

"NOT BY BREAD ALONE . . .": THE RITUALIZATION OF FOOD AND TABLE TALK IN THE PASSOVER *SEDER* AND IN THE LAST SUPPER

Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus
Wheaton College

ABSTRACT

The early Christians and rabbinic Jews who composed the accounts of the Last Supper and the Passover *seder* both used the conventions of Greco-Roman symposium literature to ritualize their foundation myths. Drawing upon anthropological theories of ritual that focus on the relationship between ritual actions and ritual texts, this paper specifies the distinctive "strategies of ritualization" and "ritualized metaphors" of the Last Supper and rabbinic *seder*. The Christian Eucharist is a ritual of both separation and re-integration, stressing the Christians' break with other first century Jews, as well as the union of contemporary Christians with their ancestors. The rabbinic *seder* is primarily a ritual of re-integration, stressing the unbroken link between contemporary Jews and their ancestors, despite the traumatic events of the Temple's destruction and exile. The table talk of these rituals also associates words of "scripture" (whether the Written and Oral Torah, or the sayings of Jesus) with the food and drink to be consumed. Ingesting the foods "inscribed" with the words of God is a ritualization of scriptural metaphors, a palpable sensual experience of internalizing the rabbinic or Christian myths, which transforms the rituals' participants respectively into "embodied Torah, or "the Body of Christ" incarnate.

Jesus answered, "Scripture says, 'Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matt 4:4, quoting Deut 8:3

Pesaḥ Matzah Maror [*Paschal lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herb*] AND YOU SHALL MAKE PASSOVER FOR YHWH YOUR GOD (*Deut 16:1*). This is—by means of the Passover you make below with the right intention, you will arouse its counterpart above, as if to say—the Holy One Blessed Be He will make a Passover like you do. . . . And . . . by [the telling of] the story of the Exodus from Egypt, on the night which one praises the Holy One Blessed be He—Behold the Holy One Blessed Be He is praised with the praises of Israel, as is explained in the holy book of the

Zohar: "YOU SHALL MAKE A PESAH—*a peh saḥ* [*a talking mouth*]*—FOR YHWH YOUR GOD as mentioned above.*

From the commentary of R. Solomon Ha-Kohen of Radomsk—*Tiferet Shlomo*—on the Passover Haggadah, 19th c., Hasidic

INTRODUCTION

When contemporary Jews and Christians perform the rituals of the Passover *Seder* or the Eucharist, respectively, they make a point of explaining the symbolism of the food and wine they eat and drink. Christians recite the words of institution, a conflation of verses from the New Testament,

The Lord Jesus, the same night he was betrayed, took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "Take eat, this my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me."

In the same manner also the cup, after he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. . . . This do in remembrance of me." (1 Cor 11:23–26; par. Luke 22:19–20)

Jews specify the meaning of *matzah* (unleavened bread); *maror* (bitter herb); and *pesah* (lamb bone), and give several explanations for the four cups of wine drunk at the Passover *seder*. Indeed, the Four Questions pose the question of the meaning of *matzah* and *maror* at the beginning of the *seder*. Why is there this stress in both traditions on eating, drinking, and *talking about it*?

There are three main reasons why both the Christian and Jewish traditions stress these elements. First, the Last Supper, upon which the subsequent Lord's Supper ritual was based, was most likely a Passover *seder*. While the evidence for this is mostly circumstantial, it is nevertheless compelling, and it is certainly how the Synoptic Gospels understood and represented the Last Supper, especially Luke.¹ Secondly, as I have argued in my dissertation

¹ Brumberg-Kraus, 1991:203. The evidence: (1) all the Gospels clearly identify the Last Supper as the meal on the evening when Passover begins, except for John. John's patently theological purpose of identifying Christ as "the true Passover sacrifice" (not greater fidelity to history) motivates the evangelist to depict the Last Supper before Passover begins, so Christ's crucifixion can occur on the same day the lambs for the Passover sacrifice are slaughtered. (2) Luke's account mentions that the Passover lamb was served at the meal, even if Jesus didn't eat it (Luke 22:15, 16). But without the specific mention of *matzah* and *maror*, this alone would be insufficient evidence that this meal was the same type of meal described by *m. Pesah*. in the second century CE. Add to this that (3) there were at least two cups of wine at the meal, one before dinner, one after (according to Luke 22:17, 20)—like the Mishnah's two before, two after the meal proper. (4) Jesus recited blessings over the bread and wine (Luke 22:17, 19) as the practice of Pharisaic early rabbinic *havurot*, whose innovations made the Passover *seder* distinct from the Biblical observance of Passover. (5) Mark's Gospel (14:20 par. Matt 26:23) mentions dipping food into condiments at the Last Supper, a practice the third of the three (or four) questions in *m. Pesah*. 10:4

(1991), Christian and Jewish table talk emerged from the classical tradition of Hellenistic symposium literature. Hellenistic symposium literature glorified the convivial gatherings of educated people to discuss topics of popular intellectual interest over fine food and a cup (or two or more!) of wine. Frequently, the food and wine, or the habits of dining, were themselves the subject of conversation. The scholarly Christian and rabbinic promulgators of the Lord's Supper and the Passover *seder* used the conventions and practices of symposium literature, just as other Greco-Roman popular philosophers and sage/bureaucrats, in order to attract adherents to their groups and to articulate their particular ideological perspectives (Brumberg-Kraus, 1991:247–48). Finally, the Last Supper and Passover *seder* are similar because both belong to the same category of religious phenomena: meal rituals. Or to be more precise, the *literary sources* for the Last Supper and rabbinic *seder* both represent similar religious phenomena: meal rituals.

In my earlier research, I was particularly insistent about this distinction between literary descriptions of dinner rituals and the rituals themselves (1991:11). I tried to clarify certain aspects of Luke's theology by comparing and contrasting his literary representation of table fellowship with what I called other Greco-Roman "idealizations" of table fellowship, i.e. in the various genres of symposium literature. However, I concluded from my comparison that Luke's particular use of the symposium genre and its commonplaces was somehow more oriented toward future performances of the meal rituals it described than its non-Christian counterparts. After all, few people go around re-enacting Plato's *Symposium*, Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*, or the lovers' meals in Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, while the Lord's Supper is a staple of Christian practice. Thus *in function*, Luke's Christian symposia had much more in common with the rabbinic *seder* preserved in *m. Pesah.* 10, despite their significant differences in literary form. Luke's Gospel consists of meal scenes imbedded in a narrative; the Mishnah's *seder* is a "list of meal rules." I knew Luke's Gospel and the rabbinic *seder* "ritualized" the meals they describe or prescribe in ways that their counterparts in Greco-Roman symposium literature did not. But because I was so concerned with distinguishing between rituals and literary accounts of them, I was unable to specify precisely where and how the intersections between rituals and *texts* about rituals occurred. This paper is intended to remedy that problem. Hence my epigraph, "Man does not to live by bread alone, but on

suggests distinguishes the *seder* from ordinary meals. (6) According to Mark 14:26 and Matt 26:30, the Last Supper concludes with the singing of "the hymn"—which could easily be a reference to the Hallel sung after the meal as per *m. Pesah.* 10:6. (7) Both meals stress table talk as a significant component. (8) Reclining was the appropriate eating posture for each meal. Together, these details (nearly all conventions of Hellenistic symposia, too) suggest the Last Supper was a *seder*—that is, something much more like the rabbinic *seder* than the Israelite rite prescribed in the Bible. See also Bahr; Tabory 1977/78, 1981; Bokser, 1984; Brumberg-Kraus, 1991: 10–11, 203n12, 215.

every word that comes from the mouth of God," was chosen partly to suggest that neither the acts of eating nor the words about them in the Christian Eucharist and early rabbinic *seder* can be fully understood when treated separately, but only when they are viewed together.

So let's return to our original observation: the authors of the early Christian eucharistic traditions and the early rabbinic *seder* make a point of explaining the symbolism of the food and wine they eat and drink. The table talk connected to the events and "props" of these rituals calls attention to the fact that the foods function as more than just nourishment. They are not "bread alone," but are also coded with cognitive contents to be internalized, that is, "ingested" just like the foods on which their meanings are conveyed. Namely, they are symbols of the historical experiences of the two different communities recounting them. Both the early Christians and Jews who composed these accounts used the circumstances of a symposium meal to ritualize their respective foundation myths. Another way of putting it is that the texts ritualize certain foundational metaphors: that bread and wine *are* the body and blood of Christ; that *pesah*, *matzah*, and *maror* *are* the historical experiences of the redemption and the slavery of "our ancestors."² The groups who ingest these incarnate "experiences" of a person or persons separated from them by time and/or circumstances take them on; they become what they eat. To the extent that each of these collective historical experiences are understood also as decisive revelations of God, eating the foods that embody these experiences also becomes in effect a means of union with God. In that sense too, in *both* traditions "man is not to live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."³ But we are anticipating my argument.

