Lukan and Biblical masculinity, a tendency that seems to have been picked up by some Hebrew Bible scholars, but not yet in the field of New Testament studies.[26] The state of masculinities studies within biblical scholarship can be recapitulated in the following way:

> In recent years, two main interpretations of masculinity in [Luke and] Acts have emerged. The first argues that the narrative's heroes are clearly aligned with the cultural ideal of masculinity in the Roman Empire, often referred to as hegemonic masculinity. The second line of interpretation concludes that the heroes are decidedly unmanly vis-à-vis this cultural ideal.[27]

Colleen Conway's diagnosis is painted in broad strokes, but for the most part it is a concise and correct synopsis of recent contributions to masculinities studies in Lukan studies and the New Testament studies more broadly. Scholars tend to view masculinity in the New Testament as molded by hegemonic ideals, either complying with them or subverting them to appear

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hand, seems to embody aspects of both Lazarus and Abraham (Luke 16:19–31), being both rejected and hospitable, pace Steele 1984: 379–94; Love 1995: 194–205, cf. Jeremias 1966; Neyrey 1985: 811; van Staden 1991: 216–230. A consequence of this one-sided reading by scholars is the tendency to gloss over Jesus' ambiguous role as both outcast and host during his ministry, although not as a heavenly banquet host in Luke. While my interest in this project is not primarily on Jesus' masculinity in Luke and Acts, I push against this tendency and consider Jesus' role as primarily teaching disciples to be hospitable towards those that Jesus identifies with, the poor and the outcast. On this point I agree with Wilson (2015: 257) that Jesus' lordship is not presented as powerful or hypermasculine, cf. Luke 22:25–27.

[25] It is significant to note, however, that I am not arguing that the hospitality reflected in Luke's stories is uniquely Jewish. In other words, the Jewish traditions available to Luke is not unique in valuing hospitality. As noted by Joshua Jipp (2013: 18), hospitality was for the ancient Greeks the main virtue that distinguished them from barbarians.

[26] Somewhat unexpectedly, a concise summary of this tendency can be found in the *Oxford Handbook of Pauline studies*, under Roetzel's (2017: 23) treatment of Paul as a legendary martyr, which describes Paul's resistance against Rome's hegemonic man as, "[a] proclamation of strength in weakness [that] survived and became the thematic core of later martyrological traditions, and the stories of the martyred few rose up to substitute for the Roman pornography of violence and its ideology of masculinity, a completely different understanding of power." While the influence of martyrology certainly shaped distinct masculine ideals in early Christianity, discourses on power and sexuality favors certain approaches to gendered behavior and rhetoric, while, at the same time, silencing others. As I explore in this thesis, non-hegemonic masculinities, especially in Jewish literature, offer an approach to New Testament masculinity that is not prerequisite on (the subversion of) categories of violence and domination, cf. Matthews 2010 and Robinson 2019.

[27] Conway 2017: 20.

inherently unmanly, as argued by Wilson. Conway concludes that Wilson's argument "represent[s] a refiguration of masculinity, one that lifts up qualities that would be deemed unmanly in the ancient world (e.g., powerlessness), in order to emphasize the power of God."[28] Contrary to this trend, this thesis argues that the influence of hegemonic masculinity has perhaps informed too much of our approach to what constitutes an ideal man in Luke and Acts.

The idea that imperial and hegemonic ideals of masculinity might not have been conceived as such by many of the "uneducated and ordinary men" (Acts 4:13) in Luke's stories has recently gained some traction in the field of Biblical Masculinities. Kendra Mohn invites an imperial critical reading of Matthew's Gospel and argues that central masculine characters are conceptualized as men without ascribing to typical hegemonic tenets such as power and domination.[29] She also notes that typical hegemons like Herod are portrayed antagonistically, even challenging their masculinity by portraying Rome's puppet king as scared, threatened, misusing economic and physical power.[30] The underlying assumption that the good men in the New Testament Gospels are not typically hegemonic is helpful. It builds on the insights offered by Wilson, but it lacks alternative approaches to how Matthew or, in this case Luke, would have conceived an exemplary man when the hegemonic comparison tend to fit the antagonist better than the ideal man.[31] My project contributes to an underdeveloped aspect of this conversation by exploring non-hegemonic and Jewish conceptions of masculinity in Luke and Acts. For all the imperial critical work done by Mohn, her study does not focus on alternative approaches to masculinity. Her conclusions are thus limited to how the ideal man *is not* power-seeking or dominating, although she argues that Matthew upholds some hegemonic tendencies.[32] Similar to Wilson's conclusions, the men are left power*less*, subordinate, and self-sacrificing.[33] While such tenets might be central to male characters in the Gospels, they seem accessible to Mohn and Wilson because they are somehow counterparts to hegemonic men, what Wilson calls *unmanly*. For that reason, I am curious to explore whether men in Luke and Acts might appear exemplary, good, and ideal without being premised on hegemonic masculinity. The overlooked impact of Jewish masculine role models and laudable characteristics such as hospitality, piety, and prudence might offer non-hegemonic conceptions of what an ideal man looks like.

[28] Conway 2017: 20, cf. Gaventa 2004: 57–58; Wilson 2014: 367–87.
[29] Mohn 2025: 1–3; 144.
[30] Mohn 2025: 75–91.
[31] Mohn 2025: 167–69; 205–6.
[32] Mohn 2025: 1.
[33] Mohn 2025: 132–44.

By using the term "non-hegemonic," it may initially sound as though I am simply replacing one binary with another. Conway, as we have seen, argues that biblical masculinity has typically been understood either as aligned with hegemonic ideals of what makes men appear as men, or as unmanly and emasculated in comparison to those same ideals. The present argument, however, seeks to approach conceptions of masculinity without restricting them to the hegemonic framework that has dominated much previous scholarship. A banal example, which I explore in depth in Chapter Five, could be how Cornelius is presented as a good man for his pious almsgiving and prayer, not for his standing within the Roman military complex. His standing as a good and masculine man in Acts seems, contrary to the existing scholarly options, neither hegemonic nor unmanly. He is lauded, but not because he exhibits hegemonic traits such as power, domination, or self-control, typical Greco-Roman tenets of masculinity that Luke could have foregrounded if these were what made Cornelius a good man. Instead, Cornelius is depicted as an ideal man because of his almsgiving and prayer.

I could, perhaps, have chosen a more specific label for a different kind of masculine behavior or performance—something like "Abraham-shaped masculinity." Other options like "marginalized" or "subordinate" masculinity are explicitly avoided because these appear dictated by their standing in relation to hegemony. Instead, therefore, I lean into the ambiguity of "non-hegemonic masculinity" in order to explore what a good and ideal man might look like when hegemony is treated as a negative rather than a positive force. The conceptual vagueness makes it possible to investigate a range of character traits, performances, and ideals, with the only shared feature being that these stories describe men who challenge or defy hegemonic expectations.

Finally, adopting a term such as "Abraham-shaped" or "Jewish" masculinity in Luke and Acts, as opposed to hegemonic or non-hegemonic masculinity, would likely create more confusion than clarity. The more general term "non-hegemonic masculinity" allows me to explore characterizations of Jewish and Gentile or Godfearing characters who exhibit liminal and hybrid masculinities, perhaps subtly critiquing the hegemonic man without accepting the premise that masculinity must be understood through a lens of power and domination. Both Abrahamic and Jewish notions of manliness are inherently diverse and deeply intertwined with broader Hellenistic and Roman masculine ideals. "Non-hegemonic masculinity" is therefore an attempt to challenge an existing methodological framework without tying the alternative to anything other than those exemplary men in the Lukan texts who resist the power and influence of hegemonic masculinity in the ancient world as well as in modern scholarship.

Moreover, while it might be heuristically useful to compare similarities and differences

between Jewish and Greco-Roman masculine conceptions, such scholarly endeavors can end up presenting masculinity in, for example Luke, as something that appears *sui generis* from a background of cultural and historical influences. In other words, attempting to pin down the most relevant comparator for a text, which then, perhaps unconsciously, is made to appear like a unique offspring of its cultural and historical backdrop illustrates how scholarly framing participates in the very cultural performances it seeks to analyze. This way of approaching New Testament texts often leads scholars to search for an intertextual or parallel text that perfectly captures the origin or interlocutor of a biblical text.[34] The result is often a modern scholarly debate that reads New Testament texts from either a Greco-Roman or a Jewish backdrop. Such methodologies can be more of a constructed binary than a helpful grouping of contemporary sources that influenced the New Testament writers. Instead, we might look at the ways in which New Testament texts such as Luke and Acts engage in concurrent discourses and processes that both inform and are informed by the broader Greco-Roman and Jewish currents.

The scholarly tendency described above might seem misplaced, should one conduct a brief review of New Testament masculinities studies. While scholars often disagree on whether men in the New Testament should be considered "true men," the ubiquitous comparator is Greco-Roman, hegemonic masculinity. The present study could thus be mistaken for an attempt to dig out an opposing scholarly trench and start lobbing claims that Jewish and not Greco-Roman masculinity is what informs, or functions as the backdrop of the Lukan man. My goal, however, is not to disregard the impact of broader Hellenistic discourses on masculine figurations in Luke and Acts, but rather to broaden the scope to include, even foreground, certain Jewish discourses on what it might look like to be a good, virtuous, or masculine man in Luke's writings. The primary justification for this reading is drawn from the simple observation that Luke presents Jewish men such as Abraham, David, Elijah, and others as masculine, and does not include references to Greek or Roman men in similar ways in the text.

Secondly, I find the justification for my methodological approach embedded in postcolonial theory. In addition to being a gender issue, masculinity has been, and still is, a concept that is readily deployed for patriarchal and imperialist agendas.[35] The deconstructive work required by all studies on (ancient) conceptions of masculinity is indebted to feminist and

[34] I thank Professor Max Lee and his paper "A Handbook for Graeco-Roman Parallels: A New Paradigm" given at the Oxford New Testament Seminar 14 Jan 2024 for developing this argument and making me aware of the potentially anachronistic scholarly jargon. While most contributions to Lukan masculinities draw on broad Greco-Roman notions of the ideal man, an additional interpretive issue is the lack of conversation with Jewish Scriptures to inform our thinking on masculinity (see e.g., Creangă 2019).

[35] I devote more space to further discuss postcolonial theory in Chapter Two.

postcolonial scholars whose contributions demand that men also be studied *as men*, and not only as that untouchable neutral concept that masculinity is often portrayed as. This tension is articulated by Homi Bhabha, whose work has shaped significant parts of my own thinking in the present study, and whom we shall return to in more depth in Chapter Two:

> To speak of masculinity in general, *sui generis*, must be avoided at all costs. It is as a discourse of self-generation, reproduced over the generations in patrilineal perpetuity, that masculinity seeks to make a name for itself. "He," that ubiquitous male member, is the masculinist signature writ large – the pronoun of the invisible man; the subject of the surveillant, sexual order; the object of humanity personified. It must be our aim not to deny or disavow masculinity, but to disturb its manifest destiny – to draw attention to it as a prosthetic reality – a "prefixing" of the riles of gender and sexuality; an appendix or addition, that willy-nilly, supplements and suspends a "lack-in-being."[36]

Bhabha's insights sit at the intersection of gender studies and postcolonial theory. His critical perspectives on conceptions of masculinity are broad and diachronic but nevertheless capture a way of thinking about masculinity that has been prevalent in modern scholarship. One of his most helpful observations is that if masculinity is perceived as objective and fixed, that perception inherently serves to perpetuate a patriarchal agenda. Luce Irigaray develops a similar argument about what she calls masculine neutrality.

Irigaray describes the *neuter* as the masculine's preexistent prerogative to simply *be*. She sees language as inherently phallogocentric, meaning that men are not only the norm, but that the female only exists in a complementary relation to the male.[37] This framing positions masculinity as self-sustaining and unquestioned, reinforcing its privileged status in philosophical and theological discourse.[38] Just as feminist critique demands that we seek to understand the concurrent notions of gender that shape how we perceive women in the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, ancient masculinity must be approached in the same critical way. The alternative is that (biblical) men remain what Jorunn Økland describes as "outstanding individuals and 'men of God.'"[39] If masculinity is allowed to be assumed *sui generis*, as

[36] Bhabha 1995: 57, cf. Thurman 2003: 137–61.

[37] Irigaray 1977: passim.

[38] Irigaray (2002: 250) identifies the masculine as projecting a historically neutral and a socially perpetuated idea that renders the feminine defined in inherently negative terms or as anything non-masculine. Her argument, however, centers around how gender is never neutral, arguing that "what claims to be universal, is actually the equivalent of a male idiolect, of a male imaginary, of a sexed world— and not neuter. (…) Men have always been the ones to speak and especially to write: in the sciences, in philosophy, in religion, and in politics."

[39] Økland 2015: 481.

something that is not fragile and unstable, weak and soft, conceptually speaking (as these characteristics are often assumed to be female), then the way we think and write and talk about masculinity will in some ways contribute to reinforcing patriarchal structures.

Masculinity's manifest destiny must, as Bhabha notes, be disturbed, destabilized, and deconstructed. The tools necessary to do this work are given to us, somewhat ironically, by those who have struggled to emancipate the second sex from the first. By showing how gender is never a fixed state, but rather performed and embodied, feminist scholars have paved the way for patriarchal structures to be challenged.[40] However, dismantling centuries of androcentric bias requires conceptions of masculinity to undergo the same scrutiny. Perhaps most consequential for this way of thinking about gender are the works of Judith Butler, especially when we talk about gendered behavior. Butler argues that "[g]ender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts."[41]

Interestingly, most scholars in masculinity studies frequently cite Butler's work and note that even in antiquity gender was an unstable construct, malleable, and dependent on frequent embodiment and culturally esteemed performances.[42] What they overlook, however, is how measuring masculine performances by how they live up to Roman masculine conceptions might play into a way of thinking about masculinity that is dictated by certain patriarchal and colonial conceptions.

Luke's Gospel contains several narrative episodes that shed useful light on this issue. The rich male characters such as the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16–21), the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1–9), and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19–31) are in many ways characterized as ambivalent, struggling, and failing to become a disciple according to Jesus' strict prerequisites (as per Luke 14:33). Crucially, these men are, in methodological terms, unstable and challenged, and do not have to be read as representing the kind of fixed understanding of masculinity that keeps influencing scholars. In basic narratological terms, characters such as Luke's rich male characters would be considered *round characters* due to their potential for development, tension, and ambiguities. At the same time, the poor, often described passively without

[40] Butler 2011 [1993]: 28–31.

[41] Butler 1990: 140, cf. Conway 2008: 9.

[42] This is true for both those scholars who see Luke or the New Testament as producing masculine men and literary tropes in line with the expectations of Greco-Roman masculinity (particularly some aspects of Roman masculinity in the early Principate) such as Conway (2008: 127–42), as well as for those who see Luke and the New Testament as subverting these expectations to characterize men in the New Testament as unmanly or subordinate (e.g., Wilson 2015 and Robinson 2019).

movement, speech, or potential for character development, would be seen as *flat characters*.[43] While the poor are saved by God's grace and have little potential to contribute to plot development, suspense, or captivating storytelling, the rich characters and the householders carry ambivalence and layers of meaning and invite the reader to be challenged by their role in the narrative.[44]

The attention to narrative complexities, challenging binaries of rich/poor, good/evil, or masculine/feminine, invites *intersectionality* as a heuristic tool in this project.[45] In *Toward Decentering the New Testament*, Smith and Kim use intersectional approaches to the New Testament in order to "interrogate (…) simplistic constructions and to think about human existence and ideas in more complex ways."[46] My argument explores intersections of masculinity, economic language, and perspectives from postcolonial theory, and it is significant to note that intersectionality as a methodological tool arises out of the lived experience of black women such as bell hooks, who in the 1980s showed how intrinsically interwoven social categories are, such as class, gender, and race. Intersectional feminist critique has had a profound impact on my own research, and it is fitting to quote one of its pioneers in full.[47] hooks states that:

> Women must begin the work of feminist reorganization with the understanding that we have all (irrespective of our race, sex, or class) acted in complicity with the existing oppressive system. To restore the revolutionary life force to [the] feminist movement, women and men must begin to rethink and reshape its direction. (…) While we must recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate the significance of feminist rebellion and the women (and men) who made it happen,

[43] Abbott 2002: 126–127.

[44] While Luke's interest in rich characters has been noted in seminal works such as Hans Joachim Degenhardt and Walter Schmithals (1965: 36–41), Luke Timothy Johnson (1977: 13), Luise Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann (1978: 67–120), and Thomas E. Phillips (2001: 5–43), others have argued that the rich are fundamentally critiqued and antagonistically portrayed, such as John Gillman (1991: 15), and Cornelis Bennema (2016: 95–108). For a succinct overview of early contributions, see Donahue 1989: 129–44, cf. Metzger 2007: 2–15. Giambrone (2017:15) similarly argues that "scholars' preoccupation with defining the Lukan 'poor' has not [sic] met with an equal precision in understanding the *rich*," (emphasis original), cf. Brown 2012: 78.

[45] Upon a close reading of Luke, the author does not seem to enforce such dichotomies but instead presents the reader with fascinating and complex constructions of rich and poor, male and female characters. This polyvalent gallery of characters might offer clues about Luke's agenda for his initial readers. On a narrative level, the affluent male characters often possess depth and ambiguity as they struggle and often fail to meet the ethical and practical demands of Jesus in the Gospel and the nascent *ekklēsia* in Acts, cf. Metzger 2007: 13. I use *ekklēsia* to promote a sensitive approach to the Jesus followers and Gospel audiences in the first or early second century, avoiding potential triumphalist and anachronistic connotations to alternative terms such as "the Church." Because the term is applied to denote these connotations, I refer to *ekklēsia* in Roman letters. See further Schüssler Fiorenza 1999: *ix*.

[46] Smith and Kim 2018: 52.

[47] The term "intersectionality" was later coined by legal expert Kimberlé Crenshaw. See Crenshaw 1989: 139–67.

> we must be willing to criticize, re-examine, and begin feminist work anew.[48]

hooks' seminal work on intersectional feminist theory underscores two things that are particularly relevant for my argument. First, she shows how much is missed and glossed over when we fail to consider lives, experiences, and human beings as complex and interconnected. Gender, class, race, power, and a multiplicity of other factors should always be considered when reading a text or engaging human experiences. Literary and narratological approaches, as well as biblical exegesis, owe much to the pioneering work of intersectional feminist critique. Secondly, I want to state emphatically that researching topics such as masculinity, power, economic language, and hospitality, is deeply indebted to this theoretical framework. Simply put, this thesis seeks to deconstruct one of the most elite, patriarchal, and privileged intersections in the New Testament, namely the intersection of masculinity, ties to Roman hegemony, and the hierarchal position of a householder or host in Luke and Acts. The apparent contradiction between a banquet host in Luke and the lived experiences described by bell hooks and others is exactly why this needs to be elucidated.

From the advent of masculinity studies, the discourse and research stand on the shoulders of feminist critique. Furthermore, intersectional approaches that investigate the synergies and double or triple oppression experienced by people who are marginalized in more than one way are products of the voices of women such as hooks. This is not only a matter of paying respect to and remembering a history of inception, but it is a fundamental premise for thinking about—deconstructing, critically examining, and reconstructing—what it means to be masculine, and, in the present study, a man who appears masculine by ways of offering hospitality, giving alms, or performing charitable deeds as a way of defying an oppressive imperial power.

Without equal scrutiny directed towards the male lived experience, patriarchal structures and oppressive power dynamics remain what Irigaray describes as the *neuter*.[49] Masculine neutrality is regressive to the goals of gender studies. If masculinity is not deconstructed and reconstructed alongside feminist perspectives on women in the texts, we might end up reproducing oppressive stereotypes.[50] The men in Luke's stories, for all their ties to patriarchy and oppressive structures, have the potential for more than the binary of power/powerless or hegemonic/unmanly. Therefore, to move towards a study of masculinity

[48] hooks 2015: 164-65.
[49] Irigaray (ed.) 2022: 207–14.
[50] See Seim 1994.

that appreciates its origins in this feminist tradition, I seek to critically engage the hegemonic man (of antiquity) and challenge a one-sided approach to the study of men in ancient texts that primarily looks through the lens of power, however patriarchal the conception of masculinity was in the ancient world. In the next chapter, I invite postcolonial concepts to aid in this task. Finally, Deborah Sawyer, who argues that Abraham represents an anti-patriarch, offers such a perspective: "A deconstruction of the story of Abraham, based on the recognition of the biblical paradigm of absolute power, can provide the materials for a reconstruction that is more resonant with contemporary theologies than those produced by societies in past millennia. The masculinity represented by Abraham offers a non-assertive maleness in stark contrast to the images conjured up by the term 'patriarch.'"[51]

In the present study, Abraham's portrayal in Luke 16:19–31 is seen as drawing together ideal wealth distribution and ideal masculinity.[52] Whether Luke's Gospel to the rich and characterization of masculine ideals points outwards from the text or is meant to describe a division in the text must remain open. Still, the hope is that good questions shed light on several potential readings without having to subscribe to one set of answers.[53] Therefore, it will be relevant to point to narratological concepts when they overlap with the broader argument at specific points in this thesis. At the same time, I avoid over-interpreting Luke by suggesting the author consciously drew on modern narratology or concepts from the studies of masculinity and postcolonialism. However, I do not reject the possibility that certain narratological concepts can help illuminate the text from a contemporary perspective. Just as gendered readings and issues of power and hegemony are concepts that transcend time. Therefore, before presenting my alternative approach tied to Jewish masculine ideals from the Lukan texts in the next chapter, I consider the broader cultural environment in which Luke and Acts are situated, and which has inspired most scholarly interpretations of masculinity in the New Testament.

5 Masculinity in the Greco-Roman World

Even though intellectuals such as Irigaray have rightly pointed out that masculinity has historically been associated with God-givenness, objectivity, and neutrality, a fascinating similarity emerges between ancient conceptions of masculinity from Aristotle onwards and the

[51] Sawyer 2005: 170.

[52] Metzger 2007: 14 argues that Luke 16:19–31 is the climax of a gradually advanced critique of wealth, built up from 12:13–21; 15:11–32; 16:1–13.

[53] Cheong 2001: 16–24 considers Luke as writing with implied (distinct Lukan community), inscribed (Theophilus), and actual (Jesus' interlocutors in the narrative) audiences.

twentieth-century landslide argument by Judith Butler: the idea that gender conceptions can change as a consequence of performance.

This might sound radical, given Aristotle's well-known association with a gender hierarchy in which men are linked to form and the divine, and women to matter — positioned at the opposite end of a spectrum running from power and masculinity to powerlessness and femininity.[54] Adriel Trott describes this tendency by showing how the "woman is in danger of becoming the subordinated part of an asymmetrical hierarchy."[55] However, one way to measure or ascribe masculinity in the Greco-Roman world was by contrasting it to the feminine. Some scholars even argue that being masculine was defined in relation to femininity as its antithesis.[56] Femininity, in this sense, should be understood as representing the imperfect man, not as constitutive of binary opposed sex or gender. Women were rather understood, bodily and socially constructed, as lesser versions of their male counterparts.

Thus, men and women, in many ways, are on opposite ends of the same ladder, and women stereotypically embody vice, whereas men epitomize virtue. The account of the female martyr Perpetua, who seemingly turns into a man when acting courageously in the face of violence and death (*facta sum masculus*, 3.2), is an early Christian example of this widespread notion of gender in antiquity. In short, to be perceived as masculine was to be perceived as virtuous.[57] Women were thus considered imperfect men in this context but could climb a gendered—or masculine—ladder by displaying masculine characteristics.[58] The worldview wherein women were inherently inferior to men can be traced back to Aristotle and was fundamental for understanding gender in the ancient world.[59] Bonnie Flessen argues that the Aristotelian conceptual idea of masculinity, where virtue is tied to manliness, informs gendered language throughout the ancient world: "[A] settled disposition of the mind determining the choice of actions and emotions, consisting essentially in the observance of the mean relative to us, this being determined by principle, that is, as the prudent man would determine it."[60]

Moreover, William Loader argues that a virtuous life was not reserved for men, as women, children, and enslaved people could exhibit typically masculine virtues such as ἀνδρεία, although these would often figure as supporting or stock characters, or otherwise

[54] Aristotle, *Pol*. 1.12–13; *GA* 2.1, see further Green 1992: 70–99; Butler 2011 [1993]: 4–16; Trott 2019: 6–26.
[55] Trott 20119: 16.
[56] Kraemer 1994: 121–144; cf. Wilson 2015: 40.
[57] Heffernan 2012: 112.
[58] Wilson 2015: 40–45.
[59] Aristotle, *Pol.* 1254b.13–14.
[60] Flessen 2011: 87–88, cf. Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 2.15 (tr. Rackham 1926: 94–95).

overlooked for their part.[61] Ivarsson's definition of ancient masculinity is equally helpful: "Being manly is always a positive value, even when applied to a woman. By contrast, being effeminate or soft is morally reprehensible."[62] This broad overview sketches out one way of thinking about gender in antiquity, but perhaps more significantly, it outlines how many modern scholars think about ancient masculinity.[63]

In addition to the example of Perpetua, similarly intriguing Christian attestations to this gendered discourse can be found in the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Martyr Acts.* In the *Martyr Acts*, dated based on Eusebius to 177CE and possibly composed originally by Irenaeus, Blandina is considered honorable, athletic, and virtuous when facing execution.[64] The account of several martyrs was written by congregations in Vienna and Lyon and subsequently sent to related churches in Asia and Phrygia to explain the horrific torture and killing of several Christians from Gaul. Marianne Kartzow argues that Blandina is "constructed by use of masculine virtue in her endurance of suffering and blessed like a noble athlete."[65] This shows how some early Christians conceptualized masculinity in line with Greco-Roman ways of thinking about gender. A virtuous woman appears masculine in line with Aristotelian ideals. Similarly, in the *Gospel of Thomas* Logion 114 Jesus says that he will turn Mary Magdalene into a man in response to Peter's claim that female disciples are not worthy of life.[66]

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[61] Loader 2021: Passim. Moreover, I use the term "enslaved person" to signal that identities should not be tied solely to being held in an oppressive state, cf. Moss 2024.

[62] Ivarsson 2007: 163–84, here 165–66. See also Mayordomo 2008. It is noteworthy how enslaved people, women and children were often used as examples to ridicule and critique, such as Celsus' description of Christians as "the foolish, dishonorable, and stupid … slaves, women, and little children" (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 3.42, tr. Chadwick 1953).

[63] It should be noted that the term "manly," as used by Ivarsson in the definition of ancient masculinity quoted above, is conceptually far from neutral. The same is true for Wilson's use of "unmanly:" To modern readers these terms might invoke notions of a certain way of appearing masculine, tied perhaps most readily to men who appear macho, strong, patriarchal, or dominant. Conversely, men who fall below this standard are rendered unmanly. Because the present study cannot do justice to modern linguistic and cultural connotations tied to the term "(un)manly," I mostly avoid describing men who appear ideal or masculine as "manly," to signal a sensitive approach to how this term might be confusing to modern readers. Similarly, I mostly refer to Wilson's terminology when discussing "unmanly men" for the same reasons. When men in Luke and Acts appear ideal or exemplary, I will describe them as such and avoid conflating these terms with the way Ivarsson uses "manly" in his definition, and the way Wilson uses "unmanly." If our thinking about what makes a man a good and masculine man develops beyond how these conceptions relate to a hegemonic comparator, the term "manly" might be used without invoking notions of power or domination. To avoid confusion, however, it may be more beneficial to allow Ivarsson's and Wilson's definitions to be descriptive of how ancient people thought about manliness, as well as how modern people conceptualize that ancient ideal. In the present discussion of masculinity in Luke and Acts, however, I explore alternative, non-hegemonic conceptions of masculinity and will largely refrain from the term "(un)manly."

[64] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.1.41. Eusebius' account of the other martyrs seeing in Blandina the one who was crucified for them (βλεπόντων αὐτῶν . . . διὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐσταυρωμένον) was seemingly too problematic for Rufinus, who omitted this and other passages praising Blandina as having put on Christ (Χριστὸν ἐνδεδυμένη, 5.1.42). See Goodine and Mitchell 2005: 1–19.

[65] Kartzow 2012: 161.

[66] Cf. Streete 2009: 21.

The examples from martyrological narratives and the *Gospel of Thomas* show how women could be part of an ancient discourse about honor, virtue, and self-control, but typically when they appear masculine. In other words, courageous and virtuous women are characterized as departing from their femininity. These gender constructions attest to the ancient "one-sex model" described by Laqueur, where only the masculine was considered virtuous, and unmanly men or women would simply be thought of as lesser men, both corporeally and performatively attested. Within a one-sex model, the human body only had one true form, and women were essentially malformed or underdeveloped.[67] The writings of the medical author Galen shows how such ancient gender conceptions were manifested physiologically: "All the parts, then, that men have, woman have too, the difference between them [is] that in women the parts are within, whereas in men they are outside."[68] Galen states in physical terms what others conceptualized based on virtuous deeds or performance, namely that being a man is the ideal state for anyone, and that anything womanly is a result of an underdeveloped masculinity.[69] Although Aristotle and Galen did not inform all ancient masculine ideals, scholars typically draw on their understanding of gender to exemplify some underlying premises for what comes to be conceptualized as the hegemonic man in the time-period relevant for this project.[70]

Susan Hylen's work on Valerius Maximus further adds to this widespread way of thinking about gender in antiquity. She argues that in *Memorable Sayings and Doings*, masculinity is sometimes challenged from below, by women, children, and enslaved persons acting virtuous in ways that exceeded men, to the extent where they became role models of courage, as in the story of Cloelia, who is described by Valerius as "a girl holding the light of *virtus* before men."[71] Early Christian martyr texts might seem to pick up on these themes, as seen in the description of Perpetua quite literally becoming a man when acting with ἀνδρεία in the arena, as well as the story of Blandina and Polycarp similarly playing on themes of courage and self-control, much like the martyrological account in 2 Maccabees 7 is a good example of Second Temple Jewish literature that picks up on similar tropes.[72]

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[67] Laqueur 1990: 4–6.

[68] Galen, *De usu partium*, 14.6–7, (tr. May 1968). Cf. Lefkowitz & Fant (ed.) 2005: 243–246.

[69] Foucault is significant in tying Galen's physiology to the discourse of sexuality and power, particularly in Volume Three of *The History of Sexuality*, cf. Foucault 1984b: 105–11.

[70] Wilson 2015: 49–50.

[71] Valerius, *Mem*. 3.2.2 (tr. Bailey 2000).

[72] See further Robinson 2019: 53: "Plutarch takes up this issue at length in order to show that women, under the right conditions, can embody masculine virtues such as bravery, self-control, and governance of a city (*Mulier*. *virt*. 257C–D, 261D, 257E, respectively). Note that Plutarch does not elevate femininity in general since men can still be mocked for acting like women (246A, 258E–F). Rather, he argues that people beside elite, Roman men can demonstrate masculinity."

At this point, I have mainly considered how recent scholarship has, broadly speaking, a shared understanding that masculinity in the Greco-Roman world was not inalienable or innate but ascribed or achieved, and often manifested in virtues, corporeal patterns, features, or appearances.[73] Behavior that would ascribe masculine status could include military prowess, eloquence, being (sexually) dominant and quite literally impenetrable, and embodying culturally esteemed bodily features.[74] Underlying these external factors that could characterize masculinity, scholars, such as articulated by Hylen, typically ascribe manliness to the virtues of self-control (ἐγκράτεια and σωφροσύνη)[75] and (manly) courage (ἀνδρεία).[76] Bodily manifestations of these virtues were foundational for a good life in Greco-Roman culture, and a key virtue in any construction of masculinity.[77]

Challenging this scholarly trend, Wilson presents a ground-breaking argument for how Luke possibly characterizes male characters in opposition to hegemonic tropes of the typically powerful Greco-Roman heroes. She argues that Luke re-figures masculinity and sees major (and minor) characters in Luke and Acts as emasculated by not mastering the virtue of self-control in light of sight and blindness (Paul) and speech and silence (Zechariah).[78] Her most helpful contribution in *Unmanly Men* is her critique of the scholarly tendency to portray Luke's male characters as either exemplifying or conforming to masculine ideals of Greco-Roman society. She effectively shows that, compared to an elite Roman man, the loss of bodily control through blindness and muteness, and ultimately Jesus' penetrated body on the cross, is antithetical to most conceptions of hegemonic masculinity.[79] At the same time, she upholds, along with most other contributors, that Luke is engaging these Greco-Roman ideals, drawing from them and being shaped by them, even though the men in the stories appear unmanly by their standards of what constitutes a man.[80] In other words, the comparator (hegemonic masculinity) is the same, and thus the ideal man, God, in Wilson's argument, is inherently

[73] Gleason 1995: 59; cf. Conway 2008: 10; Asikainen 2018: 19–45, cf. Cobb 2008; Streete 2009.

[74] Cobb 2008: 30–32; Walters 1997: 32.

[75] Hylen 2022: 163–64. Robinson (2019: 23) concludes similarly: "This emphasis on self-control as a quintessential characteristic of masculinity will resurface throughout my examination of Greek, Roman, and Jewish texts. Such a connection between being a man (*vir*) and dominating, or controlling others, rather than being dominated by them is a key theme in Roman imperial propaganda during the first century." Cf. Asikainen 2018: 184–87.

[76] Hylen 2022: 157–76. See also McInerney 2003: 321, 341 (here: in context of distinguishing male and female virtue), cf. Moriarty 1998: 2–6.

[77] Hylen 2021, cf. Livy 34.4.15–16; Juvenal, *Sat*. 1.81–146; Sallust, *Cat*. 11–14; Seneca, *Ep*. 114, 122; Seneca, *de Constantia* 10.3.

[78] Wilson 2015: 254–56.

[79] Wilson 2015: 190–242.

[80] See, e.g., Wilson 2015: 45–49; Lopez 2008: 42–48.

wedded to the ideals of the hegemonic man: powerful, in control, and requiring subordination.[81]

To be sure, recognizing a broad cultural influence, that Luke would be inspired by, and critique, concomitant gender constructions is a prerequisite also for my argument. The controversial argument in Wilson's contribution, however, is the contention that Luke, instead of valuing and drawing on imperial masculine virtues and traits, rather constructs deliberately emasculated men who present an alternative to concurrent standards and derive a "powerless power" from God, similar to Paul's rhetoric in 2 Cor 12:9 (δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται).[82] By considering the author of Luke and Acts as an eloquent and educated Gentile writing perhaps to a patron or benefactor (Theophilus) in a style of Greek that stands out among New Testament authors (except for Hebrews), previous scholarly contributions tended to see Luke's narratives concerning hegemonic constructions of the masculine.[83]

Furthermore, Wilson's re-figuration of Lukan male characters is most welcome. She argues convincingly that these characters are deliberately framed as unmanly in order to challenge concurrent ideals and forward God's power rather than human—or manly—displays of power. Situating Luke and the New Testament in a context of opposition to and subjugation by the Roman empire rather than on equal terms with the elite of the time allows her to show how masculinities must be understood as more than monolithic attempts to attain status and power.[84] My own research aims, in some ways, to contribute to the conversation on how Luke engages his broader cultural nexus, writing perhaps to and/or from a broadly Hellenized audience and setting. However, Luke should not be seen as limited to a counter-cultural author whose primary or sole aim is to present powerlessness, or a masculine ideal that is shaped

[81] In another article, Wilson (2015b: 242) argues that "Luke does in fact present a 'defense' of the gospel in relation to elite masculinity, but that in doing so, he also disrupts elite masculinity." The disruption, she contends, stems from the need to relinquish self-control and fully submit to God's prerogative. For Luke and Acts, this produces an unstable and fluctuating ideal of masculinity: characters may conform to elite expectations when confronting hegemonic men, yet the narrative simultaneously exposes and reconsiders the fragility of those norms when Paul forfeits self-mastery, bears an ambiguous name, and becomes associated with suffering (2015b: 257–59). This, she argues, ultimately unsettles elite masculine expectations. While I agree that loss of control and suffering would appear unstable—and indeed unmanly—from a hegemonic perspective, I explore how masculine conceptions might look different, potentially challenging the assumption that self-control is a prerequisite for ideal manhood in Luke and Acts by allowing other, and I would argue more central, Lukan characteristics to take precedence.

[82] Wilson 2015: 263. When claiming, for example, that Luke *constructs* or *crafts* characters with gendered implications, I primarily wish to signal that the narrative and the characters therein are described in ways that can offer insight into ancient gender roles and conceptions. I am less interested in adjudicating on whether the author(s) is deliberately partaking in a conversation on gender or (wo)manliness or not. Rather, I work on the premise that readings of New Testament texts often have gendered implications and that these should be treated with scrutiny so that patterns, characteristics, and (mis)interpretations may be made available to a modern reader.

[83] These include but are not limited to the woks of Smith 1999: 97–114; D'Angelo 1999: 171–95; Anderson and Moore (eds.) 2003; Penner and Stichele (eds.) 2007; Conway 2008: 127–42, Matthews 2013: 381–403, Asikainen 2018: 177–80.

[84] See also Robinson 2019: 44; Gunderson 2000: 5; Lopez 2008: 19, 26–55.

mostly around conceptions of power and domination. Therefore, particularly in Chapters Five and Six, I explore the implications for hegemonic, imperial masculinity when Cornelius, a Roman soldier (Acts 10:1–48), and a Philippian prison guard (Acts 16:1–40) convert to the gospel of a Jewish Messiah and go on to exhibit masculinity that is far from passive or powerless, while still clearly contrasting the fundamentals of Roman manliness.

Brian Robinson helpfully points out how scholarship thus far have viewed this negotiation between Jewish authors and the concurrent Greco-Roman ideal(s) of masculinity: "Other male authors, like Josephus and Philo, present themselves as sufficiently masculine to be complicit within the patriarchal structure of the Principate but not masculine enough to threaten Rome's domination. What a man presented about himself depended on what he hoped to accomplish."[85] Robinson uses these negotiations of manliness to study Paul's masculinity, rhetorically crafting a subordinate ideal that presents God as the only real masculine role model worthy of acknowledgement (in 1 Cor.).[86] With the Roman Principate as the chosen comparator in his study, which is the favored approach in most studies on New Testament masculinities, the conclusions tend to articulate masculine conceptions in the New Testament as measured against hegemonic forms of masculinity.

In such a schema of masculinity, Robinson claims that Abraham is an example of "subjugated masculinity," focusing on how Abraham bends to Sarah's will.[87] Thus, Abraham's potential for masculine role modelling is limited to selected texts (where Sarah is present, thus excluding Luke 16), and, more importantly, the comparator against which Abraham is measured is inextricably tied to Greco-Roman ideals of masculinity. Interestingly, the texts considered by Robinson form only parts of the significant reception of Abraham in late antiquity. Robinson highlights how Hebrew Bible scholars such as Haddox and Eilberg-Schwartz have laid the groundwork for an understanding of Jewish masculinity that primarily functions to subordinate Israel (seen as feminine by Eilberg-Schwartz) to God, the only "real" masculine entity.[88] It is striking that, in a scholarly environment where a call for challenging the boundaries and usages of hegemonic, Greco-Roman masculinity is stated explicitly,[89] there seems to be a methodological unwillingness to ask what a good or ideal man would look like if the imperial, Roman hegemonic ideal was not the only point of comparison.

Another significant contributor to this debate is the work of Martin Friis. Although his

[85] Robinson 2019: 20.
[86] Robinson 2019: 31.
[87] Robinson 2019: 32.
[88] Haddox 2010: 2–19; Eilberg-Schwartz 1994.
[89] Creangă 2019: 1.

argument focuses on the Johannine Jesus, the point here is that his methodological approach is representative of scholars who use the Roman hegemonic man as the comparator against which the New Testament men must be interpreted. Friis articulates a tendency to replicate Greco-Roman masculine ideals on the character Jesus in particularly John's Gospel but also seeing this characterization—Jesus as *the* ideal Greco-Roman man—in the entire New Testament.[90] Friis argues that John's portrait of Jesus is an amalgamation of the evangelist's awareness of and attitude towards the prevailing perceptions of masculinity in his own time. Friis is not unique in this approach, but he is pertinent.[91] In fact, the argument is drawn from the same methodological grounds not only as Wilson—although arguing for the opposite relationship *to* these ideals—but going back to the paradigmatic contributions to New Testament masculinities such as Anderson and Moore, Ivarsson, Gleason, or even Conway. This highlights the need for the present thesis by elucidating the one-sidedness in scholarship attempting to situate discussions of masculinity within an imperial and hegemonic discourse.

What it means to be a good man in light of Abraham or Jewish notions of piety, hospitality, almsgiving, and prayer, raises potentially new and contrary questions about gender compared to the Roman ideals. Surely, we might continue to appreciate the broader cultural impact on the New Testament, such as potential similarities with Stoic philosophy or a shared cultural interest by Luke and concurrent Roman authors in questions of genre or literary tropes. However, the notion adopted almost without question by scholars that Luke's character gallery is drawn primarily from the literary tradition used to cast Ajax or Augustus seems to be without solid textual justification. While literary conventions and broader Hellenistic influence is self-evident at the time of Luke's writing, Luke's distinct attention to Jewish imagery and characters should be allowed to inform our engagement with what it means to be manly. In other words, masculine conceptions in Luke's writing or in the New Testament deserve to be studied in light of the masculine ideals seen in the texts. Jesus and his disciples, as well as Paul and most of the main characters in Luke and Acts are Jews and deserve to be measured against

[90] Friis 2020: 109. Alicia Myers (2015: 191–218) offers a different reading of the Johannine Jesus, arguing both that John portrays Jesus as elevated above earthly elite men, and, at the same time cast as feminine, carrying the marks of crucifixion as a sign of penetrability.

[91] Friis (2020: 110–11), describing Jesus as a warrior-like character whose virtue is summed up in endurance and courage, offers a pinpoint example of the prevailing scholarly modus operandi for understanding New Testament masculinities. Wilson (2018: 44–58), by contrast, critiques readings that anchor Jesus' masculinity in power and hegemony. Noting that Jesus is portrayed as weeping and suffering (Luke 19:41; 22:44), she argues that "manliness is not the ideal towards which they [Jesus' followers] are to aspire." Friis and Wilson thus represent two dominant approaches to conceptualizing masculinity. Throughout this thesis, I propose that the manly–unmanly binary shaped by hegemonic expectations is too limiting, and I instead explore what an ideal man might look like when other, non-hegemonic qualities are allowed to shape our understanding of masculinity.

contemporary Jewish notions of what constituted masculinity.

Significantly, Luke's characters and stories are primarily rooted in Jewish traditions.[92] The stories typically concern Jews or people converting to the teachings of a Jewish Rabbi, and the Roman masculine men in the stories are not necessarily praised for their standing as hegemonic men. Studying Jewish masculine conceptions in Luke and Acts also intersects with readings of imperial and colonial perspectives on the Lukan text, because the hegemonic masculinity promulgated by the Roman Empire inherently sought to subject all other men, women, children, and enslaved persons. However, studies of postcolonialism and anti-imperial readings note that subjected peoples would not necessarily conform to the expectations and demands of their oppressors, but would readily defy and challenge the oppressive structures that demanded their subjugation.[93]

The notion of an omnipresent imperial masculinity under the Roman Principate era is, in some ways, helpful in appreciating the broadest set of cultural influences in the historical period where the New Testament books were written. Attention to how sexuality and power function as culturally conditioned constructions against this historical backdrop is often attributed to the influential works of Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*.[94] Foucault is quite transparent when introducing his historical analysis. His aim is:

> [T]o define the conditions in which human beings "problematize" what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live. But in raising this very general question, and in directing it to Greek and Roman culture, it occurred to me that this problematization was linked to a group of practices that have been of unquestionable importance in our societies: I am referring to what might be called the "art of existence."[95]

The moral problematization of sexuality is, for Foucault, a diachronic phenomenon whose origins can be studied in Greek and Roman culture. In other words, the Greek and Roman cultures become axiomatic points of reference to understanding the relationship between power and sexuality. It is important to note that Foucault is not writing about gender conceptions. As pointed out by Larmour, Miller, and Platter, Foucault does "not identify gender as a constitutive feature of power."[96] This, however, is not why it is important to delineate some boundaries

[92] Cf. Giambrone 2017: 21–79.

[93] As noted by Jeff Hearn (2004: 49–72), domination plays a fundamental part of asserting hegemonic masculinity, while non-hegemonic ways of appearing masculine would resist both the effects of domination as well as regarding domination as an inherently masculine trait.

[94] Foucault 1985 [1984].

[95] Foucault 1985: 10 (tr. Hurley).

[96] Larmour, Miller, Platter 1997: 18.

between the present study and Foucault. What is significant for my purposes is the preoccupation solely with Greek and Roman literature, and subsequently how it impacted Christian moral thought.[97] A potential problem with this methodology is the neglect of Jewish traditions, which I fear has influenced subsequent studies on masculinity in the New Testament to adopt the same method. The somewhat awkward consequence of this is a comparison between men in the New Testament and masculine ideals that are rarely referenced in the New Testament texts. Again, this is not to say that Luke or others were not swimming in cultural waters that were influenced by Greek and Roman cultures, but to say that masculinity seems to be defined by Jewish ideals for both Jews and Roman men in the text.

Moreover, while the contributions of Foucault and others (de Beauvoir, Irigaray, Kristeva, Lacan, and Butler, to mention some) are essential to the establishment of a discourse in which masculinity (and, often in reaction to Foucault, feminist critique) can be investigated in the ancient world, the need for a more diverse approach to constructions of masculinity has emerged in the wake of their initial contributions. Foucault facilitates a discourse of sexuality and power, but interestingly never considers the intersection of masculinity and power. Instead, he views power as "ubiquitous and inescapable,"[98] without recognizing how such axiomatic positions simultaneously postulate a masculinity that is, to cite Virginia Burrus' fitting book title, begotten not made.[99] For all the critique of power, disciplinary institutions, and diachronic injustices Foucault launches, masculinity remains static and the feminine, by extension, remains subjugated as noted by a range of scholars.[100] Foucault's work is therefore relevant to my project because it exemplifies, and perhaps even initiated, much of the scholarly engagement with ancient masculinity as this concept which is so closely associated with power and antiquity that the two have become synonymous. As a later reaction among classicist and now biblical scholars, the discussion frequently speaks of several "masculinities" or a range of "masculine mores" when engaging gender conceptions in the ancient (and modern) world.[101] As noted by Robinson and broadly accepted in the recent history of scholarship:

> Gender studies originate from feminist scholarship, particularly second wave feminist scholarship, which highlights the way women were constructed, manipulated, and maligned by men and androcentric institutions and cultures. As feminist scholars came to understand the construction and deployment of

[97] Foucault 1985: 63–77 (tr. Hurley).
[98] Larmour, Miller, Platter 1997: 18.
[99] Burrus 2000.
[100] For an overview of the early reception among feminist scholars, see Looser 1992: 593–99.
[101] Moore and Anderson 2003; Wilson 2015.

> discourses which focus on women, they noticed that these same insights also apply to men.[102]

While Robinson's diagnosis is descriptive of the scholarly discourse, it simultaneously highlights the methodological tendency to apply solely a Foucauldian view of history which favors typically Greek and Roman attitudes towards power, sexuality, and culture, while focusing less on more marginal influences. Robinson's methodological approach leads him to pay "particular attention to issues of hierarchy and power."[103] With this framework of masculinity in the ancient world, Robinson's findings conclude that "Paul engages with and renegotiates masculinity through the manipulation of key discourses of gender to present himself as a subordinate, or failed, man."[104] This way of using Foucault's understanding of power as something that is dynamic and available for individuals through the use of rhetoric and discourse, while giving less attention to the significance of social structures and class struggle, primes a discussion of masculinity in Luke's or Paul's writings towards elitist, imperialist, and colonial ways of thinking. If we look only to the powerful and hierarchically elevated for comparison, the objects of our research can only be understood on hegemonic terms. This, however, is not the only way to approach either the study of empires or the study of men.

Some scholars who study how Luke and Acts engage in the imperial structures of the Roman Empire see similar dissimilarities in the relationship between Luke's writings and the hegemonic power of his day. In his 2019 monograph, Stefan Schreiber argues that Luke is not friendly or politically apologetic towards imperial Rome.[105] Although his research is angled toward a political reading of Luke against Roman imperial influence, his study is relevant for conceptions of masculinity in Luke and Acts because he shows how the author of Luke does not attempt to win hegemonic status on Roman terms but rather presents what he calls a marginal, though not necessarily subordinate, position against powerful imperial forces. Schreiber and Wilson similarly argue that this marginal position against the dominant power gives an apt description of early Christ-followers' situatedness, both concerning political subjugation and alternative conceptions of how men appeared and behaved in ways that would be conceived as masculine, ideal, and virtuous.

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[102] Robinson 2019: 21.
[103] Robinson 2019: 20.
[104] Robinson 2019: 20.
[105] Schreiber 2019: 183–185.

From the margins, so to speak, I will investigate what masculinity in Luke and Acts would look like if the goal of New Testament authors was not merely to subordinate themselves to the imperial power but to explore possibilities of competing, even openly critique the hegemonic Roman man. I will approach the tension between what I argue is an ideal Lukan man and the hegemonic Roman masculinity which, I contend, is not at all ideal for these Lukan men, by critically examining four men in Luke and Acts who exhibit or are changed to exhibit laudable virtues and behaviors. Significantly, these men engage in hospitality, economic practices, and roles as hosts that not only challenge imperial and hegemonic expectations but also draw upon a rich tradition in Jewish texts and particularly the descriptions of Abraham.

Approaching Jewish and Roman masculinity, it is important to note that these are not mutually exclusive and that a thesis-antithesis approach to any gender or culture issue can be limiting. What I am interested in exploring, however, is how men in Luke and Acts are characterized specifically when they appear in a narrative context of practices and virtues prevalent in the broader culture of the ancient Mediterranean basin. In Luke's writings, the theme of hospitality is apt for such comparisons because hosting, caring for the poor, economic ethics, and related issues are central to Luke's overarching aims, as well as potential points of tension between Luke and Acts, the Roman Empire, and the hegemonic masculine ideal projected by the empire. While the virtues exhibited by, for example, Luke's Abraham and those who would follow his example would quite possibly be rendered masculine or exemplary by Jewish standards, caring for the poor did not hold the same central space in broader pagan culture. In their respective attitudes towards the poor, Greco-Roman and Jewish constructions of manliness must not be conflated. As I explore below, caring for the poor was a virtuous action for Jews, but not necessarily viewed as such in pagan culture.[106]

As I draw this section on masculinity in the Greco-Roman world to a close, it is striking how scholars select what constituted masculinity for Jesus followers. We have in this section seen several examples of primary and secondary sources that chisel out some contours of what

[106] Bruce Longenecker (2010: 66) argues that there were "low-level forms of care for the poor" in concurrent Roman culture, but that the poor had a more central role in ancient Judaism and early Christianity. For my purposes, it is sufficient to note that successful constructions of manliness drawn from wealthy people's attitudes towards hospitality and the poor can be traced more thoroughly in Jewish attitudes than pagan, but also that the broader cultural context of the Roman Empire should not be overlooked. See also Brown (2012) and Hurtado (2016). Hurtado's well-known argument for Christian distinctiveness raises several methodological concerns about proximity and distance to the Greco-Roman culture and "religion." In *Destroyer of the gods*, however, he largely overlooks the significance of almsgiving and charity, hospitality, and care for the poor, which, at least to Luke, shapes foundational elements of the earliest Jesus movement. Giambrone (2017: 38–49) fills several of these gaps and meticulously shows how Luke operates in proximity and distance to both Greco-Roman and Jewish influence and conventions.

an ideal man looked like from the perspective of the powerful. It is against this ideal that Paul in Robinson's eyes is rendered a "failed man." While I do not contest the argument that crucifixion, imprisonment, bodily harm and defects, self-impoverishment, and other aspects of the lives of Jesus and his early followers—as recounted in Luke's writings—are significant, such conclusions seem to address only parts of the characters' identities. While Paul surely mentions his frailty and subordination (e.g., 2 Cor 12:7–10; Phil 2:7–8), he also seems to identify as learned, zealous, and a man to be imitated (e.g., Phil 3:4–6; 1 Cor 11:1; Gal 1:14).

This point highlights a key focus of the present exposition, namely, that measured against imperial, hegemonic masculinity the New Testament men will come out as subordinate, unmanly, or striving for recognition. Does this mean that Luke consciously constructs male characters who would either look like a Roman hero or, to the contrary, a self-proclaimed unman? This does not seem to map onto Luke's narrative.

6 Masculinity in Luke and Acts

Luke makes one interesting mention of self-control (ἐγκράτεια) in Acts 24:25 when Paul is discussing the faith in Jesus Christ with Felix, the Roman governor presiding over his trial. Conway argues that this scene describes the ideal man in Luke's writing as someone who believes in Jesus and practices justice, self-control, and belief in the coming judgement based on Acts 24:25.[107]

While it is significant that Luke mentions one of the primary masculine virtues in Roman culture, it might be a stretch to claim that elite Roman masculinity is seen as ideal for Lukan men based on this one passage. For one, Felix is described as bringing his wife Drusilla, who was Ἰουδαία—either a Jewish proselyte or Judean—which introduces the possibility that the ensuing conversation included not just two men, but also a woman. While the narrative does not explicitly state that Drusilla participated in the discussion with Paul, her presence is at least implied at the outset, and the mention of her Jewish identity may signal some relevance to the exchange.[108]

[107] Conway 2017: 17–27.

[108] Wilson (2015: 155–56; 177–80) argues convincingly that Luke's Paul lacks any legitimate claim to hegemonic masculinity in Acts, even though he is tied to self-control in this passage. Interestingly, Wilson concludes (2015:178) that Paul's reference to ἐγκράτεια in Acts 24:25 (cf. Acts 26:25) is not meant to signal that self-control is a cardinal virtue for Luke (Wilson prefers "Christianity" over "Luke") but is rather deployed to critique the Roman judge for his lack of a virtue *that would have been essential to uphold for him*. In this way, Wilson's reading aligns with the present argument that hegemonic ideals and masculinity are not portrayed as ideal by Luke. When they are invoked, they appear intertwined with a type of man from whom Luke's Paul and other characters seek to distance themselves—and even to critique.

Although Luke explicitly states that Felix is the one listening to Paul (ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ, Acts 24:24), Drusilla is introduced as accompanying him in the same verse, and not described as leaving her husband when Felix hears Paul speak. Conway's claim that the three of them (though she does not mention Drusilla) are discussing a masculine ideal is not impossible, but the potential presence of a woman in the conversation should at least be acknowledged. While Drusilla's presence in Acts 24 is peripheral, Conway's claim that Luke aligns with hegemonic Roman ideals on the basis of a single mention of ἐγκράτεια—particularly in a passage where a Jewish woman is referenced just prior—risks reinforcing a tendency to privilege hegemonic comparators while overlooking, or effectively silencing, the presence of a Jewish woman in a conversation about a Jewish Messiah. While I do not hinge this argument on Drusilla being part of the conversation, the passage functions to highlight how scholars use hints of Roman masculinity— Paul mentioning ἐγκράτεια in Acts — to argue that Luke subscribes to a broad set of hegemonic ideals in a text that specifically mentions the presence of a Jewish woman. What the example from Acts shows, is that, while Luke seems aware of discourses on virtue typical for his time, it might be reading too much into the text to suggest that self-control is synonymous with masculinity in Luke and Acts based on a text that discusses faith in Jesus while a Jewish woman is present or in close proximity.

Hence, the methodological challenge for this project lies in the argument that I will make for how non-hegemonic masculine ideals are constitutive of what makes a man appear exemplary in Luke and Acts. At the outset, it seems somewhat problematic to base an argument on some of the fundamental building-blocks of Aristotelian ideas of gender and masculinity, such as how women are inherently inferior to men, or that men are considered masculine only when they are strong, brave, or courageous, because such claims are not true for Luke. To the contrary, Luke's Jesus values and calls his followers to be servile (Luke 9:46–50; 14:7–11; 22:24–30), and to endure pain, suffering, and hardship (Luke 6:23; 9:22–23; 14:27; 21:12–19; 22:42–44; 24:25–26). In addition, the men that I will group together as Luke's "sons of Abraham" appear exemplary when they offer hospitality, often through shared meals and table fellowship with the poor and offer acts of charity such as almsgiving. These ways of following Jesus and being a disciple are, however, not exclusive to men in Luke and Acts. Lydia in Acts 16:11–15 is as much a daughter of Abraham by my definition as Cornelius is a son of Abraham in Acts 10, just as the female followers who are mentioned as providing for the apostles in Luke 8:1–3 (διηκόνουν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς, Luke 8:3), Sapphira in Acts 5:1–11, and even the widow giving two small coins to the treasury in Luke 21:1–4 (Mark 12:41–44)—all of these women appear just as virtuous as Levi, Abraham, or the Philippian jailer. While

this doubling of male and female role models might appear to problematize a study on men and masculinity, the idea that men must be defined away from anything related to women is an inherently hegemonic premise. The fact that Luke includes women in exemplary roles could be seen as buttressing the claim that men do not need to be hegemonic in order to be masculine in Luke and Acts.

However, Luke's coupling of male and female disciples does not necessarily justify a claim that Luke and Acts are feminist texts, as hierarchies and male-dominated spaces still permeate the texts.[109] The fact that men and women appear virtuous in the same spaces of hospitality or charity can be an example of what Aristotle, Galen, or Valerius would consider masculine performance by non-men. If Luke subscribed to these masculine conceptions, the protagonists in Luke and Acts would perhaps share characteristics with Caesar or Pilate. This, however, seems unlikely to be Luke's conception of gender. Instead, it seems like men in Luke and Acts are somewhat less strictly defined as masculine or exemplary based on how they compare to performance and behavior also associated with women. Lydia and Cornelius both appear hospitable, and their gender does not seem to complicate their virtue or significance. In a non-hegemonic conception of the masculine, where power, dominance, and subjugation are not lauded but challenged and perhaps even defied, it does not seem all that unlikely that, as a way of rejecting the exclusivity of hegemonic masculinity, Luke and Acts contain both male and female householders and disciples. Still, it must be maintained that Luke upholds hierarchies as well. Women do not seem to hold the same privilege or positions as men. However, this insight might tell us something about Luke's ideal for men: They can appear ideal without rejecting everything associated with women. This non-hegemonic way of appearing masculine is counter-cultural to ideals lauded in the omnipresent and omnipotent Roman Empire, although hospitality was very much a Roman virtue as well. Significantly, such cultural challenges to Rome were, according to some scholars, one of the trademarks of early Christ-followers.[110]

As noted by Larry Hurtado, what later became Christianity emerged, at least in substantial parts, by being counter-culturally monotheistic (atheist from a Roman perspective) and morally distinctive.[111] Jesus' teachings stood in radical opposition to the worship and customs of surrounding power structures. They were fundamentally non-violent and, I would add, marked by a surprising attentiveness to the poor and marginalized. These characterizations

[109] See Seim 1994: 249.
[110] Hurtado 2016.
[111] Hurtado 2016: 1–13; 28–29; 175–80.

of the Jesus movement contribute to a non-hegemonic masculinity that challenges imperial ideals of manliness.

In what would have been irrational and anti-social to Roman eyes, we find in Luke a surprising number of men who are told to abandon the sword, give up their wealth and radically invite the poor and sinners to enjoy the hospitality that will come to define a cornerstone in the emerging Jesus movement. While some characters, such as Zacchaeus, as argued above, are explicitly called a υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ (Luke 19:9, note the καθότι καὶ αὐτὸς signaling that the "son of Abraham" category potentially includes an unknown number of other disciples), several key texts and characters in Luke and Acts mirror Abraham, particularly his role as hospitable host and caretaker of the pious and the poor (Luke 13:28–29; 16:19–31). As many scholars have noted, Abraham's hospitality, alongside his faithfulness and piety, made him a paragon of Jewish virtue in the first century, and Luke can be seen as conceptualizing masculinity on Abraham's ideal. [112] Through, for example, hospitality, Luke sets up a schema of behavior and ethics by which the Lukan man, whether that be a character in a story or an early Christian reader, might be inspired to live a life of discipleship to Jesus without being primarily labeled by his ability or inability to live up to Roman imperial standards of manliness.

To conclude this section, Luke writes about men who appear to be valued and desired, even presented as ideal figures to emulate. These men, however, do not seem to be modeled on the hegemonic man idealized in the Roman Empire. To introduce parts of the unique masculinity in Luke and Acts, as well as presenting a methodological framework for how I will proceed the exegesis in the main part of the thesis, I present an argument for how Luke and Acts can be seen as written to and about men with distinct ethical demands that inform constructive masculine conceptions.

7 Luke and Acts as Masculine Discourse

Luke's agenda with male characters is introduced at the very beginning of both the Gospel and Acts. One of the most striking features of Luke's writings is that "the author" surfaces in the introductions to the two books with an introductory note to a real or imagined recipient called Theophilus (Luke 1:1–4; Acts 1:1–3).[113] Since Cadbury's defining 1922

[112] See, e.g., Malina 1986: 171–94; Hobbs 2001: 3–30; Arterbury 2005: 359–69; Ahn 2010: 243–67.

[113] Although I occasionally address questions concerning the author or community implied in Luke and Acts, I make no claim about a historically re-constructible figure or milieu. My focus is on how the text presents itself as written by and to a man, including the "we-passages." My position aligns with Sandra Heinen (2019: 14–21) and others who argue that poststructuralists and the New Critics go too far in abandoning the author

contribution ("[Luke's] prefaces and dedications at once suggest classification with the contemporary Hellenistic historians"),[114] scholars frequently note that Luke's prologue is similar to literary tropes in Greek literature,[115] although they disagree about which genre. Bovon opens his commentary on Luke by arguing that the author "takes a cue from Greek literature and lends his project the character of a literary creation for public distribution."[116]

The mysterious recipient of Luke's writings does, moreover, not seem unmanly by ancient standards but is introduced to the reader as "excellent" by the author, with the designation κράτιστε Θεόφιλε ("most excellent Theophilus," Luke 1:3).[117] Interestingly, then, Luke's opening words present the Third Gospel and Acts as written by a man to a man, as the author surfaces as a man in the same introduction by referring to himself with the masculine participle παρηκολουθηκότι. The self-descriptive masculine participle for having a firm grasp (on his sources) or having "investigated everything carefully" as the NRSV suggests in Luke 1:3, frames the opening lines of the Gospel (and later again in Acts) as being written by one man to another.[118] Surely, Luke's Gospel contains more female characters than the other Synoptics and John, and the author's gospel message is fundamentally concerned with the reversal of faiths and liberation for the poor (Luke 4:18). Nevertheless, Luke is introduced as written to a literate man versed in contemporary literary tropes. In other words, there seems to be a tension between the two men of what appears to be a relatively high social standing, on the one hand, and the people that the text is primarily concerned with, the poor, on the other. Although thinking about the community who produced and received Luke and Acts is not a primary concern for this project, it might be worth noting that the two-volume work appears, at least in parts, to be written to people of a somewhat higher socio-economic standard than the people about which the author writes. In other words, a gospel to the poor might be just as, if

from interpretation. As noted by Gupta (2013: 210), King (2016: 17–20), and popularized by Moss (2024), ancient texts were typically produced by a collective effort of scribes, copyists, editors, and authors, with a social standing ranging from enslaved workers to elite patrons. I therefore approach the references to or by the "author" in Luke and Acts with an interest in how these unique details shape the understanding of masculinity and men encountering hegemonic expectations in the ancient world. In line with Breu (2019: 143), I view this strategy as reading with an intentionalist framework, where the deployed authorial voice can matter for the exegesis, even though the texts might have been produced by a community of contributors and shaped over time, as noted by Andreas Mauz (2009: 207). Pace Reece (2022: 27–29; 34–37) and others who uphold that Luke, while not discernable as a historical figure, was the singular author responsible for the production of Luke and Acts.

