SACRED HEART SEMINARY AND SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

"The Owner of the Vineyard" in Matt 20:1-16:

The "Evil-Eye" and Other Mysteries

A thesis submitted to Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

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By

Bernard J. Rosinski, S.C.J.

Hales Corners, Wisconsin

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CERTIFICATION

This certifies that the thesis, *"The Owner of the Vineyard" in Matt 20:1-16: The "Evil-Eye" and Other Mysteries*, submitted to Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, which is a record of research work conducted by Bernard J. Rosinski, S.C.J., has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sacred Scripture.

Dr. Richard Lux

Dr. Richard Lux, Ph. D.
Thesis Director

Dr. Patrick Russell, Ph. D.
Second Reader

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Date

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"The way to do research is
to attack the facts
at the point of greatest astonishment"

CELIA GREEN – *The Decline and Fall of Science*

In gratitude to the librarians and research assistants who assisted me:

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Chapter One

Introduction

The purpose of this academic convention called an M.A. thesis is to demonstrate "the student's ability to use resources critically and to engage in theological integration" (*SHSST MA Manual* 2014, 22). Demonstration consists in providing "an extended descriptive or analytical narrative dealing with a particular topic related to the student's area of concentration" (23). My area of concentration is New Testament scriptural studies. The particular topic I have chosen for a detailed analytical-descriptive examination is popularly called by some: "The Owner of the Vineyard" (Matt 20:1-15).[1] What follows in these pages, therefore, is an extended historically based socio-cultural narrative that will inductively demonstrate/illustrate a more intelligibly suitable manner of interpreting this parable -- without recourse to allegory -- that no humanly devised calculus can measure God's generous goodness or question his justice.

In broadest perspective, what, then, is remarkable about this particular gospel text? Why would anyone choose to make it an object of an extended study? In reply, when one considers its sources this parable is found nowhere else in the New Testament (Elliot, "Matthew 20:1-15: A Parable of Invidious Comparison and Evil Eye Accusation" 1992, 56). It is not found in Mark, in John, nor is it found in "Q".[2] It is uniquely Matthean as can be ascertained by anyone who carefully examines the gospel parallels in *The Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (K. Aland 2001, #256). Another impressive feature it possesses is that it contains a rare but clear reference to the Mediterranean belief in the "Evil-eye" (Elliot,

[1] See Appendix I which contains the text in Greek and English. The title of the parable has been variously named, so much so, that simply to list them would be pointless; but see suggestions provided by Amy-Jill Levine (2014, 199).

[2] "Q" is a hypothetical text judged to be a common source for traditions found in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark (Brown 1997, 116-122; Koch 1992, V:6 167-168).

Matthew 20:1-15: A Parable of Invidious Comparison and Evil Eye Accusation 1992). Furthermore, certain linguistic features, to be shown subsequently in detail, characterize this pericope as nowhere else in Matthew (Hagner 1998, 567 ff). Additionally the parable also perfectly presents an illustration of an anthropologically "high context" culture in contrast to a "low context" one (Hall 1977, Chap. 6 "Context and Meaning").[3] The parable also exemplifies and implies other features found in dyadic cultures like those found in the Mediterranean basin (Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. 1981, vii, 58-80, 101). And, finally, while the context of this parable may have been more easily comprehended by ancients who lived in an agricultural world, it is virtually unintelligible to most of today's urbanized citizens who greatly lack all understanding of how food gets to the table and, in a mechanized age particularly, how hard the life of agricultural workers was in ancient times. Thus, there is matter enough for consideration in this passage to warrant an extended descriptive-analytical study.

It should be noted at the very beginning of this study that both description and analysis can take many turns that are dependent on the viewpoint of the person making the description or conducting the analysis. It is possible, given the limitations established for this exercise, to examine only some of them.[4] Hence it is necessary to set parameters for this study and to state what shall be included and what shall be excluded. The

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[3] "HC [high context] transactions feature preprogrammed information that is in the receiver and in the setting, with only minimal information in the transmitted message. LC [low context] transactions are the reverse. Most of the information must be in the transmitted message in order to make up for what is missing in the context (both internal and external)." (Hall 1977, 107). "Because they [parables] are polyvalent, the particular point of parables takes on coloration from the context in which they are uttered or placed. Scholars have spent much time reconstructing the original context of the parables in Jesus' lifetime and distinguishing it from the subsequent reinterpretations and accretions that took place as the parables were preached in the early Christian decades." (Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament* 1997, 132)

[4] "The term 'extended' is understood to mean a minimum of 50 and a maximum of 100 pages" (*SHSST MA Manual*, 23). John S. Kloppenborg's in-depth study of a different parable, popularly referred to as "The Tenants in the Vineyard" (Matt 21:33-46; ‖ Mark 12:1-12; ‖ Lk 20:9-19), comprises 651 pages! Cf. bibliography.

following brief remarks attempt to do that by setting forth the structure of this exercise, some questions that might arise, the methods to be employed, and the limitations that bind.

