

FATHERS AND HOUSEHOLDERS IN THE JESUS MOVEMENT: THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

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In a previous article published in *Biblical Interpretation* (Destro and Pesce 1995), we underlined the *absence* of disciples' fathers in Jesus' movement. We thought this absence could explain the greater freedom of action of the sons, mothers and sisters within the movement. It was therefore quite plausible for us to think that the absence of fathers was not accidental.

To understand this absence of the disciples' fathers from Jesus' movement, we emphasized that in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus asks his disciples to give up their families as well as their occupations and goods. We also noted that the requirement of leaving the parents equally regards the mothers. However, some of them (for example Jesus' mother, the mother of Zebedee's sons and the mother of Alphaeus' son, cf. Mark 15:40) are in some way present. Since 1995 we have developed a more coherent point of view that has enabled us to improve our evaluation of the function of the fathers in Jesus' movement. In this study we will limit our investigation to the description of the Jesus movement in Luke's Gospel.

Our present analysis starts from the idea that in the first century Galilee, as described in the Gospels, we do not find the "family" but the household (οἶκος),¹ a group that lives together and makes

¹ By family we mean a culturally constructed and socially recognised descent group. We cannot discuss the historical variety of familial types. We just want to note that the elementary or nuclear family consists of two successive generations and corresponds to the reproductive nucleus of any kinship system. The household often includes more than two generations. Its reproduction does not exclusively depend on the elementary familial links; it is based on different bonds (voluntary, legal, affectional, etc.), (cf. Fortes 1971: 8). "Neither in Greek nor in Latin is there a term for our word 'family' in the meaning of 'husband and wife with one or more children' (i.e. 'the nuclear family'). In Greek Literature we find extensive discussions of *oikonomia*, that is, the management of household (Finley 1973: 17-21)" (Moxnes 1997: 20). The latin word *familia* has a different meaning compared to the contemporary word family. In Columella (I,V,7) *res*

a "living together" (Moxnes 1997: 23).² The focus on households implies attention not only to primary kinship ties but also to communal existence and work, property and power that bind kin and non-kin people. As a result, it should at once be noted that the figure we meet within the texts is above all that of the *householder* (who may be a father, in the sense of parent, namely of he who has generated, but may also not be a *father*).

Secondly, it should be underlined that in the Hellenistic world, the life and function of the household are to be seen as the counterpart of the politics centered on the πόλις. From a general point of view, a connection between οἶκος and πόλις exists at the level of patronage system.³ What A. Wallace-Hadrill wrote in 1990 seems to us significant: "Patronage was central to the Roman cultural experience, in a way that was foreign to the Greek cultural experience. It represented a vital part of conscious Roman ideology, of their own image of how their world both was and ought to be" (1990: 65). The problem is to verify in the various areas and historical periods how this ideal materialized in practice, to what extent and with what limitations: if this relation functioned for the benefit of both sides or not, if it was just a power base for the upper classes, and if this relation remained constant over the cen-

familiaris means the *villa* as a property. Gardner and Wiedemann 1991: 3-4 give four different meanings for *familia*: property, "a certain body of persons, defined either by a strict legal bond ... or in a general sense of people joined by a looser relationship of kinship"; slaves; "several persons who all descend by blood from a single remembered source." *Familia* therefore has the meaning of "household" and not of "family."

² It is here impossible to quote the vast American and European bibliography on families and households: see Goody 1983, 1990; Gardner and Wiedemann 1991; Elliott 1991; Dixon 1992; Cohen 1993; Saller 1994; Moxnes 1997; Osiek and Balch 1997; Guijarro 1997, 1998; Pomeroy 1997; Destro 1998; van Henten and Brenner (eds.), 2000; Nathan 2000.

³ For a definition of patronage we start from Saller's 1990 discussion. In 1990 Saller took up his definition of 1982 of the patron-client relationship to defend it from the criticisms it had received. In that definition he had indicated three aspects as characteristic of patronage: "First, it involves the reciprocal exchange of goods and services. Secondly, to distinguish it from a commercial transaction in the marketplace, the relationship must be a personal one of some duration. Thirdly, it must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange—a quality which sets patronage off from friendship between equals" (Saller 1990: 49). In his reply Saller points out that "In the imperial age, the *patronus-clients* relationship had no 'technical sense' and no formal standing in law. Nothing precluded a Roman from having more than one *patronus*. Linguistic usage reveals that the words *patronus* and *clients* were applied to a wide range of bonds between men of unequal status, including junior and senior aristocrats" (1990: 60).

turies. We are aware that the patronage system was widespread in the Roman environment, and we are aware with Wallace-Hadrill that patronage (as political system) “served one fundamental function, to provide a connection between the center of power and the peripheries which the center sought to control. From the point of view of the society, patronage represented a flexible method of integration and simultaneously of social control From the point of view of the individual patron, the ability to persuade others of his power to secure access to benefits was the basis of social credibility” (1990: 85).

As Rohrbaugh (1991: 126) has shown, Luke tends to call πόλις settlements that were certainly not cities (Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin Nain, Nazareth). This means that Luke’s redaction tends to place Jesus actions and words within the οἶκος-πόλις relation (cf. also Stegemann and Stegemann 1998: 447). In actual fact, as Moxnes (2001) noted, Jesus always avoided the cities of the Land of Israel and probably he did not reason in terms of the opposition οἶκος-πόλις, but rather placed the οἶκος in relation to a different social, political and religious reality. This probably means, as we will see, a mistrust of Jesus in the patron-client relation.

Therefore it is the function of fathers and householders in the Jesus movement as described by Luke, which is the main theme of this investigation.

Premise: The Relation Between Discipleship and Household

Discipleship is a social form consisting of a group of disciples, built around a master. The disciples gather in order not only to learn doctrines and a way of life, but also to reach the satisfaction of specific needs that become realistic thanks to the master’s strategic ability. Discipleship is therefore a social form created through adherence of individuals to a group. In this sense it may fall into the larger concept of “voluntary association” (cf. Kloppenborg and Wilson 1996).⁴ The household, on the contrary, is not a voluntary association and has a different social logic. The aims of the two social forms are different. In certain cases they may also conflict.⁵

⁴ B. Malina 2001: 214-17 argues against the concept of “voluntary” as used in the U.S. and Northern Europe cultures.