DEFINITIONS OF RITUALIZATION

To proceed beyond my earlier research, we first need definitions of ritual that allow us to speak precisely about the place of talk in these two different

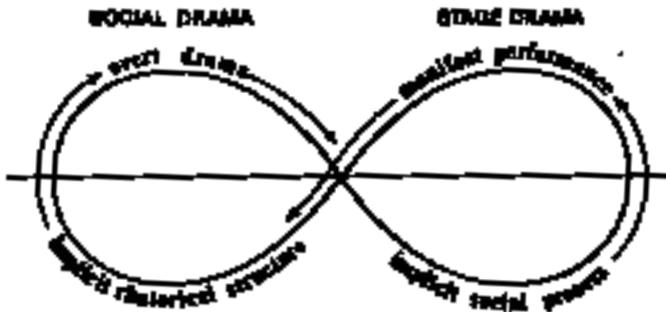
² On this understanding of ritual, see Ivan Marcus (6) and see my discussion of definitions of ritual below.

³ My second epigraph was chosen precisely to counter objections that this is only a Christian idea, that Jews could not conceive of a human being incarnating God. R. Solomon of Radomsk's point is that Jews who tell the Passover story literally become God's mouthpiece, our "talking mouth" [*peh sah*] becomes God's "talking mouth," as it is written "YOU SHALL MAKE A PESAH—a *peh sah* [a talking mouth] FOR YHWH YOUR GOD." That the composers of the Mishnah in the second century CE believed this is another story altogether. On the other hand, Martin Jaffee and others have argued that the rabbis of the Talmud were viewed as "embodied Torah," and if Torah is the word of God, the ideal rabbi would by implication be an embodied "word of God." It is significant that the symbolic *pesah*, *matzah*, and *maror* "experiences" participants at the rabbinic *seder* would eat are in fact ritual embodiments, acting out of Scriptural quotations. I will return to this point later.

eating and drinking rituals. For with all their similarities, it is the different "location" of the talking parts of the eucharistic and rabbinic *seder* rituals that suit them especially to their distinctive religious perspectives, and which constitutes one of the most significant differences between them. After that, we will discuss how the Eucharist's and *seder*'s choice of different foods to consume, and the different ways in which they are to be manipulated and consumed constitute different strategies of ritualization. Each community had its own distinctive way of ritualizing the root metaphors of its group identity, that is, their respective foundation myths and their different collective experiences of divine revelation.

There are four approaches to ritual which I have found helpful for describing the relationship between the actions of rituals and the "texts" about or in them, especially those of the early Christian Eucharist and the rabbinic *seder*. First, "ritualization" can be an editorial phenomenon, the way that one text interprets actions described in another text. According to Baruch Bokser (1988), certain editorial activity can heighten the *ritual* elements of the traditions being re-worked, such as in the tendency of the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds to augment *m. Pesah*. 10's account of the *seder* rituals by giving symbolic explanations for props and actions that the Mishnah treats more or less as accidents. Adding an editorial comment is a way of paying extra attention to the item being commented upon. This presupposes Jonathan Z. Smith's particular definition of ritual, namely that it is "a mode of paying attention" (1987:103). The way the Talmudic editors rewrite their Mishnaic traditions of the Passover *seder* often calls attention to "an accident [or peripheral feature] and by projecting upon [it] both significance and regularity, and annihilates its original character as accident." (Bokser, 1988:445, citing J. Z. Smith, 1980:113–15). The Mishnah itself also "ritualizes" its inherited Passover traditions in this way. Analogously, even the way the composers of the Gospels like Luke frame their Christian meal traditions in symposium scenes imbedded in longer narratives focuses attention on what could be accidental or peripheral features, e.g. reclining without taking a bath or passing the bread around. It "projects upon [them] . . . significance and regularity"; it ritualizes them. Secondly, words about rituals can be a constituent part of rituals, according to Jane Harrison's classic definition. Rituals in general, and these eating rituals in particular, integrate three basic structural components: "things shown" (the ritual "props" themselves), "things said" (statements about the props like "this is my body" or "bitter herb, because they embittered our lives"), and "things done" (the formal, ordered activities of manipulating and eating the talked-about props). Blessings, songs, "words of institution," the "script" of the Passover Haggadah are all examples of "things said" *within* a ritual. But what about "things said" like the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, that are not necessarily recited at the same time that the eucharistic ritual is performed? Victor Turner's view that rituals are

performances in the context of broader “social dramas” is a third way of understanding the relative places of rituals and stories about them. Turner, in “Social Dramas and Stories About Them,” views texts that describe rituals as parts of an extra-textual ritual process—“scripts” of “social dramas.” Rituals are interrelated with social dramas external to the framework of a particular ritual. They exist on a continuum, each informing the other—as graphically illustrated by Richard Schechner’s diagram (Turner: 154).



Here social dramas are the historical events in the life of the community, often expressed as social tensions and conflicts. Rituals are not simply reflections of these values and conflicts, but also ways of acting upon and transforming societies. At the same time, each society has its own particular cultural conventions, its distinctive patterns of social process that provide the “implicit rhetorical structures” for what Turner (154) calls its “expressive cultural genres.” The texts about rituals we are discussing are precisely these “expressive cultural genres.” The rituals and the stories about them are on the same continuum, just at different places. In the case of Luke’s account of meals with Jesus, the same social drama “is behind” both the meal rituals themselves and his stories about them. Luke’s “ritualization” of the meals of Jesus is his *placing* of them in the major social dramas lived out by the Christian community in the first century CE. Finally, texts may provide metaphors that can be acted out. The eucharistic meal becomes a ritual realization of the metaphor “we are the body of Christ”; the consumption of the Passover seder foods ritualizes the metaphor “this is what YHWH did for *me* when *I* went out of Egypt.”⁴ This is what Ivan Marcus (6) calls the “ritualization of

⁴ Exod 13:8. It is a metaphor for all generations of Jews subsequent to the generation of the Israelites who actually left Egypt to say *we* were slaves in Egypt, *we* left there, God redeemed *us*. *M. Pesahim* (i.e. 9:5) patently recognizes the distinction between the Israelites who experienced the original redemption from Egypt (*Pesah Mitzraim*) and the later generations of Jews who vicariously re-live it (*Pesah dorot*).

metaphors."⁵ This kind of ritualization transforms cognitive communication of ideas into something much more experiential.⁶ The Jews and Christians of the first and second centuries CE ritualized their foundation myths in order to heighten their experiential dimension, to embody their respective mythic identities in shared, replicable, self-conscious group experiences. Their ritual meals were and continue to be palpable, concrete, experiential means for reinforcing or inculcating members with their distinctive religious identity.

These four different approaches to ritual are complementary, not mutually exclusive. Each emphasizes different aspects of the relationship between rituals and texts of rituals. These aspects are variously stressed in the early Christian Eucharist and rabbinic *seder* rituals. It is precisely in these relative emphases that the similarities and differences between the meal rituals of the two religious traditions reside.

LITERARY RITUALIZATION OF THE LAST SUPPER AND PASSOVER *SEDER* AS SYMPOSIA

The accounts of the Lord's Supper and Passover *seder* ritual draw from the conventions of Greco-Roman symposium literature to project significance onto the ostensibly accidental or peripheral things and behaviors of their meals, that is, to accentuate their ritual elements. Two conventions in particular help them achieve this end: (1) singling out actions that occur in a meal, *faits divers*, to provoke comment and discussion and (2) dialogue and/or narrative frames. The rabbinic *seder* and New Testament descriptions of the Last Supper both exploit the technique of the provocative *fait divers*. For example, in Luke's account of the Last Supper, the occasion itself of gathering to eat the Passover offering as a small group, and then Jesus' actions of breaking and distributing bread, pouring and distributing the wine, and the argument that breaks out between the disciples each prompt some comment or explanation. Note especially Luke's use of the demonstrative pronoun and the particle δὲ to stress the objects and actions right there at the meal as the cues for Jesus' table talk.