This particular "Kingdom of God" parable has been a source of much fascination and interest to a number of scholars.[5] Its fullest exploration deserves respectful treatment by those methods of scriptural scholarship designed to make its particular features stand out in bold relief. An initial literary consideration is this: it appears "framed" by an expression found in Matt 19:30 and repeated in Matt 20:16, but in reverse order.[6] Scripture scholars have furrowed their foreheads in attempts to explain how this parable might be likened to the kingdom of God. First of all, does it actually stand alone? If so, what is its purpose in the gospel then? Can it be, instead, related to other passages in Matthew, e.g., a parabolic illustration and expanded instruction to Peter and his fellows who, in the immediately preceding passage, wondered what reward would be theirs for following Jesus (Matt 19:23-30)? If this, rather, is the case, how so, without recourse to allegory? How does it fit in with Matthean theology/Christology? Is the parable "of Jesus" or is it formulated by Matthew and meant for the members of the Matthean community? Fortna (1990, 66) claims it derives "from the teaching of Jesus himself."

From the outset it should be noted that "recourse to allegory" will be avoided at every cost. In his observations on the pericope selected for this analytical and descriptive study, John L. McKenzie writes: "No parable better illustrates the principle that allegorical

[5] Actually, Matthew does not use the words "Kingdom of God" but "Kingdom of the heavens" – ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. In this respect, he is again unique.
[6] "But many that are first will be last, and the last first" (RSVCE Matt 19:30); compare with "So, the last will be first, and the first last" (RSVCE 20:16). Is this deliberate or accidental? Is this question even answerable?

interpretation is to be employed with great reserve; the vineyard, the denarius, the hours of the day when the men are hired, and the reverse order of payment have all been exploited for allegorical meaning" (McKenzie 1968, 2:97).[7]

The word "context" was used above. It will become necessary to develop in these pages at least a rudimentary understanding of land ownership and patron-client relationships and of the geographical, political, and commercial context of viticulture and viniculture as it played out in the Mediterranean basin in ancient times.[8] Most importantly it will be necessary to apprehend some basics chiefly about viticulture itself: the annual calendar of activities, the labor involved in these same activities, the various levels of labor skills attendant upon these activities, the separate duties of owner, manager, and laborer, the economic and sociological implications found in these activities and the kinds of relationships that obtained among the featured principals. How was viticulture practiced in antiquity? What are our resources for this knowledge? How generalized was the practice of viticulture across the Hellenistic, Roman, and Palestinian worlds? Without this fuller understanding of all the elements involved in viticulture (and viniculture as related to it) to provide a suitably researched and reasoned context for our study text, a strong temptation

[7] K. Grobel (1982, s.v. "Interpretation...") points to the early Christian writer Origen as providing the rationale for allegorical interpretation that satisfied many subsequent patristic commentators on this and other passages and later medieval mystical writers as well. To bypass, perhaps, the problems created by searching out the literal meaning of a biblical text, many early commentators (though not all) welcomed Origen's principles and applied them liberally (Origen, "De Principiis", IV). Gnostics also applied the very same principles liberally. A corrective was necessary. Successful dealing with Gnostic heresiarchs in biblical matters called for much greater reliance on the literal meaning of sacred scripture. From this historical confrontation the church eventually learned a very valuable lesson: build on the literal. Scriptural scholarship thereafter began to develop, particularly in modern times. See also Aquinas, STh. 1. Q. 9. Cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission: *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 04/23/1993. Cf. Snodgrass (2008, 170, 173).

[8] Viticulture: "The cultivation of grapevines; the study of grape cultivation"; viniculture: "the cultivation of grapevines for winemaking" (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2004, s.vv.).

toward the use of allegory in interpreting the parable might win out and more appropriate alternative interpretations abandoned.

Once possessing this context of viticulture it then becomes possible to make use of certain sophisticated methods of scriptural scholarship to add a respectable contribution to the understanding of this pericope (Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament.* 1997, Chap. II)

In the first instance it will be helpful to study what textual critics have had to say about this pericope. Can a linguistic analysis then contribute to a deeper understanding of this text? Will we find commonalities between our text and what we find in ancient viticultural texts?

Most certainly it will then be profitable to study what historical critics have had to say about this passage. Can they provide features that deepen comprehension of the target text? It is apparent that what is involved is vineyard ownership and management year round. How did this work in ancient times and in various locales? What can we learn from history that can "flesh out" the bare bones of our high context (HC) narrative? Can sociology and anthropology supply supplemental information to what can be gleaned from history about ancient viticulture? As an example to illustrate what I mean, what kind of urgency would uncharacteristically drive a wealthy and privileged vineyard owner to seek day laborers five times throughout the course of a single day himself personally? Some of what was said above about "context" applies here to historical criticism.

Additionally, what can we learn from source critics? Have any found a verifiable tradition or literary source that the target text of our study can be traced to, in full or in part? What about secular sources that predated the gospel? Do the Hebrew Scriptures

themselves add helpful information? How about ancient sources that post-dated this gospel? Do Tannaitic sources witness to any allied traditions?