⁵ Van Henten has stressed that “by looking for the process of establishing

The relation between household and voluntary association is hence necessarily a dialectical relation that may be one of opposition or of collaboration. It implies discontinuities because it assigns external and internal social roles to those that belong at the same time to both social forms.

We shall now rapidly list a series of well known but necessary premises basic to our research.

1) Just from the fact that an active function of the householders/fathers is not mentioned, their “absence” in the household cannot be automatically deduced. Their presence could be *implicit*, as could be their function. In a recent article, Kottsieper (2000) has shown that in Ancient Israel the structure of the family led to a certain lack of function of the householders/fathers concerning some issues. For example, the brothers—and not the fathers—had an important role in relation to the sisters.⁶ This means that an enquiry into the absence of the fathers has to take into account the various kinds of first century family structures (cf. Guijarro 1995, 1997, 1998), patriarchal and non-patriarchal, as well as the relationships between collateral relatives etc.

2) Within Jesus’ movement we need to distinguish between itinerant disciples and sedentary disciples who do not follow Jesus, but remain within their own household (Theissen 1979; Pesce 1982). Jesus tells the itinerants to stay as guests *in houses* (Luke 10:5-7 // Matt. 10: 12-13) in the villages they pass through. This fact presupposes that the head of a household may have a decisive role in deciding whether to welcome them into his home, or to decide that the entire household offers them hospitality. For

social identity in Early Christianity contexts we may have to take into consideration theories that do not take kinship relations as point of departure.” Van Henten emphasizes the importance, beside the family, of “three other models”: “a holy community,” “a group of special philosophers (αἰεσις),” “the concept of the Christians as the unique people” (2000: 188-90). See also M. Sachot (1998). Starting from the relation between household and voluntary association, we take a different position.

⁶ Kottsieper takes into consideration the *Song of Songs* and the stories about the kidnapping of Tamar or the destiny of Dinah (2 Sam. 13–14; Gen. 34) and in addition, non-biblical material. From his observations we should perhaps conclude that in this type of household the father is *not* an *absent* father, but oriented towards other objectives mainly external to the family. In our opinion this means that within the family the relations between collateral relatives, brother and sister, are of decisive importance. We must nevertheless be careful, as far as the *Song of Songs* goes, that we are dealing with a piece of poetry, not a “historical” document.

this reason it is necessary to ask whether the Gospels provide evidence that can be interpreted from an anthropological perspective on the function of the householder in the houses in which the itinerants are put up. It is also necessary to understand the mechanism of hospitality in the culture in the First Century Land of Israel.

3) We should not wholly identify the houses with the life of a household, because the house can be used in a non-domestic way. In large houses there are places for the public, and more private ones. Inclusion of the movement within the house scenario does not automatically mean the identification of the movement with the households. In the course of the analysis we shall see various cases in which Jesus uses houses in non-domestic ways. It is however true that it is easier for the household members not closely linked to Jesus to be present at least for a part of the teaching (cf. the case of Martha who works while Jesus teaches in her house, Luke 10:38).

4) In Jesus' behavior and in his preaching it emerges that those who follow him are individuals; his request to follow him is not addressed to the *households*, but only to individuals. This often, though not necessarily, creates conflicts between the individual and the household that is losing one of its members. However, it is to the *household* that Jesus and his movement turn when they require hospitality. We must therefore bear in mind this substantial difference between Jesus' itinerant followers and the householders that receive them.⁷ It is only an individual⁸ that follows

⁷ Sandnes 1997: 152-53 maintains that "the starting point of the churches was normally the conversion of the *paterfamilias*, who embraced the Christian faith together with his whole household." He admits that "conversion did not always take place in connection with households. Sometimes only a husband converted, sometimes only a wife," but concludes that "the social matrix of early Christianity was *oikos* and kinship. From the very beginning the movement was marked by kinship logic and precepts" (153). We cannot accept this conclusion since he seems to overlook the dialectic between household and discipleship. See also Taylor 1995.

⁸ A certain form of independence in relation to the family was perhaps implicit and structural in the decision to follow a master. To different forms of relationship between master and disciple could nevertheless correspond a greater or lesser autonomy or independence or conflict with the family; see for example the extreme cases of the Qumranites and Pythagoreans (cf. Jamblichus, *Vita pythagorica* XVII, 71-75). For Rabbinical schools see the case of Eliezer ben Hyrcanos, whose father was against his son's desire to study the Torah at the school of Jochanan ben Zakkai because he wanted him to work on the family farm (ARN A.6; see Pesce 1982: 383 n.108).

Jesus, but it is a *household* that acts as host to him and his movement.

One specific problem concerns the sons' autonomy of choice with regard to the household and the fact that the creation of an autonomous subject may be connected to the choice to pass from one group to the other. One example is given by the fact that Jesus' disciples pass from John the Baptist to Jesus, or the fact that Flavius Josephus adheres to various movements (*Vita* 2, 10-12). It is likely that this freedom was only a characteristic of the upper classes (Rohrbaugh 2001).⁹

5) Discipleship tends to respond to particular social needs (Destro and Pesce 2000: 112-118). It therefore necessarily enters into relation with the social dynamics of institutions like household and patronage that tend to respond to similar or conflicting needs. Households have strategies and institutional tools (among which patronage) to satisfy these needs. We should therefore not ignore the relation between discipleship, household and patronage.

