

PETER-BEN SMIT

Fellowship and Food in the Kingdom

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Eschatological Meals and Scenes of Utopian
Abundance in the New Testament

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This book finally reaching a stage of completion marks the end of a journey that began with my doctoral studies at the University of Bern in the fall of 2001. The volume consists of a revised version of a dissertation, which was defended in the winter of 2005 for the Faculty of Old Catholic and Protestant Theology of the University of Bern, Switzerland. Sending the manuscript off to the press is not only a joy and a relief; it is also an occasion for thanksgiving.

I have to thank Bishop Jan-Lambert (Bert) Wirix-Speetjens (Haarlem, NL), for allowing me time for further studies abroad, while continuing my course of studies at the seminary of the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands. I owe Prof. Urs von Arx (Bern) and Prof. Ulrich Luz (Bern) a great debt of gratitude for their patient supervision, their reports as my dissertation readers, and their example. I thank Bishop Dr. h.c. Hans Gerny (Bern) for awarding me a scholarship for the first three terms of my studies, and Prof. Ulrich Luz for employing me as a research assistant. I also thank Prof. Matthias Konradt (Bern) for employing me for three years as one of his research and teaching fellows, for introducing me to academic teaching, and for acting as a *de facto* third dissertation supervisor. Furthermore, I am grateful to the three professors just mentioned, as well as to the entire Faculty of Old Catholic and Protestant Theology of the University of Bern, for making possible a lively public defense of the theses resulting from my work.

During my studies, I received the constant support from faculty and staff of the Faculty of Old Catholic and Protestant Theology of the University of Bern, especially from members of the Institute for Biblical Studies. Specifically, I would like to thank PD Dr. habil. Moisés Mayordomo Marin, Manuel Dubach, Johanna Hess, and Dr. Ulrike Sals. While working for the Protestant Department of the Old Catholic and Protestant Faculty of Theology of the University of Bern, while having a professor in the Old Catholic Department as my primary supervisor, I am grateful for the hospitality and fellowship of both 'sides' of the Faculty, and render thanks specifically for the fellowship with the students and faculty of both. As I continued my studies at the Old Catholic Seminary in Utrecht, this required flexibility on the part of that institution, for which I

have to thank it, especially its secretary, Dr. Koenraad Ouwens, and its students' chaplain, Fr. Jake Dejonge, who, together with my fellow students was a constant source of support. After my ordination to the diaconate, the Bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Switzerland, the Rt. Rev. Fritz-René Müller (Bern), the Old Catholic Parish St. Peter and Paul (Bern), its vestry, especially its president Dr. Marlies Bachmann, and its clergy, especially Fr. Pierre Schwab, Fr. Lars Simpson and Dcn. Marianne Stirnimann, made it possible for me to grow in ministry alongside academic work.

Furthermore, I am grateful to the editor of the *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (2. Reihe)*, Prof. Dr. Jörg Frey, for his acceptance of my work into this series, and to Dr. Henning Ziebritski of Mohr Siebeck publishers for coordinating its publication. A special word of thanks is due to Ms. Tanja Mix of Mohr Siebeck, who assisted me kindly, clearly, and professionally, drawing from what must be an infinite supply of patience and understanding. In this context, more than a word of thanks is also due to those who helped me with the language and style of this work, especially Alison D. Sauer (Munich), who read the entire manuscript.

The development of the thesis into a book took place while training as a hospital chaplain at Bellevue Hospital, New York, and further studies at The General Theological Seminary, New York, under the supervision of Prof. J. Robert Wright, while serving as the assistant to Fr. Ralph M. Campbell, II, the rector of St. Ann's Parish, Long Island. Often unknowingly, these communities provided me with the spiritual support needed to continue this work as a priest with a passion for both the parish and the library. Special thanks also to my mother, Fiete Smit-Maan, and brother, Jaap-Max Smit, for putting up with an all-too-bookish son and brother. Finally, I have to thank Patricia, for her love, strength, and all the ways in which she makes life a joy to live.

New York, on the Feast of St. Matthew the Evangelist, 2007,

Peter-Ben Smit

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I. Introduction

A. The Aims of This Study

In general, the eschatological meal is both regarded as a widely spread¹ and not unimportant part of the eschatological expectations in early Judaism and Christianities, not in the least in those texts now present in the canon of the NT. In spite of this widely spread opinion, there has been little research on this subject. The available publications are short and often limited to either stating the commonplace that the eschatological meal is an important motif in early Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic imagination or concentrate on giving an overview of the various texts, without dealing with them further.² Therefore, there is a clear interest in further study in this field even if only for said reason. Furthermore, studying the eschatological expectations or expressions of utopian longing,³ while taking into consideration the socio-cultural context of their emergence, is one of the ways of learning more about the hopes and wishes of the groups or individuals developing and transmitting them. The purpose of this study is thereby given: to study both the (literary) history and the use of the motifs of the eschatological meal and scenes of utopian nutritional abundance⁴ in the NT, considering the way they express the hopes and expectations of the groups developing and transmitting them. In the form of a question, this can be formulated in the following way: 'How are what kinds of traditions about eschatological meals included into the NT, and in what way do they function within the theological plan of the authors of the books in which they occur, in view of their first-century social context in general and the community for which a book was written in particular.' This question will be refined and reformulated after having given an overview of the state of research, which will reveal aporia in the

Abbreviations of journals, series, etc. follow Schwertner:1994, those of ancient texts follow Alexander:1999.