How have form critics classified this parable narrative? Are they agreed on its form or do they dispute their findings among themselves? If there is general agreement, can the form this narrative has taken be helpful in providing us with a deeper understanding?

Is it possible to learn whether this pericope has been redacted? Can redaction criticism indicate what subsequent editing by the author or unknown editors has done to clarify or even, conversely, obfuscate the meaning of the text?

For answers, in a professional paper like a master's thesis one turns to applications of all sorts of technical hermeneutical methods, highly developed by professionals.[9] What one reads, studies, and consults informs the researcher. Logistical and linguistic difficulties are surmountable because the best foreign writing usually gets translated into English and then published. Libraries are prone to make their riches accessible through various lending networks and consortia. Topical research is available by electronic means; often that even includes published periodical articles in pdf format. The digital age in which we live is a boon to academic research.

Archeology, too, has become an invaluable, almost necessary, tool for biblical research based as it is on historical-critical principles. Archeology as a science itself informs part of history as its practitioners attempt to interpret not only artifact alone but its relationship to the biblical text in its literary aspects. This is humanity's ever on-going search for meaning. Here, too however, this writer lacks training and can only rely on the expertise of others (Benjamin 2009, 1-13).

[9] "To be blunt, the study of different kinds of interpretation is difficult – indeed at times too difficult for beginners." (Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*. 1997, 20)

The topic chosen for this descriptive-analytical exercise is worth pursuing. All available resources will be exploited in the effort. Descriptive and analytical techniques that serve as appropriate hermeneutical devices will be applied. The goal in sight is to have a better understanding of the Kingdom of God parable called: The Owner of the Vineyard.

To help the reader see where this "demonstration" is headed, it should be stated that after providing an abbreviated geographical and ancient political context for the parable setting, a review of viticulture and its practices shall lead off what follows. Something will be said as well about the "evil eye" which is too often taken for a mere metaphor, but certainly not so by Mediterranean basin dwellers, particularly so in ancient times. After descriptive overviews of viticulture/viniculture and the "evil eye", linguistic and textual considerations shall be applied to the text so that its literal meaning may become more evident and any variances noted. Once textual matters have been treated, the text itself deserves examination from a variety of hermeneutical applications. Here the qualified authors that have been consulted shall be cited as to: source, form, history, as well as redaction; some effort will also be made to view the results through a socio-anthropological lens as well; pertinent and helpful archeological findings will be used. When all these preliminary applications have been completed and their results described, the final task remaining will be to compile an overview of how some people have interpreted the target parable and to see whether some further illuminating statements can be added on the basis of what has been learned from the analysis.

Chapter Two

The grapevine has been with the human race for a long time. Archeological evidence consisting of fossil grape leaves and seeds found in deposits in Europe and North America date back to the Bronze Age or c. 3500 BCE.[10] "Grape culture began in Asia Minor…" and spread from there (Winkler, et al. 1974, 1; Unwin 1991, 58-63, 94-131; Johnson 1989, 14-23).

Geographical and Geological Considerations

"Asia Minor" is a geographical designation. While in antiquity "Asia" was a single Roman province in Anatolia, today the term "Asia Minor" generally encompasses, but is not limited to, the following territories: Anatolia (modern day Turkey), Armenia, Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq and Iran), Arabia, and the Levant, or "the eastern part of the Mediterranean" (Soanes and Stevenson 2004, *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, s.v.). Thus Asia Minor also includes Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt, and Palestine (Lebanon, Syria, modern day Israel and West Bank), the territories of which border the shores of the eastern Mediterranean (Beitzel 2009, passim).[11] Of these, it is particularly ancient Palestine that interests us most.

[10] A Bronze Age date has never been assigned to North America. Otherwise it is a variable date dependent on the first use of bronze by location or civilization: Softschools.com; Accessed Dec. 15, 2016. http://www.softschools.com/timelines/the_bronze_age_timeline/145/">The Bronze Age Timeline

[11] "Asia Minor" is similar to but not equal to what is called the "Middle East," for the Middle East includes the countries of Africa that border on the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea (*Britannica* 2005, s.v.). "Near East" is another similar, though not identical, term that is used by the State Department of the United States and by some entities of the United Nations; geographically it includes the territories of Pakistan and Afghanistan along with Asia Minor (ibid., s.v.). Palestine fits, however, under all three appellatives.

Ancient Palestine, considered from a geographical standpoint, was conveniently divided into two districts, Cisjordan and Transjordan. Cisjordan (west of the River Jordan) embraced the ancient political entities of Phoenicia, Galilee, Samaria, Judah, and Idumea while Transjordan (east of the River Jordan) embraced the ancient political entities of Iturea, Gaulinitis, Auranitis, Batanea, Perea and Nabatea, all of which were established in the pre-Seleucid era (Oakman, 40) and flourished in the immediate pre-Herodian era (Beitzel 2009, 237).

From consideration of Asia Minor as the geographical area in which the grapevine was found, we have narrowed our scope to geographical Palestine. We wish, however, to narrow that scope further, to Galilee itself, the land which Jesus walked and over which he traveled widely as healer and preacher.

