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THE INVITATION TO THE ESCHATOLOGICAL BANQUET AND THE CALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST – A NOTE ON MT. 22:14*

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SUMMARY
This paper argues that more attention for the obvious semantic connections between Mt. 22:1-13 and 22:14 can further the interpretation of the parable of the Wedding Banquet by relating it to both the narrative of the Gospel of Matthew at large as well as to what may be imagined as the experiences of the Matthean community.

SUMMARY
L'article montre que plus d'attention aux liens sémantiques évidents entre Mt 22, 1-12 et 22, 14 peut enrichir l'interprétation de la parabole du Banquet, en la reliant à la narration de Matthieu en général, comme à l'expérience, reconstituée, de la communauté matthéméne.

1. INTRODUCTION
This note proposes a new way of understanding the relationship between the remark found in Mt. 22:14 and the preceding parable of the (invitations to the) royal wedding banquet (Mt. 22:1-13) by means of a consideration of intertextual and contextual aspects of the "calling" that is mentioned in Mt. 22:14. It does so in an attempt to further the current state of exegetical research, in which it is generally recognized that Mt. 22:14 constitutes a comment on the preceding narrative, but the precise connection, at least in terms of imagery and relationship to the

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Matthean community's life, often remains open. This note proposes to relate Mt. 22:14 to Mt. 22:1-13 in a more detailed manner on the basis of two interconnected observations that will be introduced now.1

First, the interplay between the verb σκέλος, as it is found in Mt. 22:1-13, and the related adjective κλητός (Mt. 22:14) is striking and needs to be considered in an interpretation of the interrelationship between these two texts. The semantic connection between this verb and this adjective often disappears in translations, since both words can carry both the meaning to call, or be called, and to invite, or be invited. While the former meaning can – and is – quickly seen to be of theological significance, the latter term is often restricted to its meaning within the setting of the wedding feast and hence as a metaphor (only). This leads to a situation in which the invitation to the wedding banquet is seen as an image for the calling mentioned in Mt. 22:14. This note recognizes this intertextual connection between Mt. 22:1-13 and 22:14 and proposes to see much more equivalence between the notions of "calling" and "inviting" than has been customary in Matthean scholarship. This interpretative proposal is possible on linguistic grounds, but also when taking into account the importance and role of meals in Matthean Christianity (and its predecessors), which forms the core of the second observation.

Second, in connection with the first point, elements of what may be assumed to have been part of the structure of the life of the Matthean community, specifically the notion of following the call of Jesus and the related participation in a communal meal, are considered in order to provide a plausible setting, both theologically and socially, for the conceptual connection of "calling" and "inviting." On the basis of these two observations, a textually and contextually coherent interpretation of the relationship between Mt. 22:1-13 and 22:14 will be provided, taking into account both literary aspects of Mt. and aspects of the life of the Matthean community.

* I am grateful to Mr. Philip Whitteker, Harlem, proofreading this paper, as well as to Dr. Soham Al-Saad, Bern, for a critical reading of an earlier version of it. The author is a research associate in the Department of New Testament Studies at the University of Pretoria (research project "Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity").

1 Given the character of this contribution, references to secondary literature will remain relatively limited, see in general however: Peter-Ben Smit, Food and Fellowship in the Kingdom WUNT 2.234 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 229-236, where a more general discussion of Mt. 22:1-14 is presented, in more extensive interaction with secondary literature. For a recent overview on research on early Christian meals, see Soham Al-Stad, Essen als Christenlebensweise. Ritualetheoretische Eingänge paulinischer Texte TANZ 55 (Tübingen: Francke, 2011), 22-32.
In order to argue this, first some aspects of the relationship between Mt. 22:1-13 and Mt 22:14 will be considered. Next, the use of κόλασος and κλαίτος in Matthew is surveyed, followed by a consideration of the connection between the calling of the disciples and meal fellowship, both in the narrative of Matthew and in reconstructions of the life of earliest Christianity, on the basis of which the concluding argument is presented.