Absence or Presence of Fathers among the Itinerant Disciples

In Luke's Gospel there are two kinds of texts that help us to understand the function in the household of those who become followers of Jesus: texts (a) that speak of individual followers of Jesus; and texts (b) that describe in the abstract the conditions required to follow Jesus, or the consequences of following him. In the first kind of text (a) the individual followers can be divided up into the following categories: i) those invited by Jesus to follow him: Simon (Luke 4:38-39; 5:10-11); James and John (Luke 5:10a-11); Levi (Luke 5:27-29); a man (Luke 9:59-60); an ἄρχων (Luke 18:18-23); ii) those who ask Jesus to follow him: a man (Luke 9:57-58); a man (Luke 9:61-62); iii) those that follow Jesus,

⁹ It should be noted how important the idea of free choice (προαίρεσις) is for Josephus in religious matters. For him, the προαίρεσις is a decision that is not taken through the influence of others. It is the moral decision of the individual, the manifestation of his own personal freedom (cf., for example, *Ant.* I.9; I.254; IV.293; IX.148; *Vita* 27.5; 369.2; *Contra Apionem* 1.214; 2.160; 2.289). The context in which these ideals of respect for the decision of the individual in religious matters develop is first of all the pluralism of the organized religious groups that characterize Judaism of the first century (see for example Josephus, *Vita* 10: "I would have been able to choose (αἰθέσθαι) the best if I had tried them all"). The second is the situation of cultural co-existence characterizing the life of first century Jews both in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora.

but of whom we know nothing concerning how they became followers, like the women in Luke 8:2-3. In the second type of text (b) the conditions for following Jesus, or what happens to those who follow him, are set out in the abstract: Luke 12:33 ("sell your possessions and give alms"); Luke 12:52-53 (two against three); Luke 14:26 (hating the members of the household); Luke 14:33 (to give up all properties); Luke 18:28-30 ("we who have abandoned everything").

In this section we shall try to find out what Jesus' followers were like, from the perspective of their place within the οἶκος. We want to see whether there were any among them who belonged to the category of fathers exercising or not exercising the function of *householder*. We shall be asking a series of questions to the texts.

The first question is: to what generation do those who follow Jesus, or whom Jesus calls upon to follow him, belong?

One may speak of generation: a) if evidence or traces of evidence exist relating to the people who have become parents and to the offspring that has been generated, b) if there is information available that can lead us to this evidence, such as for example age, c) if kinship terminology implies a difference in generation (e.g. if the text speaks of "mother-in-law" or "daughter-in-law").

In certain cases our attention may focus on situations in which three generations are present together: the father, one or more adult children (whether male or female), and the children of the latter. Within the household, we can distinguish therefore between the generation of older people, the generation of the adults, and the generation of the young, the adolescents or children (νεανίσκοι, παῖδες). For brevity's sake, we speak of the fathers with reference to the generation of old people, in that we implicitly assume as our point of view the generation of the adults.

A preliminary answer to this first question is that none of the disciples who follow Jesus belong to the older generation, as we have defined it. None belong to the generation of the νεανίσκοι or the παῖδες. They *seem* to belong to an intermediate generation of adults. Simon, in particular, is present on the scene together with a mother-in-law belonging to the previous generation (even if she does not belong to Simon's kinship group) (Luke 4:38-39). In Luke 5:10a-11,¹⁰ James and John, sons of Zebedee, are clearly

¹⁰ On this passage see Guijarro 1998: 176-78. Luke underlines the need to abandon "everything."

of the intermediate generation with respect to their own father Zebedee. This generational situation is much clearer in Mark 1:19-20 than in Luke. Mark 1:20 says that their father Zebedee was with them and with the wage earners (μισθοί). In Mark's presentation, the father Zebedee is not one of the group of Jesus' disciples. He does not follow them, and is left behind. In this case it is true that the father, a member of the older generation, does not react positively, but is *absent*.

In Luke 9:59-60 (// Matt. 8:21-22) the relationship between generations is outlined. A father, who was head of the household, has just died. He was the leading figure of authority in the household, within the old generation. His son has a strong function in the household because he represents the intermediate generation, which is tied to important duties and tasks. He is very much in the foreground, and indeed is about to succeed to the leadership of the household.

There is then a series of texts in which it is not clear whether the disciples of Jesus belong to the first generation, or to the intermediate generation. To us the second hypothesis seems more plausible. In Luke 8:1-3 we find a group of women disciples of Jesus who follow him on his journeying. They are well-off women who support Jesus' group with their own property. None of these women is defined on the basis of criteria relating to generation. The fact that they can dispose of their own goods freely places them either in the intermediate generation or in the generation of older people. Of Joanna, Luke specifies that she was the wife of Herod's administrator, but we cannot exclude that she was already an old woman, with offspring.

The same situation arises also in other cases. In Luke 5:27 (// Mark 2:13-15 // Matt. 9:9-10) Levi appears, and becomes a disciple of Jesus. He is a householder who gave a dinner for Jesus "in his house" (Luke 5:29). His ascendants, descendants or collaterals are not named, nor even is his wife (since we cannot exclude he was married). He might belong to the first, or to the intermediate generation, even though to us the second hypothesis seems more plausible. A similar case is that of the ἄρχων of Luke 18:18-23 (// Mark 10:17-22 // Matt. 19:16-22) invited by Jesus to follow him: his case is useful to clarify the social identity of Jesus' followers. The fact he can dispose of his own goods places him in the category of householders, but no information about his gen-

eration is given to us: he too might belong either to the first generation, or to the intermediate generation.

In the case of the disciples of Luke 9:57-58 and 61-62 we do not have certain indications concerning their generation status. Luke 7:11-17 (the son of the widow of Nain) is illuminating. It seems that neither the mother nor the son are disciples of Jesus. After Jesus woke him up, the young man does not show any desire to follow him, nor does Jesus ask him to, perhaps precisely because he is very young (*νεανίσκος*). This may help to clarify that the followers are adults, and autonomous. From the exclusion of a younger generation comes a confirmation that the intermediate generation, or the previous one is the focus of attention.

A broader picture, abstract but with more complex social meanings, is given in Luke 12:52-53 (// Matt. 10:34-36):

for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.¹¹

Within the household, the conflict follows generation and gender lines. Male and female are clearly distinct. Only one of the three conflicts is between males. Two occur between females (12:53). The conflict involves a first ideal unit of father-son, a second unit of mother-daughter, and a third unit of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The implicit social model is that of a household in which there is a family of two generations: the generation of the parents and that of the married son and the daughter. It is the most schematically outlined family model that we find in Luke's Gospel. It is a sufficiently detailed model to become a point of reference for the classification of the kinship relations within the household. It is important to note that the conflict is not an accidental result, but the certain effect of the division (*διαμερισμός*) that Jesus says he has come to bring.