What can be said about Galilee?[12] The *New Moody Atlas* (Beitzel 2009) speaks of two geographical parts of Galilee and describes their terrain:

1). Upper Galilee lies between the Litani River (in the very southern part of modern day Lebanon) and the Bet Kerem Valley (found on an east-west line from Acco to Rosh Pinna approximately 6-7 miles north of the excavated site of Capernaum on the biblical Sea of Galilee (also known as Lake Genesareth or Lake Kinnereth/Chinnereth in modern Israel). The area is described as having a harsh and irregular mountainous terrain, rocky, with very little surface soil and not suitable for most kinds of agriculture, except trees and vines. Today, a substantial portion has been set aside as a forest preserve.[13]

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[12] Freyne examines many political and geological considerations of Galilee in great detail (1980, 3-21).

[13] An indication found on a map entitled *Israel and Palestine/Palestine*, n.d. This is the title of an International Travel Map sold by Barnes and Noble, Inc.; ITMB Publishing /International Travel Maps – scale 1: 225,000 (Mt. Meiron Preserve). Using the latitude/longitude feature of the New Millennium World Atlas Deluxe CD, the approximate boundaries of Upper Galilee can be found at: Lat. 33.343N/Lon. 35.259E and at: Lat. 33.043N/Long. 35.546E (Rand McNally 1998).

2) Lower Galilee lies between the Bet Kerem Valley and the Jezreel/Esdraelon Valley in the south, (found on a northwest-southeast line from Haifa/Joppa to Beth-Shean/Scythopolis at the entrance to the Jordan Valley, some 12.5 miles from the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee), (Beitzel 2009, 24, 34, 44-46). Elevations are low to moderate, ranging from near sea level to about 1650 ft., with the highest elevation being Mt. Tabor at 1929 ft. The soil in the Jezreel flatlands is alluvial (Beitzel 2009, 43;).[14] About 380 km^2 (or 150 mi^2) in size, the central Jezreel Valley serves as the "bread basket" of modern Israel (Van Beek 1982).[15] It is conjectured that it was here in the Jezreel Valley that Naboth the Jezreelite was murdered and had his vineyard taken by Jezebel the Sidonite to give to her husband, the Israelite King Ahab according to the First Book of Kings (21:1-17) of the Hebrew Scriptures (Yee 1992). Beitzel claims that "most biblical references to Galilee, including all New Testament references, are to Lower Galilee" (34).

In the Hebrew Scriptures, viticulture and viniculture and winemaking itself – said to be among the activities that Noah engaged in – are first attested to in the book of Genesis (9:20-21). In the same scriptures the grapevine became a common metaphor for the nation of Israel itself transplanted from Egypt and taking root in the land of Canaan or Israel or Palestine (Isa 5:1-7; Ps 80:8-13; and elsewhere).[16]

According to the Hebrew Scriptures Abraham, the patriarch of the Hebrews along with his descendants, had first been "promised the land" (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 24:7, etc.) and then given the land of Canaan as the "land of promise" by God (i.e., from Dan to Beersheba,

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[14] New Millennium World Atlas Deluxe CD (Galilee, *Main Map Options: Physical view*).
[15] The area of Lower Galilee would be generally circumscribed by N-S lines drawn from Lat. 32.927N and E-W lines drawn from Lon. 35.092E for the northern and western sides and from Lat. 32.549N. and Lon. 35.569E for the southern and eastern sides. The area is roughly trapezoidal, with the western and eastern sides generally parallel. (ibid.)
[16] See, among many others, Amy-Jill Levine, *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*. 2014, 199)

its northernmost and southernmost limits: Judg 20:1; 2 Sam 3:10). Abraham's descendants had to learn that the "Promise" required definite changes in their nomadic, pastoral way of life. The "Promise" of "a land of milk and honey" (Num 13:27; Gen. 12:7) demanded agricultural cultivation of the land and stable possession by its Hebrew occupants (Kohler and Sola Mendes, s.v. "agriculture").

Kaufmann Kohler and Frederick de Sola Mendes (ibid.) claim that initially the Hebrews/Israelites were a pastoral people and their entry into The Land of Canaan (the Israelite portion of Palestine) and subsequent colonization of the territory required them to learn agricultural skills like viticulture and viniculture from the Canaanites whom they either displaced or learned to co-exist with and by whom they were taught to practice Ba'al worship occasionally to placate local agricultural gods – a practice which aroused great displeasure among the prophets (cf. Hos 2:8-9a).