14When the hour came he reclined at the table [*anepesen*], and the apostles with him; 15and he said to them, "How I have longed to eat this passover

⁵ Marcus credits the anthropologist James Fernandez with the concept of "ritualization of metaphors."

⁶ This "experiential emphasis" is what led later Jewish medieval mystics to turn the dual definition of the Hebrew word *ta'am* as both "reason" and "taste" into a metaphor for their experience of linking mind and body when they self-consciously performed the traditional rituals according to the new mystical reasons they found for them [*ta'amei ha-mitzvot*] (Matt: 398, citing the *Zohar* 3:271b [*Raya Mehemna*] and other thirteenth to fourteenth cent. Spanish kabbalistic sources). As one mystic put it, "We will be able to prepare tasty reasons [*mat'amim*] for [God's] ritual laws, such as He loves."

[*touto to pascha*] before my Passion. ¹⁶For I tell you I will not eat it until the time it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷And when he took a cup and blessed [it], he said, "Take this [*touto*] and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸For I tell you from now on I will not drink from the fruit of the vine until the time when the Kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹And when he took bread and blessed [it], he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This [*touto*] is my body which is given for you. This [*touto*] do in my memory." ²⁰And the cup likewise after eating the meal, he said, "This [*touto*] cup is the new testament [sealed] in my blood poured out for you." . . . ²⁴Then a dispute began among them, over who of them should be considered the greatest. ²⁵So he [*ho de*] said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶Not so with you, but rather let the greater among you be as the novice, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the server? Is it not the one who reclines? But I in the midst of you [*egō de en mesō humōn*] am as a server."

Likewise, in the rabbinic *seder* of *m. Pesah*. 10, what is done or what is served at the table is supposed to prompt remarks from the participants. In the well-known example of the Four Questions, a male child at the table on his own or coached by his father is to comment why the evening rituals such as eating unleavened bread (*matzah*) and bitter herbs (*maror*), or dipping certain foods twice rather than once "make this night different from all other nights." Rabban Gamaliel's dictum that one must *say* something about the three distinctive foods of Passover—the Passover lamb offering, the unleavened bread, and bitter herb ("*pesah, matzah, maror*") similarly takes the food on the table as cue for discussion.⁷ This talk, whether put in the first-person authoritative voice of Jesus in the Gospel narratives of the Last Supper, or in the third-person description apparently attributed to R. Gamaliel, is a "mode of paying attention" to otherwise ordinary actions of eating.

THE MISHNAH'S RITUALIZATION OF TABLE TALK IN THE *SEDER*

While the Mishnah's *seder* and the Last Supper accounts both use dialogue and narrative frames, the latter in the Gospels exploit the potential interplay or even conflicts of points of view that such frames allow much more than the former. In form, Chapter 10 of *m. Pesahim* is not much different from the chapter that precedes it, or from nearly any other chapter in the Mishnah. That is, the rabbinic *seder* is framed by a topically organized treatise, the Mishnah; it is included under the topical chapter *Pesahim*, which is itself a sub-topic of the order *Mo'ed* (Festivals). Its rules are introduced in impersonal third-person verbal constructions, which are occasionally broken up

⁷ *M. Pesah* 10:4, though in the best manuscript of the Mishnah, Kaufmann, there are only three questions or comments; 10:5 (R. Gamaliel's dictum).

by named speakers to whom specific statements are attributed. Sometimes there are nearly imperceptible shifts to first- or second-person address, as in *m. Pesah*. 10:5:

Rabban Gamaliel said, Whoever did not say these three things on Passover did not fulfill his obligation: *pesah*, *matzah*, and *merorim*. *Pesah* because the Omnipresent skipped over the houses of *our* ancestors in Egypt. *Merorim* because the Egyptians embittered the lives of *our* ancestors in Egypt. *Matzah* because *they* were redeemed.

The Mishnah's account of the Passover *seder* does not call attention to its own textuality (i.e. by means of a self-referential subjective "I" narrator or exaggerated conflicts between the points of view of its framing and framed dialogues and narratives), but rather to the textuality of the texts it prescribes that one recite. The Mishnah's list of Passover meal rules includes a "script" for texts that are themselves to be performed at the meal (a type of "symposium literature"). Among the texts cited explicitly to be recited during performances of the Passover symposium are three questions (*m. Pesah*. 10:4: Why is this night different from all other nights . . .); the *bikkurim* portion of Scripture from Deut 26:5 (*m. Pesah*. 10:4: "And one expounds from 'A wandering Aramean was my father' until he finishes the entire portion"); the mention of the *pesah* sacrifice, *matzah*, and bitter herb (*m. Pesah*. 10:5: "Whoever does not say these three things has not fulfilled his obligation, '*Pesah*, *matzah*, and *merorim*; *Pesah*—because the Omnipresent passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt . . . Matzah—because they were redeemed.'"); portions of the Hallel Psalms 113–114 (*m. Pesah*. 10:5–6); and specific blessing endings proposed by R. Tarphon and R. Akiba (*m. Pesah*. 10:6). In addition, there are several other places where the *seder* prescribes something to be recited without quoting the text (10:2: the blessings over the day and the wine; 10:5: giving thanks, etc.; 10:7: blessings after the meal and after reciting Hallel; and 10:9 blessings over the *pesah* and festival sacrifices.⁸ In other words, the Mishnah clearly marks all of these as ritual "things said." Of the "things said" prescribed in the Mishnah's *seder*, at least six are quotations from or allusions to Scripture: the expounding of Deut 26:5ff (*m. Pesah*. 10:4), Rabban Gamaliel's implied proof texts for *pesah*, *matzah*, and *maror* (Exod 12:27; Deut 16:3, and Exod 1:14), the Psalms of Hallel before the meal and the Psalms of Hallel to be recited after the meal (Psalms 113–118). Two are full quotations of rabbinic statements to be recited: the three or four questions that the father is supposed to instruct his son to say (*m. Pesah*. 10:4), and R. Gamaliel's state-

⁸ These portions of *m. Pesah*. 10 are similar in form to other passages in *m.* and *t. Berakhot* that prescribe what participants ought to say at rabbinic banquets, "symptotic literature" per se—notably *Birkat Ha-Zimmun*, the formula inviting diners to recite a grace after meals (*m. Ber.* 7:3), and Ben Zoma's speech on what a good guest says to his host after dinner (*t. Ber.* 6:2).

ments about the three symbolic foods (including their Scriptural proof texts, 10:5). The Mishnah presumes that the other things said, namely the various blessings over the wine and day, reciting Hallel, the grace after meals, and over the paschal and regular festival meat offerings are texts known in whole or part from oral traditions. In two cases, the Mishnah makes some general prescriptions for things to be said, specifying not the words themselves, but how they should be said, namely, (1) one should recite the story of the Exodus at the meal “starting in disgrace and ending in glory” (*m. Pesah*. 10:4), and (2) one is “obliged to give thanks, to praise, to glorify, to crown, to exalt, to elevate the Holy Blessed be He, etc.” at the *seder* (10:5).

There are three important implications of the way the Mishnah ritualizes Torah passages, rabbinic statements, and blessings in the *seder*. First, it barely draws any distinction between their provenances. Whether from the Written Torah or the oral Torah of the rabbis, the obligation to recite them is the same. Liturgically, the ritual treats them with equal authority as sacred scripture.⁹ Secondly, the things said and the things done—namely, the acts of eating—are arranged in such a way as to internalize Torah by in effect *eating it*, at least metaphorically. I refer in particular to the punning association of the scriptural proof texts with the ritual foods that are eaten. The Passover offering by means of a pun is made to symbolize the Israelites’ experience of being “passed over” on the night of the tenth plague when the Egyptians’ first born male children were slain [“*pesah* (Passover offering) because God *pasah* (passed over) the homes of our ancestors.”] Another pun equates the bitter herb with the Israelites’ bitter experience of slavery [“*maror* (bitter herb) because the Egyptians *merreru* (embittered) our ancestors’ lives in Egypt.”] *Matzah* (unleavened bread) symbolizes God’s rescue of the Israelites from Egypt, either because that’s what the Israelites ate when they rushed out of Egypt (according to the Biblical account), or as an implied pun on God as *motzi*, the one *bringing* our ancestors *out* of Egypt (*m. Pesah* 10:5). My point is that the pun heightens the oral association between the Scripture recited and the foods eaten—and the experience of divine redemption that both the proof texts and the foods convey.¹⁰ To put in terms of later Jewish commentators—

⁹ Liturgical use of text can be a way of relating to it as “scripture.” See Graham, 1986.