[114] Cadbury 1922: 15.

[115] Giambrone 2017: 39.

[116] Bovon 2002: 16. See further Moles 2011: 461–82; Adams and Hauge 2016: 137–54, cf. Alexander 1993.

[117] Cadbury (1922: 507) and others after him note that the wording does not necessarily signify a wealthy or elite person but could be a literary convention of formal greeting.

[118] Parsons 2007: 15–50.

not more relevant for a community that is being urged to share and redistribute.[119]

Interestingly, Luke relies on hospitable characters of some means in the text to realize his gospel to the poor. Seeing as Luke contains so much special material that is concerned with how to be a disciple, especially for men with some surplus of possessions or roles as banquet host, it is worth noting how the prefaces frame the two volumes. For all the discussion of these introductory verses, they are not frequently commented on as masculine discourse. What constitutes masculinity for Luke and Theophilus, especially in light of the stern economic ethical demands launched at rich men in Luke's stories? This discourse of masculinity has not yet been noticed in scholarship.

Wilson interestingly introduces Zechariah as the first man to appear in Luke and Acts.[120] While he is most certainly the first male character to keep center stage for a narrative unit (Luke 1:5–25), the reign of another man, King Herod, contextualizes the narrative before Zechariah enters the scene. Additionally, when the author of Luke and Acts surfaces as a man in the prologue to the Gospel (Luke 1:1–4) writing to a male recipient, we might miss out on crucial male characters by jumping straight to Zechariah. While women could write under male pseudonyms in the ancient world, the author at least presents him- or herself as a man on the surface of the text. However, the first man to appear as more than a self-referring participle in Luke (and Acts) is the actual or implied recipient of the work referred to as "Theophilus."

The debate concerning the identity of this named recipient in the prescript in Luke 1:1–4 has raised more questions than it has provided answers.[121] It is, therefore, difficult to assert any claims on Luke's actual recipient(s). While it would be beneficial for my argument to follow Kim and others who contend that Theophilus was a real rich man of significance for Luke's broader Gospel to the rich, due to the uncertainty of the evidence I simply note that the author self-identifies as a man writing to another man. While one does not have to deny the possibilities of affluent readers and recipients of Luke and Acts, the evidence is too disputed to make assertive claims about either Theophilus or Luke's recipient community. Part of what makes speculation about a defined Lukan community so suggestive is that Luke and Acts, especially when considered as a unified two-volume work, offer little direct evidence about the early reception or lived context of the texts.

The early reception shows that Luke was scarcely read compared to Matthew and John,

[119] See Hume 2011.

[120] Wilson 2015: 1.

[121] Especially with Alexander's 1993 contribution and the array of responses it prompted, cf. Bovon 2002: 21.

and, as noted by Gregory, the scholarly debate has paid insufficient attention to how Luke's Gospel and Acts never seem to be received as a literary unit before Irenaeus.[122] Rather, when we first encounter actual readers of Luke, the Gospel was being read alongside other Gospels, and Acts was read as the story of the apostolic church.[123] The practice of separating Luke's two works seems to be without exception in both the preserved manuscripts and patristic reception in the first two centuries CE. It is helpful to notice the brevity of Luke's early reception to underscore the point that Theophilus should remain primarily a literary construct in our imaginations, although asking questions about what it would mean for Luke's Gospel (and Acts) to be targeted towards one or more rich recipients can be fruitful to explore. Introducing the Gospel narrative as written by a man to a man sets the stage for narratological constructions of masculinities in the stories that follow.

8 Luke's Narrative World: Social Context and Historical Approaches

While historical reconstructions of Luke's specific recipient community remain outside the possibilities of narrative texts alone, asking questions of authorial intent can provide fruitful engagements with the primary source. One example that I return to in Chapter Four is Luke's characterization of the unnamed rich man and Abraham. If we read the passage as primarily addressing the disciples and Pharisees, the narrative audience in Luke 15–16, our inquiry remains within the bounds of Luke's story. However, by broadening the scope to consider constructions of masculinity in the text, the focus partly shifts to a study of those to whom the text would have impacted.[124] On the other hand, theorizing about an unknown specific Lukan community raises several issues.[125]

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[122] See Gregory 2003; Rowe 2006: 449–457; Gregory and Rowe 2010. Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer*. 3.1.1.

[123] Bockmuehl 2005: 163.

[124] The rich man is nameless in the preserved manuscripts apart from the Bodmer papyrus where he is given the name Νευης for unknown reasons, and "Dives" (Latin for "rich man") in the Vulgate, which has often been used interchangeably with reference to the parable character by later readers. In addition, there is a scholarly tendency to capitalize references to unnamed characters such as the "Rich Fool." However, seeing as Abraham and Lazarus are the only named characters in all the Synoptic parables, I explore the possibility that refraining from giving the rich man a name can be a deliberate decision on the author's part in Chapter Four. Cf. Cadbury 1962: 399–402.

[125] This tendency has been criticized by Richard Bauckham (1998), who argues that Luke and other Gospels were written to "all Christians." Others, such as Kim (1998: 53), argue instead for a more localized Lukan community. Interestingly, Kim draws on the repeated references to famines in Luke and Acts. Somewhat paradoxically, these references might seem to align more with Bauckham's view of the Gospels being written to a universalized audience. Kim argues that: "among other reasons to afford his congregation, particularly wealthy Christians, appropriate ethical teachings on how to deal with wealth and to behave themselves as Christians" (p.53). Kim argues that Luke's unique references to famine (λιμὸς) in Luke 4:25; 15:14, 17; 21:11; and Acts 7:11; 11:28 refer historically to an increase of poor people (πτωχοί) in a larger geographical area. Imagining rich readers responding to this socio-economical issue in a larger geographical area, might open a possible middle ground

One of the critical impacts of Halvor Moxnes' influential contributions to socio-historical approaches to the New Testament was revealing the difference between the historical Pharisees and Luke's literary characters.[126] Moxnes' contributions to investigating the social world behind the Lukan text has profoundly impacted my own research. Acknowledging Luke's primary self-designation as a narrator with a real-life audience in mind is what I find to be the most helpful socio-historical context to the present study of the Third Gospel and Acts.[127] While classic Lukan conundrums, such as whether Luke is writing about a division within Israel or urging affluent readers in a hypothetical community is outside the scope of this project, the focus will remain mostly within the text's narrative world. However, I work on the premise that, for example, Theophilus invites an authorial intent to communicate normatively, not only descriptively, with a real or imagined audience.[128]

Most scholars tend to agree that Luke is written by a Gentile author for a predominantly Gentile audience between after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE to around the turn of the first century. Strelan holds a minority position that Luke is a Jew writing to a Jewish audience, an argument that could be gaining traction after the contributions by Giambrone and others.[129] For the following argument, we simply rely on "Luke" being both a competent writer of *koinē* Greek, perhaps the most accomplished in the New Testament apart from Hebrews,[130] and with developed knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures in Greek, that is, the Septuagint.[131] Luke's sometimes questionable reference to, or seemingly mistaken understanding of, the geography of the land of Israel have led some scholars to situate the author in a diaspora location. Fitzmyer argues this point, saying that "this phrase [Luke 17:11] enshrines Luke's "geographical ineptitude," and it is not easy to explain what is meant here."[132] Then again, Jewish authors with a competent level of Greek are heavily attested in the works of Philo and 2 Maccabees (e.g., 2 Macc. 2:23), and lacking familiarity of Judean and Galilean geography appears in Josephus.[133]

Moreover, the patristic evidence tying Luke to Paul's travelling-companion mentioned

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between Bauckham's theory of a universal audience and attempts to reconstruct specific gospel communities, and rather envision rich readers in a relatively large region as among the intended readers of Luke's Gospel.

[126] Moxnes 1988: 1–9.

[127] Contra Seccombe 1982: 35–43, Petracca 2003, and others who see Luke as primarily a historiographer who is recounting specific moments in the time of Jesus' ministry.

[128] See Metzger 2007: 1–3.

[129] Strelan 2008; Giambrone 2017: 21–25; 67–79; 292–314.

[130] See Alexander 2005: 231–52.

[131] See Litwak 2005.

[132] Fitzmeyer 1985: 1152.

[133] See e.g., *Vita* 42–45; *War* 2.573–76, cf. Mason 2003: 48–50.

in Philemon 24 and 2 Timothy 4:11 or the "beloved physician" referred to in Colossians 4:14 should not be overlooked (Irenaeus *Haer*. 3.1.1; 3.14.1; Anti Marcionite Prologues, the Muratonian Canon (170–180 CE; cf. Hays 2008: 229), Justin, *Dial*. 103.19; Tertullian *Marc*. 4.2.2–5; 4.5.3; Eusebius *Hist. eccl* 3.4.2), as argued by Gregory and others.[134] In the latter half of Acts (Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16) the author uses the first person plural to write him/her/themselves into the narrative, and there seems to be a strong notion present in Acts, Pauline and the deutero-Pauline epistles, as well as patristic sources that "Luke" the author was, at the same time, Luke the travelling companion of Paul. On the other hand, there is a significant gap in time between a proposed dating in 70–100 CE and the mid to late second-century reception. There is also an equally significant gap in time between Paul's travels (40s–50s) and the earliest likely dating of Luke and Acts. For these reasons, I do not rely on support from any scholarly position and will interchangeably use the term "Luke" and "him" for convenience.

At the same time, it is helpful in light of my methodological goal of deconstructing outdated understandings of masculinity, to note the layers of androcentrism that can be glossed over by a tradition initiated perhaps by Irenaeus to conflate the authorship of Luke and Acts with one quasi-historical man named Luke. Amy-Jill Levine and others have resisted the idea of Luke being a male author, arguing that women could write under male pseudonyms in antiquity.[135] Based on the self-referring participle παρηκολουθηκότι in Luke 1:3, however, I refer to the author in the same way as the author self-identifies to keep with the authorial markers in the narrative, although the identity of an actual author, or authors, remains anonymous and we should remain appreciative of the gender-inclusive sensibility a potential pseudonym indicates. Adding to this point, the recent studies on collaborative scribal practices and the crucial but often invisible and marginalized labor of enslaved people by Jeremiah Coogan, Candida Moss, and Joseph Howley shows how scribes and secretaires, often enslaved people and freed persons, men and women, would have worked simultaneously and/or sequentially to produce New Testament books.[136] Yet, these "authors" remain hidden behind the text, which, in the case of Luke and Acts, is presented as written by a man (who was later given the potentially pseudonymous name Luke) to another man (Theophilus).

These recent contributions disturb preconceived notions about what kind of people shaped and produced Luke and Acts. It might not have been one man, yet the texts came to be

[134] Cf. Gregory 2003.
[135] Levine and Witherington 2018: 6–7.
[136] Coogan, Moss, and Howley 2024: 227–53. Cf. Moss 2024.

associated with an androcentric reception. Scribes, enslaved people, and women are easily forgotten, while Luke becomes the man associated with the texts. I am, somewhat similarly, interested in destabilizing ideas about the men that appear *in the text*. How is masculinity conceptualized if we approach the text from the perspective that they were produced by people who encountered society from its underside? Can Luke and Acts be read as challenging notions of power, domination, and control associated with the Roman Empire? To introduce some of these questions, I conclude the chapter by asking, why study men and masculinity in Luke and Acts?

9 Conclusion: Justifications for the Study

In some ways, studying men in biblical texts has been the norm throughout the history of modern scholarship, and we should be cautious not to carry forth a patriarchal—or Kyriarchal[137]—torch that serves to eschew the variety of female and queer characters in Luke and Acts or the New Testament as a whole.[138] Compared to the other three Gospel writers in what we now know as the New Testament canon, Luke contains far more female characters than Mark, Matthew, and John. This made Luke's Gospel a fruitful venue to explore when feminist critique began to influence the field of biblical scholarship about half a century ago.[139] Men and masculinity in a text such as Luke or Acts must, as mentioned, be subjected to the same kind of deconstructive and reconstructive scrutiny in order for the male perspective to remain neutral, objective, and self-evident.

Luke has generally been appreciated for acknowledging the female companions of Jesus who followed him from his ministry in Galilee (Luke 8:1–3) to the cross (Luke 23:27), the grave (Luke 23:49; 55–56), and then as first witnesses to the resurrection (Luke 24:1–3; 4–8; 9–11). The accounts of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38–42), Mary the mother of Jesus and Elisabeth, her relative (συγγενίς), in Luke 1–2, the prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36–38), and several other female characters among the Lukan *Sondergut* make up a crucial part of Lukan characters and gives the Third Gospel a distinct characteristic by containing a significantly

[137] Schüssler Fiorenza 1999: 5 problematizes the binary gender hierarchy presumed by "patriarchal," arguing that language solely describing gender does not do justice to women's life experiences in antiquity.

[138] The 27 books that are now known to us as the "New Testament" will be referred to as such for pragmatic reasons, while recognizing triumphalist Christian supersessionism that demotes Jewish Scriptures to solely the "Old Testament" and celebrates the early writings of the Jesus-followers as the "New Testament." Schüssler Fiorenza (2007: 1) consequently refers to the "Christian Testament," while others place an asterisk in the New* Testament to push back against this tradition.

[139] See, e.g., Schüssler Fiorenza 1983 and Schottroff (tr. Kidder) 1993.

larger number of female characters than the other canonical Gospels. While close readings of these pericopes continue to make seminal contributions to feminist biblical scholarship, Luke and Acts have gradually been seen as subscribing to conventional elite patriarchal norms of the first century.[140] The need to study how gender constructions affect men and concepts of masculinity in many ways arises out of feminist critique. Still, while feminist scholarship has propagated a way for centering women's, enslaved persons', children's, gender-deviant, or queer voices from antiquity—marginalized voices whose reversal aligns with Luke's gospel project (cf. Luke 4:18–19 and 14:13) —gender studies remain a niche, often ostracized from mainstream scholarly debates, or compartmentalized as an isolated scholarly discourse.[141]

Rhiannon Graybill's study of prophetic masculinity in the Hebrew Bible offers helpful clarifications on how masculinity needs to be studied in conversation with ancient portrayals of women and femininity to appreciate more fully the gendered language in biblical texts.[142] Building on the work of Irigaray and others, she argues that deconstructing the patriarchal and often "problematic and deeply troubling representations of women"[143] needs to be complemented by an equally critical engagement with masculinity. As mentioned, the consequence of limiting gender studies to feminist critique is that male bodies and performances remain exempt from scrutiny and destabilization.[144] A similar argument is made by Sara Parks, who uses Bernadette Brooten's contributions, and particularly the reception of these to show how feminist scholarship is silenced in two layers. Firstly, Parks demonstrates how a groundbreaking scholar like Brooten continues to be relegated to the margins of the scholarly discourse.[145] Brooten's work became influential in the 1980s for unearthing women's roles as leaders of ancient Jewish assemblies and synagogues based on careful and comprehensive studies of material culture and how these had been neglected and effectively censored by 19th-century European male scholarship.[146] Secondly, on a meta-level, Park elucidates how Brooten's work is an argument for how gender studies grapples with the structures and institutions that—in the texts and in the academy—have suffocated and silenced voices and life stories, and can be a crucial interpretive lens for the study of ancient texts,

[140] For a thorough overview of this trope in Lukan scholarship, see Gaventa 2004: 50–53. Further, Seim (1994: 97–163) argues that Luke preserves both a positive and a limiting view of women's place in the role in the gospel proclamation and in church leadership.

[141] See further Parks 2019: 46–64.

[142] Graybill 2016: 11–13.

[143] Graybill 2016: 11.

[144] Lipka (2014: 86–106) and Murphy (2019: 274–89) make helpful contributions to this point.

[145] Parks 2019: 48–52, cf. Brooten 1982.

[146] Brooten 1982: 5–6, 99.

cultures, and receptions.[147]

In a somewhat unexpected way, therefore, my project engages what is now known as the "Brooten Phenomenon," which describes how biblical women and the study of these tend to be considered subsidiary in scholarship.[148] Brooten's work protests what she sees as an unwritten rule that relegates gender studies to the margins, challenging this tendency by presenting material evidence for female Jewish synagogue leaders in the ancient world.[149] Masculinity studies should aim to break down that same wall as Brooten and the scholarship in her wake from the other side, by showing how studies on masculinity in the ancient world stand on the shoulders of women and feminist critique. Adding to this, Schüssler Fiorenza claims that New Testament studies are fundamentally preoccupied with primary sources from a kyriarchal historical period.[150] Partly, she argues, because elite men were at the center of writing and reading in the ancient world.[151] Similarly to Brooten's line of reasoning, she maintains that this patriarchal structure is perpetuated when the conceptions of femininity and women in the Bible are shaped by a guild that continues to place the study of women at the margins. This project about masculinity engages the same methodological interests by exploring how masculinity in the ancient world was seen as culturally dependent and continually constructed, particularly in relation to power, hegemony, and imperial structures.[152]

In addition to these contributions, my methodological approach is shaped by Claudia Camp, who contends that in Second Temple Jewish texts, images of the female body were frequently used by male authors to interpret and approach experiences of trauma or anxiety.[153] Her argument, while I do not work on the same primary sources, reveals how gender conceptions are not ancillary but a primary way for ancient people to engage the world around them, especially in relation to extremities such as violence, threat, and, in a Jewish first-century context, the implications of living under the hegemony of the Roman Empire. From a Lukan perspective, I therefore investigate how conceptions of masculinity challenge and/or assimilate with the ideal of the hegemonic Roman man. This perspective resists the common scholarly

[147] Parks 2019: 63–64.
[148] Cf. Parks 2019: 46–64.
[149] Brooten 1982: 149–51.
[150] Schüssler Fiorenza 1999: 1–6.
[151] Recent contributions by Moss (2024), and others, challenge this perception by arguing that enslaved people, both men and women, were present and contributing at every stage of literary production in the ancient world. While Schüssler Fiorenza and Moss share an overarching goal of lifting the voices of those traditionally marginalized in the texts and their reception, recent scholarship diversifies our point of entry into the multilayered processes that shaped the New Testament. See further Ehrensperger and Sheinfeld (2020).
[152] See further discussion in Chapter Two.
[153] Camp 2013.

approach of using the Roman masculine ideal as a benchmark for analyzing the Lukan man. Furthermore, it critiques the patriarchal bias identified by Brooten, which has significantly hindered efforts to approach the gendered experiences of men, women, children, and enslaved individuals within ancient Judaism and early Christian literature by relegating them to the periphery. As this section shows, Luke and Acts are suitable primary sources to scope out ancient conceptions of masculinity because the texts contain a wide range of both hegemonic and subjugated men and women, including representations of imperial power as well as those who suffered under it. Significantly, therefore, the methodological approach to these representations must be informed by gender conceptions that are not preconceived on the ideals of the powerful.

The need for a counter-cultural masculinity rooted in Jewish scriptures can be elucidated by engaging a contribution to Bormann's 2018 edited volume, fittingly titled *Abraham's Family*. In one chapter, Aliyah El Mansy explores the masculinity of Abraham's family in Jubilees. Parts of her work presents a thorough exegesis of Jubilees 19:13–15 and convincingly lays out how Jacob is a true man; perfect, upright, and educated, while Esau's masculinity is questioned for being harsh, rustic, and prone to war.[154] One of the strengths of the argument is how El Mansy situates Jubilees in the conflicting period of uprising and turmoil for the Jewish people experiencing the transition of power from the Seleucid empire to the rise of the Hasmonean dynasty. Confronted with the trauma of violence and upheaval, El Mansy sees the gendered language in Jubilees as an "inner-Jewish struggle about power and ideology."[155] To frame her investigation of what it would mean to be masculine in this context, she sets out to elucidate Jacob's ideal masculinity by using Raewyn Connell's fluid concept of masculinity that ranges on a spectrum from hegemonic, via subordinated and complicit, to marginalized masculinity.[156]

El Mansy's argument is a good example of how inapt the Greco-Roman hegemonic man paradigm is when applied to Jewish Scriptures that are so clearly counter-cultural. To be sure, I find El Mansy's contextualization and exegetical work to be broadly convincing. The issue, which can be seen developed within her own argument, is that Connell's scale does not fit the argument; it conversely challenges the fundamental principles of the method. At one point, she alludes to how hairiness, a hard and tempered body could be considered masculine

[154] El Mansy 2018: 133–34.
[155] El Mansy 2018: 144.
[156] El Mansy 2018: 130, cf. Connell 2015 [1999].

from a typical Aristotelian (hegemonic) viewpoint.[157] She immediately forfeits this potential connection, and rightfully so, because Jubilees clearly relegates Esau's masculinity. Jacob is "the role model" while Esau is characterized in El Mansy's words as "a person not to be trusted."[158]

In fact, El Mansy reveals a potential shortcoming of Connell's model when attempting to force it onto this Second Temple Jewish text. Firstly, she does so by showing how masculinity in Jubilees is defined more in terms of the literacy and education of characters such as Abraham, Jacob, and Moses than the hard and ferocious man exemplified by Esau. Secondly, El Mansy concludes that Jubilees does not promote war and violence save as a last resort.[159] It is thus noteworthy, yet paradoxically logical that Connell's definition of the hegemonic man does not reappear in the conclusion. Connell's *Leitkategorie* for studies on masculinity has risen to a somewhat hegemonic standard, resulting in its usefulness being outplayed. As discussed earlier, hegemonic masculinity as defined by Connell can be viewed as a cultural tendency to value a certain masculine performance that subjugates all other men, women, enslaved persons, and children, attested primarily in military, sexual, bodily, and social domination, honor, and (self-)control.

Thus, when El Mansy concludes that Jubilees is, in fact, *not* promoting war, violence, or any form of domination, be that cultural, bodily, or otherwise, but, in her own words, "promotes mutual peace and love (Jub. 37:4),"[160] she inadvertently reveals the fallacy in her own conclusion. In fact, her final section is worth quoting in full:

> [The Jewish people represent] a society in need of consolidation guidance, and role models of masculinities who care about family, repair broken family ties, and keep the divine commandments. Further investigations comparing the construction of masculinity to other literature and social history would be fruitful. All in all, it becomes clear how elaborately Jubilees combines different rationales and conveys its idea of masculinity through norms and values. Jacob is a just son of man and a just son of God. Or in other words: "true masculinity" is presented as "true sonship."

The society in question is the proposed situatedness for the formation of Jubilees, i.e., the Jewish people living under the latter stages of the Seleucid empire, sometime between 175–

[157] El Mansy 2018: 134, cf. Gleason 1995: 69.
[158] El Mansy 2018: 134.
[159] El Mansy 2018: 144.
[160] El Mansy 2018: 144.

125 BCE.[161] El Mansy admits that Jewish Scriptures from this period, while being subject to heavy influence of Hellenistic culture, have an agenda of defining identity over against this cultural supremacy, seeing it also as "a serious threat to the Jewish way of life in the eyes of many groups."[162] To advance what she rightly identifies as an understudied avenue, fruitful approaches to masculinity in Jewish Scriptures must challenge the comparative framework, which has been too narrowly defined by a Greco-Roman lens of the hegemonic man.

Ironically, El Mansy's conclusions seem to support this point, as Jacob looks nothing like an instrument of domination, while Esau does. The ideal Jewish man of Jubilees is thus, according to El Mansy's conclusions, constructed to challenge typically hegemonic tropes. Literary and cultural constructs are not only formed to create distance and criticize but should also be seen as constitutive of an alternative, in this case masculine construct. To be a good man in Jubilees, and this is true also for Luke, is less about climbing Connell's ladder of hegemony, and rather about foundational Jewish virtues and gender roles such as hospitality and sonship. True masculinity as true sonship dovetails linguistically with my own project, and I see in El Mansy's contribution significant potential for a Jewish, counter-cultural masculinity that can be defined by piety, righteousness, family duties, love, and sonship.

We must dare, however, to uphold the distinctiveness of the Jewish good man. As convincingly exemplified by Jubilees' image of Esau, the masculine ideal in Second Temple Jewish Scriptures is not defined by violence and domination, but by honoring the commandments and caring for an exposed group of people. To these Jewish authors, the hegemonic man is not someone to imitate or idolize. On the contrary, such masculinity can be seen as a threat to their very existence.

A counter-cultural role model is thus needed, and it seems like a wide range of Jewish authors in the Second Temple period deliberately construe masculine ideals that value love and care over power and conquest. Second Temple Jewish masculinity is thus a counter-cultural phenomenon that challenges the oppressive connotations of hegemonic masculinity. Significantly, it is a way of appearing as an exemplary man that seeks neither hegemony nor subordination nor complicity nor marginalization. While Jewish communities might have been subjects of empires and shifting power dynamics in the region, it seems to have been essential to define masculinity away from the oppressive structures surrounding and permeating them. Second Temple Jewish masculinity presents itself as successful without being hegemonic, and

[161] El Mansy 2018: 131.
[162] El Mansy 2018: 131.

servile without being unmanly. This is a masculine ideal that should be allowed to influence our reading of Luke and Acts. Especially for an author like Luke, who is both embedded in Jewish tropes influenced by the relevant period, and also well-versed in Hellenistic culture, and potentially addressing a majority Gentile audience. With these preliminary reflections we move to introduce an alternative approach to masculinity in Luke and Acts based on a postcolonial reading of ancient Jewish masculine conceptions.

Chapter Two: Methodology

1 Introduction

The problem this chapter seeks to outline—and that this thesis aims to address—is that definitions of masculinity in the New Testament, and particularly in Luke and Acts, have been shaped almost exclusively by vocabulary and concepts drawn from the hegemonic and all-powerful Roman Empire.[163] This is problematic because a construction of masculinity that begins (and ends) with the language of a colonizing and oppressive force effectively marginalizes and dehumanizes those men who fall short of the imperialist credentials. In the first chapter, I argued against this tendency from the perspective of (a history of) Gender Studies and conversations from broader Lukan themes, and in this chapter, I construct an alternative approach from overlooked primary sources and the inclusion of postcolonial theory.

The Jewish and converted Gentile men in Luke and Acts need to be compared to the masculine ideals of their cultural roots and the stories and role models in the text. More often than not, Luke references Jewish men: Abraham, Elijah, David, and others, who might tell us something about what makes men appear ideal or exemplary from Luke's perspective. This is a gendered reading of Luke and Acts that draws significantly from postcolonial theory because it implies that imperial structures, especially those encompassing power, domination, and a monopoly on violence would have fundamentally impacted gender conceptions among those who lived lives subjected to that violence.

This critical insight from postcolonial critique was noted by Frantz Fanon, among others, who argues that "[t]he problem of colonization, therefore, comprises not only the intersection of historical and objective conditions but also man's attitude toward these conditions."[164] Thus, to correct the imbalance created when conceptualizing masculinity mostly from Roman ideals, this chapter establishes a comparative framework rooted in the masculine role models and ideals that emerge within the text itself, the majority of which are Jewish rather than Roman.

Herein lies a fundamental methodological decision to focus on how men in Luke and

[163] Several scholars have argued that masculinity was tied to Roman conceptions of honor and status, and shown that violence, military prowess, and domination (social, sexual, and by conquest) were fundamental tenets of this masculine ideal. See, e.g., Craig Williams, who argues that military discipline was "the ultimate bulwark of Roman masculinity" (Williams 2010: 130), and Jennings and Liew argues that "the Roman military supposedly embodies the ideal of Roman masculinity" (Jennings and Liew 2003: 476), cf. Flessen 2011: 72.

[164] Fanon 2021 [1952]: 65.

Acts appear masculine, even ideal men, based on Jewish (non-hegemonic) and not Roman (hegemonic) masculine constructions. While several scholars have shown how Hellenistic culture and later Roman ideals shaped regional and local Mediterranean cultures in the relevant period,[165] I explore how masculinity is constructed in critical engagement with, and even opposition and defiance to, the hegemonic ideals of the broader culture.[166] Before turning to the Lukan narratives in Chapters Three through Six, it is necessary to develop an alternative approach to masculine conceptions in Luke and Acts.

Such an approach needs to consider the intersection of power and masculinity, because forcing gender roles into assimilation or subordination is a colonial weapon, as noted by Aimé Césaire: "I am talking about millions of men whom they have knowingly instilled with fear and a complex of inferiority, whom they have infused with despair and trained to tremble, to kneel and behave like flunkeys."[167] Good men in Luke and Acts seem, rather, to defy and challenge the cultural hegemony of Rome, appearing masculine in their own right.[168] Luke and Acts, with its strong elements of Greco-Roman literary conventions and broad geographical scope, makes for an intriguing study, because linguistic mimicry and adaptation do not necessarily signify embeddedness, but can be tools of resistance and defiance.[169]

The significance of Wilson's work in this discussion should not be understated. In many ways, my exploration of non-hegemonic Jewish masculinity builds upon the conversation Wilson initiated by demonstrating how Lukan men appear unmanly when compared to Roman ideals.[170] While her argument has significantly advanced scholarly debates on masculinity in the New Testament, the discussion can be further enriched by considering a perspective on masculinity that is not solely defined by, but may also challenge, Greek and Roman ideals.[171]

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[165] See, e.g., D'Angelo 2003a; 2003b; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Anderson and Moore 2005; Stewart 2016.

[166] Preliminary engagements with a non-hegemonic masculine ideal can be found in Zsolnay 2014; Haddox 2016; Creangă 2019; and Wines 2023.

[167] Here quoted in Fanon 2021: *vii*. Cf. Boyarin 1997.

[168] Hegemonic masculinity is, as introduced in Chapter One, not a fixed term, but varies based on what a given culture grants cultural, political, and social hegemony. It relates to power and powerlessness, and the study of masculinity thus grows out of feminist critique and critical theory more broadly. For a concise overview, see Smit 2017: 4–11, cf. Connell 1987: 183–88; Connell 2005: 76.

[169] Fanon 2021: 124.

[170] See especially Wilson 2015: 59, where she concludes that: "In the Greco-Roman world, masculinity and power go hand in hand, with a manly man exercising power over others in terms of sexual, paternal, political, and military power, and exercising power—or self-control—over himself in terms of controlling his own body and emotions. In brief, to be a man in the ancient world meant to wield power over others and power over oneself."

[171] See Wilson 2015: 40–49, where she outlines the characteristics of Roman masculine constructions in the principate era and compares Jewish and early Christian authors to these standards of manliness. While it is undoubtedly true that Luke and other Jewish and early Christian authors were familiar with, and shaped by, Roman literary and cultural tropes of masculinity, Wilson's framework may tell us more about how Roman

From the standpoint of the present argument, Lukan and New Testament men do not simply fail to meet Roman standards of masculinity; rather, they actively subvert the ideals of their conquerors by embodying a different standard of masculinity. Instead of appearing unmanly—a term Wilson employs to describe their divergence from hegemonic norms—men in Luke and Acts deserve to be assessed within a framework of non-hegemonic masculinity, often tied to Jewish practices, which does not necessarily align with Roman ideals of power and domination. This chapter, therefore, takes up a question inspired by Hebrew Bible scholar Ovidiu Creangă's call to "rethink the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its limits,"[172] asking how we might situate Luke's portrayal of men within a discourse of manliness shaped by the author's use of Jewish masculine ideals from the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish texts.

As discussed in the introduction, masculinity—whether ancient or modern—can be defined by the traits and characteristics that make men appear good, ideal, and exemplary.[173] Methodologically, this is significant because, in the following discussion of non-hegemonic and Jewish masculine conceptions, we rely on the same premise that masculinity (and femininity) is defined by performances and that appearing masculine is tied to embodied practices.[174] In other words, virtues, actions, and appearances are fundamental tenets of what constitutes masculinity, even from a non-hegemonic and Jewish perspective. However, the argument that these virtues, performances, actions, and appearances are dictated by Roman ideals is unsatisfactory. This is where insights from postcolonial theory can aid our reading, as they reveal how power and domination function as tools of oppression. I aim to show that it is somewhat ironic to argue that the masculine ideals of the oppressed would align with the hegemonic masculine conceptions (power, domination, military prowess, etc.) of their oppressors. To provide a more balanced discussion of how men in Luke and Acts appear manly, the Jewish ideal figures within the text must be allowed to shape our conceptual framework. To challenge the prevailing focus on Roman masculinity, this chapter develops a comparative

culture would have perceived Jesus in the canonical Gospels than it does about how (Jewish) Jesus-followers themselves would have understood him. One example is found on pp. 68–75, where she maps the significance of power and self-control—primary virtues of Roman hegemonic masculinity—onto Judaism and early Christianity. She argues, for instance, that "in many early Christian texts, the association of paternal power with human fathers diminishes as a central component in conceptions of manhood" (p. 70), positioning Luke at odds with fundamental hegemonic conceptions of the first century. Later, Wilson concludes, "[w]ith these mandates concerning [sexual, paternal, political, military] power, we find the most differences between Jewish and Christian authors and their Greek and Roman coevals" (p. 74). The results are, perhaps, unsurprising, given that the methodological premise primarily compares Jewish men to the "manly" standards of their Roman conquerors.

[172] Creangă 2019: 1.

[173] Økland 2015: 481–82. Cf. Gleason 1995; Wilson 2015.

[174] Cf. Butler 2014.

framework that allows us to assess how Luke and Acts construct masculine ideals largely by drawing on Jewish role models, not Roman ideal figures, although Luke, the author, swims comfortably in the waters of both Jewish and Roman cultural and literary traditions. The following roadmap outlines this approach step by step.

2 Road Map

This chapter is structured as a three-step argument. First, I examine scholarly engagement with Jewish masculinity from the relevant period, introducing a critical perspective on how Jewish masculinity was shaped in relation to the broader Roman context.[175] Secondly, I introduce three concepts from postcolonial theory, hybridity, third space, and mimicry, to aid the discussion of masculine constructions in Luke and Acts. Thirdly, I then investigate three Jewish characters that appear in Luke and Acts from a postcolonial and masculine perspective—Abraham, Elijah, and David—to see how masculinity in Luke and Acts appears when Jewish ideals function as a primary comparator. These three characters are sometimes presented as masculine ideals, yet Luke, like other ancient authors, selectively adapts their narratives to serve his broader thematic and theological concerns.[176] This is crucial, as Jewish texts depict violent kings, dominant and patriarchal structures, and a diversity of masculine expressions comparable to those found in Roman society. However, Luke's selective reception of these figures—particularly Abraham, Elijah, and David—suggests a type of masculinity that emphasizes hospitality, charity, and reversal. While relevant virtues such as piety, hospitality, and benefaction were valued in Roman culture, Luke's emphasis on these virtues is drawn from Jewish ideals and practices, even when used to characterize, for example a Roman centurion like Cornelius.[177] While I do not wish to contend with the possibility of Luke drawing on popular Roman virtues such as self-control, I suggest a deliberate effort to construct an

[175] To account for the earliest references made by Luke in his two volumes (late first century BCE) and a possible later date for the composition of Luke and Acts (120–130s CE), this study defines the relevant period as spanning from the late Second Temple era—beginning with the subjugation of the Hasmonean dynasty to Rome in 63 BCE—through the fall of the Second Temple in 70 CE and culminating in the aftermath of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 136 CE. During this timeframe (63 BCE–136 CE), Jewish masculinity was shaped both by Roman military and cultural dominance and by resistance to these hegemonic ideals.

[176] While this study remains focused on Luke's reception of these figures, it is worth noting the ambivalence and problematic portrayals of masculinity in the broader biblical tradition concerning archetypal Jewish men like Abraham and David. Luke appears selective in his references, including these figures when they serve his thematic concerns—such as hospitality, kinship, identity, or piety—but omitting more controversial aspects of their narratives. For instance, he makes no mention of Abraham passing off Sarah as his sister to be taken by Pharaoh, nor does he include David's morally fraught actions in the story of Bathsheba and Uriah. Instead, Luke crafts a vision of these patriarchs that aligns with his literary and theological objectives.

[177] For further discussion, see Chapter Three (3.8 and 3.9) and Chapter Five.

alternative vision of masculinity—one that does not conform to hegemonic Roman ideals.[178]

By drawing out Luke's portrayal of Elijah, David, and Abraham as a case study in this chapter, I show how conceptions of masculinity seem to be shaped around ideals that break with hegemonic expectations. Before turning to these three Jewish men, however, it is necessary to establish a broader understanding of Jewish masculinity in the ancient world because this has been largely overlooked in Lukan studies. How was masculinity conceptualized by Jewish writers in the late Second Temple Period? And, more importantly, how did these conceptions interact with, resist, or accommodate Roman ideals? By looking at some of the men from the Hebrew Bible that are most frequently referenced in Luke's writings, this chapter advances the thesis that masculinity in Luke and Acts is shaped by non-hegemonic ideals that challenge the hegemony of the conquering power of Luke's day, namely the Roman Empire.

3 Situating the Debate

As previous scholarly contributions have shown, exploring masculine conceptions in Greek and Roman culture provides an essential cultural framework for understanding Luke and other New Testament writings.[179] As we have seen, Roman ideals of masculinity were primarily defined by what we now refer to as *hegemonic masculinity*. Interestingly, studies of *Jewish masculinity* by New Testament scholars such as Peter-Ben Smit and Megan Wines, and Hebrew Bible scholars such as Susan Haddox, and a recent collection of essays edited by Ovidiu Creangă have argued that Jewish masculinity assimilated and challenged the hegemonic expectations of Roman masculinity that existed around them.[180]

Significantly, Kelly Murphy has argued that Jewish masculinity in the book of Proverbs appears non-hegemonic and tied to shrewd economic behavior that she argues is intrinsic to Jewish piety and fear of Yahweh.[181] By being generous and hospitable, men might find wisdom, live good lives, and honor God, whose creation reflects the ultimate act of hospitality.

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[178] Just as I do not disagree with Wilson (2015) or others that power and domination were synonymous with masculinity in a Roman context, nor that these appear as tenets of certain masculine tropes in Jewish and early Christian literature, I simply aim to show that certain conceptions of hospitality and piety, not power, seem to be lauded by Luke and used to characterize ideal men. Interestingly, I do not see Wilson disagreeing on this, but it shows, nonetheless, that our conclusions are often driven by differences in methodological and comparative approaches.

[179] See particularly Andersen and Moore 2005 and Conway 2008. For a survey of the relevant literature, see Chapter One.

[180] Smit 2017: 26–35; Haddox 2016a: 176–206; Haddox 2016b: 5–14; Creangă 2019; Wines 2023. See also the collected essays in Bormann 2018.

[181] Murphy 2019: 285, cf. 275–79.

Murphy's study of men, money, and masculinity offers a rare alternative to scholarly attempts to define what makes men in the Bible appear manly. Interestingly, social aspects, such as economy, the household, community formation, and other identity markers sit at the intersection of both gender issues and anti-imperial approaches to the biblical texts. From a postcolonial perspective, economic issues are intrinsically tied to both oppression and liberation. Fanon argues that "the true disalienation of the black man implies a brutal awareness of the social and economic realities. The inferiority complex can be ascribed to a double process: First, economic. Then, internalization or rather epidermalization of this inferiority."[182]

To a colonial power, taxation, monopolization, and forceful acquisition of economic resources are tools of oppression. For an oppressed group, (re)defining economic ethics and upholding values that defy colonial conquest can be used as defiance and opposition. In Luke and Acts, central themes such as the gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18–19), the great reversal (Luke 1:52–53; 6:20–25), the need for repentance (Luke 3:8; Acts 2:38), and the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:26–33) are continuously framed in economic terms. In addition, calls to discipleship and banquet hosting are almost exclusively reserved for men (Luke 5:27–29; 7:36; 10:38; 11:37; 14:1; 16:19–31; 19:5–6; 22:10–12; Acts 10:23–48; 16:30–34; 18:7), although there are noteworthy exceptions where women appear as household leaders, such as Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12), Lydia (Acts 16:14–15), and Priscilla (Acts 18:2–3, 18–26). Luke's writings illustrate the intersection of economic issues (sometimes referred to as Lukan "wealth ethics")[183] and masculinity through several key figures. For instance, Joseph of Arimathea is described as "a good man" (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς, Luke 23:50) for giving away his tomb, an act of generosity that seems to align with Luke's broader emphasis on the ethical use of money and possessions. The imperial implications of Jesus' crucified body, penetrated by Roman nails and spears, juxtaposes Joseph's masculinity based on charitable giving (and the fulfillment of prophecy from Isaiah 53:9) with the violence of the Roman man.[184] Similarly, Barnabas is explicitly called a "good man" (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς, Acts 11:24) by Luke, and is characterized as "filled by the Holy Spirit and faith" (πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ πίστεως, Luke 11:24), a quality demonstrated through his economic actions: he sells a field, lays the proceeds at the feet of the apostles (Acts 4:37), and is later entrusted with delivering the collection from

[182] Fanon 2021: *xi*.

[183] See Hays 2010.

[184] Wilson 2015: 202. Jesus' penetrated body is the key characteristic for Wilson's argument that Luke's male characters appear unmanly, "Slaves and other nonmen were marked by their corporal penetrability, and those whose bodies were penetrated were in turn marked as unmanly. Crucifixion, then, as an act of bodily penetration, put a person in the position of a slave: the archetypal passive body and the antithesis of manliness. As Josephus relates, crucifixion amounted to "the most pitiable of deaths" (*J.W*. 7.203)."

Antioch to the *ekklēsia* in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29–30). These examples suggest that, for Luke, masculine virtue is not measured in strength and domination but can be seen as an economic counterculture that favors community and charitable deeds and rejects hegemonic and colonial structures.

I return to Murphy's work more thoroughly in the discussion of Levi and his ties to imperial economic practices in Chapter Three. It is, however, relevant to point out here that Hebrew Bible scholars challenge the ubiquity of hegemonic masculinity in their field and their readings of ancient texts, a methodological step that has yet to be fully embraced in New Testament scholarship.[185] The Jewish virtues that seem to form the backdrop of Luke's economic language allow men to appear exemplary by being charitable, a non-hegemonic masculinity that is lost on studies using only the masculine conceptions of hegemony in their approach to the masculinity in Luke and Acts.[186]

Gil Rosenberg's contribution to the same publication is particularly relevant in setting up this alternative approach to how we understand ancient conceptions of masculinity.[187] Rosenberg argues that masculinity should be analyzed based on how men either support, comply with or resist hegemonic masculinity.[188] The latter option to *resist* hegemony by presenting alternative ideals of masculinity, is where the present argument is situated. While Murphy, Rosenberg, and others have suggested that we think about masculinity outside the box of hegemony, Rosenberg's categories are still mostly defined in contrast to it. Most recently, Wines has argued that "Jewish men of Jesus's time would have had to carefully balance the influence of the dual expectations of Roman hegemonic masculinity and Jewish communal masculinity."[189] The contributions of Murphy, Rosenberg and Wines prepare a way to study and understand conceptions of manliness in the ancient world that places a critical light on concurrent hegemonic masculinity. As Wines shows, Jewish men likely had to navigate a complex balance between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity to appear ideal within both Jewish and Roman contexts. However, postcolonial theory suggests that oppressed groups often resist the ideals imposed by their oppressors, rather than conform to them. Instead of merely existing alongside Roman masculinity, masculine conceptions in Luke's writings may function as a critique of its defining features—power, domination, and conquest. This suggests

[185] Murphy's argument ties economic behavior, hospitality, and piety to conceptions of masculinity as one of the very few to note these intersections.

[186] For comprehensive accounts of the wealth ethical language in Luke's writings (although mostly focused on the Gospel), see Hays 2010 and Giambrone 2017.

[187] Rosenberg 2019: 41–57.

[188] Rosenberg 2019: 41.

[189] Wines 2023: 6.

that Luke's depiction of manliness is not only non-hegemonic but actively resists the imperial ideals imposed on Jewish men. By criticizing economic patterns, imperial cultic practices, codes of hospitality and benefaction, as well as the Roman military and prison complexes, prominent male characters in Luke and Acts appear masculine in ways that align with Jewish ideals, such as, for example, the ethical teachings of Proverbs, or the ideal example of Abraham.[190]

While Wilson and Flessen have similarly suggested that Jewish masculine conceptions would have influenced Luke and other New Testament authors,[191] Wines is the only one who explores some of these Jewish influences in New Testament texts.[192] She maps contributions from Hebrew Bible scholars onto the New Testament and traces the significance of God's supreme or singular masculine status, alongside certain kingly and prophetic Jewish tropes in the Gospel of Mark.[193] Her work is a valuable contribution to a long-overdue discussion, and this chapter builds upon her argument while also challenging some of its conclusions. Significantly, Wines concludes that "submission to God is the most defining feature of a masculinity constructed out of the ideals of the Hebrew Bible."[194] While her argument reveals aspects of the Markan Jesus' characterization as masculine and/or unmanly, Jewish masculinity represents more than submission. Or, to phrase it differently, submission can mean more than being emasculated, a conclusion that might be colored by a hegemonic approach to the text, similar to parts of Wilson's argument.[195] Particularly through the inclusion of postcolonial theory, Jewish masculine conceptions in Luke and Acts can be regarded as defiant and non-hegemonic without being unmanly, a term that I hypothesize is dictated by certain imperial and hegemonic rhetorical tropes.

Early contributions to studies on masculinities within Hebrew Bible scholarship focused on conceptions that framed masculine men as subordinate to God and relied on hegemonic performances and embodied characteristics. Scholars such as Howard Eilberg-

[190] Rosenberg's study is on Abraham in the Genesis 18–19 narratives and her methodology provide a solid foundation for non-hegemonic and defiant masculinity. However, her research question is whether Abraham appears to "queer" hegemonic conceptions, and she concludes that Abraham upholds patriarchal structures when using Sarah as a bargaining chip with Pharaoh. While her framework for thinking critically about how we apply hegemony as a concept is instructive, it would have been interesting to see what conclusions would have been possible if options outside a queering of hegemonic expectations existed.

[191] Wilson first agrees with Flessen that "Luke's vision of masculinity aligns more with representations found in Jewish texts" (2015: 21), and then goes on to ask, "what precisely is the relationship between Luke-Acts and perceptions of masculinity in the larger Greco-Roman world?" (2015: 24).

[192] See Wilson 2015: 48; Flessen 2011: 81–83.

[193] The idea of God being the "only" masculine entity in a Jewish thought-world is drawn from Eilberg-Schwartz's *God's Phallus*, see discussion below.

[194] Wines 2023: 12.

[195] Wilson 2015: 256.

Schwartz and David Clines, for example, were central to a growing discourse that simultaneously described "the man" in the Hebrew Bible as subordinate to God, and relying on strength, violence, and honor to appear manly. Clines primarily investigates the story of David from 1 Samuel 16 to 1 Kings 2.[196] He sets up an interesting premise by comparing (his own) conceptions of Western masculinity "today" (1995) to the portrayal of David in the two books of the Hebrew Bible.[197] Clines argues that the characterization of David, and by extension the masculine ideal in the Hebrew Bible, is marked by a combination of hegemonic stereotypes (war, violence, sexual domination including rape, polygamy, and indifference to women), and ambiguous characteristics such as beauty, musical proficiency, and oratory.[198] This ambivalence, between supposed "masculine" virtues such as strength and courage in the context of war and killing, and the "softer" expressions of beauty and musicality reveal the underlying hegemonic premise of Clines' argument.[199] While it is most helpful to scope out the range of characteristics applied to the character David in 1 Samuel and 1 Kings, the applied apparatus only reveals masculine conceptions if they correspond to hegemonic expectations.

Another example of such a conceptualization of masculinity in the Hebrew Bible can be found in Eilberg-Schwartz's *God's Phallus*, the first monograph to ask what masculine consequences it had for ancient Israelites to subordinate themselves to a masculine deity.[200] Eilberg-Schwartz argues that in worshipping a male (although not necessarily corporeally perceived) deity, the people of Israel take the role of a wife or a woman.[201] While the language he draws on to portray Yahweh as an explicitly male entity is found in a limited array of primary sources (certain Prophets and a somewhat figurative reading of the Song of Songs), his work remains influential as it teases out some of the ambiguities tied to worship practices where men in a patriarchal society are in some ways intrinsically excluded from the apex of power and domination. Eilberg-Schwartz might be using intentionally provocative language (as the title suggests) when he describes what he sees as Israelite men "preparing to be wives," or "this means that the men must be female."[202] What the book effectively shows, however, is that when a monolithic view of masculinity is divinely conceptualized and made incorporeal and unattainable, all other men are effectively emasculated. What Eilberg-Schwartz might have intended to be a book about men breaking with typical masculine stereotypes when

[196] Clines 1995b: 212–41.
[197] Clines 1995b: 212–15.
[198] Clines 1995b: 216–31.
[199] Clines 1995b: 227–28 (musicality); 239–40 (beauty).
[200] Eilberg-Schwartz 1994: 5.
[201] Eilberg-Schwartz 1994: 148.
[202] Eilberg-Schwartz 1994: 40.

subordinating themselves to God, shows, somewhat ironically, that hegemonic masculinity, when applied anywhere, effectively serves to elevate the powerful and emasculate everyone else.

While Eilberg-Schwartz's language serves a specific purpose within his interpretive framework, it is not the case that his descriptions of men "becoming women" breaks with the patriarchal worldview of the ancient Near East, although Israel is not infrequently portrayed as a woman. Importantly, he does not imply that men in the Hebrew Bible are feminized in relation to women. Rather, Eilberg-Schwartz highlights a key feature of hegemonic masculinity: a strict hierarchy in which manliness is reserved exclusively for figures of ultimate authority, in this case, the God of Israel.

Moreover, Eilberg-Schwartz's contribution to masculinities studies in the Hebrew Bible shares interesting parallels with Wilson's *Unmanly Men*. Wilson's interpretation of masculinity in Luke and Acts aligns with Eilberg-Schwartz's perspective on the people of Israel, as both scholars highlight similar constructions of gender and masculinity within their respective frameworks. Wilson argues, as mentioned above, that Luke deliberately constructs powerless (i.e., unmanly) men to underscore the power of the only true male entity, the God of Israel. While the servile aspects of Israel's (and Jesus-followers') relationship to God are theologically fundamental and potentially impact perceptions of manliness, conclusions that render the Jewish or Christ-following man as intrinsically relegated should be challenged.

One critical corrective to studies of gender conceptions and masculinity is a recognition of non-elite figurations of masculinity that challenge the dominant gender hierarchy. This pushes against recent constructions of masculinity such as Wilson's, who opines that "[t]o be a 'manly' man, according to Greek and Roman authors, one must be elite and, above all, not act like a woman."[203] Against this characterization of ancient masculinity, Jews and early Christians, subjugated to the imperial elite standards, would inevitably end up as unmanly, which ties together with her overall argument (surveyed above) that Luke's male characters are often unmanly and that the only power and masculinity resides with God. In contrast to this perspective, other scholars such as Susan Hylen and Teresa Morgan have argued that even Roman sources from the first century depict a range of non-elite people, even women, children, and enslaved persons, as manly.[204] Approaches to masculinity that are premised on the elite lack any alternative constructions of manliness that could be available for people on the

[203] Wilson 2015: 48.
[204] Hylen 2021: 9; Morgan 2007: 122–25.

underside of history or the margins of society. Rosenberg notices this tension and argues that masculinity *can* be understood as challenging and resisting hegemonic constructions.[205] For men living under threat and pressure from a violent oppressor or colonial power, masculinity could be defined in defiance of violence and hegemony. Hospitality may become a mode of resistance against the inhospitable, and charity a protest of financial extortion. These ideas about gender are fundamentally premised on a critique of the assumption that hegemony would have been viewed as ideal by people oppressed under its dominance.

A crucial aspect of the theory that came to be understood as "hegemonic masculinity" through the work of Raewyn Connell should here be noted.[206] Originally, the term was introduced by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who wrote letters from prison in the 1930s criticizing the tendencies to allow power and domination to appear moral, unchecked, and ordinary by the common people. For Gramsci, imprisoned by the fascist movement led by Mussolini, hegemony describes the propensity of the ruling class to balance coercion and consent in order to assert power.[207] When picked up by Connell—an Australian Marxist writing in the 80s and 90s—the Gramscian ideas were given academic buttressing, allowing the theory to transcend time and inform discussions of, for example, ancient gender constructions. While this has been most helpful to a substantial number of academic pursuits, it is noteworthy that a theory used to map out and compare conceptions of masculinity to the powerful and oppressive empires of antiquity arose from the defiant ideas of a political prisoner.

It is as if a book title such as Conway's *Behold the Man*—where Luke's Jesus is portrayed as aligning with hegemonic Roman ideals of masculinity based on power and authority—has turned the theory somewhat against itself. Originally meant to deconstruct and describe the intricate workings of power, hegemonic masculinity is sometimes used to shroud someone like the Lukan Jesus, a man depicted as suffering under unjust punishment in a veil of imperial masculinity.[208] Framing Jesus and other male characters in Luke as unmanly can be just as reductive as portraying them as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity. Denying marginalized groups (of men) access to any other (masculine) identity than the one promulgated by their oppressors could unconsciously contribute to a colonial reading where only the ruling class is allowed to dictate what it means to be a (hu)man.[209] As the examples of

[205] Rosenberg 2019: 41–57.

[206] Connell 1987: 86–92; 1995: 76–81.

[207] This was later understood as, and applied to both state, institutional, civil, intellectual, and moral power. See Gramsci 1978 [1971]: 12–13; 53–60; 104–6; 160–82; 206–75; 388–408; 416–18; 447.

[208] Note how Luke characterizes Jesus as being crucified as a criminal while, at the same time, being recognized as just and innocent (δίκαιος) by the centurion in Luke 23:47.

[209] See Gramsci 1978 [1971]; Connell 1995; Conway 2008; Wilson 2015.

Abraham and other Jewish men in Luke's writings and the corpus of Jewish texts show, qualities and performances that would not necessarily have been regarded as masculine or exemplary from a hegemonic viewpoint appear as defining characteristics of ideal men for Luke.

To conclude this section, scholars have mapped out several approaches to how Jewish masculinity would have influenced New Testament authors. While some rely on the Greco-Roman conceptual framework to situate Jewish masculine conceptions, it is possible to rethink the question of what it meant to be exemplary men for ancient Jews from a non-hegemonic perspective. Before we turn to that task, I will introduce three auxiliary methodological concepts from postcolonial theory. The purpose of these concepts is to aid our reading of masculinity in Luke and Acts by considering the implications of power and domination on subjugated people and marginalized groups.

4 Postcolonial Approaches to Jewish Masculinity

To support my discussion of non-hegemonic and defiant masculinity in Luke and Acts, I will introduce selected concepts from postcolonial studies. These insights are gleaned particularly from the works of Homi Bhabha, and I will draw on his terminology of *hybridity*, *third space*, and *mimicry* to facilitate a discussion of masculinity that is sensitive to the oppressive structures surrounding conceptions of gender and power. While postcolonial theory has been readily applied by biblical scholars to gain both cultural-historical and/or rhetorical insight into the world of the New Testament in its Greco-Roman milieu,[210] scholars sometimes draw on Bhabha and other postcolonial scholars to show how New Testament authors are influenced by imperial rhetoric or cultural tropes.[211] My use of postcolonial theory has a somewhat opposite intention. Because studies on masculinity in the New Testament predominantly use Roman masculine conceptions as their point of comparison, the corrective offered by postcolonial theory is the opportunity to explore the hybrid or "third spaces" that occur when Jewish and Godfearing or converted Gentiles encounter the domination and conquest that characterized their oppressors. My reading of scholars such as Bhabha invites this corrective to colonial issues both modern and historical:

[210] See, e.g., Liew 2006: 206–32; Marchal 2008: 59–90; Burrus 2000: 147–48; Moore 2009: 449–51.

[211] Liew 2006: 206–32 is a good example, where the purpose of the argument is to present a case for how the author of Mark is laden with rhetorical imperialist undercurrents.

> Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries [sic] and the discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of east and west, north and south. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, and people.[212]

I consider the Lukan story in the Third Gospel and Acts to include a majority of characters who are described as marginalized in their political and social context, living under Roman hegemony. Because masculinity is one of the ways in which cultural, political, and military hegemony is asserted, postcolonial theory can show how power and masculinity intersect for oppressed groups in several distinct ways. Firstly, Bhabha argues that characterizations of what he calls *hybridity* are typical of encounters between imperial powers, colonizers and their subjects. Fundamentally, hybridity rejects the notion that relationships between an occupier and the occupied should only be regarded as purely adversarial.[213] He argues that in the multifaceted encounters between the powerful and the subjugated, symbols, identity, and culture are never fixed, but rather negotiated in an ambivalent process.[214] Being in a hybrid space can be defined as being in between two or more identities, almost but not quite resembling either category.[215] Having to balance several identities and roles, often prompted by occupation or forced cultural or political influence, hybrid identities are forced to define themselves in tension and co-existence with these alien influences. Bhabha elaborates on the cultural undercurrents that foster oppositional identities for marginalized groups:

> Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The 'right' to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of

[212] Bhabha 1992: 437.
[213] Bhabha 2004: 54–55.
[214] Bhabha 2004: 54.
[215] Bhabha 2004:122.

> contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are 'in the minority.'[216]

The synergetic potential in intersecting a study of masculinity with attention to colonial representations of power has been noted by Eric Thurman.[217] He notes that Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and third space show how subjugated and colonized people imitate power as a way of surviving and resisting oppressive authority. In a study of colonial mimicry in Mark's Gospel, Tat-Siong Benny Liew argues that Jesus is characterized as subtly outperforming imperial authority and power by revealing the kingdom (or empire) of God, which is mightier and more powerful than Rome (cf. Mark 8:38; 12:27).[218]

Thurman links Liew's reading to masculine discourse because "the 'might-is-right' ideology that supports imperialism (…) is of a piece with hegemonic masculinity."[219] In significant ways, Thurman and Liew show how postcolonial theory can be useful to shed light on places where imperialist rhetoric seems to have left a mark on the New Testament writings. However, they both use the theory to point to *similarities* between the oppressor and the oppressed. To build on Thurman's contribution, I explore how Luke resists the imperial rhetoric in the Third Gospel and Acts. In other words, men living under the Empire may have conceptualized masculinity *differently* from those who pursued conquest and domination.

While Thurman's study is most helpful, it shares the inclination to view the masculine conceptions and colonial critique in the New Testament primarily from a hegemonic Roman perspective.[220] As evident from the above quotation from Bhabha's work, hybridity is not solely meant to elucidate points of similarity, but a way for marginalized groups to be studied on their terms. From a peripheral starting point, it might make more sense to ask, what are the masculine conceptions available for men who are constantly unmanned by an omnipotent power? To investigate further, we introduce another, closely related term from Bhabha's work.

Alongside hybridity, Bhabha's concept of *third space* provides an additional framework for examining the dynamics of marginalized groups and power. The concept of third space grows out of Bhabha's engagement with Said's concept of "orientalism."[221] Said's term is a defining concept in postcolonial theory describing how Western civilization tends to

[216] Bhabha 2004: 3.
[217] Thurman 2003: 137–61.
[218] Liew 103–108, cf. Thurman 2003: 149.
[219] Thurman 2003: 149.
[220] See especially Thurman 2003: 140–41.
[221] Cf. Said 1978.

depict other cultures—particularly, for Said, the Eastern world, or, derogatorily, the "Orient"—in a fetishized way that forwards imperialist and colonialist presumptions.[222] One of Bhabha's most significant contributions to postcolonial theory, or, in other words, his impetus to read texts *with the marginalized*, lies in revealing how we (including Said) often approach texts from a Western perspective, creating a binary of colonizer and colonized.[223] Bhabha broadens this dichotomy by introducing what he calls third space, a concept that explains social, cultural, political, and ideological ways in which subjugated people can resist imperial or otherwise oppressive forces through subtle but distinct methods of mimicry and camouflage.[224] Third space is therefore significant to a postcolonial vocabulary, because it requires us to begin our thinking from the perspective of marginalized groups and the peripheral areas of culture and power. If Luke's characterization of men and how they appear masculine are approached as a third space, where masculinity is negotiated between Jewish and Roman conceptions, then this space emerges from the encounter of dominant and defiant conceptions of masculinity.[225] In other words, a third space allows for entirely new categories that are not premised on power, but rather shaped by the interaction between a marginalized group and its oppressor.

With a third space as a point of reference for engaging masculinity in Luke and Acts, the goal shifts from proving whether men in Luke's stories fit within the broader cultural expectations of masculinity,[226] to instead exploring how masculinity could be conceptualized from the margins of society. The benefit of this method is that it is premised on the social realities of most characters in Luke's stories. How, for example, does Levi, a dubious tax collector, potentially held in low regard by fellow Jews and a mere financial tool for the colonizer, become a model disciple and hospitable host in Luke? Is he fundamentally characterized as unmanly? Similarly, what consequences does it have for their masculinity when a Gentile jailer in Philippi, or Cornelius, a Roman centurion, converts to the Way and distances himself from hegemonic conceptions of masculinity in the Roman Empire? In the ambiguous third space that appears between the Jewish tradition of the *ekklēsia* and the gendered expectations of the dominant culture, masculinity appears different than previously described as either masculine or unmanly in light of hegemonic expectations.[227]

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[222] Said 1978: 43; cf. Bhabha 2004.
[223] Bhabha 2004: 153.
[224] Bhabha 2004: 72.
[225] Bhabha 2004: 122.
[226] As per Conway 2008.
[227] Cf. Wilson 2015: 256; Conway 2008: 127–42.

The last concept I use from postcolonial theory is *mimicry*, as a way of approaching one of the most peculiar reactions that occur when marginalized people encounter their oppressors, namely the tendency to partly display aspects of the dominant culture. According to postcolonial theory mimicry is common among marginalized groups searching for identity under imperial and colonial power. One example that we will explore in Chapter Five is the characterization of Peter in Acts 10 as an articulate orator and acclaimed leader who fits within broader Greco-Roman literary tropes and can thus be seen as mimicking the dominant culture. However, mimicry is an ambiguous concept, as argued by Buchanan:

> A term used in Postcolonial Studies to describe the paradoxical (or doubly articulated) state of affairs in colonial countries whereby the colonial power desires its subjugated others, namely the indigenous population of the occupied country, to look or at least act the same as the occupiers and yet fear that very outcome because it would dilute their own sense of difference and superiority. Mimicry is thus, as Homi Bhabha theorizes, an ambivalent strategy whereby subaltern peoples simultaneously express their subservience to the more powerful and subvert that power by making mimicry seem like mockery.[228]

First introduced in a 1984 article, Bhabha argues that mimicry is a strategy that can be deployed by colonized people simultaneously draws on aspects of the colonizer's rhetoric and undermines its authority.[229] In this way, mimicry creates an ambivalent space of assimilation, subversion, and resistance that allows marginalized groups to engage in with their oppressors, bypassing censorship or reprisal because the rhetoric, stories, or literature is acceptable to a colonial audience. At the same time, mimicry allows the author to challenge the concepts and ideas that she mimics because her words are now camouflaged, which is, according to Bhabha the ultimate goal of mimicry.[230] To engage scholars like Jeremy Williams and others who view Luke as embedded in imperial rhetoric (see Chapter Six), I use mimicry to argue that Luke's stories are concerned with how marginalized people form identity, in this study how men identify as masculine, as a way of defying imperial hegemony. Postcolonial theory thus allows me to read Luke and Acts as primarily concerned with Jewish and Gentile Jesus followers, rather than texts exhibiting imperially attuned rhetoric.