Interpretations of Mt. 22:14 generally acknowledge that this verse comments on the preceding parable in a way that moves beyond the immediate confines of the parable; it is also generally accepted that Mt. 22:1-11 has received (Matthean) additions in the form of what is now Mt. 22:11-13 and 22:14.2 In other words: it seems plausible that in Mt. 22:14 Jesus, as the narrator of the parable, is speaking again, not the


king, who has been speaking throughout the parable, or it is an actuarial comment of the author of the Gospel.3 It is also generally acknowledged that Mt. 22:14, which has a gnomonic ring to it, is likely related to both the HbL/xx tradition of the calling of God's people as well as to its (re)appropriation in early Jewish apocalyptic discourse, especially in discussions about the number of those who will be saved (as it is also reflected in Mt. 7:14; 19:25, 20:16, and Lk 13:23).4 Furthermore, the semantic relationship between "being called" (Mt. 22:14) and "being invited" (throughout Mt. 22:1-13) seems to produce a double entendre involving the two shades of meaning of κόλασος and κλαίτος, i.e. "being invited" and "being summoned." However, most interpretations of this text also have in common that they tend to regard the preceding parable about the invitations to a royal wedding feast and the resulting meal context of this remark as an illustration of events in "salvation history" (such as the calling of the nations) or a theological consideration of the Matthean community as a corpus permixtum and the divine judgment on the church as well (generally found to be expressed in Mt. 22:14 and prepared by Mt. 22:10-13) mainly.5 At this point, the current study diverges, as it takes the view that the meal setting is likely much more than just an illustration of things that are not meals (such as the development of "salvation history"). Rather, given the semantics of κόλασος and κλαίτος, it is argued that being called and participating in a meal are very closely related to one another in Mt. 22:1-14, which resonates with the rest of this gospel, while this interpretation can also be grounded plausibly in the experiences of the Matthean community.

3 See e.g. Davies/Allison, Matthew, 206, diff. e.g. Robert H. Gundry, Matthew (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 440.


5 See e.g. 4 Es. 7:47-8:1; 8:55, 2 Bar. 44:15; see however also Bar. 4:14. In general, see e.g. Davies/Allison, Matthew, 206. – This also applies to other parts of the imagery of Mt. 22:1-14, see e.g. David C. Snaith, 'Matthew 22:13a and 1 Enoch 10:4c: A Case of Literary Dependence?', JNSY 47 (1992), 3-19.

calling of sinners rather than the righteous, are directly related to Jesus’
calling of people (see also Mt 22:14), while the references in ch. 22 are
generally related to invitations to a meal; in Mt 20:8 and 25:14 the
context of the summoning is the assigning of particular tasks or duties.

As noted, in Mt 22:14 the adjective κλητός, of the same root as the verb καλέω occurs. It is a Mt. hapax legomenon and is generally
translated as “to be called.” The use of the adjective κλητός rather than
the verb καλέω in Mt 22:14 may well have to do with the fact that
the use of the adjective forms an elegant alliteration with another adjective
in the verse, namely εἰκόνας, while it may also be noted that the
latter word also creates an (acoustic) connection with καλλιεργήσωs in
Mt 22:3, καλλιεργήσωs in Mt 22:4 and καλλιεργήσωs in Mt 22:8,
which, of course, is also true, at a semantic and acoustic level for κλητός.

With this, an overview has been given of the use of καλέω/καλέωs in
Matthew, especially as it is related to invitations and the summoning
or calling of people. Next, consideration will be given to acts of sum-
moning or calling people in relation to meals as they occur in Matthew
at large, i.e. beyond the use of καλέω/καλέωs and beyond Mt 22:1-14,
in order to describe this.