¹⁰ A pun with a similar function might be found in Luke’s account of the Last Supper (Luke 22:28–30 and 20), though in this case the “scripture” is words of Jesus (not the written Torah). Luke plays on forms of the verb διατίθειναι: “Having had a share with me in my experiences, I bequeath [διατίθεμαι] to you, as my Father bequeathed [διέθετο] to me, the kingdom, that you eat and drink at my table in my kingdom” to connect this experience to his distribution to his disciples of the cup, which he labels as the “new testament [διαθήκη] in my blood poured out for you.” In other words, the cup that evokes the presence of Christ, that bonds the Christian community together when they drink it in the Eucharist, is “inscribed” with the “scripture” of Christ’s words. The inscribed words convey the experience that Christians are who they drink. I

the Passover *seder* is concerned primarily with "*mitzvot* of the mouth" (*Haggadah shel Pesah*: 97). Telling the prescribed story of the Exodus and eating the prescribed foods are functionally equivalent. Both are ways to "MAKE A PESAH—a *peh śah* [a talking mouth] FOR YHWH YOUR GOD."¹¹ In general as a list of rules prescribing the order of a meal, the rabbinic *seder* makes virtually no distinction between the "things said" and the "things done." The things said are made functionally equivalent to the other courses of the meal. Talk and food are both on the *seder* menu. Finally, the Mishnah's *seder*'s elliptical, often partial references to the Scriptural text and the story it tells, suggests that it is assumed, and that its correspondence to salvation history is unproblematic. It does not spell out, clarify, or differentiate itself from the context in which it is to be performed. The Mishnah does not precede the *seder* with a story of its origins, but presents it as if the *seder* had always existed. The rabbinic debates prompted by some of the prescriptions, and which give it a dialogical form, always seem to begin *in medias res*. The interlocutors never question that one says blessings over the wine and day at the Passover *seder*, but only in which order. (*m. Pesah*. 10:2); they don't question that one recites the Hallel Psalms at the *seder*, only where in Scripture one begins and ends. The Passover *seder* doesn't even accentuate the fact that one of its major ritual props—the paschal lamb sacrifice—is no longer available because of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. In other words, the Mishnah does not represent its list of meal rules as being in any sort of conflict with its social context. Indeed Baruch Bokser has argued persuasively that the rhetoric of the rabbinic *seder* is a strategy of denial. It presents the new meals rules as if nothing changed—despite all evidence to the contrary: the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jews from their land. According to Bokser (1984:92) this "anachronism" is an intentional literary strategy that "enables people to believe they stand in a continuity with the past," and that

Mishnah Pesaḥim 10 is an example of the anachronistic process which aims at continuity and cannot acknowledge the existence of change, but which at the same time is motivated by a desire to express a new meaning. The need to demonstrate conformity with the past indicates that the framers of the Mishnah are still affected by the traumatic loss of the cult. But in structuring the rite on a new basis and in adding new features, they are coming to grips with the crisis.

But the Mishnah's structure minimizes the novelty of the rules of its Passover rite. It does not exploit the literary options available to it: e.g. irony, exaggera-

deliberately translated the word *διαθήκη* as "testament" because Luke's word play draws an analogy between Jesus' words of institution and the last wills and testaments of Greco-Roman patrons providing for communal meals in their memory for members of their funerary club.

¹¹ Deut 16:1, as interpreted by the *Zohar*. See my second epigraph.

tion of conflicting points of view, unreliable “I”-narrators, or virtually anything else that could undermine its claim for the absolute, timeless relevance of its order of Passover meal rules.

To show what I mean, it is worth contrasting this literary representation of symposium meal rules to another in Lucian’s *Saturnalia* 13. Lucian’s sympotic rules are framed by his alter ego, the narrator Kronosolon’s recounting a conversation with the god Kronos, and their exchange of letters. They are phrased primarily in personal first and second person constructions. The narrator shifts from recounting his dialogue with Kronos to a direct second person address to his audience immediately preceding the enumeration of the laws:

“I do not know the laws,” I said. “I will instruct you,” said he, and he set to. Then, when I had learnt them all, he said, “And tell them that if they are disobedient it’s not for nothing that I carry this sharp sickle here—I should be a fool to have castrated *my own* father Uranus, and yet not make eunuchs of the rich who break *my* laws, making them servants of the Great Mother and collectors for her, complete with flutes and cymbals.” That was his threat. So you had better not transgress his ordinances.

No one is to do any business, public or private during the festival. . . .
(*Saturnalia* 12–13)

By framing his meal rules in quotations from a dialogue spoken from an interested party, Kronos’ point of view, Lucian allows free play for irony and humor. He presents his “meal rules” as parodies to be laughed at, rather than as real prescriptions intended to be performed by his audience. In Lucian’s work, the dialogue frames the prescriptions, while in the Mishnah, the prescriptions tend to frame the dialogues.¹² The narrators in *m. Pesah.* 10 begin out of sight, and “drop into sight” when suddenly a rabbinic dispute or a Scriptural proof text is introduced as a source for a rule. It’s the opposite with Lucian’s *Saturnalia*; the personalities of the interlocutors are quite obvious at the outset, and only drop out later in the third-person impersonal formulation of the rules themselves. The impact of these varying approaches is that the Mishnah’s structure stresses the objectivity, the timelessness of its sympotic rules. Lucian’s structure suggests the subjectivity of the rules, their contingency on the particular personalities of the rule-givers and receivers. Moreover, the Mishnah tends to stress the consistency of the table talk with the banquet setting it prescribes—as in the requirements to remark on what one is eating in *m. Pesah.* 10:4–5. On the other hand, Lucian stresses the incon-

¹² I.e. *m. Pesah.* 10:6:

Up to what point does he recite [the Hallel]? The House of Shammai say, Until “As a happy mother of children” and the House of Hillel say, Until “the flinty rock into a fountain.” And he seals [with the term or prayer for] “redemption.”

gruity of the sympotic host Kronos' behavior with the decorous, just, and even playful sympotic rules he prescribes, when he has Kronos threaten to castrate the banquet participants who don't observe them. In short, the relationship between the particular type of framing text and the sympotic rules it frames has a significant bearing on how the respective audiences of the rabbinic *seder* and Lucian's *Saturnalia* are to take the rules—with a grain of salt or as a "script" for an actual banquet ritual.

RITUALIZATION IN THE GOSPELS: FRAMING CONFLICTS

It is precisely this effect that differentiates the form of early Christian descriptions of meal rituals in the Gospels from the form of the Mishnah's list of Passover *seder* meal rules. In other words, the way that the Gospels, especially Luke's, imbed their "symposium scenes" or even lists of meal rules (i.e. Luke 14:7–14) in broader narratives allows for an interplay of conflicting points of view that is much closer to Lucian's *Saturnalia* than to the Mishnah's Passover *seder*. Thus, in 14:7–14, Luke frames his list of sympotic meal rules for hosts and guests in a dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees, set at a Pharisaic "symposium," in order to contrast them ironically with their setting.