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[228] Buchanan (ed.) 2018: online entry ("Mimicry"), no pagination.
[229] Bhabha 1984: 125–33.
[230] Bhabha 1984: 125. Here, he quotes Lacan (1977: 99. Tr. Sheridan) who argues that "The effect of mimicry is camouflage (...) It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare."

The three concepts from postcolonial theory (hybridity, third space, and mimicry) highlight the potential pitfalls of using hegemonic masculinity to understand masculine conceptions in texts about people subjugated to that very same hegemony. As a corrective lens, postcolonial theory opens new avenues for understanding how men in Luke appear ideal and masculine in distinct and defiant ways as a response to the cultural and political forces shaping their world. To conclude this section, postcolonial theory and studies on masculinity provide an important intersection on gender issues because they take seriously how power and masculinity affect each other, particularly for dominated and subjugated people. Expanding on the relationship between power and masculinity within colonial and imperial contexts, we turn to the Hebrew Bible to explore masculine ideals that would have been available to Jewish men and Jesus-followers in Luke and Acts. In light of the above discussion of colonial and imperial power, the men in Luke's writings should be considered in relation to ideals beyond those imposed by their oppressors.

5 Refigurations of Men and Masculinity in the Jewish Scriptures

To present a comparative framework for understanding Jewish masculine identity in Luke and Acts, we turn our attention to three figures central to Luke's engagement with the Hebrew Bible: Elijah, David, and Abraham. The focus on these potential models of Jewish masculinity in Luke and Acts in this project is meant, not as a comprehensive approach to Jewish masculine conceptions in general, but to show that if we look for portrayals of men in Luke's stories, we see that the author uses Jewish figures such as Abraham in ways that model performance and specific roles, such as hospitality, piety, and discipleship. In other words, a Jewish man, such as Jesus or his disciples, as well as non-Jewish men who convert to the Way in Acts, would appear exemplary and masculine if they embodied characteristics resembling someone like Elijah, David, or Abraham. As reflected in the title of the project, I argue that Abraham has a special place in Luke's construction of an ideal man. With a unique focus on table fellowship, meal scenes, and hospitality, Abraham, particularly his striking role in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19–31, is a Jewish ideal man that offers fascinating points of comparison to other men in Luke's stories. His unique role will be studied more closely in Chapter Four, but I introduce him at the end of this discussion, to set up an alternative method of comparison to the hegemonic man of Rome.

The first man I explore from the Jewish Scriptures who appears to represent certain Jewish ideals in Luke's writings is Elijah. As a prophet associated with hospitality in the

Hebrew Bible, Elijah's interactions with the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kgs 17:8–16 develops themes of divine provision and care for the poor and marginalized. In this passage, Elijah comes to a widow during a severe drought and famine, requesting food and water despite her desperate circumstances. The widow, though initially hesitant, responds to Elijah's request. As reward for her charitable actions despite her own desperate situation, Elijah promises divine sustenance: her jar of flour and jug of oil will not run out until the famine ends. As a prophet, Elijah showcases both God's power and his care for the poor. As a man, he reinforces the Jewish ideals of piety, faith, and the significance of offering—or, in Elijah's case, receiving—hospitality, even in times of hardship. The fact that the woman is intertwined with Elijah, as one who must be equally willing to give what little she has, creates an interesting ambivalence for Elijah's standing as a prophet and a man. Before he can show God's miraculous power, he must be saved by a woman.

This story of Elijah resonates with Jesus' teachings in Luke's writings. The ambiguous role of a woman, a care for the poor and marginalized, and even the mention of famine can all be seen as overlapping themes in Luke and 1 Kings. Moreover, in Luke 4:25–26, Jesus explicitly references Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in his synagogue sermon which explicitly launches the "gospel to the poor." The ideal of Elijah and the story of the widow at Zarephath in Sidon intersect with Luke's concern for the marginalized as well as a potential foreshadowing of Gentile inclusion.

Finally, Elijah's characterization in 1 Kings 17 aligns with non-hegemonic Jewish ideals of masculinity. Elijah is described as obedient, compassionate, and caring for a poor widow, with no mentions of displays of dominance or control. The prophet is rather placed as an agent of God in a situation where he fundamentally lacks control and is assisted by a widow. Nevertheless, he appears as an ideal in Luke's writing. Although he embodies fragile and ambiguous characteristics, the prophet's story from 1 Kings is received in Luke as an ideal man because he was sent explicitly to a non-Jewish widow.

In the only study of Elijah's masculinity that I am aware of, Marie-Theres Wacker uses Clines' model of exploring (hegemonic) masculinity and Connell's concepts of subordinate and marginalized masculinity, finding Elijah to fit awkwardly within the conceptual framework that she proposes. Wacker concludes: "Élie ne correspond pas au modèle de David, c'est-à-dire au modèle de la masculinité hégémonique. Il représente un type différent, celui du nazir et/ou du prophète."[231] In other words, Elijah does not correspond to her chosen comparator, the

[231] Wacker 2014: 30.

masculine ideal of David, even though David is a warrior-king and displays hegemonic tropes, because Elijah's masculinity is tied, perhaps more significantly according to Wacker, to prophetic and poetic tropes. In this way, the hegemonic framework so often applied by scholars fails to fully identify how Jewish men appear masculine.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the association of Elijah with an ideal Nazirite (drawn from 2 Kings 1:8, "A hairy man with a leather belt around his waist," cf. John the Baptist in Luke 7:33) and a prophetic figure that does not fit the mold of a hegemonic man, leads Wacker to look for other ways of characterizing the prophet as masculine. She argues that he fits better within Connell's category of marginalized masculinity ("masculinité marginalisée") but does not qualify this argument based on Elijah's depiction in the Hebrew Bible.[232] Based on the comparative framework she has set up, the characterization of Elijah is marked by the ways he does not fit a Davidic ideal.[233] Within her comparative framework, David is the hegemonic ideal, and Elijah ends up as marginalized or unmanly because he lacks certain traits that David embodies. According to Wacker, kings are not, however, synonymous with a hegemonic masculine ideal.

Strikingly, King Akhab also comes up short against a hegemonic ideal of a man and that the character that most closely resembles hegemony is Queen Jezebel, wife of King Ahab (1 Kings 16:31), who is famously portrayed as a worshipper of Baal and offering hospitality to the prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kings 18:19), and who "killed the prophets of the Lord (1 Kings 18:13, cf. 18:4). Wacker ironically identifies that hegemonic characteristics *are not* idealized in the Jewish Scriptures, to the point where they are misogynistically associated with a demonized woman ("la reine Jézabel revêt des traits d'hégémonie, mais elle est diabolisée").[234] What are we to do with the fact that Elijah, although he does not fit into a hegemonic mold, seems to be a role model for Lukan men? Wacker's reading of the prophet seems to leave us with one option: concluding that Elijah is marginalized and unmanly because he is compared to a hegemonic ideal that Wacker herself, in the case of King Akhab, finds unfit to capture masculinity in the Hebrew Bible. This characterization, however, does not align with Luke's references to Elijah.

Luke's portrayal of the prophet Elijah is mirrored in the characterization of John the Baptist (Luke 1:17; 7:33); he appears on the mount of transfiguration alongside Moses (Luke

[232] Wacker 2014: 1–3, 30.

[233] As we shall see below, David might not be all that hegemonic himself, cf. Clines 1995b; Wines 2023.

[234] Wacker 2014: 28–30.

9:30–31) and seems to be awaited as the prophet whom the people expect has returned when they hear of Jesus' works and deeds (Luke 7:16; 9:8, 19, cf. Mark 15:35–36; Matt 27:46–49). Moreover, when rejected in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus identifies elements of his ministry as echoing the work of Elijah (and Elisha, cf. Luke 4:27), referencing how the prophets were sent only to a select few (the widow in Zarephath and her son in 1 Kings 17:8–16, cf. the widow in Nain and her son in Luke 7:11–17).[235] Elijah, in other words, is a mark of prophetic credibility for Jesus and an ideal man to be emulated. If Jesus' disciples are to imitate him and Jesus himself mimics (parts of) Elijah's ministry, the prophet deserves to be considered as an ideal Jewish man with gendered as well as other implications. At the same time, the Lukan (and Matthean, cf. Matt 11:19) Jesus breaks with the prophetic mold of John the Baptist and Elijah in the eyes of the crowds, describing him as a "glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 7:34). Here, Luke presents a juxtaposition of Jesus to John, who came "eating no bread and drinking no wine" (Luke 7:33), and the parallels between John and Elijah might be stronger than those between Jesus and the prophet, although, as Luke's Jesus exclaims, "wisdom is vindicated by all her children" (Luke 7:36). John and Jesus are, in other words, both criticized by Jesus' opponents in this passage (i.e., the Pharisees), John for preparing, and Jesus for proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Does Luke portray Elijah as unmanly? Or is Elijah molded on Roman masculine tropes?

These questions, which would be relevant to ask based on previous scholarship on Lukan masculinity, seem misplaced. That might not be surprising, seeing as asking questions about Jewish masculinity has been so absent from New Testament scholarship. It might also explain the scarcity of gendered studies on characters such as Abraham and, even more, Elijah. Based on Luke's use of the Septuagint and the Elijah typology in the Third Gospel, the prophet seems to hold a revered position.[236] At a significant moment of Jesus' messianic revelation, on the mount of transfiguration in Luke 9:28–36, Elijah appears together with Moses and Jesus, and the prophet is something of an archetype for parts of the ministry of both John the Baptist and Jesus. Finally, in the transfiguration scene in Luke 9:28–36, Elijah appears together with

[235] The mutual context of famines for their respective ministries is another overlap in the Elijah and Jesus stories from 1 Kings and the Third Gospel.

[236] Cf. Croatto 2005: 451–65; Otten 2017: 2–6, 22–75, and passim. Otten's study engages the classic theme of remnant theology in Luke and Acts, closely tied to Luke's frequent references to Elijah. While this theological motif lies outside the scope of the present project, the most noteworthy contribution in Otten's work is his demonstration of how the Elijah trope extends beyond Jesus to include John the Baptist and a range of disciples—including Cornelius (pace Conzelmann 1960: 20–27; cf. Otten 2017: 254–66). The idea that Elijah serves as a typological mold for multiple male figures in Luke and Acts has significant implications for how masculinity is conceptualized. If Elijah represents an ideal for Lukan men, that ideal is distinctly shaped by a Jewish prophet from the Hebrew Bible—rather than by a model rooted in hegemonic masculinity.

Moses when Jesus' face appears "like some other" (τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον, Luke 9:29).[237] Jesus appears to be closely associated with the two Jewish prophets, who are revealed in glory (οἳ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ, Luke 9:31), and it is in their company that Jesus' glory (δόξα, Luke 9:32) is revealed to the onlooking, drowsy disciples.

At the moment of glorious revelation, Jesus appears in the company of prophets on top of a mountain, with stories about the cost of discipleship (Luke 9:23–27) and the healing of a child (Luke 9:37–43) sandwiched around this revelation of the Son of Man. The masculine connotations are inherently ambiguous and explicitly tied to Jewish prophets and messianic expectations. The ambiguity lies in the interplay of glorification and suffering, and Elijah and Jesus embody a masculinity that is shaped by characteristics such as divine revelation and prophetic authority, rather than by traits associated with someone like King Akhab. While Jesus is revealed in messianic splendor, he is prophesized to suffer and die, not conquer by the sword. Finally, his followers must similarly expect persecution and crucifixion (Luke 9:23–27), and their mission lies with the sick children (Luke 9:37–43), not with the powerful and elite men who represent the crucifier, not the crucified. Elijah represents, both in the Hebrew Bible and in Luke's references to him, a man who fits awkwardly within hegemonic characteristics, yet still appears as an ideal man.

David, the second example of a Jewish role model and ambiguous masculine ideal that we will consider, enters the Lukan story in a way that immediately awakens gendered associations. The reference to David in Luke 1:27, as well as the genealogy in Luke 3 (here, 3:31), traces Jesus' lineage to David through Joseph. The Davidic ancestry is referenced in relation to two men, Joseph and Zechariah, the second of whom, when worshipping the God of Israel for his son John, speaks of how Jesus will become a mighty savior or "horn of salvation" (κέρας σωτηρίας, Luke 1:69) in the *house* of his *servant* David.

Zechariah and Joseph are, however, mere bystanders to the conception and birth of Jesus, this mighty savior, who is borne by Mary and conceived by the Holy Spirit. The men tying Jesus to David appear somewhat sidelined, and the actual lineage could be questioned, seeing as Joseph takes the role of a stepfather. Therefore, David's presence in the Lukan story can be seen as at the same time, evocative and subversive: while his connection to Joseph might evoke the continuation of a royal lineage, Mary does not mention David when she worships the same God of Israel, but rather Abraham (Luke 1:55). The ambiguity of David's masculinity

[237] Note that Luke does not use the Markan μεταμορφόω (Mark 9:2) and thus does not necessarily describe a physical change.

in Jewish tradition — a warrior, poet, sinner, and king — introduces a Jewish masculine ideal that plays on or mimics but also challenges several hegemonic masculine conceptions.

However, Luke's use of Davidic tropes does not fit with Clines' definition of the Jewish (hegemonic) masculinity that David represents in Clines' reading of the Hebrew Bible. Clines defines David's manliness and, on that basis, the ideal man in the Hebrew Bible as (1) a strong and violent warrior; (2) a good speaker; (3) good-looking; (4) bonding with other men; (5) not bonding with women; and (6) an adept musician.[238] Luke's references to David are certainly both kingly and ideal, but John the Baptist and Jesus' association with David does not develop around violent, strong, or aesthetic aspects of the David narratives. Rather, Jesus is recognized as a son of David by a blind man, just before entering Jerusalem—not as a warrior-king, but as a servile Rabbi (Luke 18:35–43).

On the other hand, male bonding is foundational among Jesus' followers, who are told to leave their families and reorganize themselves around a different identity with elements of male bonding (Luke 14:26).[239] Luke's representation of David is useful for demonstrating how masculinity in Luke and Acts, and in the Hebrew Bible, is both ambiguous and diverse. Furthermore, it shows how Luke participates in a reception history where certain tropes and characteristics are emphasized, while others are passed over in silence. Interestingly, the Davidic tropes that Luke includes cast Jesus as a Messianic figure, but they do so without tying him to typical masculine traits like the strong and powerful warrior. In fact, these tropes are reversed when Jesus enters Jerusalem as a poor prophet on the path to humiliation and death.

At the same time, however, Jesus fulfills aspects of Davidic masculinity by being an eloquent speaker who frequently bests his opponents (Luke 5:17–26; 6:1–11; 7:36–50; 11:37–54; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 20:20–26) and as someone who regularly bonds with other men. Conclusively, these traits paint a picture of David as a Jewish masculine ideal readily deployed by Luke, but, significantly, David—and Jesus when placed in Davidic imagery—seems to embody manliness without drawing on the ideals of Roman hegemonic masculinity. This reconsideration of Davidic masculinity brings us to Abraham, the third and last figure in our exploration of Jewish masculine ideals in Luke's writings.

Abraham can be seen as Luke's ideal man for hospitable hosts and disciples with a surplus of means and possession. Foundational to Abraham's position as virtuous, an ideal believer and patriarch is his hospitality, drawn from texts such as Genesis 18:1–8. Interestingly,

[238] Clines 1995b: 212–41.

[239] Moxnes 2007: 155–70. Notwithstanding the women who are frequently mentioned as following Jesus and caring for his ministry, as per Luke 8:1–3.

Sarah's role in the story dovetails in some ways with the ambiguous household ethics and gender roles in the first-century Mediterranean culture. Several scholarly contributions have been made to situate Abraham and Sarah within ancient gender roles.[240] However, a common trope in recent scholarship is to situate gender roles concerning sexuality and control over one's body, heirs, and reproduction, usually concerned with the wife-sister narratives in Genesis 12:10–20; 20:18, the Hagar stories in Genesis 16 and 21, and the promise and birth of Isaac in Genesis 17 and 21. While scholars disagree on Abraham's masculinity as subordinate to God's will, his control over Sarah and her sexuality, and whether this casts him as normative or subversive, patriarchal or queer, the discussion is broadly formed along the lines of bodily control and sexual potency.[241] This is a methodological tendency that effectively imposes the Greco-Roman hegemonic man on the Jewish virtue of hospitality. As such conclusions would presuppose, Abraham would be forced into a dichotomy of being either masculine or unmanly by hegemonic standards. While these findings might function to compare archetypal Jewish characters to a Greco-Roman standard of what it might mean to be manly, we miss out on what successful ways of being a man would look like if constructed from Jewish ideals.

Scholars such as Peter-Ben Smit have noticed the link between hospitality and masculinity as it pertains to Greco-Roman notions of status and honor, but little has been discussed in terms of how hospitality relates to Jewish ideals of masculinity.[242] This is where (Luke's characterization of) Abraham complicates the image. In many ways, hospitality in the Jewish Scriptures is a way of honoring creation, as creation can be seen as God stretching out the heavens and the earth as a tent for humans to dwell in.[243] Human hospitality honors creation by extending hospitality to those who lack shelter, food, and security. Christine Pohl argues that the New Testament picks up on this ideal of hospitality from the Jewish tradition (although her work contains a potentially triumphalist reading of Christian hospitality), arguing that: "the basis for the corporal works of mercy [is] feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, ransoming the prisoners, and burying the dead. In the Christian tradition, these works were often encompassed in the practice of hospitality." Similarly, Downs argues that when Apostolic and Patristic authors refer to "almsgiving" with "the Greek word ἐλεημοσύνη (or the Latin loanword *eleemosyna*)," they develop a tradition around "a term that emphasizes not merely the provision of assistance but

[240] See e.g., Teubal 1984; Exum 1985; Davidson 2002; Sawyer 2005; Haddox 2010; Rosenberg 2019: 47–57.

[241] See Rosenberg 2019: 47–57.

[242] Smit 2017: 57–58.

[243] See, e.g., Isa 40:22; 42:5; Job 9:8; 37:18; Ps 104:2; Zech 12:1.

the *merciful* provision of assistance."[244] While the depths of these discussions cannot be covered in the present study, offering hospitality and doing acts of charity play significant parts in Luke's economic ethics, and is developed from a tradition with strong roots in Jewish texts.[245] Abraham, I will argue in Chapter Four, is introduced at the climax of Jesus' teachings on hospitality in Luke and epitomizes this ideal of a "good man" according to Luke.

Furthermore, hospitality in Luke is not only a prerequisite for the Jesus movement to sustain its mission in Galilee and on the way to Jerusalem (Luke 5:27–32; 8:1–3; 9:1–6; 10:1–8). It is also tied into eschatological issues such as how the poor are to be saved (both earthly and in the afterlife, cf. Luke 3:10–14; 6:20–25; 16:19–31) and what is required of the rich in order for them to be saved (Luke 12:13–21; 14:7–14; 14:15–24; 16:1–13; 16:19–31; 18:18–25; 19:1–10).

In this way, hospitality marks Luke's gospel to the poor as well as to the rich, and, as I shall argue, Abraham appears as the ideal hospitable man at the peak of Luke's exposition of hospitality. The significance of Luke's Abrahamic and economic tropes touch on several major Lukan motifs, such as the language of wages and debt (Luke 7:41–43; 12:57–59), what some scholars refer to as the Devil's ransom (Luke 4:5–6; 22:3), or Jubilee language from Leviticus 25 (Luke 4:16–21).[246] Recently, Jennifer Quigley has argued that the broader concept of humans entering into economic relations with God/gods was widespread in the ancient world. She coins the term *theo-economics* as a way of approaching and understanding the intersection of ancient beliefs and economics. She argues convincingly that economic ethics were tied to "heavenly" as much as earthly concerns of poverty, social status, honor, and suffering.[247] Remembering or neglecting acts of charity, especially for the rich, also reflect a relationship with God. It ties into issues of heavenly reward and punishment and can be seen as a cornerstone in Jesus' teaching on social and eschatological issues particularly in Luke's Travel Narrative. What is so striking in Luke's narrative is that in the theo-economic schema it is Abraham, not Jesus, Gabriel, or God who appears in the heavenly or eschatological imagery. Finally, the economic teachings of the Third Gospel seem to define parts of the early life of the Jerusalem *ekklēsia* in Acts 2:44–47 and Acts 4:32–37 as well, and the teaching on hospitality might reappear when the gospel message is proclaimed to Godfearers and Gentiles, as I explore in Chapters Five and Six.

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[244] Downs 2016: 275–76.

[245] For a more comprehensive treatment, see Hays 2010: 25–49; Anderson 2013: 113–89; Garrison 2013: 109–42: Eubank 2013: 29–52; Downs 2016: 27–141; Giambrone 2017: 171–208.

[246] See Giambrone 2017: 127–37; 296–304; cf. Hays 2010: 41; 110–11; 238.

[247] See Quigley 2021.

The image of a heavenly banquet in Luke, hosted by Abraham (Luke 13:28–30; 16:22) where the poor and righteous are gathered to feast harkens back to Isaiah 25:6–9, and Luke seems to allude to Jewish imagery of heavenly feasting where the poor are invited, and the hospitable host sits at the head of the table. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Abraham is described as rich or wealthy in Genesis 13:2 (πλούσιος in the LXX) and the *Testament of Abraham* (*T.Abr*), where he is characterized in many ways similarly to the rich man in the Lukan parable (*T.Abr* 1.5; 4.2). Philo similarly references Abraham's wealth twice when he introduces the story of Abraham and Lot and when Sarah suggests he produces an heir with Hagar (see *Abr*. 209; 252), noting that his opulence matched that of the wealthy people in the land to which he had emigrated. These texts might serve as interlocutors when we later investigate how Abraham might be seen as an ideal man for other Lukan householders and disciples to emulate.

The *theo-economic* language of Proverbs is found particularly in 19:17 and 22:9 and exemplifies the kind of Jewish ethics that Luke draws his ideal host from. Interestingly, the Septuagint version of Proverbs 19:17 states, "He who shows mercy to a poor man lends to God, and He will repay him according to his gift" (ὁ ἐλεῶν πτωχὸν δανείζει θεῷ καὶ ἀνταποδώσει αὐτῷ κατὰ τὸ δόμα αὐτοῦ). This use of lending (δανείζει) and repayment (ἀνταποδώσει) language reflects a transactional aspect of divine-human relationships, where acts of charity are seen as investments in a heavenly economy. The language of mercy and payment resonates with Lukan salvific economic language, as seen in the Steward parable (Luke 16:1–9), or negatively, in the parable of the Rich fool (Luke 12:13–21). The emphasis on "lending to God" in Proverbs 19:17 ties directly to Luke's teaching on hospitality and charity as actions that store up treasures in heaven (Luke 14:12–14).[248] Gary Anderson sees similar economic language as prevalent in Matthew 6 (especially Matt 6:19–22), and ties Jesus' teaching on storing up a heavenly reward to passages in Second Temple texts such as 2 Baruch and the close parallel text 4 Ezra.[249] As apocalyptic texts written after the fall of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the Jewish authors tie the crisis in their time to the destruction of the First Temple in 587 BCE. The trauma caused by the Roman suppression of the Jewish revolt is interpreted through a discussion of justice and injustice. How could such a devastating fate be bestowed on the

[248] Further connections between charitable giving or hospitality and redemptive or salvific reward can be found in texts such as Deuteronomy 15:10 and Proverbs 10:2 in the Septuagint, where generous giving or righteousness results in the Lord's blessing and deliverance from death (ὅτι διὰ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο εὐλογήσει σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔργοις, Deut 15:10; δικαιοσύνη δὲ ῥύσεται ἐκ θανάτου, Prov 10:2).

[249] Anderson 2013: 124–29.

righteous and unrighteous with such indifference? Anderson elaborates by engaging 2 Baruch 14:

> Ultimately, the only way to make sense of the problem of evil is to have faith that the righteous will be rewarded in the world to come. "For the righteous," our author concludes, "justly have good hope for the end, and go away from this habitation without fear, because they possess with you *a store of good works which is preserved in treasuries*. Therefore they leave this world without fear, and are confident of the world which you have promised to them with an expectation of joy" (v. 12).[250]

Anderson's exposition on charity is helpful as it shows a shared interest in economic language across a range of Jewish sources. As noted by Downs, however, Anderson seems to apply a heavenly dimension to the image of a treasury that is not supported by the primary source, such as in the treasury referenced above from 2 Baruch 14:12.[251] Downs offers a helpful corrective, showing that nowhere in key passages such as Proverbs 10:2, Sirach 29:8–13, Tobit 4:7–10, and Tobit 12:8–9, are the references to a *heavenly* treasury.[252] The distinction is significant because, as Downs notes, an image of a heavenly treasury can easily become justifications for Catholic dogmas such as the "purgatory, the treasury of merits, and indulgences."[253] While the theologizing pitfalls of Anderson's study should be avoided, Downs' study on the tradition of almsgiving in Jewish, New Testament, and Patristic writings shows that the Christian tradition that developed around almsgiving saw, in Downs' words, a "connection between care for the poor and atonement for sin."[254] Their engagement with Jewish sources further buttress the image of Abraham as a hospitable man grounded in Jewish ideals, rather than expressing Greek or Roman hospitable practices.

Acts of mercy and charity, according to Anderson, play crucial parts in Jewish eschatological thought contemporary to the production of the Synoptic Gospels. While sinners are judged according to a book containing an account of their sins, the righteous are part of a different economy (2 Bar 24). Because of the treasures they have stored up from their righteous deeds (these are described differently as either wages, rewards, treasures gained from charitable deeds, or the deeds themselves as storable treasures),[255] their sins are forgiven, and their debt is paid.[256] Nathan Eubank argues that Matthew reflects a similar economic language, noting

[250] Anderson 2013: 129.
[251] See Downs 2016: 282–83.
[252] Downs 2016: 283.
[253] Downs 2016: 283.
[254] Downs 2016: 286.
[255] Anderson 2013: 135. Cf. Eubank 2013: 50–51.
[256] See further Eubank 2013: 29–35.

that "[this] *widespread conception of sin as debt and of righteous deeds as earning wages or treasure generated a rich variety of economic tropes in texts dealing with divine recompense*."[257] Both Anderson and Eubank focus their study on Matthew and find that charity (Anderson) and almsgiving (Eubank) are "quintessential"[258] toward obtaining a heavenly treasure that delivers from judgement, redeems from sin, and promises a reward in the resurrection. Downs similarly concludes, in his treatment of Luke 11:41 and its reception history, that almsgiving can cleanse from sin.[259]

The textual basis in Second Temple Jewish traditions that scholars broadly agree situate Luke's writings within a wider theological and eschatological paradigm, emphasize the heavenly and eschatological implications of earthly behavior. While distinctions can be made between whether almsgiving and charity can atone for sins or be considered meritorious in various texts, as argued in detail by Downs, I simply note that there is a rich Jewish tradition contemporary with Luke that connects economic language, piety, and eschatological expectancy to almsgiving, hospitality, and other charitable practices. By linking themes of mercy, hospitality, and economic relationships, the LXX, apocryphal literature, the rabbis, and Luke, all provide a framework for understanding acts of charity as integral to a person's relationship with salvation, justice, and God. Significantly, these practices sketch out ideal masculine behavior that is premised on care and inclusion, not power and domination.

This kind of economic ethic is what Abraham idealizes in Luke 16 and, therefore, something that can be seen as associated with ideal masculinity in Luke and Acts. The dramatic consequences of misusing possessions or neglecting hospitality show how significant this theme is within Luke's narrative, as Jesus proclaims, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). These themes are further emphasized in Luke's references to Abraham, such as the vision of people coming from east and west to eat with Abraham in the Kingdom of God (Luke 13:28–29) and the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, where Abraham highlights the consequences of neglecting the poor (Luke 16:19–31). Similarly, the language mercy and giving bread to the poor found in Proverbs 22:9 resembles closely what the Rich man fails to do in Luke 16:19–31, and perhaps what Abraham succeeds in both doing for Lazarus and teaching the rich man.[260] Luke, moreover, shows linguistic similarities to Proverbs 22:9 in other passages, using the same language of

[257] Eubank 2013: 50; italics original.
[258] Eubank 2013: 51.
[259] Downs 2016: 141.
[260] Author's translation of Proverbs 22:9: He who shows mercy to the poor (ὁ ἐλεῶν πτωχὸν) is sustained (διατραφήσεται), for he gives his own bread (τῶν γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ ἄρτων) to the poor.

blessing (εὐλογέω) and bread (ἄρτος) in the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:16) and the Last Supper (Luke 24:30).

The Lukan household and Luke's sons of Abraham are, moreover, not sons by traditional family ties. Jesus calls his followers to hate their family (μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ…, Luke 14:26, cf. Mark 10:29, 3:31–35), and Moxnes argues that Luke presents ancient family roles as breaking with the norm by depicting the followers of Jesus as leaving behind traditional family constellations in favor of an itinerant Jesus movement that constitutes a different kind of "family."[261] On the other hand, the household pericopes in Luke (and Acts) align with how ancient Jewish households were seen as honorable and charitable when providing for the guest and the stranger. In Job 31:32, the righteous man is described as one who makes sure that the stranger does not lodge outside, and Deuteronomy 10:19 says to show love for the stranger, rooted in the people of Israel's experience as sojourners in Egypt. Luke similarly portrays Abraham and Jesus' teachings as caring for the outcast rather than one's family or close relations. In Luke 14:12–13, familial ties are relegated while the poor are invited to a banquet. Similarly, in Luke 8:19–21, Luke's Jesus teaches that family can be defined by those who hear the word of God, and, finally, in Luke 10:29–37, Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan is a striking example of offering charitable love to a stranger, even someone who could have been considered an enemy.

What is significant for my purposes is that Luke draws on Abraham in a specific way in texts concerning economic language, table fellowship, and hospitality. For example, in Luke 3:7–14, John the Baptist rejects the crowds' appeal to their descent from Abraham if they neglect to serve the poor and share their possessions. Abraham also appears at the heavenly banquet in Luke 13:28–30, alongside Jacob and Isaac, welcoming those who enter through the narrow door. This passage directly precedes some of Luke's most powerful stories about hospitality and charity in chapters 14–16. In the exegetical chapters that follow, I show how these themes are developed in the stories of Levi (Luke 5) and of Abraham and the rich man (Luke 16). To conclude this preliminary discussion of Luke's ideal men and their relationship to hospitality and economic language, I simply note that Abraham emerges as a model figure for a somewhat unexpected group of followers in Luke's narrative. As with Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1–10, Abraham is frequently invoked in texts that emphasize table fellowship and charitable

[261] Moxnes 2003: 106–7. Cf. Mark 3:31–35.

action.[262]

These teachings find resonance in texts such as Proverbs 25:21 which describe feeding one's enemy (cf. Luke 10:29–37) and offering charity beyond one's immediate family (cf. Luke 16:19–31). Similarly, in Tobit 4:16, Tobit tells Tobias to give bread to the hungry and to clothe the naked, a thematic parallel to Luke's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, where the rich man is condemned by the hospitable Abraham for neglecting the Jewish ethical demands of feeding and clothing the poor.[263] Luke's idealizing of Abraham thus appears in line with a range of Jewish sources and practices of hospitality. Similarly to Elijah and David in Luke and Acts, Abraham appears as an ideal figure in stark non-hegemonic ways. These three Jewish masculine role models thus exemplify how masculinity can be conceptualized from the perspective of the ideal figures *in the text*. Significantly, these are Jewish men who offer a refiguration of masculinity that is not premised on hegemonic ideals yet still appear manly.

To conclude this section, Luke's references to Elijah, David, and Abraham can be seen as drawing on exemplary Jewish men in a particular way which opens the possibility for masculinity to be constructed in non-hegemonic ways. Although several patriarchal, violent, and hegemonic tropes exist in Jewish masculine conceptions, Luke portrays an ideal man who is shaped around virtues of piety, charity, and hospitality, qualities that challenge the notion that a marginalized group of Jewish and converted Gentile men would consider themselves masculine or ideal based on whether or not they lived up to the ideals of their oppressors.

6 Conclusions

This chapter has explored a possible way to answer the question posed in the introduction: How might we understand conceptions of masculinity in Luke and Acts if we view hegemonic masculinity not as an intrinsic aspect of how all men appear manly, but as a rhetorical tool employed by those imperial and colonial forces who claimed dominance over the men Luke and Acts portray? The answer I have posed looks to the ideal men in Luke's narrative, arguing that these are shaped by Jewish virtues and deeds that reflect non-hegemonic and sometimes defiant ways of appearing masculine and exemplary compared to the ideals of the Roman Empire. I have introduced concepts from postcolonial theory to aid my engagement

[262] As discussed elsewhere as well, this is not an exclusive category, as Luke mentions Abraham in more generic references to the patriarch as the father of all the children of Israel, as well as the daughter of Abraham in Luke 13:16.

[263] See also Sir 7:32–35.

with this question and surveyed scholarly engagements with non-hegemonic masculinity, particularly by Hebrew Bible scholars. Moreover, this chapter has looked at how Luke characterizes Abraham, Elijah, and David, to offer an alternative perspective on masculine ideals in Luke and Acts.

The intersection of a gendered and postcolonial reading of Luke and Acts shows, perhaps against the grain, that Luke's characters challenge the (masculine) ideals of the Empire that favor control, violence, domination, and subjugation. Instead, Luke and Acts appear to value ideals, practices, and customs, in large parts rooted in Jewish traditions, that favor hospitality, servility, piety, and economic divestment. The argument has not been an attempt to juxtapose Jewish and Roman virtues in order to claim, for instance, that piety and hospitality were exclusively Jewish concepts in the ancient world. Rather, I have shown that when writing about ideal men, Luke draws on a tailored reception of certain Jewish role models, emphasizing their hospitality and piety as a counter-cultural alternative to the rhetoric of conquest and domination. This rhetoric, which shaped aspects of Roman masculinity, effectively rendered Jesus and many of his followers crucified and persecuted as criminals, emasculated by standards of manhood they could neither embody nor endorse.

The hospitality and economic language in Luke and Acts shares broad cultural tropes with Hellenistic and Roman practices, yet it focuses on reversing expectations of familial and socio-economic hierarchies. Luke consistently favors the poor and the stranger over traditional family constellations and elevates a heavenly economy above an earthly one. Interestingly, Luke draws on Abraham who, as patriarch, holds clear familial ties to ancient Jews in several passages concerning economic and charitable practices. When the crowds or Jesus' challengers are told about Abraham, it is not primarily as the forefather of all Jews, though he certainly remains that, but as a figure who exemplifies distinct ethical and hospitable practices.

The title *Sons of Abraham* is therefore not meant to create an exclusive category that denies any ancient Jew (or, in Acts, Gentiles) their identity as a son or daughter of Abraham. Indeed, I do not focus in detail on figures like Lazarus, who is positioned in Abraham's bosom much like a son. Instead, I am interested in characters who appear to be called to resemble Abraham in Luke's narrative: hosts and household leaders who are often overlooked. These figures are not typically poor or itinerant, do not neatly fit Luke's gospel to the poor, and often vanish from the story as quickly as they appear. Yet I will argue that they can be brought to the forefront and seen as sons of Abraham because they occupy a neglected role in scholarly accounts of Luke's storytelling: that of banquet host and hospitable householder.

This role remains understudied and carries gendered implications that challenge the

enduring assumption that ideal masculinity in Luke and Acts should be measured against Roman hegemonic norms. Luke's sons of Abraham offer an alternative model, one that is not shaped by conquest, domination, or elite performance. With these preliminary conclusions in place, we now turn to the first of these men who are called to follow Jesus by ways of becoming a "Son of Abraham."

Part II: The Gospel of Luke

Chapter Three: Levi's Hospitality and Non-Hegemonic Masculinity in Luke 5:27–32

1 Introduction

This chapter examines Levi's calling and banquet in Luke 5:27–32, focusing on how Levi represents non-hegemonic masculinity.[264] The exposition of non-hegemonic masculinity found in Chapter Two describes how certain masculinities, while potentially including elements of hegemonic masculinity like patriarchal authority, resist subservience to dominant gender norms.[265] Levi, I will argue, is reshaped as a pious and hospitable Jewish man when he gives a great banquet for Jesus and his followers. While his former life as a tax collector for the Roman Empire cast him as sinful, immoral, and unmanly in the eyes of his fellow Jews—and not particularly masculine by imperial standards either—his act of hospitality reverses the fate of a formerly emasculated man. Levi, thus, provides a fascinating example of how men with ties to the Roman Empire would not have appeared as masculine ideals for Jews in the Gospel narratives. Instead, Levi shows how Jewish masculine conceptions of charity, piety, and hospitality—shaped around the ideal of Abraham—represent non-hegemonic ways of being a man in Luke and Acts.

The significance of this study pushes against contributions to masculinity studies in Luke and Acts which argue that Luke is deliberately constructing heroes that align with Roman hegemonic masculinity, most notably by Conway, who claims that "Luke-Acts (…) is completely at home within the masculine power structures of the Roman Empire."[266] Instead, I explore in this chapter how Levi's masculinity transitions from being criticized as imperial to being praised as a non-hegemonic Jewish banquet host. My hypothesis is that this non-hegemonic masculinity can be found in Jewish texts, highlighting Levi's resemblance to Abraham's hospitality and the economic ethics in Proverbs.[267]

Levi, as a masculine Jewish figure in Luke, challenges the assumptions of Conway and others. In the conclusion, I consider an argument by Warren Carter which is similar to, but more explicitly stated than, Conway's argument about Luke's situatedness within Roman conceptions of masculinity, to demonstrate how my position challenges the comparison of New

[264] Although non-hegemonic approaches to masculinities are generally understudied, I build on the work of scholars such as Schippers (2007), Creangă (2010, 2019), Charlebois (2011), and Zsolnay (2017).

[265] Charlebois 2011: 71, 305.

[266] Conway 2008: 127–42 (127).

[267] Discussed below (Ch. 3.7).

Testament masculinities with Roman ideals. Levi, for example, breaks ties with the Roman Empire and finds the Jewish virtue of hospitality.[268]

This chapter demonstrates the need to study New Testament masculinities beyond Roman hegemonic models, by examining Jewish conceptions of masculinity.[269] As Wines has recently argued, we need to consider that "[a]s Jewish men, Jesus and his disciples would also (and perhaps more so) have needed to adhere to the ideals of manliness put forth by their own Jewish community."[270] By examining the characterization of men, such as Levi, who seemingly challenge the notion that hegemonic masculinity is the comparator that makes the New Testament men appear (un)manly, I argue that the Roman ideals of masculinity often represent the crucifier, not the ideal. By "crucifier," I refer to Jesus becoming a victim of Roman execution. The violence and persecution by the Roman military complex were unlikely to be seen as ideal masculine traits by first-century Jewish men. Therefore, instead of comparing New Testament masculinities to Roman norms, this chapter offers an alternative approach by focusing on Jewish hospitality, beginning with Levi's banquet in Luke 5.

In just six verses (Luke 5:27–32), Levi introduces crucial themes in Luke's narrative. Within the calling scene and banqueting story, Levi is tied to conceptions of masculinity that Luke subsequently develops throughout his two-volume story of Jesus and the *ekklēsia*.[271] First, Levi is called *from* the oppressive role of tax collector *to* embody the Abrahamic ideal of hospitality.[272] Levi's banquet alludes to Abraham's hospitality in Genesis 21:8 LXX (ἐποίησεν Αβρααμ δοχὴν μεγάλην) and introduces a motif of Abraham-like characters in Luke. Second, hospitality is Levi's response to Jesus' calling to discipleship. Joshua Jipp highlights Levi's hospitality as central to this passage, noting that "the focus here [Luke 5:27–32] is on Levi's act of hospitality toward Jesus."[273] Finally, Levi's departure from the toll booth severs ties with an oppressive economic system, redefining masculinity through Abrahamic hospitality, and defying his former ties to the Roman Empire. I conclude that Levi is characterized as a good man and a prototype of a householder disciple namely *because* he challenges and breaks from

[268] Carter 2015: 142–55.

[269] As mentioned, the longstanding tendency to compare New Testament masculinity to hegemonic concepts builds on the seminal works by Raewyn Connell (1987: 86–92; 1995: 76–81).

[270] Wines 2023: 6.

[271] Jipp (2013: 224–25) argues that Luke's particular interest is on Levi's hospitality as a proper response to Jesus' calling in Luke 5:27–32, although scholars tend to focus more on the table fellowship, as per Just Jr. 1993: 130–40.

[272] Hospitality includes the necessary protection and accommodation received by a guest from the moment she enters into the hospitality of a host until the moment she leaves. The shared meal might function as a shorthand for this practice. See further Arterbury 2005: 131–32. For a fuller discussion of ancient hospitality, see Chapter Two.

[273] Jipp 2013: 224.

imperial, hegemonic conceptions of masculinity. As the first banquet host, Levi asserts a valuable and esteemed role in Luke's narrative as a householder and host, without appearing unmanly, introducing non-hegemonic masculinity in Luke.

The present argument hinges on two exegetical insights. First, I argue that Levi's previous role as a tax collector was seen as sinful (Luke 5:30) due to the economic strain it placed on Jews under Roman taxation. Secondly, I contend that Levi's banquet represents Luke's alternative economy, contrasting his former role as a tax collector with his demonstration of piety and hospitality. These two steps establish an argument that Jesus' teaching on hospitality challenged the Roman Empire's economic power over rural Jews in Galilee. Finally, the economic ethics that are invoked in Luke's economy have ties to central aspects of masculine performance in Jewish Scriptures, which can be seen as non-hegemonic and defiant against the hegemonic man of the Roman Empire.

When approaching Luke's version of the Levi story from a non-hegemonic perspective, there is one distinctive feature of non-hegemonic masculinity that is particularly relevant. Zsolnay emphasizes how non-hegemonic men can contain elements of a hegemonic ideal (mimicry), calling them "non-hegemonic constructs which embody the ideal, yet do not overtly oppress."[274] In the case of Levi, we might appreciate how he appears patriarchal as a banquet host, yet hybrid in the sense that he explicitly leaves his ties to the Roman economic system in favor of serving Jesus and his poor, itinerant followers. In addition, his actions, as well as Jesus' emphasis on dining with sinners, seem to upset the rural Jewish religious elite. Such ways of conceptualizing an alternative masculine behavior are not uncommon for groups living under imperial power or who are in other ways oppressed, summarized by what Boyarin has called "masculinities of resistance."[275] A system that values domination is, moreover, typically resisted and challenged by those who suffer under it, as argued by Boer, "the very act of asserting dominance is inherently unstable. (…) Hegemony is continually undermined from within and without."[276] Defiant, or non-hegemonic, masculinity resists being defined by oppressive ideals as merely subordinate or unmanly. At their core, non-hegemonic ideals contest those structures and institutions that seek out ways to hold them captive, or that want to submit them to the hegemony of their oppressors.[277] By instigating table fellowship with tax

[274] Zsolnay 2017: 3.
[275] Boyarin 1997.
[276] Boer 2012: 72.
[277] See the below discussion (Chapter Five) of the Judea Capta coins where the Jewish people are depicted as women and enslaved people kneeling before a Roman soldier.

collectors and sinners, Levi's banquet marks the start of Luke's challenge to the masculinity of those who persecute Jesus and his followers.

2 Road Map

This chapter examines non-hegemonic masculinity through Levi, a tax collector who becomes the first banquet host for Jesus and his followers, highlighting a rarely explored intersection in gender studies. This intersection becomes visible in Levi's shift from exploiting wealth for personal and elite gain to embodying hospitality and banquet hosting for Jesus and his followers, which reflects an underexplored intersection of economic language and masculinity. To elucidate the interconnectedness of Roman tax policy, radical hospitality (throwing a great banquet for sinners), and masculinity, the argument developed throughout this chapter proceeds in two parts: First, I explore how Levi's banquet influences Luke's portrayal of economic themes. This section argues that householders and banquet hosts are vital to fulfilling Jesus' mission of proclaiming good news to the poor (Luke 4:18, cf. Isa 61:1).[278] Second, I connect this economic argument to Luke's critique of hegemonic masculinity. Levi, once part of an oppressive economic system, now serves by redistributing wealth to those he once exploited. I examine the Jewish disdain for tax collectors in the first century and argue that Levi's embrace of hospitality radically alters his social standing.

Luke's inclusive meal scenes create an alternative economy centered on non-hegemonic ideals. Defiant against the structures that have held them down, Luke's *economy of salvation*[279] offers an alternative: sustaining the poor instead of gathering for the rich. The masculine tenets of the banquet host resemble the ideal of Abraham and descriptions of his virtuous piety are found in an array of Jewish sources.

3 Levi and the Lukan Economy of Salvation

Levi's banquet connects the Nazareth sermon to Luke's salvation economy. Although Luke's Jesus announces his mission to liberate the oppressed in Luke 4:16–30, he has not yet shown how this will be realized. Significantly, Levi is the first to introduce Luke's meal scenes,

[278] Lear 2018: 159–72.

[279] This term can be defined as what those followers of Jesus who are not poor have to do to be saved. See Matson 1996: 45; Giambrone 2017. Matson (1996: 185) ties the household conversion language to Luke's use of the Hebrew Bible, arguing that "Household salvation was basic to the economy of salvation in ancient Israel (Deut. 6:4–9; 14:26)." Cf. Tannehill 1994: 126.

which begins to show how the gospel message is to be practiced, a theme that is developed further, particularly in Luke 14 and 16. Levi's banquet, set within a literary context that closely links it—though this is often overlooked—to Jesus' sermon in his hometown synagogue (Luke 4:16–30), warrants greater emphasis in Luke's portrayal of salvation.

While Luke 4:16–30 is often seen as programmatic,[280] Darr argues that Levi's banquet is equally crucial for understanding Luke's salvation economy.[281] The literary connection between Luke 4 and 5 highlights the relationship between Jesus' "good news" and Luke's emphasis on hospitality. Building on Darr's insights, this chapter emphasizes the significance of portraying a tax collector as the first household leader in Luke. This perspective challenges two tendencies: (1) framing Jesus' gospel solely within the Nazareth sermon and (2) overlooking Levi's banquet in discussions of Luke's economic language. Recognizing Levi's banquet enriches our understanding of the hospitable figures supporting Jesus' mission and the *ekklēsia*[282] and illustrates that the synagogue scene in Nazareth only partially introduces the gospel program. Darr's view suggests that Levi's banquet is as programmatic as the Nazareth episode, warranting further study.[283] This chapter expands on his insights to deepen our understanding of Levi's role.

First, however, it is necessary to establish the link between Jesus' Isaianic Sermon in Nazareth (Luke 4:18–27) and Levi's banquet (Luke 5:27–32). In this emblematic scene, Jesus details what his upcoming ministry will entail: good news to the poor, release of the captives, sight to the blind, and letting the oppressed go free. Key themes include reversal,[284] the gospel to the poor,[285] prophetic revelation,[286] and scriptural fulfillment.[287] Jesus' sermon, given in the synagogue in the town where he was brought up (οὗ ἦν τεθραμμένος, Luke 4:16) sets the stage for Jesus' ensuing teachings and deeds.

However, Jesus' Nazareth sermon does not explain how this change for the destitute

[280] See, e.g., Tiede 1988: 101; Nolland 1989: 195; Evans 1990: 70; Green 1997: 207; Bovon 2002: 152.

[281] Darr 2016: 23–40. Famously, Bovon (1989: 210) argues for the programmatic effect of Luke 4:16–30, showing how Luke distinguishes himself from Mark and uses the Nazareth sermon to proclaim his unique kerygma: "Die Tradition über Jesus in Nazaret war ursprünglich nicht mit dem Anfang Seines Wirkens verbunden... Lukas will jedoch programmatisch erzälen, dass (...) die frohe Botschaft (im lukanischen Sinn) hört und von Anfang an Widerstand leistet."

[282] Luke 5:27–32; 7:1–10; 7:36–50; 8:40–56; 10:38–24; 11:34–57; 14:1–24; 19:1–10; Acts 10:1–48; 16:14–15; 16:25–34; 17:5–9; 28:7–10.

[283] Darr 2016: 24, 38.

[284] Luke 1:46–55; 6:20–26; 13:28–30; 16:19–31; 18:14.

[285] Luke 4:16–21; 6:20; 7:22; 14:12–14; 16:19–31.

[286] Luke 2:25–35; 7:16; 13:33–35; 24:25–27, cf. Acts 3:22–26.

[287] Luke 1:45, 68–79; 2:29–32; 4:16–21; 9:31; 18:31–33; 21:22; 24:44–49, cf. Acts 1:16; 2:16–21; 3:18; 10:39–43; 13:28–33.

will occur. The answer requires hospitality, and Luke envisions both earthly and heavenly reversals, described by Schottroff and Stegemann as "Luke's gospel to the rich."[288] Although the Nazareth sermon is seen as programmatic for themes like reversal and liberation, scholars often downplay the role of those called to enact this gospel message, such as Levi.[289] Jesus' interest in the sinner is specifically tied to banqueting and hospitality in Luke, seen especially with the expansion to Gentile hosts in Acts such as Cornelius and the Philippian jailer.[290] Just as the poor are in need of support to be lifted up, the sinner (Levi) is in need of forgiveness, reversal, and liberation. In Luke's salvation economy, the sinner with a surplus of possessions can achieve this by being hospitable. The salvific implications of Luke's economic ethics can be seen as alluded to in Luke 3:6–14. Here, John the Baptist talks about the eschatological consequences of not bearing fruit—righteous economic action—worthy of repentance (like trees "thrown into the fire," Luke 3:9). The same soteriology is vividly portrayed in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), where the rich man is condemned for not sharing his possessions with Lazarus. Interestingly, Abraham features both in Luke 3:8 and 16:22–31 (cf. 13:28–30), placing Abrahamic allusions in proximity to Luke's salvation economic interests.

To conclude this section, Jesus' mission relies on host disciples to support his ministry and offer inclusive table fellowship.[291] I categorize hospitable disciples as "sons of Abraham," who engage in hospitality differently from Jesus and the apostles and rather make their possessions available for Jesus' ministry.[292] This category is specifically meant to capture those hospitable hosts who share characterizations with the portrayal of Abraham in the parable in Luke 16:19–31. While Abraham frequently appears as a stock character, such as in Mary's worship (Luke 1:55) and Zechariah's prophecy (Luke 1:78), the patriarch plays a unique role as one of only two named characters in any Jesus parable (the other being Lazarus in the same parable) and is tied to eschatological banquet imagery in Luke 13:28–30. While Zacchaeus is the only one to be explicitly called a υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ (Luke 19:9), several characters mimic aspects of Abraham's hospitality.[293] Interestingly, Luke introduces a new group of male characters in the first banquet scene of his Gospel.

[288] Schottroff and Stegemann 1986: 87.
[289] See, e.g., Green 2014: 173–79.
[290] See Adams 1999: passim.
[291] Luke 5:27–32; 7:36–50; 9:1–6; 10:1–12; 19:1–10; Acts 4:36–37; 10:1–48; 16:11–15; 18:1–3.
[292] See Hays 2010: 93–94, 267.
[293] Luke and Acts reference Abraham in familial or ancestral terms in Acts 3:25 and 7:2–32 and includes a "daughter of Abraham" in Luke 13:16. Here, however, I focus on Abraham's unique role in Luke's enigmatic parable in 16:19–31.

4 Levi's Banquet: Initiating the Meal Scenes in Luke's Gospel

Luke's first banquet is hosted by Levi, one of those whom Jesus calls to repentance (μετάνοια, Luke 5:32), and the large banquet (δοχή μέγας, Luke 5:29) features tax collectors, a new group of guests distinct from the crowd in the previous scene (5:17–26). While there are "others" present at the banquet (… καὶ ἄλλων, Luke 5:29), it is the large crowd of tax collectors that is mentioned explicitly, and the later reference to "sinners" (Luke 5:30) seems to be directed towards the tax collectors, as will be discussed in more detail below. The Pharisees and Scribes appear near the banquet but not at the table. Since Jesus later frequently dines with Pharisees in the narrative (7:36–50; 11:37–52; 14:1–24), they may have declined this meal because of the sinners reclining (κατακείμενοι, Luke 5:29) with Jesus. Significantly, it is the Pharisees who reveal the other groups present at the banquet.[294]

The Pharisees and their Scribes grumble and complain, thereby informing the reader that Jesus is eating with sinners and tax collectors. They also criticize his disciples for eating and drinking (ἐσθίουσιν καὶ πίνουσιν, Luke 5:33) instead of fasting often and offering prayers (νηστεύουσιν πυκνὰ καὶ δεήσεις ποιοῦνται, Luke 5:33) as John's disciples do, highlighting tensions over religious practices.[295] The dinner guests and onlooking Pharisees and Scribes form the typically male-dominated meal scene,[296] and the banquet introduces a bracket of Lukan meal scenes imagery which spans from Levi's banquet to Zacchaeus' banquet in Luke 19:1–10. Other notable banquets include Simon the Pharisee's banquet in Luke 7:36–50, the noon meal at the Pharisees' house in Luke 11:37–54, the banquet at the leader of the Pharisees in Luke 14:1–14 and the ensuing parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14:15–24, and the eschatological banquet with Abraham and Lazarus in Luke 16:19–31 (cf. 13:28–30). As noted by Love, Levi's and Zacchaeus' banquets form a pair of meal scenes that "open and conclude" the Galilean ministry (Luke 4:14–9:50) and Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51–19:44).[297] While later banquets develop these themes further, Levi's banquet initiates a central Lukan motif that shapes the ensuing narrative.

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[294] I elaborate on the role of the Pharisees for Luke's call to discipleship in Isachsen 2024: 33–38.

[295] Isaiah 58:6 redefines fasting as justice: "to lose the bonds of injustice, to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house." This aligns with the eschatological banquet in Isaiah 25:6–9. Rabbinic traditions, such as m. Ber. 63a, emphasize the importance of table fellowship with the marginalized, promoting unity and compassion. The tension between Jesus and the Pharisees thus reflects differing interpretations of Scripture and tradition.

[296] Love (1995: 199, 203–5) notes that while there certainly are women disciples and household figures in Luke and Acts (Luke 7:36–50; 8:1–3; 23:55; 24:10; Acts 1:12–14; and we might add Acts 16:11–40), they do not merit calling narratives or honorary positions at banquets. See Seim 1994.

[297] Love 1995: 204.

Levi's calling and subsequent banquet is the natural place to begin the study of Luke's sons of Abraham, although the reasons might not be self-evident. Levi's initiating of Luke's meal scenes echoes Abraham's celebration of Isaac's weaning by "making a great feast" (ἐποίησεν Αβρααμ δοχὴν μεγάλην (Gen 21:8 LXX), ἐποίησεν δοχὴν μεγάλην Λευὶς (Luke 5:29)). This phrase represents Luke's addition to the Markan story, an intertextual echo that portrays Levi as resembling Abraham the generous banquet host in Genesis 21:8. As discussed in Chapter Two, Abraham was frequently seen as the ideal of Jewish hospitality in Jewish and early Christian texts, a hospitality which in turn is closely tied to caring for the poor and the stranger, often in texts about rich men.[298] What is more significant, however, is that the unique Lukan addition to the Markan source is important in order to justify a study of Levi's banquet. Seeing as my argument concerns particularly Lukan interests, it could make more sense to devote a chapter to, for example, Zacchaeus. However, I include Levi's banquet because of the subtle yet significant Lukan version of the story. In addition, the story appears in the context of Jesus' early ministry and thus ties together larger themes that can be seen as being gradually revealed throughout the Gospel. It is Luke's placement and shaping of the Levi narrative that, in this way, justifies the study.

Levi is the first Lukan banquet host linked to Abrahamic hospitality, though he is not explicitly depicted as wealthy or caring for the poor. These elements are introduced later, for example in Jesus' parable of the great banquet in Luke 14 (caring for the poor) and the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 (a rich tax collector). Luke's addition of a "great banquet" to the Markan text reflects his careful attention to social and economic themes and enriches his portrayal of banquet hosts.[299]

The household and inclusive meals continue to be of significance for Luke throughout the two volumes. While we cannot know whether Levi stayed in his house to accommodate repentant sinners and poor followers of Jesus, or if he came along toward Jerusalem, Levi introduces a subset of discipleship that seems more focused on hospitality and table fellowship than radical self-impoverishment. In Acts 6, the twelve appoint seven disciples to "serve tables" (διακονεῖν τραπέζαις, Acts 6:2). Levi prefigures this role, representing the hospitable hosts who play a key part in the *ekklēsia*. There seems to be a division of labor in Luke, where disciples with enough surplus to host banquets serve as householders for the Jesus movement while the

[298] Cf. Gen 18:1–15; Job 31:16–23.

[299] The same character is called Matthew in the Gospel of Matthew, who according to Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39) was associated with the gospel author by Papias in the early second century CE.

closest apostles and leaders serve by itinerant ministry.[300]

Notably absent from Levi's banquet is an explicit mention of the poor (πτωχός), a group central to Jesus' mission in Luke 4:16–30 and later banquets in Luke 14 and 16. Levi's banquet initiates Luke's focus on meal scenes and inclusive table fellowship, beginning with the marginalized and extending to prominent Gentiles in Acts. This prototype of a Lukan banquet includes thematic hints of the marginalized and poor. On the one hand, Luke's focus on sinners and tax collectors who appear as problematic for other Jews (here seen in the response by the Pharisees) represents those whom Jesus has come to heal and call to repentance (cf. Luke 5:30). In this way, Levi himself aligns with the proclamation in Luke 4:16–30. However, his role as host and one who is called to use his surplus to support Jesus' ministry is also of significance to Luke. The "poor" category can also include Jesus and his apostles, who have left everything and rely on the hospitality of Levi and other hosts.[301] This aligns with Luke's language of reversing social roles and sustaining the vulnerable and lowly. Jesus and his apostles, like the poor, seem to be dependent on the hospitality of others and embody the economic vulnerability that will later be explicitly associated with the "poor" in Luke 14 and other scenes. Levi's banquet thus prefigures the later meal scenes, introducing the significance of hospitality for certain followers of Jesus, which also represents a progressive development and foreshadowing of themes that will later come to fuller fruition in texts such as Cornelius' hospitality in Acts 10.[302] Given the importance of these banquet scenes, it is crucial to understand the significance of their hosts.

5 Levi's Banquet as a Missing Piece in Luke's Economic Language

For Jesus to enact the good news to the poor proclaimed in the Nazareth synagogue, his ministry invites those with surplus to host banquets, repent, and redistribute their possessions. *Levi's Banquet is the first pericope where we see this economy in action*. After being chased

[300] A "division of labor" doesn't imply that householders give away less than itinerant disciples, though it might suggest as much. Scholars like Degenhardt (1965: 31) and Kim (1998) see an inconsistency in responses to Jesus' call to "give up all your possessions" (Luke 14:33), a view challenged by Hays (2010). My reading of Abraham in Luke 16:19–31 (cf. Chapter Four) suggests that wealthy banquet hosts can retain their wealth while supporting the Jesus movement.

[301] Green notes how the category of "poor" entails social, as well as economic, aspects in Luke's Gospel. See Green 2014: 173–79.

[302] Scholars like Moessner (1989), Green (1995), Tannehill (1989, 1994), Rowe (2006), and Carroll (2012) often link progressive revelation in Luke and Acts to Jesus' Messianic identity or the Spirit's guidance. While hospitality and meal scenes are well-studied (see Jipp 2013), Levi's banquet may gradually reveal the importance of supporting the poor through inclusive meals, though not explicitly stated in Luke 5:27–32.

out of his hometown synagogue, Jesus calls the fishermen Simon Peter and the sons of Zebedee (Luke 5:1–11), demonstrating his power as healer (Luke 5:12–16) and forgiver of sins (Luke 5:17–26). The stage is thus set for the introduction of the disciples who shall be called to follow Jesus, not necessarily in the same way as Peter, James, and John who walk with Jesus on his way to Jerusalem, but rather by preparing the means and redistributing their possessions to facilitate the ensuing ministry.[303] Levi abandons his former life and supports the Jesus movement, likely continuing as a hospitable host. If he did, in fact, follow Jesus towards Judea, this is not mentioned by Luke. While Luke follows Mark's account of the miraculous catch (Luke 5:1–6), the calling of Levi serves unique Lukan purposes.[304] For one, the gospel message proclaimed to host-disciples dovetails with the good news to the poor proclaimed in the Nazareth manifesto. Secondly, their resources and table fellowship are not only needed to call sinners to repentance and eventually feed the hungry but also carry eschatological significance for anyone who wants to dine with Abraham at the heavenly banquet (cf. Luke 13:28–30; 16:22). In the next chapter, I explore Abraham's role as an ideal banquet host, but we might note that Luke's earthly hosts are repentant sinners who merely mimic aspects of Abraham's hospitality.[305] Thirdly, hospitality, or the lack thereof, has a prominent place in the birth narrative (Luke 2:7). When Mary and Joseph arrive in Bethlehem, they are refused hospitality (διότι οὐκ ἦν αὐτοῖς τόπος ἐν τῷ καταλύματι, Luke 2:7). Mary, carrying the unborn Lord, is met with inhospitality in the city of David, and Jesus spends his first night among livestock and lowly shepherds. In many ways, Jesus' life, mission, and death are marked by inhospitality, while a significant part of his teaching is centered around a call to be hospitable. The first to be called to this crucial service of the Lord in Luke is Levi, who is sitting in his toll booth as Jesus approaches. Luke, then, with his distinctive attention to this ambiguous disciple, builds a literary and thematic bridge between the Nazareth and banquet manifestos.

This connection is reinforced by linking Jesus' teaching in the synagogue and at the banquet table to his dialogue with the Pharisees and Scribes. When dining with Levi and calling him to become a disciple, Jesus makes clear to the Pharisees and Scribes that these tax

[303] The women in Luke 8:1–3 seem to occupy a middle ground between the closest apostles and the banquet hosts, perhaps primarily providing for the twelve, while Levi and other household leaders support the wider group of disciples and the marginalized (Luke 14:13). Hays (2010: 180) suggests that Luke affirms that they all travel with Jesus, contra Kim (1998: 102–4).

[304] According to Theobald (1984: 91), Luke adapts the Markan source to achieve his own narrative and theological objectives.

[305] Baird (1988: 368; cf. Moxnes 1980: 117–206) contrasts Abraham with Luke's *oikodespotēs*, who are generally portrayed as less exemplary. In Luke's eschatological feast, Abraham is depicted as reserving the honorary banquet seat for Lazarus, and this role builds on his identity as one who welcomed the stranger, what Baird calls the Jewish "shining mark of identity."

collectors and sinners (ἁμαρτωλός, Luke 5:32) are indeed the ones who need repentance (μετάνοια). The righteous of Israel (i.e., the Pharisees) are portrayed as secondary to the poor in Luke 4; here, in Luke 5, they are secondary to sinners. Green argues that Luke in the pericope of Levi's banquet is finally revealing themes of conflict (Luke 2:34–35; 5:17–26), law-observance, sin, and forgiveness (Luke 4:18–19; 5:1–11, 12–16, 17–26).[306] Jesus' argument with the Jewish religious elite highlights a crucial perspective in Luke: without characters such as Levi, essential Lukan themes might seem overshadowed by the more familiar focus on the poor. Hastily dismissing the rich and the householders overlooks the tension in Luke's call for repentance, particularly aimed at hosts of Jesus' inclusive table fellowship.