4. Invitations, Meals, and the People of God in Matthew

As many scholars agree, Jesus’ calling of people, specifically of the
“disciples” and the “Twelve,” but also at large, led to the creation of a new
and symbolically highly charged community that can be understood
as the proleptic core of the renewed (eschatological) people of God,10
a tradition continued by the Gospel of Matthew.11 This new community

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7 See e.g. Frederick William Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testa-
ment and other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago, 7200),
502-503, lists four central meanings: “to identify by name or attribute,” “to request
the presence of someone at a social gathering,” “to use authority to have a person or group
appear,” and “to choose for receipt of a special benefit or experience”; Walter Bauer/
Kurt Aland/Barbara Aland, Greek-Deutsches Worterbuch zu den Schriften des
Neuen Testaments (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 899-910, lists two main meanings
“rufen” and “sehen” ( Braun); Henry George Liddell/Robert Scott/Henry Stuart Jones,
A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 864, lists two core mean-
ings: “call, summon” and “call by name.” — The verb καλέω is the main verb to
indicate “to invite” or “to call,” which numerus a bit the results of this paper, given that
it opens up the possibility of unintentional or accidental intertextuality. The case made
here, therefore, must rest on more than the occurrence of the verb (and related words)
as such, but needs to take into account the literary context and coherence as well (kind
suggestion of Dr. Carolin Föth, University of Bern, Switzerland).

8 In Lk., which often is the preferred Gospel to look for references to meals and
associated concepts, the verb καλέω is used with the same meanings, namely “to name
or to be called” (13:31–32; 35–36:59–62:76, 2.4:21:23, 6:15:46, 7:11; 8:2, 9:10, 10:59,
15:19:21, 19:39, 21:37, 22:3:25:33, see also 20:44) and “to summon/to invite” (5:32,
7:39, 14:7–10:12–15:16–17:12, 19:13). As clear, the first use of the verb occurs
throughout the Gospel, while the second use occurs mainly in ch. 14, with two earlier
instances in 5:32 and 7:39 and one later instance in 19:13. In the second category of
texts, various kinds of summoning occur, specifically the summoning of people by Jesus
(5:32, sinners, not the righteous), the inviting of people to a meal (7:39, 14:7–10:12–
15:16–17:24), and the summoning of people for a specific task (19:13). Of these texts,
especially those in Lk. 5 and 14 seem to cohere closely, while 7:39 uses καλέω also
with reference to inviting someone to a meal (Jesus in this case), 19:13 has a more
generic meaning, but it seems to be possible to connect the “calling” there to, for exam-
ple, that of 5:32. However, a stronger argument may be made for Mt., given that in that
Gospel, a further reference occurs to the calling of disciples using the verb καλέω (Mt
4:21) that has no direct parallel in Lk.; the Lk. counterpart of the argument made
in this note would focus on Lk. 14:24, which, also, is not a direct parallel to Mt. 22:14.
was both constituted and characterized by a specific meal praxis.\textsuperscript{12} There is also substantial agreement that the New Testament Gospels all reflect this development and dynamic and even further develop the use of meal scenes in order to express the ethos and identity of their tradition and community.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, they give literary expression to the experience that being a “Christian” was an embodied activity (or “worldview”) in the sense that it implied being part of a specific meal fellowship as the most concentrated form and expression of life in communion or fellowship with both Christ and fellow believers.\textsuperscript{14} Even only for that reason, one may argue that there is a very close relationship indeed between Jesus’ call to follow him and the ensuing meal fellowship.