One Sabbath [Jesus] went to have a meal in the house of one of the leading Pharisees. [A man *sick with dropsy* crashes the party, and Jesus heals him, despite his Pharisaic companions' disapproval of Sabbath healing] . . . When *he noticed how the guests were trying to secure the places of honour*, he spoke to them in a parable. "When somebody asks you to a wedding feast, *do not sit down in the place of honour*. . . ." Then he said to his host, "When you are having guests for lunch or supper, *do not invite your friends, your brothers, or other relations, or your rich neighbors*; they will only ask you back again, and so you will be repaid. But when you give a party, *ask the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind*." (Luke 14:1, 7–8, 12–13)

In this and other meal scenes prior to the Last Supper (Luke 7:36–50; 11:37–54), Luke uses the symposium literary technique of commenting on a *fait divers* to provoke a conflict of interpretations between Jesus and the Pharisees. But by framing these scenes in a Gospel narrative that privileges Jesus as "the good guy," which equates his point of view with the character "God" and the authoritative omniscient third-person narrator, the formal arrangement implies that Jesus' way of performing Jewish meal rituals is better than the Pharisees' way.¹³ Hence, early Christian table fellows need not be hyper-

¹³ Brumberg-Kraus, 1991:179–89. Luke, unlike the other Synoptic Gospel writers, does not spell out in these scenes that the Pharisees are wrong, but allows the audience to draw its own (unavoidable) conclusions, just as Jesus entraps Simon the Pharisee to condemn himself in the

sensitive to the ritual purity of participants, nor meticulous about immersion and tithing, as the Pharisees were. However, the symposium scene frameworks are used not only to differentiate early Christian meal rituals from the Pharisees'. There are *faits divers* in the Last Supper account that also provoke or imply other conflicts of interpretation. Though its framing narrative clearly marked the Last Supper meal as occurring at the time of the Jewish holiday of Passover [*pascha*, lit. "the Passover offering"] (Luke 22:1, 7), the time when "it was necessary to sacrifice the Passover offering," (Luke 22:7), and indicated that Jesus' disciples were to prepare the Passover offering to eat it with him (Luke 22:8, 11, 13)—the *fait divers* that the prepared Passover meat sacrifice is before them prompts Jesus' comment that he *will not eat it* with them. He says, "Though I earnestly desired to eat *this Passover offering* [*touto to pascha*] before I experience my passion, I say to you that I will not eat *this* until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16). Jesus' words differentiate eaters of the Passover offering from those who do not eat it, and times when it is appropriate to eat from times when it is not. In other words, Jesus' view that he must not eat the Passover offering this particular Passover differentiates him from other Jews, on the one hand, for whom it is necessary (a *mitzvah* "commandment") to celebrate the Passover by eating the lamb sacrifice, and *from his own disciples* on the other hand, who are not sharing his experience of the passion, and will be separated from him because of his death. Jesus' comment on another *fait divers*, the argument among his disciples over who is the best (Luke 22:24–30), further reinforces my claim that the rituals of the meal are intended to differentiate between better or worse ideological perspectives. Namely, Jesus says, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are called 'benefactors.' *Not so with you*, but rather let the greater among you be as the novice, and the leader as one who serves. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the server? Is it not the one who reclines? But I in the midst of you am as a server" (Luke 22:25–27). Put differently, groups which do not view welcoming, solicitous "host-like" behavior as the mark of leadership do not have Jesus "*in the midst of you*" (like the Gentile kings mentioned here, or Pharisees like Simon in Luke 7:37, or the opponents of the Greek-speakers concerned with the distribution of food [*diakonia*, lit., "table service"] to poorer Chris-

"Socratic dialogue" in Luke 7:40–44. But it's precisely the imbedded symposium setting that "sets up" the reader to draw this conclusion. Luke puts Simon in double jeopardy. First, Simon's non-extravagant welcome of Jesus (compared to the sinner woman's) is marked as inconsistent with the symposium setting that casts him as a host. Secondly, the Gospel narrative frame that has already unequivocally represented Jesus as something more than a prophet undercuts Simon's interpretation of Jesus (7:39). In the other meal scenes, too, Luke similarly uses the setting to demonstrate that Jesus and his followers—guests or uninvited guests—are fitter hosts than their ostensible Pharisic hosts. These scenes refer allegorically to the extra-textual social drama of the early Christian inclusion of Gentiles.

tians in Acts 6). Moreover, Jesus' comment suggests there are two different "calendars": one in which the scheduled consumption of the Passover offering is to take place as planned (i.e. the ordinary Jewish one), the other in which it is postponed because of Christ's death, and resumed with his resurrection. Or better, there will be a time when Jesus' followers will not be sharing the Passover lamb/experience with him, and a time when they will. Scholars have posited for Luke various schemes for periodizing Christian salvation history. Without going into detail about them here, suffice it to say that all are based on times that are either "with Jesus," "without Jesus," or with some attenuated presence of Jesus. Analogously, the ritual act of eating the paschal lamb is either "with Jesus," "without Jesus," or with some attenuated presence of Jesus.¹⁴ The sacrificial paschal lamb metaphorically stands for what Jesus is going to experience (*to pascha is to pathein*, from the verb *paschein*), though in the ritual that follows, as a metaphorical vehicle for Jesus' experience it is exchangeable. "Broken bread" and "poured out wine" ("my body" and "my blood") become the ritualized means for others to internalize Jesus' experience of death and new life in them. The paschal lamb (even though it may be a metaphor for Christ's experience) cannot be the ritual food for the Eucharist because of its other connotations as the shared food that unites non-Christian Jews as a group living according to a distinctive sacred calendar, that is, their different salvation historical scheme. The logic of this ritual dictates that a different sort of people of God united by a shared experience of Christ (rather than by shared ethnic origins, shared halakhic practice, or a shared Biblical liturgical calendar), must ritually experience its group solidarity by eating (and not eating) something that differentiates them from other Jewish groups.

Thus, the early Christian literary representation of meal rituals in symposium scenes imbedded in the Gospel narratives differs from the form of the Mishnah's *seder* in two important respects. First, it uses the meal frame to

¹⁴ Particularly suggestive is Bösen's scheme correlating Luke's different periods of salvation history with different types of meals. Jesus alludes to three types of meals in Luke's Last Supper account: (1) the meals of his earthly ministry, including the last Passover meal when he doesn't eat the lamb (Luke 22:16, 18); (2) the meal of bread and wine ("my body" and "my blood") his disciples are to eat "in his memory" until he returns once and for all at the end of time (22:19, 20); and the meal the risen Christ will again eat together with his disciples, in judgment of Israel at the end of time. Each corresponds respectively to the meals enumerated in the title of Bösen's book *Jesusmahl, Eucharistisches Mahl, Endzeitmahl*. The "Jesus meal" corresponds to the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. The Eucharistic meal corresponds to the in-between time. Bösen (74) even calls it the "meal of the in-between-time [*Mahl der Zwischenzeit*]. The "end-time meal" corresponds obviously to the end time. Bösen argues that Luke's interweaving of references to these three meals in his redaction of the Last Supper scene in effect collapses them all semantically into the "in-between-time" Eucharistic meal. I am arguing that the performance of the ritual has an analogous effect. Luke's editorial association of meals with periods of Christian salvation history is part of the same process of ritualization of the Last Supper. See also Brumberg-Kraus 1991:197-226.

stress not only the continuity of Christian meal rituals with the practices during Jesus' ministry, but also their discontinuity with the practices of others in their Pharisaic, Greco-Roman cultural contexts. Secondly, by imbedding them in the *Gospel* narrative *per se*, it sets the stage for a peculiarly Christian understanding of the "social dramas" external to the rituals in which they are to take place. The framing narratives of the Gospels, especially Luke-Acts, concentrate on three social dramas experienced by the early Christian community. They are first, the historical drama of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God, and the consequent disinheritance of ethnic Israel. The people of God is transformed from being the ethnic/familial people of Israel to the "children of Abraham"—to use Paul's terms (Galatians 3–4, Romans 4).¹⁵ The second social drama they address is the early Christian community's loss of its founder and first leader, Jesus—crucified by the Roman authorities with the collaboration of their Jewish puppet supporters, and even betrayed by one of his own followers, Judas.¹⁶ The third social drama occurring among the early Christians in general, and which concerned Luke in particular, was the perseverance of the first followers of Jesus through the persecutions that they suffered from the Jewish and Roman authorities in the wake of Jesus' death and the Roman-Jewish war/destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE.¹⁷ The broader narrative of Luke-Acts framing the Last

¹⁵ That Luke is particularly concerned with telling this story has been amply discussed in the scholarly literature. It is reflected in Luke's playing down of Jesus' ethnicity in his genealogy (he's only the "supposed" son of Jewish Joseph, traced back to Adam, the son of God [Luke 3:23, 38]; contrast Matt 1:1: "Jesus Christ son of David, the son of Abraham"), in the point of Luke's parables of the Great Banquet (14:15–24), and in ch. 15, including the Prodigal Son, not to mention the Pentecost scene in Acts 2, and especially the account of Peter's conversion of the Gentile centurion Cornelius in Acts 10–11 (Peter: "I now understand how true it is that God has no favorites, but that in every nation those that are god-fearing and do what is right are acceptable to him [Acts 10:34–35]). This scene is especially important because it demonstrates the importance of the particular social dramas performed relative to this issue—Jews eating with Gentiles and their subsequent confrontations with their fellow Jewish Christians who disapproved. This is also described by Paul in Gal 2:12–13: "For until some messengers came from James, [Peter] was taking his meals with Gentile Christians; but after they came he drew back and held aloof, because he was afraid of the Jews." The evidence from Paul and Luke-Acts suggests not only that this was a general issue within the early church, but also that Luke in particular wished to call attention to it

¹⁶ That the earlier Christians in general, and Luke in particular, were interested in this event is also amply illustrated by New Testament passages, i.e. "But the time will come when the bridegroom [i.e. Jesus] will be taken away from them . . ." (Luke 5:35, par. Mark 2:20; Matt 9:15); "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised" (Luke 9:22, par. Matt 16:21ff, Mark 8:31ff); or during the Last Supper: "But behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table, for the Son of Man goes as it has been determined . . ." (Luke 22:21–22, par. Matt 26:21–25; Mark 14:17–21).