Luke examines five components of the *οἶκος*, of which four are linked to each other via kinship and consanguinity (father, mother, son and daughter) and the fifth is an acquired member, the daughter-in-law. It is because of this acquired member that we can say we have here a domestic group based on an extended family. According to the representation of the conflict of three people against two in an *οἶκος* of five people, one may imagine that the

¹¹ On this passage see Guijarro 1998: 287-88.

point of reference is made up of a model in which the father and the mother on one side are opposed to the son, the daughter and the daughter-in-law on the other. The mother is the only person with two roles: she is mother and mother-in-law. The mother and the father never appear as husband and wife, and the son and the daughter never as brother and sister. This means that the text selects the positions and the roles it wishes to illuminate. The emphasis in the discourse is therefore on the generations, and the links and the oppositions are described according to a vertical dimension. This text of Luke is extremely important in our eyes. It contains the representation, albeit hypothetical, of the conflict that may be generated when a member of the household wishes to become an itinerant disciple of Jesus. This means that, according to Luke, the disciples who follow Jesus by leaving the οἶκος may belong to different generations. They may not only be sons, but also daughters and even wives (as in fact Luke 8:1-3 emphasizes with regard to Joanna, Chuza's wife). In substance, Luke presents a conflict between two generations, not between individuals, because he speaks of three against two, as if the three were allied, but against the two. He does not speak of a conflict of one person against four: only in this case could it be said with certainty that each individual member of the household, by becoming a disciple of Jesus, becomes an enemy or separates himself/herself off from the other four. This latter vision is not Luke's, but Matthew's (10:35-36).

It should be noted that in Luke the father is named first, whereas in Matthew it is an ἀνθρῶπος (both at v. 35 and v. 36) who is named first. The phrase of the final comment of Matthew sums up the whole viewpoint of an individual ἀνθρῶπος. In Matthew all the members of the household (οἰκιακοί) are against one ἀνθρῶπος. Matthew seems to generalize and concentrate all the members of the οἶκος against the potential disciple. In the two following verses (Matt. 10:37-38: "He who loves father or mother more than me ... who loves son or daughter more than me") Matthew is pointing out that whoever follows Jesus may be a son or a father. In addition, the fact that this individual is related first to the older generation, and then to the younger one, induces us to believe that Matthew considers the disciple to belong to the intermediate generation.¹²

¹² See also *Gospel of Thomas* 16, where the conflict in the house is between

We need to take into account Luke 14:26 (// Matt. 10:37-38) (see also Guijarro 1998: 303-305). The *logion* supposes that the typical disciple is a male who has a father and mother, who is married with children and who has brothers and sisters. Luke supposes here an οἶκος similar to that of 12:52 but a bit more extensive, in the sense that it may contain a greater number of people with brothers and sisters as well as children. The typical disciple is therefore imagined as a member of the intermediate generation (he has parents and children) in a large household. The dynamic force of the household is not represented by the father, but by the intermediate married man. What is worth noticing is that Luke implicitly places Jesus' *logion* in a context of social obligations enforced by οἶκος membership (as described in the parable of the Great Supper, Luke 14:18-20). The *logion* seems to imply the rejection of an essential generational line, that links the so-called consanguineous of three generations. It is obviously harder for disciples to detach themselves from the relatives than from other members of the *familia* in the Latin sense of the term (namely from the οἶκος). Luke might have said: "who does not hate his/her οἶκος" (in other words his/her overall social position). The *logion* seems to imply not just the obligation of a clear separation, but also a radical condemnation of the normal relations within the οἶκος.

An important clarification comes from Luke 18:28-30 (// Mark 10:28-30 // Matt. 19:27-9) (see also Guijarro 1998: 206-7):

And Peter said, Lo, we have left our homes and followed you. And he said to them, Truly, I say to you, there is no man who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive manifold more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.

If we examine the order in which the renunciations are given ("house, or wife, or brothers, or parents, or children"), we can deduce that according to Luke the person who abandons his relatives to follow Jesus is a male belonging to the intermediate generation between the parents (γονεῖς) above him, and his own children (τέκνα) below. Indeed, Luke puts forward a series of alter-

two against three. Thomas, however, makes only the opposition between son and father explicit, concluding that the disciple will be standing alone. Behind this gospel tradition that we find in Luke, Matthew and Thomas probably lies a tradition that is also reworking or having in mind two parts of a verse in Micah (Mic. 7:6).

native cases that defines the intermediate generation: he who abandons his wife, or his brothers or else parents or children.

We can add that in three cases (Simon, James and John, and Levi) the disciples that follow Jesus and separate themselves off from their household also have another characteristic. They are members of voluntary professional associations: fishermen and tax collectors. They are people, in other words, who have already experienced social forms different from the household. They live within associations in order to reach objectives that the household could not obtain, even though fathers, sons, and brothers may enter together in such associations.¹³ This means the disciples are already predisposed to enter into a voluntary association also if the voluntary religious association of Jesus required a separation from (and also a conflict with) the household.

We can also ask ourselves about the kind of household the disciple who follows Jesus comes from. Levi's house is certainly a big one with slaves. But Simon's seems to be small or medium-size. Luke 12:52-53, describing the conflict created in a household when some of its members decide to follow Jesus, seems to presuppose a household of limited size. Perhaps this image also underlies Luke 18:28-30, where it does not seem that those that have abandoned their house had a very big one.

The conclusion of this first point is that the Gospel of Luke mainly imagines the disciples that follow Jesus as belonging to the intermediate generation. From this perspective, it is evident that in Jesus' movement the fathers of the older generation tend to be absent. It is however true that there may be many fathers in the intermediate generation.

The second question is whether the disciples who follow Jesus (or those who could follow him) are heads of household.

In Luke, the householders seem to be: Simon, James and John, Levi, the unnamed man (τις) who wishes to follow Jesus wherever he goes (9:57-58), the man who asks for permission to go and bury his father first (9:59-60), who asks to take his leave of the people in his οἶκος (9:61-62), and the rich ἄρχων who does not follow Jesus (18:18-23). In Luke 18:29-30 the man who leaves his wife or his

¹³ We want to thank Amy-Jill Levine for having underlined the fact that the members of the household could enter without problems in the fishermen's voluntary association. Her critique gave us the opportunity to modify our point of view. On the fishermen's associations see Hanson 1997.

children could be a householder, but the case is also imagined of he who abandons his parents or brothers and sisters without being married. Apparently he is not a householder.

The women of Luke 8:1-3 would hardly seem to be householders, even though some of them are wealthy property holders, and from this point of view could also be householders in their own right.