The missing piece of the programmatic puzzle in Luke 4 and 5 is thus introduced by Levi the tax collector. Although Jesus, a poor itinerant rabbi, proclaims good news to the poor (εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς, Luke 4:18), a different kind of disciple is called to provide hospitality and support.[307] Without considering the role of the hospitable hosts and the proper repentance of sinners alongside the prophetic statement in the Nazareth synagogue that proclaims that the gospel is given to the poor, we are left with the "what" but lacking the "how."[308] Levi introduces these eschatological economic themes to the gospel narrative. Jesus' message of good news to the poor, and his teaching that the last shall become first, calls for a community of hospitable followers who undergo conversion, repentance, and transformation. Levi introduces crucial parts of the banqueting imagery and its focus on repentant sinners, although other hospitable hosts will come to further develop the significance of caring for the poor, most notably Abraham in Luke 16:19–31.

Luke also uniquely ties Levi's calling to the first controversy with the Pharisees.[309] Luke's use of καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα connects the banquet scene to the previous section and the theme of Jesus as healer and forgiver of sins is brought into proximity with Levi's banquet.[310] The banquet is intimately tied to the central issue of forgiveness, and Marshall sees the pairing of the healing story and the sinners invited to dinner as two related ways of conveying Jesus'

[306] Green 1997: 245.
[307] Haddox 2016a: 181, cf. Kelle 2005: 67–69; 250–53; Herzfeld 1987: 75–89.
[308] Adams 1999: 242–43.
[309] Cf. Mark 2:14–22; Matt 9:9–17.
[310] Wolter (2016: 237–8) links the Pharisaic controversy in Luke 5:21 to Jesus' authority to forgive sins, traditionally a divine prerogative (Isa 44:22; 4Q242 1, 3–4). However, he does not connect 5:27–32 with 5:22 or 4:16–30, instead framing Levi's calling as a narrative on eating and drinking—a "small narrative of … calling" (2016: 242). Strikingly, Wolter argues that Levi's discipleship "was tied to the presence of Jesus. Accordingly, it disappears after Easter in Luke, both as a demand and as an ethos of the disciples of Jesus" (2016: 243). This is the exegetical tendency that I seek to adjust, emphasizing the programmatic impact of Levi's banquet.

ability to forgive sins.[311] Jesus' power is received physically by the paralytic and symbolically through fellowship with sinners.

In this passage, we observe Luke intertwining the introduction of several main themes. His use of μετάνοια (calling sinners *to repentance*) in 5:32, καταλιπὼν πάντα (leaving or forsaking *everything*) in 5:28, explicitly calling Levi a tax collector (τελώνην ὀνόματι Λευὶν), tying him to the category of sinners in 5:27, and framing the story around a δοχή μέγας (great feast) in 5:29 are all unique to Luke's version. The claim that Levi's banquet is a last supper before he becomes an itinerant disciple is problematic.[312] It glosses over the significance of banquet hosts in the ensuing narrative of Luke and Acts (Luke 14; 16; Acts 10–11; 16) and it dilutes one of Luke's most potent purposes for placing Levi's banquet after Jesus' sermon in Nazareth. Throughout the ensuing Galilean ministry and Travel Narrative, Jesus addresses followers in household and meal settings at several key times, calling them to provide for the poor and his ministry.[313]

Although Luke's story does not confirm whether Levi continues to serve the Jesus movement as a banquet host—remaining silent on that matter—it is worth noting that the ensuing banquet is the only detail all three Synoptics provide about Levi after his conversion. If he did follow Jesus towards Jerusalem, that is something we can only assume from silence. What we do know from Luke's account, and as discussed above, is that householders and banquets are characters and themes that shall come to shape fundamental parts of the narrative. Although later passages, particularly in Luke 14–16, form the pinnacle of Luke's hospitality language, Levi's banquet initiates this message to banquet hosts and wealthy followers. If we entertain the possibility that Levi remains a household leader and banquet host for the Jesus movement, he initiates a type of Jesus follower who resembles the ideal hospitality epitomized by Abraham.[314] In other words, Levi propagates the way for all subsequent sons of Abraham. The story of Levi, a problematic tax collector, marks the inception of a group of disciples that can challenge previously held assumptions of economic issues and gender conceptions in Luke

[311] Marshall 1978: 217.

[312] Contrary to Theobald (1984: 101), who calls Levi's banquet an "(Abschieds-) Mahl," one might see it as the instigating meal scene that sets the stage for the table fellowship fully realized in Acts 2 and 4. While debating whether banquet hosts like Levi or Zacchaeus remain stationary or become itinerant is moot textually, scholars like Hays and Theobald hinge arguments on the unprovable claim that former householders became itinerant disciples. The household, however, remains central to Jesus' and the apostles' ministry in Luke (e.g., 4:38; 5:29; 7:6, 37–44; 9:4; 10:5–7, 38–42; 19:5; 22:10) and to the founding of the *ekklēsia* in Acts (10:17, 32; 12:12; 16:15, 32; 17:5; 18:7).

[313] Luke 5:29–32; 7:36–50; 10:38–42; 11:37–41; 12:16–21; 14:12–14, 16–24; 16:19–31; 19:1–10.

[314] As noted by Bovon (2002: 190), "[i]t does not disturb Luke that Levi, who has left everything, still possesses a house and can throw a dinner party. According to Luke's ethical code, confirmed in Acts, Christians do not abandon everything in the literal sense, but place everything at the disposal of the church."

and Acts. Starting with this passage, Luke effectively presents not only austere itinerancy but concurrently radical hospitality—radical because it seems to break with the Pharisees' expectations—as a way to become a disciple. Levi's story introduces key themes central to Luke's message to householders and wealthy followers, highlighting the significance of meal scenes. In conclusion, Levi's banquet must be considered alongside Jesus' Nazareth sermon to fully grasp Luke's economic agenda. This agenda is instigated by a sinful tax collector who becomes Luke's first banquet host, a recharacterization that carries significant implications for his masculinity.

6 Levi: A Lukan Banquet Host

At this point, I have established Levi's significance as the first banquet host in Luke, particularly within what I term Luke's economy of salvation. To tie Luke's economic language and focus on hospitality to masculine conceptions, this section explores the gendered implications of banquet hosts and householders in Luke. For first-century Jews in rural Galilee, Levi's role was highly resented due to multiple layers of taxation.[315] Levi is the first to challenge these oppressive ties, followed by householders like Cornelius in Acts 10, discussed in Chapter Five.

To understand the implications of Levi's sinful and emasculating past, I consider perspectives on tax collectors from the first century CE. Jews saw Levi's role as a tax collector as sinful and unmanly, tied to a Roman economic system that contradicted Jewish values of piety, charity, and hospitality.[316] His conversion, however, opens new possibilities. In other words, Levi's calling and banquet redefine his masculinity, aligning him with Jewish ideals of piety, charity, and hospitality, as modeled by Abraham. Once a tax collector serving Roman interests, Levi's transformation establishes a new economic foundation for the Jesus movement, where manliness is defined through acts of hospitality rather than hegemonic power.

[315] Green (1997: 246) provides an explicit description of what tax collecting entailed, stating that "toll collectors as a group were despised as snoops, corrupt, the social equivalent of pimps and informants." Cf. Herrenbrück 1990: 60–72; Schottroff and Stegemann 1986: 7–13; Badian 1983; Donahue 1971: 39–61; Finley 1973: 60.

[316] Dinkler (2013: 39) presents a similar argument regarding Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1–10: "The character Zacchaeus' occupation as a tax collector plays an important role in the pericope of Lk. 19:1–10. By naming Zacchaeus' occupation immediately, Luke evokes his readers' preconceived cultural profile of a tax collector, which (as many commentators note) would likely have been negative (Lk. 3.13 implies that tax collectors often took more than they were due)."

This transformation highlights the contrast between Roman and Jewish masculinities, as Levi's former ties to oppressive practices make him appear unmanly. His shift from an instrument of imperial power to a "son of Abraham" reflects a masculine identity rooted in Jewish virtues. To explore this further, I briefly consider the dishonorable and emasculating connotations of being a tax collector. Levi may not embody a hegemonic Roman man, but he represents an oppressive system built on domination, a perspective echoed by both modern scholars and in the ancient world.[317]

Tax collectors were seen as corrupt, morally compromised traitors, notorious for collecting taxes for Roman oppressors and overcharging the public. Philo comments on their brutality, describing tax collectors in first-century Egypt who tortured women and children to locate runaway taxpayers (*Spec*. 3.159) and a Roman tax collector in Judea who accumulated wealth by stealing (νοσφίζω) from the local Jewish population (*Embassy* 30.199–206). Similarly, Lactantius, in *The Death of the Persecutors*, links exploitative tax collecting to the revolts preceding Christian persecutions, comparing the heavy tax burden under Galerius in the third century to that under Trajan in the second.[318] Later, Cyril of Alexandria, in a 5th-century sermon on Luke 5, reflects on Levi's dual role as both money-loving and unrighteous, yet called to discipleship and redemption:

> Levi was a publican, a man greedy for dirty money, filled with an uncontrolled desire to possess, careless of justice in his eagerness to have what did not belong to him. Such was the character of the publicans. Yet he was snatched from the workshop of sin itself and saved when there was no hope for him, at the call of Christ the Savior of us all. For Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And he left all and followed him.[319]

While later patristic writers reflect their unique context—in this example, North-African Christianity in the 5th century—Cyril's exegesis focuses on the sinful implications of Levi's former vocation, interestingly omitting the subsequent banquet.[320] For Jews, the dishonor and

[317] Herrenbrück (1981: 178–94) argues that the τελώνης were not the *publicani* (official Roman tax contractors), but local hires known as *portitores*, employed by the *publicani*. These collectors, associated with greed and exploitation enforced by Rome, were particularly disliked from a Jewish perspective for their collaboration and perceived lack of moral integrity. Accordingly, they are often described in the New Testament with the pejorative τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοί (Luke 5:30; 7:34).

[318] *Mort*. 22–23.

[319] From Cyril of Alexandria's Sermon XXI, trans. Just Jr. 2003: 95 (*CGSL* 113).

[320] Cyril's anti-Jewish polemic makes his theologizing about the Lukan text deeply contextual. The insight to be gained from this patristic reception of the Third Gospel is the long-standing tradition of associating tax collectors with sin. Any anti-Jewish sentiment in later Christian readings is problematic, and, as I will show throughout this thesis, Luke is profoundly embedded in Jewish practices, ethics, prophetic fulfilment, and eschatology.

exploitation associated with tax collecting would render Levi unmanly in his past life. While Levi is not explicitly characterized as sinful, Luke knows well how to portray upright Jews such as Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, or Mary. Moreover, in Luke 5:30, the Pharisees group together the tax collectors and sinners, and, in Luke 5:32, Jesus says that he has come to call sinners to repentance immediately following Levi's calling (ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι ... ἁμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν). These factors suggest that Levi was seen as a sinner before his calling. The consensus among scholars and patristic readings supports the conflation of "tax collector" and "sinner." Finally, Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, who appears right at the closing of the narrative theme that Levi initiates, is explicitly referred to as a sinful man (ἁμαρτωλός ἀνήρ) in Luke 19:7. Levi was perceived as a sinner and, as Josef Ernst notes, "Für [Lukas] ist der *Sünder Levi* das Paradebeispiel für Jüngerschaft und Nachfolge."[321] Ernst highlights the significance of linking Levi's sinful past with his calling to discipleship, making Levi a model of transformative discipleship. A formerly sinful tax collector under Roman employment, called to exemplary discipleship through banquet hosting, offers interesting insights into how manliness is portrayed in Luke.[322]

Exhibiting any form of ideal masculinity as a rural Jew under Roman hegemony was inherently complex and fraught with challenges. Being a tax collector for the Romans was, as I have shown, seen as a sinful vocation in the text. In other words, representing the oppressive economic and military force in the region does not seem to be idolized or valued much by Luke or the characters in his stories. This is significant because, from a perspective where hegemonic masculinity is the ideal, we might expect Levi to be positioned hierarchically "above" his Jewish peers on a spectrum of masculinity. He could potentially wield a certain power over them by claiming their livelihood and effectively dominate and financially subjugate those from whom he collected taxes. Such a characterization, however, is antithetical to Luke's portrayal of Levi. His vocation is not lauded for its potential to exhort power but shunned for its oppressive nature. It seems then, that Levi, as a tax collector extorting money from subsistence-level farmers and fishermen to fund the elite[323]—whether Herod Antipas or the

[321] Ernst 1977: 196 (italics mine).

[322] While the tax collector's contact with Roman oppressors would potentially have caused concern for fellow Jews—Snodgrass (2008: 134) suggests that they were considered "ceremonially unclean" —Luke still places a tax collector in the Temple in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9–14. It might, therefore, be helpful to hear Luke's stories about Levi and other tax collectors through a postcolonial perspective, as stories about hybrid men who navigate a third space between survival under a colonial economy and military power, as well as remaining closely affiliated with their Jewish identity.

[323] Eschner (2019: 522) argues that "Since Galilee was mostly populated by Jewish farmers, taxes were payed [sic] to Herod Antipas instead of to the Romans." See further discussion below.

imperial treasury—faced pressure as both a thief and supporter of an oppressive regime.[324] In terms of what constitutes masculine performance or behavior in Luke, the question must be asked from the viewpoint of those who criticize Levi for his ties to the Roman economy. For oppressed groups, Zsolnay argues that maintaining masculine ideals was a "keystone of societal organization"[325] in the ancient world. In other words, as a tax collector working for the Roman imperial economy, Levi would have been seen as unmanly by fellow Jews. Paradoxically, the hegemonic masculine ideals are actively undermined when Levi is called to leave the toll booth. Before considering how Luke narrates Levi's economic and masculine transformance, I will briefly consider how he fits within the hegemonic paradigm, to show how this comparator is effectively inapt to capture how Luke describes the conversion of a tax collector.

Roman masculine ideals valued domination, strength, courage, self-control, as well as violent and sexual penetration. In a hierarchical system where only the elite could achieve a status as masculine and ideal, their subjects were naturally emasculated. As Virginia Burrus notes, "[e]mpire sets the stage for the performances of gender."[326] Again, from a Roman perspective, Levi's ability to extort money could have been seen as exercising power and strength. However, as a locally hired Jewish tax collector, he lacked real power within the imperial system. What is significant for my purposes, however, is that Roman power is associated with the sinner Levi. And, more importantly, when he leaves the role as an instrument of oppression, he is recharacterized as an ideal host, not unmanly vis-à-vis the Roman ideal, but a good Jewish man.[327]

Significantly, Jews would have deemed Levi sinful and immoral in his former life under Roman authority. Wilson notes that men associated with Rome were not seen "as ideal men for many Jewish and Christian authors, since [they] represented their enemy oppressors."[328] She also observes that "Jesus characterizes his target audience as "sinners" (5:29–32; 15:1–10), or those who occupy the margins of society, (…) the blind, lame, tax collectors, prostitutes, fishermen, and other 'disreputables' that many elite males would have taken care to avoid."[329] While Wilson notes the tensions between Jewish and Roman masculinities, her conclusion that

[324] Most agree that the tax collectors who encountered Jesus were Jews. Scholars debate whether these Jewish collectors were *portitores* working under Roman *publicani* or whether they collected taxes for the regional ruler, Herod Antipas. This detail, while significant for reasons of socio-historical reasons, does not challenge the consensus that they were Jewish tax collectors. For a concise overview, see Eschner 2019: 521–24.

[325] Zsolnay 2017: 5.

[326] Burrus 2007: 8.

[327] Contra Wilson 2015: 45–54, 75.

[328] Wilson 2015: 72.

[329] Wilson 2015: 194–95.

Lukan men appear unmanly is open to challenge. The "unmanly" figure in the Levi pericope is specifically the sinful tax collector aligned with Roman power. Levi, as an agent of Rome, was likely seen by his Jewish contemporaries as a social outcast and morally corrupt—a "sick" person in need of healing (Luke 5:31) and among the "sinners" Jesus came to call (Luke 5:32). Thus, being a man of Rome did not align with positive masculine ideals for these Galilean Jews.

Strikingly, after Jesus calls Levi, he adopts esteemed Jewish values, hosting a banquet that mirrors Abraham's feast for Isaac (Gen 21:8) and extending hospitality to Jesus and his followers. Moving from unmanly to manly, Levi's character embodies virtues like hospitality and charity, which defy Roman oppression and are celebrated in Jewish Scripture. To explore how Levi's masculinity aligns with virtues found in Jewish Scripture, we briefly consider the notions of economic ethics and masculinity in Proverbs.

7 Jewish Masculinity and the Economic Ethics of Proverbs

Although wealth distribution and hospitality are not typically seen as markers of masculinity in New Testament studies, Murphy's recent work connects money and masculinity in the book of Proverbs, where Lady Wisdom instructs young men to seek wisdom over gold (Prov 16:16) and to be hospitable and prudent. Murphy argues that Proverbs advises young men to "avoid obsessing about accumulating wealth," as well as to "seek wealth so that they, like Yahweh, can care for the poor and needy."[330] She notes "a direct cause-effect relationship between behavior and socioeconomic status,"[331] citing Proverbs 13:21 which teaches that "misfortune pursues sinners, but prosperity rewards the righteous."[332] The combination of Proverbs' focus on shrewd economic behavior and the "construction of ideal masculine performance (…) related to economics and economic ethics in the book,"[333] effectively shows that masculinity in Jewish Scriptures can be constructed in non-hegemonic ways.[334] As Murphy notes, the typical hegemonic man that is conceptualized around features such as strength and power is strikingly absent in Proverbs,[335] in fact, "Proverbs concludes by recasting a woman as strong (…) to show its young male audience how to become a man (…) and to become

[330] Murphy 2019: 287.
[331] Murphy 2019: 274–75.
[332] Murphy 2019: 274.
[333] Murphy 2019: 279.
[334] Cf. Adams 2014.
[335] Murphy 2019: 275.

economically successful patriarchs."[336]

Murphy's study of masculinity in Proverbs invites further exploration of the link between economic virtues and ideal masculinity.[337] Lipka similarly contends that Proverbs associates successful masculinity with "virtues such as wisdom, judiciousness, integrity, humble piety, self-discipline, industriousness, and perseverance."[338] These studies are highly relevant to Luke and Acts, which emphasize economic ethics and feature diverse male characters. While I am not suggesting a direct literary link to Proverbs, Luke's portrayal of Levi reflects values paralleling those found in Proverbs, specifically the conversion from working for the accumulation of (imperial) wealth to caring for the needy. Both texts underscore similar concerns regarding wealth, hospitality, and ethical masculinity, revealing a convergence in moral teaching without implying textual dependence. The virtues praised in Proverbs, such as the righteous use of wealth and the association of misfortune with sinful economic practices, align closely with Levi's transformation from tax collector—explicitly tied to "sinners" in Luke 5:30—to banquet host for the Jesus movement. Significantly, Proverbs illustrates that Jewish masculine ideals differ from Roman ideals. This foundation supports a Lukan masculinity that defies hegemonic conceptions, as further exemplified by Cornelius in Acts 10.[339] In these texts, an ideal Jewish man can thus be defined by using wealth for righteous deeds. Lipka and Murphy convincingly argue that the book of Proverbs offers alternatives to masculinity centered on strength, sexual domination, or military power.[340] Similarly, Proverbs lacks any reference to typical hegemonic terms such as ἀνδρίζομαι.

Conversely, the book of Proverbs instructs young men (נַּעַר) on wisdom, righteousness, justice, equity, and shrewdness (1:2–3). It is consistently attributed to men: Solomon (1:1; 10:1), Hezekiah's men (25:1), Agur (30:1), and King Lemuel (31:1), suggesting that even these hegemonic kings should seek out non-hegemonic masculinity.[341] The personification of Wisdom as female further complicates Jewish conceptions of masculinity, highlighting their complex relationship with Lady Wisdom. If the young men to whom the book is written attest their virtue and masculinity by finding Wisdom, it is noteworthy that some of the core characteristics such as being hospitable are personified in a female characterization of Wisdom,

[336] Murphy 2019: 287.
[337] Lipka 2014; Adams 2014; Murphy 2019: 278–79.
[338] Lipka 2014: 98.
[339] Cf. Luke 3:12, 14 (tax collectors and soldiers); 5:27–31 (Levi); 7:29 (tax collectors); 19:1–10 (Zacchaeus); Acts 8:27, 38 (the Ethiopian eunuch); 10:48 (Cornelius); 13:12 (Sergius Paulus); 16:33 (the Philippian jailer); 17:12 (Greek women and men of high standing); cf. 26:28 (unsuccessful attempt to convert King Agrippa).
[340] Murphy 2019: 276; Lipka 2014: 95.
[341] Murphy 2019: 276.

as in Proverbs 9:1–6: "Wisdom has built her house ... set her table ... To those without sense she says, come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity and live."

The femininity of Wisdom underscores the non-hegemonic nature of any attempt to ascribe manliness to the kind of behavior or ethics found in the book of Proverbs. At the same time, however, it allows hospitality to be desirable for young men (1:4), taught as the wisdom of the great man Solomon, but personified by a woman. Both masculinity and feminine Wisdom are rooted in Jewish household ethics and hospitality, contrasting with hegemonic masculinity.[342] In other words, Jewish patriarchs learn economic ethics and masculinity from Woman Wisdom, ideally allowing them to embody masculinity without being dominating, in line with Zsolnay's definition of non-hegemonic masculinity, as discussed above.[343]

While this does not separate Jewish conceptions of masculinity from patriarchy per se, manliness could be performed without necessarily subjugating other men and women. This aligns with postcolonial sensitivities where ideals for a minority or marginalized group are formed in tension and overlap with the culturally dominant ideals. The ideal Jewish man might appear patriarchal, yet also resistant to dominating and subjugating tenets of hegemonic masculinity, closely associated with Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and mimicry.[344] Significantly, the household and Jewish notions of hospitality negotiate both male and female gender roles without them being mutually exclusive or seen as claims to domination or control.[345] As we shall see, this hospitable ideal of masculinity maps onto Levi and Luke's male hosts, who appear masculine and exemplary by hosting banquets and breaking with sinful and wicked economic practices, more so than they resembles a dominating hegemonic ideal man.

[342] Conway (2008: 7) notes the potential challenge to Jesus' masculinity when "speaking in the language of Wisdom," but sees this as "[contributing] to the ideal of masculinity that coursed through the veins of the Roman Empire." From the perspective of hegemonic masculinity as an ideal for Jesus and his followers I would agree with the first claim. However, the second claim creates a somewhat awkward tension. It seems that Jesus "speaking in the language of Wisdom" at the same time problematizes his masculine standing and is informed by the masculine ideals of the Empire. An alternative reading would be to consider how texts such as Wisdom could contain a Jewish masculine ideal that is not premised on the same tenets as hegemonic masculinity.

[343] See further Clines 1995b: 213.

[344] Bhabha 1984: 125–33; 2004: 240.

[345] Loader 2021: 389–90.

8 Levi and Non-Hegemonic Masculinity in Luke

Levi is the first Lukan character to break from a system of hegemonic masculine expectations in the text and he thus challenges Conway's argument that Luke is situated within the mold of literary conventions of hegemonic masculinity in the Roman Empire.[346] As I have shown, Conway and others argue that Jesus and other New Testament men align with Roman hegemonic masculinity,[347] particularly during the early Principate.[348] Even when Jesus and other men fail to achieve hegemonic status, the modern scholarly analysis is premised on how New Testament men relate to hegemonic masculinity, sometimes emasculated,[349] and sometimes attaining to hegemonic ideals.[350] Luke's unique additions to the Markan story about Levi portray him in ways that appear diametrical to Conway and other scholarly definitions of masculinity.[351] Strikingly, Levi does not fit the bill of a typical Roman literary protagonist, with power and authority as his hallmark characterizations.[352] As previously demonstrated, Levi's former ties to the Roman taxation system would have rendered him unpopular—and even sinful—in the eyes of fellow Jews living under the very economic structure he helped enforce, whether by choice or necessity. Levi's story points away from hegemonic ideals and, instead, narrates how a former sinner becomes the first banquet host for Jesus' followers. The way Luke's economy seems to value that which challenges the imperial economy—by offering hospitality to the Jesus' movement instead of paying taxes to Caesar—suggest that masculinity in Luke can be conceptualized around non-hegemonic tenets.

One scholar who has challenged the premise that Jesus and his followers adhere to hegemonic tropes is Halvor Moxnes. He argues that Jesus and the disciples inhabit "queer spaces" in the Gospels, breaking with traditional roles of the *paterfamilias*, household, and identity markers in the ancient world.[353] Moxnes offers a third perspective, suggesting that Jesus and his followers challenge ancient heteronormative standards. These "queer spaces" disrupt traditional patriarchal and household norms both spatially and relationally.[354]

For Moxnes, queer gender conceptions represent a break with hegemonic norms, and

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[346] MacDonnell 2006: 72–141.

[347] Conway 2008: 91–96; 147.

[348] Elliott 1990 and D'Angelo 2003a; 2003b foreground how masculinity in the Roman Empire contained a notion of subordination to the *pater patriae*, i.e., the emperor.

[349] Conway 2008: 100–104.

[350] Conway 2008: 127–42.

[351] Eric Thurman (2003:144) argues that Jesus is deliberately emasculated in the gospels by "strategically taking up a 'feminized' positionality of servile suffering in explicit resistance to Roman colonial models of domination." See further Clines 1995a: 367–78; Moore 2003: 1–22; and Neyrey 1998, cf. Friis 2020.

[352] Conway 127–42.

[353] Moxnes 2007: 164–65. Cf. D'Angelo 2002: 68–69; 2003b: 294.

[354] Moxnes 2003; 2004; 2007.

his argument shows how identity and community formation in the New Testament break with certain hegemonic expectations. In many ways, therefore, Levi could be a fitting example of someone who breaks with expected community formation. However, by exploring how masculinities can be expressed non-hegemonically, we might discover masculine conceptions that can be understood as more than what they break away from.[355] In the case of Levi and other banquet hosts, the household remains a significant site of masculine performance, and certain patriarchal structures appear to be upheld. Moxnes, by contrast, emphasizes the itinerant dimension of Jesus' ministry, arguing that the reconfiguration of male–male relationships—marked by a departure from traditional notions of family and household—is what renders the Jesus movement a queer space.[356]

In some ways, queer conceptions remain within the discourse of hegemony because the Roman standard of a patriarchal household and masculine roles are still what Moxnes sees Jesus and other men breaking away from. To challenge this approach, Charlebois argues that femininity and masculinity can be non-hegemonic, appearing marginalized or oppositional, yet still ideal without conforming to hegemonic power structures.[357] These non-hegemonic conceptual frameworks are more fitting for a converted tax collector who has now become a household leader. Zsolnay elaborates on this point when describing relative masculinities located below hegemonic cultural ideals on the scale or gradient described above:

> These [dominant masculinities] are non-hegemonic constructs that embody the ideal, yet do not overtly oppress (e.g., the star athlete who expresses tolerance toward homosexuality or does not deride women). Subordinate and marginalized masculinities are those constructs that are stigmatized. A man attempting to perform a hegemonic construct must, by necessity, group other men and all women into the category of "other," frequently referring to those characteristics that differ or conflict with that construct as being feminine.[358]

This argument contributes to recent studies on how to understand the ways in which masculinity is conceptualized, described by Økland as "the ways of being a man that make one visible as a man."[359] Significantly, scholars such as Zsolnay and Økland are interested in recalibrating the interpretive framework used to define masculinity, inviting a more diverse range of perspectives on ancient texts. Within this framework, even someone like Levi—

[355] See Messerschmidt 2018: 38–41.
[356] Moxnes 2007.
[357] Charlebois 2011: 33.
[358] Zsolnay 2017: 3.
[359] Økland 2015: 481–82.

regarded as sinful for his dealings with the colonial power yet re-inscribed as masculine through his role as a repentant host—can be included in discussions of ideal masculinity. As the attentive reader of the New Testament Gospels would notice, the imperial and elite men in the stories are usually antagonistically portrayed.[360] From King Herod's ordering of the slaughter of all children under two years (Matt 2:16–18) or beheading of John the Baptist (Luke 9:7–9), to the crucifixion of Jesus by Roman authority (Luke 23:26–43), several hegemonic men in the Gospel narratives represent a constant threat. On the other hand, men who break with hegemonic power to embrace the Gospel, distancing themselves from Roman masculine ideals, such as Levi or Cornelius, seem to appear masculine by a different comparator.

In Chapter Two, I presented emblematic male figures in the Hebrew Bible and showed how several aspects of Jewish notions of masculinity idealize behavior, embodied practices, virtues, and gendered expectations that appear masculine without being hegemonic. Levi is a most fitting example of this because he would not have appeared masculine within either a Roman or a Jewish comparative framework before his conversion. As Davina Lopez argues, Rome would portray itself as a masculine conqueror and its subjects as enslaved persons and women.[361] In other words, Levi comes up short in any attempt to achieve hegemonic masculinity. Yet he does not appear unmanly after his conversion. Brigitte Kahl similarly sees Mary's worship (Luke 1:46–55) as juxtaposing imperial power with a gospel to women and children.[362] In the case of Levi, then, it might be constructive to ask what in his character and behavior amounts to non-hegemonic masculinity? What kind of man is he in light of Jewish ideals, such as Abraham?[363] The fascinating aspect of Levi and other men in household and meal settings in Luke and Acts is that they are changed or called away from former ties to imperial structures and institutions. They can, therefore, function as examples to show how non-hegemonic ideals might form part of a "masculinity of resistance."[364] Levi is the first Lukan man with ties to imperial (economic) power and oppression. If then, the powerful Roman man is not the ideal but rather represents the power that has Jesus crucified, how does Levi's call to follow Jesus impact his masculinity?

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[360] Among the exceptions are centurions, who play an intriguing role as representatives of Roman military power and, at the same time, show exceptional faith (Luke 7:1–10), declare the innocence of Jesus (Luke 23:47), and initiate the universalized table fellowship with Gentiles (Acts 10).

[361] Lopez 2008: passim.

[362] Kahl 2002: 70–88.

[363] The Abrahamic ideal, and thus why Levi can be seen as a son of Abraham, relies on the exegetical argument in the next chapter (Chapter Four) where I present a case for Abraham as Luke's banquet host par excellence.

[364] Boyarin 1997.

Jesus' call to discipleship is mainly, perhaps exclusively, addressed to men.[365] That discipleship is a predominantly masculine vocation for most followers in Luke has been noted by Moxnes.[366] Moxnes' argument focuses on the anti-patriarchal connotations of calling men out of a household setting and placing them with the Son of Man who has no place to rest his head (cf. Luke 9:58).[367] His insights are most helpful, as they highlight ways in which masculinity in Luke breaks with honor codes and the expectations of the *paterfamilias* in a Roman context. By showing resistance to the established parameters that would make a man appear masculine in a Roman system of ideas and gendered expectations, Moxnes concludes that, although Luke might be informed by concurrent "elite gender ideologies in the Roman world,"[368] Luke contains "counter-images and narratives that present alternative and ambiguous masculinities."[369]

These conclusions are helpful in two ways. Firstly, they show how Luke conceptualizes masculine roles and behaviors that radically break with gendered expectations in Roman society, such as criticizing the system of taxation by reshaping a tax collector into the first banquet host in Luke's economy. Secondly, and this is significant to the following argument, Moxnes' conclusions leave masculinity hanging in the air of ambiguity and what he articulates as a "queer" space.[370]

As a response to the unresolved tensions in his conclusions, one might hypothesize certain alternative claims about Luke's images and narratives of households and banquet hosts. Moxnes argues that followers of Jesus are called to leave the expectations of household codes and patriarchal structures, as can be seen in texts where Jesus speaks to his disciples about the cost of following him. Examples in Luke include Luke 9:62 ("No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God") and 14:26 ("Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple"). This mode of discipleship is fitting for the most radical followers of Jesus (i.e., the apostles). However, it does not apply in the same way to other disciples who appear in household and banqueting settings, such as Levi and Zacchaeus.[371] These modes of

[365] Moxnes 2007: 155 argues that while we find women in household settings in Luke and Acts such as the stories about Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42, and Lydia in Acts 16:11–40, the explicit call to discipleship and, we might add, the role of banquet host, is exclusively given to male followers.

[366] Moxnes 2007: 155–70.

[367] Moxnes 2007: 162.

[368] Moxnes 2007: 168.

[369] Moxnes 2007: 168.

[370] See Moxnes 2003: 28–45.

[371] See also Luke 7:36–50 (Simon the Pharisee); Luke 9:51–10:24 ((in)hospitality, judgement, and eschatology); Luke 14:1–24 (teaching and parable on radical hospitality); Luke 16 (theo-economic

discipleship become particularly significant in Acts, where the focus shifts from the (largely itinerant) story of Jesus and his close followers to the story of the *ekklēsia*, which is founded in households and local communities.

Asking questions about masculinity in Luke's stories about tax collectors and other dubious characters who become generous and hospitable shows how men in Luke are not fashioned from Roman conceptions of masculinity. Luke's description of Zacchaeus as a man of short stature (ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς, Luke 19:3), together with the Pharisees' skepticism over Jesus' table fellowship with Levi's kind, shows that Luke takes men with little claim to hegemonic masculinity and redefines them according to other parameters of what it means to embody masculinity. Physical and vocational impediments do not exclude Zacchaeus and Levi from being sons of Abraham. In fact, these characterizations seem irrelevant after they begin following Jesus, and it is their hospitality and economic ethics that qualify them to appear as masculine role models to be emulated by those followers of Jesus who are called to serve and host. While Levi represents the early beginnings of Luke's radical hospitality, Zacchaeus appears at the closing of the Travel Narrative (Luke 19:1–10) when Luke has elaborated on the significance of hospitality (Luke 14–16) and is called a son of Abraham (υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ, Luke 19:9). In these closing verses of Luke's extended section, Zacchaeus the son of Abraham (υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ, Luke 19:9) is paired with Jesus the Son of Man (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, Luke 19:10), who has come to seek out and save the lost. The pairing effectively shows the different modes of discipleship required by the different subsets of followers. While the heart of Jesus' mission is tied to a radical group of followers who must go out and spread the news of the Kingdom of God, others are called to foster this message through offering hospitality, caring for the poor and the Jesus movement, and acting and appearing masculine and exemplary as "sons of Abraham." Being a son of Abraham has ties to Jewish conceptions of non-hegemonic masculinity, particularly as it connects hospitable hosts to the image of Abraham. These men do not appear unmanly, on the contrary, they are typically called from unmanly situations such as being short statured or laboring as a tax collector. Their new life as householders in Luke's economy re-shapes them as masculine Jewish men in the image of the patriarch.

consequences of earthly (in)hospitality); Luke 24:13–35 (post-resurrection hospitality); Acts 10:1–11:18 (universalized hospitality and Gentile inclusion), cf. Jipp 2013: 171–217.

9 Levi and Luke's Sons of Abraham

To summarize thus far, I have shown how men in Luke who were at one time connected to the Empire, are transformed through conversion into a new ideal centered on Jewish hospitality. In the introduction to the present work, I presented a category of male disciples that can be grouped as "sons of Abraham." This chosen category of male characters is somewhat inspired by Turid K. Seim's term "sons of the resurrection," which describes men in Luke who transcend traditional gender roles (e.g., celibacy over marriage) and are, according to her argument, redefined in the eschaton.[372] However, Seim and most studies on masculinity in Luke and Acts use Roman hegemonic masculinity as their chosen comparator.

We might be reminded here about Wilson's argument, which remains a defining contribution to show how, vis-à-vis these masculine ideals, Lukan men appear inherently unmanly.[373] Paul's blindness, Jesus' crucifixion, and the marginalized followers in Luke and Acts indicate that, by Roman standards, Luke's male characters appear effeminate. In other words, Levi and other men in Luke would continue to appear subjugated and subordinate to their Roman oppressors, should we continue to use the colonial language as the defining measurement of what makes a man. As Wilson concludes, "Luke's male followers do not meet the qualifications of Greco-Roman heroes," but rather "cultivate the so-called unmanly dispositions of powerlessness, passivity, and lack of corporeal control as exemplified in Jesus."[374] Focusing on men who were once part of imperial structures but are transformed as disciples challenges this methodology and reveals that Roman ideals are not the primary lens for understanding masculinity in Luke. Rather, masculinity in Luke contrasts ties to imperial power, exemplified in the Levi story by tax collection, with a masculine ideal centered on household hospitality. Strikingly, these are the tenets of masculinity that significant contributors such as Conway and Carter use to tie Jesus and Lukan men to conceptions of masculinity.[375]

When Levi hosts a banquet for Jesus and his followers, a new type of man emerges in the narrative. Converted from ties to oppressive economic practices and embracing a new role as host for a movement that is centered on the marginalized, the very same groups of people he formerly exploited for the good of the elite, Levi exhibits new virtues and behaviors when

[372] Seim 1994: 209–28.
[373] Wilson 2015. Cf. Penner and Stichele 2007.
[374] Wilson 2015: 244.
[375] Conway 2008: 127–42. I engage Carter's contributions below in the concluding paragraphs of this chapter.

he becomes a follower of Jesus. In Chapter Two, I demonstrated how Luke draws on specific Jewish masculine ideals to frame the hospitality Levi offers following his conversion. In what follows, I briefly outline how the Lukan hospitable man and "son of Abraham" can be distinguished from broader Greco-Roman conceptions of hospitality. This discussion responds to a valid critique of the present argument—namely, that Luke may still be portraying Hellenized Jewish men who participate in a more generalized, culturally expansive model of hosting and hospitality. However, in the case of Levi and Luke's sons of Abraham, this does not hold.

While hospitality was common and institutionalized in the Roman Principate, Jewish hospitality has certain distinct characteristics compared the broader cultural concept often referred to as Greek *xenophilia*. Noticeably, hospitality in Jewish Scriptures favors caring for the poor and the stranger, and Luke can be seen as radicalizing certain aspects of this form of hospitality when the poor are given a seat around the table where even rich neighbors and siblings are rejected (see below).[376]

To please the beneficiary, calculated practices served to benefit the giver of hospitality in domestic and public hospitality codes in the elite circles of the Roman Empire.[377] Hospitality often served as a tool for social and political gain.[378] While rooted in mythological stories that upheld the significance of hospitality even when offered by a poor household to house Jupiter, the presider over the *ius hospitia*, most of our preserved sources are written by and for an elite audience and concern elite people.[379] However, Jewish hospitality also includes elements of reciprocity in texts such as Tobit 4:5–11 ("You will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against a day of need" v.9, cf. Luke 16:1–9), Sirach 29:21–28 ("you will play the host and provide drink without being thanked" Sir 29:25) and 31:12–31, there is a distinct attention to caring for the poor (cf. Ex 22:25–27; Lev 19:9–10; 25:35–37; Deut 14:28–29; 15:1–11; 24:19–21; 26:12–13). Where Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (8.618–724) describes how the poor couple Philemon and Baucis offering of hospitality to Jupiter and Hermes is rewarded with a castle, priesthood, and being spared from the destruction of the inhospitable, hospitality in the Hebrew Bible is fundamentally tied to ways of honoring the covenantal relationship with God, his

[376] Seen as an act of piety, the Jewish practice of hospitality often echoes Abraham's reception of the three strangers in Genesis 18. For an overview of the intertestamental, Rabbinic and early Christian references to the visiting angels. See Arterbury 2003: 359–367. *T.Abr* 20.15A captures the popular reception of Abraham's hospitality in the Second Temple Period: "Let us too, my beloved brothers, imitate the hospitality of the patriarch Abraham." Cf. Heb. 13:2.

[377] See Livy, *Hist.Rom* 5, 42.

[378] Cf. Koenig 1992: 299–301.

[379] See Ovid, *Metam*. 8.987ff.

blessings and the covenant. While there are certainly overlaps between the Greek *xenophilia* and the hospitality found in Jewish Scriptures, the idea of reward and reciprocity (with ties to munificent *euergetism*) distinguishes the more servile Jewish practice from its Greco-Roman backdrop.

Compared to the classic story of *xenophilia* in the tale of Eumaeus, the poor farmer who offers hospitality to Odysseus upon his return to Ithaca, and Luke's story of the Emmaus couple (Luke 24:13–35), we see a similar story of ordinary folk unknowingly sheltering the protagonist and offering hospitality. Odysseus, though a king, and the resurrected Jesus, Lord and God, are both received by Eumaeus and by the Emmaus couple (potentially a man and a woman), who appear as humble hosts welcoming the protagonist without recognizing his true identity.[380] Odysseus tests Eumaeus several times to see if he is truly hospitable[381] and then reveals himself to his host when Eumaeus has passed these tests. His reward is security, honor, and status, as well as a place in the royal household.[382] In Luke's story, Jesus reveals himself when he shares a meal with the couple, and their offering of hospitality to Jesus is the reason he appears to them. Their reward is to see and recognize the Lord, and they return to the believers in Jerusalem. Two similar stories of ordinary people who unknowingly host royalty, yet distinctly different in the intricacies of hospitality. Eumaeus' piety is tested and rewarded with earthly status, while the Emmaus couple's piety is shown simply in the offering of hospitality. Their reward is divine revelation and being "clothed with power from on high" (ἐνδύσησθε ἐξ ὕψους δύναμιν, Luke 24:49). In line with the theo-economic language of Luke 16, where an earthly steward (Luke 16:1–9) and a rich man (Luke 16:19–31) serve as positive and negative examples of earthly (in)hospitality, the outcome of (in)hospitality is heavenly reward or judgement.

In Luke, good hosts defy social norms by inviting the poor and crippled (Luke 14:13) or when Levi, a tax collector, hosts a banquet for Jesus and sinners (Luke 5:27–31). The hosts are called to redistribute earthly wealth and exchange the worldly economy with a promise to be provided for (by the poor) at the heavenly banquet.[383] This Lukan construct draws on Jewish imagery of hospitality, as seen in prominent texts such as Tobit 4:7–8, Sirach 3:30–31, 29:1, 11–12; Proverbs 9:1–6; Esther 9:22; Philo's *De.Abr* 110, Josephus' *A.J* 1.196; *Let. Arist* 319; Sib.Or 8.303–4 (exemplified negatively), and *T.Job* 10–12 (with potentially later Christian

[380] Luke 24:13–35; *Od.* 14.48–524.
[381] *Od.* 14.457–461; 14.518–522; 15.304–306; 24.205–361, cf. MacDonald 2014: 30.
[382] See *Od.* 21.214–216.
[383] Wojtkowiak 2023:22–52.

influence). These and other Jewish texts appear to influence much of Luke's concept of hospitality. At the same time, Luke radicalizes hospitality when favoring the poor over family such as in Luke 14:12 where Jesus specifically rejects notions of reciprocity and privilege: "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid." This radical hospitality where the poor are preferred over one's family and friends can be contrasted to a text such as Sirach 29:27, where the instruction seems to suggest the opposite: "Be off, stranger, for an honored guest is here; my brother has come for a visit, and I need the house." As we have seen, Levi is not described as giving his banquet specifically to the poor, but Jesus' identification with the poor and his closest followers' renunciation of possessions, alongside the thematic initiation of banquet scenes that begins with Levi and is developed particularly in Luke 14 and 16 suggests that Levi plays an intrinsic part for Luke, when establishing what constitutes radical hospitality.

Moreover, Luke's reversal language in the meal scenes—where the marginalized are invited and the rich are required to give up rather than gain from hospitality—introduces different expectations of how a patriarch should act. Although it might seem contradictory to construct a masculine identity from a space and a role that could be occupied by women, the Lukan household and hospitality have significant consequences for successful ways of construing masculinity.[384] To appreciate what a good man might look like, in this case, constructed mostly from a Jewish perspective on gender roles in the first century CE, we are required to think outside the box of hegemony, power, and domination. Levi is the first Lukan character to move from imperial associations to a non-hegemonic masculinity, reflecting a particular reception of Abraham as well as ethical teachings from Proverbs and other Jewish texts.

This first engagement with a Lukan banquet host, uniquely constructed although Levi is a Synoptic character, shows that Luke conceptualizes masculinity not through categories of exclusivity, power, and domination, but servility, piety, and hospitality. While Jewish masculinities have diverse and conflicting representations, such as military victors and hegemonic kings, masculinity in the Jewish Scriptures contains facets of non-hegemonic ideals that appear strikingly different from the expectations of the Roman hegemonic man. This is significant because Levi presents a very different masculine ideal than the typical Roman comparator applied to previous contributions. He is hospitable in an Abraham-like way, but far

[384] Osiek and MacDonald 2006: 18–26, 194–219, 250; Osiek 2008: 336.

from a hegemonic man. Therefore, by foregrounding Luke's householders and measuring them against Abraham's example, we might begin to see the contours of a different masculine ideal that dovetails with Luke's emphasis on table fellowship and the followers of the Jesus movement who facilitate the gospel to the poor. Having examined Levi's banquet and its role in Luke's economy, we now turn to the enigmatic portrayal of Abraham, after some preliminary conclusions.

10 Conclusions

If Luke contains criticisms of the Roman tax system and promotes an alternative economy, then the agents of the Lukan economy—the banquet hosts—do not seem to conform to Roman masculine ideals. Instead, they promote ideals like charity and hospitality, as seen in Levi's support of an alternative economic model. Before his conversion, Levi's role as a tax collector would have rendered him unmanly by Jewish standards. His new life, however, embodies proverbial hospitality and Abrahamic masculinity.

The substantiating argument for the significance of his reversal laid out in this chapter is that Levi formerly had ties to the economic system that aided in subjugating and oppressing the Jewish population. Levi's conversion marks a break from the exploitative economic systems he once served. However, the man he becomes, a banquet host for Jesus and his poor disciples (former fishermen) is not recognized by ties to hegemonic claims of manliness. Neither does Levi appear unmanly after his conversion. He transforms from unmanly to manly, embodying Jewish ideals of hospitality, piety, and charity. Levi's house becomes a space for Jesus and the Pharisees to debate moral purity, highlighting the importance of his banquet for Jewish discourse.[385] Luke's main objective seems to be that formerly dubious men can be disciples through shrewd economic behavior. Levi is thus changed from an emasculated thief to a prototype of a Lukan "good man."

The findings in this chapter might be summarized by juxtaposing the argument to the provocative 2015 article "Cross-Gendered Romans and Mark's Jesus: Legion Enters the Pigs (Mark 5:1–20)" by Warren Carter. While Carter's argument is primarily focused on Jesus' encounter with Legion, he ties Levi into a discussion about imperial rhetoric and masculinity, which helpfully shows the potential for my argument to push against. Carter argues that in

[385] Some scholars have suggested that contact with Gentiles made tax collectors ritually impure, based on a later Rabbinic argument from m. Tehar. 7:6. See Eschner 2019: 521–22. This view has been challenged, most explicitly by Maccoby (2001: 60–63). Cf. Eschner 2019: 524.

Mark 2—containing much of the material redacted in Luke 5—Jesus appears in the form of not only a hegemonic man but a military official who outshines the Roman legionnaire(s) by being a superior officer. In Carter's words, Jesus "challenges the ruling power of male, Galilean, imperially allied officials,"[386] in a fascinating reading of Legion as representational of Roman hegemonic masculinity. In other words, Carter's argument does the opposite of what this chapter has attempted to do, contending that Jesus appears to best these imperially allied officials, whereas the present argument claims that the men in Luke with ties to imperial institutions are rather changed from their imperial past. Carter portrays Jesus as a military victor, overpowering the Roman presence and framing him as a hegemonic figure. He claims that "Jesus enters Ch. 5 with his hegemonic masculinity well in place," and that "[t]he scene constructs Jesus as the victorious military commander."[387] While the Gospels portray Jesus with royal and messianic tropes (Luke 1–2), the notion of him as a hegemonic Roman figure creates an inherent tension.

Carter concedes as much when concluding his article by noticing how "[t]he empire always strikes back," ending his argument, rather surprisingly, stating that "[t]en chapters later, in crucifixion, as an 'emasculated victim,' Jesus will be defeated, weak, womanly."[388] This, and similar contributions to masculinities studies, of which we have seen numerous examples, cannot see the forest for the trees. While I acknowledge the influence of Roman cultural norms and literary tropes on Luke's writing, such as casting Levi's banquet scene in the style of a Roman symposium, the masculine ideals in Luke tend to challenge, rather than embrace, the dominant masculine ideals of the time. Carter's mention of Levi as a representative of "imperially allied officials" is therefore striking.[389] Although Carter's treatment of Mark 2 is auxiliary to his larger argument, Levi can help us resolve the tension created by forcing Jesus or other men in the New Testament into hegemonic categories. That is what the present argument has attempted to do.

When Jesus calls Levi from his toll booth in Luke 5, the economic ties to provincial princes and imperial rulers are not seen as something Jesus and his followers are to imitate, improve, or champion. The exploitive tax system is linked to sinners and sick people ("Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Luke 5:30), those who are in dire need of Jesus' healing and call to repentance. This is evident in Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees,

[386] Carter 2015: 142, cf. Saldarini 2001. For a more precise reading of the implicit critique of imperial authority in the Markan story, see Thurman 2003: 148; cf. Horsley 2001: 140–41.
[387] Carter 2015: 142, 155.
[388] Carter 2015: 155.
[389] Carter 2015: 142.

where Luke emphasizes the importance of table fellowship with sinners. As we have seen, Luke's Jesus is critical of Gentile benefaction practices in Luke 22:25 where Jesus explains that the one seated at the table is greater (μέγας, Luke 22:27), but calls his closest followers to serve (διακονέω, Luke 22:27). In the context of rural life in first-century Galilee and Jesus' association with the marginalized people on the fringes of society, attention should be given to what happens to Levi and other men in need of salvation when they are called and converted. One might postulate that food, hospitality, and a message of hope for those who, like Levi, would have been associated with sin and moral impurity appears to be the center of Luke's agenda, rather than a metaphorical or, for Carter and others, almost literal tug-of-war with hegemonic Roman expectations. A different approach to manliness in Luke and the New Testament requires a different comparator. While Levi is the first character to embrace hospitality and challenge oppressive and hegemonic masculinities in Luke, he merely resembles the outlines of Abraham, the paragon of hospitality for Jews in the first century. Levi is crucial, as he initiates the banquet scenes developed in Luke 14–16, highlighting the role of feeding the poor and dining with tax collectors and sinners. After examining Levi as the first "son of Abraham" in Luke, I now turn to the portrayal of Abraham in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

Chapter Four: The Rich Man and Abraham in Luke 16:19–31



Figure 1: The Rich Man, Lazarus, and Abraham at the St. Pierre Monastery in Moissac, France. Photo by author, [2024].[390]

1 Introduction

On the west side of the entrance to the abbey of the St. Pierre monastery in Moissac, beside a beautifully ornate Romanesque tympanum, stands an extraordinary work of stonemasonry and exegetical craftsmanship.[391] The robust, rigid figures carved into the entrance depict the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus—one of the most complex and layered parables in the New Testament, found only in Luke. A testimony to the artistry and theological insight of the early 12th century, St. Pierre, situated along the Via Podiensis, a main route through France on the Camino de Santiago, has welcomed the pious and the penitent for a millennium. One can imagine that when the 7th century monastery was expanded to include such a transcending piece of art in the early 12th century, the idea was to educate and warn whoever entered the monastery about the dangers of gluttony, sumptuous living, and other sins and vices, using the vivid imagery of fire and torment in Hades to quicken the steps of tired

[390] This image is the author's own photograph, taken at a public site. No copyright restrictions apply.
[391] Fraïsse 2007:245–70; Klein 2004: 105–56.

pilgrims and usher them to the pews.[392] These are the sculptures that inspired the imagination of the monk Adso in Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*, who describes "the silent speech of the carved stone" as he passes under the tympanum and is struck by a vision.[393] A pioneer of Romanesque sculptures in the region, Moissac came to shape the artistic vision of numerous abbeys and cathedrals, particularly because of the tympanum depicting a vision from Revelation above an exquisite sculpture of the prophet Jeremiah, as well as the ornate columns of the cloister, of which 88 are extant.[394] The parable of the Rich man and Lazarus contributes to the overall didactic and awe-inspiring portal, but more importantly, it contains a detailed reading of the Lukan parable.[395]

The main vignette of the sculpture portrays the pain and suffering of the unrighteous rich man, who famously neglects the poor man Lazarus outside his gates in the Lukan parable. As the parable goes, the rich man indulges in lavish banquets every day (εὐφραινόμενος καθ᾽ ἡμέραν λαμπρῶς, Luke 16:19), while Lazarus is laying outside his gates. Poor and destitute, Lazarus starves while dogs come and lick his wounds. The second part of the parable is set in the afterlife. Here, the earthly fates are reversed, and Lazarus is carried to Abraham's bosom while the rich man suffers agony and torment in Hades. The parable ends with a dialogue between Abraham and the rich man, where the patriarch repeatedly rejects the rich man's pleas for water and, significantly, his request to have Abraham send Lazarus to his brothers so they may escape a similar destiny.

However, the introductory panel located above the main vignette (and depicted above) narrates the first part of the parable while adding a crucial detail. Contrary to how the parable is named in modern Bibles (e.g., NRSV, NIV, ESV) — The Rich Man and Lazarus — the artist foregrounds Abraham and the rich man, revealing an exegetical detail that is often lost to modern readers. With subtle, yet striking similarities and differences, the unknown artist portrays the rich man and Abraham as seated in a similar posture: the rich man at his earthly banquet (Luke 16:19), and Abraham caring for Lazarus. While Luke does not explicitly describe a meal scene in this passage, the image of the heavenly banquet in Luke 13:28, where some will dine with Abraham while others are thrown out, the Great Banquet in Luke 14:15–24, the Abraham-like father of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), and the mirroring image of

[392] Scholars typically date the sculptures to the first quarter of the 12th century, while an inscription dates the completion of the cloister to 1100. See Toman and Bednorz 1997: 259–62.

[393] Cf. Toman and Bednorz 1997: 259.

[394] See Nebolsine 1969: 199; Toman and Bednorz 1997: 260–61.

[395] See Petzold 1995: 71–75.

the rich man's feast invites perhaps a parallel banquet imagery.[396] The rich man's earthly inhospitality is juxtaposed with Abraham's heavenly hospitality. While scholars and avid readers today might associate the parable primarily with the significance of helping the poor—particularly for the rich—the medieval stonemason complicates the traditional reading due to an inescapable detail: Abraham also looks rich, portrayed as even exceedingly rich compared to the rich man. In the portal sculpture, Abraham (left) can be seen wearing elegant, layered robes, not so different from Luke's description of the rich man, who is described as wearing "purple cloth and fine linen" (πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον, Luke 16:19). Although the stone relief lacks color, the one closest to the description of fine linens would be Abraham, not the rich man.

Reminiscent of prominent and pious figures in medieval iconography, Abraham displays dignity and authority, a detail that is underscored by seating the patriarch on a throne-like chair with a serene and compassionate posture, cradling Lazarus in his bosom.[397] His hair and beard are long, symbolizing wisdom and age (not unlike a sculpture of the prophet Jeremiah, situated just below). The rich man is portrayed as sharing most of these features, although he is clearly the lesser man compared to Abraham. He is depicted as wearing elaborate clothing in a 12th-century context, but his garments appear bulkier and less graceful in comparison to the patriarch. Pious and righteous wealth is contrasted with excess and material attachment. This is made clearer by the overflowing of food at the rich man's table and the fact that he is not looking at Lazarus, while Abraham is attentively caressing the poor man who appears like a child in his father's arms. The rich man's posture and chair appear mundane and inferior to Abraham's. In a most elegant way, these similarities in positioning and attire create a superficial resemblance, while simultaneously conveying nuanced differences that effectively portray Abraham as a pious, generous, and compassionate ideal, rooted in hospitality and virtue, and the rich man as antithetical to these values through his overconsumption and self-indulgence.

This astonishing artistic choice, placing Abraham and the rich man side by side, and thus emphasizing their superficial resemblance and moral opposite characteristics, offers a

[396] As argued by Seim (1994), Luke frequently presents mirrored characters such as in Luke 1:5–56 (Zechariah and Mary); 2:25–38 (Simeon and Anna); 7:1–17 (the Centurion and the Widow of Nain); 10:38–42 (Martha and Mary); 16:19–31 (the Rich Man and Lazarus); 23:39–43 (the Penitent and the Mocking Criminals); Acts 1:23–26 (Matthias and Barsabbas/Justus); 4:36–5:11 (Barnabas and Ananias/Sapphira); 6:8–8:3 (Stephen and Saul/Paul); 8:4–25 (Philip and Simon the Sorcerer); 9:36–10:48 (Tabitha/Dorcas and Cornelius); 13:6–12 (Paul and Elymas/Bar-Jesus); 16:13–34 (Lydia and the Philippian Jailer); 18:24–28 (Priscilla/Aquila and Apollos); 19:11–17 (Paul and the Sons of Sceva); Acts 2–12 (Peter); Acts 13–28 (Paul).

[397] Pereira 2004: 212–19.

powerful, yet often overlooked, perspective on Luke's parable. By mirroring the two men, Abraham's hospitality appears as a guiding example of discipleship for certain followers of Jesus. Throughout the Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51–19:44), Jesus has instructed his followers and engaged the Pharisees and crowds following him towards Jerusalem on the significance of divestment, radical inclusion, and table fellowship, especially with marginalized groups. Luke emphasizes that disciples, such as Levi, who are called to serve and follow are not required to embrace complete self-impoverishment, but rather to embody hospitality as gracious hosts.[398] Unlike Lazarus, whose salvation comes in the form of angelic escort to Abraham, these followers demonstrate their calling through merciful deeds and charitable acts. Like the shrewd household manager in Luke 16:1–9, the householders and hosts in Luke can be saved through this "salvation economy," anticipating an invitation to Abraham in the afterlife. In the remarkable piece of moral and theological pedagogy at Moissac, the medieval stonemason's hand may thus have chiseled out an overlooked reading of one of Luke's most complex parables, bringing to light a narrative nuance that might otherwise have remained obscure.

2 Road Map

This chapter argues that the hospitable Abraham in Luke 16:19–31 depicts ideal, non-hegemonic masculinity in Luke and Acts. To set up the argument, I will first explore Abraham's role in the parable in light of scholarly debates that situate the parable within a diverse context of Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Egyptian influence, arguing that the characters and references in the Lukan passage are primarily centered on Jewish traditions. Significantly, the parable's similarities to broader cultural concepts such as the classical symposium allows me to explore the hybrid potential of Abraham, as someone who retains certain hegemonic tropes, while, at the same time, challenging the ideals of the hegemonic man.[399] Secondly, I highlight how the parable draws on explicit Jewish imagery and argue that these are the most potent references in the parable and for Luke's overarching agenda. While Jewish literature was certainly influenced by broader cultural and literary currents in the Second Temple period,

[398] Scholars have noted a potentially awkward social problem among the early traditions of the Jesus movement. Downs (2016: 278), building on Roman Garrison's observations (1993: 111), succinctly describes the problem by arguing that, "Some strands of the Jesus tradition display harsh denunciations of wealth and the wealthy (e.g., Luke 6:24–26; 12:15–21; 14:33; 16:19–31; Matt 19:23–24//Mark 10:23–25//Luke 18:24–25). Other aspects of the Jesus tradition and other early Christian scriptural texts, however, accommodate the wealthy by '[compromising] the demand of renunciation and [promoting] the virtues of hospitality and charity, the good deeds of the rich' (e.g., Matt 6:1–4; 25:31–46; Mark 14:7; 15:43; Luke 12:33; Acts 20:35; 1 Tim 6:17–19)."

[399] Zsolnay 2017:3–5. See also Love 1995: 194–206, cf. Steele 1984: 379–94.

the story remains focused on Abraham's teaching, the Torah, and eschatological imagery corresponding with broader Lukan themes. Finally, I draw these discussions together to show how Luke's characterization of Abraham is a model of hospitality for a certain subset of disciples to follow in Luke and Acts. As the Jewish paragon of piety and example par excellence of a virtuous life for ancient Jews, Abraham represents a masculine ideal that allows men in Luke to good and ideal men without being measured against Roman hegemonic ideals. Abraham's heavenly hospitality includes strong ties to Moses, the prophets, the Law, as well as the reversal of typical honor codes by placing a poor man at the seat of the honorary guest. While Luke's Jesus represents the self-impoverished and rejected Messiah who calls his followers to offer hospitality to the similarly marginalized, Abraham is the archetype of what a good household leader should look like. I thus conclude that Abraham conceptualizes a masculine and exemplary man in Luke's writing that other men in Luke and Acts can be compared to.

3 Situating the Debate

A 12th-century stone sculpture from southern France, although it might reveal a detailed reading of Luke's unique parable, is merely an artistic interpretation of Luke's parable.[400] Therefore, setting up the argument that Abraham represents an overlooked ideal man and exemplary host in Luke's writing relies on a close reading of the Lukan text alongside relevant Jewish textual interlocutors, as well as the author's use of Abraham as a reference and character. For the purposes of my argument, exploring Abraham's role as an exemplary pious and hospitable man offers a helpful corrective to constructions of masculinity in an ongoing scholarly debate where men are deemed masculine or ideal based on how they live up to Roman ideals associated, as we have seen, with what is often labeled hegemonic masculinity.

Abraham offers an alternative, as he represents a non-hegemonic masculinity based on piety, charity, and hospitality in line with non-hegemonic ideals, often drawn from Jewish stories and characters such as Abraham. Luke's unique reception of selected features of the

[400] The upshot of this visual representation of the story is that Abraham is so clearly juxtaposed with the rich man's feast, possibly invoking the meal scenes associated with the patriarch. Luke includes explicit references to reclining with Abraham at a meal in Luke 13:28–29, as well as indirectly in the unique wording in Luke 5:29, as argued in the previous chapter. Martin O'Keane (2007: 485–518) has written an excellent study on the visual imagination tied to "the bosom of Abraham" and interestingly rejects the idea that Lazarus reclines like a guest at a banquet (2007: 489). Instead, O'Kean contends that Abraham is depicted as maternal, caring for Lazarus as a child in his mother's arms. O'Keane's argument might function as a point of contrast to the present study, where I argue that Abraham can be tied to hospitality in Luke and other concurrent texts, and, more importantly, that Abraham functions as a masculine role model, not primarily as a mother caring for a child.

patriarch from Jewish scriptures are, moreover, both defining for prevalent themes such as hospitality and table fellowship in Luke and Acts. Finally, exploring Abraham's role as an exemplary and ideal man is helpful, as Luke's portrayal of the patriarch can be seen as drawing from Greco-Roman tropes such as having Lazarus recline in his bosom, while he is clearly still being a foundational Jewish role model upholding the significance of keeping the law and listening to Moses and the prophets.

Thus the parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus is apt for exploring alternatives to the masculinity ideal of a Roman man because the parable, according to most scholars, seems to draw on genres and potential origin myths from Greek, Jewish, and Egyptian traditions.[401] While I will not try to pin down its genesis, it suffices to note that the parable's possible points of reference are inherently diverse. Such a composite story draped in Jewish references and with named Jewish characters seems unlikely to be, as Conway frames Luke's Gospel, a narrative that is fully embedded in the hierarchies of power and masculine ideals of the Roman imperial rule.[402]

In addition, the scholarly quest to situate the parable in a broad milieu of ancient fables and folklore has a problematic history. In 1918, Hugo Gressmann famously argued that the Egyptian folkloristic story of Setme and Si-Osiris could have formed a literary backdrop for Luke's parable.[403] While he interestingly sees the Lukan parable as resembling only certain elements of reversal and immediate resurrection with the Egyptian tale, Gressmann also pointed out how similar stories are preserved in the Rabbinic literature.[404] It is also worth noting that Gressmann's perspective, although he sparked a discussion about the Lukan parable's origins, is marred by triumphalism.[405] He argues that the afterlife imagery should be credited to the Christian religion, while Jewish, Greek, and Egyptian influences form the rudimentary literary backdrop for the story. From this anachronistically constructed literary environment, Luke's parable is, for Gressmann, the crowning achievement: "Als die reifste Frucht darf das Gleichnis Jesu vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus gelten."[406] Approaching the parable through the lenses of non-hegemonic masculinity and postcolonial theory involves a reconstructive effort, one that critiques the power structures embedded both in Luke's text and its reception.