\textsuperscript{12} See from the plethora of literature e.g. Jason Bolker, Jesus’ Tischgemeinschaften WUNT 156 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); and Craig L. Blomberg, Contagious Holiness: Jesus’ Meals with Sinners (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), as well the following brief statement of his argument: “Jesus, Sinners, and Table Fellowship,” Bulletin for Biblical Research 19 (2009), 33-62, as well as John Dominic Crossan, The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jew (Peabody: Harper San Francisco, 1991), 344; N. T. Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 149; Scott McKnight, A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 41-49; John P. Meier, A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus 3 (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 250; Geza Vermes, The Authentic Gospel of Jesus (London: Penguin, 2003), 401; James D. G. Dunn, Jesus Remembered (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 599-605; and David Cattermole, Jesus People: The Historical Jesus and the Beginnings of Community (London: Darton, Longman & Todd / Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 77-84. With regard to the dispute as to how historical Jesus’ “symposiums” were, it is of significance to beware of the analytical nature of the concept “symposium” that can be used to cover a number of meals that were somewhat similarly structured, or at least characterized by the same sort of social dynamics, though (at least from the point of view of those discussing them) wildly different in character. Pella’s comparison of Plato’s Symposium with the meal fellowship of the Theophanerai in De vita contemplativa is an elegant illustration of this. Whether Jesus himself held “formal” symposiums with the unethical or not seems to be immaterial for the questions pursued here, of importance is that association with Jesus could and did often take the shape of a meal, given that shared meals were a central way of expression in a bond or fellowship.

\textsuperscript{13} Core publications are in this respect still Dennis E. Smith, From Symposium to Eucharist (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress, 2003); Mathias Künighart, Gemeinschaft und Mahlgemessenheit TANZ 13 (Tübingen: Francke, 1996); and also: Andrew McGowan, Ascetic Eucharists: Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999). For meals in Matthew, see also: Matthew Powell, The Meal in Matthew (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 201-204, in that publication I also argue my position in favor of the historicity of the historical Jesus’ controversial meals.

\textsuperscript{14} For a consideration of embodiment also Al-Sa’di, In Nisai, 148-188, 72-88.

In Mt., there are two texts that seem to be of primary importance when it comes to this issue. These are Mt. 9:9-10, the calling of Matthew, and Mt. 11:19, the logion about the Son of Man being a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of sinners and tax collectors. In the first case, Jesus’ calling of a tax collector (Mt. 9:9), though without using the verb εὐκαρπία, issues into a controversial meal in, presumably, the tax collector’s house (9:10). Jesus’ association with tax collectors and sinners gives rise to protest from Pharisees. Part of Jesus’ reply, defending this meal praxis, consists precisely of one of the verses in Matthew that uses the verb εὐκαρπία in order to describe Jesus’ “calling” of people, namely the well-known statement that he has come to call sinners, not the righteous (Mt. 9:13). These connections, between the factual calling of Matthew to follow Jesus, the ensuing meal fellowship, and Jesus’ explicit defense of this praxis with reference to his calling of sinners are of importance for the argument presented here. The second text, Mt. 11:19, is similar to Mt. 9:9-10:13 in a number of ways. While it does not refer to the calling of anyone explicitly, the “ethos” of the Son of Man is described in terms of a particular meal praxis, namely a non-ascetic one that also involves the Son of Man’s, i.e. Jesus’, association with sinners and tax collectors. The latter may, from the point of view of Mt. 9:9-10:13 well be seen in the light of Jesus’ calling of people, as it was considered above.

Therefore, it may be argued that for Matthew, the association with Jesus, following his call or invitation, also involves participation in the same meal. While this may be regarded as fairly uncontroversial, it is still of importance, given the connection of the call to follow Jesus and the invitation to a meal, with the former apparently implying the latter. Such a connection also connects well with the importance of shared meals as a core expression of social bonding in the Greco-Roman world, both in actual fact and in literary depictions of relationships between people and groups.\textsuperscript{15} One may take this even one step further and take into account the history and social setting of the “Matthean community.” As it is plausibly argued by many, one of the issues that the
Roman meal etiquette, namely that an invitation should be honored properly, for example by showing up after committing to it (see the statement in Mt. 22:8), but also by coming adequately prepared and dressed. Dishonoring a host by dressing sloppily, or, as seems to be implied by this part of the parable, by pursuing an unrighteous walk of life, would also merit rejection by the host. Given the interest Matthew has in community discipline — for which there was apparently reason —, a parallel between the actual experience of Matthew’s community and the eschatologically oriented parable in Mt. 22:1-14, here esp. 10-13, may be drawn. That is to say: just as the acceptance of the call of God had a concrete historical shape in the invitation to the communal meal of the Matthean community, the acceptance of this call implied the pursuit of righteousness (as understood by this community and as reflected in Mk.), which had the concrete shape of the acceptance of the ethos of this community. To the extent that a meal functioned as a microcosm of the macrocosm of life and the world at large, meal etiquette was a microcosmic representation and enactment of the ethos of the group or community holding this meal. Given this background, the