In Luke 12:33 (a *logion* present only in Luke) Jesus orders: "Sell the things that belong to you and give them alms." The *logion* in itself does not refer just to the disciples. In Luke's vision, however, the *logion* is strictly linked to Jesus' following (cf. Luke 12:22.41).¹⁴ The problem we raise is whether Luke thinks that the disciples who sell are householders or not. They could be, to the extent that the person who sells has to have the power to do so. But one might also think that a son may ask of his father for that part of the property that was due to him as his future inheritance (as Luke says in the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32).¹⁵

Similar to this, another *logion* is found *only* in Luke 14:33. In this passage, the total abandonment of property (and not only of money) shows that the disciple is imagined as a person who has the power to dispose of, or to renounce, "all he has." He would thus seem to be a householder.¹⁶

Yet the ideal disciple who separates himself from his household in Luke 12:52-53 (and therefore creates a conflict within it) does not necessarily seem to be a householder, to the extent that he separates himself from his parents, and thus seems to separate himself from the household of which his father is head. The ideal disciple of Luke 14:26 is also member of the intermediate genera-

¹⁴ Moxnes 1988: 66-68 asks himself what the function of money was, and why Luke in general insists on selling, and on money as the means of exchange.

¹⁵ The parables, as is well known, are not a sure source for knowing everyday social praxis, or the bases of the social structure.

¹⁶ The insistence of Luke on the necessary separation from all one's property raises a problem for the reconstruction of the historical Jesus. Our hypothesis is that in some way Jesus had in mind the equality of the Jubilee of Lev. 25 (Destro and Pesce 1999: 59-72), as indeed also in Luke 4:17-19 demonstrates (in which Jesus' declarations are clearly inspired by the ideal of the liberation of the Jubilee). The Jubilee is a mechanism of collective reorganization according to which every member of the people has to come back into the possession of his freedom if he had been reduced to slavery, and has to come back into possession of his house and land, if he had been forced to give them up because of his debts. On Lev. 25 and its reinterpretation in the Judaism of the first century before the CE see Pesce 1999.

tion (he has parents and children) and hence is not primarily a householder.

The conclusion is that according to Luke the disciples are not often householders, but rather members of a household of which the father is the head, who remains in the household also after the son has become a disciple. This element, too, leads us to think of an absence of fathers of the older generation in Jesus' movement.

The third question is whether from Luke's texts there emerges a conflict between generations, which may provide the background to the separation of some members of the intermediate generation from their household.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) the eldest son seems to fit happily into the household, in a village far from the city (cf. 15:15, *πολιτῶν*), run by the father from whom he will have to take over in the future. The younger son sees no prospects for himself in this situation and dreams of his own place in a far away country, in a completely different context. A conflict emerges between the city, seen negatively, and the village, seen positively. On some members of the intermediate generation (in this case the younger son) the city, perhaps Hellenized, exercises an attraction that is judged negatively in the parable (indeed his life in the city ends in failure). An image also emerges of a conflict between generations, father against son, and within the same generation, between younger and eldest son: this conflict is grafted on to the city/country conflict. This conflict seems to be disapproved, because the choice of the young son to go against the way of life of his father ends in his own disaster.¹⁷

The parable shows that Luke has a very positive opinion of the father and householder, but perhaps a less positive one towards the two sons. The choice of the younger son to go to the city is not approved, but also the attitude of the eldest son is judged negatively. His defensive attachment to the household is condemned because it prevents him from welcoming back his brother. The parable wishes to put forward a model in which the traditional household has to accept within itself, unconditionally, also those who fail and those who have threatened its existence. In

¹⁷ On the conflict between generations in the ancient world see Bertman 1976 and Fuà 1995: 202-06. Many of the articles in the book Bertman edited, show the conflict between generations in Rome during the Roman Revolution (134-27 BCE) and at various times in the first century CE.

Luke's Jesus's ideal, the household should offer the guarantee of perpetual help even to those who split off from it.

In conclusion, we suggest that the followers of Jesus seem to belong to an emerging middle generation, some with an experience in choosing to adhere to voluntary associations linked to their work. It would seem they already previously lived in a generational conflict with the older generation because of their mobility and socio-economic inventiveness. Most (both married and unmarried, both men and women) belong to the households of their fathers. Some are themselves householders who can freely dispose of their property, and who have an important function in their own household. This creates strong conflicts between the followers and the other members of the household because of the function they fulfilled before their becoming part of the movement.

Householders that Provide Hospitality to Jesus and his Disciples: The Challenge to Householders

Having first examined the itinerant disciples, we shall now examine the texts that tell us of those who give Jesus hospitality, and thus of possible disciples or sedentary sympathizers.

In this section we utilize the scenes of Luke's Gospel where Jesus and his movement come into relation with households. We will take into account also the parables that have a household as their background. The parables choose to present clearly outlined scenarios in order to convey specific messages. They tend to produce a sure effect on the audience and do not reflect Jesus' and his movement's real experience, as much as a cultural background that is nonetheless important for the reconstruction of the environment of Jesus' movement. The texts that can be useful in this perspective are as follows: 1) 5:17, Jesus teaching in a house; 2) 7:1-10, the centurion; 3) 8:19, conflict of Jesus with mother and brothers; 4) 8:39, the return of a healed man to his οἶκος; 5) 8:49-56, the head of a synagogue; 6) 9:4, commissioning the Twelve; 7) 9:42, a νεανίσκος is given back to his mother; 8) 9:52-55, a Samaritan village refuses to give hospitality; 9) 10:5-7,8-10, the seventy have to ask hospitality in the houses; 10) 10:34, the πανδοχεῖον; 11) 10:38-42, Jesus in Martha's house; 12) 11:5, hospitality for a friend at midnight; 13) 11:37, Jesus in the house of a Pharisee;

14) 14:1, Jesus in the house of a Pharisee; 15) 14:8, places at table; 16) 14:12, teaching on hospitality; 17) 14:15-24, parable of the banquet; 18) 15:11-32, the prodigal son; 19) 16:1-8, the dishonest manager; 20) 16:19-31, the rich man and the poor man; 21) 17:7-9, the little house-owner; 22) 19:2-10, Jesus in the house of Zacchaeus; 23) 24:29-30, hospitality in a house at Emmaus.