¹ Cf. below, I.B. on the state of research.

² There are, however, a few exceptions for the eschatological meal in Mt., Lk., the Apoc., and the life of the historical Jesus. Cf. below, I.B.2.

³ For terminological precisions, cf. below, I.C.1.

⁴ On this terminology, cf. below, I.C.3.

present state of research. After this, the precise methods and definitions used in this study, as well as a selection of texts and an explanation of the structure of this thesis will be presented and discussed.

B. State of Research – Further Questions

At the beginning of the 20th century, Albert Schweitzer avidly promoted the theme of the eschatological banquet, and his has been an important voice since then.⁵ In recent years, however, also a number of publications were devoted to the subject of the eschatological meal. It is still the case, however, that more often⁶ than not,⁷ the existence of the motif is taken for granted and presupposed, rather than discussed extensively. Russell's 1964 statement that the 'idea of an eschatological banquet is, of course, a familiar one in apocalyptic tradition,'⁸ repeated by Priest in 1992,⁹ is still typical. Often this is combined with the (erroneous) assumption of a clear literary relationship between the main HB/OT example of an eschatological banquet, Isa. 25:6-8, and eschatological banquets in the NT.¹⁰ Because of this rather static situation, writing a complete history of research is not a useful task. Instead, an overview of the present state of research can provide the necessary background for the research undertaken in the body of this thesis. The works discussed are selected, either because

⁵ Cf. Schweitzer:1971a, idem:1971b. Schweizer:1946, focuses on the distinction between and possible separation of anamnestic and eschatologically oriented meals, as problematized by Lietzmann:1926, 252, and discusses this within the context of research on the Lord's Supper in the NT in the first half of the 20th century, also noting, however, that this 'längst vorhandene Frage' was firmly underlined by Schweitzer at the beginning of the last century. Wainwright:1971, offers on 1-17 an overview of earlier research in the area of eschatology and (eucharistic) meals, also taking Schweitzer as his starting point.

⁶ Representative examples include Jeremias:1960, 197-210, even when suggesting a declaration of abstinence as the correct interpretation of Mk. 14:25parr. (209-210), he uses the idea of a 'messianic meal' as a matter of course, cf. further: Luz:1990, 13n12, Luz:1997, 237n34, Davies/Allison:1988, 453, Riniker:1999, 84. Klauck:1982, 320-323, refers to 'the metaphor of the eschatological meal' as such (321).

⁷ Careful voices include Chilton:1992, 140, who wonders how common the theme is, and Wright:1996, 532.

⁸ Russell:1964, 322.

⁹ Cf. Priest:1992, 223, referring to '(...) the common assumption of the pervasiveness of the messianic/eschatological banquet in Jewish apocalyptic thought (...).'

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Blenkinsopp:2000, 359, claiming that the banquet found in Isa. 25:6 is 'well represented in the gospels.' In this respect, Bolyki:1998, 69, is much more careful, stating that dependence cannot be ascertained anymore. See for his own half-page overview of messianic banquets: Bolyki:1998, 193.

they discuss the theme of the eschatological meal within one literary work, or because they provide an overview of the complete theme in early Christian and (early) Jewish literature. This means that only studies with a more elaborate discussion of the topic will be taken into account. The overview differentiates between contributions aiming at giving a general overview, and those concentrating on one particular (NT) book.

1. General Contributions

First and foremost, two essays should be mentioned here. The first was written by John Priest¹¹ and aims primarily at giving an overview and a classification of the early Jewish and early Christian eschatological and messianic banquets. After listing some examples of eschatological meals from non-canonical writings¹² and after discussing the theme in the HB/OT,¹³ Priest sees six categories of eschatological banquets within the canonical writings of the NT. These are the following: the messianic banquet, hosted by Jesus,¹⁴ an eschatological ‘Lord’s Supper’ (Mk. 14:25parr.),¹⁵ the Lord’s Supper as memorial with an eschatological outlook (1 Cor. 11:26),¹⁶ the banquet as a simple illustration of the kingdom,¹⁷ the miraculous feedings,¹⁸ and the destructive banquet (Apc. 19:17-19).¹⁹ Finally, Priest suggests that all of these traditions ultimately derive from the OT/HB theme of the celebration of God’s victory.²⁰ He concludes his essay with some general observations and conclusions, therein asserting the general pervasiveness of the theme, the immediate background of the theme in the HB/OT of the divine warrior, and the

¹¹ Priest:1992.

¹² Priest:1992, 223-229, these texts include 1 En. 62:12-16, 2 En. 42:5, 3 En. 48:10, 2 Bar. 29:1-8, 4 Ez. 4:33-41 (= chs. 3-14 of the whole of the apocryphal book of Ez., cf. Metzger:1992, 516-559, esp. 516, 2 Ez. 2:33-41 (cf. for an overview of the various subdivisions of Ezra: Charlesworth, *OTP* 1, 516), Test. Abr. 20:14, Test. Is. 6:22, 8:5-7, Test. Jac. 7:21-28, 1QSa 2:11-22.