See e.g. Smith, Food, 234. See also Al-Studd, Essen, 35-43, on the proper participation in a meal, from the selection of participants, the seating order, to proper behavior during the meal. 32 See for this argument e.g. Smith, Food, 235-237. 33 It seems that this worked both ways: for a properly dressed guest, a proper place would be reserved, while a guest dressed less properly, or embodying less “honor” this way, a lesser seat (or in the case of Mt. 22:14, no seat at all) would be reserved. See for considerations of this with regard to Jas. 2: Peter-Beu Smitt, “A Symposiastic Background to James?”, VT 58 (2011), 105-122, esp. 114-117, with reference to Plutarch, Mor. 615C; see also Baudhāṇa, Pārāra, 485-486, whose argument is based more on rabbinic sources. Baudhāṇa’s point is worth quoting at length, as it also does justice to the narrative coherence of the parable as it stands now: “At first, it appears as though, in his anxiety to fill the banquet hall, the king abandons any notion of worthiness as soon as he has braced it. The invitation is extended to all and sundry, “good and bad” (v. 10). But the final episode provides an essential clarification. The man who accepts the invitation but, by wearing his everyday, soiled clothes, shows only contempt for the purpose of the occasion, is no more worthy than those who rejected the invitation. They spurned the invitation to the feast; he disdains the feast while actually attending it. In effect, he has not really accepted the invitation, since the invitation is not just to be physically present at the feast but to participate in the king’s rejoice over the marriage of his son. The point is not that the man without the wedding garment turns out to be one of the “bad” who were invited along with the “good.” Both good and bad are genuinely invited; neither being good nor being bad is a qualification for being a guest. All that is required is that willingness to honor the occasion, to rejoice with the king, to be a real guest at the wedding, which wearing a wedding garment expresses” (Ibn ‘aṣār, al-Ma’āṣir, 6, 1, 487-488). 34 For this argument, see: Andrew McGowan, Archeological Excavations, Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 4-5 (following
5. THE INTERPRETATION OF Mt. 22:14

On the basis of the above considerations, the interpretation of Mt. 22:1-14, specifically with regard to the interrelation of Mt. 22:1-13 and Mt. 22:14, can be furthered in a number of ways.

First, based on the above observations, the statement made in Mt. 22:14, while retaining its connections with the HB/LXX and early Jewish apocalyptic traditions, as well as its character as a reflection on Mt. 22:1-13, can also be read in closer conjunction with what may be assumed with regard to the life of the "Matthean community." In other words, the rejection, not just of God's (or Jesus') call in general, but more specifically also the invitation to meal fellowship with (and along the lines of the ethos of) God's (or Jesus') (new) community might well be part of the experiential background of the statement.34

Second, in the light of these observations, the play on words that occurs in Mt. 22:14, i.e. the double entendre emerging from two of the connotations of καλεῖν, "to call/surname" and "to invite," seems to be more than just a theological comment on something that was illustrated by the preceding parable and based on a semantic connection. It now also seems to be an equally theological comment on the conceptual connection between (the refusal of) meal invitations and (of) following Jesus' call as it may have been part of the experience of the Matthean community; the concrete call implied invitation to a meal fellowship the (faithful) participation in which was the earthly form of answering that call.35


32 See also e.g. Bandel, "Parable," 488.
34 Not only the proximity in language of Mt. 22:8, 4 to Ephs 4:1.
35 This could also make Mt. 22:1-14 very close to Q Ἐκκλησίας 2.3-9. A similar argument has been put forward by Smith, Symposium, 242, for the Gospel of Mark, but he does not elaborate on this for Matthew (ibid., o.c., 272-273).