[401] See, e.g., Bovon 2013: 473–78; Lehtipuu 2007: 41–42.
[402] Conway 2008: 127.
[403] Gressmann 1918: 31–42.
[404] See e.g., y. Sanh. 6:6, 23c; y. Hag. 2:2, 77d; b. Sanh. 23a; b. Pes. 54a; b. Ber. 28b.
[405] Gressmann 1918: 59–62.
[406] Gressmann 1918: 62.

More recently, scholars have tended to tie the parable's banquet imagery to specific traditions—such as classical Greek symposia (e.g., Plato's *Symposium* 174A; Xenophon's *Symposium* 1.7), eschatological meals in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Isa 25), the eschatological banquet in 1 Enoch 62:4, or the Messianic meals at Qumran (1QSa 2:11–22).

While such comparisons offer interesting points of comparison, they risk narrowing the parable's interpretive scope. Its multivalency resists a monolithic reading and invites a more layered understanding.[407] The methodological pitfall of a reading of the Rich Man and Lazarus that ties it exclusively to any one cultural trope is that it might leap out of the text, so to speak, and begin to consider ideals and performances that either align with or deviate from those rooted in the Greco-Roman syllabus—such as self-control, status, honor, and patriarchal structures.[408]

The irony is that the Rich Man and Lazarus contains such explicitly Jewish imagery with the frequent references to Abraham, Torah, Moses, and the prophets. It is significant to note, however, that Jewish masculinity is not antithetical to ideals of patriarchy, strength, and violence.[409] What is noteworthy is that Luke's use of Abraham and other Jewish ideal masculine figures seems neither to embody Jewish tenets of masculinity tied to violent or hegemonic traits, nor do they seem to align strictly with the Greco-Roman ideal of a symposiarch. In line with the postcolonial strategies such as mimicry and third space, it is not surprising that Abraham appears aligned with certain tropes from elite Greco-Roman literature. The patriarch is depicted as seated at the head of the table, with Lazarus mimicking a guest of honor. The imagery reflects patriarchal structures and draws parallels to banquet settings much like a symposium. However, Luke's primary focus lies in emphasizing the consequences of inhospitality and the rich man's failure to use his wealth wisely, which ultimately leads to his punishment. In other words, the symposium-like scene introduces a reversed banquet scene, not unlike Jesus' teaching at the banquet in Luke 14.

Developing this theme from Luke 14 and throughout the Travel Narrative, Jesus now juxtaposes hospitality and inhospitality in two scenes, one earthly and one eschatological, thus including a striking portrayal of the consequences of not following his impetus from earlier parables and teachings. Particularly in the parable's second scene, Lazarus, the named poor

[407] See, e.g., Lehtipuu 1999: 73–105; Hock 1987: 447–63.

[408] While this parable has not, to my knowledge, been considered in studies of masculinity in Luke, the method of reading its hospitality and meal scenes in light of Platonic tropes is strikingly similar to gendered readings of Luke that focus on Greco-Roman masculine ideals. Example of such readings include Steele 1984: 379–94; Kraus 1991, Love 1995: 194–206; Eschner 2019: 528–32 (on Mark's meal scenes).

[409] See e.g., Clines 1995: 212–41; Smit 2017: 26–35.

man, is placed in Abraham's bosom, a position that could, as I discuss in detail below, imply another banquet, and this placement challenges cultural norms by elevating a sickly and destitute individual to a status traditionally reserved for someone who could enhance Abraham's social standing, honor, or power.[410]

The radical shift between the first and second parts of the parable serves a dual purpose. First, in line with Snodgrass' seminal study on Jesus' parables, Luke conveys "*an expanded analogy used to convince and persuade*."[411] The didactic purpose is clear and conveys an intertwined image of judgement: the poor are saved and the *unjust* rich are condemned. Secondly, however, Luke's parable aligns with Amy-Jill Levine's argument that a common purpose of parables is to surprise, disturb, and challenge the reader.[412] In line with Hebrew Bible prophecies of reversal (e.g., Isa 5:8; 10:1–3; 32:6–7; 61:1; Jer 5:27–28; 22:13–16; Amos 2:7; 8:6; Ps 72:4; Neh 5:4) and Luke's ongoing theme of feeding the poor and sending the rich away empty (Luke 1:53), Abraham instructs the rich man to seek answers to his plight from Moses and the prophets. In other ancient hospitality stories, we might expect Abraham to have seated the rich man at his side.

Neither in this chapter nor in the thesis as a whole do I contest the view that Luke or Jewish literature of the Second Temple period were shaped by and receptive to Hellenistic tropes, literary conventions, and cultural patterns. As the ensuing argument demonstrates, Luke's imagery engages themes and references that resonate with a wide spectrum of literary traditions, including Jewish, Greek, and other Mediterranean sources. Interestingly, in line with postcolonial theory, Jewish and Christ-following communities living under Roman imperial hegemony in the first and second centuries CE can be seen as mimicking tropes from the dominant culture. However, through subtle contrasts and alterations to established genres and imagery, they subverted the rhetoric to resist and challenge its underlying premises.

Luke's juxtaposition of Abraham and the rich man, also features a poor Jewish man, whose presence functions as a flat character, embodying divine care and justice for the poor in line with Luke 4:16–21. His name, meaning "God helps" (see discussion below), reinforces this role by signaling God's concern for the marginalized. The earthly banquet scene in Luke 16:19 contains echoes of Plato's imagery yet also critiques the economic practices and status-

[410] "Reclining" (ἀνακλίνω, Luke 16:23, κατάκειμαι, Plato, *Symp*. 174a–175a) at a banquet table to discuss issues of great importance is perhaps the closest parallel between Luke's parable and the classic standard for banqueting imagery in the ancient world. As I show in this chapter, however, the similarities to contemporary Jewish depictions of Abraham offers other points of reference and comparison. For comparisons of Hellenistic symposia to Luke's meal scenes, see Steele 1984: 379–94.

[411] Snodgrass 2018: 9, emphasis original.

[412] Levine 2014: 1–26; 267–306.

driven priorities that would have shaped such gatherings. Instead of glorifying wealth and social status, Luke emphasizes his great reversal, elevating the poor man to honor while condemning the rich man to suffering and torment as consequences of his misdeeds.

The non-hegemonic potential in the text requires us to look past surface level similarities and investigate what masculine ideals shape the parable. A point of comparison is Peter-Ben Smit's helpful exegesis of Mark 6 and the juxtaposing of Jesus' and Herod's hospitality in Mark's Gospel.[413] Smit introduces his argument with a statement on how he regards the Markan community: "I read Mark's Gospel as a text produced by an early Jewish sect, which was characterized by following Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah; as such, it was a marginalized community within the Roman Empire."[414]

Luke is, as discussed in the introductory chapters, uniquely different from Mark and most other books in the New Testament. The author might have been familiar with higher echelons of Greek literature than his fellow Synoptic author. However, Luke's unique narratives, such as those found in Luke 15–16, describe the same communities and people that Smit focuses on in his reading of Mark 6. Without staking these claims on questions of the identity of the recipient communities or the authors of the text, Luke, as well as Mark, deserves to be read from the perspectives of a marginalized community.

With this contextualization of the literary work one might expect masculine conceptions critical of Roman hegemony to play a significant part in the ensuing argument. However, Smit goes on to argue that "a highly hierarchical concept of masculinity [in the Greco-Roman world] (...) may also be assumed for the world in which the Gospel of Mark was authored."[415] He compares the Markan meal scenes to Plato and Plutarch among other classical Greek writers and thus sets up a comparative schema where Jesus can be constructed as a successful *symposiarch* while Herod is similarly deconstructed and criticized for not living up to the expectations of a Greek banquet host. Strikingly, and without reference to the postcolonial theory that Smit introduces earlier in his work, he concludes:

> The combination of the two stories in Mark 6 constitute not only the deconstruction of Herod's credibility as a man and ruler alongside Jesus's proportionally inverse construction of the same, but these two ritual gatherings also serve as the vindication of a marginal ('subhegemonic') kind of masculinity over against its hegemonic counterpart.

[413] Smit 2017: 48–66.
[414] Smit 2017: 49.
[415] Smit 2017: 50–51.

The latter is revealed for what it is really worth: nothing.[416]

Smit's argument is strikingly paradoxical. He constructs a comparative framework shaped by hegemonic conceptions of masculinity, even drawing on postcolonial theory and non-hegemonic Jewish masculine models.[417] Yet, rather than critically interrogating these tropes, he largely leaves them unexplored—only to arrive at a conclusion that declares hegemonic masculinity in Mark is "worth nothing." However, he provides ample ground to forward the conversation on how New Testament authors would conceive of men as manly. What might we glean from Luke's banquet imagery if we allow the Jewish imagery and ideal men such as Abraham and Moses to guide our reading alongside the cultural impact of the Greco-Roman symposium tradition?

4 Dives and Abraham: Thesis and Antithesis of Jewish Masculinity

Throughout the corpus of Jewish texts about Abraham, the patriarch is described as pious, wealthy, and hospitable. While Luke is frugal in his use of adjectives describing Abraham, he is closely tied to issues and themes of hospitality, piety, and economy, which corresponds with descriptions of the patriarch in the Jewish tradition. In Genesis, Abraham is described as rich (13:2), throwing a great banquet (21:8), and this characterization is picked up in *T.Abr* 1.5, where Abraham is described as hospitable, and, according to Allison's translation, Abraham "has a prosperous life with many things and is exceedingly rich (πλούσιος)."[418] In other words, in *T.Abr* and Genesis, Abraham is explicitly characterized as rich.

Luke is less overt but, in line with the 12th-century stonemason's interpretation, the gospel writer juxtaposes Abraham the unnamed rich man in the parable. In the eschatological second act of the parable, Abraham directs the unnamed rich man to the Jewish Scriptures in his final rejection of the rich man's requests. Moreover, in the Testament, Abraham's chamber is described as decorated with the same fine linens and purple cloth (πορφύρα) as the rich man is wearing (Luke 16:19) in *T.Abr* 4.2. Luke, then, may not only be aligning Abraham's wealth with other Jewish traditions, but by pointing the rich man's brothers to Moses and the prophets, he suggests that the Jewish Scriptures provide ethical guidance relevant to wealth and salvation. Abraham's reference to scripture ties the two rich men together as thesis and antithesis of how

[416] Smit 2017: 65.
[417] Smit 2017: 14–18.
[418] Allison 2003: 63.

to use possessions, be hospitable, and care for the poor.[419] Luke makes Abraham's wealth secondary by leaving it unmentioned and focuses instead on how the patriarch is hospitable to poor and inhospitable to the unjust rich, by caring for an outcast. Radical hospitality, caring for the poor and the stranger permeates the Old Testament. While several texts contribute to this imagery, Genesis 24:34 (v.35 LXX) can be used as a proof text of sorts: "... the Lord has greatly blessed and exalted my master, and has given him sheep and oxen, silver and gold, male and female servants, camels and donkeys." Key texts in the Jewish and early Christian tradition might suggest that Abraham serves a unique purpose in Luke, giving him a potentially significant part to play in Luke's economic drama, whose main thrust is good news to the poor and a stern message to the rich.

In the Rabbinic tradition, Abraham's hospitality is not only exemplary compared to other mortal men but even seen in relation to God's creational activity in Isaiah 40:22. In the Midrash commentary on Genesis, Bereishit Rabbah (Gen. Rab. 48.1), Abraham's opening his tent (אֹהֶל) to the strangers at Mamre in Genesis 18:1 is likened to God's stretching out the heavens and earth as a tent for man to dwell in (וַיִּמְתָּחֵם כָּאֹהֶל לָשָׁבֶת Isa 40:22). The Isaianic language in the opening passage of this central pericope (Isa 40) reflects certain key features of God that later Jewish tradition noticed as characteristic also of Abraham. In these texts, we see that the theme of hospitality as a way of honoring creation—God stretching out the earth as a tent for humans to dwell in—is tied to Abraham also in key Rabbinic sources. Interestingly, singling out Abraham's hospitality and rejection while leaving out other aspects of his characterization in Genesis seems to be a clearly developed theme in the *Testament of Abraham*, which might be concurrent with Luke's own writing.

In addition to focusing on hospitality, *T.Abr* develops a strong theme of salvation and judgement tied to charitable actions, similar to Luke's parable of the rich man. In *T.Abr*, the patriarch is shown many people condemned to hell, while only a few are being saved, one in seven thousand (*T.Abr* 11:4; cf. 1–14).[420] Abraham goes on to pray for the judged souls, and his prayers are heard by God, who brings a sinner to paradise because of the patriarch's entreaty for the soul. Abraham shows himself as caring for sinners. In Genesis 18:16–33, Abraham seems only to care for the innocent who might fall alongside the wicked should the Lord destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In Luke 16:19–31, Abraham appears even less forgiving, refusing to grant a sign—resurrecting Lazarus—that might aid both the rich sinner and his

[419] For a discussion of the textual basis, see Chapter Two.

[420] See also the *Apoc.Abr* 15.4–7 where Abraham is taken up to heaven and, at the same time, witness people languishing in Gehenna.

(potentially blameless) siblings. Instead, he insists that they already have Moses and the prophets and should heed their teachings (ἔχουσιν Μωϋσέα καὶ τοὺς προφήτας· ἀκουσάτωσαν αὐτῶν, Luke 16:29). Like *T.Abr*, the Lukan parable might suggest that salvation is achieved, and judgement is passed on the basis of works and deeds done in life.[421] Another striking similarity between the rich man and Abraham in Luke's parable is that they both reject: the rich man rejects Lazarus, and Abraham rejects the rich man. In the reversal of the rich and poor men's fate lies another reversal, as hospitality and inhospitality—or rejection—bind together the earthly and eschatological scenes. Abraham, therefore, while not being explicitly characterized as rich, might serve a crucial function in the parable as the one who exemplifies how followers of Jesus with the opportunity and responsibility to show hospitality (cf. Luke 14) should care for the poor and marginalized. In line with the centrality of meal scenes and Luke's emphasis on the responsibility of householders and hosts to care for the poor, Abraham emerges as an ideal figure for Jesus' followers to emulate. This is not because he is explicitly wealthy or depicted as a banquet host in Luke 16, but because Luke deploys him in this and other texts as an ideal of piety and hospitality, one who cares for the poor and reprimands the unjust rich.

Another fascinating overlap between Luke's parable and the pseudepigraphal testament is the use of bosom (κόλπος) to describe those reclining most intimately with Abraham. In *T.Abr* 20.14A, we find Isaac and Jacob reclining in the same κόλπος as Lazarus does in Luke 16, emphasizing the significance of this position.[422] However, in the Jewish stories about Abraham (noting potential later Christian influence on the Pseudepigrapha) the honorary position is reserved, not for the wealthy patron, but for the son. Lazarus, being brought to Abraham's bosom, where Abraham's biological sons would usually be depicted, shows a focus on familial ties over traditional honor codes. Is being a "son of Abraham" reserved for the poor, silent, and destitute men such as Lazarus? Strikingly, Luke seems to have an agenda with the rich, and Lazarus thus might function more as a point of juxtaposition with the rich man. Zacchaeus, the only character to be explicitly called a son of Abraham (υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ, Luke 19:9), is rich and valued for offering hospitality. Similarly, Luke's economic agenda targets those who are in a position to save and help (just as *God helps* Lazarus) the poor laying outside

[421] Cf. Giambrone 2017: 272. On this point, Giambrone rightly suggests that *T.Abr* might have been labelled an apocalypse, which would perhaps have included the text in important discussions on "Luke's thought world" (n.250, cf. Carson, O'Brian, and Seifrid 2001). He argues convincingly that the soteriology in *T.Abr* might be influenced by later Christian renditions of the text but that it nevertheless remains highly significant both for understanding Luke's parable and, moreover, it challenges—and thus remains an outlier for—E. P. Sanders notion of "covenantal nomism."

[422] Cf. 4 Macc. 13:17.

their door. Lazarus is thus a parable prop; he is received in a place of hospitality and care that would be available for the rich man, had he acted differently with his earthly possessions.[423]

Finally, it is worth noting the similarities in how Abraham and the rich man are dressed. Across genres and cultures, clothing was a factor that typically revealed character in ancient narratives.[424] When characterizing the rich man, Luke includes his expensive clothing to show how he has spent his possessions on unnecessary things rather than using them to provide for the poor. Interestingly, then, Abraham is often characterized similarly to Luke's rich man in other stories about the patriarch. Luke's use of luxurious clothing to describe the rich man in this parable, followed by the introduction of Abraham as a contrasting figure in the next scene, creates a deliberate ambiguity. The paradoxical pairing of the two rich men is not exclusive to this parable in Luke's two-volume work. Seemingly, wealth can be tied to (re)establishing honor and kinship, as in the parable of the lost son when the father dresses the lost son in the best robe (στολὴν τὴν πρώτην), a ring (δακτύλιον), and sandals (ὑποδήματα) (Luke 15:22), just as it can be used to describe the antagonistic rich such as Herod's "royal robe" in Acts 12:21 or that those who wear soft raiment and are gorgeously appareled live in kings' courts (Luke 7:25).[425]

The ambiguity is striking, then, when Abraham appears to judge the rich man in Luke 16:22–31. Luke's unique use of Abraham as an eschatological host has been noted by Böttrich, who argues that Luke's uniqueness in "rewriting" Abraham is tied to the innovative casting of Abraham as the "image of hope" similarly to *T.Abr* and *Apoc.Abr* where Abraham sees his future place in the Kingdom of God.[426] While repentance must happen in this life—a theme developed throughout the Travel Narrative, particularly in Luke 12–16—Abraham is reframed by Luke to function as an ideal hospitable man who invites repentant sinners with the poor to recline with him. Eschatological themes permeate Abraham's role in other concurrent texts as well. *T.Abr* develops strong themes of death, possessions, and the afterlife, which draws additional parallels to Luke 16.[427] Abraham's hospitality and intercessory prayers on behalf of

[423] In line with Lukan reversal tropes, Lazarus and the poor are natural guests in the Kingdom of God. The potency of parable, however, lays not only in showing how the poor are saved in God's great reversal for fortune and fate, but to show householders and hosts what is required of them to be welcomed alongside the poor, much like the steward in the preceding parable who acts shrewdly with his masters possessions in order to secure that he will be received in their eternal homes (εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς, Luke 16:9).

[424] Cf. Berner et al. 2019. See also Seneca's mention of rich men clothed in purple (*purpura vestiat*) in *Ep*.XVI.

[425] See Neyrey 1995: 136.

[426] Böttrich 2018: 272–74.

[427] 1 Baruch 3:14–19 shows significant overlap in themes of storing up wealth, where Gentile rulers (ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν, 1 Bar 3:16, cf. Luke 22:25, especially with the use of κυριεύοντες/κυριεύουσιν), are

the condemned sinners (long recension), paints a picture of an ideal man who is faithful, hospitable, just, and judging, offering fellowship and community in the afterlife.[428] Similar to the characterizations in Genesis and Jubilees, the Pseudepigraphon depicts Abraham as both hospitable and affluent (Gen 13:2; 21:8). Therefore, *T.Abr* provides a unique opportunity to consider characterizations of Abraham as a masculine ideal and wealthy and hospitable host in a text with relatively close proximity to Luke's Gospel, depending on when we date the two texts.[429]

5 Abraham as a Non-Hegemonic Masculine Ideal in Luke

Abraham's significance for ideal masculinity and the hybrid and anti-hegemonic potential in Luke's portrayal of the patriarch can be found in the way his characterization is tied to care for the poor, inclusion of those cast out by the rich, and his stern warning to the unjust, not merited on Abraham's own wealth, but tied to his ideal standing for Jews and converted Gentiles in Luke's stories. Among those I would call sons of Abraham are both rich men like Zacchaeus, as well as men from other social strata like the Philippian jailer.

As an alternative to the scholarly tendency to compare Lukan and New Testament men to hegemonic ideals of masculinity in the Roman empire, Abraham appears as the ideal Jewish man in Luke's enigmatic parable. Receiving Lazarus in his bosom, the patriarch acts as an exemplary hospitable man in the afterlife imagery. The patriarch epitomizes a model of radical hospitality that all other banquet hosts and householders can be measured against, in the stories in Luke and Acts, and potentially for readers of Luke's writings. Abraham thus appears illustrative of the intersections of hospitality and masculinity in Luke, effectively introducing

juxtaposed to men seeking Wisdom, and where the consequence for the wicked is torment in Hades (εἰς ᾅδου κατέβησαν, 1 Bar 3:19).

[428] See Rindge 2011: 102–3.

[429] Pseudepigraphal texts like *T.Abr* are often studied as Jewish texts from the Second Temple period, although they survive largely through later Christian transmission. This history of reception and transmission introduces challenges like textual corruption and additions, noted as early as James (1892: 49), cf. Nickelsburg 1976: 121–37; Schmidt 1986; Allison 2003: 38–39. There is relative consensus on dating *T.Abr* with a *terminus ad quem* of Trajan's reign (117 CE), though some scholars trace its origins to Egypt, potentially between the first century BCE and before 115–117 CE (Gruen 2002: 182–193). Two recensions exist: the longer Recension A, supported by 23 medieval manuscripts, and the shorter Recension B, with ten manuscripts, including one Sahidic fragment generally dated to the 4th–8th century CE. Schenke (2014: 87–105) has suggested that this range can be narrowed to 300–499 CE. However, recent scholarship drawing from textual criticism and reception history (Gruen 2002: 182–193; Breed 2014; Lied and Lundhaug 2017), critiques the traditional search for an "original text," highlighting instead the complexities of manuscript culture and reception, arguing that humoristic and satirical elements in the Pseudepigrapha resemble tropes from the Second Sophistic period. Despite the challenges of securely dating pseudepigraphal texts, the traditional consensus remains convincing for dating *T.Abr*, particularly noting the work of Allison (2003).

a masculine ideal that is not premised on Roman hegemonic masculinity. The striking features of Abraham's masculinity are that he expects other men to follow Torah and care for the poor, ideals that share little with power and domination.[430] Interestingly, this ideal maps onto strong currents in Luke, the New Testament, and early Christian writings.

In the Third Gospel, famously known as the gospel to the poor, it appears that masculine ideals can be tied to piety, charity, and hospitality. In the New Testament and early Christian writings more generally, caring for the poor is frequently a task directed to those who have a surplus of possessions and the ability to offer hospitality. In terms of Luke's economic ethics, it seems unlikely that disciples who are called to host banquets and offer hospitality to followers of Jesus and the Way should necessarily practice the extreme self-impoverishment practiced by Jesus and the twelve apostles.[431]

In Hebrews 13:2, believers are urged not to neglect hospitality, invoking the story of Abraham from Genesis 18:1–8. James 1:26 and 2:16 similarly highlights the importance of providing for the poor and needy, clearly engaging Jesus followers who are called to be hospitable. Particularly in James 2:21, this ideal is tied to Abraham, emphasizing that his righteousness was demonstrated through his willingness to serve. Similarly, 1 Peter 4:9 exhorts believers to show hospitality without grumbling (cf. Luke 15:2), and while hospitality does not seem to require wealth, but rather a mutual sharing of possessions, hospitality, not self-impoverishment seems to be the ideal. In 3 John, working to provide for other Jesus followers, who to them are strangers (καὶ τοῦτο ξένους, 3 John 1:5), is seen as a faithful thing to do (πιστὸν ποιεῖς). Similar wealth ethics can be found in the Apostolic Fathers as well, especially in 1 Clement 1:2, where the recipient of the letter is praised for his hospitality in the opening of the letter, as well as in 1 Clement 10:7, 11:1, and 12:1, which describes the significance of hospitality for Abraham, Lot, and Rahab. Finally, the Shepherd of Hermas, particularly Mandates 8 (38:10), ties hospitality to the fundamental practice of the community, as well as to the virtue of self-control (ἐγκράτεια) which is a fascinating example of early Christian

[430] Johnson (2006: 252) expands on the image of Abraham's κόλπος, showing how it combines an intimate space reserved for a son or a friend (אַבְרָם, Abram, "exalted father," cf. Gen 17:5) with an image of the patriarch (אַבְרָהָם, Abraham, "father of a multitude of nations," cf. Gen 17:5). Johnson argues: "The expression 'bosom of Abraham' is found only in Luke's Gospel, and may derive from the ancient biblical idea of 'being gathered to one's people' at death (Gen 49:33; Num 27:13; Deut 32:50; Judg 2:10). Abraham functions here as the 'father' of this people (see Luke 1:73; 3:8; 13:16, 28; 19:9)."

[431] While women appear as hospitable and household leaders in Luke and Acts, such as Tabitha/Dorcas (Acts 9:36–43); Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:6–19); and Lydia (Acts 16:11–15, 40), explicit calls to discipleship, and characters described as banquet hosts, are exclusively male tropes, as noted by Moxnes 2007: 155.

hospitality being associated with a central aspect of Roman masculinity.[432] If Luke and other New Testament and early Christian writers associated hospitality with central aspects of discipleship and would tie these to Abraham, there seems to be grounds for considering the implications of his ideal for constructions of masculinity.

Among scholars, Luke's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus has not been considered as significant for conceptions of manliness, particularly disregarding Abraham's role in the parable and in Luke and Acts more broadly. The fact the parable has come to be known as the story or parable of the "Rich Man and Lazarus" already draws attention away from the centrality of Abraham in this passage. In Luke 16:19–31, the nameless rich man is described as rich (Ἄνθρωπος δέ τις ἦν πλούσιος), wearing purple and fine linen, and feasting.[433] Throughout the Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51–19:44), we meet several characters described as rich and many others who are introduced as "a certain man" (Ἄνθρωπος τις). Interestingly, the ἀνθρωπος τις most adjacent to the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is the father of the lost son (Luke 15:11), who is both wealthy and hospitable, resembling several characteristics of the patriarch.

Seemingly, ἀνθρωπος τις functions as a formula for how Luke sets up narratives and parables throughout the Gospel, especially in the Travel Narrative: Luke 10:30; 12:16; 14:2, 16; 15:11; 16:1; 19:12; (20:9). Notably, this formula does not appear in Acts, which might point to a particular interest in framing the Travel Narrative—the extended Lukan account of much of Jesus' parables and teaching—around stories that begin with ἀνθρωπος τις. However, it is significant that Luke collapses this trend when naming Lazarus and Abraham. As the only named characters in any Gospel parable, they stand out in many ways. Luke's unique use of names combined with an unnamed rich man, merits attention in more ways than previously suggested.

Having established some relevant texts as interlocutors to the Lukan text, we might consider how deploying Abraham in a parable might function with broader Lukan themes. Luke 16 in general, and the parable[434] of the rich man and Abraham in particular, have

[432] See also Herm. Sim. 9, cf. *T.Job* 10; Tob 5–7.

[433] Scholars such as Johnson (2006: 251–52) frequently note the antagonistic light placed on the rich man when Luke introduces him as extravagant in a way that clearly aligns with the critique of the wealthy in Luke 7:25. They fail to note, however, that Abraham might challenge the position that Luke's ideal man and follower of Jesus has to be poor.

[434] Defining Luke 16:19–31 as a parable is not entirely unproblematic. Interestingly, in most manuscripts the passage is not introduced with something like Εἶπεν δὲ παραβολὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς λέγων, as in Luke 12:16, which is in some ways a similar parable or story about a rich man who is judged harshly due to his economic decisions. The insertion of παραβολὴν in Codex Bezae (D) and the Curetonian Syriac suggests that early transcribers saw it appropriate to linguistically signify the parabolic nature of the pericope, similar to the insertion

presented exegetical conundrums for scholars for centuries.[435] A reading where Abraham contrasts the unnamed rich man sets up the parable to describe a type of discipleship aimed at followers outside Jesus' innermost circle of apostles. These disciples use hospitality and redistribution of wealth to serve Jesus' itinerant ministry, perform charitable deeds for the poor, and through this gain access to the Kingdom of God. By depicting Abraham as the ideal, and casting other hospitable disciples in his image, Luke creates a masculine mold divorced from hegemony and exclusivity. In addition, this non-hegemonic masculinity seems to value hospitality, care for the poor, and consequently allows Luke to proclaim a gospel to disciples who are called to be hospitable hosts without casting redistribution of wealth as negative, emasculating, or a failure.[436]

These preliminary findings suggest that Abraham's hospitality and piety exemplifies a good Lukan man and challenges the idea that these men must, economically, renounce *everything*.[437] Indeed, the negative portrayal of the rich in Luke's Gospel, which specifically adds woes (οὐαί) to the rich (Luke 6:24–25), is potentially not coherent with the characterization of other men such as Zacchaeus. Similarly, the leader of the Pharisees (ἀρχόντων [τῶν] Φαρισαίων) at the banquet in Luke 14 would be blessed (μακάριος, Luke 14:14) by Jesus, should he invite the poor to his feast.[438] Positive masculine constructions thus appear at key places in Luke, and, more importantly, these successful constructions of male characters do not come with a prerequisite of total abandonment of possessions. Rather than focusing solely on the apostles who are sent out, Luke highlights Abraham and a leader of the Pharisees as figures of influence for a different kind of discipleship—one centered on those

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of παραβολὴν in Luke 16:1 by one miniscule manuscript (579). In addition, Jesus is not directly "likening" two things with each other as is another key characteristic in parables, and we have two named characters in Abraham and Lazarus (and "Νευης" for the rich man in P75) which does not occur in any other parable of Jesus. However, Snodgrass (2018: 17) argues that the story follows the development of a parable. In narratological terms, Jesus is likening the rich man's fate to the Pharisees in Jesus' audience who in their hypocrisy and love of money neglect the poor, cf. Johnson 2006: 249–50. Moreover, Luke is casting Abraham and the rich man as opposite rich men, which has implications for the author's larger project of describing ideal disciples, which this thesis argues that he does in significant part by constructing an ideal man who is hospitable, generous, and caring for the poor.

[435] Donahue 1988: 162. Cf. Augustine's *Sermon 359A* and *Letter 108*, and Ambrose's *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* (Book VII).

[436] Pace Conway 2008: 127–42; Wilson 2015: 256.

[437] Pace Hays 2010: 267. Although Hays somewhat hedges his claim of coherence in Luke's wealth ethics and claims that "everything" for someone like Levi can mean to put all his possessions at the disposal of Jesus' ministry, Abraham's characterization as caring for the poor in an afterlife scene could problematize his generally robust claim (and excellent exegetical argument) of coherence in Luke's wealth ethics.

[438] MiJa Wi (2019: 199) suggests that Luke here is blessing the rich, but it should be noted that the Pharisees, although often figuring in pericopes concerned with wealth distribution are referred to as φιλάργυροι (16:14). Moxnes 1988: 1–9 has warned against reading socio-historical significance into Luke's literary constructions. In addition, the "rich neighbors" (γείτονας πλουσίους, 14:12) are among the groups that Jesus tells the Pharisee not to invite to his banquet.

who remain stationary. These men might host banquets and extend hospitality to the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (πτωχούς, ἀναπείρους, χωλούς, τυφλούς, Luke 14:13).

Moreover, an exemplary Abraham with similarities to the unnamed rich man challenges previous scholarship on Luke, both regarding how Luke conceptualizes masculinity and what Luke's Jesus demands from would be followers with ties to mammon and empire. At this point, the discussion suggests an emphasis in Luke on issues of wealth management and hospitality, arguing that they intersect with overarching Lukan themes as well as with a potential masculine ideal. Abraham-like men—and potentially women—serve critical functions in several ways. Not only do disciples such as Levi and Zacchaeus facilitate the social and practical aspects of Jesus' ministry, but they also present a mold for ethical use of possessions and appear masculine in ways that are quite different from Roman hegemonic expectations. In light of Luke 16 (both parables), Luke's agenda with hospitable men (exemplified negatively by the Pharisees and positively by Abraham and the shrewd manager) also underscore eschatological consequences, suggesting that Luke's interest in these characters concerns more than a need for cautionary tales.

Finally, a hospitable man emerges as a potent character trope in Luke's Gospel, linking certain masculine performances to central Lukan themes such as caring for the poor, inclusive table fellowship, reversal, and repentance, among others. To investigate further what Luke's ideal man looks like, and how the stories and parables construct a masculine ideal in the image of Abraham, we can examine the patriarch's portrayal in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

6 Luke's Agenda with the Rich

For scholars, the Rich Man and Lazarus is typically a parable that epitomizes Jesus' rejection of the rich. L. T. Johnson argues that "the final words of the parable seal their [the Pharisees'] rejection: even if someone came back from the dead, they would not listen (16:31). Therefore as the rich man is rejected from a place in the people ('the bosom of Abraham'), so are they to be rejected from the people."[439] Bovon shares the inclination to read the parable as

[439] Johnson (2006: 256) further ties the Pharisees' rejection to the ultimate rejection by "the people" of Jesus as the Messiah leading to his unjust killing. While Luke references a resurrection in Luke 16:31, the Pharisees are not as antagonistically portrayed throughout the Travel Narrative, and, more importantly, a monolithic focus on the rejection of the rich limits the constructive potential of the parable that would call on the rich to change their ways from that of the unnamed rich man and be hospitable in the image of Abraham. Cf. Gowler 1991: 301.

reproach for the rich and adds, "this parable invites us, here implicitly, to do good and to imitate Lazarus."[440] The two "invitations," to do good *and* to imitate Lazarus seem paradoxical, as the poor man is defined by a lack of action and agency, while the actions of the rich man (or men) are at the center of the parable. The scholarly options leave Abraham in an awkward position. He fits neither reproach nor voluntary self-impoverishment.

While there is no doubt that Abraham is a unique parable character, being named and placed in an afterlife setting, scholars struggle to identify why exactly Luke includes such an original portrait of the patriarch. In her salient contribution, Outi Lehtipuu argues that Luke's parable shares important themes with afterlife imagery spread out "all over the ancient Mediterranean world."[441] Some suggest a potential Egyptian origin story, while others have pointed out how Luke's parable differs from both Jewish and Egyptian sources.[442] In a New Testament context, Luke is rather unique with descriptions of flames (Luke 16:24), especially seeing fire in relation to torment, although similar depictions were widespread in concurrent Jewish afterlife imagery.[443] Further, Lehtipuu opines that Luke has no interest in eschatology with the parable but rather uses the imagery to appeal to popular narrative tropes. She views Luke as uninterested in soteriological issues, arguing that the author has exclusively earthly wealth distribution as his agenda. The earthly, social, and practical implications of overconsumption, neglect of the poor, and inhospitality in the parable are certainly significant themes. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter One, Luke was written to Theophilus, who, although we know nothing about who he was or if he was even a real man, is described as "most excellent" and gives the impression of being a wealthy man. Considering how Luke consistently writes about householders and rich men, Lehtipuu is right to argue that Luke seems to have an interest in calling the wealthy man to atone and change.[444] While her argument focuses on the social aspects of Luke's parable, the two dimensions, earthly and eschatological, need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, including Abraham and the potential for an eschatological agenda in the parable seems to strengthen her argument that Luke's main goal is repentance for the rich. She summarizes her argument in the following way:

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[440] Bovon 2013: 473.

[441] Lehtipuu 2007: 41.

[442] Bovon 2013: 473–78. In an early contribution to this discussion, Bolkenstein (1939: 399–443) argues that divine care for the poor in the afterlife is unique to Egyptian stories in antiquity and absent in Roman and Jewish thought. Although his argument is to be lauded for its pioneering corrective against Christian triumphalism that saw such care for the poor as a Christian invention *ex nihilo*, he has also been criticized for his neglect of Jewish and to some extent Roman examples of caring for the poor. See next note.

[443] See, e.g., 2 Baruch 30:4–5; 44:15; 51:6; 54:14, 21–22, cf. Charlesworth (ed.) Vol.1 1983: 619. See further 1 Enoch 10:7, 13; 18:9–15; 21; 54; 71:24–26; 91:9; 100:7–9; *Apoc. Paul* 17.

[444] Lehtipuu 2007: 42.

> [E]schatological expectations do not form a central theme in Luke-Acts and do not explain the purpose for writing the work. [It] is used to serve more practical aims. In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, this aim is to exhort people to repentance, which ought to be shown by proper behaviour, especially by the right use of possessions.[445]

Her work offers valuable insights into the parable's socio-cultural setting. However, considering the broader narrative construction of Luke, the eschatological focus can be understood as a progression of pericopes emphasizing wealth distribution, almsgiving, and charity among male characters culminating in 16:19–31. This trajectory includes key parables such as the "rich fool" (Luke 12:16–21), the great banquet (Luke 14:15–24), and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32). As in the two parables in Luke 16, earthly vocations have eschatological consequences, and these themes are complementary more than they are mutually exclusive, as Lehtipuu suggests. The heavenly rewards and retributions are of sure importance for Luke, just as much as the author has a distinctive social gospel.

Bolkenstein and Lehtipuu are effectively filling in each other's gaps, as the decisions made by the unnamed rich man on earth mirror his fate in the afterlife. More importantly, there is nothing besides his economic priorities that have consequences for his afterlife. Whether the influence is a Hellenistic matrix, as argued by Lehtipuu, or a framework distinct from both Jewish and Greco-Roman imagery, as Bolkenstein suggests, Luke carefully constructs opposite men in Abraham and the rich man, both of whom exemplify earthly and heavenly consequences of hospitality and charity. There is little reason to doubt that the parable draws heavily on a substantial tradition of concurrent afterlife imagery. While a multivalent context of Egyptian, Hellenistic and Jewish literature might be influencing Luke's afterlife imagery, one should be careful of the "parallelomania" described by Samuel Sandmel and appreciate both Luke's practical and heavenly economy.[446]

Richard Bauckham notes that attempts to read additional characterizations into Luke's parable as to why the unnamed rich man is condemned are not supported by the text.[447] His reading captures the significance of the rich man's earthly deeds, but Bauckham surprisingly argues that wealth itself is the deciding factor in the rich man's fate. If this was Luke's intention, Abraham would again be left in that awkward position of playing such a prominent role in a parable that, according to Bauckham, is supposed to be criticizing wealth per se. This

[445] Lehtipuu 2007: 303.
[446] Sandmel 1962: 1–13.
[447] Bauckham 1991: 233.

exegetical knot can be untied, however, by reading Abraham's reference to the rich man's "good things" (τὰ ἀγαθά σου, Luke 16:25) ironically, suggesting that it is not merely possession of wealth, but rather the rich man's failure to use it in support of Lazarus, that ultimately tips the eschatological scale. By incorporating Abraham into the wealth ethical reading, the parable is clearly centered around the rich man's inhospitality on the one hand and Abraham's hospitality on the other. In other words, if the good man in Luke's stories is pious and hospitable, these qualities must benefit the poor and outcast in the here and now. However, if Abraham is the ideal, these men might continue to occupy a seat at "the head of the table" and keep some of their possessions. Most importantly, Luke's ideal man appears to be defined by piety, charity, and hospitality. While this masculine ideal primarily focuses on hosts and household leaders, a significant aspect of Luke's ideal man is linked to how he treats men (and women) who find themselves at the other end of the socio-economic spectrum. In the Rich Man and Lazarus, it is the latter who represent this category, a group of relatively flat characters whose purpose mainly serves to challenge and construct an ideal for the hospitable man.

In comparison, *T.Abr* includes no account of Abraham caring for the poor after their fate has been decided, and his hospitality is retrospectively described as having taken place while he was alive. He is, however, portrayed as a role model of hospitality towards the end: "Let us too, my beloved brothers, imitate the hospitality of the patriarch Abraham" (*T.Abr* 20.15A). In Luke 16:19–31, Abraham is not part of the earthly narrative but only appears in the afterlife imagery and explicitly cares for Lazarus and elevates his status to that of the honorary guest or a beloved son. Instead of passing judgement, as in *T.Abr*, Luke's Abraham mirrors the rich man on opposite sides of the dividing chasm who demonstrates what the unnamed rich man needed to do in order not to end up in Hades. In the parable, the outcome is irreversible, as undergirded by Abraham's rejection of the rich man's requests. The contrast between Abraham and the rich man becomes even more apparent when considering how Abraham acts during his lifetime in *T.Abr*. In the opening verses, he is described as inviting everyone into his tent, rich and poor alike:

> The just man was altogether very kind to strangers. For he pitched his tent at the crossroads of the Oak of Mamre, where he welcomed all— rich and poor, kings and rulers, the crippled and the helpless, friends and strangers, neighbors and travelers. These the pious and all-holy, righteous, and hospitable Abraham welcomed equally.[448]

[448] *T.Abr* 1.1b–2. Tr. Allison 2003: 63.

Abraham clearly fulfills an ideal of hospitality that can be seen as contrasted by the rich man in Luke's parable. This hospitality aligns with the parable of the great banquet in Luke 14:15–24, especially if we also consider the ending of *T.Abr*, where the patriarch is called to paradise as a friend of God. Here, Abraham's heavenly tent seats the righteous alongside Isaac and Jacob ("The tents of my righteous ones and the lodgings of my saints Isaac and Jacob are there, in his bosom"),[449] similar in many ways to Luke's two mentions of Abraham in the afterlife in Luke 13:28 and Luke 16:22–31.

It should be noted, however, that this part of the long recension of *T.Abr* contains a later Christian appendix (20.14A). This might reveal a key element in the text's *Wirkungsgeschichte* that focuses on imitating Abraham's hospitality and charity to obtain salvation.[450] Whether this influence is from Luke's accounts of Abraham is suggestive, but it is a helpful reminder that the two texts could have a longer and more intertwined history of influencing each other. While themes such as hospitality and piety appear in the earlier preserved tradition as well, it might suggest a tendency to include certain aspects of the stories about Abraham such as his piety and hospitality, while leaving out other features. Luke is, in some ways, contributing to a similar tradition with his unique but selective application of Abraham's character.

Other narratives about Abraham are less frequently commented on and referenced in the same period, and we even see examples of passages about the patriarch being omitted. Wintermute notes that in Jubilees "the author has freely (...) expurgated the notice of Abraham's presenting his wife to foreign rulers as his sister [in] Gen. 12:10–20; 20:2–7."[451] Where these less favorable depictions of the patriarch receive less attention in several texts from the period around the first century, other characteristics of Abraham seem to be noticed. Philo juxtaposes Abraham and Lot through an exposition on a disagreement between their servants.[452] In Philo's work, Lot's servants exemplify attachment to earthly possessions and reputation, while Abraham's servants represent virtue and the internal value of the soul.

On the one hand, if we confer with the intertestamental Jewish literature and later Christian reception of these accounts, it seems like a certain reception of Abraham's hospitality takes precedence over other characteristics of the patriarch. The shared interest in specific parts of the Abraham story, particularly regarding his hospitality and piety, seems to have been singled out and foregrounded both by Jewish authors and later Christian interpolators of these

[449] *T.Abr* 20.14A. Tr. Allison 2003: 382.

[450] Giambrone 2017: 272 also notes that the reference to "friends" (φίλους) and "eternal tents" (αἰωνίους σκηνάς.) in Luke 16:9 resembles the characterization of Abraham in the *T.Abr* 20.14A.

[451] Wintermute (Charlesworth ed.) 1985: 35.

[452] *Abr*. 217–224.

Jewish texts. Whether or not Luke knew *T.Abr* is not relevant, although it offers one of few similar accounts of Abraham in an afterlife setting. What is significant is that Luke seems to be doing the same kind of selective reception of the patriarch. In the Lukan parable, Abraham is characterized as the archetypal host, while other available characteristics seem less important.

On the other hand, a specific interest in Abraham's hospitality might have been more prevalent in and around the first century CE relative to the other stories about the patriarch. Across the Jewish literature, Abraham's hospitality and piety permeates descriptions of the patriarch. Abraham asks for hospitality in Genesis 23:4 (cf. Ps 39:12) and describes himself as stranger and alien (גֵּר־וְתוֹשָׁב in the MT and πάροικος καὶ παρεπίδημος in the LXX).[453] The sojourning in the land, his promise to fill the earth, and his welcoming of strangers after having settled in the land all attest to the centrality of his hospitality. This is certainly not lost on Jewish authors contemporary with Luke.

When Philo discusses Abraham's piety (εὐσέβεια) in *Migration of Abraham* (*Migr*. 60 onward, with 110–118 addressing hospitality at Mamre), he identifies three of four cornerstone narratives to be expositions on his hospitality and piety: Abraham's willingness to leave his homeland, his sojourn in Egypt, and his hospitality toward the three visitors at Mamre. The fourth and final cornerstone is the Akedah.[454] Birnbaum and Dillon argue that Philo uses the plural ξενίαι when discussing hospitality at Mamre to suggest that Abraham also receives hospitality when he and Sarah are rewarded with a son.[455] This would underscore the significance of *offering* hospitality for the later promise of descendants and the promise of a land for Abraham's offspring. According to Birnbaum and Dillon, the reward can be seen as a kind of reciprocal hospitality, where Abraham, Sarah, and their descendants *receive* hospitality in the sense that they are welcomed by God to sojourn in the land as a gift for *offering* hospitality to the strangers at Mamre.[456]

While Birnbaum and Dillon's exposition of *Migr*. is most helpful, it does not seem self-evident that receiving the promise of an offspring equates to receiving *hospitality*. Surely, it would not have been surprising for a host to receive gifts or compensation for offering hospitality. However, it seems more likely that the plural use of ξενίαι alludes to Abraham being received in a foreign land, or perhaps even suggests a plurality of hospitalities unfolding

[453] I owe thanks to Dr. Noel Cheong for bringing this reference to my attention.

[454] See Birnbaum and Dillon 2021: 302–4. Note how all of these are exemplified negatively in the story of Lot's family and the destruction of Sodom: Sin, unwillingness to leave, and inhospitality.

[455] Birnbaum and Dillon 2021: 303.

[456] Birnbaum and Dillon 2021: 302–4.

across both earthly and angelic dimensions during the visitation.[457] In any case, it seems clear from Philo's account of Abraham and Sarah that the reward of childbirth is closely tied to their exemplary hospitality and virtue.[458]

Philo further describes hospitality in Genesis 18:1–8 in a way that strikingly includes both men, women, and enslaved people in the act of offering food and kindness to the guests: "The servant slaughtered it and prepared it with all speed; for in the household of a sage no one is slow in showing kindness, but women and men and slaves and free show the greatest enthusiasm for the service of guests."[459] Philo's seemingly unproblematic mention of women and enslaved people as instrumental in offering hospitality shares certain similarities with Luke's writings.

In the Third Gospel and Acts, we frequently hear about women who do acts of charity such as the women mentioned in Luke 8:1–3, Tabitha in Acts 9:36–42, the mother of John Mark in Acts 12:12, or Lydia in Acts 16:11–15. Enslaved people also appear in the context of meals and hospitality, such as the enslaved person sent first as a messenger to the invitees and subsequently to gather the poor as guests in Luke 14:17–23, and the enslaved worker mentioned in Luke 17:7–10. However, both Philo and Luke, while allowing women and enslaved persons to appear in a hospitality setting, uphold patriarchal and hierarchal structures. The aforementioned enslaved worker in Luke 17:7–10 appears as a point of comparison with the apostles, who are first asked if they would invite their enslaved person to the dinner table (Luke 17:7), and then told to serve and obey without expecting gratitude (Luke 17:10).[460] Luke thus includes enslaved people in a uniquely Lukan story, but, at the same time, he upholds a

[457] Indeed, Philo sees Abraham and Sarah as sojourners on God's earth, which ultimately cast them as receiving hospitality, seen, for example, in *Migr*. 142 where Philo ascribes an abridged quotation from Numbers 28:2 (LXX) to Sarah after having given birth to Isaac: τὰ γὰρ δῶρά μου, δόματά μου, καρπώματά μου φησί διατηρήσατε προσφέρειν ἐμοί ("My gifts, my endowments, my fruits" he says, "be careful to offer unto me").Whether this image of Abraham and Sarah receiving hospitality from God can be linked to the promise of a son by the angelic visitors is not explicit.

[458] *Migr*. 110; 254.

[459] *Migr.* 109. Tr. Birnbaum and Dillon 2021: 110.

[460] Bovon (2013: 497) suggests that the master's command, "put on your apron and serve me" (περιζωσάμενος διακόνει μοι, Luke 17:8), shares Christological (and linguistic) similarities with Jesus' words in Luke 12:37, "he will fasten his belt … and … serve them" (περιζώσεται … καὶ … διακονήσει αὐτοῖς). This detail is significant because it potentially places Jesus and the apostles in ambiguous roles as both master and enslaved worker in the parable in Luke 17:7–10. Jesus begins with the rhetorical question, "Who among you would say to your slave?" and follows up with a description of service, "So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'" (NRSV). The short parable captures a striking detail about the centrality of both servility and hospitable deeds in an almost paradoxical way, as it simultaneously challenges and upholds hierarchies of enslavement and household leadership. See Seim (1994: 97–163) for a feminist reading of Luke's double-edged sword when it comes to criticizing and maintaining patriarchal hierarchies.

hierarchy of master and enslaved person.[461] Similarly, while Philo mentions women and enslaved persons in the passage above, he assigns the virtue and praise associated with hospitality to the patriarch alone, although he admits that the act of giving hospitality required several people:

> We have now described the hospitality of the man, which is itself an incidental aspect of a greater virtue. That virtue is piety, about which we have spoken earlier, and of which the tale that has just been related is a particularly clear example, even if we were to assume that the strangers were men. (…) I cannot conceive how I should express the excess of happiness and blessedness pertaining to that house in which angels were prepared to stop off and receive hospitality at the hands of humans.[462]

While these excerpts are neither emancipatory nor particularly deconstructive of hierarchal structures, they tie together an ambivalent conceptualization of the hospitable man. On the one hand, Abraham in Genesis, Philo, and similarly the sons of Abraham in Luke and Acts, appear in close proximity to women and enslaved persons. The role of household leader or banquet host, in other words, constantly relies on assistance and support from women and enslaved persons. From a hegemonic comparative standpoint, this would hardly suffice for a man to appear manly, as the household appears to be a woman's, even an enslaved person's domain too.

At the same time, these authors seem to uphold a hierarchy where the man is clearly "on top." Abraham, not Sarah or the enslaved person, is the one praised for his piety and hospitality across these texts. Hospitality and banquet hosting remain predominantly masculine roles, which leads me to conclude two things from this section. First, Luke seems to have an agenda that goes far beyond reproaching rich characters, as the ideal of Abraham, his hospitality and righteous standing, and the continuous interest in men who would benefit from adhering to Abraham's ideal clearly show. Secondly, the ideal man represented by Abraham is distinctly non-hegemonic. By allowing Abraham to take his rightful place in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke establishes a non-hegemonic ideal against which other disciples—or "sons of Abraham"—can be measured.

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[461] The description of the enslaved person as "useless" (ἀχρεῖοί, Luke 17:10) reveals the derogatory rhetoric applied to the enslaved person. Similarly, in Matt 25:30, the "useless enslaved person" is eschatologically "thrown into the outer darkness" (τὸν ἀχρεῖον δοῦλον ἐκβάλετε εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον). The harsh characterization adds to the paradox of the parable as the apostles are the ones likened to useless enslaved people, telling them to strive for what appears to be an ideal of servility and hospitality.

[462] Birnbaum and Dillon 2021: 111.

To summarize thus far, Luke's characterization of Abraham portrays him as an ideal man. At the same time, the patriarch does not seem to fully align with typical readings of Luke's gospel message to the rich. Abraham remains elevated and hierarchically "on top" in the afterlife, which might unsettle arguments about total divestment in Luke. In a similar way, Abraham breaks with the expectations of what scholars typically see as masculine. While he is patriarchal and pious, his masculinity is tied primarily to non-hegemonic ideals. Postcolonial theory claims that this is a typical trait for subjugated people, to mimic and uphold hegemony to an extent, while subtly and defiantly presenting a different ideal. For Luke, this ideal seems to be associated with hospitality, economic ethics, and care for the poor. In the last part of this chapter, I therefore examine an intersection that is typically not considered in gendered readings of Luke, namely how masculinity and economic language of hospitality and charity can be used as a window into Luke's ideal man.

7 Non-Hegemonic Masculinity and the Economy of the *Ekklēsia*

To further examine Abraham's unique portrayal in Luke as a masculine ideal and Jewish role model for householder disciples to emulate, I apply the reading of Luke 16:19–31 where Abraham is seen as the antithesis of the rich man to broader seams in Luke's Gospel. The intention of this narrative exploration is twofold. Firstly, we will test whether the characterization of Abraham in Luke 16 can be seen as intensifying themes of hospitality and an understanding of Jewish practices up until this point in Luke's narrative. Secondly, I argue that Luke develops a theme around the character of Abraham that reaches its peak in the parable. Several references to Abraham in Luke depict him as a stock character, often tied to the term πατήρ (father). For instance, this characterization appears in Mary's worship (Luke 1:55) and Zechariah's prophecy (Luke 1:78). These references, however, may also contribute to a broader portrayal of Abraham as a man, father, and ancestor throughout Luke and Acts. With 22 total references to Abraham across these two books, six of which occur in Luke 16:19–31, his presence emerges as a significant and recurring element in the narrative.

One potential pushback against my argument is that Abraham does not figure prominently throughout Luke and Acts in the same way as he appears in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. In fact, most other references to the patriarch seem formulaic and passing compared to the uniquely vivid portrayal in Luke 16:19–31. The first two references to Abraham in Luke are found in the paired prophetic worships in Luke 1—Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) and Zechariah's prophecy (Luke 1:68–79). While these references to the

patriarch seem more formulaic in nature, Mary in many ways introduces the gospel to the poor just before tying her worship to the promise given to Abraham: "he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich empty away" (Luke 1:53), followed by "according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever" (Luke 1:55). Thus, while Abraham's role in Mary's worship is quite different from the parabolic character in Luke 16, the patriarch is tied to Luke's overarching interest in wealth and poverty from the opening of the Gospel story.

Similarly, when Zechariah prophesies the birth of his son, John, Abraham is referenced again. Not only does this double reference tie the two worships even closer together, but it also connects Abraham with John's ensuing ministry. This connection is picked up when John's ministry is recounted in Luke 3:8, where he warns the crowds not to say, "we have Abraham as our father" (πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ, Luke 3:8), but instead to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Abrahamic lineage is not understood in typical genealogical terms, according to John the Baptist, as he assures them that "God is able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones" (Luke 3:8).

The crowds react by asking about this very tension, "What then should we do?" (Τί οὖν ποιήσωμεν; Luke 3:10).[463] The connection to Abraham is apparently established not through birth or lineage, but by "bearing fruits worthy of repentance" (ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας, Luke 3:8). Crucially, the subsequent teaching focuses on economic ethics and a warning to tax collectors and soldiers not to extort the people they have authority over: "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise" (Luke 3:11). To the tax collectors, "collect no more than you are authorized to do" (Luke 3:13), and to the soldiers, "do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14).

John's teaching and stern warning tie the Abrahamic theme to Levi and other tax collectors, as previously discussed in Chapter Three, as well as to soldiers and Roman officials, which will be relevant in Chapters Five and Six. Finally, referring to Abraham as "father" (πατήρ) and using the term "children" (τέκνον) to refer to Abraham's descendants in Luke 3:8 tie these introductory references to the patriarch to the rhetoric deployed by Luke in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), where the rich man addresses Abraham with the same πατήρ (Luke 16:24) and is referred back to as τέκνον (Luke 16:25) in an almost patronizing way, similar to John's comparison of stones to potential children of Abraham.

[463] See further Wi 2019: 175–77; 206–7.

Therefore, while the introductory references to Abraham are formulaic, especially compared to how Luke brings Abraham to life in the parable in chapter 16, the opening of Luke's Gospel clearly ties the patriarch to themes of sonship, economic ethics, and an man that challenges the authority of soldiers and tax collectors. This marks the beginning of a crescendo that intensifies toward Luke 16. Levi thus introduces several aspects of a good man that will come to shape Luke's narrative, such as hosting Jesus and his poor, itinerant disciples, rejecting imperial economic practices, and resemblances of Abraham that will define a unique group of Jesus followers in Luke's two volume work.

As the Travel Narrative (Luke 9:51–19:44) unfolds, Luke develops the theme of wealth, generosity, and social reversal, with an increasing focus on table fellowship, hospitality, and economic teaching (Luke 10:1–12; 10:25–37; 11:5–8; 11:37–41; 12:13–34; Luke 13:28–30; 14:1–24; 15:1–32; 16:1–31; 18:18–30; 19:1–10). Two passages that stand out in relation to Abraham's role in this expanded Lukan body of text are the references to the heavenly banquet in Luke 13:28–30 and the parable known as the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32). The father in the parable, much like Abraham in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, is a benevolent host for the returning brother while reprimanding the brother who stayed home. The imagery of the repentant brother and the angry brother (ὀργίζω, Luke 15:28) draws some parallels to the characterization of the Pharisees as grumbling in Luke 15:2 (διαγογγύζω), and the repentant sinner (Luke 15:10).

In Luke 16, the dialogue between the Rich Man and Abraham in Luke 16:24–31 brings these characterizations together: the Rich Man, much like the grumbling brother and the Pharisees, refuses to accept the reversal of fortunes and pleads for mercy, while Abraham, like the father in the Prodigal Son, remains firm in his response, showcasing the importance of repentance both with a positive example (the lost son) and a negative (the rich man). Significantly, Abraham appears as an ideal man at the climax of Luke's Travel Narrative, suggesting that the references to him in the beginning of the Gospel continue to shape Lukan ideal both in terms of economic practices, hospitality, hosting banquets, and being a patriarch.

Luke's developing theme of Abraham as an exemplary man reaches its conclusion with Zacchaeus in Luke 19:9, where Jesus declares that salvation has come to the tax collector's house and calling him a son of Abraham (υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν, Luke 19:9). Unlike the somewhat formulaic references to Abraham earlier in Luke, Zacchaeus seems to be living out and embodying core aspects of Abrahamic identity—not through birthright, but through hospitality towards Jesus and a repentant economic ethic. Strikingly, as noted in Chapter One, Zacchaeus is introduced as physically non-hegemonic, described as "small in stature" (μικρὸς τῇ ἡλικίᾳ,

Luke 19:3), which distances him from traditional ideals of power and dominance. Yet, despite this apparent weakness, Jesus presents him as an ideal man, not because of physical attributes but because of his radical reorientation of wealth and willingness to repent and, looking back to the first mention of tax collectors in Luke 3:8–14, Zacchaeus is a son of Abraham because he bears fruit worthy of repentance. His commitment to give half his possessions to the poor and repay fourfold anyone he has wronged reflects the ideal of economic ethics developed through the Travel Narrative, an ideal that is consistently tied to Abraham as an ideal example of Luke's economic ethics.

Thus, while Abraham's presence throughout Luke is sporadic, and at times formulaic, his function in Luke is tied to the central theme of hospitality and crescendos toward active engagement with wealth and justice in Luke 16 and Luke 19. Luke deliberately characterizes Abraham in line with well-known Jewish tropes of exemplary piety and hospitality, which provides followers of Jesus with an ideal, particularly for those who are called to be hospitable and charitable towards the poor and the Jesus movement. If Abraham is an ideal for hospitable host and other men in Luke's two-volume work, and potentially for his audience, scholarly attempts to define masculinity in Luke as conforming to, or being unmanly with regards to hegemonic ideals, appear unsatisfactory. While Abraham is patriarchal and stern in response to the rich man's requests, he does not seem constructed around Roman hegemonic ideals, nor does he appear unmanly. He is, rather, shaped around non-hegemonic ideals of hospitality and economic ethics from the Jewish Scriptures. If Abraham can be seen as an ideal for masculinity in Luke and Acts, that ideal is distinctly Jewish in important ways, as Abraham is used by Luke to foreground hospitality, caring for the poor, and teaching rich men how to (not) use their wealth.

In this way, considering Abraham alongside banquet imagery in Luke challenges previously held conceptions concerning Luke's great reversal. One consequence of noticing the significance of Lazarus reclining as a guest of honor or a son is that Luke does not present a complete reversal where the rich are cared for by the poor. Instead, Abraham occupies the same position as patriarch in the afterlife, just as ancient readers likely would imagine Abraham from Genesis 18 or *T.Abr,* where he is introduced as a hospitable patriarch. Thus, Luke opens the gates of salvation not only for those called to be hospitable through almsgiving and charity but also sketches an eschatological reality where some rich remain in the role of *paterfamilias* or οἰκοδεσπότης.[464]

[464] Metzger 2007: 2.

At the same time, Luke's references to Abraham paints an ambiguously portrayed character. One the one hand, Abraham is often seated hierarchically "on top" while Lazarus rests in his bosom, reinforcing patriarchal structures that can be seen as dominating. He is merciless towards the rich man and his relatives, does not give up on any personal possessions, and is the caretaker of his people. Interestingly, Abraham's portrayal in Genesis is far from monolithic in terms of his masculinity, contributing to an image of the patriarch that bears the marks of a round character. While Luke emphasizes particular aspects of Abraham—his hospitality, piety, and eschatological role—the broader Genesis narrative complicates this idealized portrayal. Stories such as his banishment of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 16), his surrender of Sarah to Pharaoh (Gen 12:10–20), and his claim that she is his sister, allowing Abimelech to take her (Gen 20:1–3), contribute to an image of Abraham that includes characteristics that could even be considered cowardly, emasculate, and subordinate. When Luke places this ambivalent character as an ideal man and eschatological patriarch, he presents a masculine ideal around Abraham based on selective characteristics.

One way to approach such a complex and multifaceted characterization is through Bhabha's concept of mimicry. From a postcolonial perspective on the masculine characterization of Abraham in Luke's parable, we would say, with Bhabha, that the patriarch "mimics the collaborative colonial ideologies of patriotism and patriarchy, depriving those narratives of their imperial authority."[465] Mimicry, as I have discussed in Chapter Two, is a term that is meant to capture ambiguities that arise out of colonial domination and the subjugation of local communities.[466] Abraham thus has the potential to mimic masculine traits that appeared ideal in a broad cultural context. At the same time, he represents a commitment to Torah (Luke 16:29–31, cf. Luke 16:16–17), a care for the poor, an example of proverbial eloquence, and an ideal Lukan banquet host, a role that is frequently relied on by the Jesus movement, a primarily Jewish group of people who are persecuted by Herod(s) and the Roman Empire.

To summarize thus far, Abraham appears as a non-hegemonic, ideal man in Luke's parable because he is valued for his care for the poor, not for using the wealth he most certainly possesses to acquire social standing or power. Rather, Abraham's ideal masculinity challenges notions of imperial power by idealizing an inclusive table fellowship that cares for the poor and sustains the persecuted. While Abraham is, in many ways, still hierarchical and patriarchal,

[465] Bhabha 2004: 240.
[466] See Buchanan 2018: no pagination, entry under "postcolonialism."

and the banquet mimics elements of classical Greek and Roman banqueting practices, the focus is on presenting a social and eschatological economy that punishes squandering and elevates the shrewd and the poor. Just as Mary's worship carries anti-imperial potential when she sings about the Lord has "scattered the proud" (Luke 1:51) and "brought down the powerful from their thrones" (Luke 1:52), Abraham's hospitality opens a place alongside the poor for those who, like the patriarch, share their possessions, but punishes those who store or squander.