How Jesus Utilizes the Houses/Households

Luke's Jesus presents himself as someone who does not have a house (9:58), but who seeks a place where he can eat and sleep. He uses Simon's house (4:38), Martha's house (10:38), the house of Emmaus (24:29-30) (this latter case is an episode of the resurrected Christ), he sends messengers to find lodgings for himself (9:52), and he travels around preaching and asks to be put up in private houses (19:5). In particular, Jesus (a) is often welcomed with a banquet prepared especially for him (5:27-29; 11:37-52; 14:1; 24:30); (b) teaches (5:17; 8:20; perhaps in 10:38 because it cannot be excluded that Jesus teaches not only to Mary but also to a public present that is not mentioned); and presents his teachings in meal settings (in 11:37-52; likewise in 14:5-24 where he teaches after dealing with the issue of Sabbath healing, 14:1-3); (c) heals (5:24; 8:51-56; 14:4). Jesus therefore uses houses for a variety of functions.

Jesus shows he wants to strengthen the bonds within the household. He gives an only son back to his widowed mother (7:11-17), who in the absence of a husband would probably be without assistance. In 8:32-33 Jesus heals a man who is possessed. The healed man, called ἀνῆρ, asks to follow Jesus (literally 'stay with him'). Jesus refuses and tells him: "return to your οἶκος" (8:39). Returned to his οἶκος, he will no longer live among the tombs, which represent the opposite of the οἶκος.

Jesus and his movement need the household structure because they have to find somewhere to lodge (and they do not normally make use of inns). Luke's Jesus programmatically declares that the twelve have to make use of hospitality in the houses of others. He tells the twelve: "And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there you go out" (9:4). To enter (εἰσερχομαι), to exit (ἐξερχομαι) are verbs of movement; to stay (μεῖνω) means a temporary

stasis between the two movements. It indicates, however, primarily a stay directed at some kind of activity (not a rapid visit).

In 10:1-12 (// Matt. 10: 5-16) Luke tells that Jesus sends seventy of his disciples (two by two and in various places: 10:1), to ask to be taken into the houses (οἰκία, Luke 10:6.7). They have to enter a house and receive hospitality (substantially to receive “food and drink” and a place to sleep, as the verb “stay” may indicate). In short, they must not pass from house to house. The disciples shall say “Peace to this οἶκος”, in other words to the group of people who live in the οἰκία. They must settle down, be accepted by the householders, and utilize the resources of the house. Jesus’ movement thus utilizes the system of the houses. The οἶκος offers Jesus’ movement the required support structure through its hospitality. This is all the more significant if it is borne in mind that there were places where people actually could lodge when traveling (e.g. the so-called inn of Luke 10:34 πανδοχεῖον, or else the κατάλυμα of Luke 2:7).

Households with Which Jesus and his Movement Enter into Contact

In Luke we meet a great variety of types of houses, where hospitality is practiced (both in the actual experience of Jesus and his disciples, and in the parables). This confirms the recent results of research on the variety of houses in first century Palestine (Guijarro 1995, 1997, 1998; Botha 1998). In particular we find: the *villa* (as in the case of the proprietor who has an οἰκονόμος Luke 16:1-8, or in the case of the parable of the banquet, 14:15-24); very big houses such as that of the rich man who does not take any notice of poor Lazarus (16:19-21); Levi’s house that can provide a large-scale banquet (5:29); Zacchaeus’s house (19,2-10); perhaps those of the two Pharisees who invite Jesus (11:37; 14:1-7); medium-size houses like perhaps Simon’s, where maybe there are no slaves present; that of the little οἰκοδεσπότης (Luke 17:7-9) who probably has only one slave to carry out all the household tasks (work in the fields and the serving of meals); small houses such as Martha’s where there are no slaves (10:38-42); perhaps Luke imagines also a house in an *insula* as in the case of the person who receives a friend (Luke 11:5-8) at night. To sum up: the parables give examples of very big houses.¹⁸ The middle-size and

¹⁸ The parables generally contain exemplary stories. They must present em-

small houses appear only in the stories of hospitality concerning Jesus and his disciples. In some of these stories, however, we meet big houses as well (see the case of Levi and Zacchaeus).

The Function of Households in Luke's Narrative

In the time of Jesus there was a widespread cultural mechanism for providing hospitality in houses. It was normal for travellers to find hospitality (in the houses) along the way, despite the existence of taverns or inns (cf. 2:7; 10:34) or perhaps also synagogues with inns (Levine 1981; White 1996; Destro and Pesce 2000: 73-74). This custom was not just Judean or a characteristic of the Land of Israel, but was typical of the contemporary Roman world.

In Columella's *Re rustica* (I,V,7) the author suggests that one should not build a *villa* on the road (*in via*). The purpose is to avoid travellers falling back on the *villa* to ask for shelter and support, thus damaging the fields. People who pass through damage the household (*infestat rem familiarem*). Columella's text shows both the common recourse to lodging (in villages or in houses) along the road and the reaction to this custom, well attested in the first century.¹⁹ This information prevents us from giving an interpretation to the passages in the Gospels that is strictly religious and linked to the customs of the Jesus' group only. The support mechanism for travellers (via hospitality) should be understood as the practice of reciprocal aid rather than as pure generosity. To the extent to which hospitality was granted, one could hope to eventually receive it in return.

From the specific perspective of our research, it is crucial to notice that a house may provide hospitality only if the head of the household allows it. To the extent that the heads of the household are normally married men with children, we have to recognize that in Jesus' movement the fathers exercised a very important function, that of providing support for Jesus and his disciples.

blematic situations and hence have to display group leaders, rather than subordinate figures. They thus express, in part, the conditions of an upper class.

¹⁹ Also the passage in Luke 24:29-30 (the story of Emmaus) represents a scene in which it can be easily seen how the scenario is a traveller who, towards evening, needs hospitality, a house where he can eat and sleep. The traveller is invited to stay. He enters as if he was going to stay and lies down with the guests to eat. It is imagined that he must also have a place to sleep before leaving the day after.