¹³ Priest:1992, 234-237, noting that there are three interrelated themes: eating and drinking before YHWH (cf. e.g. Deut. 12:7-18, 2 Sam. 6:18-19, 1 Chr. 29:22, Ex. 24:1-11, Neh. 8-10), the slaughter of God’s enemies (cf. Isa. 27:1, 34:5-7, Jer. 25:15-34, 46:10, Ezek. 29:3-5, 32:2-8, 39:17-20, Zeph. 1:7-9, Ob. 16, Ps. 74:13-14, Isa. 51:9-11), and the eschatological meal proper (Isa. 25:6-8, 49:9-12, 55, 65:13-16, Ezek. 34:11-31, Zeph. 3:8-13, Zech. 9:9-17).

¹⁴ E.g. Apc. 19:9, Lk. 22:30, cf. Priest:1992, 229-230.

¹⁵ Priest:1992, 230-231.

¹⁶ Priest:1992, 231.

¹⁷ I.e.: Mt. 8:11-12par., Mt. 22:1-14, Lk. 14:15-24, Mt. 25:1-13, cf. Priest:1992, 231.

¹⁸ I.e. Mk. 6:32-44parr., 8:1-10parr., Jn. 6:1-15, in relationship with Lk. 24:28-43, Jn. 21:9-14, Lk. 6:21a, 16:19-31, cf. Priest:1992, 231-232.

¹⁹ Priest:1992, 232.

²⁰ Priest:1992, 234-237.

close association of the eschatological meal with Jesus' meals and the early Christian Eucharist. Priest calls for more attention to the theme in Jewish and Christian literature after 200 CE as well as in the preceding 400 years, suggesting that extra-Israelite backgrounds should be further taken into consideration, as well as the interaction of the theme with underlying intentions of the authors of relevant texts.²¹

The second essay to be mentioned here comes from the hand of Dennis E. Smith,²² and pursues a similar goal of organization and systematization, though following a different categorization: Smith mainly discerns between numinous/sacred foods²³ on the one hand and messianic or sacred eschatological banquets on the other,²⁴ both in the NT and in its context. In view of the eschatological banquet, he differentiates between texts focusing on victory and reversal,²⁵ scenes of eschatological joy,²⁶ and finally the wedding banquet.²⁷ Smith also draws attention to the interaction of these mythological meals and 'real,' i.e. historical meals, noting that these merge at Qumran (1 QSa 2:11-22).²⁸ He does not make any explicit suggestions about the theme's provenance.

The corpus of early Jewish and rabbinic literature dealing with the eschatological meal has been compiled in a number of other works too. The most important among them is that of Billerbeck,²⁹ but also Ginzberg,³⁰ Volz³¹ and Moore³² have published similar compilations. Even though focusing on rabbinic texts, Billerbeck's classification of the various

²¹ Cf. Priest:1992, 237-238.

²² Smith:1991, 64-73. He repeated his view later in Smith:1992 and in his monograph on meals in the NT, Smith:2003, 166-171.

²³ E.g. bread of life/manna: Ex. 16:1-17:7, Num. 11:7-9, 20:2-13, Ps. 78:25, Wisd. 16:20, 4 Ez. 1:19, Jos. As. 16:8.14-16, water of life: Jn. 4:10-14, Apc. 22:1-2.17-19, Od. Sol. 6:8-18.

²⁴ Cf. Smith:1991, 65.

²⁵ Isa. 25:6-8, 1 En. 62:12-14, 2 Bar. 29:1-4.

²⁶ Mt. 22:1-10, Lk. 14:16-24, Gos. Thom. 64, and the pilgrimage of the nations (Mt. 8:11-12par.)

²⁷ Mk. 2:19-20par., Mt. 22:1-14, 25:1-13, Lk. 14:7-11, Jn. 2:1-11, 3:29, Apc. 19:7-9, 21:2.9, 22:17, Gos. Thom. 104.

²⁸ Smith's view, also the view taken here, is that this Qumranic text looks forward to celebrating the community's meal in the eschaton, in the presence of both Messiahs. Cf. Smith:1992, 71.

²⁹ Cf. Billerbeck:1928, 888-891.919-921 (abundance of creation), 1146-1147.1154-1165 (eschatological banquet), and listing texts that deny the existence of (physical) food in the heavenly Garden of Eden on 1132-1133.

³⁰ Cf. Ginzberg:1968d, 4:114-116, idem:1968e,234.

³¹ Volz:1934, 367-368.