8 Is Abraham Hosting an Eschatological Banquet?

As explored above, one of the ways in which Abraham could be juxtaposing the rich man is if he receives Lazarus at a table or a banquet. In line with Luke 13:28–30, the last shall dine with Abraham in the kingdom of God, but is that image what Luke is alluding to in the parable? To fully appreciate Luke's characterization of Abraham in the parable, we might consider the developing theme of hospitality in the preceding sections of Luke's Gospel. First, Luke consistently emphasizes the inclusion of marginalized people in the eschatological reversal, making it relatively straightforward to envision how someone like Lazarus would have a natural seat next to Abraham at a heavenly feast, in line with the imagery in Luke 13 and Isaiah 25. Interestingly, however, being poor and outcast like Lazarus does not seem to be the only way to receive a place at Abraham's table.

The steward in Luke 16:1–9 uses unrighteous mammon to secure eschatological aid from his newly made friends on earth (note Luke 16:9, "so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes"). In other words, the steward's clever use of his master's money positions him to take a seat at Abraham's table during the great reversal. In contrast, the unnamed rich man ends up in Hades alongside the "rich fool" (Luke 12:16–21) and others who hoarded their possessions solely for themselves. Hospitality certainly covers more than meal scenes, and the shrewd steward seems preoccupied with a more all-encompassing hospitality than just table fellowship and banqueting. In the second parable of Luke 16, however, the banquet imagery is key to the story, as the rich man is described as feasting, contrasted by Abraham, who is known for hosting banquets in other Jewish texts, and seemingly condemned because he does not share or invite Lazarus to dine with him. Because it has such strong parallels to Luke's focus on meals and table fellowship, we briefly consider how this imagery relates to Abraham in the parable.

Firstly, rather than centering solely on Lazarus as the rich man's opposite and their

dramatic reversal of fortune in the afterlife, Luke places unexpected emphasis on Abraham's κόλπος—the folds of his garment forming a breast pocket—positioning him as a pivotal figure at the heart of the parable's narrative thrust. As we have seen, someone reclining in the κόλπος of the host usually describes the position of the honorary guest at a feast or banquet in Greco-Roman literature, and typically reserved for Abraham's sons in the Jewish stories.[467]

In John's Gospel, the Beloved Disciple similarly reclines in the bosom of Jesus (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, John 13:23) at the last supper, and Jesus is described as the only one who can know God, and make God known, because he is the one "who is in the bosom of the Father" (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, John 1:18). Moreover, Matthew (8:11) mirrors the same afterlife imagery, stating that many will come and recline (ἀνακλίνω) with Abraham in the Kingdom of Heaven. Luke 13:28–29 slightly amends the Matthean version, but both Matthew and Luke use ἀνακλίνω ("to recline"), which situates those who shall eat with Abraham in a typical banquet imagery. 1 Enoch 62:14 further substantiates the imagery, saying that the righteous "shall eat and rest and rise with that Son of Man forever and ever." If Luke deploys Abraham in the parable to serve as a banquet host, there seems to be some Synoptic and adjacent intertextual material to draw from

Secondly, while Luke does not include a mention of a specific meal in the parable, he frames it within references to eschatological dining with Abraham in Luke 13:28–29, followed by three chapters (Luke 14–16) that include several stories with thematic and linguistic ties to Abraham's hospitality. The Great Banquet in Luke 14 appears directly after the reference to eating with Abraham in the kingdom and is described with wording similar to Levi's "great banquet" (ἐποίησεν Λευὶς δοχὴν μεγάλην, Luke 5:29), which echoes Abraham's feast for Isaac in Gen 21:8 LXX (ἐποίησεν Ἀβραὰμ δοχὴν μεγάλην). Luke then shifts from δοχή (banquet, used in Gen 21:8; Luke 5:29; 14:13) to δεῖπνον μέγα (great dinner, Luke 14:16), a term widely used in classical Greek for the main meal preceding the symposium (cf. Plato, *Symposium* 175c; Xenophon, *Symposium* 1.1; Aristotle, *Ethics* 1173b). The variation in vocabulary describing meal scenes could suggest that Luke is aware of both Jewish hospitality traditions and Greco-Roman banquet conventions.[468] This awareness combined with the description of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom in Luke 16:22–23 has led several scholars to argue that the

[467] See Hock 1987: 456.

[468] While my argument primarily focuses on the overlooked Jewish imagery in the parable, I do not place heavy weight on Luke's familiarity with Greek symposium traditions. I regard these influences not as mutually exclusive but as complementary, showing how the portrayal of Jewish characters in a Hellenized context may generate a "third space" of meaning. Within such a space, a marginalized community in an imperial setting could draw upon a multivalent register of allusions and cultural influences (cf. Bhabha 1994).

parable does depict a banquet, although Luke does not mention a meal.[469] The thematic link carries further, as the father of the lost son resembles both Abraham's hospitality and his opulence, and Luke 16 is profoundly occupied with issues of (in)hospitality and the absence of table fellowship. This ideal is tied both to a selective reception history that presents Abraham as a hospitable, pious figure and to his placement within a meal scene that echoes Greco-Roman banqueting traditions, which cast him in certain hegemonic colors. He sits, metaphorically, at the head of the table.

Thirdly, with a shared cultural backdrop of Palto's *Symposium*, ancient banqueting practices are often described in Greco-Roman sources, such as in Plutarch's *Life of Cato the Younger* (775; 33, 4). Luke might be drawing on this literary tradition, as argued substantially by Jonathan Kraus.[470] At the same time, Abraham contrasts the rich man's distribution of wealth by inviting poor Lazarus to recline at his κόλπος instead of leaving him at the gates. Lazarus, being carried to Abraham by angels, moves from the gutter to a place of honor next to the patriarch. The rich man, having had an abundance of possessions in life, has lost everything. Not only is his affluent lifestyle (εὐφραινόμενος καθ' ἡμέραν λαμπρῶς, Luke 16:19) reversed, but he is also no longer able to quench his own thirst, asking Abraham to send Lazarus to moisten his tongue with water (Luke 16:24). Seeing as a heavenly banquet imagery has been developed leading up to Luke 16, Lazarus is laying in Abraham's κόλπος, and Abraham seems to juxtapose the rich man who is judged for not sharing of his feast, picturing Lazarus and Abraham as reclining for a meal might not be too farfetched, although it remains an argument from silence.

As we now have seen, Luke is not explicitly describing a banquet in the parable, and, moreover, if we place Abraham in the host's seat at the banquet, we would be challenged to rethink some of the categories of inclusion and exclusion mentioned by Jesus in Luke 14:15–24.[471] Intriguingly, the ἄνθρωπός τις who hosts the Great Banquet in Jesus' parable in Luke 14 initially struggles to get his invited guests to attend his dinner party. After they all produce unsatisfactory excuses for why they are unable to attend, the host's enslaved person is sent out to bring in diverse groups of marginalized people. In the preceding scene, at the Sabbath meal

[469] Cf. Smith 2003: 37–45; Lehtipuu 2007: 145–52; Somov and Voinov 2019: 470–472.

[470] See Kraus (1991: 18–20; 150–68), who does not discuss Luke 16:19–31 within the context of meal scenes and symposia. See also Eschner (2019: 528–32) for an exposition of similar imagery in Mark's Gospel.

[471] Bovon's (2013: 483) reading of The Rich Man and Lazarus suggests that only two outcomes are available, torment in Hades or invited by Abraham's hospitality: "The strategy of the text is to lead readers to make their moral choice, namely, that of deciding in favor of sharing and fairness. Depending on your response, you will either be carried off by the angel to be in Abraham's bosom or you will go down the path that plunges you into the torments of Hades."

with the leader of the Pharisees, Jesus makes it clear that friends, even family members, and rich neighbors have no place at the great banquet (Luke 14:12). Interestingly, then, in the closing statement of the parable in Luke 14:24, the master applies an exclusively masculine noun (ἀνήρ) when telling the enslaved person that no man originally invited will taste his banquet (Luke 14:24).

It is significant that Luke inserts his version of Mark 8:34 immediately following this parable. In the earlier Markan version, Jesus calls the crowds with his disciples (ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ) to take up their cross and follow him, disregarding even their own life for the sake of the gospel. Mark, with his distinct focus on faith and discipleship, writes this pericope after the healing in Bethsaida (Mark 8:22–26) and Peter's rebuke of Jesus, prompting a discussion of his identity and the need to keep his Messianic identity a secret (Mark 8:27–30). The call to take up one's cross and risk one's life thus comes at a critical point in Mark's Gospel, signifying some of the fundamental issues in the Markan account. Similarly, Matthew places the Markan text after describing the persecution and dangers awaiting the disciples who are being sent out in Matthew 10:38, aligning the text with a distinct focus in Matthew on persecution, as seen from the infancy narrative onwards, and highlighted in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:10).

When Luke inserts the Markan pericope after the great banquet in 14:27, he reveals the importance of wealth distribution and for Jesus' disciples to be hosts for the "poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" (Luke 14:21). Like Matthew and Mark, Luke ties the fundamentals of discipleship to taking up one's cross and following Jesus. However, Luke's version of the Markan pericope might be aimed at a slightly different audience. In the context of the parable of the great banquet, the profound call to discipleship is directed towards those who can be referred to as "master" (κύριος, Luke 14:21), who has an enslaved person (δοῦλος, Luke 14:17, 21), and enough superfluous wealth to invite people from the city streets and the rural roads to his table. This wealthy host is an ideal man for those followers who themselves have the means to serve. And in the story of the rich man and Abraham, that ideal man is personified in the Jewish patriarch, who has been described as a prominent figure at the heavenly banquet earlier in Luke 13, and who now appears with Lazarus in the place of an honorary guest at the peak of Jesus' teaching about inclusion and hospitality.

Luke thus emphasizes the importance of these householders among Jesus' followers by stating emphatically in 14:33 that renouncing all possessions (ἀποτάσσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑπάρχουσιν) is a prerequisite to becoming a disciple. The ensuing parables of searching and finding, hosting and sharing in Luke 15 and 16 intensify this message culminating with the

ideal host Abraham and his heavenly banquet, a theme that is introduced in Luke 13:28, just before the Great Banquet passage in Luke 14. Throughout this part of the Travel Narrative, Luke gives center stage to householders, effectively detailing the cost and requirements of discipleship for those followers who are called to host and be hospitable. In Luke 14, the eschatological consequences of a renunciation of wealth that benefits the poor are identified in the statement made by one of the guests at the dinner party that Jesus is attending, prompting the parable in 14:15, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Moreover, Luke's use of πᾶσιν ("all") in ἀποτάσσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑπάρχουσιν (14:33) clearly is not meant as an encouragement to voluntary impoverishment, as such a total renunciation would make any banquet at the same time a "last supper."[472]

While Luke 14:33 presents renunciation of all possessions as a key part of discipleship, the portrayal of Abraham complicates an overly rigid interpretation of total impoverishment. If absolute renunciation is taken literally to mean becoming a poor itinerant follower, Abraham's position as an affluent host in the afterlife would seem contradictory. Hays' solution to this problem is to argue that "everything" can mean different things and, significantly, that placing one's possessions at the disposal of the Jesus movement fulfills the requirement without necessitating immediate or total self-impoverishment.[473] However, this solution still holds to the notion that wealth and possessions must be abandoned in some sense. A portrayal of Abraham wearing fine vestments and being a "good rich man," as suggested by the 12th-century stonemason, sits somewhat uneasily with Hays' argument. Instead, Luke seems to present a model where wealth, rather than being discarded entirely, is redefined through hospitality and even necessitated, both to save the poor from their earthly suffering and to save the rich from their suffering in the afterlife.[474] While Abraham himself is not explicitly characterized as rich in Luke, his ideal is particularly impactful for those disciples who have excess of possessions or are called to be hospitable.

Therefore, while Jesus and the apostles embody radical dispossession as part of their itinerant ministry, figures like Abraham demonstrate a different mode of faithful discipleship. In Luke and Acts, the righteous may retain wealth but deploy it for hospitality and inclusion. This economic framework allows Luke's οἰκοδεσπότης to appear more than antagonistic and in need of renunciation. Even more, the ideal man that Abraham portrays opens an overlooked category of masculinity, one that values hospitality and economic ethics rooted in Abraham's

[472] As per Mineshinge 2003: 253, pace Hays 2010: 188.
[473] Hays 2010: 184–85.
[474] Cf. Gérard 1995: 92; Wojtkowiak 2023: 22–52.

ideal from Jewish sources, and, at the same time, a masculinity that is largely non-hegemonic. In this way, Luke balances the radical call to giving away possessions with an affirmation of householders who, rather than giving up their economic standing entirely, are called to be hospitable in the image of Abraham.

On the contrary, Luke deploys these householders to forward a theology and a community in which discipleship and masculinity can be tied to charitable deeds and hospitality, tracing back to Levi's banquet in Luke 5:27–32. To present these men as positive and important contributors to the economy of the *ekklēsia*, he casts them as successful and virtuous in a way that creates a new space for constructions of masculinity in the third Gospel (and Acts). Luke seemingly wants the οἰκοδεσπότης to keep the means necessary for offering hospitality. In order to urge householders to forward these ends, possessions and wealth must be a potentially positive characteristic which again leaves room for the οἰκοδεσπότης to be an exemplary man who contributes to the nascent Jesus movement in Luke's narrative and possibly beyond in the ears of Theophilus and other (rich) recipients of his work.

To conclude this section, even though the parable does not depict an eschatological banquet, Abraham plays a significant part in Luke's construction of an ideal hospitable man throughout the Travel Narrative. Finally, although the scene in Luke 16:19–31 takes place in the afterlife, considering how Luke 16 might be harkening back to imagery in Luke 13 and 14 reveals the social as well as eschatological potential in Luke's unique use of the patriarch. In this way, Luke conceptualizes an ideal, exemplary, and good man in Abraham, who figures as a prime example of Jewish virtue and whose impact can be seen as both soteriological, as well as providing other followers of Jesus and the Way with a non-hegemonic masculine ideal.

9 Conclusion: Abraham's Non-Hegemonic Ideal

I draw this chapter to a close by reverting to the sculpture at the entrance to St. Pierre in Moissac. Luke's mirroring of two men, one sumptuously feasting in the rich man's house where Lazarus is rejected and the other in an eschatological scene where the rich man is rejected, is a significant exegetical key that has often been overlooked. But, as remembered by the stonemason's hand, Abraham's pious hospitality towards Lazarus juxtaposes the rich man's inhospitality and sumptuous feasting, presents followers of Jesus and potentially readers of Luke with an ideal figure of the patriarch and his benevolence. At the same time, however, Luke's ideal man patriarchal. Exercising eschatological hospitality dovetails with the practical, socio-economic theology in Luke. Essential for the construction of Luke's *ekklēsia* are the

hospitable disciples who use their possessions to forward the Kingdom of God. To legitimize a gospel to the those who must show care and hospitality to the poor, Luke conceptualizes men who are shaped around righteous wealth distribution and hospitality, exhibiting what it might mean to be a good man in Luke and Acts. This particular Lukan man challenges both Jewish and Greco-Roman notions of masculinity in the image of Abraham. While Luke is not fashioning his male characters into heroes or elite hegemonic men, they are certainly called to be more than subordinate or unmanly. Luke's unique portrayal of Abraham and those called to follow his example are virtuous and good men by a strikingly non-hegemonic conception of masculinity.

At this point, I conclude from this chapter that Luke's ideal man is defined by hospitality, charitable acts, and contributions to a communal economy (cf. Acts 4:32). The closest companions of Jesus are expected to give away everything to follow Jesus, but apart from the apostles, especially when we get to the book of Acts, the householders are expected to provide for the poor, but not necessarily to a point where they become poor themselves. This theme is picked up by Luke in Acts, where the prominent figures of the nascent *ekklēsia* seem to travel around using possessions without being impoverished by their vocation. Moreover, the household becomes a cornerstone when establishing the *ekklēsia*. With the support of the Jerusalem *ekklēsia*, Barnabas (Acts 4:36–37; Acts 11:22–26; Acts 12:25) for example continues to spread the gospel in the Mediterranean basin, establishing an *ekklēsia* in Antioch, just as Lydia seems to be the leader of a household in Philippi (Acts 16:15).

Abraham thus functions as an exemplary man for other men (and potentially also for women, which aligns with a non-hegemonic ideal where femininity is not necessarily antithetical to masculinity), epitomizing care and hospitality in Luke 16:19–31. Abraham is presented as a heavenly host in other Lukan texts, a theme that points both backwards in Luke's Gospel and forwards to Acts. More so, Abraham exemplifies a non-hegemonic masculine ideal, which explains the appearance of Abraham in this pericope, a culmination of a theme that is developed throughout the Travel Narrative. From its beginnings in Galilee, the followers of Jesus are given parables, teachings, and stories about what it means to be a disciple. Central themes are charitable acts and the giving of alms to the poor (Luke 11:41; 12:33), hosting and sharing meals with those on the lower strata of the socio-economic spectrum (Luke14:7–24) and securing patrons in the afterlife by prudent use of possessions (Mammon) (Luke 16:1–9).[475] These are all epitomized in Luke 16:19–31, although the consequence of failing what we

[475] See further Hays 2010: 145–46.

might call the "economy of the *ekklēsia*" is presented earlier in Luke 13:28 (cf. Luke 3:10–14).

Beyond superficial ridicule of the rich man in chapter 16 lies a carefully curated ideal man that Luke applies to forward a social and eschatological economy. This chapter has presented an argument for how Abraham fits Luke's economy of the *ekklēsia* as a model man for other disciples to be measured against. In order to fully appreciate Levi, Abraham, and the other men as examples of ideal and non-hegemonic masculinity through radical hospitality, both as a concurrent social gospel, as well as an eschatological foreshadowing, we need to investigate the realization of Luke's economy as he presents it in his second volume, the Acts of the Apostles. It is to this task we now turn.

Part III: The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Five: Hybrid Masculinities in Acts 10:1–48

1 Introduction

This chapter argues that when Cornelius is characterized based on Jewish notions of piety (Acts 10:2, 4, 31) and falls at Peter's feet (Acts 10:25), conceptions of Roman hegemonic masculinity are challenged and defied by a different ideal for men in Luke's story. Significantly, Cornelius embodies what recent scholarship on Lukan masculinity has not sufficiently appreciated, namely an ideal that is not premised on Roman masculinity. Instead, believers in Acts are, as argued by Douglas Hume, characterized by proclaiming Jesus as Lord, hospitality, and the sharing of possessions.[476] What makes Cornelius such a striking case for our argument, moreover, is that he, as a Roman military officer, could easily have been deployed as a sort of reference point, exemplar, or identity marker of a Roman man.[477] He might have been someone Lukan men aspired to emulate, imitate, or even champion, had their ambitions been to embody hegemonic masculinity. However, this does not seem to be Luke's intention with the centurion. In a striking narrative development, Cornelius is initially lauded for his practice of Jewish customs (Acts 10:2, 4, 31), and then, surprisingly, he disappears from the narrative entirely and is not mentioned after Peter begins preaching nor in the actual conversion scene (Acts 10:34–48; cf. Acts 11:1–18). This chapter argues, therefore, that Cornelius' masculinity is marked by ambivalence and hybridity. Furthermore, the interplay between Cornelius and Peter challenges Roman masculine expectations and presents men that appear worthy of imitation by standards marked by practicing Jewish customs, being servile, and committing one's hospitality and possessions to the Way.[478] Can defiance of empire, selfless servility, and Jewish piety be considered masculine in Luke's narrative in Acts?

2 Road Map

To set up the argument, I will explore how Luke's characterization of Cornelius challenges Roman hegemonic masculinity by presenting an alternative ideal rooted in non-hegemonic and Jewish piety and servility. First, I examine recent scholarly approaches to the debate, situating a reading of Cornelius in the ongoing discourse about gender, hegemony, and

[476] Hume 2011: 155–57.

[477] As suggested by Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 200.

[478] The Jesus movement in Acts is frequently referred to as ὁ ὁδός (the Way) in Acts 9:2; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22.

masculinity in Acts. Secondly, I explore Cornelius' designation as a Godfearer among scholars and the implications of this liminal identity. Having presented preliminary observations, I consider the significance of Cornelius' role as a Roman centurion and the tension between his military identity and his practice of certain Jewish customs. Finally, I consider the three concepts of *mimicry*, *third space*, and *hybridity*, and how a postcolonial perspective might inform Cornelius' masculinity. I conclude that Cornelius and Peter embody a masculine third space, simultaneously subverting imperial authority and reimagining masculinity in the context of Luke's narrative as "sons of Abraham."

3 Situating the Argument in Recent Scholarship

Scholars have readily noticed the favorable light Luke sheds on the centurion. One recent example focuses on the dispatch of Cornelius to Peter in Joppa (Acts 10:22). When they arrive, they tell the apostle that the one who sent them is "a centurion, a just and Godfearing man (ἀνὴρ δίκαιος φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν), as witnessed by the whole Jewish people." With this introduction, Cornelius is given what Matthew Thiessen calls a "glowing character reference."[479] The characteristics that, according to Thiessen, make Cornelius worthy of praise combine elements of his Roman occupation (as a centurion) with his practicing of Jewish piety. Flessen has similarly argued that Luke characterizes Cornelius as an exemplary man and interestingly suggests that his exemplariness is tied not to his hegemonic status, but his practicing of almsgiving and prayer.[480] One the one hand, complicating Wilson's conclusions, he does not necessarily appear unmanly.[481] On the other hand, in line with Wilson's argument, Cornelius could be seen as giving up on his former ties to hegemony to become an unmanly man. Most notably, this would make sense with Cornelius disappearing from the latter part of the narrative. Perhaps he no longer had access to his masculine status? However, the two available categories of being either hegemonic or unmanly leave Cornelius in an awkward

[479] Thiessen 2022: 469.

[480] Flessen 2011: 3–4.

[481] Throughout Luke and Acts, figures such as Levi (Luke 5:27–32), Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10), and Barnabas (Acts 4:36–37), who relinquish possessions for communal benefit, are elevated despite traits that might seem "unmanly" by dominant cultural standards but praised by Jesus and his followers. For instance, Zacchaeus is described as short of stature but identified as a "son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9), signaling how Jesus praises shrewd economic behavior and hospitality, while remaining uninterested in how Zacchaeus lives up to the ideals of the hegemonic man. Similarly, Cornelius transitions from a recognized soldier of the Empire to an anonymous follower of the Way, embodying the Lukan theme of abandoning worldly acclaim to pursue discipleship. This transformation is highlighted further in Acts 11:12, where Peter recounts entering "the man's house" (τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀνδρός). Here, Cornelius is unnamed, yet apparently very much a *man* in the eyes of Peter.

position because his value, for Luke, seems tied to other practices and characteristics. To advance the conversation started by Flessen and Wilson, I suggest that Cornelius idealizes a non-hegemonic man. One thing Thiessen and Flessen do not comment on is how Cornelius so abruptly disappears from the narrative after repeatedly receiving what, for Luke, appears to be laudable characterizations. Moreover, he appears to be challenged by Peter, who, as we shall explore, mimics certain tropes of Greco-Roman masculinity to undermine its authority. In the following, I therefore argue that Cornelius serves a specific purpose, namely, to challenge the authority he is set under as a Roman soldier, what Flessen calls his "direct connection to the empire."[482]

In the latter part of the narrative of Acts 10, when Peter proclaims that Jesus Christ is Lord of all (Acts 10:36), it becomes evident that the imperial cult, along with the authority (and benefaction) typically associated with centurions (cf. Luke 22:25), is challenged by a different ideal, which, according to the argument presented in this thesis, can be viewed as one of Luke's "sons of Abraham." Justin Howell and C. Kavin Rowe have contributed two complementary perspectives on the translation of the Lukan Peter's crucial statement in Acts 10:36 (οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος), both arguing that an inherent part of the scene serves to challenge the emperor and his authoritative agents, such as provincial centurions.[483] Their readings thus highlight a critique of the imperial cult by addressing both the emperor and his subordinates. Rowe focuses on how Jesus, this one (οὗτός), and not the emperor, is proclaimed as Lord of all.[484] Howell, on the other hand, builds on this by arguing that Jesus' lordship is significant because it places him above centurions and other agents of the Empire, further challenging imperial authority.[485]

Drawing on Howell's contribution, Luke's portrayal of Cornelius in Acts 10 deploys similar rhetorical of mimicry and irony, attributing to him qualities that seem contrary to his position within an imperial military system.[486] This irony might serve to highlight a more comprehensive critique of the imperial cult, not just targeting the emperor but extending to his subordinate authorities. From a postcolonial and gendered perspective, Luke might be seen as critiquing Roman power and authority in the context of Acts 10, especially in 10:34–43. At this point in the story, Cornelius has been praised for his benefaction to Jews, but after the promising introduction, it is Peter who takes center stage in Cornelius' house, while the host is not mentioned. When Peter subsequently proclaims Jesus as Lord of all in this context of an

[482] Flessen 2011: 42.
[483] See Rowe 2005: 279–300; Howell 2008: 25–51.
[484] Rowe 2005: 280–81.
[485] Howell 2008: 50–51.
[486] Howell 2008: 25–51.

imperial household, the emperor's power is subverted or even declared powerless. Noting Wilson's argument again, it is not Peter who appears powerless in this scene, but rather Caesar.[487]

While Rowe's argument is primarily focused on the critique of the emperor and the imperial cult, Howell extends the argument to include the emperor *and* those with authority, i.e., centurions, which Howell sees as connected to Luke 22:25 ("the kings/rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors"), because they are benefactors and have authority. Rowe further notes that the emperor and his cult would have been associated with the same terms of authority (ἐξουσία) throughout the Roman Empire.

Cornelius might thus offer a critical lens for understanding Luke's ironic treatment of imperial power. Howell identifies parallels between Cornelius in Acts 10 and the centurion in Luke 7:1–10, particularly in their ambiguous relationship with authority (ἐξουσία). According to Howell, both centurions are portrayed as benefactors (εὐεργέται) to Jewish communities. While this could place them within the framework of Luke 22:25, where Jesus critiques those who "lord it over" others while claiming the title of benefactors, they are in fact giving to Jews and not Gentiles.[488] In Acts 10, Jesus is the one described "doing good" or "serving as a benefactor" (εὐεργετέω, Acts 10:38), while Cornelius is described as giving alms (Acts 10:2, 4, 31) and he is "given a good testimony by the Jewish people" (Acts 10:22).[489]

Based on Acts 10 and its parallels to Luke 7:1–10, it seems that Luke is not placing these centurions in the category of the rulers of the Gentiles, but rather constructing a different kind of Gentile (or Godfearing) figure of authority that is in line with the ideal Jesus sets up for his apostles in Luke 22:25. Howell's argument remains helpful by highlighting the potential irony, and Luke seems to emphasize how centurions, representatives of imperial authority, defy their imperial ties by submitting to the authority of Jesus, the Lord of all. This rhetorical strategy reinforces Luke's subtle critique of the Roman imperial system, suggesting that true authority belongs to Christ and not to the emperor or his subordinates. Luke's critique of imperial power is paired with a description of Cornelius as someone practicing certain aspects of Jewish piety.

The practicing of (Jewish) piety is an understudied perspective on Jewish masculine conceptions. In Luke, and many prevalent Jewish texts from the Second Temple period, being pious could be seen as tied to (im)moral conduct, a subject with ties to the heavily debated area

[487] Wilson 2015: 256 and passim.
[488] Pace Howell 2008.
[489] See Conway 2008: 133.

of Jewish purity language. Jonathan Klawans' distinction of ritual and moral purity is helpful, although we will not go too far into the rather elaborate conversation on purity language in Second Temple Judaism. I simply note that Klawans distinguishes between ritual and moral aspects of purity, where it is only the latter that is caused by sin and, correspondingly, requires punishment or atonement, as in almsgiving and other charitable deeds. Further, Downs argues that in Luke 11:39–41 (see Downs' translation below), Jesus picks up on the same discussion of moral impurity among the Pharisees.[490] This is significant because it singles out Luke's attention to atoning almsgiving (i.e., giving to the poor), while, at the same time, noticing that Luke's Jesus is not criticizing the Pharisees of ritual impurity. Just as Luke's Paul retains his ritual purity throughout Acts (16:3; 21:22–26; 24:18), the Pharisees are ritually pure but morally impure. Downs' translation of Luke 11:41—"Give alms with respect to the things within, and see, everything is clean for you"—shows Luke's attention to the atoning effects of almsgiving in Luke and Acts.[491] According to Downs, Cornelius offers a point of continuity between the Third Gospel (Luke 11:41) and Acts, as his practicing of piety and almsgiving seems somehow tied to how Gentiles after Acts 10:28 are potentially neither profane nor unclean. Downs concludes that, "Cornelius embodies the instruction of Jesus regarding ἐλεημοσύνη in the Gospel of Luke: his prayers and ἐλεημοσύνη are closely connected to his purity."[492]

Why is Luke's language of moral purity, atoning almsgiving, and Jewish customs significant for Cornelius' masculinity? The reason is that, by characterizing Cornelius as a Gentile who aligns with Jesus' teaching from Luke 11:39–41, the Roman centurion appears to have some similarity to ideal Jewish men. One example of such a man is Tobit. As argued convincingly by Downs, Cornelius' and Tobit's piety share several similarities, although it would be suggestive to assume a literary relationship between the two texts. With regards to Wilson's argument that blinding and silence are among the most emasculating characteristics in Luke's stories,[493] the gradually silenced Cornelius (Acts 10:34–43) and the blinded Tobit (Tob 2:10) are excellent test cases for my argument that their hospitality and practicing of Jewish customs are what makes them appear masculine. Leaning on Downs' and Hays' arguments about what constitutes moral standing in Luke, Cornelius appears moral and pious

[490] Downs 2016: 127.
[491] Downs 2016: 125–29.
[492] Downs 2016: 138.
[493] Wilson 2015: 78–112; 152–89.

in a way comparable to Jewish men such as Tobit.[494] Piety was a central virtue for men in the ancient world, both in Greek, Roman, and Jewish culture. Moreover, while this is true from both a Greco-Roman and Jewish perspective, Luke seems to be describing piety and pious behavior by drawing on Jewish examples and exemplars, while Roman benefaction might be alluded to or even criticized. This can be seen perhaps most clearly in Luke 22:25–26, where Luke's Jesus corrects his disciples when they quarrel over who is going to be the greatest, telling them that while people in positions of power might be called benefactors (εὐεργέται), it is not so for the apostles who must become "like the youngest and the leader like one who serves (ὁ ἡγούμενος ὡς ὁ διακονῶν)." While Roman piety would have potentially tied Cornelius to practices such as worshipping the imperial cult, paying tribute to the emperor, and claiming military victories on behalf of Rome, which can all be tied to hegemonic masculinity, the piety he practices in the Lukan text is strikingly non-hegemonic. Luke's rhetorical use of leadership or hegemony (ἡγέομαι, Luke 22:26) is tied to a juxtaposition and a paradox by being defined through servility and service (διακονέω, Luke 22:26). Before honing the discussion in on Cornelius, we briefly consider the implication of piety on masculinity in a first-century CE context.

4 Piety and Masculinity in the Ancient World

To explore how piety could impact Jewish and Roman conceptions of masculinity, I briefly consider how this virtue (*pietas*/εὐσέβεια) is deployed by three contemporary authors, Emperor Augustus, Josephus, and Philo. Josephus' portrayal of Moses provides a useful comparison, as Josephus integrates Jewish conceptions of piety with Roman literary tropes and conventions. In the third and fourth book of *Jewish Antiquities* (*Ant.*), Moses exemplifies piety through obedience to divine law and humility,[495] yet Josephus also alludes to Moses' authoritative leadership in ways that could resemble tyrannical traits.[496] Augustus similarly emphasizes his *pietas* as a cornerstone of his leadership in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, portraying himself as a benevolent ruler who restores peace and moral order to Rome. While pointedly rejecting accusations of tyranny,[497] *pietas* in Augustus' writing is also tied to

[494] The similarities are extensive, as all of Cornelius' commendable traits appear foundational to Tobit's character as well. See Acts 10:2 and Tobit 1:3, 3:1–6 (piety); Acts 10:4 and Tobit 1:16–17, 4:7–11, 12:12–14 (charity and divine favor); Acts 10:23–24, 10:48 and Tobit 2:1–2, 2:4–7 (hospitality); Acts 10:4 and Tobit 12:12–14 (prayers and acts of charity remembered before God).

[495] See, e.g., *Ant.* 4.150–151.

[496] See, e.g., *Ant*. 3.214–215 for the description of Moses' leadership during the wilderness rebellion.

[497] *Res gest. divi Aug.* 7, 9, 34. Tr. Cooley 2009.

successful military conquest and divination. Finally, Philo's treatment of Moses paints him as a divine human and, in many ways, an ideal man. While a comprehensive treatment of these writers is outside the scope of this thesis, we might offer some points of comparison to show how the virtue of piety influenced conceptions of masculinity in similar and distinct ways for Jewish and Roman authors concurrent with Luke.

Notably, Cornelius' piety is tied to practicing Jewish customs, his household is baptized into a movement that proclaims Jesus as "Lord or all," and Cornelius himself, in terms of his status, accolades, or honor, does not seem to be Luke's focus after having introduced the centurion. Augustus' piety similarly casts the emperor as benevolent and charitable, yet the overarching aim of divinization contrasts with the charitable customs Cornelius demonstrates, as recognized by his angelic messenger (Acts 10:4, 31). While Roman emperors were elevated to divine status if deemed worthy (e.g., Augustus, but not Caligula or Nero),[498] piety in Luke seems to be valued for its fear of the God of Israel and its benefit to the oppressed.[499] This interplay might make piety a well-suited virtue for imperial mimicry.

While Cornelius appears pious similar to a hegemonic man in an imperial context, the specific practice reflects both shared cultural significance and conflicting associations to imperial authority and masculinity. As the complementing arguments by Howell and Rowe articulates, both the emperor and his figures of authority such as centurions are subjected to critique in Luke's narrative, when Jewish customs are lauded and Jesus, not the emperor is presented as the Lord.[500] Luke's attention to practicing piety and assigning authority has implications for constructions of masculinity. Based on similar references to Josephus, Augustus and other contemporary sources, Robinson argues that "the gendered ideology of Roman imperial domination (…) shows that the more resistant a group is to Roman control the more effeminate are their descriptions. Such a distinction is important as Josephus pointedly describes the rebels who cause the war as acting like women."[501] Viewed from a Roman

[498] See Suetonius, *Cal.* 60 and *Nero* 56 for their rejection in the imperial cult.

[499] In Suetonius' *Aug*. 1.1, Augustus is introduced as making sacrificial offerings to Mars when he suddenly called to battle, and his piety is given as the reason why the military campaign was successful.

[500] Rowe 2005: 279–300; Howell 2008: 25–51.

[501] Robinson 2019: 96. His methodological approach operates from the viewpoint of Roman masculinity and seeks to explore subordinate masculinity in 1 Corinthians, defined in an earlier section as such, "Even though the details of masculinity differ, distinguishing bodies as masculine or feminine based on a distinction of active-passive or control-uncontrolled functions in connection with social norms to form a gendered hierarchy. This hierarchy places some men at the apex of power by defining them as the ideal of masculinity, non-ideal men and elite women occupy a middle position, and women, enslaved people, and all lower-class men occupy the bottom position. The result is a pyramid where the top represents a concentration of power in the smallest group comprised exclusively of elite men. The result is a form of hegemonic masculinity, as defined by Connell, which coopts social norms and the idea of nature to limit access to masculinity and simultaneously attribute it a disproportionate amount of social and legal power," Robinson 2019: 49–50.

perspective, Robinson is correct to conclude that oppositional groups are rendered effeminate. The question is, however, whether that is the preferred or applied perspective of Paul (for Robinson), or Luke, or any of the New Testament authors.

The *Res Gestae* demonstrates how piety was central to the Roman ideal of leadership, integrated into the emperor's identity as both a moral exemplar and a military leader. Augustus frames his *pietas* as pivotal to his achievements, connecting it to his role in avenging Caesar and bringing peace to Rome.[502] As Cooley notes, Augustus uses virtues like *pietas* and *iustitia* to underscore his role as a protector and restorer of moral order.[503] Similarly, Josephus presents piety (εὐσεβεῖν) as a defining characteristic of leadership, exemplified by Moses. However, Josephus' portrayal of Moses is complex, as he draws attention to both Moses' pious obedience to divine law, and the authority he wields over his people in ways that could appear tyrannical. For instance, in *Against Apion* (*Ag. Ap.*), Josephus juxtaposes Moses' piety with the despotic tendencies of other rulers (τυραννίδας) while acknowledging the authoritative power Moses exercised.[504] In some ways, both Augustus and Moses are portrayed as figures whose leadership derives legitimacy from their piety, illustrating how this virtue was crucial across cultural and political divides in the ancient world. The similarities and distinct characteristics of different portrayals of piety effectively make it a virtue that is apt for an ambiguous character such as Cornelius, who embodies and practices tenets of both Roman and Jewish masculinity.

What is particularly notable in these accounts is the way piety reinforces the leader's identity as a figure of moral and spiritual authority. Augustus' *pietas* is closely tied to his military successes, presenting him as a liberator and restorer of Rome's order.[505] Josephus highlights Moses' piety through his humility and submission to divine law, though this same leadership is at times depicted with authoritarian overtones, such as his imposition of laws and responses to rebellion.[506] Cornelius exemplifies a form of leadership that bridges these traditions, drawing on values of service and piety that align closely with the Jewish framework, while still representing the Roman army, which, to Luke, does not seem to be contradictory or mutually exclusive. In some ways, piety emerges as a common virtue that legitimizes leadership across Roman and Jewish contexts, while Luke subtly prioritizes practices resonant with the humility and devotion of Jewish piety.

Philo's writings further illuminate the interplay of piety and leadership, presenting

[502] *Res gest. divi Aug.*, 1–2, 34–35.
[503] Cooley 2009: 103.
[504] *Ag. Ap.* 2.158–59. Tr. Thackeray 1926: 356–57.
[505] *Res gest. divi Aug.* 9.
[506] *Ant*. 3.214–215.

Moses as both a godlike and ideal man. In *Sacrifices* 8–10 and *Names* 125–129, Philo characterizes Moses as a figure of divine-like perfection, paralleling Augustus' depiction of himself in the *Res Gestae*. Conway notes that Philo's association of Moses' piety with his gender identity reflects a broader ancient conception in which virtue and masculinity elevate a figure toward the divine.[507] One striking similarity between the emperor's agenda and Philo's writings is the emphasis on appearing godlike. In terms of deification, Philo's characterization of Moses is, at times, similar to Augustus' self-description as divine.[508] The two authors share a literary ambition, namely, to present the object of their writing as ideal to a point where the literary characterization of a (hu)man tips over into a category of the "godlike" (θειότερον) or apotheosis. As was typical across ancient conceptions of masculinity, the masculine is contrasted with the feminine. The tendency to associate men with gods and women with a "degenerate soul"[509] is widespread in ancient literature, tracing back to Aristotle.[510] With the understanding of ancient gender as performed in a hierarchy in mind, virtuous, or godlike performance is, in many ways, synonymous with ideal masculinity. An additional characteristic of the works of Augustus and Philo is, therefore, the procuration of the ideal man. As argued by Conway, "Philo's conception of Moses as a god is closely linked with his understanding of Moses as an ideal man, where "man" is understood in terms of Moses's gender identity."[511] Conway aims to inform the heavily trodden debate on whether or not Philo thinks of Moses as a god, but her analysis is helpful for our study of how piety and masculinity are intertwined in ancient gender conceptions. For Conway, the more godlike the characterization, the more masculine the object of that characterization appears.[512] Philo and Augustus can, therefore, be seen as correlating piety with masculinity (i.e., godliness) and they seem inclined to dedicate their rhetorical acumen to portraying their respective heroes as pious.[513]

In these three authors' accounts, piety legitimizes authority and constructs a masculine ideal. Yet Luke's depiction of Cornelius subtly reframes these notions. Rather than presenting Cornelius as a figure of dominance or aspiring divinity, Luke emphasizes his humility and

[507] Conway 2003: 473.

[508] Conway notes *Sac*. 8–10; *Vita* I.27, 158; *Mut*. 125–9 as instances where Philo describes Moses in divine terms, but notes that Philo very much remains monotheistic, as seen in e.g., *Mut*. 7–10, 181–82; *Tom*. 1.66, *Post*. 14, *Zeus*. 14. See Conway 2003: 471.

[509] Conway 2003: 478.

[510] For Aristotle, the reason for an inherent godlikeness in the male body is due to his active role in creation, as stated in *Gen*. *An*. 732a9. See further Laqeuer 1990; Gleason 1995. For an overview, see Conway 2003: 473–74.

[511] Conway 2003: 473.

[512] Conway 2003: 478–79.

[513] Conway 2003: 479.

devotion to the God of Israel (Acts 10:2, 31). Luke's most striking characterization of Cornelius is, therefore, the way he fades out of the story. Contrary to a masculinity that elevates and even divinizes the man, Luke's ideal man gives up on these claims to manliness and retreats to the background of the narrative. Cornelius' acts of charity and reverence reflect Jewish traditions of piety, aligning more closely with the virtues associated with Moses than with the imperial *pietas* of Augustus. This suggests that while piety transcends cultural divides, Luke's narrative subtly prioritizes the elements of piety that resonate with Jewish humility and service over those tied to conquest and domination.

Both Philo and Augustus present their heroes as ideal figures whose piety and masculinity elevate them above ordinary men. Conway describes the interconnectedness of the masculine, the pious, and the divine by arguing that "the divine/human hierarchy is intricately connected to the male/female one. A more pious soul indicates a more masculine status, or vice versa. Becoming more pious and becoming more masculine are one and the same and both result in a move up the cosmic hierarchy toward the divine realm."[514] From these brief examples, we might suggest that both Jewish and Roman traditions integrate piety as a performative element that reinforces ideal masculinity, though expressed within distinct cultural contexts. In Luke's story, Cornelius is placed in a liminal space, drawing on the ambiguous performances of piety between a Jewish and Roman context. Before I continue to explore the implications of both Cornelius' imperial ties and his Jewish piety, I briefly pause to consider the fundamental significance of Cornelius being someone who practices Jewish customs without being (fully) Jewish. Scholars often apply the term "Godfearer" to describe an individual who has not converted but does not strictly fit all the markers of the broader category of a "Gentile." To further explore Cornelius' identity and masculinity, I therefore offer some brief comments on the contested term "Godfearer."

5 Cornelius: An Exemplary Godfearer?

As the gospel spreads in Acts, from Jewish Christ-following communities towards an *ekklēsia* that includes Gentiles, certain liminal characters seem to have some foreknowledge of Jewish Scriptures and practices. The first character Luke describes in this way is the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26–40, who is baptized by Philip after having read and become intrigued by the words of the prophet Isaiah. Kartzow and Moxnes argue that the Ethiopian eunuch

[514] Conway 2003: 479.

elucidates dynamics of inclusion and identification, which helpfully situates these ambivalent characters.[515] While the Ethiopian eunuch exemplifies the inclusion of a foreign ethnicity, a literate, Nubian eunuch, and in many ways an unmanly man by most ancient standards, the inclusion of Cornelius is diametrical. The baptism and subsequent incorporation of an African eunuch have radical, perhaps even queering, consequences for ethnicity and gender in the Lukan community, as argued by Kartzow and Moxnes: "Such persons were 'cut off' from the opportunity to procreate and were left outside the traditional household context, since they could not fulfill roles as husbands and fathers."[516] While these factors are no hindrance for Philip to baptize the eunuch, the baptism of Cornelius' household attests to a different mode of discipleship and a diverse category available in Acts for non-Jews. The first non-Jewish converts can, effectively, be both a castrated Ethiopian eunuch from the "ends of the earth" or a Roman centurion from the heart of the Empire.[517]

According to Kartzow and Moxnes, "the Ethiopian eunuch was much more of an 'other' than Cornelius in Acts 10–11, who was described as a God-fearing Roman officer before his conversion."[518] While the intersectional elements of race, sexuality, geography, and occupation place the eunuch on the margins of ancient society compared to Cornelius, they might represent distinct ways of entering the early Jesus-following movement. However, viewing Cornelius as a representative of the Roman Empire does not seem to align with either the masculine or the anti-imperial characterization that Luke attributes to the centurion.

Significantly, therefore, the second character whom Luke places in this "in-between" category is Cornelius, whose household conversion narrative is interwoven with Peter's angelic vision proclaiming all foods permissible for Jews and thereby propagating the way for non-Jews to partake in the table fellowship of Christ-believers. The eunuch and the centurion have some exposure to Jewish practices before being baptized, and, because these characters are somewhat hybrid or liminal, it might be helpful to label them according to their third space. For all practical purposes, these liminal characters can be referred to as Godfearers, as a way of indicating that they practice forms of Jewish piety without having been circumcised or converted. However, this distinction is not uncontroversial.

On the one hand, Ross Kraemer critiques the use of Godfearer as a fitting translation of

[515] Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 184–204.
[516] Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 194.
[517] Nubia was often perceived quite literally as the "ends of the earth," cf. Acts 1:8 as per Shauff 2009: 762–75.
[518] Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 200.

θεοσεβής.[519] She argues that the term lacks specific references in the available manuscript and material evidence, and that, consequently, its use tends to be sweeping, rigid, and "theoretically flawed" because a similar category is not available for other similar phenomena outside the context of Gentiles who practice some form of Jewish customs.[520] Paula Fredriksen, on the other hand, upholds the validity of "Godfearers" as someone who is "a pagan who voluntarily assumes [...], or who supports [...], or who utilizes [...] some aspects of Jewishness, which eo ipso implies some degree of contact both with (local) Jews and (thus and also) with their god."[521] Her argument aims to build on Kraemer's work and acknowledges how the term is frequently used in an overly broad way.[522]

At the same time, Fredriksen argues that similar practices were widespread in the ancient Hellenized world and that the inherent flexibility embedded in the term "Godfearer" might serve its intended purpose.[523] Its plasticity reflects, in many ways, the historical practice it describes. Therefore, we should recognize that Godfearer is a somewhat technical term that lacks synonyms to capture the range of other practices that would have been frequent in any practice of ancient faith and piety. This is especially significant in the urban context from which many of the New Testament texts arose.[524] When referring to Cornelius as a Godfearer, I lean on Fredriksen's argument to signal that Luke is here introducing a significant group of characters who practice Jewish customs without being proselytes.[525]

Luke's characterization of Cornelius establishes several points of connection with the category of a "Godfearer" throughout Acts 10. While specific practices play a role, the fundamental qualification is tied to how Luke depicts Cornelius as embodying Jewish piety without full conversion prior to his baptism. Certain aspects of Luke's introductory description underscore this characterization. In Acts 10:1–2, Luke portrays Cornelius as "a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God," firmly situating him within Jewish practices of prayer and charity. Notably, Cornelius remains an officer in the Italian cohort according to Luke, yet his devotion to Jewish piety is further validated in Acts 10:3–6, where he receives an angelic vision that acknowledges his prayers and almsgiving as a "memorial before God." Continuing to serve in

[519] Kraemer 2014: 61–87; cf. Kramer 2011: 179–232.
[520] Kraemer 2014: 62.
[521] Fredriksen 2015: 33.
[522] Fredriksen 2015: 25.
[523] Fredriksen 2015: 30–33.
[524] See Fredriksen 2015: 27. She argues that life in the ancient *polis* entailed relationships with the deities of those who lived there, and that, at least in a private sense, Jews would participate in the "godfearing" of foreign gods, without necessarily stepping into the realm of idolatry or syncretism.
[525] See also Keener 2013: 1750–53.

a Roman legion would require cultic practice, and it seems likely therefore that Cornelius would not have devoted himself only to the God of Israel. Finally, Cornelius' liminal identity as a "Godfearer" also aligns with Peter's vision in Acts 10:9–16, where the divine revelation abolishing distinctions between clean and unclean foods signals the breakdown of barriers to Gentile inclusion.

Cornelius' identity fits within Fredriksen's framework, describing someone connected to local Jews, their customs, and their God.[526] This development is further exemplified in Peter's proclamation in Acts 10:34–35: "God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." Here, Peter affirms Cornelius' household as welcomed into the Jesus-following movement. Lastly, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his household in Acts 10:44–48, occurring even before baptism, functions as a divine endorsement of Cornelius' pivotal role as a "Godfearer" and participant in the growing *ekklēsia*. In other words, Cornelius is particularly useful in Luke's narrative because his identity is liminal. Throughout Acts 10, Luke presents Cornelius as a central figure bridging Jewish customs and Gentile inclusion and labelling him as a "Godfearer" captures significant parts of this liminal identity.

6 The Implications of Cornelius' Ties to Rome and Jewish Customs

The subjugation of Cornelius to Jesus (and Peter), and the implicit and/or explicit critique of the imperial cult, the emperor himself, as well as his authoritative subjects, carry significant implications. By appearing to render power to Jesus and the God of Israel, Cornelius undermines imperial power and challenges conceptions of masculinity. His complex characterization invites certain questions: How can the Lukan man value hegemonic Roman ideals if the very building blocks of hegemonic power are criticized by the conversion of a Roman soldier?[527] Or, alternatively, how can Lukan men be considered unmanly when Cornelius is seemingly praised for practicing Jewish customs?[528] It seems that the comparative model where masculinity is only studied from a Roman hegemonic perspective, leaves some of these tensions unsolved. As with Levi and Abraham, Cornelius appears as a man to be emulated because he adheres to tenets of Jewish customs valued by Luke. The story of Cornelius seems to foreground Jewish piety in a story about a man with certain ties to

[526] Fredriksen 2015: 33.
[527] Contra Conway 2008: 127–42.
[528] Pace Wilson 2015: 21.

hegemonic power. Masculinity can instead be considered in light of what Jewish, and now also Godfearing, Christ-followers would have adhered to, as argued by Wines.[529] Interestingly, what Wines argues is true for the Jewish followers of Jesus seems to be crucial also when the Way expands to include men with ties to Roman hegemonic masculinity.

To explore what constitutes an alternative ideal, Hebrew Bible scholarship on non-hegemonic masculinity and postcolonial concepts of mimicry and hybridity[530] offer alternative ways to approach a Roman military officer who is described as a pious Godfearer in the eyes of first-century Jews.[531] As surveyed in Chapter Two, Bhabha argues that such hybrid characterizations are typical of the encounters between imperial power and their subjects.[532] Could Cornelius, in this way, be a symbol of defiance? A man who does not invite or exemplify the Roman manly man, but rather someone who ambiguously challenges the very authority with which this type of masculinity was enforced on Jews and others living under Roman oppression?

According to Luke's report, the Jewish Jesus-following community appreciated Cornelius' benefaction and piety. One could imagine, therefore, that such a virtuous Roman soldier would imply that the hegemonic man in Luke and Acts can be an ideal. This has certainly been suggested by scholars such as Kartzow and Moxnes, who see Cornelius as a Roman "alpha male" that men in Luke and Acts could have a point of comparison.[533] The potential in Luke's story of Cornelius and other centurions and Roman figures of authority is, however, an opportunity to criticize imperial power. Should Cornelius have been praised for how he performed and aligned with *Roman masculine conceptions*—it is strange that Luke explicitly praises Cornelius for his practicing of Jewish customs.

This does not mean, however, that virtues and deeds such as piety and almsgiving or benefaction were exclusively either Jewish or Roman. In fact, Luke notes several centurions who give benefactions to Jewish communities in Luke and Acts (Luke 7:1–10; 23:47; Acts 10:1–48; 22:25–29; 27:1–3). What we should note, and what Kartzow and Moxnes overlook, is that Cornelius' piety seems to be valued because it represents his attempts to practice certain aspects of Judaism. When Luke's Jesus says that there is a difference between the kings or rulers (βασιλεῖς) of the Gentiles and the leaders of the Jesus movement in Luke 22:25, the impetus is on doing what the Gentile rulers cannot, because Jesus' followers are called to lower

[529] Wines 2023: 6.
[530] Bhabha 2004: 121–31.
[531] A perspective that owes credit to the work of Bonnie J. Flessen (2011).
[532] Bhabha 2004: 3.
[533] Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 200–4.

themselves. The comparison of the apostles to the Gentile rulers in Luke 22 uses the rhetoric of political power to undermine its authority, in line with Bhabha's concept of mimicry.[534] Through mimicry, the apostles' leadership mirrors aspects of Gentile political authority, yet subtly destabilizes it by redefining greatness as servitude, thereby exposing the limitations of hierarchical power, emphasizing instead a radically different "greatness" rooted in service and identification with the poor. The apostles are called to be leaders of the *ekklēsia* just as the Gentile rulers are set to govern the people under them, but Jesus' leaders are distinguishable in the way they are called to lead.[535] When the apostles argue about who is the greatest (μείζων, Luke 22:24), Jesus uses political language to distinguish between the Gentile benefactors who are marked by their hierarchical position above their clients or beneficiaries, while Jesus' aspiring leaders will be—note that the apostles hear Jesus' teaching after having misunderstood this very point—known by servility.

Cornelius' characterization in Acts 10 is similarly tied to his performance and practice of Jewish customs that benefit the marginalized community. His ties to Roman masculine conceptions as a soldier and someone who typically exercised domination over the Empire's subjects make Cornelius a useful tool for defining a Godfearing disciple and a masculine man. By using a centurion to undermine imperial authority, the characterization of Cornelius destabilizes the claims of earlier scholarship that Luke portrays men as masculine (e.g., Conway)[536] or unmanly (Wilson) *based on how these men live up to the expected masculine performance of Roman hegemonic masculinity*.[537] Cornelius shows that masculinity can be defined through servility, hospitality, and charity based on Jewish customs without being subordinate or unmanly vis-à-vis the hegemonic ideal. It is, rather, a non-hegemonic ideal. Luke's Jesus makes a point in distinguishing the type of benefaction given by those under imperial authority and that given by his followers. Similarly in the Cornelius story, the piety that is lauded is a practicing of Jewish piety and almsgiving, not as a testimony to imperial

[534] Bhabha 1984: 125–33. Cf. discussion above in Chapter Two.

[535] Similar to how the concept of mimicry is used to define how marginalized people adopt aspects of the oppressing culture—*almost, but not quite the same*—the use of κυριεύουσιν in Luke 22:25 creates ambiguity. While Jesus is often referred to as the κύριος (Lord) in Luke's narrative, a subtle yet significant distinction is made here between those who would use their royalty or authority to assert dominance and those who are called to serve. Lordship, for Luke's Messiah, is not so much about "lording" (κυριεύουσιν), as Jesus is frequently associated with the poor. The ambivalence of Jesus being, in William Lane's words "the poor man *par excellence*" (1974: 494), and the "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36), can be seen as creating a masculine third space, where hegemonic power is simultaneously criticized, mimicked, and overthrown.

[536] Although Conway explores a range of masculine constructions of Jesus and other men in the New Testament, her reading of the Lukan Christ is a seminal example of using Roman masculinity to characterize Jesus in the Third Gospel. See Conway 2008: 7, 91–96, 127–42. See further Friis 2020: 109–11.

[537] Conway 2008: 127–42; Wilson 2015: 256.

benefaction. In fact, had Cornelius "lorded it" (κυριεύουσιν, Luke 22:25) over his Jewish neighbors, he would have been breaking with the teachings of Luke's Jesus from Luke 22:25.[538] Herein lies Cornelius' potential. He is on the surface an agent of Caesar, but Luke's favorable characterization of him is tied to practices that undermine Caesar's authority. It seems contradictory, therefore, that Cornelius' prayers and charitable deeds should have ascended before the God of Israel, had his intentions been that of the Gentile rulers, namely, to enforce hierarchal authority and display power. Kartzow and Moxnes miss out on this potential by characterizing Cornelius as an image of the hegemonic Roman man contrasted with the Ethiopian eunuch.[539] Instead, it is Cornelius' servility that allows him to be a point of identification for Godfearing Jesus-followers, not his Roman benefaction or, for that matter, his authority as a Roman centurion of the Italian cohort.

To draw together this first part of the argument, Cornelius is portrayed as a good man in Acts 10. However, the traits that make him appear masculine are rooted in practices and performances aligned with Jewish traditions, challenging typical Roman conceptions of masculinity.[540] Cornelius' identity and masculinity is further challenged by the seemingly unproblematic reference to him being a Roman soldier. From the perspective of Roman hegemonic masculinity, Cornelius appears unmanly when he falls before Peter, gives alms, or submits to Jesus as "Lord of all." However, these masculine conceptions do not seem to reflect Luke's perspective or narrative emphasis. Instead, Luke highlights Cornelius' positive attributes as a Godfearer, and through Peter's speech, positions Cornelius and his household as the setting for the first proclamation of the (Lukan) gospel to Gentiles. Interestingly, for the hegemonic man to be criticized, Cornelius' place in the story recedes to the background.

[538] Although Jesus' teaching from Luke's Gospel is not explicitly referenced in Acts, Luke's characterization of Cornelius appears to resonate with Jesus' instruction in Luke 22:25, suggesting a degree of continuity between Jesus' teaching and the practices of his followers, even without direct citation. Exploring connections between Jesus' teaching in Luke's Gospel and the portrayals of Cornelius, Peter, and the Philippian jailer in Acts aligns with what is often described as narrative-ethical interpretation. Douglas Hume (2011: 4–6; 36–37; 147–57) argues that Acts 2:41–47 and Acts 4:32–35, which depict the communal and hospitable *ekklēsia* in Jerusalem, function to shape a broader narrative-ethical purpose—much as I suggest that Jesus' teaching and parables in Luke's Gospel are reflected in characterizations within Acts. Notably, Hume (2011: 156) concludes that sharing possessions and extending hospitality are central throughout Acts, calling for further study of passages such as Acts 10 and 16. By reading the stories of Cornelius and the Philippian jailer through the lens of hospitality, we can better appreciate their contribution to the overarching narrative developments in both Luke and Acts.

[539] Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 184–200.

[540] Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 831.

7 Cornelius' Ambivalent Role in the Lukan Story

There is one additional element of Cornelius' story in Acts 10 that should be noted. When Cornelius encounters Peter something unexpected happens. From being a character introduced by name and described in detail regarding his life as both a Roman soldier and a Godfearer, Cornelius strikingly fades away as the narrative suspense reaches its culmination in the giving of the Holy Spirit and the baptism and conversion of the entire household (Acts 10:44–48). If Cornelius is, as argued by Flessen, an exemplary man, it is noteworthy that by the end of Acts 10, and in Peter's retelling of the incident in Acts 11, Cornelius is not even mentioned.[541] Instead, it is Peter who appears to take center stage. From a gendered perspective, Peter triumphs as an orator while Cornelius is silenced.[542] Moreover, the centurion falls at Peter's feet and is subsequently told to stand up by an uneducated and ordinary man (cf. Acts 4:13), a striking image considering how Rome sought to portray the Jewish people as dominated and subjugated in the first century and beyond.[543] These perspectives challenge the scholarly view that Luke, especially in places like Acts 10, aims to conform to imperial rhetoric and present Luke and Acts as literary compositions amenable to an imperial context.[544] If Luke is not deploying Cornelius as a point of identification with the Empire, but is rather critical of imperial authority, Cornelius' hybrid masculinity implies that the hegemonic man is criticized and not idealized. A hybrid man is, as argued by Bhabha, someone who might mimic and embody elements of hegemonic traits, to subtly undermine and defy oppressive powers.[545]

In the only monograph devoted to Cornelius' masculinity, Flessen uses an intersection of piety, characterization, and concepts from gender studies to argue that Cornelius is an exemplary man. Reviewing Flessen's work, Eric Barreto calls for a postcolonial perspective to be added to the study of Cornelius' masculinity, and the present study seeks to build on Barreto's keen eye for postcolonial perspectives in the text. Using Bhabha's terminology of hybridity, Barreto argues that we might "imagine an interstitial space between accommodation and resistance."[546] Barreto's critique might be overly scrutinous. Flessen does introduce the

[541] Cf. Acts 15:7–9.

[542] For the significance of public speech and oratory in ancient conceptions of masculinity, see Gleason 1995: 67–84; Johnson 2010: 204, cf. Dinkler 2013: 88–91.

[543] For a study of Roman military occupation of the Mediterranean basin in the relevant period, see Saddington 1996: 157–81. For the presence of Roman (auxiliary) legions in Caesarea, see Keener 2013: 1704–44, cf. Jos. *War* 2.268.

[544] See Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 200; Matthews 2019: 164–65; Williams 2023: 3, 151.

[545] Bhabha 2004: 72, 153.

[546] Barreto 2013: 796.

significance of these perspectives in her study of Cornelius, although her study simply does not dwell on the postcolonial sensitivities it so clearly alludes to:

> Colonized people like Greeks and Jews were forced to create the means by which they would critique their oppressors. Through rhetorical discourse about masculinity, they fashioned a method of liberation. They created new options for the demonstration of masculine virtue and made courage available to un-men. No longer were power and control limited to Roman authority figures... [but] people under them established their own standards and found ways to be masculine in adverse circumstances.[547]

Flessen's argument is developed around two assumptions: 1) that masculinity among marginalized and oppressed groups was defiantly constructed to challenge their oppressors, and 2) that these constructions were shaped by courage, power, and control. Noticeably, her work on Cornelius, as well as my position in the present study, shows that while she is correct to assume the first point, the second point seems to be misaligned with Luke's characterization of Cornelius and other central Lukan men. In the Third Gospel, Jesus emphasizes the value of servitude, calling his followers to adopt humility and service (Luke 9:46–50; 14:7–11; 22:24–30), while also urging them to endure pain, suffering, and hardship as part of their discipleship (Luke 6:23; 9:22–23; 14:27; 21:12–19; 22:42–44; 24:25–26). Moreover, the humble piety exhibited by Cornelius in Acts 10 resembles the generous and hospitable man, not a man who seeks courage, power, or control. Cornelius resembles the characterization of Abraham in Genesis 18:1–8 (cf. Gen 12; 22; 26), the Mosaic ideal of Deuteronomy 10:12–13, or the man in LXX Proverbs 19–22, whose fruit is alms (καρπὸς ἀνδρὶ ἐλεημοσύνη). Noticeably, several non-hegemonic tropes exist in Jewish texts, and these masculine ideals challenge the assumption held by Flessen and others that the way of appearing masculine for Jews is by attaining the virtues of their oppressors. Cornelius aligns with the impetus to give alms found in Luke 11:39–41, and is a man who shares more similarities with the characterization of Tobit's practice of almsgiving (Tob 4: 7–8; 7:1–11, cf. Sir 3:30–31) than hegemonic masculine conceptions such as those Flessen claims were defining for Cornelius' masculinity (courage, power, control).

According to postcolonial theory, mimicry and ambivalence are common among marginalized groups searching for identity under imperial and colonial power. The characterization of Peter as an articulate orator and acclaimed leader fits within broader Greco-

[547] Flessen 2011: 80–81.