With regard to the custom of asking for lodgings along the road the Columella text indicates clearly that two attitudes could be taken: acceptance or rejection (because of potentially risks). Hospitality was not therefore automatic and guaranteed. The reasons for rejecting hospitality could be many. To remain with Luke's example, those who were refused hospitality were first of all those who did not belong to one's own group. Luke 9:52-55 clearly shows that the Samaritans do not give hospitality to Jesus and his followers because they are on their way to the Temple of Jerusalem, which is not a Samaritan but a Judean place of worship. Luke 9:53, on the other hand, presupposes that providing hospitality to a group of pilgrims is normal if they belong to the same religious group. The Samaritans do not refuse hospitality as such. They simply deny hospitality to non-Samaritans. Luke 11:5-8 (the parable of the man who takes a friend into his house at midnight) shows that hospitality necessarily has to be offered to friends. What is common to these texts is that hospitality is practiced towards those who are close or similar, but is refused to those who are considered extraneous and hostile or dangerous.

Jesus indeed did not restrict himself to asking and accepting hospitality, but demands important changes in behavior from the households that provide him with hospitality. There are three points that seem to us important in the perspective of Luke's Jesus. First, the households *must* practice hospitality. This duty is implicit in Jesus' command to the twelve and to the seventy (9:4; 10:5-7). Jesus himself, as we said already, asks for hospitality quite firmly, with decision (cf. 19:5). Jesus seems well aware of the difficulty houses may have in providing hospitality, because he orders the disciples to make a gesture of rejection towards the villages that do not provide them with hospitality (Luke 9:5; 10:10-12).²⁰ Secondly, the householders shall not provide hospitality for those who are able to reciprocate, i.e. with the aim of obtaining advantage through the exchange, but towards those who have nothing, and who are not able to return the hospitality.²¹ The parable of the banquet (Luke 14:15-24 // Matt. 22:1-14 // Thomas 64) is very significant from this viewpoint (See Dupont 1978; Rohrbach 1991). Luke's version is certainly much nearer to the literary ar-

²⁰ On hospitality in first century villages see Oakman 1991: 166.

²¹ Moxnes 1991: 264: "Jesus urges here a break with the system of reciprocities in which a gift is always repaid by the recipient"; Elliott 1991: 236-38.

chetype common to Matthew and Luke (Pesce 1978). In the parable the people who are invited refuse the invitation because it conflicts with the activities of their own household. The households here appear as worlds that tend to look after their own autonomous position, and wish primarily to run their own affairs focusing on the internal life of the οἶκος (purchase of fields, of oxen, of a wife in the case of Luke, claims against merchants, the purchase of a home or a farm, a banquet for a friend, in the case of Thomas). The households make their calculations in terms of their material interests and matrimonial alliances. Since the other householders have refused the invitation to the banquet,²² the householder in the parable orders his own slave to invite poor people, the crippled, the blind and lame (14:21). The parable suggests that banquets should be used to provide hospitality for those who are outside the system of exchange and competition, and perhaps to encourage the acceptance of the ideal of redistribution of goods.²³ Third, the householders have to behave in line with criteria of justice. In 19:1-10 Luke presents Jesus' meeting with Zacchaeus, head of the tax collectors, and a very rich man. Jesus says to him: "I must stay (μεῖναι) in your οἶκος" (19:5). Luke is arguing that the life of a house owner does not necessarily have to be rejected: Zacchaeus is not invited to leave his house to become a follower of Jesus. He is a house-owner who does not abandon his way of life but practices justice: he will give half his goods to the poor and will compensate the injustices he has committed. The fact that Zacchaeus, who was a superintendent of tax-gatherers and therefore very rich (cf. Cimma 1981: 41-98),²⁴ does not

²² Rohrbaugh 1991: 140-46 illustrates certain patterns of behavior in pre-industrial society underlying the parable: the dual invitation to the meal by the urban élites, the fact that if someone who belonged to the élite did not accept the invitation, all the others do not accept it either, and finally it was unthinkable that the classes living on the margins of society could be invited by the urban élites and enter into their urban space.

²³ Rohrbaugh 1991:146 believes that "table fellowship within the Christian community is ... the issue Luke addresses by the parable" On the contrary, we look at Luke's parable from the *implicit* perspective of Jesus' social context. We are not interested in dealing with the problem of the internal social composition of Luke's community. About this see Stegemann and Stegemann 1998: 511-12.

²⁴ As M.R. Cimma wrote: "The variety and grand scale of the business run by tax superintendents required the availability of a large number of people of key importance who could lend their labor to others, freely. This was probably why association was so frequent, so as to be able to face up to ever-growing commit-

have to sell all his goods, but only half, and that it is said to him: "salvation has come to this οἶκος," seems to contradict the story of the ἄρχων who refuses to sell all his property (Luke 18:18-23). Only itinerant followers, in Luke's view, must sell everything, whereas sympathizers may adopt a less radical attitude. This is consistent with the image of a movement that is based, at the same time, on the one hand on its more active members *leaving* the households and on the other hand, on householders *providing* hospitality.

The parable of 16:19-31 (to be found only in Luke) is in line with this too, and widens the scenario. It introduces a rich man (πλούσιος) and a poor man (πτωχός) Lazarus, who is at the gate of the rich man and who is not invited in. Hospitality does not work here, exactly as it did not work in the parable of the banquet. There is apparently a lack of hospitality, and a lack of respect for the system of taking people in and making them at home. The hospitality system is not practiced towards the wretched person who is in no condition to be able to repay.²⁵ Here too, as in the parable of the banquet, the opposition is between those who are rich and those who are poor and without a house.

Within the more general function of hospitality, Luke emphasizes first of all two scenarios: that of domestic service (Martha, Simon's mother-in-law, the slave who returns from the fields) and that of conviviality.²⁶ The convivial scenario in particular, as we have seen, recurs frequently. These two scenarios are important to explain what the Lukan Jesus thinks of the functioning of the οἶκος. Luke's Jesus finds in certain kinds of behavior practiced in the οἶκος the symbolic representation of social structures or situations that he disapproves of. Jesus goes into the houses because they are precisely the place where some of the central problems of his society become evident.

In brief, Luke's Jesus denounces the mechanism of exchange

ments that derived from the taking on of public contracts." The tax gatherers were often grouped in companies (1981: 41-98).

²⁵ Here too, as in the parable of the banquet, the opposition is between those who are rich and those who are poor and without a house. The parable says that to avoid the punishment of hell it would be enough to observe the law of Moses and the prophets. It may be deduced that the parable presupposes that egalitarianism in the people of Israel derives from respect for the law.