³² Moore:1946, 363-366.

texts is of relevance here, as he subdivides the texts using the image of the eschatological banquet into a category dealing with superabundant fertility³³ and another category dealing with the eschatological communion of the righteous (with each other and God) in the shape of a meal.³⁴ Billerbeck does not argue these categories extensively, nevertheless they agree with the typology used in the present thesis, as it will be proposed below.³⁵

Beyond these studies the eschatological meal has been considered within the context of the following more recent thematic studies on (eucharistic) meals in the NT.³⁶

In 1971, Wainwright presented a thesis on the Eucharist and eschatology,³⁷ which includes a substantial reflection on HB/OT, intertestamental and NT literature as far as it concerns eschatological banquets. This takes place in view of (eucharistic) meals both as the ‘antepast of heaven,’³⁸ as well as in terms of their relationship to Christ’s parousia.³⁹ Wainwright draws on these texts, as well as on patristic literature, for his further systematic-theological explorations.⁴⁰ In his section on meals as the ‘antepast of heaven,’ however, Wainwright reflects on the ‘Old Testament preparation,’⁴¹ which includes the covenant meal (Ex. 24:9-11),⁴² (sacred) meals associated with sacrifices,⁴³ wisdom literature,⁴⁴ and feeding and feasting in the future salvation.⁴⁵ From the corpus of ‘intertestamental’ literature, Wainwright lists texts dealing with the abundance of food,⁴⁶ the new manna,⁴⁷ Passover,⁴⁸ future (messianic) feasting (1 En. 62:13-16),⁴⁹

³³ Billerbeck, 4.1, 888-889.919-921.

³⁴ Billerbeck, 4.1, 1146-1147.11152-1163.

³⁵ Cf. below, I.D.2.

³⁶ Exceptions, not considering the subject include Wick:2003, Barth:1987, Klinghardt:1996.

³⁷ Wainwright:1971.

³⁸ Wainwright:1971, 18-59.

³⁹ Wainwright:1971, 60-93.

⁴⁰ The body of the work, cf. Wainwright:1971, 94-154.

⁴¹ Wainwright:1971, 19-21.

⁴² Wainwright:1971, 19.

⁴³ E.g. Gen. 31:54, Ex. 18:12, Deut. 12:5-7.17-18, 14:23.26, 15:20, 27:7, 1 Sam. 9:11-14, cf. Wainwright:1971, 19-20.

⁴⁴ Prov. 9:1-6, Ps. 23:5, Cant. 5:1, cf. Wainwright:1971, 20.

⁴⁵ Isa. 25:6-9, 34:6, 48:21, 49:9-10, 55:5, 65:13, Jer. 46:10, Ezek. 34:13-14.23, 39:17-20, Zeph. 1:7, Zech. 9:16, cf. Wainwright:1971, 20-21.

⁴⁶ 4 Ez. 8:52-54, 2 Bar. 29:5, cf. Wainwright:1971, 22.

⁴⁷ 4 Ez. 1:19, 2 Bar. 29:8, Midr. Qoh. 1:9, cf. Wainwright:1971, 22.

⁴⁸ Cf. e.g. Josephus, *B. J.* 5:98-105, 6:290-295, so: Wainwright:1971, 22-24, also including many patristic references.

and finally texts from Qumran.⁵⁰ As far as the NT is concerned, future feeding and feasting,⁵¹ meals during Jesus' ministry,⁵² their relationship to one another (focusing among others on Mt. 6:11/Lk. 11:3),⁵³ as well as with the Eucharist, are taken into account (focusing on the intertextual relationships of Mk. 14:22-25parr.).⁵⁴ This overview serves Wainwright to support his broader thesis that the association of meals with the deity and eschatology is supported by a broad range of texts from the context of the NT and the early Church.⁵⁵ Even if this is true in general, it does not constitute a workable typology or clear tradition-historical proposal.

In his 1990 monograph on early Christian meals, Bernd Kollmann⁵⁶ focuses explicitly on eschatological meals and on nutritional abundance,⁵⁷ but concentrates primarily on the place of (eschatological) meals in the ministry of Jesus and their reception through early Christian communities.⁵⁸ Kollmann discerns between an eschatological 'Heilsmahl'⁵⁹ and a messianic 'Heilsmahl'⁶⁰ based on the presence or absence of a messianic figure.⁶¹ He concludes that Jesus both preached and enacted the eschatological/messianic banquet, which was as such also received in the meal praxis of the early Christian communities. This conclusion, which is not further elaborated, serves as the background for his exegesis of the relevant NT texts.⁶²

⁴⁹ Wainwright:1971, 24.

⁵⁰ 4QpPs 37 2:10-11, 1QSa 2:11-22, cf. Wainwright:1971, 24-25.

⁵¹ Mt. 8:11/Lk. 13:29, Mt. 5:6/Lk. 6:21a, Mt. 25:14-30, Lk. 12:35-38, cf. Wainwright:1971, 26-27.

⁵² Mk. 2:15-20parr., Mt. 11:19/Lk. 7:34, Lk. 15:1-2, 19:1-10, Mt. 11:28, Mk. 6:30-44parr., 8:1-10par., Jn. 6:3-15, Mk. 7:24-30, Mt. 15:21-28, Mk. 2:23-28, cf. Wainwright:1971, 27-29.

⁵³ Wainwright:1971, 29-34.

⁵⁴ Wainwright:1971, 34-42.

⁵⁵ Cf. Wainwright:1971, 58-59, for his systematic conclusions, of which the first one is: 'having the form of a meal, the Eucharist belongs to that universally known realm of spoken and acted imagery which describes the relation between God and men in terms of eating and drinking.'