36 See e.g. Smit, Food, 236-237.
37 In this way the boundaries marked by (non)participation in the earthly meal of the Matthean community, as Smith, Symposium, 273, refers to them, also mark eschatologically relevant boundaries. - See also Hahn, "Gleichnis," 69-70: "Wir wissen welch eine große Rolle die Mahlgemeinschaften in Jesu Wirken gespielt haben. Jeder durfte kommen und darauf teilnehmen; und gerade die Ausgestoßenen waren immer wieder seine Gäste. Davon wird kaum zufällig im Zusammenhang eines Mahles gesehen, daß die Gesundung des Arztes nicht bedürfte, wohl aber die Kranken (Mt 2, 17a pass.). Die Fremden nahmen Anstoß an diesen Mahlgemeinschaften und hörten Jesus entgegen, er sei ein "Freiser und Stifter, ein Freund der Zollner und Sünder" (Lk 7, 34/ Mt 11, 19). Das alles gewinnt sein Tragweite und Schärfe dadurch, daß er in diese Mahlgemeinschaften als Antizipation des himmlischen Mahles verstanden hat. Hier völzt sich bereits die Aufforderung zum Kommen und die Teilnahme an dem von Gott gewährten endzeitlichen Heil. Jesus eigenes Wirken erhält somit durch dieses Gleichnis eine Deutung. Die späteren Erzählungen von der Speisung der Menge haben mit Hilfe des Wunders den Vorgang der irdischen Mahlgemeinschaft, Jesus transparent gemacht. Dasselbe geschieht nun in Jesu Verkündigung mit der Gleichniserzählung: seine Gemeinschaftsmahlte stehen im Lichte der anbrechenden Gottesherrschaft. Aber das Gleichnis will nicht zur einem verborgenen Sachverhalt aufdecken, es ist selbst Anrede und Aufforderung zum Kommen. Keiner ist ausgeschlossen, doch wer in dieser Stunde mit Rücksicht auf bestimmte Verpflichtungen Jesu Tischgemeinschaft ausschlägt, begibt sich des Heils."
6. CONCLUSION

What is the significance of these considerations and arguments for the interpretation of Mt. 22:1-14, specifically for that of Mt. 22:14 and its relation to the preceding parable? It seems to be the following: by reading Mt. 22:1-14 in this way, the "call" of God to his people, as it comes to the fore in the shape of invitations in Mt. 22:1-13 and as a "calling" in Mt. 22:14, has received a more concrete place in the world of the "Matthean community", namely in the concrete invitation to the meal of the community, which calls for an encompassing kind of acceptance, as the parable as a whole and especially the anecdote of the man without a proper vesture shows. Thus, the semantic connections between "inviting" and "calling" as they occur in Mt. 22:1-14 on the one hand and in Mt. 4:21 and 9:13 (also with 22:14) on the other hand, resulting in a play on words on Mt. 22:14 that at the same time constitutes a catchword connection between different parts of this pericope, can be plausible related to what may be assumed as the experience of the Matthean community with regard to meal fellowship. At the level of the gospel narrative, the call to follow Jesus is bound up with participating in his meal fellowship, and very similar dynamics may also be assumed at the level of the Matthean community, while the rejection or the dishonoring of the invitation to join this community took precisely also the shape of rejecting or dishonoring its meal fellowship, which, in Mt. 22:1-14 received an eschatological "extrapolation" (or, vice versa, the Matthean meal praxis and the appertaining invitations and their [non-]acceptance were a proleptic enactment of the grand dynamic of invitations and their [non-]acceptance related to the eschatological banquet).