The use of the grapevine as a literary metaphor for Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures suggests that Israelites commonly engaged in grapevine cultivation in the Land of Canaan as part of their customary agricultural activity and practice when and where feasible (I Kgs 4:25; Amos 9:13-15). Also frequent are allusions to the grapevine as a symbol of peace and plenty (1 Kgs 4:25; Hos 14:7; Amos 9:13-15; Zech 3:10). While all-important grain, tuber and legume products were ordinarily and more easily grown on level ground in suitable soil (especially in the fertile Jezreel/Esdraelon Valley east of Carmel), the people learned to terrace otherwise agriculturally useless hillsides which they were able to use for growing grapevines, fig and olive trees (Hab 3:17; Benjamin 2009, 168-169; Ross 1962).[17] The

[17] šᵉdēmōt' from šᵉdē·mā(h) meaning "a terrace for cultivation; a piece of land cleared of trees and usually enclosed" (Koehler and Baumgartner 1994-2000). Citing Applebaum and his sources, Oakman (1986, 26) makes the point that Palestinian growers increased their agricultural repertoire with the coming of Greeks

climate and soil of Palestine appears to be well suited to growing grapevines. It has sufficient heat and rainfall in most areas (Ross 1962).

Incursions and Invasions

We shift now from geographical to political considerations, from microcosmic Galilee to macrocosmic Palestine. As a political territory Palestine is not easy to define because of its long history, the various incursions it experienced during that long history and the boundary changes of its component polities that frequently resulted. The *New Moody Atlas of the Bible* contains a protracted treatment of "Palestine" (Beitzel 2009, 31-39). The treatment includes the important question of whether the name, "Palestine" was perceived only as a "political" designation traceable to the Roman Emperor Hadrian or whether it was also conceived as a "discreet geographical entity" and described as such in earlier Assyrian and Egyptian court documents.[18] Whatever Hadrian's political intention was, Palestine as a discreet geographical entity is the more acceptable and sustainable perception – then and now (Beitzel, 31).

It was noted above that Palestine, in all its component regions, endured various incursions by foreign powers (Josephus, *Ant*. 1987, passim; Wright, Murphy and Fitzmyer 1990, 75:1-193). Both Assyrians and Babylonians invaded Jewish Palestine. The first invasion by the Assyrians led to the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel. The second invasion by the Babylonians led to the exile of many Judeans until Cyrus, King of Persia

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and Romans. One wonders whether agricultural technology was not similarly affected by the writings of Cato, Varro, and Columella (Applebaum 1987, 646-56).

[18] Beitzel provides the Assyrian name for Palestine as *Pilištu* or *Palaštu*. For other usage and his references, cf. 278n49. These same words may also refer to Philistines who inhabited the coastlands of Palestine. Whether *Erezt-Israel* can be referred to today as "Palestine" is a contentious issue.

and conqueror of the Babylonians, allowed their return to their homeland some 70 years later. In turn Cyrus would be defeated by the Macedonian Alexander the Great.

Alexander the Great, the Macedonian, conquered virtually the entire breadth of Asia Minor. The impact of his conquest was a tidal wave of change known today as *Hellenization* which greatly affected the Palestinian region.[19] Hellenization began with Alexander and its impact continued through the descendants of his successors, both the Seleucid branch (which ruled in Syria and the east generally) and the Ptolemaic branch (which ruled in Egypt and the west generally). Among other effects, Hellenization was a phenomenon that brought with it a *lingua franca* (the koiné Greek) useable throughout the entire region of Asia Minor (including Palestine), an arrangement of government and trade with its *polis*, coinage, land ownership, and patron-client systems (all affecting Palestine, at least to some extent), a history of warfare and competition between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid opponents who, at the early death of Alexander, coveted the empire left behind (including Palestine). The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, provides us with an ancient historical narrative of much of what transpired in Palestine, particularly from the time of Alexander the Great down to the destruction of Jerusalem in CE 70 (See also, Van De Mieroop 2007, 299-301; Morkot 1996, 110-134; Wright, Murphy and Fitzmyer 1990, 75:126-144).[20]

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[19] For an in-depth treatment of Hellenism, consult M. Rostovtzeff. 1941. *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. For how Hellenism affected Judaea and Palestine, cf. Martin Goodman *The Ruling Class of Judaea* 1987, 17-19. Seán Freyne has a chapter on the impact of Hellenism on Galilee (*Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E. A Study in Second Temple Judaism* 1980, 22-56).

[20] Josephus' observations are scattered in the several volumes he wrote: his *Life*, the *Antiquities of the Jews*, the *Wars of the Jews*, and *Against Apion* (The Works of Josephus 1987). The titles are shortened throughout this study: *Life; Ant.; Wars; Apion*.

For the period of about a century, between the years 166-63 BCE, the Jewish Hasmonean family held hegemony over the "promised land" as ethnarchs or kings as a consequence of the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids. It was Alexander Jannaeus, chiefly, who consolidated various conquests and invasions of surrounding Palestinian territories by John Hyrcanus I and Aristobolus I, his predecessors, and cobbled together a Jewish nation comprised of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee under his control. As king and high priest he ruled over most of what was known as ancient Israel from 103-76 BCE (Beitzel 2009, Map 92, 218). He was succeeded as ruler from 76-69 BCE by his widow, Queen Alexandra (Wright, Murphy and Fitzmyer 1990, 75:140-156).