⁵⁶ Kollmann:1990a, 187-189.206-225.

⁵⁷ Cf. Kollmann:1990a, 207, who refers to both Jn. 2:1-11 and to the synoptic miraculous feedings as reflecting eschatological nutritional abundance.

⁵⁸ Cf. Kollmann:1990a, 233-238.

⁵⁹ 'Meal of salvation.' Including Mt. 22:1-14par., Lk. 15:11-32par., Mt. 8:11-12par., Lk. 14:7-14, Mk. 2:18-22, cf. Kollmann:1990a, 222.

⁶⁰ Including Lk. 22:24-30, 12:35-38.

⁶¹ Kollmann:1990a, 221-222. Smith:1991, 64, already rightly rejects this suggestion.

⁶² Mt. 22:1-14/Lk. 14:16-24, Lk. 15:11-32, Mt. 8:11-12/Lk. 13:28-29, Lk. 14:7-14, Mk. 2:18-22, 11:19/Lk. 7:34, Lk. 22:24-30, 12:35-38 (in this order).

In the relevant chapter of *The Feast of the World's Redemption*,⁶³ Koenig focuses primarily on the NT evidence for the eschatological meal⁶⁴ within the context of what he understands to be 'eucharistic meals' in the NT, interpreting them as one of the foremost early Christian (and Jesuanic) missionary vehicles.⁶⁵ For this analysis he refers to the work of LaVerdiere, who, however, does not go much further than Koenig, and confines himself in a similar way as Kieffer⁶⁶ to Jesus' earthly meals, the miraculous feeding and the Last Supper, all primarily in the context of Lk.⁶⁷ Therefore, in spite of the terminology used, what is viewed as eschatological meals in this study, remains without much attention.

Smith's 2003 monograph repeats the views on the eschatological meal, which he had published in articles earlier (cf. above). Therefore, his book needs no further discussion in this place.⁶⁸

Within the context of research on the historical Jesus, attention has been given to the subject of the eschatological meal as well. Apart from the aforementioned contribution by Schweitzer, especially Becker's work is of importance.⁶⁹ In his discussion of eschatological meals in Jesus' preaching and their context, he discerns between an apocalyptic expectation of an exuberant celebration at the end of time⁷⁰ and a sapiential tradition,⁷¹ viewing God as the provider of nutrition *per se*. In Jesus' preaching, these two lines of thought have merged in the process of which these sapiential elements were integrated into a general apocalyptic outlook.⁷² This subdivision is different from those presented earlier, as Becker classes the texts according to their sources (or, in the broader sense of the word: traditions), revealing less about their function than about their (possible) provenance.

Among other works on the historical Jesus, Meier refers in the second volume of his trilogy on the historical Jesus to eating and drinking in the

⁶³ Koenig:2000.

⁶⁴ Koenig:2000, 165-214.

⁶⁵ Including e.g. Mk. 2:18-20parr., the miraculous feedings, the eschatological outlook at the Last Supper, Mk. 10:35-40parr., Mt. 22:1-14, 25:1-13, Lk. 7:34par., 22:30.

⁶⁶ Cf. below, I.B.2.

⁶⁷ LaVerdiere:1996, esp. 79-95.

⁶⁸ Smith:2003, 166-171.

⁶⁹ Cf. Becker:1996, 194-211.

⁷⁰ Including the image of superabundance, Becker lists the following texts as belonging to this tradition: Isa. 11:6-9, 25:6, 62:8-9, 65:17-25, 1 En. 10:18-22, 25-26, 60:6-10.24, 4 Ez. 6:49-52, Test. Lev. 18:11.14, Sib. Or. (prologue) 84-86, Sib. Or. 3:704.717-718.767.782.785. Cf. Becker:1996, 194-195.

⁷¹ Including: Ps. 104:14-15, 132:15, 136, 145:8-9.15-16, 146:7, Ps. Sol. 5:8-19, Test. Jos. 1:5, cf. Becker:1996, 185-196.

⁷² Becker:1996, 196.

kingdom of God extensively, but without ordering the texts or developing a thesis beyond underlining the pervasiveness of the theme. This makes further discussion of his contribution superfluous at this place.⁷³ The same applies to the discussions by Wright⁷⁴ and Crossan,⁷⁵ whereas Theißen/Merz place, without discussion, the eschatological meals in his category ‘images of judgment.’⁷⁶

2. Contributions Focusing on Individual Works

A first work to be mentioned is the (unpublished) doctoral thesis of Nakamura,⁷⁷ focusing on the interpretation of Isa. 24:21-23, 25:6-10a. Of this text at least the latter part is a good (and even the only)⁷⁸ example of an eschatological meal in the OT. Nakamura does not only extensively discuss the occurrence of this kind of meal in the biblical canon, but broadens the horizon in the directions of coronation rituals⁷⁹ and the mythologeme of a deity’s victory and temple building.⁸⁰ She thus concludes that Isa. 25:6-8 has to be read in both contexts.⁸¹ Though the present study does not deal with the eschatological meal in the HB/OT or ANE in general, it is important to notice the location of one early example of an eschatological meal within the context of the establishment of the rule of a deity, in view of the intimate relationship between the eschatological meal and judgment.⁸²

In his doctoral thesis on the eschatological meal in Matthew, Steffen offers an extensive collection of texts, but without discerning between various kinds of eschatological meals in any of the ways the aforementioned authors do. He prefers short discussions of the individual instances of the meal⁸³ in his section on the ‘Jewish Pre-Understanding of the Messianic Banquet’⁸⁴ following the corpora of HB/OT,⁸⁵ early Jewish⁸⁶

⁷³ Cf. Meier:1994, 302-317.