²⁶ This Gospel pays careful attention to the question of the order of places at table as symbolic geography of the social hierarchy (14:7-11), on the kinds of people invited (14:12-14:15-24), on the obligation to provide food even for unexpected guests ("the friend who arrives at midnight," 11:5).

between householders that excludes all the social classes that are not able to enter into a reciprocal exchange: those who are not house-owners, the destitute, those who have no proper income. These social classes should, according to Luke's Jesus, be beneficiaries of support both by his itinerant disciples (who have to sell everything and give alms to the poor) and by his sedentary followers who have to open up their houses.

We saw in Luke's Gospel that Jesus concentrates his attention on the situation of the poor and marginal people, who are unable to benefit from mechanisms of exchange and social reciprocity. Jesus focuses carefully also on a situation in which the poorer social classes cannot benefit from the mechanisms of patronage. Jesus shows that he knows perfectly the mechanism of patronage (cf. 7:1-10). He seems to live in one of these situations of crisis described by Hadrill Wallace in which patronage does not function.²⁷ As Moxnes has rightly emphasized, the rich people in Luke do not wish to behave like patrons, "they are portrayed as unwilling to show such generosity as one should rightly expect" from patrons (cf. Moxnes 1991: 254-257). Jesus' command to the itinerant disciples to give their goods away without asking to be repaid, and his suggestion to the others to use hospitality outside the mechanism of reciprocal exchange takes away the very basis for patronage (Moxnes 1991: 264). We believe that Jesus is not trying to radically transform the patronage mechanism. It is hardly

²⁷ Wallace-Hadrill lists three cases in which the function of patronage weakens: a) when the number of the poor in a city grows to a great extent, they are "simply too numerous to enter into significant personal relations with the few hundred members of the political elite," or else when debt crises occur that necessarily imply "a crisis of patronage" because "'debt' in a patronage society should form part of the nexus of mutual obligations of patron and client: a debt crisis implies a crisis of patronage" (Wallace-Hadrill 1990a: 69). b) In relation to the distribution of lands and corn, as in the case of the Gracchi in Roma. This "constituted a frontal assault on patrimonial power, for dependence on the state for alleviation in times of poverty and crisis reduced the necessity of dependence on an individual" (Wallace-Hadrill 1990a: 70). c) When the "relationship of dependence and protection" is "made monetary," giving rise to two phenomena: "the rewards of advocacy and the bribery of voters." "The very concept of bribery, as of debt (above), suggests a patronage system in crisis" (Wallace-Hadrill 1990a: 70-71). In First Century Land of Israel, patronage could be in a crisis situation for two of these reasons: monetarisation and the heavy indebtedness of the poor. The weaker and poorer the lower classes, the less interesting are patronage relations. People who are too poor do not become useful clients, and the patrons have insufficient wealth or power in relation to their needs. In this situation, in which also the function of the head of the *oikos* is weaker, the social form of discipleship could respond to needs left unresolved by patronage.

possible to remove a power mechanism. On the contrary we think that he is thinking of an entirely different social model, that of the overturning of roles and the aspiration towards equality that come to light in the Jubilee of Leviticus.

We have shown elsewhere (Pesce 1999) that Jesus' idea of the remission of sins, and his attitude towards sacrifices, are inspired by this social and religious ideal of the Jubilee. In Luke, the religious transformation of the οἶκος that Jesus puts forward does not go in the direction of the construction of the πόλις, but in the direction of a regeneration of the entire community of Israel that involves the welcoming of the poor.²⁸

Conclusion

Luke's Jesus looks at the social life of his time from the point of view of the households. No section of them seems left inert or neutral by him. Jesus addresses the households with two different challenges. The first is addressed to the members of the intermediate generation that depend on the old generation of the fathers. The second is addressed to the householders in charge. He asks the former to abandon everything and to follow him (this request is particularly significant for the disciples that although belonging to the intermediate generation are householders). The latter he asks to open their homes and offer a different kind of hospitality, one without reciprocity and social compensation. This double challenge differentiates the kind of participation of individuals to the Jesus movement, and puts all of them into a close interrelation within which the model of discipleship tends to transform the model of the household.

In fact, the reason why Jesus asks his itinerant disciples to travel without possessions is because it must be clear to those who put them up that they will never be able to gain anything in return, either as hospitality, goods, or political protection or social integration. The basic reason why Jesus asks the itinerant disciples to break with their own household and sell their property is that this is the only way they are absolutely unable to be utilized as instruments of an alliance between their own household and the house-

²⁸ In 1988 Moxnes had already recalled the importance of the Leviticus Jubilee as background to Jesus' religious ideals.

holds who provide them with hospitality. The disciples depend on the households for their sustenance, precisely because they travel like the poor. If they were economically independent they would have less opportunity to establish relationships with the households. At the same time, within Luke's vision, the householder or head of the family has an essential function in Jesus' movement not because he is itinerant, but because he is the head of a host structure that is transformed according to the social and religious style of the movement.

The Gospel passages examined have shown that there is a very strong dialectic between Jesus' movement and the households, but that the movement has a structural relation with the households that cannot be eliminated, and that implies a much deeper and closer correlation than might be thought of on the basis of an abstract and schematic conception of this dialectic.

ABSTRACT

The Jesus' movement has in Luke a structural relation with the households. The relation between household and discipleship is dialectical, because it assigns external and internal roles to those that belong to both social forms. The itinerant followers of Jesus seem to belong to an emerging middle generation in their households, and have some experience in choosing to adhere to voluntary associations. Most (both married and unmarried, both men and women) belong to the households of their fathers. Some are themselves householders, who can freely dispose of their property, and who have an important function in their own household. This creates strong conflicts between the followers and the other members of the household because of the function they fulfilled before their becoming part of the movement. On the other hand, Jesus and his movement depend on the household structure. The householders offer Jesus' movement the required support through hospitality. Furthermore, Luke's Jesus denounces the mechanism of exchange between householders that excludes all social classes that have no chance whatsoever of entering into it and cannot benefit from the mechanisms of patronage. Jesus asks the householders to open their homes and offer a different kind of hospitality without reciprocity and social compensation. The double challenge to the itinerant followers and to the householders differentiates the kind of participation of individuals to Jesus movement, and put all of them into a close interrelation within which the model of discipleship tends to transform the model of the household.

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