A second, equally important element in the history of Palestine after Alexander the Great was the Roman entry into Jewish Palestine by Pompey and his Roman army in 63 BCE. It began with an invitation from two competing brothers, Hyrcanus II and Aristobolus II, who jostled each other for succession at the death of Queen Alexandra in 69 BCE. Pompey was asked to "decide" which of Alexandra's two sons should be king. In the end Pompey decided that Judea should be part of the Roman province of Syria (Josephus, *Ant.* XIV:3; Wright, Murphy and Fitzmyer 1990, ibid.). And Pompey's Roman successors made other arrangements for Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. In the approximately 100 years that afterwards transpired between a Roman incursion into Palestine and the subsequent Roman destruction of Jerusalem c. CE 70-72 (and biblical Judaism with it[21]) portions of Palestine were to know three "client kings" – Antigonus, Herod the Great and Herod Agrippa I – and a host of "ethnarchs" and "tetrarchs" of its variously apportioned entities. (Wright, Murphy

[21] Goodman, too, claims as much (1987, 4).

and Fitzmyer 1990, 75:145-193). Herod the Great, client-king and Roman vassal, had a significant impact on Palestine as we shall see when we consider land ownership.

This is, admittedly, a brief description of the historical and political "context" of Palestine, and within it the small portion called Galilee. Galilee interests us because Gospel accounts indicate that Galilee served as the base of operations for Jesus of Nazareth. It was the land in which he grew up, whose culture and practices he learned from its people, whose language he spoke, and in which he labored as a carpenter or construction worker.[22] It was in Galilee that he healed and preached using parables. It was from Galilee that he traveled to/into Bashan and Gilead in the Transjordan and Phoenicia, Samaria, and Judah in the Cisjordan (Beitzel 2009, Map 3, p. 33; Map 103, pp. 244-245 – see gospel citations on Map 103). It was on just such a trip – according to Matthew a final one that would lead to his execution by crucifixion – that Jesus traveled "away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan" (19:1). On this trip Jesus narrated the parable about the "Owner of the Vineyard" (Matt 20:1-16). Matthew's gospel contains this parable Jesus narrated as preacher in which a landowner possesses a vineyard for which he seeks, throughout the course of an entire day, to employ a large labor force. Jesus likened this situation to the Kingdom of God ("heavens") which he preached. On the basis of verisimilitude, one can assume that such situations were frequent enough occurrences in the Galilee and with which Jesus' hearers were familiar so that Jesus could make his point when his listeners made their comparisons and drew their conclusions.

[22] Although Jesus has traditionally been identified as a carpenter (see Matt 13:55), the Greek word τέκτων is more accurately translated as construction worker or builder, one who works in wood as well as in stone (Arndt and Gingrich 1952).

Agrarian Societies

In the era we are considering and writing about from our perspective of industrial and post-industrial societies, the agrarian societies that prevailed in ancient Palestine and Galilee and, indeed, throughout Asia Minor and the entire Mediterranean basin hold a deep fascination for us moderns. We are interested in the way people then lived, how they lived, what resources they had, their creativity and inventiveness. How did they communicate? How did they legislate? How did they govern? How did nations relate, peoples, families, and individuals? What values did cultures hold in common and, disparately, what distinguished them? How did people apply those values and to what extent did they hold them, be willing to die for them? How did they think, and feel, and believe? How were they organized, if at all? Did their societies have "classes" like we seem to have, "proletariats" as some postulate, or "castes" like some of our societies? Were there "rich" and "poor" and, if so, what causes led to such differences?

Those who have studied these questions and similar ones find few and uneven literary and archeological sources that can offer illumination to these questions relative to the societies and cultures they are examining.[23] The more ancient the culture or society, the murkier and more shadowy our understanding of their accomplishments are (Harland 2002). Museums throughout the world witness to our desire to protect what we have salvaged and saved and our purpose ultimately is to understand what we have for display.

This much we have learned to date: ancients were as aggressive as we moderns are and attempted to extend their power and influence over vast areas as readily as we moderns

[23] Lenski and Weber speculate to a very large extent on why societies developed as they did, making use of occasional supportive ancient resources. At the same time, it must be confessed that their inferences are very plausible (Lenski 1984). Weber had the advantage of having studied Roman agriculture in Roman law (Weber 2008).

seem to do. In our eagerness to understand, our scholars speculate on the values that prevailed in ancient times which led to differing and competing social systems (Harland 2002, 515-517). Scholarly research has uncovered literate peoples that were aggressive and left records of their aggression and aggrandizement (Rostovtzeff 1957; Lenski 1984; Van De Mieroop 2007).

Landownership in Palestine

From this generalized background of ancient agrarian societies, we turn to our primary goal: the analysis and description of Galilean viticulture as it applies to a "high context" communication. Now we need to supply additional contexts as background to understanding the parable of the Owner of the Vineyard (Matt 20:1-16). We briefly consider land ownership in Palestine and Galilee as heirs to land ownership systems introduced during the earlier political eras. We consider initially the sources from which we derive our information. We also need to examine their applicability to Galilee within ancient Palestine. This portion will be extended because the parable of interest provides so little by way of context, as is the case with most Palestinian economic and social questions (Harland 2002, 522-525).