¹⁷ See e.g. Luke 21:20–24 and par. Mark 13:14–20; Matt 24:15–22. Jesus warns his followers about the terrors to come in his so-called apocalypse: the "desolating sacrilege" (i.e. the destruction of the Temple by the Romans) and the succession of the next generations of Christians who will not be physically with him (i.e. Paul and the communities to whom he and his fellow apostles preached the Gospel after Jesus' death). Luke suggests that the mores and times after Jesus'

Supper associates all three of these social dramas with the ritual of the Eucharist instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper, and to be performed by subsequent Christians as the Lord's Supper. The Gospel narratives first spell out the etiology of the social and theological divisions that the Lord's Supper ritual then is intended to act upon—to resolve. To put it in terms of Turner's ritual theory, the Gospels allude to the moments of social "separation" preceding the moments of "transformation" and especially "re-integration" that occur when Christians gather together and consume the eucharistic elements. In other words, the performance of the ritual is subordinated to the narrative (a creative literary interpretation of the extra-textual Christian "social dramas"), in order to set the scene for it. One has to know the story first, in order to properly perform the ritual. Its symbolic connotations presume familiarity with the broader Gospel accounts of Jesus' entire ministry, death, and resurrection appearances and the early history of the church. There is not enough said in the ritual itself to provide its performers with "the whole story," but rather the particulars of the ritual are allusions to fuller accounts of the Gospel perhaps heard at other times in other contexts. In other words, the sympotic scene frame calls attention both to the break and to the continuity of Christian meal rituals with their cultural context.

RITUALS OF SEPARATION AND RE-INTEGRATION

If Luke's Gospel and the Passover *seder* are both textual accounts of social dramas (their respective mythic salvation histories), their strategies of ritualization differ in their outcomes. Luke's Gospel stages the Last Supper as a ritual of separation, a ritual self-consciously differentiating Jesus' social group from first century Jewish and other Greco-Roman groups. Victor Turner (158) would call this a ritual intended to effect a "divisive outcome" in the social dramas it performs, at least vis-à-vis other contemporary groups. On the other hand, by attempting to dissolve the distinction between the Christians "eating with Jesus" in the past and subsequent Christians "eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ" now, the ritual aims at what Turner would call a "re-integrative outcome." In contrast, The Mishnah's Passover *seder's* strategy of ritualization is more one-sidedly "re-integrative," insofar as it tries to play down the historical rifts and trauma that divide the Israelites who observed the Passover rite in the Bible "then" (*Pesah Mitzraim*) from the

death will be qualitatively different from the time of his ministry in his Last Supper table talk: "before when I sent you out without purse or bag or sandals, you lacked nothing. Now you'll need all of these and a sword" (Luke 22:35–38, my paraphrase). Likewise the traditions about Peter's denial betray early Christian anxieties about the succeeding generations after Jesus. (Luke 22:31–34, Luke 22:40–46 and par. Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42).

subsequent generations of Jews after the destruction of the Temple who observe *Pesah dorot* “now.”¹⁸ Thus, the differences between the rabbinic seder and Christian Eucharist stem in part from their different literary strategies of ritualization.

JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN “FEASTS OF HISTORY”:
RITUALIZATION OF DIFFERENT METAPHORS

Having noted these differences in form, let us return to our initial claim that as meal rituals, they are similar in function. Both use meals to tell the story of their respective communities. More precisely, both are rituals that involve shared group eating of certain specific foods (the “things shown”) combined with certain explicit statements about what the foods symbolize (the “things said”). Moreover, both eating rituals are intended to link their present participants with earlier groups of people—the ancestors or founders—from whom they are in fact separated by time and death, as if they were all part of the same group at the same meal. In the *seder*, the most well known formulaic phrase that makes this association is “In every generation each person is to see himself [sic] as if he himself went out of Egypt.”¹⁹ For the Last Supper, it is Paul’s remark (which has become a crucial part of the Christian eucharistic liturgy),

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This my body that is for *you*. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as *you* drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as *you* eat the bread and drink the cup, *you* proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.²⁰

¹⁸ Bokser (1984:91) views the early rabbinic *seder* as a stage of “working through” the catastrophe of the Second Temple’s destruction. Drawing upon the theory of the Jewish psychologist Mortimer Ostow, Bokser says that by “reconstructing personal and group myths which provide a sense of origin, continuity, identity, and destiny” . . . [the rabbinic movement] adapted the group myth—the mythic history of Israel represented in the Passover motto of “from slavery to freedom,” so that it would be applicable to comparable situations in the future.

¹⁹ *בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים*. While it is included in most Passover Haggadah manuscripts (though not always in the same place), there is some question whether this passage was originally part of the text of the Mishnah or a later gloss. See Bokser (1984:119–20).

²⁰ 1 Cor 11:23–26 (NRSV). Note how Paul’s “quotation” of Jesus’ historic words turns their “you” from being a reference to the apostles at the meal with him to a reference to Paul’s audience in Corinth, i.e. clearly the “you” of the last sentence of my quotation (1 Cor 11:26). Paul contributes to the process of the ritualization of the Last Supper as the Lord’s Supper by equating Jesus’ original companions at the Last Supper with subsequent Christians, a group separated by time, place, and circumstance (Jesus’ death) from them at that time. Obviously this interpretation is not unique to Paul; the Synoptic Gospels, especially Luke, view Jesus’ words here as “the words of institution” of this ritual for later Christians in the same way.

In this sense, both the Christian and the Jewish meal rituals are what Chaim Raphael aptly called the Passover *seder*; they are both "feasts of history." In each ritual, the group's history, symbolically encapsulated in foods, and explicitly labeled as such by certain spoken words, is ingested—so that the respective participants become what they eat.

As such, both ritualize metaphors, in Ivan Marcus's sense of the term. The metaphor in both cases is "We who eat or drink this now *are* those who ate and drink that then." Ostensibly this is not true. But if acknowledging that difference we still say it's so, and reinforce our saying with the tangible *experience* of eating and drinking what we say is the same thing those in the past ate and drank, we have ritualized the metaphor. Saying it's so does make it so, at least from a ritual standpoint. But the metaphor "we are our ancestors" is not the only metaphor the Eucharist and the Passover ritualize. They also ritualize the metaphor "we have eaten the word of God." While the New Testament literature states this much more explicitly than the rabbinic *seder* (Christ is "the Word" [John 1:1] and the bread from heaven that gives life [John 6:48–51]), it is hard to avoid that inference even from the *seder*. For as we have noted above, the three most important constituent symbolic foods of the *seder*: *pesah*, *matzah*, and *maror* are orally "inscribed" (as it were) with Scriptural quotations, when one repeats R. Gamaliel's words before eating them.²¹ Marcus' term for this type of ritual in ancient Judaism that equates study of Torah with eating is apt: "ritualized mnemonics."²² It is a particularly early rabbinic tendency to stress the metaphor that *study* is eating, since in rabbinic ideology, study of Torah replaces the priests' consumption of sacrifices as the central form of service of God, since the latter form is no longer possible with the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The rabbinic *seder* itself exemplifies this view in the way it treats the paschal offering. It plays down the requirement that one *eat* it, and stresses rather that one fulfills one's obligation merely by talking about it (i.e. learning the midrash of the Torah about it), as per R. Gamaliel's dictum in *m. Pesah*. 10:5. It is only later, under the influence of new trends in thirteenth century Christian incarnational theologies of the Eucharist, or Spanish kabbalah's reappropriation of the language of the biblical sacrificial system, that we find pronounced Jewish expressions of the converse of the metaphor: that *eating* is study (see also Brumberg-Kraus, 1999).