Roman literary tropes and can thus be seen as mimicking the dominant culture.[548] Peter, in many ways, looks like Quintilian's ideal man, who can appear virtuous and morally superior by the power of his oratory skills, as noted by Robinson.[549] As we have seen, however, mimicry is an inherently ambiguous concept, and the narrative in Acts 10 significantly challenges the validity of Roman hegemonic masculinity although Peter shows signs of a masculinity that would have been recognized by Roman elites. It is specifically this mimicking of elite oratory by an ordinary fisherman from Galilee that galvanizes the anti-imperial potential, by showing how Peter can best the military officer in his own household, all the while asserting a fundamentally different masculine ideal.

The significance of a Jewish masculine ideal in Acts 10 has significant implications because here, for the first time, they are attributed to a man who, up until this point, would have represented this oppressor. On the surface, Cornelius represents those powers and criminalizing forces that, in the words of Peter uttered in Cornelius' house, "put him (Jesus) to death by hanging him on a tree" (Acts 10:39). Yet, Luke does not use Cornelius as a representative of this power, instead Luke challenges imperial authority by presenting Jesus as Lord of all and Cornelius as a Godfearer and later convert to the Way.[550]

Peter's words in Cornelius' household reveal how Jesus suffered torture and execution by the Empire, and this verse has been central for scholars who have sought to emphasize that the crucifixion places God in the midst of those who have experienced, and who still experience, criminalization, state-sanctioned violence, mob-endorsed murder, lynching, and terror. In a recent study on criminalization in Acts, Jeremy L. Williams argues that "[t]hose who have been on the underside of judicial and extrajudicial punishments—those such as Hughes, Brooks, Du Bois, and Cone—identify with the criminalized."[551] Williams' contribution is exegetically meticulous as well as ethically informed by the history of violence against "descendants of slaves, immigrants, Muslims, and Palestinians."[552] Williams draws on Cone, who famously uses Acts 10:39 frequently in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* as a reminder that "[t]he cross places God in the midst of crucified people, in the midst of people

[548] Witherup 1993: 45–66.

[549] Robinson 2019: 3, cf. Quintilian, *Inst*. 12.2.1–2, trans. Russell, LCL: "Since the orator is a good man (*vir bonus*), and the concept of a good man (*virtutem*) is unintelligible apart from virtue (*virtus*), and since [virtue], though it derives some impulses from nature, has none the less to be perfected by teaching, the orator must above all else develop his moral character by study, and undergo a thorough training in the honorable and the just, because without this no one can be either a good man (*vir bonus*) or a skilled speaker."

[550] Contra Kartzow and Moxnes 2010: 200; cf. Williams 2023.

[551] Williams 2023: 3.

[552] Williams 2023: 194.

who are hung, shot, burned, and tortured."[553] Interestingly, Williams argues that Luke's characters appear in "an oppressive world crafted by Acts, which traffics in a Roman hegemonic imagination."[554] Building on the argument by Shelly Matthews that Luke (the author) can be seen as sharing in imperial ideology, Williams frames Luke's narratives—particularly in Acts—as displaying a "privileged status and sympathy to Roman power."[555] At the same time, towards the end of the book, Williams urges his reader to become "truth-tellers that call out sites of unjust incarceration like Acts' Paul."[556] A certain tension arises in Williams' reading if these two things are true at the same time, namely that Luke is sharing in imperialist ideology and that Luke's Paul functions to call out imperial injustice. A way to approach this tension and uphold the possibility that Luke can adopt and criticize the Empire simultaneously, is available through a postcolonial reading of characters such as Cornelius (see below, next section) and the Philippian jailer (see Chapter Six).

The story of Cornelius resists the notion that Lukan masculinity should emulate imperial ideals. As noted by Robinson, Cornelius' piety aligns more closely with Jewish customs than with Roman hegemonic traits, reflecting an alternative framework of masculine virtue.[557] In his interaction with Peter, Cornelius models subordination and receptivity, while Peter's preaching reveals an unsettling image of Jesus—criminalized and executed in the most humiliating way by Roman authorities (Acts 10:39). Luke's account places responsibility for Jesus' death on Jewish leaders, yet also implicates Roman soldiers like the centurion present at the crucifixion (Luke 23:47).[558] Despite such humiliation, Peter's message to Cornelius' household emphasizes Jesus' identity as Lord of all, anointed by God and proclaimed by prophets (Acts 10:37–43).[559] This depiction challenges Roman ideals of masculinity by presenting divine lordship through vulnerability and unjust suffering—a sharp contrast to the dominance and strength celebrated in imperial rhetoric.[560]

In some significant ways, the present argument aligns with the overarching aims of Williams', Matthews', and Cone's contributions, by foregrounding the voices of those who are typically silenced by the powerful, even seeing Cornelius as a powerful man who is changed

[553] Cone 2011: 26, cf. Williams 2023: 2.
[554] Williams 2023: 151.
[555] Williams 2023: 3, cf. Matthews 2019: 164–65.
[556] Williams 2023: 191.
[557] Robinson 2019: 111.
[558] See Keener 2012: 939–41; cf. Keener 2013: 808.
[559] Williams 2023: 2–3, 151–94.
[560] Wilson 2015: 263.

by the gospel (not unlike Paul's Damascus experience in Acts 9:1–19).[561] By considering how Jewish masculine conceptions in Acts 10 challenge the expectations of the hegemonic Roman man, the men who are marginalized by imperial power perform and are characterized in ways that do not subscribe to the ideals of their oppressors. In Acts 10, when these Jewish ideals are mapped onto a Roman centurion, Luke effectively narrates a story of a man expected to appear hegemonic by his status and vocation but characterized in strictly non-hegemonic ways. In other words, it is his exhibition of servile Jewish virtues that mark Luke's characterization, not his hegemonic traits such as his power, courage, or domination. While scholars such as Wilson are right to point out that Luke's men appear unmanly compared to Roman ideals, Luke's characterization of male characters deserves to be read and understood from the perspective of marginalized men living under Roman authority.[562] Similarly, although I am indebted to Jeremy Williams, who reveals how elite ancient texts often aid in the criminalization and prosecution/persecution of subjugated people, we might benefit from complicating the image of Luke's relationship to Roman hegemonic ideals.[563]

As a final note on Luke's ambivalent portrayal of Cornelius, the centurion's unannounced narrative exit gives pause to Flessen's claim that Cornelius could even be considered an "exemplary man" at all.[564] While her argument is most helpful to show how Roman ideals are not necessarily what constitutes masculinity for Luke, it might be more helpful to place the encounter of Cornelius and Peter in a masculine third space. This category, informed by concepts from postcolonial and masculinity studies, in an attempt to elucidate how Peter and Cornelius might be seen as negotiating what it means to be a good man from a Jewish

[561] δύναμις ("power") appears twenty-five times in Luke and Acts (Luke 1:17; 1:35; 4:14; 4:36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; 10:13; 19:37; 21:26; 22:69; Acts 1:8; 2:22; 3:12; 4:7; 4:33; 6:8; 8:10; 8:13; 10:38; 19:11) and is readily applied by Luke to characterize Jesus, Stephen, Peter, Paul, and other followers. However, Luke's use of δύναμις seems to convey a power to perform healing and wonderous deeds more than it reflects for example military power. The idea of power and powerlessness is central to Wilson's argument, and I concur that the power of the God of Israel that Luke and Acts submits to could be seen as a "powerless power" from the viewpoint of Roman conceptions of power. The question, however, is whether Luke is redefining power to align with Second Temple Jewish ideals of piety and divine justice, rather than with imperial dominance. This power might not be so powerless, as it seems necessary for healing alongside piety (ὡς ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει ἢ εὐσεβείᾳ πεποιηκόσιν τοῦ περιπατεῖν αὐτόν, Acts 3:12) and the giving of the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:22). The same power seems to not only subvert Roman hegemonic masculinity but also establishes an alternative model of masculinity grounded in service, humility, and faithfulness to God's will—values exemplified by figures like Jesus, Stephen, Peter, and Paul throughout Luke and Acts. This redefinition of δύναμις thus becomes a means by which Luke portrays resistance to imperial values and frames divine power as inherently distinct from the coercive force wielded by Rome.

[562] Failing to do so resembles, in many ways, the global cosmopolitanism critiqued by Bhabha, in which diverse identities and "peoples located on the periphery" (Bhabha 2004: *xiv*) are only appreciated when they contribute to upholding the values and vantage points of the majority and the powerful.

[563] See further Williams 2023: 91–194.

[564] Flessen 2011: 3–4.

perspective that pushes against the expectations of imperial hegemony. Here, Bhabha's concept of hybridity is helpful, as it explores how marginalized people define themselves by both adopting and defying elements of the dominant culture.[565] While Peter mimics certain elements of a hegemonic man through speech and leadership, Cornelius' characterization moves from an ideal Godfearer to an incognito member of a Christ-following household. The two men, Peter and Cornelius, both appear hybrid, exhibiting certain facets of hegemonic, while, at the same time, criticizing and defying imperial authority. Through both subtle and explicit characterization, Luke is redefining how masculinity is conceived as strikingly non-hegemonic, exemplified by submitting to Jesus as Lord and living out an ideal as "sons of Abraham."

8 "Stand Up, I Am Only a Man"

Peter's response to the bowing centurion, telling him to stand up because he, too, is only a man (ἀνάστηθι καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπός εἰμι, Acts 10:26), presents a striking image of reversal. The Roman soldier at the feet of a Jewish fisherman is the reverse image of the Judaea Capta coins minted after the suppression of the last Jewish revolts in 136 CE, where the Jewish people are portrayed as captured, enslaved, kneeling, often as a woman, before the conquering Roman soldier.[566] Peter and Cornelius, the two men at the center of this pivotal scene of universalized table fellowship, appear masculine in a surprising way compared to the expected tenets of masculinity in the Greco-Roman world.[567] In other words, the masculine ideals of the powerful, the Roman imperial men or hegemonic masculinity, appear to be challenged in the encounter between Peter and Cornelius.[568]

Luke's narrative reverses the imagery of Rome as a conqueror and the Jewish people as conquered. As Cornelius reports from his angelic vision after Peter has told him to stand up (ἀνάστηθι, Acts 10:26), his prayer has been heard (εἰσηκούσθη σου ἡ προσευχὴ, Acts 10:31a), and his alms have been remembered before God (αἱ ἐλεημοσύναι σου ἐμνήσθησαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, Acts 10:31b, cf. Acts 10:4). The imperative to "stand up" is significant, as Peter identifies with Cornelius, saying that "even I am only a man" (καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπός εἰμι, Acts 10:26), simultaneously raising Cornelius from his subjugated posture and reserving any

[565] Bhabha 1994: 85–122.

[566] See Kochenash 2019: 627–40. However, where Kochenash sees this reversed imagery as a testimony to the equality in the Kingdom of God, Cornelius prostrating before Peter could also be seen as critique of imperial power.

[567] Pace Wilson (2015: 45), "Jewish and Christian authors during the principate often mimic the general 'rules' of masculinity in the larger Greco-Roman world."

[568] Cf. Wilson 2015: 248.

exalted position to Jesus Christ who, in Peter's words, is "Lord of all" (πάντων κύριος, Acts 10:36).[569] In terms of what might constitute a good and masculine man in Acts 10, the story of Peter and Cornelius plays with intricate expectations of masculinity.

At this point in the story (Acts 10:36), the practice of piety and Jewish customs have already qualified Cornelius as someone who is remembered by God. In addition, Luke makes no mention of him leaving his former vocation as a soldier, in the way that Levi leaves the toll booth, or Peter leaves his own [house] (ἀφέντες τὰ ἴδια, Luke 18:28). Moreover, seeing as Cornelius has not yet been introduced to the Way or Peter's preaching (which follows immediately after), it is noteworthy that the qualifying aspects of Cornelius' character are so clearly marked by his prayers and charitable deeds. It is only later that he is baptized, and by that point, the focus is on the household, and no longer solely on Cornelius as an individual. To further complicate the characterizations of Peter and Cornelius, the Roman soldier and pious Godfearer is subordinate to Peter: he falls at his feet, remains quiet as Peter takes the stage as the public speaker and preacher, and by the time the story becomes a conversion narrative, Cornelius, one of the most elaborately introduced characters in Luke and Acts, is not even mentioned.[570]

Interestingly, in Luke's Gospel, a son of Abraham can seemingly be characterized as being pious and hospitable like Abraham in Luke 16:19–31, or someone who remembers to do what the rich man in the parable forgets: listening to Moses and the prophets. Cornelius, in other words, might be seen as leading an exemplary life before he encounters Peter in Caesarea. Is there, indeed, anything that changes when Cornelius is baptized with his household at the closing of the narrative? Could he be an ideal man for Luke and still be a pious Godfearer and Roman soldier? He has already fulfilled his duty to be charitable and give alms, something Jesus frequently requires his followers to do.[571] Significantly, Cornelius' alignment with the Lukan Jesus' teaching shows how the economic language in Luke's gospel continues to be the relevant qualifier when the gospel message, now spoken from the lips of Peter, reaches Godfearing Gentiles.

However, Cornelius is only partly accomplished in terms of becoming a follower of the Way. The conversion narrative in Acts 10 is not even focused on Cornelius, but on a household

[569] See Kavin Rowe's (2005:279–300) argument for how a first-century audience would have received this designation as closely associated with the language of the Roman imperial cult.

[570] Milnor 2005: 4–27. See also Økland 2004 and Osiek and Pouya 2010: 60–72. Milnor argues that the Principate initiated a spatial shift from public expectations to a more private and household-oriented (although patriarchal) role for the man. Cf. Garnsey and Saller 2014.

[571] Luke 5:27–31; 9:23–25; 9:57–62; 12:13–21; 14:25–33; 16:13–15; 18:18–27; 19:1–10; 21:1–4.

simply identified as "these people" (τούτους, Acts 10:47). As evident in the guest list Cornelius exposes when he learns that Peter is on his way, he is inviting his relatives and close friends (συγκαλεσάμενος τοὺς συγγενεῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἀναγκαίους φίλους, Acts 10:24). Seemingly unaware of the radical hospitality preached by Luke's Jesus, Cornelius constructs a welcome party consisting of the kinds of invitees specifically denied table fellowship in Luke 14:12, where Jesus instructs the leader of the Pharisees by saying, "when you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors." The reason, Luke's Jesus makes clear, is that in doing so, "they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid" (Luke 14:12). Hospitality in Luke is not structured around reciprocity in a worldly sense. In other words, the host should not invite those who could give him claims to some social contracts or materially beneficial arrangement, but should rather invite the poor so that, as Luke's Jesus explains in Luke 14:14, "you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." Seemingly, then, Cornelius is not yet exemplary, as Flessen argues, but the pious soldier rather occupies something of an ambivalent third space that has implications for his masculinity.

In line with Bhabha's definition of hybridity, Cornelius fits almost, but not quite, into the mold of a disciple. Jesus requires that his followers "hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters" (Luke 14:26), while Cornelius seems to practice a different kind of hospitality when he prepares the welcome party for Peter and his companion.[572] Interestingly, while Cornelius is not practicing hospitality in line with the teachings of Luke's Jesus, at least not entirely, he is recognized as pious by Peter. Later, when Peter is giving a speech that ends with the Spirit being poured out on the members of Cornelius' household, presumably including Cornelius, as Peter's retelling in Acts 11:14 suggests (σὺ καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκός σου, Acts 11:14), we learn that "every Gentile" or "all nations" (παντὶ ἔθνει, Acts 10:35) who "fear him [God] and does works of righteousness are acceptable to him" (ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστιν, Acts 10:35). It is noteworthy that Cornelius is first characterized as being charitable and Godfearing in the introduction to the passage, but that he is not mentioned explicitly when the Spirit is given to (him and) his household.

Finally, although we do not learn much about what happens to the newly converted household, the passage ends with Luke narrating that "they asked" (ἠρώτησαν, Acts 10:48), again in the plural, Peter to stay with them for several days. An invitation to remain with the household in Caesarea for some time is hardly enough to prove that Cornelius and his

[572] Moxnes 2003: 294.

household had by that time become aligned with Luke's Jesus' teaching from the Third Gospel. However, the characterization of Peter is striking. He is an ordinary man who converted a Roman centurion and his household. Moreover, he appears as an orator, a leader, and an active part of the story. Cornelius' character development, on the other hand, moves from an ideal Godfearer, named and substantially described, to an invisible member of a converted household.[573] Initially, Cornelius represents both the hegemonic Roman man and the pious Godfearer. In what could be reminiscent of Lukan reversal language, the author leaves Cornelius unnamed and unnoticed. This narrative reversal has intriguing implications for Cornelius' masculinity.

While Peter represents those who follow Jesus by giving away everything (Luke 5:11), Cornelius resembles those disciples who follow Jesus by being hospitable. As we saw in Luke's characterization of Levi (Chapter Three), these characters tend to fade out of the narrative as they do not (literally) follow Jesus on his way to Jerusalem. Strikingly, then, Levi and Cornelius both seem to appear at crucial points in a Lukan narrative only to disappear entirely just as abruptly as they entered the story. At the same time, their contribution to significant themes such as meal scenes and Gentile conversion are central to overarching themes in Luke's two volumes, despite their Melchizedekian points of entry and exit in the story.

Similarly to Levi's banquet, Cornelius offering Peter and his followers hospitality aligns with the Nazareth sermon's imperative to bring good news to the poor (Luke 4:16–28). The table fellowship that Levi introduces with sinners is universalized to include Godfearers, starting with Peter's vision and the conversion story in Acts 10. Perhaps the move from named and idealized characterization to incognito disciple in Luke's characterization of Cornelius plays into larger Lukan themes. Luke could be seen as portraying Cornelius as leaving behind his former life, characterized by titles, publicly endorsed virtues, and ties to both Roman power and Jewish piety. The implications of having the centurion fall at Peter's feet and—metaphorically—fall out of the narrative after such a monumental introduction raises questions about what Luke's ideal man looks like. Where Flessen has described Cornelius as exemplary and Wilson described the Lukan man as unmanly, what are we to make of Cornelius? Does he disappear or forego his exemplary standing and masculinity when he fades into the background

[573] Flessen is not the only one who sees Cornelius as the exemplary man and main character in Acts 10. Giambrone (2017:222–26) argues that the conversion story is specifically about Cornelius' baptism: "the baptism of the centurion ultimately embodies the new life of this righteous man" (2017: 225). Concerned with how charity can be tied to receiving eschatological life, Giambrone's argument is premised on the same reading as Flessen, namely that Cornelius remains central throughout the narrative. As I show, this reading could be challenged by recognizing how the centurion, contrary to scholarly claims, seems to disappear from the story.

of the narrative? Or is it perhaps a different ideal that shapes his characterization?

Concluding that Luke portrays unmanly men may help explain how a crucified Lord might have appeared to Gentile readers in the Roman Empire. However, such an understanding of gender does not fully address the tension of how someone subjected to humiliation, violation, and a state-sanctioned execution could simultaneously be proclaimed as Lord of all. Similarly, Peter and Cornelius are not depicted as unmanly. The ideals referenced in the text could, in fact, be seen as masculine when viewed through a broader comparative lens, particularly in the context of how Jewish men maintained a sense of masculinity when faced with imperial authorities that held the power to persecute and emasculate them in the most extreme ways.[574]

Luke's characterization of Cornelius as a liminal figure, one who is navigating the boundaries of cultural, religious, and social identity, resonates with Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and third space. Cornelius is simultaneously almost but not quite Jewish and almost but not quite a hegemonic Roman man. By having a hybrid man such as Cornelius introduce table fellowship between Godfearers and followers of the Way, Luke can undermine and challenge hegemonic masculinity by constructing a non-hegemonic ideal. These tensions are introduced even before the two men meet in Caesarea when Cornelius' messengers find Peter in Joppa. Peter initially invites Cornelius' men into his household and offers them hospitality (εἰσκαλεσάμενος οὖν αὐτοὺς ἐξένισεν, Acts 10:23), effectively claiming the role of host over someone with potentially higher status from the perspective of Roman hospitality codes. The men do not have the authority to immediately escort Peter back to Cornelius; instead, the scene offers an opportunity to show Peter's radical hospitality, inviting the strangers into Simon the tanner's house in Joppa. This is significant because it introduces themes of authority and hospitality that are developed later in the story. The scene is similar to yet distinct from Cornelius' hospitality in Caesarea, setting up an interplay between the two men. When Peter has travelled to Caesarea, he refers to his standing as a Jew (Ἰουδαῖος, Acts 10:28). He reminds Cornelius' household that it would have been unlawful for him to join with (κολλάω, Acts 10:28), or come into foreigners (ἀλλόφυλος, Acts 10:28) like them, had it not been for his recently received revelation. The language emphatically highlights the former (dietary) boundaries between them and further serves to underscore the radicalness of Peter's revelation.

It is striking that Peter, an uneducated and ordinary man (cf. Acts 4:13), can exercise such authority in the house of Cornelius, addressing his household and having the Roman

[574] Cf. Boyarin 1997; Boer 2012: 72; Zsolnay 2017: 3.

centurion fall at his feet in reverence when he arrives. In many ways, the soldier is unmanned by Peter, who, in many ways, assumes the role of household leader when he is invited into Cornelius' house. The Roman soldier's response is just as startling, as Cornelius effectively leaves behind dominating parts of his Roman identity and enters a "hybrid space," where the hegemonic masculinity of the Empire is suspended. He submits to an unremarkable Jewish man, and the transformation from a soldier with potential hegemonic claims to masculinity to a baptized householder in the Lukan *ekklēsia* can be seen as reflecting Bhabha's notion of a hybrid identity.

As we have seen, hybridity grows out of cultural challenges to imperial and colonial forces, often created where two lived experiences meet to create a new, third space of being. In our case, this can be represented by the Roman soldier who has embraced Jewish practices, falls before Peter, and is baptized with his household into the Way. Between them, Peter and Cornelius negotiate a third space, a defiant way of forming identity for groups who challenge powerful oppressors by creating something new; a hybrid man and a non-hegemonic masculine ideal.

In this way, Lukan men seem to be defined not by how they adhere to hegemonic expectations, but by serving a different ideal, the criminalized Lord who was killed by these hegemonic powers. To draw on Wilson's conclusions, she would be right that Luke's characters are rendered unmanly from a Roman perspective. However, the Roman masculine ideal does not seem desirable in Luke's storytelling. It seems that what makes Cornelius manly, although not necessarily exemplary as Flessen suggests, is his practicing of Jewish piety and his submission to a non-hegemonic Lord. Moreover, it seems that his humble subordination to Peter and the collective baptism of the household initiates the collective conversion, noting that Cornelius is no longer in focus when the baptism takes place, Luke simply refers to "these people" (τούτους, Acts 10:47). Finally, the only thing we learn about the converted household is that they invite Peter and his circumcised believers (περιτομῆς πιστοὶ, Acts 10:45) to stay with them for some days (ἐπιμεῖναι ἡμέρας τινάς, Acts 10:48). Similar to the Philippian jailer whom we will explore in the next chapter, it is noteworthy that key aspects of hospitality mark the characterization of a newly converted Godfearing household. At this point, Cornelius has strikingly receded to the background and Peter addresses him and his household collectively. The man who entered the story with a dual characterization of being both a Roman officer and pious Godfearer ends up unnamed and unnoticed. Perhaps as a corrective to Flessen's argument, it makes more sense to view Cornelius as a hybrid man, rather than an exemplary man. Or, in other words, being an exemplary and good man in Luke's narrative world is more

closely associated with practicing service, hospitality, and community than to appearing "exemplary" in hegemonic terms.

To sum up this section, the story of Peter and Cornelius suggests that Luke's masculine conceptions do not fit the comparator of Roman hegemonic masculinity. Hierarchy and domination are rather seen as masculine tenets to be resisted. Casting Peter as a leader, and an ideal man against a Roman centurion (who is also masculine, but not by hegemonic standards) breaks with the scholarly notion that power and hegemony are the only legitimate comparators to understanding what constitutes masculinity in Luke and Acts.

9 Conclusions

This chapter has argued that masculinity in Luke and Acts should be understood in large part from a Jewish, imperial critical, and not a Roman perspective, even when the narrative introduces a Roman soldier. Performance of different, divergent, and defiant masculinity is hardly visible from the perspective of the majority, the powerful, and the oppressive. To catch a glimpse of what masculinity looks like in Luke's stories, we need to approach the question by identifying the tension between the hegemonic ideals of the Roman Empire and the non-hegemonic masculinity in Luke and Acts and ask what it means to be a good man for men who are marginalized but refuse to be subjugated by their oppressors. Cornelius challenges the significance of hegemonic masculinity in Acts by living according to servile and humble Jewish virtues in line with a rich tradition and concurrent focus on piety and hospitality in Jewish sources. Masculinity in Luke and Acts seems neither predicated on nor emasculated by hegemonic Roman conceptions. It is rather redefined in defiance of the oppressive forces that hegemonic men perpetuate over them.

These hybrid men appear in a third space between oppressor and oppressed and are a way of seeing beyond the polarities available when an oppressor or a hegemonic culture asserts dominance. In line with Bhabha's concept of hybridity, the story allows us to appreciate masculine conceptions that are not dictated by the standards of colonial and imperial forces.[575] With Cornelius and Peter, Luke is, on a conceptual level, telling a story of how Roman hegemonic masculinity gives way to humble, pious, and servile men. Using Jewish virtues, Luke develops the well-established theme of table fellowship and hospitality from his first volume to include Godfearers and later Gentiles. In this way, a new man appears "between

[575] Bhabha 2004: 55–56.

fixed identifications [and] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy."[576] In other words, Cornelius and Peter appear like good men despite the hierarchal and dominating forces that inform the masculine ideal of the Empire.

Luke's use of a centurion to exhibit Jewish virtues is therefore striking. Centurions, as we have seen, appear at crucial moments in the Third Gospel as ambiguous characters who simultaneously represent the Empire and are described as faithful (Luke 7:1–10) and recognizing Jesus' innocence/righteousness at his crucifixion (Luke 23:47).[577] It is fitting, therefore, that Luke introduces a centurion to initiate the universalized gospel message in Acts 10. His household and virtue are characterized by Jewish notions of hospitality and piety, a house and a man that is not recognizable to Luke's reader as hegemonic. Although the masculine ideals of the Empire seem to be "unhomed," Cornelius by no means appears unmanly. As Bhabha articulates it, "[t]o be unhomed is not to be homeless."[578] In other words, the absence of hegemonic masculinity does not result in an unmanly man. Bhabha's notion of being "unhomed" plays a fundamental part in describing how marginalized groups resist and defy oppression by intricate displays of mimicry and critique. This notion of mimicry and critique is vividly demonstrated in Acts 10, where Cornelius' household becomes a site of non-hegemonic masculinity, challenging the dominance of imperial authority through practices rooted in Jewish piety and inclusive table fellowship.

Inviting Bhabha's insights into conversation with Cornelius' characterization reveals new ways of understanding masculinity in Luke and Acts. We might say with Bhabha that to be unmanned is not to be made unmanly. Peter and Cornelius embody these tensions of third space and defiant masculinities in Acts 10, and the contrast of Roman masculine ideals with Jewish piety and Lukan hospitality opens a non-hegemonic space for masculine performance to appear. Peter, the ordinary and unlearned Jewish man, is characterized as exemplary through speech, leadership, and virtues aligning with ideals in Jewish Scripture. Cornelius is similarly praised for practicing Jewish virtues, his household is transformed through baptism, and he becomes the first Roman imperial man converted to a follower of the Way.

These insights can be considered from the perspective of marginalized Jewish men who,

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[576] Bhabha 2004: 5.

[577] In line with Williams' argument that criminalization and the language of (in)justice play a central role in Luke and Acts, we might reconsider the centurion's declaration at Jesus' crucifixion. Although Jesus is suffering a punishment reserved for the unjust, the centurion declares him "just" (δίκαιος, Luke 23:47). This highlights the paradox of the Roman judicial process, where the victim is perceived as guilty but is, in fact, the one being treated unjustly while remaining truly just. Williams 2023: 128.

[578] Bhabha 2004: 13.

at the time of Luke's writing, likely recalled the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. As argued by Tong, the New Testament "was written and compiled by individuals and communities living under the rule of the Roman Empire. The biblical text can then be interpreted either as imperialist propaganda or apologetics—or as a subaltern text resisting imperialism."[579] In line with postcolonial theory, we might suggest that these two interpretations or approaches to the biblical texts are intertwined. Through mimicry and subtle resistance, texts like Luke and Acts may conform to certain imperial tropes while simultaneously critiquing the underlying rhetoric of power and hegemony. This chapter has demonstrated how such critique can take the form of counter-cultural or non-hegemonic masculinity through a gendered and postcolonial reading of Cornelius and Peter. While exhibiting some tenets of Roman masculinity, Peter and Cornelius' actions and characterizations work to undermine imperial authority. Furthermore, their masculinity is shaped by the practice of Jewish piety and hospitality, evoking figures like Abraham and drawing on ethics rooted in Jewish Scripture. In Luke's narrative, these two men are portrayed as neither unmanly nor aspiring to be hegemonic men. Instead, the story presents a third space for the Lukan man—who could aptly be described as a "son of Abraham."

[579] Tong 2019: 118.

Chapter Six: Sons of Abraham in Roman Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

1 Introduction

This final chapter advances the thesis that the Philippian jailer in Acts 16 is converted, not only from a Gentile prison guard to a follower of the Way, but from one of the chief promoters of Roman hegemonic masculinity to Luke's ideal for a good and exemplary man. The jailer further exemplifies in Luke's second volume the radical hospitality established in the Third Gospel. To ascertain grounds for my proposed reading, I pay specific attention to the potentially emasculating effects of the jailer's intended suicide. My argument rests partly on reading the jailer as a narrative representation of the authorities opposing Paul and Silas in Philippi, while also recognizing that he was most likely a *servus publicus*, a public enslaved person owned by the Roman State (*res publica*).[580] In other words, the jailer functions as a "hybrid" character in postcolonial terms: he embodies the oppressive authority of the imperial order while at the same time being potentially enslaved himself as a *servus publicus*.

To explore the tension that arises out of the clash between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity in Acts 16, I engage the work of Albert Memmi, Frantz Fanon, and others. Paul and the jailer occupy spaces between colonizer and colonized, Paul as an (unlawfully) imprisoned Roman citizen and the jailer as an agent of Roman power and (potentially) an enslaved person. These intersections challenge conceptions of power and masculinity, and the interaction between these men is perhaps the most striking critique of hegemonic masculinity in Luke's two-volume work.

While firm knowledge of the identity and socio-economic profile of the Philippian jailer might not be available from Luke's account, I simply rely on the narrative purpose of a jailer who first represents the sword that threatens Paul's evangelizing journey to Gentile lands, then almost falling on that sword representing a crisis in hegemonic masculinity, before leaving the sword to follow the Way. I therefore investigate what consequences it might have had for a first-century jailer set under—or representing—Roman authority to intend suicide.[581] My interest is primarily in the jailer as a literary character. At the same, my reading requires a

[580] As per Rapske 1994: 261–76, contra Malina and Pilch 2008: 119, who argue from a minority position that the jailer is a Godfearing Jew. Most scholars recognize the scarce historical evidence for a strong Jewish presence in Philippi and the lack of a reference to a synagogue.

[581] For the position that the Philippian jailer was a veteran, see Fitzmyer 1998: 583; Matson 1996: 155–57; Bruce 1990: 336. For the opposing view that the jailer's identity remains anonymous, possibly a public enslaved person or the descendant of a veteran, see Blaiklock 1965: 42; Rapske 1994: 261–62; Ascough 2009: 25; Keener 2014: 2484–86.

socio-economic context to adequately frame our discussion.

Having set up this framework, I argue that when the doors of the prison cells are flung open by the earthquake, the jailer finds himself in an utterly dishonored situation. The loss of control and domination over others leads him to a desperate attempt to either regain some of the lost honor or to cowardly escape punishment for his failure. Either way, his situation can be seen as having severe emasculating effects.

Having laid out this part of the argument, I turn to how Luke recharacterizes the jailer after he and his household have been baptized. Here, I will argue that it is not insignificant that Luke shapes the jailer into a model believer in Jesus by highlighting behavior that corresponds with the author's suggested behavior for the stationary disciples with possessions in Luke's first volume. Key elements of this behavior are tending to the poor and wounded, preparing and sharing a meal, and opening his house to the followers of Jesus. This connection is reinforced when the jailer asks Paul the Lukan *Leitfrage* "what must I do?" (Acts 16:30).

This question, followed by the jailer exhibiting behavior that represents an ideal follower of the Way, is the foundation of his newfound identity, having opted out of suicide and chosen to be baptized. The narrative in Acts 16 intersects with the broader theme of hospitality when the newly converted jailer hosts and helps Paul and Silas. Similar to Levi, Cornelius, and other converted Lukan men, the jailer is called to be a son of Abraham.[582] With his conversion, this theme that started with the story of a Jewish tax collector in rural Galilee, is now carried out into the world through Paul's proclamation of a Jewish Messiah in Roman Philippi. Furthermore, the jailer's story profoundly critiques Roman masculinity, a reading that is made available by engaging postcolonial perspectives on identity formation for the oppressor and the subjugated. In other words, the story of the Philippian jailer can be read as a story that criticizes hegemonic masculinity and reconstructs a character who fails to satisfy these by focusing on a set of behaviors and actions central to Luke's Abraham-like ideal of a hospitable man.[583] The enslaved guard and the imprisoned Roman citizen challenge boundaries and

[582] Inasmuch as the jailer engages Luke's wealth ethics (hospitality), this chapter engages the *ethics* more than the *wealth*, seeing as the jailer is not characterized as wealthy. While characters can be rich without being specifically labelled as such, this introductory remark is meant to clarify that by "wealth ethics" I suggest a broad framework of teachings, actions, and behaviors in Luke and Acts. By hosting, caring for, and providing food and shelter for Paul and Silas, the jailer plays a significant role within Luke's economic program even though he likely was not a wealthy person.

[583] I apply the term "characterization" to signal that the author presents the jailer as deserting Roman ideals, but not to claim that Luke is deliberately writing about masculinity. According to Mark Powell (1990: 52) characterization is "the process through which the implied author provides the implied reader with what is necessary to reconstruct a character from the narrative." The jailer's critique of hegemonic masculinity is thus reflected by, not inscribed in his characterization.

hierarchies of hegemonic power and thus show how Luke fundamentally values non-hegemonic masculine men as a way to criticize the power structures that persecute the Way.

2 Context: A Jewish Messiah in Roman Philippi

A key aspect of my argument in this chapter is that the Philippian jailer is portrayed as emasculated by the standards of Roman military virtue before conversion and that he fulfills Luke's suggested behavior for household managers post baptism. In the first Gentile conversion story, we meet a man who starts out as a Roman with sword in hand and is converted to a hospitable host. In this way, he represents an intriguing case for the model Lukan man. He displays aspects of hegemonic masculinity by Roman standards pre conversion, and he is portrayed as exemplary according to Luke's suggested behavior for household managers post conversion. Against the backdrop of Roman masculine mores, might Abraham's ideal hospitality better explain how Luke portrays the earliest Gentile converts to the Way? As previously shown, Luke's use of hospitality and economic language is deeply founded in the Jewish Scriptures. Therefore, by contrasting the jailer's former adherence to Roman masculinities with his post-baptismal recharacterization, elements of the conversion narrative in the Philippian jail might highlight ways in which Jewish virtues of hospitality and submission to Jesus continues to shape non-hegemonic masculine conceptions in Acts. If I am right, the same radical hospitality that we have seen in Luke's first volume continues to be highly relevant in the latter half of Acts. These findings challenge the argument that Luke's wealth ethical arc bends towards leniency the further we get into Acts.[584] Equally, it challenges elements of the arguments by Conway and Wilson that Luke is either subscribing to or subverting the powerful and dominating Roman masculine ideal.[585]

To fully appreciate the implications for Luke's ideal man in this conversion story, I will first address some contextual matters that are particularly urgent as Paul's gospel proclamation reaches a Gentile audience. Of particular relevance to this discussion is the importance of Paul's proclamation of a Jewish Messiah in the heavily Roman city of Philippi. Scholars have long noted the lack of evidence for a Jewish presence in Philippi, based both on the accounts of Luke and Paul and on archaeological findings.[586] In addition, the conversion of the jailer is the first story in Acts of a Gentile convert and a household community founded in Gentile

[584] See, e.g., Horn 1983: 89 and passim.
[585] Conway 2008: 127–52; Wilson 2015: 256.
[586] Bockmuehl 1997: 6, 8–10, 12–20.

territory. The lack of reference to a synagogue (albeit Lydia's mention of a προσευχή, a "place of prayer," in Acts 16:13, 16) and the beginning of Gentile conversion are contextual factors that have marked Acts 16 as a turning point in Paul's evangelizing journeys.

My interest in how masculinity and economic language (hospitality) intersect in the story of the Philippian jailer is also a story of the clash between Roman masculine virtue and Jewish masculinity. Taking seriously the implications of being a good host, providing food and shelter for friends and strangers, and asking Paul what he must do to be saved, ties the jailer's conversion story specifically to Abrahamic tropes aligned with Jesus' teaching in Luke's Gospel. In addition, I will show how the pivotal moment in the jailer's story, his intended suicide and subsequent conversion, might suggest a departure from Roman ideals of manliness in favor of Paul's gospel proclamation. Therefore, the Philippian jailer's conversion story might be seen as relying on conversion to behavior that aligns with the wealth ethics proclaimed by Jesus, a distinctively Jewish Messiah whose *teachings* might not surface in Luke's second volume, but whose suggested *behavior* continues to be required by followers of the Way.[587]

If Luke describes the arrival of Paul's proclamation in Philippi as a championing of Roman deities and virtues by a Jewish Messiah who is worshipped in households modelled after Jewish, Abraham-shaped hospitality, we might pause before suggesting too much of a Roman influence on the first Christ-following community in Macedonia. Surely, the substantial work on cultic presence and Greco-Roman influence on Philippi in the first century should not be overlooked. Moreover, the predominantly Roman cultural context in Philippi is often mentioned in tandem with the fact that a Jewish presence is largely unattested. However, if we pay too much attention to the lack of a Jewish presence in Philippi, we might miss the distinctively Jewish Messiah whom Paul proclaims.[588] This message aligns with Luke's first volume. It is this Jewish Messiah who is the "Most High God" (ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὕψιστος, Acts 16:17)

[587] The one saying of Jesus that we do find in Acts (μακάριόν ἐστιν μᾶλλον διδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν, Acts 20:35), and that is not included in the Third Gospel, certainly could have relevance for Luke's suggested behavior for those among the followers of the Way who have a surplus of possessions. Moreover, upon departing from Ephesus and immediately before citing the words of Jesus, Paul states that he has not desired anyone's gold, silver, or clothing (Acts 20:33), that he has worked with his hands to support himself and his companions (αὐτοὶ γινώσκετε ὅτι ταῖς χρείαις μου καὶ τοῖς οὖσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ ὑπηρέτησαν αἱ χεῖρες αὗται, Acts 20:34), and urges the Ephesian *ekklēsia* to work as he has done to support the poor and themselves. Confronted with this striking scarcity of sayings and teachings on wealth ethics in Acts, I suggest that patterns of behavior might fill in some gaps and help trace how Luke constructs successful was of being a disciple and a follower of the Way.

[588] Cowan (2019: 164) helpfully notes that "Luke's focus on the Jewish heritage of the Christian movement is (…) an argument for the truth of the Christian message. His aim is to demonstrate that, despite widespread rejection from the Jewish community, the events of the life of Jesus and the early church genuinely constitute the realization of God's salvific plan." While I do not subscribe to the use of "Christian" or "church" due to their anachronistic connotations, Cowan's point highlights how the Way challenges Roman deities and authorities by proclaiming a Jewish Messiah in Acts.

contrary to the competing deities in the Roman city. Further, it is the same Lord to which Paul and Silas redirect the jailer's courtesy. Most importantly, it is into the believing community around this Jewish Messiah that the jailer and his household are baptized. Therefore, when the jailer proceeds to act in line with the economic ethics based in substantial parts on Jewish Scriptures, customs, and masculine virtues from Luke's Gospel, we might think differently about what the Jewish presence in Philippi looks like *after* Paul has converted the jailer. This image might align with Polycarp's reference to the Philippian *ekklēsia* some five decades after the narrative setting of Acts, writing that they were "well trained" in Scripture (Pol. *Phil*. 12.1).[589] This reference suggests that a Jewish influence, while perhaps not well-attested before Paul's arrival, certainly influenced the community in the century that followed.

Scholars have noted Luke's interest in juxtaposing Paul and Silas' gospel of Jesus Christ against both the Roman imperial presence and the cultic landscape present in first-century Philippi.[590] Among the diverse landscape of cultic practices Roman city was the Dionysus cult at Mt. Pangaion, the local cult of the Thracian Rider, and the Roman cult of Silvanus, popular among the middle to lower socio-economic strata of the Philippian demographic. Luke's elaborate storytelling places Paul and Silas' evangelizing in the midst of these foreign practices and thoroughly challenges the diverse religious milieu. Firstly, Paul's exorcism of the enslaved girl propagates the superiority of Jesus over the local cults. Secondly, the fact that Paul invokes the name of Jesus when performing the exorcism further undergirds this assumption. Thirdly, the subsequent triumph over the Roman legal system, made possible by both divine intervention and by finally revealing Paul's Roman citizenship only after he has suffered beating and imprisonment (16:37), portrays Paul's gospel as unsusceptible to any authority other than the Most High God.[591]

However, the gospel proclaimed by Paul and Silas is that of a distinctively Jewish Messiah who is introduced in a Roman setting. The ways in which Jesus is presented as superior to the local and imperial cults, as well resisting Rome's carceral system, presents the jailer as moving from Roman masculine ideals to becoming a Christ-following host. In other words, Luke's ideal man is far from adhering to Roman virtues of violent domination, and the God of

[589] Cf. Bockmuehl 1997: 9.

[590] Pilhofer 1995: 93–112; Keener 2014: 2381, 2456–64; Staley 1999: 124.

[591] At this point, Wilson's (2015: 256) argument that the God of Israel is presented as the most powerful, and thus by extension, the epitome of masculinity (cf. Eilberg-Schwartz 1994), aligns with my reading. The other deities that Paul and Silas encounter in Phillipi are clearly subordinate to the Most High God. However, Paul does not appear to be emasculated in the narrative, which explicitly pits him against Roman officials. The opposite seems to be the case for Luke, who characterizes Paul and Silas as saving the jailer and undermining the Roman authorities by revealing how Paul was unjustly imprisoned.

Israel is presented as superior to other deities. The jailer, remodeled into a risk-taking host, fulfills several fundamental aspects of Jewish hospitality and wealth ethics. Now, to investigate whether the jailer can be said to behave in continuation with Luke's ethical demands from the author's first volume, I will consider the possible tensions between the radical communities in Luke's gospel (as well as described in Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32–35) against the household communities established during Paul's journeys to found new Christ-following communities.[592]

3 A New Economic Day in the Nascent *Ekklēsia*

So far, I have gestured towards some of the tensions that strike the core of Acts 16. Paul is pushing the frontiers of the Christ-following movement into Macedonia and its predominantly Gentile territory, and thus the gospel message of a Jewish Messiah clashes with deities and customs in the Greco-Roman world.[593] In addition to this new landscape, Luke's account of Paul's journey to Philippi and the story of the Philippian jailer appears at a crucial junction in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles. In the section of Acts spanning from chapters 12–28, after we learn of the economic struggles in the Jerusalem *ekklēsia* (Acts 11), the story moves in broad strokes from the Jerusalem community to the journeys of Paul. Luke might suggest that the communal living described particularly in Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32–35 did not manage to sustain itself after some time, possibly due to the famine (λιμός) mentioned in Acts 11:28.[594] While the reason remains uncertain, Luke explicitly narrates how the community received a collection from Antioch (Acts 11:27–30).

After a certain Agabus (referred to as a prophet in Acts 21:10) predicts (ἐσήμανεν) that there will be a famine during the reign of Claudius, Luke tells us that the disciples (μαθητής) sent funds to Judea by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:29–30). Hays argues that what might seem to be a reference to a specific historical famine might be "a Lukan hyperbole."[595]

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[592] The generally accepted tendency (see, e.g., Marguerat 1999: 368; Matthews 2001: 72–95 and passim; Weaver 2004: 221–63; Keener 2012: 53–54) to talk about Paul's travels as "missionary," is problematic on several levels. The nomenclature is lacking in the Greek and was first ascribed to Paul's traveling activity in Acts in J. A. Bengel's *Gnomen Novi Testamenti* (1742), as noticed by Greene 2019: 15. It thus might carry modern connotations of colonialism and imperialism, which again might render Paul's journeys as a somewhat anachronistically construed concept. As here, in Acts 16, Paul is not a representative of the Roman Empire, although he is described by Luke as being a Roman citizen. Rather, the gospel he proclaims seems to consistently challenge the instruments of imperial power by undermining their authority throughout Acts. I thus refrain from the label of "missionary" and thank Professor Jeremy L. Williams for directing my attention to this point.

[593] Weaver 2004: 262.

[594] For a review of the debates concerning historical significance of the references to λιμός in Luke and Acts, see Fitzmyer 1998: 483; Kim 1998: 53.

[595] Hays 2010: 238.

While he is likely correct in noting the futility of tracing Luke's repeated references to famine (six of the twelve uses of λιμός in the New Testament occur in Luke and Acts) to specific historical events, it is noteworthy that several scholars interpret the reference to the collection from Antioch as consistent with Luke's ethical and theological exhortations toward generous redistribution of wealth. [596] This view, however, deserves to be challenged.

Although the Antiochene *ekklēsia* may serve as a compelling example of a community embodying key aspects of Luke's vision for economic generosity, it is important to recognize that the communal living described in the Jerusalem *ekklēsia* (Acts 2:42–47; Acts 4:32–35) does not appear to result in self-sufficiency. The financial struggles of the Judean community complicate attempts to construct a coherent wealth ethic across Luke's two volumes—particularly in Acts 12–28.

A striking example from modern scholarship is Hays' extensive treatment of wealth ethics in Luke and Acts. Despite dedicating nearly two hundred pages to the topic, the final 17 chapters of Acts (12–28) receive only 18 pages of attention and are discussed under broad thematic headings ("Greed" and "Hospitality"), in contrast to the detailed engagement with specific passages found in earlier chapters of his exposition.[597]

This tendency to focus primarily on Luke's Gospel—and the short-lived and utopian economic practices of the Jerusalem *ekklēsia*—suggests that the radical and fiery teachings of Jesus fade from view as the narrative shifts toward Gentile territories. Such a reading, I argue, neglects and largely overlooks significant passages in the latter half of Acts. Stories such as the conversion of the Philippian jailer demonstrate how essential elements of Jesus' teaching on hospitality and redistribution continue to shape the lives of early Gentile converts.

Therefore, in order to consider Lukan wealth ethics across both volumes, the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:23–40 (and the broader context of Acts 16:1–22) might add significant insight into the latter half of the Acts (12–28). With the economic distress experienced by the Jerusalem *ekklēsia* and the move from a mostly stationary community to the narration of Paul's itinerant travels in this section of Acts, we might need to look more closely to unearth Luke's wealth ethics as the gospel message moves from Jerusalem into the Greco-Roman world. The economic struggles of the Jerusalem community do not necessarily signify Luke moving away

[596] Tannehill 1994: 47; Parsons 2008: 169–70; Keener 2020: 313.

[597] Hays (2010: 248) argues that the theme of wealth in Acts 12–28 are more akin to "narrative wallpaper" and then devotes two paragraphs to the girl with the Pythonic spirit (245–46), and one paragraph to Cornelius, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer (249).

from the radical teachings of Jesus towards more lenient wealth ethics as the *ekklēsia* spreads and grows in Acts.

In the following, I argue that attention to Luke's embeddedness in Jewish Scriptures is key to uncovering some of the lost potential of these pericopes concerning household communities in Philippi. In the previous chapters, I have argued that paying attention to how Luke constructs (particularly) male characters in household and banquet settings might reveal central aspects of his wealth ethics and their embeddedness in Luke's reading of the Jewish Scriptures. Interestingly, the Philippian jailer does not merely become a role model for a Lukan stationary disciple. His transformation occurs in a section of Acts that recent scholarship claims is less central to this key Lukan theme. Yet his character development—culminating in his portrayal as an ideal disciple—begins with a profound crisis of masculinity. However, before diving into Luke's characterization of the jailer, there are some other key contextual aspects to consider, in order to fully appreciate the centrality of Acts 16 concerning the intersections of wealth ethics and masculinities, and Luke's economy of the *ekklēsia*.

4 Making Men in Paul's Travel Narrative

Another major turning point in the immediate context of Paul's journey to Philippi is the apostolic council in Acts 15. Having been appointed to evangelize to the uncircumcised, Paul soon undertakes his second journey. With support from the whole *ekklēsia* (ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, Acts 15:22), Paul's evangelization to Gentile communities occupies the remainder of Luke's narrative. First, we learn that Paul parts ways with his former companion, Barnabas, who earlier in Acts 4:37 had sold a field, brought the money (ἤνεγκεν τὸ χρῆμα), and laid them at the apostles' feet before becoming an itinerant disciple and Paul's traveling companion.

Luke's characterization of Barnabas highlights a rather uncommon character development, from an owner of a farm, via being a member of the Jerusalem *ekklēsia* (note how he is unmentioned between Acts 4 and Acts 9), to a traveling apostle (Acts 14:14) and close companion of Paul and later John Mark. Interestingly, scholars such as Hays, Klauck, Petracca, and others have highlighted how Luke's suggested ethical behavior, and especially Jesus' teaching of giving away all of one's possessions can mean different things for the closest apostles and the disciples who function as householders and banquet hosts.[598]

[598] Hays 2010: 2, 39, 82; Klauck 1989: 187–92; Petracca 2003: 160, 326. The tension between what some see as the more radical teachings of Jesus (often argued on the basis of Luke 14:33 which can appear insensitive to the context of that verse) over against the more lenient attitudes towards these seen in Luke's characterization of the typical banquet host (Levi in Luke 5, the ἄνθρωπός τις of Luke 14:16, Abraham in Luke 16) might be

However, Luke's characterization of Barnabas at this critical junction in Acts 15 might suggest that, as the history of the early evolution of the *ekklēsia* progresses, the characterization of the ideal Lukan follower of the Way progresses with it. Rather than Acts 12–28 being evidence of Luke giving up on his radical call for the rich followers of Jesus to give away their possessions,[599] the narrative progression towards Paul's journeys might invite new characterizations of ideal ethical behavior.[600] It is not insignificant that the author writes himself into the narrative, constructing the hotly debated we-passages beginning from Acts 16:10–17 (cf. Acts 20:5–15; 21:1–8; 27:1–28:16). Without staking too much on the potential meaning and consequences of these unique passages, we should recognize that this is a rather abrupt insertion of the first-person plural perspective in the context of Acts 16.[601] With minimal discussion of the enigmatic we-passages, I contend that they narratively function to bolster the notion of "us" and "them," as Paul's proclamation of a Jewish Messiah moves into the most overtly Roman environment yet. The significance of this observation for my interests lies in the possibility that by identifying with the itinerant Jewish evangelizers, Luke, or the deployed author, shapes his narrative identity around Jewish men at the moment in the story where they begin to encounter a largely Gentile Roman audience.[602] For an author who, according to

partially understood in light of Luke's use of οἶκος vocabulary in the teachings of Jesus in Luke 9:4 and 10:5–7 (see Matson 1996: 87–88). Here, the apostles, and later the Seventy-Two, are told to stay in the οἶκος of those who welcome them. At the same time, however, when Jesus encounters people along the way (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, Luke 9:57) who cannot immediately forsake their οἶκος (Luke 9:61) to follow him, they are told to be unfit for the Kingdom of God. The gospel message clearly needs followers who abandon the οἶκος entirely to follow Jesus, and it needs household managers (οἰκονόμοι) to support the movement. The verbs used by Luke to describe the renunciation is καταλείπω in 5:28 (Levi's banquet) and ἀποτάσσω in 14:33 (the Great Banquet). While these verbs are usually translated literally as "leave" or "give up," these could perhaps be better understood as "set aside interest" (καταλείπω) and "renounce interest" (ἀποτάσσω). In light of the Steward parable (Luke 16:1–9) it seems like Luke is not criticizing shrewd use of wealth and possessions, but rather drawing a distinction between *serving* Mammon as opposed to serving God. The οἶκος plays a significant role from Jesus' Galilean ministry to the first Gentile followers of the Way in Acts. I therefore suggest that the Philippian jailer and the household conversion stories in Acts (10:1–11:18; 16:11–15; 16:25–34; 18:1–11) could be seen as integral parts of Luke's wealth ethics from the first volume.

[599] Mineshinge 2003: 253.

[600] While it is not explicitly stated whether the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 is a Gentile Godfearer or a convert to Judaism, the jailer in Acts 16 is the first unambiguously Gentile convert in Acts.

[601] Irenaeus (*A.H* 3.14.1) famously introduces the theory that the author here makes himself present in the narrative and self-identifies as Luke, Paul's physician. While scholars typically note Irenaeus' contextual need to combat opposing theologies, most notably Marcion, his theory has been supported by scholars such as Thornton (1991: 93–119), Fitzmyer (1989: 17–22), Witherington (1996: 485), and Jervell (1996: 6–10). A common trope among the supporters of Irenaeus' claim seems to be that they consider the author's partaking in the narrative as "unobtrusive" as per Witherington 1996: 485. This view has been criticized for reading too much historicity into a literary text (cf. Marguerat 1999: 24–25). Literary and narrative approaches to the issue reignited the discussion in light of Haenchen's argument that the Lukan "we" serves to invite the reader into the narrative, noting the shift to Paul's travels to Gentile territories and the "post-apostolic" narrative of the latter half of Acts (see Haenchen 1965: 65–99, cf. Tannehill 1994: 246; Kurtz 1993: 113).

[602] Cf. Heinen 2019:7–23. See discussion of the question of authorship in Chapter One.

Conway and others,[603] is so comfortably situated within this Gentile Roman milieu, it could perhaps give some pause that the same author suddenly introduces an identity marker that has remained dormant for most of the two-volume work.

It should also be noted that, while the context of Acts 16:11–40 is marked by several significant progressions and changes in the narrative, we also find key Lukan themes continuing to shape the storytelling and characterizations in Acts 15 and beyond. For one, Acts 16 contains an intriguing example of Luke's coupling of male and female characters. While the Philippian jailer and Lydia are not mentioned in the same scenes, they are strikingly both characterized as being the head of their respective households (ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, Acts 16:15; ὁ οἰκός σου, Acts 16:31). Compared to the jailer, Lydia's hospitality might be seen as even more underscored by Luke's use of παρεβιάσατο (Acts 16:15), effectively characterizing Lydia as a household leader who is exemplary in urging her guests to stay.[604] Just as we find a daughter of Abraham in Luke's first volume (Luke 13:16), it is noteworthy that female household leaders in Acts are paralleled with, and possibly excels beyond some of their male counterparts. As discussed in Chapter One, placing men in such proximity to female spaces and tied to performances typical for women, would potentially have detrimental consequences for their masculinity if seen through a Greek or Roman lens. Luke, however, seems rather deliberate in highlighting—both in the Gospel and Acts—how successful ways of being a man can co-exist spatially and ethically alongside successful female followers and leaders of the Way.

Lydia and the jailer are both characterized by the significance of their possessions, their faith, their gender, and their service to Paul, Silas (and Luke). In addition, they could both have been enslaved persons, and some scholars have even suggested that Lydia might be a symbolic character.[605] Such arguments rest partially on the notion that she is from Thyatira, which is a city in the province of Lydia, arguing that effectively being named "Lydia of Lydia" gives her name a primarily symbolic effect. In the pioneering feminist work of Luise Schottroff, an intriguing case is made for Lydia being poor, working with unappealing fabric (due to its supposedly bad smell) and representing marginalized women who formed networks and supported Paul in Philippi.[606] For my purposes, it is not insignificant that such a name fits the profile of a (manumitted) enslaved person.[607] As I discuss below, there is a case to be made for

[603] Conway 2008: 127.
[604] Reimer 1995: 125–27.
[605] Matthews 2004: 131; MacDonald 2023: 236–53; cf. Parsons 2008: 229–30.
[606] Schottroff 1993: 131–37.
[607] See e.g., Strabo's *Geography* (7.3.12) where Lydus is given as a suitable name for an enslaved person bought from the region of Lydia.

the Philippian jailer being a public enslaved person. If both the household communities founded in Philippi are led by (former) enslaved people, these two central characters can be seen as intersecting with wealth ethics, gender roles, and enslavement. All these intersections would challenge the notion that Luke conceptualizes masculine men around hegemonic ideals.

Scholars such as Moxnes and D'Angelo have, although arguing for opposite constructions of masculine ideals in the Lukan households, focused on the teachings of Jesus when attempting to draw out Luke's constructions of masculinity and household ethics.[608] While they rightly point out the tensions between concurrent constructions of the *paterfamilias* (the husband, father, and enslaver),[609] Jewish and Greco-Roman households, and how these are refigured in the New Testament and especially in Luke and Acts, the lack of sayings of Jesus in Acts (save Acts 20:35) warrants more careful readings of Luke's characterizations in his second volume. It makes sense that scholars such as Moxnes and D'Angelo pay less attention to Acts 12–28 when their methodology is based largely on Jesus' sayings.

However, by largely neglecting the (predominantly male) characters who fill household management roles in Luke and Acts, they miss out on central Lukan characters who fundamentally challenge their concept of masculinity in Luke and the New Testament as breaking away from a traditional family and household values. Surely, Jesus and those closest to him renounce family, security, and in many cases the traditional household. However, conversion stories in Luke and Acts suggest that later and/or more peripheral disciples subscribe to a different code.[610] The significance of hospitality continues to influence Luke and Acts, not only in the form of radical renunciation of wealth but as a call to invite the poor and give shelter to the marginalized. Thus, I propose that Luke's characterizations of household leaders should inform our understanding of Luke's wealth ethics and gender constructions in tandem with the sayings and teachings of Jesus.

Having considered the significant context of the tensions in the Jerusalem *ekklēsia*, the impact of the Antiochene collection, Barnabas' dynamic discipleship, and the shift towards a Gentile audience accompanied by the narrator's appearance in the story, I now move on to investigate more thoroughly how Luke characterizes the conversion of a Roman official in Philippi. Contrary to the scholarly position that Luke does not find adherents to his previously meticulously described economic language in Philippi,[611] I engage Acts 16:11–40 and

[608] Moxnes 2015: 327–40; D'Angelo 2003: 287.
[609] Osiek, MacDonald, and Tulloch 2006: 18.
[610] Matson 1996: 135–83.
[611] Hays 2010: 250–52.

especially the characterization of the Roman jailer to challenge this position. Finally, Luke's characterization of the jailer exemplifies how (de)constructions of masculinity play a crucial part in Luke's description of ideal discipleship.

5 Jewish Men in a Roman Prison

In Acts 16:23 the Philippian jailer is introduced as the last of a series of Roman officials who have just arrested Paul and Silas and ordered that their clothes were to be torn off and their bodies beaten with sticks (περιρήξαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκέλευον ῥαβδίζειν, Acts 16:22). The reason for their punishment and subsequent imprisonment is caused by Paul's exorcism of an enslaved girl (παιδίσκη) with a "Python(ian) spirit" (πνεῦμα πύθωνα), or a "spirit of divination" (NRSV).[612] The serpentine connotations in this exorcism should be reflected in the exegesis, as it ties Paul's proclamation of a Jewish Messiah to Luke 10:19 (πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων) and the authority of the apostles to cast out demons.[613]

With a clever play on words in Acts 16:18, Luke describes how, just as the spirit goes out (ἐξελθεῖν) of the enslaved girl, the enslavers of the girl see the money-making potential go out (ἐξῆλθεν) or disappear.[614] The loss of their source of income sparks fury, and they drag Paul and Silas in front of the rulers (ἄρχοντας) and the magistrates (στρατηγοῖς) of the city. The critique of Delphic greed has ties to a broader juxtaposition of Apollo and the Most High God (ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὕψιστος), to use Luke's wording from Acts 16:17. In a recent exploration of this intersection, Olivia Stewart Lester argues that both gender and economics are essential for untangling this juxtaposition, focusing her study primarily on the Sibylline Oracles 4–5 and Revelations, but using Acts 16 as a central interlocutor when discussing the prophetic economy that, following her argument, distinguishes early Jewish and Christian texts (noting the potentially problematic nature of these terms)[615] from Greco-Roman prophecy and cultic practice in the centuries following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.[616]

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[612] A more literal translation is here suggested, seeing as "Python(ian)" and the alternative "pythonic spirit" might aid our understanding of the cultural and historical significance of this form of clairvoyance. The term refers to Apollo's defeat of the πύθων in the caves of Delphi, and according to C. K. Barrett it was believed that possessing such a spirit rendered similar gifts as that of the oracle of Delphi. Barrett 1999: 784–85, cf. Hays 2010: 245. Weaver 2004: 256–58 further bolsters this argument.

[613] Weaver 2004: 258.

[614] Rowe 2016: 135–36.

[615] Stewart Lester 2018: 4–5.

[616] Stewart Lester (2018: 208) further picks up on a fascinating link to an early Christian interpreter of the Sibylline Oracles, namely Clement of Alexandria in his *Exhortation to the Greeks* (3–4). Clement seems to further the critique of payments and gift-giving to oracles and deities in Roman practice and contrasts this idol worship to Christian's who seek and worship only God (cf. 3.33; 4.44).

Stewart Lester observes that, in the Sibylline Oracles the authors portray the Jewish God using typical hegemonic tropes such as masculinized domination.[617] The male authors then use a female body—the Sybil—as a mouthpiece through which their prophetic economy is proclaimed, creating a fascinating intersection of economic language (debt, sin, reward, etc.) and explicit gendered language that has strong parallels to Luke's story in Acts 16. The Jewish-Christian authors of the Sibylline Oracles characterize God with traits typically assigned to Apollo and the Sibyl is instrumentalized, subjugated— "struck by a whip" (Sib. Or. 3.6).[618] For Luke, however, the mouthpiece for the Most High God, Paul, is the one who is whipped and beaten, and masculinity seems tied to speech and behavior that fundamentally challenge categories of violence or domination as the credentials for what it means to be a man. While Luke and the authors of the Sibylline Oracles both negotiate Jewish notions of gender and economic language clashing with Hellenistic literary conventions, the respective outcomes in terms of conceptions of masculinity seem diametrical.

For our purposes, it is not insignificant to note how Paul's proclamation of a Jewish Messiah in Philippi aligns with this critique of Delphic oracles and its attached (greedy) economic practices. Interestingly, Paul's end goal in this Roman environment is focused on the establishment of two Jesus-following households. For Luke, the decisive contrast lies against Roman economy, cultic practice, and imperial violence. The alternative is the economy of the *ekklēsia*. It begins in worship, expressed through baptism into the Way. It requires laying aside every violent means, and it is fulfilled in a new ethic: hospitality, love for enemies, and care for the poor and the wounded. This latter point becomes explicit when Paul and Silas encounter the jailer during the ensuing prison scene, but the drama in which the Most High God prevails over foreign powers is set up when the two evangelizers meet the enslaved girl.

Leading up to their arrest and beating, it is not insignificant that the enslaved girl foretells that Paul and Silas have come proclaiming a way of salvation (Acts 16:17), a question that is later picked up by the jailer asking, "what must I do to be saved?" Moreover, she identifies them in some ways similar to her own identity as enslaved, claiming that Paul and Silas are also enslaved (οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, Acts 16:17). Later, the road to salvation is exactly what the jailer receives from Paul and Silas, and the power of the Most High God is shown as exceeding both Delphic deities and Roman carceral

[617] Stewart Lester 2018: 187.