Even a cursory examination of the text of Matt 20:1-16 tells the reader something significant about the "householder."[24] He must have held extensive property if that property he called his vineyard required the householder to make five trips during the course of a single day to find an adequate number of workers. A question addressed to the

[24] See Appendix 1 for a presentation of the text: Greek in the left column, English in the right column. The *Catholic Comparative New Testament* makes use of 8 ecclesiastically approved Catholic translations of the New Testament text of Matt 20:1-16 (Hiesberger 2005). "Householder" appears twice, "landowner" five times, and "man" once. It would seem that among these sources "landowner" is the preferred English translation for the Greek οἰκοδεσπότης; but see "master of the house" (Arndt and Gingrich 1952, 560).

group hired last even seems to suggest visits to multiple hiring venues; the owner would otherwise have seen the idle workers if he had repeatedly visited a single venue (Matt 20:6). And even then the gospel reader never learns whether the householder obtained a sufficiency of day-laborers to complete the task for which he hired them. Biblical legal practice itself explains why we need to terminate all such wondering and speculation. Day's end (not task's end!) requires payment according to the prescriptions found in Lev 19:13 ("…you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning") and elsewhere.[25] And it is the payment itself, from the last hired to the first hired, that concludes the parable and may turn out to be the key to its comprehension.

Because he complies with Levitical law, that fact alone induces the reader to believe that the "householder" is Jewish rather than a Hellene or a Roman holding property in Palestine though, of course, the evidence is not compelling. Whether, in actuality, there were Roman or Hellene estate owners in Galilee, or more widely in the Levant, at the time of Jesus is exceptionally hard to determine. Though such villas probably existed before, archeology reveals the existence of Roman villas after the fall of Jerusalem (Edelstein 2015). A Hellene or Roman estate owner could have easily complied with the custom of his Jewish neighbors.

Furthermore, even if the task itself for which the day-laborers were hired is not finished, the morrow will see the same procedure and activities repeated, at least until the task is done.

What might such a vineyard task or tasks be? (Look carefully; the gospel never specifies what work is to be done!) What vineyard task would require so many workers

[25] See also: Deut 24:14-15; Jer 22:13; Mal 3:5; Tob 4:14; Jas 5:4. Cf. Philo *On the Virtues* XV:88.

whose task is unnamed? Or, instead, might it not have been the vast extent of the vineyard itself that required so many laborers to do a seasonal task? As we shall see, most interpreters simply assume that the task was the grape harvest. But was it? Does the text provide the reader with any clues? Could the need for day-laborers be due to some other seasonal viticultural task(s)?

This parable of the Kingdom of God incorporates a "figure," that of a presumably law-abiding Jewish landowner with an extensive vineyard (though its size in area is never indicated nor is its location) who requires a large labor force for some reason that the text does not supply.

In a gospel parable, a "figure" is a kind of "Everyman." What then do we know about land ownership in Palestine? What can we learn? What features may we obtain to fill in details that will move a reader to knowledge beyond mere caricature to a well-rounded figure that will provide clues for understanding a parable of the Kingdom of God? The reader needs to be provided with some realistic context.

Land Ownership in the Ancient Near East

Ancients looked upon land tenure as the source of wealth. Various ancient rulers tended to claim ownership of all land (Lenski 1984, 210-219). This reasoning was particularly well-illustrated by the Pharaohs of Egypt. They considered the land of Egypt as theirs by divine right (Fiensy 1991, 21). The Ptolemaics who followed them were no different (Hengel 1973, 19). In describing the situation which extended as far as the Ptolemaic influence reached (which included Palestine), Martin Hengel had this to say:

> By far the largest part of the land was the direct possession of the king and was worked by free tenants, the royal peasants, under the strict supervision of royal officials. The royal land also provided those portions of land which were assigned

> to military settlers or given as gifts to high officials like …. However, both could be repossessed by the king at any time as they were his property (Hengel 1973, 19).

The Zenon Papyri disclose extensive Ptolemaic economic activity in Palestine during Hellenistic times. Zenon appears to have been an Egyptian land factor or administrator who traveled to Palestine from Egypt to oversee and manage properties for Apollonius[26] who himself was minister of finance (διοικῆτες) under Ptolemy II. From the papyri thus far examined and transcribed, it appears that Zenon's travels on behalf of his superior included Judea, Bashan, Galilee, and Samaria (Aharoni, et al. 2011, 141). Interestingly, one of the sites he visited in the third century BCE was a "wine-producing estate of a Greek officer" at Beth-anath (ibid.).[27]

The activities of the Ptolemaics have been studied by a number of sociologists, economists, and anthropologists (Oakman 1986; Applebaum 1987; Hengel 1973; Fiensy 1991; Freyne 1980; Pastor 1997). All have commented on the aristocrat-enriching Ptolemaic system of land-holding in Egypt, Palestine and even in Galilee. They are familiar with its tax-farming, its monopolistic profiteering, and its melding of law and statute with the interests of the elite. Most of these men have also studied this legacy as it was transmitted and often merely slightly modified by the Seleucids, Hasmoneans, and the Romans with their Herodian contemporaries and allies. After all, who wants to mess with what works to one's advantage? We are interested in learning whatever we can about landownership as it might have been practiced in Palestine, or better, in Galilee.