⁷⁴ Wright:1996, 530-532.

⁷⁵ Crossan:1991, 341-344.

⁷⁶ Cf. Theißen/Merz:2001, 241-244.

⁷⁷ Nakamura:1992.

⁷⁸ So Nakamura:1992, 209.

⁷⁹ Nakamura:1992, 37-83.

⁸⁰ Nakamura:1992, 84-154.

⁸¹ Nakamura:1992, 269.

⁸² Cf. e.g. Q 13:29-28, Lk. 14:16-24, Mt. 22:1-14, 25:1-13, Apc. 19:7-9.17-19.

⁸³ Cf. Steffen:2001, 45-113, noting correctly that ‘there is lack of evaluation in the field of biblical theology’ in this respect (idem, *op. cit.*, 45-46).

⁸⁴ Steffen:2001, 45 (sic).

⁸⁵ Steffen:2001, 45-68, noting in Isa. the intimate connection with the themes of exile and return, Steffen sees references to eschatological abundance in: Isa. 1:19, 9:3 27:2-6.12-13, 29:17-24, 30:19-29, 32:1-8, 49:5-13, 51:3, 55:1-2, whereas he sees a banquet

and rabbinic literature.⁸⁷ He then places them in the categories of ‘universal’⁸⁸ and ‘restricted’⁸⁹ terrestrial meals, which can constitute the inception of the messianic era⁹⁰ or be a metaphor for its bliss.⁹¹ Finally, Steffen suggests that a particular (i.e. exclusive) earthly banquet is typical of Jewish tradition,⁹² with which Mt. remains in continuity except for the particular aspect of the meal. This subdivision, however, seems to say little about the function of eschatological meals, and even less about their provenance. Therefore this systematization is probably more useful for the task of relating these eschatological meals to (one of the brands of) dispensationalist theology, which Steffen outlines at the very end of his study, than for the task undertaken here.⁹³

Regarding the eschatological meal in Lk., the contributions of Bösen are of central importance.⁹⁴ He outlines the Lk. meal theology already in the title of one of his books: ‘Jesusmahl – Eucharistisches Mahl – Endzeitmahl.’⁹⁵ Bösen describes the main line of thought in the Lk. as far as meals are concerned as a reflection of the place in time and space of the Lk. community: between Jesus’ past earthly presence, enjoying his pneumatic and sacramental presence, while moving on towards his (postponed) coming. In none of his monographs, however, the broader field of eschatological meals in the NT, OT/HB or any of their contexts is discussed.

only in Isa. 25:6-8. In Ezek., the same relationship between lack of food during the exile (cf. Ezek. 4:13-17, 5:10.12.16-17, 6:11-12, 7:15.19, 12:16-20, 14:13.21) and its abundance after Israel’s restoration (cf. Ezek. 34:13-16.27.29, 36:8-15.29-30.34-35.37) is observed. In Zeph., the relationship between abundance and righteousness, or rather the lack of both, is noted (Zeph. 1:13, 2:6-7.13), whereas the relationship between exile and lack and restoration and prosperity is again encountered in Zech. (cf. Zech. 1:17, 3:8-10, 8:11-12.19, 9:15-17).

⁸⁶ Steffen:2001, 68-96, discussing: Sib. Or. 3:580-583.601-623.697.740-761 in terms of eschatological prosperity, the eschatological and nutritional role of Leviathan and Behemoth in 1 En. 60:7-9.24, 4 Ez. 6:47-52, 2 Bar. 29:4, and further the banquets and references to abundance in 3 En. 48A:10, Test. Is. 6:22, 8:6, Test. Jac. 7:21-28, 1QSa 2:11-22, 4Q171, 11Q13.

⁸⁷ Steffen:2001, 96-110, referring to ‘Avot 3:17.20, 4:16-17.21-22, b. Shab. 153a, Sem. 8:10, as well as the extensive rabbinic interest in the consumption of mythological animals (pp. 101-104).

⁸⁸ Steffen:2001, 111-112.

⁸⁹ Steffen:2001, 112.

⁹⁰ Steffen:2001, 112.

⁹¹ Steffen:2001, 113.

⁹² Cf. Steffen:2001, 110-113.116: ‘Given the further option that the messianic banquet is either terrestrial or heavenly, the evidence in Matthew favors the Jewish belief that it is terrestrial.’

⁹³ Steffen:2001, 299-301.

⁹⁴ Especially in his two monographs: Bösen:1976 and Bösen:1980.

⁹⁵ Trans.: ‘Jesus’ table fellowship – Eucharist – Eschatological Meal.’