²¹ While this is not quite as explicit an eating of Torah as the medieval Ashkenazic Jewish ritual of little boys licking Hebrew letters smeared with honey or small cakes with Scriptural verses actually written on them, which Marcus discusses (1), it is certainly on the same continuum.

²² Marcus: 54–59 ("Food Metaphors and Ritualized Mnemonics").

That being said, namely, that the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper and the rabbinic *seder* in the Mishnah similarly treat them as meal rituals, I would like to turn to some significant differences between the two. As accounts of rituals, these Christian and Jewish traditions both involve Harrison's three basic building blocks of ritual: "things shown," "things said," and "things done." But because they articulate different foundation myths and different group boundaries—i.e. different religious perspectives—they consequently order the common structural components differently, or use different foods and other props, and "do" different things to them. The foods chosen to be eaten; the ways they are prepared, served, and eaten; and the hierarchical relationship between what is said about and what is done to the foods are not arbitrary. They are meaningfully rooted in the particular, distinctive religious perspectives of the rabbis and their early Christian counterparts. Thus, there is a reason that the main food components of Christian ritual meals are meatless, bread and wine, while meat (the *pesah*, paschal lamb, or some substitute meat) is a crucial component of the rabbinic *seder*; and why the type of bread—unleavened *matzah* is emphasized in the latter and virtually unspecified in the former. There is a reason why the "breaking" of the bread and the "pouring" out of the wine is done emphatically in the Christian ritual, while other types of manipulations of food: drinking wine while reclining, discussing foods without eating them, and making the "Hillel sandwich" or its antecedent combination of food elements are stressed in the *seder*. And finally, even if both rituals combine eating and story-telling, it seems that the Christian story-telling precedes the "things done," while the rabbinic *seder* subordinates the story-telling to what's done; it is just one more thing in the order of things done at the *seder*.

The early Christian foundation myth accounts for at least four distinctive characteristics of the ritual: 1) that the ritual is an eating ritual; 2) that bread and wine, not meat, are eaten; 3) the wine and bread ("blood and body" of Christ) are "divided" and "broken" (Luke 22:17, 19) and "given" and "poured out" to his followers; and 4) that it is a Jewish Passover meal at which no Passover lamb meat seems to be consumed (it is prepared [22:13], but not eaten, at least not by Jesus [22:15]). Each of these elements has a symbolic reference to the "players," "props," "performances," or "stage setting" of the social dramas occurring to the Christian community vis-à-vis the broader Jewish and Greco-Roman society. What happens in this ritual is the breakdown and recombination of symbolic cultural forms typical of the "liminal stage" of rites of passage (as Turner explains), so as to be reconstituted in a new or renewed form. That accounts for the language of "breaking down"—"*diamerisate . . . eklasen . . . ekchunnomenon*" in Luke's account. But beyond that, the ritual is intended to do nothing less than to break down the Jewish people, the Gentile people, the Passover lamb sacrifice, and Jesus Christ—the "players and "props" in the social dramas we discussed—so as to recombine them

in a new form: the reconstituted people of God. No longer are real flesh and blood to be the bonds that bind the community of God together, nor Pharisaic halakhah (a point made in Luke's accounts of Jesus' meals with the Pharisees [7:36ff; 11:37ff; 14:1ff]), but rather a shared experience of Jesus Christ. Jesus is a Jewish man—flesh and body—who is also a "son of God," indeed whose submission to his divinely ordained fate of suffering exemplifies his being "of God," who in the ritual is "broken down" into his component parts, transferred to his followers, and thus reassembled as the communal "body of Christ." The language of breaking down, as well as the image of physical ingestion and digestion—drinking and eating—conveys this transformation. Wine and bread are ingested, and not "real" flesh and blood—i.e. meat—what you would expect at a sacrificial meal!—in order to play down the fleshly bond of the old people of God, "Israel according to the flesh," i.e. ethnic Jews. Ethnic Jews, sharing the "flesh" of the Passover meat sacrifice, reinforce their identity as the chosen people of God as being "in the flesh" (not to mention circumcision "in the flesh" as being a mark of male membership—pardon the pun—of the people of God.)²³ Not so for the reconstituted people of God, the "body of Christ" in which there is "no longer Jew nor Greek" (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11).²⁴ What Christians eat to become the "body of Christ" are themselves raw materials transformed into something different: bread and wine are transformations of natural produce—grain and grapes, they are "cooked" not "raw." Real meat—with or without the blood drained from it, even cooked, is closer to raw or organic material than bread and wine. Christians are what they eat, not a corporate body linked organically by blood and flesh to one another and to God ("meat"), but rather a transformed, cultivated part of

²³ I mean this only partly in jest. Nancy Jay and others in her wake, Joanna Dewey and Stanley Stowers, have argued that patriarchal groups use the blood and flesh of shared meat sacrifices to foster myths of communal origins and bonds that root group identity in institutions controlled by males, rather than who one's mother is. Jay quips that sacrifice is a "remedy for [man] having been born of woman" (xxiii). See also Brumberg-Kraus, 1999.

²⁴ "Nor male nor female," the rest of Gal 3:28, supports Dewey (16), who claims (persuasively, in my view) that "the renunciation of blood sacrifice among Christians entailed the renunciation of the hierarchical organization of society brought about and sustained by animal sacrifice, at least as an ideal for Christians, even if Gal 3:28 was never fully realized in practice" (her emphasis). Compare this to *m. Pesah.* 8:7, which forbids groups made up solely of women, slaves, and/or minors (i.e. without any free adult males) to assemble to eat the paschal lamb sacrifice. On the other hand, apart from Gal 3:28, which supposedly was originally an ecstatic exclamation during the eucharistic meal, there are few if any New Testament passages about the Lord's Supper that explicitly stress the dissolution of hierarchical, male/female distinctions among its participants. On the contrary, Paul uses the metaphor of the "body of Christ" to legitimate male authority over females (i.e. 1 Cor 11:1–16, immediately preceding his instructions about the proper performance of the Lord's Supper, 11:17–34). In other words, the absence of meat sacrifices among Christians may have made them more attractive to women seeking higher social status than their other social circles might have allowed, but it does not appear to have been the intention of the New Testament writers who advocated the eucharistic meal ritual.

creation—like bread and wine. Similarly, Luke’s account of the ritual emphasizes Passover *time* (cf. three different expressions announcing the approach of the time of the feast of Passover [Luke 22:1, 7, and 14]), not the consumption of Passover *meat*. Again, this is to play down the fleshly connection of the new Christian community to the old Israel, while at the same time retaining a “spiritual” connection to Israel, that is a temporal connection to its calendar, its history. Christians tell a story about how the people of God was reconstituted—from the ethnic group of Israel chosen by God in the “Old Testament” to a mixed community of Gentiles and Jews, united by their shared experience of Christ, rather than blood ties or halakhah. Consequently, the Last Supper stresses bread and wine (not “real” flesh and blood) as the common elements which bond the new community of God together. It is a metaphorical kind of flesh and blood—“the body and blood of Christ” that the ritual causes to “flow” through the reconstituted people of God. This is Luke’s ritual solution to the conflict in the social drama of the early Church: the communal incarnation of the “Body of Christ” is a “New Israel” that includes Gentiles and Judaism without ethnic Jews!²⁵

In contrast, in the Passover *seder*, Jews not only tell their story differently (i.e. *within* the meal ritual), but also tell a different story. Namely, the people sitting around the table now are the same “Israel” that participated in the Exodus from Egypt and in the Temple Passover rites, i.e. “Tell your child the story on this day, ‘Because of what the Lord did for *me* when I went out of Egypt’” (*m. Pesah.* 10:5 quoting Exod 13:8). Jews don’t have to explain or defend their family lineage as the chosen people of God, as Christians do. It’s assumed, just as the fragments of blessings, scriptural verses, and other sayings alluding to that story in the Mishnah’s *seder* are assumed. Rather, adult Jews have to tell the story to their children that Jews are just as chosen as their ancestral parents—despite all evidence to the contrary. In other words, Jews are not only separated from the generation of the Exodus and Sinai by several millennia (tradition recognizes the gap between “*Pesah Mitzraim*” and “*Pesah dorot*”), but Jews have lost their Temple, been exiled from their land, and confronted with a whole set of tribulations that suggest that God no longer favors them. Consequently, their *seder* meal rituals emphasize *maror* and *matzah*, as the elements that unite this generation with the past ones—*maror* for the experience of suffering, *matzah* (= *motzi*’, sort of) for redemption. Jews play down the Passover lamb—Jews talk about it but no longer eat it, as if to deny that the loss of the Temple and its rites is all that terrible. On the other hand, Jews still display the meat bone, and roasted egg, and usually serve meat in the meal proper—unlike Christians—since they have less of a