[618] See Sib. Or. 3.1–6: "High-thundering, blessed, heavenly one, who has the cherubim, seated one, I beg you to give me a little rest, I who have prophesied things all true, for my heart is wearied within. But why does my heart quiver again, and why is my spirit struck by a whip, forced from within to announce an oracle to all." See further Sib. Or. 4.18–23 as per Stewart Lester 2018: 172–73.

institutions. Although Luke's text allows for the jailer to appear focused on being saved from his present predicament ("how can I get out of this situation?"), the salvation he receives ties both the girl and the jailer to the same driving force in the plot concerning conversion and how to be a follower of the Way. Furthermore, when the girl identifies Paul and Silas as enslaved to the Most High God, the reader is prepared for the ambivalence of the ensuing unjust punishment and imprisonment of Paul, who is a Roman citizen and thus supposed to be insusceptible to such kinds of corporeal punishment (cf. Acts 22:25).[619] I return to the implications of Paul's citizenship and the unjust nature of his punishment below, but I first offer some comments on the prison scene that epitomizes the drama of Acts 16.

It is in the midst of this chaotic scene of crime and punishment that the Roman rulers and magistrates of Philippi order the jailer to have Paul and Silas thrown in prison and put in stocks (ξύλον, Acts 16:24). During the show trial, the jailer appears more like a stock character who follows orders and throws (ἔβαλεν) Paul and Silas into prison. Unlike someone like Cornelius who is elaborately introduced only to disappear from the narrative, the jailer is rather casually introduced. We learn nothing of his name, status, or of his thoughts and feelings; he rather appears as an instrument of the imperial forces that exercise their power and violence over these Jewish men (Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, Acts 16:20), enslaved to the Most High God. In continuing dissimilarity with the Roman soldier of Acts 10, the jailer's character development sees him evolving from a docile servant to asking for salvation, receiving baptism, and tending to Paul and Silas in his house. The road from silent jailer to proclaiming Jesus as savior and becoming a son of Abraham starts when the walls of the prison are shaken by an earthquake.

Paul and Silas have remained silent during their flogging and imprisonment. However, in the middle of the night (μεσονύκτιον, Acts 16:25) they entertain the other prisoners by singing hymns and praying to God. Following their nightly worship, a great earthquake ensues, their chains are broken, and all the captives are set free (Luke 4:18, cf. Isa 58:6). When the Philippian jailer wakes up, stirred by the great turmoil of these events, he is suddenly revealed as having depth and ambivalence. Seeing the prison cells open, he supposes that the prisoners have escaped. Then, having failed in his duties as guard of the prison, he unsheathes his sword and prepares to die by suicide. When Paul suddenly appears before him, the earlier situation is reversed entirely. Instead of escaping to safety, perhaps returning at once to the household of his trusted disciple Lydia, Paul rather confronts the jailer, shouting (ἐφώνησεν, Acts 16:28) to stop him from harming himself and revealing that none of the prisoners had indeed escaped.

[619] Conway 2008: 20–21.

What looked like a prison break has instead set the stage for the jailer to break with his ties to hegemony and power and embrace the Way proclaimed by Paul and Silas.

Paul, who only recently had received severe beatings and humiliation, appears to have gathered Silas and the other prisoners and now stands before the jailer with what John Chrysostom would later describe as "manly courage" (ἀνδρεία) in his homily on Acts 16:25–26.[620] At this point in the narrative, Paul and the jailer have undergone severe reversals of masculine identity. The Roman official with a claim to total domination and control over his subjects (Acts 16:24), is now throwing himself at the feet of his former prisoner in a suicidal state of desperation (Acts 16:27). Luke, having entirely reversed the fates of the two characters, proceeds to narrate a fascinating tale of conversion and reconstruction. After Paul's decision not to escape the jail cell but rather confront his captor, the jailer asks Paul and Silas, saying Κύριοι, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ; (Acts 16:30). At the dramatic climax of the prison scene, Paul and Silas have suddenly become the Κύριοι ("Sirs" or "Lords"), showing that the roles have shifted. Paul is no longer the criminalized, (unjustly) punished captive, but suddenly appears to be in full control of the situation. However, the answer to what the jailer can do to be saved has little to do with the urgent matter of taking responsibility for the unravelling of the prison, but Paul rather answers as the girl predicted in Acts 16:17, namely that salvation comes from believing in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, this salvation is not just for the jailer but for his entire household (ὁ οἶκός σου, Acts 16:31).

Surprisingly, the jailer then proceeds to be an exemplary disciple, he washes and tends to Paul and Silas, invites them into his house, serves them food, cares for their injury, believes in Jesus, and gets baptized with his household. His loss of (self-)control and domination, with close ties to status, identity, masculinity, and virtue, especially in hegemonic masculine constructions, are reconstructed by a characterization of the jailer as a hospitable follower of the Way and a pious disciple of Jesus Christ. His doubly humbled posture, first intending to fall on his sword and then falling at the feet of the apostles, is lifted up similarly to Luke's daughter of Abraham (Luke 13:16) who is lifted out of her destitute state, and paralleling

[620] Chrysostom, *Homily XXXVI*, C.d.29 (v.9:pt.1) (author's translation from the Greek text by De Montfaucon 1837: 304). Chrysostom describes the jailer as being struck, not by Paul's φιλανθρωπία (here: "kindness"), but rather by Paul's ἀνδρεία when deciding not to escape but rather confront the jailer. The choice to translate ἀνδρεία as "manly courage" is to evoke a discussion among classicists on the gendered connotations to the virtue of ἀνδρεία. My position leans on Cullyer's argument that "[f]rom the classical period onward *andreia* was commonly understood as the part of human *arete* that consists of daring (*tolma*) and endurance or perseverance (*karteria*) when manifested in the male spheres of war and politics" (Cullyer 2002: 213; cf. Smoes 1995: 282). The verb form ἀνδρίζομαι is used similarly and could be seen as having implications on masculinity in e.g., *Mart.Pol* 9.1 and Herm.Vis. 1.4. Conway (2008: 29) similarly argues that "the Greek *andreia* can be rendered either courage or manliness. They are one and the same."

Cornelius who falls at Peter's feet in Acts 10:25. With the ensuing hospitality offered to the wounded apostles, the jailer has become a son of Abraham. Interestingly, the jailer's need for salvation might have been alluded to when the apostles approach Philippi by boat.

Earlier in the narrative, the incentive for redirecting Paul's itinerary to Philippi is prompted by his vision of a certain man (ἀνὴρ) from Macedonia (Acts 16:6–10). Scholars have pondered this strange passage, often because on a surface reading it seems perhaps to challenge the overarching theme in Acts of God being the primary acting and initiating entity throughout the narrative.[621] Keener notes that dream visions such as this one would not have been an unfamiliar cultural phenomenon, neither among Jews, Egyptians, nor in Roman society.[622] It is puzzling that Luke would include this vision and then, immediately afterward in Acts 16:10, interpret the dream as if it is, after all, God who has called (προσκέκληται) Paul to proclaim the Gospel in Macedonia. For our purposes, it is particularly intriguing that the man in Paul's dream is asking for help (διαβὰς εἰς Μακεδονίαν βοήθησον ἡμῖν, Acts 16:9). As Paul's journey passes into Roman Gentile territory, the local *man* asks for help from a man proclaiming a Jewish Messiah.[623]

In broad strokes, it was often believed (save in Stoic thought) that dreams foretold the future and were messages sent from God, and Pliny the Elder even provides an account of dreams as a way of discouraging a man from committing suicide.[624] Considering these literary and cultural discourses, in which readers would likely interpret Paul's vision as a form of narrative anticipation—foreshadowing a later moment of crisis—the most fitting object of comparison is the suicidal jailer. Although Keener notes the possible warning against suicide as a general way of interpreting dreams in the ancient world, the intriguing parallels between Paul's vision and the jailer seem more potent than a reading of the dream-vision as a ploy to reveal that it is God's agency steering Paul towards the Macedonian shores.[625] Rather, the ἀνὴρ in most need of help in the ensuing passage is the Roman subject who, after utterly failing his imperial duties, is changed to Luke's ideal ἀνὴρ as leader of a Christ-following household. Keeping in mind the mentioned clash between local deities and the Most High God that Paul proclaims, the dream-vision draws together the earthly and celestial elements of the drama that

[621] Dibelius 1956; Keener 2012: 436.

[622] Keener 2014: 2342–50.

[623] Luke uses ἀνήρ more than any other New Testament author, 27 times in the Gospel and 100 times in Acts. Conway 2008: 127–28 sees this as inviting a Gentile audience to associate Luke's heroes with core tenets of the Greco-Roman hegemonic man. I suggest that the ἀνήρ in Acts, at least here in Acts 16, is called to embrace Jewish non-hegemonic masculine tenets. Moreover, the available associations that Conway alludes to are appropriate for postcolonial mimicry and the production of hybrid identities.

[624] See Keener 2014: 2347–48 for a substantial overview. See also, Pliny the Elder *Nat.* 36.21.97.

[625] Keener 2014: 2348.

is about to unfold as Paul sets foot on Gentile land. Before diving deeper into the implications of the jailer's conversion story for the larger project, I offer some brief thoughts on the significance of this story unfolding in Roman Philippi.

6 Philippi in the First Century CE

The conversion of the jailer's household is Luke's first account of a household community founded among Gentiles in a Roman setting.[626] In the previous chapters, I have considered Jewish and Godfearing disciples such as Levi, Peter, and Cornelius. Abraham's role as heavenly banquet host also fits well within the context of Luke's focus on God's chosen people. Never before, however, has this intramural discourse of Abraham, with all its potential for non-hegemonic masculine conceptions and resistance to Roman imperial power, been proclaimed to a Gentile Roman soldier with seemingly no prior knowledge of Jewish customs or the Jesus movement. One of the striking aspects of Luke's account of the household communities in Philippi (Lydia and the jailer) is the move from evangelizing to a Jewish audience, to a now predominantly Gentile audience also among Paul's founding of household communities. Philippi's convenient situatedness at the junction of East and West and the rich archaeological and epigraphic evidence from the first centuries CE has drawn significant scholarly attention to its Greco-Roman profile.[627]

Peter Pilhofer goes so far as to give his influential contribution to the study of ancient Philippi the subtitle *Die erste christliche Gemeinde Europas*. While it remains somewhat unconvincing that Paul or other ancient travelers would have considered the crossing over from Troas to Neapolis (Acts 16:11) as entering Europe, it might make more sense to describe this part of Paul's voyage as first entering Macedonia.[628] While the scholarly contributions to situating Philippi in its ancient context are most welcome, less attention tends to be given to Paul's proclamation of a Jewish Messiah in this Roman colony. In addition, one might wonder about the extent to which *Europe* is a political instrument in Pilhofer's project that emphasizes this *European* turn in the Paul's travels.[629] Scholarship in the late 20th century had an unfortunate tendency to force Paul's second evangelizing journey into a constructed European discourse.[630] While the ancient Greek concept of Europe certainly existed as one of the three

[626] Bockmuehl 1997: 17; Staley 1999: 125.
[627] See, e.g., Bormann 1995: 232–39; Fitzmyer 1985: 584; Pilhofer 1995: 153–99.
[628] Pilhofer 1995: 154–56; Gnilka 1996: 78–79, cf. Bockmuehl 1998: 12–14.
[629] See, e.g., Staley 1999: 114–15, 122.
[630] See, e.g., Dunn 1997: 215, 218; L. T. Johnson 1992: 281–97.

parts of the world alongside Libya and Asia, I lean on Staley's argument that Acts does not envision such a division, and consequently that the "Europeanizing" of Paul's travels is a modern scholarly enterprise that should be shunned.[631] Although R. B. Rackham warned against the influence of modern geographical ideas on Luke's account as early as 1906, the exegesis of Acts 16 has suffered from Western scholarly triumphalism throughout the 20th century.[632]

One aspect that has been neglected due to a combination of the one-sided Greco-Roman material culture discovered in Philippi and the aforementioned scholarly enterprise is the significance of Paul's proclamation of a Jewish Messiah in this Macedonian, foreign, and "most explicitly Roman territory that Paul has yet entered."[633] The implication of Luke's reference to προσευχή in Acts 16:12; 16, and the references to συναγωγή in other cities mentioned before and after Philippi (Acts 14:1; 15:21; 17:1), gives the journey to Philippi a unique position in Paul's apostolic activities. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the Pythonic spirit and the rich religious landscape of Philippi with the "Most High God" proclaimed by Paul invites reflection on how a Jewish Messiah is received in this new Gentile context.[634] Luke's mention of meeting Lydia outside the city gate by the river (Acts 16:13), at the προσευχή, suggests the absence of both a synagogue and a ritual bath (*mikveh*). Luke frequently reports on Jewish presence and Jewish buildings in this section of Acts (see especially Acts 14–18), suggesting a limited Jewish presence in Roman Philippi.[635] The socio-historical context of Paul's journey to Philippi, the most Roman, and Gentile, and the least Jewish location yet for Luke's account of the spreading of the Gospel, makes for an intriguing test case for our hypothesis that Luke's Jewish hospitality continues to be relevant in the latter half of Acts.

To this day, the jailer has received less attention in scholarly discussions on this specific Jewish context of Luke's Philippian community. Bockmuehl points out that Luke appears knowledgeable and precise when describing the different roles and hierarchies within the Roman military and correctional institutions in Acts 16, and thus that the jailer appears solidly

[631] Staley 1999: 135.
[632] R. B. Rackham 1906: 272.
[633] Staley 1999: 125.
[634] Noting the potential methodological problem of relying on Luke's account as historically accurate, articulated by, for example, Boismard and Lamouille (1990), and Taylor (1994), I subscribe to the view that Acts can be considered as reporting accurately the accounts it narrates (Rapske 1994; Bauckham 1995; cf. Bockmuehl 1997: 11). Moreover, my argument relies mostly on the internal logic of Acts to investigate what Luke focuses on when narrating the Gospel's spread from Jerusalem into predominantly Gentile areas.
[635] Bockmuehl argues that the marginal Jewish presence is understandable in this predominantly agricultural society, which lacked a significant commercial center to attract a more diverse population. Cf. Bockmuehl 1997: 9.

within this discourse when he is introduced by Luke as δεσμοφύλαξ.[636] However, in Luke's characterization of the jailer post-conversion, the jailer appears to have gone through significant change. When he takes Paul and Silas into his house, he mimics the hospitality of the Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), offers table fellowship in line with Luke 22:26–27, and effectively draws on themes of repentance that Luke draws from Jewish Scriptures. Apart from his former vocation as a Roman military official, the jailer acts similarly to Abraham, Levi, and the host of the Great Banquet in Luke 14 after becoming a follower of the Way. In addition, Luke refers twice to a place of prayer (προσευχή) in Acts 16:13 and Acts 16:16, setting the stage for the unfolding drama as Paul, Silas, Lydia, and other women gather there. While Luke neither mentions nor excludes the possibility of it being a synagogue, which is mentioned explicitly in Thessaloniki (Acts 17:1), a communal Jewish prayer seems central to Luke's attestation of the early Philippian community.

If the nascent Philippian *ekklēsia* is lacking a communal gathering place it might give additional emphasis to the household communities founded by Lydia and the jailer. Although the Jewish presence in Philippi appears to have been marginal, the absence of a synagogue should not be taken to mean that Paul was retreating from the proclamation of a Jewish Messiah. Rather, much like Paul himself emphatically states in 1 Corinthians 9:21, he is not being apart from the law of God (μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ) but according to the law of Christ (ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ), to win those outside the law.[637] Without staking too much on Luke's knowledge of the Pauline corpus, Luke is carefully drawing on tropes embedded in concurrent Jewish discourses when describing the Christ-following communities in Acts 16. Significantly, Paul's encounter with enslaved people and Roman officials is far from a Europeanizing project. It rather tells the story of how a Jewish Messiah who was crucified by the Romans now challenges their hegemony, even on their home turf. Luke's choice of ascribing Paul Roman citizenship and describing the first Gentile household community in Philippi, thus sets up tension between the Jewish Messiah and the Roman Empire, the hegemonic and non-hegemonic man, the colonizer and the colonized.[638]

While both the reference to a place of prayer and the intriguing construction of household communities in Acts 16 could be read as Luke placing Paul's Philippian ministry

[636] Bockmuehl 1997: 16.

[637] While I do not rely heavily on a relationship between Paul's letters and Luke's narrative in Acts, I maintain that when evidence originates in the Pauline correspondence, it can lend support to Luke's version. However, the reverse—using Acts to interpret Paul—should be approached with caution.

[638] Surely, Lydia's household would have been converted at an earlier stage of Paul's mission, but these events escape the Lukan account, cf. Osiek, MacDonald, and Tulloch 2006: 158, 235.

within a Jewish kerygma, the post-baptismal recharacterization of the Philippian jailer further buttresses the continuing importance of Jewish wealth ethics in Luke's second volume. The jailer's household is carefully modelled on the same Jewish scriptures as the household and banquet imageries in Luke's gospel, such as to love your neighbor as yourself (Lev 19:18, referred to in Luke 10:27), and to show mercy to those in need (Mic 6:8, indicated in Luke 11:41). In addition, table fellowship is not mentioned concerning Lydia's household but is reserved for the jailer.[639] Together, the place of prayer (προσευχή) mentioned in Paul's encounter with Lydia and the table fellowship initiated in the jailer's household bring the two foundational practices of shared meals and prayer in the Jerusalem *ekklēsia* in Acts 2:42 (Ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς).[640]

Moreover, the reversal aspects of the Greco-Roman banquet norms, seen perhaps most clearly in Luke 14, inviting the marginalized instead of using a dinner party to consolidate status and influence, is given a striking contextualization when Luke now in Acts 16 makes Paul and Silas the vulnerable and wounded being cared for by a (former) Roman jailer. Therefore, this first expansion of stationary discipleship to a Gentile household has a considerable impact on Luke's wealth ethics in the transition from being proclaimed within Israel to including Gentiles. Finally, the drastic recharacterization of the jailer has implications for Lukan masculinities specifically, and the importance of radical hospitality more broadly (particularly when seen in tandem with Lydia). I conclude in this section, therefore, that when the Philippian jailer converts from a Roman official to a follower of the Way, from dishonored and suicidal to a baptized disciple, and from an instrument of emasculating punishment, via a complete reversal of fortunes, he becomes a model for Luke's ideal leader of a Christ-following household. It is to the fascinating characterization of the Philippian jailer that we now turn.

7 The Jailer's Socio-Economic Status

One key objection to our reading of the Philippian jailer is that he is not necessarily described as or presented as being rich. Compared to Abraham's wealth, or Zacchaeus, Luke's explicit son of Abraham, the jailer seems to represent a different social group. Significantly, he

[639] As noted by Matthews 2001.

[640] Witherington (1998: 487) argues that the conversions of Lydia and the jailer deliberately "stress the equality of women and men in God's plan of salvation and their equal importance in the new [Christian] community." While Luke's coupling of the two household leaders is highly significant, I would argue that they function to attach Paul's Gentile mission to different aspects of Luke's Jewish wealth ethics.

is paired in some ways with Lydia, who similarly to the jailer is described as having a household (τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, Acts 16:32) in Philippi. However, contrary to his female counterpart who deals in luxurious purple cloth, the jailer's socio-economic status is less attested and somewhat murky in comparison. Does this raise certain questions such as can potentially non-wealthy characters offer relevant perspectives on Luke's suggested behavior for those who have possessions? The behavior that the jailer shows after having become a follower of the Way, however exemplary, does not necessarily require substantial wealth. A bucket of water to clean the wounds of Paul and Silas, some loaves of bread to fill their stomachs, and shelter for the night. Maybe that is the extent of his hospitality between the lines of Luke's story. While my argument rests more on how Luke counters a loss of concurrent masculine status by focusing my attention on the converted jailer's status within the newfound Christ-following household, I will briefly consider the socio-economic status of the jailer.

As mentioned, scholars tend to view the jailer as either a Roman official or a public enslaved person. While the jailer might narratively function to represent the Roman officials punishing Paul, I suggest that he was likely a public enslaved person. In one of his letters to the emperor Trajan (110 CE), Pliny the Younger interestingly raises the question of whether Roman soldiers should assist public enslaved persons in overseeing prisons, to which the emperor advises him not to do so.[641] This might strengthen the position that the Philippian jailer was a public enslaved person. In one of his other letters, Pliny writes about public enslaved persons, telling the emperor that certain convicted criminals "are performing the duties and functions of public slaves, even to the point of drawing the yearly emolument of the public slave."[642] Seeing how these enslaved persons received wages noticeable enough to raise economic concerns when others tried to obtain them, being a public enslaved person should not necessarily be considered a signifier of low socio-economic status. Thus, the jailer might open a possibility to investigate those characters who are relevant to Luke's wealth ethics without being described as rich (πλούσιος), a description Luke seems to reserve mostly for his first volume.[643] Moreover, the jailer seemingly has one or more subordinates (Acts 16:29) and is trusted with the custody of the prisoners.[644] Finally, intending suicide by sword might suggest

[641] Pliny *Ep*. 10.19–20 (trans. P. G. Walsh 2016: online, without pagination).

[642] Pliny *Ep*. 10.31.2; 10.32.

[643] See the previous discussion of the pharisees in Chapter Three, who are often described as money-loving (φιλάργυροι) but not rich.

[644] This argument might be challenged by the Syriac tradition. The Peshitta renders ܐܫܪܐ (“to light”/”to shine”) in the Aph'el (causative) third person singular followed by “for himself a lamp” (ܠܗ ܠܦܢܝܐ). A proposed translation could thus be “and he lit for himself a lamp,” which would potentially challenge Acts 16:29 as grounds

that he did belong to a social stratum above the poor, an aspect of his characterization we will consider below. While the evidence is scarce and the socio-economic status of the jailer escapes firm conclusions, we can suggest that he should not be considered poor although he was most likely a public enslaved person. Thus, we might turn to the implications of his intended suicide to further advance our argument for his relevance for intersections of wealth ethics and masculinities in Acts, and specifically how Jewish notions of manliness continues to shape Luke's two-volume work now that the narrative is brought into Gentile territory.

8 The Emasculating Stakes of the Jailer's Intended Suicide

With no attempt at being comprehensive, I offer some insight into the potential consequences of suicide or punishment for having lost the prisoners. Based on concurrent attitudes towards suicide, the jailer may have intended suicide for at least two different reasons. On the one hand, he might have viewed his situation as irreparable, shameful, and beyond salvaging to the point where suicide would have been tolerated or even viewed as a last resort for regaining some of the lost honor. For one, Dio Cassius notes that during the reign of Tiberius (*c*. 31 CE) it was not uncommon for persons who were facing punishment to die by suicide to make sure that their children would inherit their property.[645] Should the jailer be held responsible for escaped prisoners, he might avoid the confiscation of his inheritance by dying before he could be convicted of this crime. This adds a potential layer of shame and indignity for the suicidal jailer, seeing as imprisonment would strip him of what status he would have left.[646]

Luke's mention of a sword might further add to this notion that the jailer sees suicide as a way of restoring in death some of the honor his misfortune has caused. Van Hooff argues that from a Roman legal position, using weapons was seen as more honorable than other means of suicide, especially hanging, drowning, or jumping off a cliff, which was often thought of as a method reserved for people from lower social strata.[647] Similarly, Keener argues that Luke's

for arguing that the jailer was the leader of the prison due to the indication in the Greek manuscripts of having subordinates.

[645] Dio Cass. 58.15–16.

[646] For similar accounts of (attempted) suicide to avoid this kind of dishonor, see Tacitus, *Ann* 6.40; Dio Cassius 58.27.4, cf. Rapske 1994: 221–223; 296. For two examples of (one committed and one intended) suicide to avoid punishment, see Lucian, *Lucius* 24; 39.

[647] Van Hooff 1990: 47–54. There is a methodological issue concerning the relevance of later legal sources on this first-century setting. However, suicide by sword was similarly viewed as (more) honorable in earlier sources, cf. Corn. Nep. 23 [Hannibal], 12.5; Dio Cass. 19 frg.; Tac. *Ann*. 14.37, see further Keener 2014: 2503.

mention of a sword might suggest that shame and failed responsibility would be sufficient reasons to die by suicide in an attempt at restoring some of the lost honor and status.[648]

On the other hand, committing suicide to avoid punishment could also have been seen as cowardice and potentially add to his shame and dishonor. Such a reading, where the jailer is seen as preferring suicide to later punishment and execution, is proposed by Otto Bauernfeind who argues that: "der Kerkermeister haftet für seine gefangenen, offene Gefängnistüren (und abgefallene Fesseln) bedeuten für ihn den Tod; daß keiner seiner Oberen ihm ein Wunder glauben und keiner ihm mildernde Umstände zubilligen wird, weiß er; darum will er lieber selbst die Folgerungen ziehen."[649]

The suicidal characterization of the Philippian jailer thus introduces him as conflicted and multifaceted. While it might have been intended as either an escape from future punishment or as a way of regaining lost honor, his intended suicide signifies shame and indignity. Furthermore, if seen as concerning his identity as a public enslaved person, his failed responsibility would likely implicate punishment.[650] From these brief examples of the dishonorable consequences of both letting (some of) the prisoners escape and of committing suicide, I suggest that the jailer's situation implied a significant loss of status, security, and honor which would have emasculating implications from a Roman perspective. Perhaps imagining that falling on his sword would have been the only way of salvaging the situation, the jailer encounters a most surprising series of events when the released prisoners suddenly show up to offer him an alternative.

9 Implications for Luke's Economic Language

The jailer finds himself at a critical junction when the earthquake has struck, and he supposes that the prisoners have escaped. The choice between facing his superiors or meeting his end there in the ruptured prison might have been equally unappealing. However, in this moment of crisis, Paul presents an alternative and asks him to put away the sword, because, as Paul says, "we are all here" (ἅπαντες γάρ ἐσμεν ἐνθάδε, Acts 16:28). None of the prisoners have escaped. Rather, they have come with Paul and Silas to approach the suicidal prison guard. The recently whipped and beaten prisoners are in charge, and the categories of honor and shame have shifted entirely. It is at this point when Luke has stripped the jailer of status and identity,

[648] Keener 2014: 2507.
[649] Bauernfeind 1980: 210.
[650] Rapske 1994: 244–47, 252, 262–63.

that we can appreciate how the new Lukan man and disciple is reconstructed. The Philippian jailer shows how Luke can be seen as inviting an intersection of economic language and masculinity in the way he reconstructs a failed man by focusing on how he manages his household and possessions to forward the economy of the *ekklēsia*. In giving up any last claims to hegemonic masculinity, the jailer is recast as hospitable and caring for the persecuted apostles.

Firstly, the jailer falls at Paul's feet, subordinating himself to his former captive. The conversion is thus tied to a reversal where former power dynamics are turned upside-down.[651] Secondly, when the jailer asks the question "what must I do" in Acts 16:30, he invokes a strongly attested trope in Luke and Acts (Luke 3:10–14; 10:25; 12:17; (14:16); 16:3; 18:18; 20:13; Acts 2:37; 9:36; 22:10). MiJa Wi has argued that the question has soteriological underpinnings, especially for the rich throughout Luke's gospel, that Jesus' response can be seen as tied to the significance of mercy (ἔλεος) and almsgiving (ἐλεημοσύνη) (Luke 18:18), and the salvific potential for the rich (Luke 10:25; 12:16–21; 16:1–9).[652] Wi calls for more work to be done on the Lukan question of what the different characters should or must do (Luke consistently uses the aorist subjunctive of τί ποιήσω/τί ποιήσωμεν), and her detailed work is limited to Luke's first volume.[653]

The jailer picks up on the lacuna described by Wi and shows how this central wealth ethical question carries over from Luke's first to his second volume. With a few exceptions, the question τί ποιήσω(μεν) in the Third Gospel functions to address soteriological issues articulated in economic terms. This trope is initiated by John the Baptist who answers this question from the crowds (ὄχλοις, Luke 3:7) saying that "those who have two tunics must share with him who has none, and he who has food must do likewise" (Luke 3:11). The imagery of the axe at the root of the trees and the trees being cast into the fire introduced by John the

[651] Interestingly, in other instances of jailers being converted in early Christian texts, women often play a crucial part in the conversion story. In the *Acts of Peter* 1.1 it is Candida, the jailer Quartus' wife, who hears Paul and conveys his proclamation to the jailer. In the *Acts of Perpetua and Felicity* (9.1; 16.4) the jailer is converted after witnessing the steadfast faith of the soon to be martyred women. While conclusions cannot be drawn at this point, it is noteworthy how early Christians such as Polycarp (Ισχυε Πολύκαρπε καὶ ἀνδρίζου, *Mart.Pol* 9.1), Perpetua (*facta sum masculus,* 3.2), and Paul in Chrysostom's reading of Acts 16.25–26 (*Homily XXXVI*, C.d.29 (v.9:pt.1)) are portrayed as ideal men in contexts of imprisonment and bodily harm, while the Roman jailers are characterized as suicidal or swayed by women. As argued earlier in Chapter One (Introduction), self-control and domination were foundational to Greco-Roman ideals of manliness. Imprisonment and corporeal punishment thus had clearly emasculating consequences. At the same time, early Christian texts seem to subvert these connotations by depicting the prisoners as masculine and the jailers as unmanly. There are some interesting parallels in Talmudic texts (*t. Moʿed Qat. 7*; *b. Taʿan. 22a*.) but here the jailer receives praise rather than ridicule for protecting female Jewish prisoners.

[652] Wi 2016: 175.

[653] Wi 2016: 177.

Baptist in Luke 3:9 frames the question as a soteriological issue. The subsequent answer to the crowd asking what they must to avoid being cast into the fire sets the stage for Luke's wealth ethics throughout the gospel (Luke 10:25–37; 12:16–21; 16:1–9; 18:18–30), and I would argue also in Acts.

Interestingly, after Peter's speech in Acts 2, the crowds are cut to the heart (κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν, Acts 2:37) having heard him proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and they ask the question "what must we do?" Much like the crowds in Luke 3 react to the proclamation of John the Baptist, Acts also narrates a similar response to a similar question. The answer to the question in Acts 2 has the same theological and soteriological ramifications, as Peter states emphatically that the crowds must repent (μετανοήσατε, Acts 2:38), and that everyone baptized in the name of Jesus Christ will receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). In Acts 2:42–47, the practical implication of this central question is narrated, and here we find perhaps the most striking example of realized Lukan wealth ethics when the author describes how the Jerusalem community had all things in common (εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινὰ, Acts 2:44). The answer to the very Lukan τί ποιήσω(μεν) thus seems to be tied to similar economic language in both the Gospel and Acts.

Moreover, Peter's programmatic statement in Acts 2 has strong parallels to the jailer's question in Acts 16. Having placed himself at Paul's feet after the earthquake, he asks Paul this theologically loaded question in a situation where more imminent saving might be pressing. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the upheaval of the prison could potentially have severe consequences for the jailer, but, at the same time, at this point in the story, he has just learned that none of the prisoners have indeed escaped. Paul's answer, however, is strictly soteriological and in line with Peter, John the Baptist, and the teachings of Jesus. The jailer is told to believe in the Lord Jesus (πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, Acts 16:31), and then he and his household will be saved (σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου, Acts 16:31). Paul makes sure to reinscribe lordship to Jesus after the jailer had addressed Silas and himself as Κύριοι. Modern translations sometimes gloss over this distinction (e.g., NRSV) rendering the jailer's address as "Sirs." While "Sirs" might be the jailer's intended meaning, it is worth noting the particularity of this scene and the significance of identifying "the Lord" in Luke and Acts.[654]

[654] The same form of προσπίπτω ("to fall down before") is paired with the vocative κύριε/κύριοι in Luke 5:8 when Peter falls at the feet of Jesus after witnessing the miraculous filling of the fishermen's nets. Moreover, ἔντρομος ("trembling") in this form is found only two other places in the New Testament, in Acts 7:32 and Hebrews 12:21, both referencing Exodus 3:6 and Moses' trembling before the burning bush. Other uses of τρόμος are found in Mark 16:8 when the women react to the empty tomb, and four times in Paul describing obedience (2 Cor 7:15; Eph 6:5; Phil 2:12) or the state in which he came to the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 2:3). Apart from

While not explicitly stated, the jailer's gesture might suggest a theophanic response or an act of *proskynesis* or *adoratio*.[655] While the jailer might not have known the Lord to be Jesus Christ at that moment, Paul makes sure to correct the mistake and assign true lordship to Jesus. Again, the imperial powers are subjected to the proclamation of a Jewish Messiah.

Finally, after having subordinated himself to his former prisoners, the jailer is given the chance to convert and become a follower of the Way. His calling to discipleship follows a similar pattern to that of Levi and other stationary followers in Luke's first volume. In addition, it exposes a detail about the jailer's socio-economic status, as Luke's mention of the family receiving the word of the Lord reveals that the jailer is the leader of his household. As mentioned, the inclusion of τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ parallels Lydia's characterization, which is sandwiched around the story of the jailer and the conversion of his household.

Having been taught the words of Jesus and been baptized, the jailer proceeds to be a model Lukan man. After the complete downfall of status and crisis of identity earlier the same night, the jailer is restored to a new man after being baptized. Luke characterizes him similarly to the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), an unexpected character who tends to the wounds of a would-be stranger (ἔλουσεν ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν), houses them and prepares food, and uses his possessions to care for their board and lodging (Acts 16:34). Luke effectively turns an emasculating crisis into an opportunity to exemplify the radical hospitality of Jesus' teaching in the author's first volume, personified in the actions of a Gentile convert in the second volume. Fundamental to the reconstruction of a broken man are characterizations of prudent wealth management and household leadership. The conversion of the Philippian jailer reveals how a Jewish Messiah and his teachings on radical hospitality conquers an instrument of Roman military power.

Seen through a lens of masculinity, the hegemonic man is clearly juxtaposed to Luke's sons of Abraham. When the jailer is baptized and brought into the Jesus movement, his primary identity markers are shaped by a Jewish hospitality that aligns with the Abrahamic ideal and the charitable hosts in the Third Gospel. Finally, categories of honor and shame are substituted with the Christ-following community's focus on hospitality and shared meals, emulating key features of Lukan wealth ethics.[656] The shift from subjugation under a hegemonic, imperial

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the somewhat distinct use of the term in the Pauline corpus, the jailer's response can be seen as having a theophanic aspect, which in turn is redirected to Jesus in Paul's answer to the jailer's question.

[655] As argued by Haenchen 1971: 497 against the position of Zahn that the jailer falls to the ground to check if the prisoners have been released from the stocks.

[656] Öhler 2005: 415 argues that the Jerusalem *ekklēsia* in Acts shows how Luke prioritizes the shared meal over typical Greco-Roman honor codes: "Ehre und Ansehen in ihr von untergeordneter Bedeutung. Zentrum der Gemeinde ist (...) das gemeinsame Mahl."

masculine system to the identity of a son of Abraham highlights the importance of considering competing models of masculinity in Luke. Just as Paul crosses over into Gentile Roman territory, the Jewish man clashes with imperial, military, and dominating masculinity more severely than at any point earlier in the narrative. To illustrate the consequences of the encounter between Paul and the jailer, we will now consider how this narrative might challenge the idea that Luke aligns with Roman hegemonic masculinity.

10 The Philippian Jailer and Lukan Masculinity

Against the majority position of scholars who claim that Luke portrays ideal men according to Roman power structures, the jailer is a striking example against this thesis in Luke and Acts.[657] In the drama of Acts 16, Roman masculinity is thoroughly contrasted by an ideal Lukan man. While the jailer might not have represented the higher strata of Roman authority and power (although not poor), his conversion and participation in a Christ-following household contrast his former life. Moreover, when Luke shapes him into a disciple of the Jewish Messiah, he leaves behind his former Roman ways, which would possibly have had him fall on his sword to regain in death some of the honor he lost when the cell doors were struck open. Instead, he is shown the way to salvation by Paul and Silas.

The transformation from a suicidal jailer to a leader of a Christ-following household happens almost in an instant. Against the other major position on Lukan masculinities articulated by Wilson, the most emasculating moment in the story of the jailer—his near attempt to die by suicide—is not part of his recharacterization as a Christ-follower, but rather the pivotal moment of his departure from Roman masculinities.[658] In other words, Luke's characterizations of masculinity neither attempt to rise to the standards of the Greco-Roman ideals nor do they seem to suggest subordination to them. Instead, Luke focuses on hosting and hospitality, the suggested behavior for the stationary disciples of Jesus, when recharacterizing the jailer after he has been converted to a follower of the Way.

The intersection of hospitality and masculine behavior is strikingly exemplified in the story of the Philippian jailer, who is converted from being an instrument of imperial violence, power, and domination, to being a son of Abraham. Luke's ideal man should thus not be considered alongside the Roman hegemonic masculine categories of honor and shame,

[657] Argued most notably by Conway 2008:127.
[658] Contra Wilson 2015: 254–56.

domination, and subjugation, but rather informed by Abraham-shaped, radical hospitality. Inviting the story of the Philippian jailer into conversation with the earlier chapters of this thesis, we might appreciate more fully how Luke's attention to households, shared meals, and redistribution of possessions play key roles also in this pericope. In Chapter Two, I argued that much of Luke's table fellowship and hospitality code is deeply embedded in Jewish sources. Attentiveness to Luke's Jewish context in Acts 16, however scarce evidence of pre-existing Jewish influence in Philippi might have been compared to other places of Pauline travel narratives, reveals a distinctive feature of how the author constructs ideal disciples. Luke's attention to the jailer's suicidal state has clear emasculating implications within a Roman conceptual framework. Interestingly, then, when he is subsequently baptized into Paul's Philippian community, Luke's portrayal of the jailer focuses on his hospitality as a household leader. The jailer acts in line with Luke's suggested behavior for those who have possessions, such as a household, a surplus of food, and the opportunity to heal Paul's and Silas' wounds.

Moreover, Greco-Roman masculinities are contested by a type of manliness that would have quite possibly been problematic in the concurrent socio-cultural context. The jailer, having thrown himself at the mercy of the insurgents he had thrown into prison just hours earlier, gives up on hegemonic masculinity and the consequences of failing as a man when he decides to be baptized instead of committing suicide. Furthermore, the characterization of the jailer as someone who, post-conversion, invites the stranger to dine in his house, tends to his needs, and finds faith, presents a version of Lukan masculinity that is intrinsically tied to how the followers of the Way distribute their possessions and open the doors of their houses.

At the same time, this categorization is not exclusively male, as shown in the coupling of Lydia and the jailer. When describing how women householders such as Lydia, but also Saphira and Tabitha, seemingly hold similar positions to the jailer, Levi, and Zacchaeus in the nascent *ekklēsia*, Luke shows that being a man is not mutually exclusive with having important roles in the economy of the *ekklēsia*. The male disciples might be successful men within a Lukan household, but it is far from a hegemonic ideal and not necessarily a step up compared to their earlier status in society. In other words, to be a disciple seems to entail a substantial degree of servility and divestment. Just as the jailer falls at Paul's feet, the Lukan household aims to serve rather than be served.

However, we have no way of knowing whether Lydia or the jailer are required to give up everything to be a follower of the Way (cf. Luke 14:33). Whether they gave everything at some earlier or later stage is unclear, but the reference to Lydia's profession as a purple cloth merchant might indicate that some disciples continue working after having dispossessed their

wealth, just as Paul works to sustain himself and his companions (Acts 18:1–4; 20:34). This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it might show that, similar to how Abraham and other banquet hosts from Luke's first volume (see Chapters Three and Four), some disciples in Acts are also expected to continuously provide for others. Secondly, Lydia breaks the norm in which male disciples are typically the hosts and the ones with possessions (see further discussion below). In the story of the Philippian jailer, masculinity is conceptualized in quite substantial parts by drawing on wealth ethics and household responsibilities, just as in the Third Gospel. At the same time, the way the jailer is refigured as an ideal follower is not inherently concerned with domination, but rather with charity, servility, and hospitality. For Luke, the ideal disciple is not characterized as someone who would claim any hegemonic status in the ancient world, but as someone willing to use their possession to serve. Serve the poor, serve the *ekklēsia*, and serve God.

This point is central to Wilson's conclusions, where she argues that Luke "provides a refiguration of masculinity that is inextricably wed to his understanding of God's powerless power."[659] Her argument is tied to the idea that Luke sculpts his male characters from the archetype of God's kenotic decision to be born and crucified as a poor man and reveal his power through the resurrection of Jesus. Moxnes extends this argument by pointing out how Jesus exhorts his disciples to follow his example: "This position is summed up in Jesus' farewell speech in Luke when he sets up a slave who serves others as an ideal for his disciples, not mighty rulers and benefactors (Lk 22:24–27)."[660] Wilson and Moxnes both focus on the itinerant followers of Jesus and thus seem to miss the crucial aspect of Lukan masculinities which I have argued is tied to hospitality, wealth ethics, and household discipleship. This ideal man and son of Abraham is especially significant because it is this mode of discipleship that seems to be required of Godfearing and Gentile converts. Cornelius and the jailer, the two men with most ties to Roman hegemonic masculinity, are not called to itinerant ministry but establish households that can support the Messiah movement. Interestingly, while the servile aspects of the jailer's (and the other stationary disciples in Luke and Acts) discipleship are quite clear, my findings do not support the argument that Lukan masculinities should, however far from hegemonic, be viewed as inherently unmanly, as argued by Wilson and Moxnes. Rather, Lukan masculinity is tied to honorable practices such as hosting banquets and tending to the needy. These virtues and practices resemble more closely a masculine ideal formed from

[659] Wilson 2015: 263.
[660] Moxnes 2020: 115.

Jewish role models such as the portrayal of the Patriarchs in the Pseudepigrapha, or the ethical teaching widespread in Second Temple Judaism.[661] Again we see, then, that Luke's masculine ideal is non-hegemonic and servile, yet it is not portrayed as either conforming to Roman ideals or as unmanly compared to them.

The attention to gendered constructions in Acts 16 also allows us to appreciate more fully the significance of economic language in line with Luke's first volume on one of the most dramatic passages of his second volume. Contrary to Marguerat, Pilhofer, and others who have carefully laid out the Greco-Roman context for Luke's account of the nascent Philippian *ekklēsia*, our attention to the construction of the jailer's household community offers a new perspective.[662] The attention to Luke's distancing from Greco-Roman masculine ideals and uncovering much of the same household and wealth ethics from Luke's Gospel might help us to see Paul's journey to Philippi as continuing the spread of Luke's Jewish ideals of hospitality and Abraham-shaped discipleship into the Gentile Mediterranean areas.

Marguerat seems hesitant to conclude too much on Israel's role after Acts 15,[663] echoing the classic debate on whether Luke envisions the spread of the gospel as departing from Judaism,[664] or seeing the *ekklēsia* as a continuation of Israel.[665] Subsequently, a range of positions has been posed in this debate in lieu of Haenchen's argument that "Luke has written the Jews off."[666] This chapter does not attempt to get too much into the (potentially anachronistic) weeds of the loaded issue of a "parting of the ways." However, by foregrounding Luke's distinct household ethics—drawn in large parts from engaging in dialogue with Jewish Scriptures—and Luke's resistance to Roman hegemonic masculinity in favor of a Jewish, non-hegemonic ideal, we might propose a slightly different reading of Acts 16:11–40.

Surely, a Jewish Messiah can be proclaimed to Gentiles without Luke necessarily being interested in the salvation of (a remnant of) the people of Israel. Nevertheless, if we let Luke's embeddedness in the Jewish Scriptures for the construction of economic language (hospitality) and gender roles (non-hegemonic masculinity) inform our reading of the Philippian incident in Acts 16, Luke's account of Paul's first travel to Gentile territories in Acts can be seen as drawing on similar tropes as the economic and gendered language presented in the Luke's Gospel. In this way, Paul's final words in Acts 28:20, claiming that he is bound to his chain for

[661] See, e.g., *Ant*. 1.196; *Abr*. 107–17; Heb. 13:2; Jos. Asen. 2:21; Sib. Or. 8.303–4; 2 Ezra and 3 Bar.; Sir 3:30–31 (29:22–27; 31:28); Tob 4:7–8, 7; Vis. Ezra; and 2 Macc.
[662] Pilhofer 1995: 93–112; 153–99; Marguerat 1999.
[663] Marguerat 1999: 211, 230.
[664] J. T. Sanders 1988: 51–57.
[665] Jervell 1972: 41–44.
[666] Haenchen 1978: 278.

the hope of Israel (ἕνεκεν γὰρ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ τὴν ἅλυσιν ταύτην περίκειμαι), in some ways harken back to the chains he carries in Acts 16.[667] Paul's gospel message proclaims a distinctly Jewish Messiah, and the foundation of his *ekklēsia* does not differentiate between Jewish and Gentile households but is rather informed by Jewish household ethics in the formation of the first Gentile household communities.[668]

11 Non-Hegemonic Masculinity and Postcolonial Theory in Acts 16

Having offered some reflections on how Paul and the Philippian jailer contribute to my overall argument that Luke's *Doppelwerk* contains non-hegemonic men who can be seen as formed by an Abraham-like ideal of hospitality and charity, I draw the exegetical part of the thesis to close by considering the Philippian scene in dialogue with key aspects of postcolonial theory. When introducing Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Jean-Paul Sartre describes the author as having "experienced a twofold liability, a twofold rejection, in the process that sets colonizers against colonized, and "self-rejecting colonizers" against "self-accepting colonizers." According to Sartre, Memmi understands the system so well because he felt it first as his own contradiction. Sartre argues that Memmi "*represents* no one, but since he *is* everyone at once, he will prove to be the best of witnesses."[669] This unique vantage point allows Memmi to describe the intricacies of colonial power and domination, because he writes from that complex third space or hybrid identity that marks people who attempts to survive and resist their oppressors. In Memmi's own words, he was "sort of a half-breed of colonization, understanding everyone because I belonged completely to no one."[670] As a Jewish man writing

[667] While the question of Israel's role after Jesus' death in Luke is not a focus of this chapter, I contend that they keep their position as God's people in line with Paul's words to King Agrippa II: "I say nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would happen: that the Christ is one who suffers and that as the firstborn of the dead he proclaims light to Israel and the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22–23). Surely, the Messianic hope for some Jews remained unfulfilled, as we learn from the Emmaus couple: "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21; cf. Acts 1:6). Nevertheless, the proclamation of a Jewish Messiah is consistent in Luke and Acts, and I hope that by elucidating the significance and particularities of the jailer's newfound, Christ-following household, we might appreciate more fully how it is the Jewish Jesus who conquers the Gentile territories in Acts 16 and beyond.

[668] I lean on Oliver (2021: 133–39 and passim) who argues that while Luke considers some Jews as rejecting Jesus' Messiahship, it seems that Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple remain significant throughout Luke and Acts. Oliver highlights how Luke is unique in portraying Jesus as weeping over Jerusalem as a prophet in Luke 19:41 (2021: 142), that Luke does not differentiate between the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of Israel," in Acts 1:3–6 (2021: 104), and that in the initiated but not fulfilled eschatology Israel will be delivered by God: "Luke uses traditional Jewish terms to describe Israel's restoration. This vocabulary describes Israel's salvation in a collective and tangible way. For Luke, salvation means freedom from exile and all forms of oppression— spiritual, yes, but also physical, political, social, and economic," (2021: 140).

[669] Memmi 1990:20.

[670] Memmi 1990: *xvi*.

from Tunisia, a predominantly Muslim colony of France during its struggle for independence in the 1950s, Memmi offers rare perspectives on colonialism and imperialism that encapsulates aspects of "both sides" of the colonial struggle. This experience of being at the same time in opposition to and a product of imperial forces has certain similarities with Paul and the Philippian jailer in Acts 16.

Contrary to the scholars such as Pilhofer who, through means of certain anachronisms of Western scholarly triumphalism, argue that Paul's journey to Philippi represents a Europeanizing of the Gospel message, the criminalizing rhetoric and discussion of Roman citizenship in Acts 16 can be better understood as anti-colonial discourse, in which conceptions of masculinity play a significant part. Luke's characterization of Paul in this scene describes him as someone who is first arrested and jailed by Roman authorities, and then secondly shown to be unlawfully imprisoned because he is "one of them," in other words, a Roman citizen. Williams argues that Luke, by introducing Paul's status at the very end of the story, engages in imperial rhetoric by characterizing Paul as having a better grasp of Roman legal rights than the Roman officials in Philippi.[671] Although Williams, as I have shown above (see Chapter Five), identifies Acts as criticizing the Roman carceral and judicial systems, he concludes that Luke presents a "Roman Paul."[672]

While it is evidently true for Luke that Paul is a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37–39), Williams' argument could benefit from allowing Paul to occupy both the space of a Roman who conquers Gentile land and Roman legal disputes, as well as that of a conquered Jewish man who experiences unjust criminalization, bodily harm, and incarceration. Such a characterization is available through the concepts of hybridity and third space, as introduced in Chapter Two. Remembering that in postcolonial theory, these concepts describe how marginalized groups subtly criticize their oppressors by mimicking and adopting certain hegemonic characteristics, the interaction between Paul and the Philippian jailer appears to be a fascinating case of hybrid interaction with imperialist practices and rhetoric.[673]

Throughout this chapter, I have argued for the significance of Paul proclaiming a Jewish Messiah in Philippi, and shown how the jailer as a (failed) representative of hegemonic masculinity submits to Jesus as the Most High God. By offering a way out of the Jailer's intended suicide, Paul represents a Jewish man who fundamentally criticizes the Roman hegemonic man. My gendered reading of Acts 16 shows that in the clash of masculine ideals,

[671] Williams 2023: 172–88.
[672] Williams 2023: 188.
[673] Cf. Bhabha 1992: 437; 2004: 54–55.

the Jewish Messiah and the followers of the Way offer a non-hegemonic, servile, and hospitable alternative to violence, domination, and unjust punishment. In this reading, Paul's identity as a Jewish man is significant because the alternative to a violent death that he offers the jailer requires his conversion to Jesus, the Jewish Messiah. Strikingly, then, when Paul demands the Roman officials to report to their superiors that he was indeed unjustly criminalized (Acts 16:37–39), he leans on his Romanness, what Williams correctly labels Luke's "Roman Paul."[674] How can it be that Paul seemingly fluctuates between identities here, first suffering under and fundamentally challenging the validity of Roman legislation and masculine ideals, and then uses his Roman citizenship as a get out of jail free card?

Williams is right to conclude that Luke's Paul functions to criticize how Roman authorities effectively are the ones committing a crime by arresting Paul, unjustly criminalizing the Way in the process.[675] However, claiming that Luke is embedded in the hegemonic rhetoric of the Roman Empire and fundamentally portrays a "Roman Paul" takes away some of the thrust of the argument. It seems more likely that Luke is, as Williams shows, aware of Roman judicial and rhetorical tropes, and undercuts these by presenting a Jewish Paul who, to make matters more embarrassing for the imperial authorities, has been unjustly criminalized because he is a Roman citizen *as well*. The citizenship appears to be more a marker of an identity that Paul can invoke for survival and subtle critique, not as defining for his whole identity.

As I have shown, Paul is in Philippi to proclaim a Jewish Messiah, and as the drama of Acts 16 reaches its climax with the earthquake and conversion of the jailer, this first Gentile man changes from emasculated in the eyes of the Empire to the point of intended suicide, to a hospitable host according to the sons of Abraham in Luke's *Doppelwerk*. This changed man leaves most of his ties to hegemonic masculinity and shows, even though Paul can rely on his citizenship, that the Roman man is not the ideal. Instead, masculinity is negotiated and portrayed by having two hybrid men reveal the intricacies of colonizer and colonized: one a failed prison guard and the other an unjustly criminalized Jewish citizen of Rome. In line with how postcolonial theory describes hybridity as the means by which marginalized, or in this case, criminalized groups adapt to and challenge their colonizers, Paul and the Philippian jailer embody such hybrid identities.

In the conversion scene and the subsequent release from prison, the violence and legal proceedings of the Roman Empire are severely criticized. The jailer's sword offers nothing but

[674] Williams 2023: 188.
[675] Williams 2023: 185–86.

the nadir of his status within the Empire. Falling on it would have penetrated him and left him dying as an unmanly Roman man. Similarly, Paul has come to bring the good news of the Jewish man Jesus to Gentile lands. In the process he is unlawfully exposed to violent punishment and incarceration, unlawful because he is *also* a Roman citizen. The message of the Jewish Messiah survives criminalization, even succeeds in the deepest prison cell by converting a man set under Roman authority. Just as Jesus is criminalized by Rome and crucified at Golgotha, only to be reckoned by a Roman centurion to be a just or righteous man (ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος δίκαιος ἦν, Luke 23:47), Paul reveals his standing as just and righteous even according to the Empire's own standards after being unlawfully punished. Similar to how Memmi's influential book takes the perspective of both colonizer and colonized, Luke's characterization of Paul and the Philippian jailer offers valuable insight into how the Jesus movement encountered the imperial power of their time. A gendered and postcolonial reading allows us to appreciate how Luke conceptualizes men in a way that appears knowledgeable of Roman customs, while simultaneously criticizing core tenets of Roman authority and power.

12 Conclusions

To conclude this chapter, the Philippian jailer is an intriguing example of how Luke can be seen as drawing on and criticizing masculine mores in order to reconstruct ideal behavior among certain strands of disciples. Abraham, as I argue can be seen as the ideal of a non-hegemonic man in Chapter Four, and the Philippian jailer are somewhat opposite examples. However, they fulfil many similar duties in the economy of the *ekklēsia*, effectively showing how exploring intersections of radical hospitality and masculinities can provide novel approaches to overlooked Lukan characters. Moreover, these Lukan characterizations elucidate how the *behavior* (Acts) Luke narrates should be considered alongside the *teachings* (Luke's gospel) of Jesus, to fill in crucial gaps in Luke's suggested behavior to those followers of the Way who host meals and serve the poor, wounded, and marginalized.

While earlier scholarship has claimed that the latter half of Acts lacks much of the radical exhortation to the divestment of wealth in the teachings of Peter and Paul, the Philippian jailer might push back on readings that argue too strongly for more lenient wealth ethics in Acts. In this chapter, I have therefore argued that paying attention to how the conversion of the jailer draws on central aspects of Luke's embeddedness within Jewish discourses of wealth ethics can be seen as central to his characterization of the first Gentile household *ekklēsia* in Acts. The radical conversion and hospitality shown by the Philippian jailer is not a toning

down, but rather a continuation of the teachings of Jesus found in the Third Gospel. Finally, the clash of Roman masculine ideals with this fundamental Lukan characterization has further aided our investigation, highlighting the importance of considering the intersections of wealth ethics and masculinities in both Luke and Acts.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

This thesis began by asking, what constitutes an ideal, exemplary, and good man in Luke's stories? Examining the scholarly debate, I have argued that previous scholarship has often framed masculinity in Luke and Acts either as reflecting the hegemonic masculine ideals prized in the Roman Empire or, conversely, as portraying men who deviate from those ideals—what Wilson has characterized as "unmanly men."[676] Particularly over the last decades, this position has been moderated, reproduced, and challenged by a range of scholars who, in broad terms, share the inclination to use hegemonic ideals about the body, gendered performance, virtue, and power to analyze and situate the New Testament men within their concurrent cultural landscape as either successful or unsuccessful examples of this masculine ideal.

This thesis has argued that non-hegemonic and certain Jewish masculine ideals provide a more fruitful comparative tool for Lukan masculinity. Focusing on disciples and followers in Luke and Acts who offer hospitality in line with Abraham's ideal from Luke 16:19–31, I have argued that Luke's ideal man is a son of Abraham. Against a backdrop of Jewish virtues such as hospitality, exemplified in the present work through a reading of the key passages from Luke's two-volume work, I have sketched out a refiguring of the Lukan man in light of a hospitable and virtuous Abraham and set Abraham as an ideal to see how other characters with significant possessions and positions in the Galilean ministry in Luke, or the nascent *ekklēsia* in Acts, relate to this ideal. In the afterlife imagery in Luke 16:19–31, Abraham casting out the rich man and giving the "kolpos seat" to Lazarus reverses but also highlights aspects of Jewish virtue. The focus is on caring for the poor within household or meal settings, rather than on the status-affirming or honor-seeking behavior one might expect in a Roman context.

The reason that household disciples and banquet hosts—those whom I call sons of Abraham—are so significant to the debate on masculinity in Luke and Acts is that these are the types of disciples and followers whom Roman hegemonic men are called to be in Acts. To set up my argument, I have used concepts from postcolonial and masculinity studies, to highlight how power and hegemony intersect with gender constructions. This methodological approach corrects a tendency popularized by Foucault to consider sexuality and power as inseparable and symbiotic, by showing how marginalized masculine ideals in Jewish texts (famously not considered by Foucault) challenge the notion that masculinity can only be defined in hegemonic terms. Luke's contribution to the reception of Abraham in the first century CE

[676] Connell 2005: 69; Gleason 1995: 59; contra Wilson 2015: 21 and passim.

suggests that non-hegemonic ideals could be applied as a way of resisting the violent and dominating force of imperial power. Strikingly, when Peter and Paul encounter an imperial centurion or a jailer in Roman Philippi, their proclamation of Jesus as a Jewish Messiah and Lord of all brings hegemonic masculinity to its knees. In these scenes, the men in Luke's story do not appear unmanly or as subscribing to hegemonic ideals—yet they still appear as good, ideal, and exemplary men.

To introduce how men in Luke and Acts are characterized as potential role models when they convert from ties to hegemony and become followers of Jesus, I considered Levi in Chapter Three as the first man to pave the way for subsequent disciples. As a tax collector with ties to the oppressive economic system enforced on the local Galilean Jewish population, Levi changes radically when Jesus calls him from the toll booth. From being sinful and dubious in the eyes of his fellow Jews, Jesus reshapes him into a son of Abraham when he dines with him, to the astonishment of the Pharisees. Levi appears at a critical juncture in the Lukan narrative, as his hospitality fulfils several key aspects of Jesus' programmatic sermon given in Nazareth in Luke 4:16–30. Considering Levi's banquet alongside Jesus' "good news to the poor" allows the hospitable host-disciples to form a natural part of Luke's economy, which develops from Luke 4 and 5 throughout the ensuing ministry, the Travel Narrative, and continues to shape household disciples in Acts. Significantly for the reshaping of what an ideal man looks like in Luke's story, Levi's problematic past is the characteristic that ties him to the Roman imperial economy and systems of colonial power, while he appears as an ideal host after his conversion. Therefore, from as early as Luke 5:27–32 we see that the hegemonic man of Rome is criticized by Luke, while an Abraham-shaped masculinity is idealized.

Levi, however, only introduces a theme that gradually develops toward the most striking teachings on wealth and hospitality in Luke 16:19–31. Therefore, in Chapter Four, I discuss the fascinating portrayal of Abraham in the complex and unique Lukan parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Here, I argue that Luke presents an ideal masculine man who is juxtaposed with the gluttonous and extravagant rich man in the parable. Drawing on similar portrayals of the patriarch in contemporary Jewish (and early Christian) sources, I have shown that Luke conveys a selective but representative image of Abraham as a rich, hospitable, and exemplary role model for others to emulate. Particularly significant for my argument is the recognition that Abraham's masculinity appears non-hegemonic and is drawn—although in the case of Abraham this is perhaps unsurprising—from Jewish conceptions of what makes a man appear manly. The patriarch remains patriarchal and exhibits characteristics that align with aspects of a Greco-Roman symposium and other cultural tropes. However, Abraham's role in

Luke is far from idealizing domination or power; rather, it is deployed to highlight the significance of benefiting the poor, being charitable and hospitable—precisely for those who have the means, represent the patriarchy, and host the banquets. In line with postcolonial theory, men who seek to mimic Abraham might also appear masculine and exemplary within, for example, a Greek symposium tradition. In keeping with hierarchical structures, even certain hegemonic tropes can be characteristic of hybrid identities formed under imperial and colonial domination. However, the details and most significant parts of the Lukan parable are deeply embedded in Jewish traditions that place value on caring for orphans and widows, even to the point of rejecting eschatological life for the unrighteous rich man and his family. For Luke, being hospitable and using one's possessions in the way exemplified by Abraham sits at the heart of a salvation economy that is at once crucial for his narrative progression and a cornerstone of his theology.

The significance of the Abraham-shaped masculine ideal, and the economic ethic that follows it, is revealed in Acts 10 and 16, where Roman men with ties to hegemonic masculinity are baptized and become followers of the Way. Cornelius and the Philippian jailer, whom I treat in Chapters Five and Six, disclose an unmistakable part of Luke's plot: when Luke's Gospel is proclaimed by Peter and later by Paul to Godfearing and Gentile Romans, they too are called to be sons of Abraham. Significantly, they are not called to leave their households and follow the apostles—perhaps one reason why these characters have received less attention from scholars such as Wilson and Moxnes—but instead, they establish the nascent *ekklēsia* in their own homes. While Jesus' ministry contains radical calls to abandonment and self-impoverishment, Luke's narrative progresses toward the story of the first Jesus followers, who unmistakably gather under the roofs of people like Levi, Abraham, Cornelius, and the Philippian jailer. These men defy hegemonic ideals by embracing the teachings of a poor, itinerant rabbi. They are not unmanly, nor are they hegemonic; they are non-hegemonic yet masculine men that conceptualize masculinity in opposition to and defiance of an oppressive empire.

As the first seeds of the *ekklēsia* are sown, Luke's two-volume work depends on these sons of Abraham. The significance of this project therefore lies in foregrounding and redefining masculinity in a way that is premised on the virtues, traits, and practices valued by the people in Luke's story. Jews and converted Christ-followers appear masculine in ways that can be defined better by Jewish hospitality, charity, and almsgiving in line with Jesus' teachings. Significantly, they do not seem to be characterized by the hegemonic ideals of the Roman Empire. The specific contribution of this project to the ongoing discourse of New Testament

masculinities has been made available in substantial parts by applying both a gendered, as well as a postcolonial reading of Luke and Acts. While this intersection has been noted by some scholars, this project has sought to utilize it to highlight the shortcomings of the current standard methodology, where hegemonic masculinity is assumed as ubiquitous in a way that renders all other conceptions of masculinity either subordinate, unmanly, or aspiring to imitate and replicate the Roman man.

Luke and Acts provide its readers, both ancient and modern, with a plethora of stories about Jewish, Roman, and other men who complicate the scholarly consensus that hegemonic masculinity would have represented the ideal man. Instead, Luke tells the stories of men who convert from their hegemonic past, challenge the authority of the emperor, and, perhaps most significantly, Luke tells the story of Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish man who is lynched, beaten, and crucified by Roman men for charges of blasphemy raised by a religious elite. Jesus' life is marked by inhospitality from the inn at Bethlehem to the cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem. Yet Luke's version of his teachings and the early life of his group of followers in Acts center around hospitality and care for the marginalized and poor. In defiance of the destructive and colonial power of the Roman Empire, Luke refigures masculinity in contrast to the hegemonic man. Even tax collectors, centurions, and Roman jailers are called to abandon their ties to hegemonic identity when they become followers of the Jewish Rabbi. With continued scholarly exploration into non-hegemonic masculinities and anti-imperial currents in Luke and Acts, we may grasp more fully how the sons of Abraham are indispensable to Luke's retelling of Jesus' life and the emergence of the *ekklēsia*.

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