Peres draws the attention to the Lk. eschatological banquet in the context of Greek epitaphs and thus opens up an important motif-historical window, however, he also stops just there. To his insightful comments on esp. Lk. 22:30⁹⁶ will be returned, however.

More recently, Kieffer published an article devoted to the eschatological meal in Lk.,⁹⁷ but he uses an entirely different definition of the eschatological meal than it will be used in this study.⁹⁸ Kieffer concentrates on Jesus' earthly meals and the way in which these are prescriptive for the (meal) praxis of the Lk. community, considering these meals as eschatological, as Jesus is throughout the whole of Lk. already the Risen Lord. The only things in common with the texts, considered in this study are his discussions of Lk. 9:10-17 (miraculous feeding as anticipation of the fullness of the kingdom) and the Lk. account of the Last Supper, as Kieffer leaves all depictions of the age to come as a meal out of consideration.

In his commentary on the Apc., Aune offers a concise typology of eschatological meals as an aid to his interpretation of Apc. 19:9⁹⁹ He outlines five kinds of eschatological meals: 1. the slaughter of Leviathan and Behemoth,¹⁰⁰ 2. a banquet proper,¹⁰¹ 3. the provision of food for the redeemed by the Messiah as a further development of (2),¹⁰² 4. access to the fruit of the tree of life (e.g. Apc. 2:7, 22:14),¹⁰³ and 5. access to eschatological manna (e.g. Apc. 2:17).¹⁰⁴ In this context, Aune notes both the relative sparsity as well as the relative independence of these traditions from one another,¹⁰⁵ but does not proceed to a more detailed discussion of any of these kinds of eschatological meals.

3. Concluding Observations and Further Questions

A first observation regarding the systematization and categorizations of the eschatological meal as used in the works discussed above is that most stop at precisely that point: providing an overview, without, however, discussing their broader context, the functions of these texts, or their genesis. More precisely, the works in the first category¹⁰⁶ often lack attention to the

⁹⁶ Cf. Peres:2003, 233-237.

⁹⁷ Kieffer:2004.

⁹⁸ On which, cf. I.C.3.

⁹⁹ Aune:1998, 1032-1034

¹⁰⁰ E.g. 2 Bar. 29:4, 4 Ez. 6:52, cf. Ps. 74:14, Ezek. 32:4, cf. Aune:1998, 1033.

¹⁰¹ E.g. Isa. 25:6-8, Mt. 8:11-12par., Lk. 14:15, Lk. 22:30, Mk. 14:25parr., 2 Ez. 2:38, Test. Is. 6:22, cf. Aune:1998, 1033.

¹⁰² E.g. 1 En. 62:14, 3 En. 48A:10, Lk. 22:28-30, cf. Aune:1998, 1033-1034.

¹⁰³ Aune:1998, 1034.

¹⁰⁴ Aune:1998, 1034.

¹⁰⁵ Aune:1998, 1032-1033.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. above, I.B.1.

eschatological banquet's literary function and context, whereas the works listed in the second category often lack attention to its provenance and genesis.¹⁰⁷ These questions about context, genesis and function, will therefore have to be addressed in the present study, thereby moving beyond the more general contributions mentioned above, and integrating the more particular discussions of individual NT texts or authors.

Second, even though it can be stated that most authors writing on the subject practically agree on the corpus of texts¹⁰⁸, which needs to be considered, a difference in emphasis and categorization can be observed. Priest, on the one hand, stresses the importance of taking into account in a more thoroughgoing way the ANE history of the motif, as well as its history of reception in rabbinic literature (having discussed most relevant pseudepigraphic texts himself already), and offers a six fold typology. With a more sociological orientation, Smith suggests, on the other hand, two main categories (numinous foods and meals). The latter route seems also to be the route pursued by Aune and partially by Billerbeck, who discern between table fellowship and nutritional abundance. Wainwright and Becker do not clarify their criteria for classing the texts extensively, but in their cases, the provenance of the various traditions seems to be decisive. For a classification interested in the literary functions of eschatological meals within the NT, however, this categorization cannot answer all questions. Of the other authors offering a categorization, Kollmann focuses on the presence or absence of a messianic figure, but, as will become clear in the course of this study, this hardly constitutes a decisive criterion, neither does Steffen's emphasis on the oppositions of earthly vs. heavenly and universal vs. particular banquets, as this does not reflect the interests of the NT authors using the topic of the eschatological meal. This means that the question for a useful typology of eschatological meals is still open, and will have to be addressed.¹⁰⁹

Third, another topic on which a number of proposals have been made is that of the provenance of traditions and motifs used to create the various NT images of the eschatological meals and of scenes of utopian nutritional abundance. The clearest of these is Priest's suggestion that all eschatological meals finally derive from the motif field belonging to a deity's victory. Only the outlines of the various possible trajectories have been sketched, however, and the precise interrelations, especially of OT/HB imagery and its NT counterparts, as well as of the latter with (contemporary) social and literary conventions, remain unclear. This is mainly

¹⁰⁷ Cf. above, I.B.2. Nakamura:1992 and Steffen:2001 constitute two (partial) exceptions.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. however Kieffer:2004, for an entire different corpus of texts.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. below, D.2.

due to the preparatory character of the contributions, or their function as a survey within the context of a larger work. The present study will therefore have to deal with this question.