²⁵ Ethnic Jews *as such*. I do not claim that Luke envisioned a Jew-less church, only that Jewish ethnicity was insufficient as criterion for membership.

need to play down organic flesh and blood ties.²⁶ Jews rather need to play down meat that can be prepared only at a Temple that no longer exists—not animal flesh *per se*. If Christians transform themselves through the breakdown and spilling out of the Christ-charged bread/body, wine/blood elements for distribution, for Jews the liminal transformative moment of the ritual is marked in my mind by the "Hillel sandwich." By combining the maror and the matzah (with the conspicuous omission of the *pesah*), Jews ingest both the bitter and redemptive experiences of their "feast of history."²⁷

Significantly, the foods symbolizing the experience of redemption and freedom are "cooked," while the food reminding Jews of their bitter experience of slavery must be a raw vegetable (*m. Pesah*. 2:6). In other words, the experience of servitude and suffering is "natural," i.e. it happens and there is not much one can do about it to prevent it—while its remedies: four cups of wine, roasted meat, and *matzah* are all products of human culture. Fredman (75–93) makes much of the interplay between "raw" and "cooked" to argue

²⁶ It is interesting that the Passover seder emphasizes roasting or burning as the process by which ordinary meats and bread are transformed into foods fit for sacrifice and the Passover rite. How important is the burning/cooking metaphor in the *seder*—the burnt *matzah*, the *basar tzalui*, the roasted egg or bone? Christians dissolve their symbolic constituent elements by breaking them, partitioning them, while Jews do so more often by burning. Is the former action a metaphor for discontinuity, the latter a metaphor for refinement and continuity? That's certainly the case in the medieval Jewish mystical theories of eating, based on the root metaphor of burnt sacrificial offerings (Brumberg-Kraus, 1999:23–24; Fredman: 79).

²⁷ However, it may be anachronistic to project the Hillel sandwich practice back to the rabbinic *seder* in the Mishnah. In the Mishnah, *Pesah* 10:3 only mentions that one is to eat bitter herbs, *charoset*, "cooked things", and the lamb sacrifice meat (when the Temple existed), not that one should form (*korkhim*) and eat them together in a sandwich. The reference to the custom of "*korekh*" now canonized in most printed Haggadot goes back to a *baraita* about Hillel's Passover practice during the time of the Temple, and does not appear in the Mishnah. According to Moshe Miller, who answered my query to the electronic discussion group H-JUDAIC about the history of the "Hillel sandwich,"

- 1) Hillel interpreted the verse "*Al matzot u'merim yochluhu*" (Numbers 9:11) literally—"you shall eat the paschal lamb upon matzo and maror." It is clear that he and his disciples also ate this way (See *Tosefta Pesachim* 2:14). However, his fellow sages disagreed with him.
- 2) Rashi and Rashbam (*Pesachim* 115a—*shehaya korchan*) both write that all three were wrapped together. However, Maimonides (*Yad Chametz u'Matza* 8, 6–8) mentions only matzah and maror. Commentaries (*Taz Orach Chaim* 475:9) explain that Maimonides maintains that this was true even during the eras of the Temple, when they offered the paschal lamb.
- 3) The Gemara (*Pesachim* 115a) discusses the issue at length, and concludes that since the halacha was not decided clearly one should only follow Hillel's custom after fulfilling the mitzvah of eating matza. Some early haggadot mention this custom (e.g. Prague), others do not. Reasons for mentioning it are to show that this is merely a custom and not a requirement of the mitzvah.
- 4) The subject is treated at length in Haggadah Sheleimah by Rabbi M. M. Casher ch. 31. (Rabbi Moshe Miller, mmliller@gti.net)

The inclusion of Hillel's *baraita* on Num 9:11 in later editions of *M. Pesah*. 10, i.e. *t. Pesah*. and subsequent *Haggadot* is an perfect example of Bokser's understanding of ritualization as a textual editorial tendency.

that the transformation of foods according to the Jewish norms of Torah parallels the perfection of Jewish children through learning Torah (and males through circumcision prescribed in Torah). The *seder* unites these two ways of internalizing Torah into a single ritual—to “cook” its participants into Jews who embody Torah. The *seder* calls attention to the ways the essential foods are cooked (apart from the *maror*) in a far more pronounced manner than the Last Supper accounts refer to their elements. The Last Supper plays down the element of human intervention in its terms for its food and drink: *arton* is a generic term for bread and can even refer to food in general; the word *oinos* is never used for the wine, but rather *potērion* (“cup”) or “fruit of the vine.” In contrast, in the *seder*, it is stressed that no less than four cups of wine be served [ארבעה כוסות של יין], and that they are mixed [מזוגן] each time they are served. *Matzah’s* difference from other kinds of bread is noted in the four questions (*m. Pesah.* 10:4). *Matzah* is practically burnt when it is made, and its contrast to *hametz* alludes to its role as the type of bread fit for sacrifices; *hametz* is prohibited from ordinary sacrifices. Likewise, the Mishnah’s list of foods to be eaten at the *seder* (apart from the bitter herb) uses names that connote that they are human products: *matzah*, *haroset* (lit. “something manufactured”), and two *tavshilin* (lit. “cooked things”). If Jews are what they eat and drink, the *seder* underlines that they, like the symbolic foods they ingest, are not naturally that way, but “cooked” into something characteristically Jewish. Or as Fredman puts in the epigraph to her chapter on “The Created Society,” “Chickens are not born kosher” (75).

Finally, the *seder’s* wine and required reclining posture emphasizes that its participants are not servants or slaves (*pace* Luke 22:26–27), but should act like free aristocrats (even if during the rest of the year they are not). According to *m. Pesah.* 10:1: “Even if one is among the poor of Israel, they should not eat until they recline. And they should not [be served] less than four cups of wine, even if it has to come out of the communal charity fund.” The impersonal constructions “let them make not less than four cups of wine,” “they mixed for him the first . . . second . . . third . . . cup (*m. Pesah.* 10:2, 4, 7) emphasize that the participants are *being served* like free people. The “things said” over each cup (especially the text of the Hallel) stress that this freedom is of the same sort as their ancestors’ redemption from slavery in Egypt. The scriptural quotations attached to the cups of wine, as well as the blessings, state that the joyous experience of the wine/freedom comes from God. Fredman also points out that wine functions as a transforming substance; as an intoxicant it breaks down the barriers that separate the participants from each other (but not from non-Jews, since the Mishnah prohibits that), and from their ancestors in Egypt and in the time when the Temple existed (83–84). Yet at the same time, the *seder* imposes its order on its boundary-breaking drink: there are to be four cups, drunk in their prescribed order, accompanied by prescribed blessings and quotations of Torah, times when you can drink whenever you want to, times when you cannot (*m. Pesah.* 10:7). Everything

eaten or drunk at the *seder* is stamped with the norms of the Torah. The *seder's* ritualization of food and table talk do not emphasize the breaking of boundaries as the Christian rite does, but rather the internalization of boundaries that make Jews who they are.

Why are the ritualizations of the Christian and Jewish meals different from one another? Christians eat a meatless meal, while Jews eat both meat, and vegetable and grain products at their meal. Christians first break up and spill out the foods they eat and drink, while Jews first re-combine their principal foods in a "Hillel sandwich." Christians "ingest" the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, while Jews taste the bitterness and unleavened Torah of their ancestors' experience of God's revelation and redemption of them from slavery in Egypt. And Christians tell their story before they come to the table, while Jews tell it between courses of the meal. Why? Because Christians need their story to get everybody to the table; the initial presumption is that Gentiles don't belong. Jews don't question that they belong to this table, but rather they question and explain why they still come to it.

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