In view of the above, it will be clear that the present study does indeed attempt to fill a hiatus in the current state of New Testament studies. This should be achieved in the following directions in particular, and can be formulated in the form of subquestions, refining the broader question formulated earlier.¹¹⁰ These are:

- a. what is a useful way of systematizing the various occurrences of eschatological meals in the NT into a typology, thus providing a tool, making an overview of the motif possible?
- b. what are the interrelationships of the various texts, especially with respect to the histories of tradition, motif histories and their mutual interdependence?
- c. what are the literary functions and the ‘*Sitze im Leben*’ of these texts in the NT.
- d. how can the place of these traditions in the history of religions be described.¹¹¹

C. Methods and Definitions

1. Tradition and Motif History

As the interest of the present thesis lies also in the development of the individual texts containing references to eschatological meals within their respective literary contexts, a tradition-historically oriented approach¹¹² is

¹¹⁰ Cf. above, I.A.

¹¹¹ In this way, also some of the desiderata of Priest:1992, formulated at the end of his contribution (237-238), can be answered: attention to allusions to the meal, the combination of judgment and joy, the relationship with the Eucharist, fragments of the motif in Jewish and Christian literature between 200 BCE and CE, the pre- and non-Israelite background of the motif and the relationship of the motif, and to the needs of early Christian and Jewish writers that used it. Priest’s wish to move (far) beyond 200 CE cannot be fulfilled, however.

¹¹² Defined with Schnelle:2000, 125: ‘Die Traditionsgeschichte fragt nach dem Werdegang und der Gestalt eines Textes sowohl in seiner mündlichen Phase als auch in schriftlichen Vorformen auf vorredaktioneller Ebene. Sie hat die Aufgabe, die Vorgeschichte des Texts zu erhellen, indem sie dessen Entstehungsgeschichte rekonstruiert. Ziel der Traditionsgeschichte ist es, ein Modell der Genese des vorliegenden Textes zu erarbeiten.’ This agrees with the second kind of tradition history which focuses on the history of the tradition of one particular text, as defined by Utzschneider/Nitsche:2001,

the most appropriate. Further insight into individual concepts (e.g. ‘manna’) used by the NT authors can be gained by broadening the perspective through the use of motif history,¹¹³ thus facilitating a comparison with pretexts¹¹⁴ and arriving at a text’s location in the broader use of the motif of, for example, eschatological nutritional abundance. That tradition and motif history will have to be assisted by other tools, especially source and redaction criticism, is obvious. Just as obvious is the fact that the final interpretation of a text can only take place within the text’s own literary context, with appropriate attention to its *Sitz im Leben*, conceived of as the communicative setting of a text.¹¹⁵ In addition, it should be noted that the chosen combination of a more thematically oriented overview of the various canonical and non-canonical texts concerning eschatological meals (cf. below, par. I.D.2.), with the discussion of the various NT texts in their literary contexts, followed by an again thematically structured concluding chapter, makes an integration of diachronic and synchronic observations possible. In this way, justice can be done to most aspects of the texts under consideration.

2. *Socio-Cultural Approaches*

Less of a commonplace is the use of socio-cultural approaches, even if these have gained their place in biblical studies during the past thirty

200.204-208, to be distinguished from tradition history in a broader sense which comes closer to the development and transmission of a motif (cf. idem/idem, *op. cit.*, 200-204).

¹¹³ A useful definition is found in Schnelle:2000, 129: ‘Die Begriffs- und Motivgeschichte fragt nach Herkunft, Geschichte, Bedeutung und Anwendung der im Text vorkommenden Begriffe und Motive. Dabei sollen durch den Vergleich mit literarisch nicht abhängigen Texten theologie- und geistesgeschichtliche Zusammenhänge aufgezeigt werden. Bei einem Motiv handelt es sich um ein Wort, ein Bild, eine Metapher oder ein Thema mit feststehender Bedeutung, auf die der Autor zurückgreifen kann, um einen bestimmten Sachverhalt auszudrücken. Die Begriffsanalyse hat das Ziel, sowohl den geprägten Bedeutungsgehalt eines Begriffs als auch seine konkrete Verwendung im Kontext herauszuarbeiten. Die diachrone und die synchrone Betrachtungsweise ergänzen sich somit bei der Begriffsanalyse.’ Cf. also Schnelle’s remarks on terminological confusion in: idem, *op. cit.*, 129-130. This definition comes close to that of Baldick:1990, 142, who defines ‘motif’ as follows: ‘a situation, incident, idea, image, or character-type what is found in many different literary works, folktales or myths: or any element of a work that is elaborated into a more general theme.’

¹¹⁴ Cf. for this terminology: Luz:2004, 124-125.

¹¹⁵ Cf. the highly illuminating graphic in Egger:1987, 36, helpfully reinterpreting the enterprise of NT exegesis in terms of reconstructing the communicative process the text was part of (cf. idem, *op. cit.*, 34-40), similarly: Söding:1998, 25-30, for his graphic, cf. 27.