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[26] This man was the διοικῆτης, or land manager/supervisor/major domo of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (ibid, 19). He is the "high official…" referred to in the citation from Hengel above.

[27] John S. Kloppenborg (2006) publishes an extensive collection of papyri and epigraphic documentation (for an overview cf. XX-XXIX). See also "Citizen Science Meets Ancient Egypt" for current information on the state of the El-Fayum/Philadelphia papyri finds in the *National Geographic (History)*, pp. 4-5, July 2016.

Taking advantage of a useful land-size division found among Roman estates by H. Dohr which seems to work well for Palestine, we distinguish the following: 1) small freeholdings or subsistence farms, 2) medium-sized estates, and 3) large estates which can include imperial or crown lands (Fiensy 1991; Dohr source cited on p. 62n25). This was an era in which land ownership throughout the Mediterranean basis was passing from the freeholders into hands of the various elites (Rostovtzeff 1941, 1181).

Freeholders

Jack Pastor (1997, 25) provides us with useful details about the sizes of subsistence farms in Palestine, noting however, that "literary sources are few" and hardly "illustrative of the common situation". His method of approach is to determine the size of a plot of land necessary to keep a person alive and working: slaves and soldiers chiefly (first making use of the observations on the matter by ancients, Cato and Polybius – and citing Oakman, 61). For a year's subsistence, two *iugera* (1.3+ *acres* approx.) are deemed sufficient for a single adult. Pastor notes that Oakman himself arrives at 6 *dunams* (.6 *hectares* and 1.5 *acres*) per person (ibid.) Freed from subsistence considerations and relying on Feliks (no source provided), the size of freeholding plot sizes range from 2 *dunams* (½ *acre*) to 23 *dunams* (5.7 *acres*). With the archeological efforts of Shimon Dar to determine freeholding plot sizes in Palestine, Pastor finds some slight increase: some plot findings range from 39-45 *dunams* (9.5-11 *acres*) in one area and 30-50 *dunams* (7.5 -12.4 *acres*) in another area (25; cf. his sources on p. 212). One has to recall that "subsistence" now means not merely maintaining the life and ability of the farmer himself to work but also of his wife and children and even an extended family. Pastor also recalls Applebaum's archeological research in Samaria where he contends that 25 *dunams* (6.2 *acres*) may have been the

average size of a holding or plot (25). Finally, he notes other archeological surveys and their results: Orman in the Golan, 20 *dunams* (c. 5 *acres*); Golomb and Kedar in Galilee, 16 *dunams* (c. 4 *acres*) (Pastor, 25-29).

Now a vineyard is only a portion of a freeholding. Its chief portion is destined for grain production (wheat and barley) for these were the subsistence staples for the people and for having the wherewithal to pay various taxes; then a lesser portion for the olive orchard for oil; and finally grapevines for wine as foodstuff priorities, with space for a vegetable garden. Thus even when the average acreage is determined through archeological investigation and keeping present the need for crop rotation, based on grape production per unit measure, one has to presume that the acreage devoted to viticulture ranged from 5-15% of the total (but see Applebaum's citation of R. Johanan's advice: "Let your holdings be divided into three parts, a third grain, a third olives, and a third vines" found – with source – on page 651 in n. 5).[28] Management and cultivation of such small plots easily lay within the purview of the owner and his family; they could easily handle the workload. There was no need to hire day laborers. Vineyards for such freeholdings did not demand as much labor as larger holdings did – a freeholder could even hire himself out as a day-laborer to landowners visiting the ἀγορά (Matt 20: 1-15).

Oakman and Fiensy focus on the ways the Hellenic and later land possession systems worked against the small, the weak, the poor peasant class to the advantage of the

[28] Oakman does not treat this aspect of agricultural production, being more concerned with distribution and its impact on the small landowner. For a more extended theoretical treatment of production and possible proportions of a small freeholding devoted to vineyard, see Appendix II. Applebaum, instead, devotes a number of pages to consideration of the various agricultural crops planted, the various locations associated with crop types, their provenance and transference among Mediterranean regions, irrigation and climate factors, and even some observations on the technology available to a Palestinian farmer (646-656). Cato's observations on the equipment and personnel needed for a 100 *iugera* vineyard (66.1 *acres*) leads to the conclusion that to maintain even a small vineyard would most likely exceed a small freeholder's resources unless there was some kind of village co-operative (LCL 283:25-27).

wealthy elite (Fiensy 1991, chap. 2; Oakman 1986, chap. 2). Peasants were the majority of the populace, planted firmly and dwelling on their small, often ancestral, plots, or in nearby villages from whence they might find employment as tenants or as day-laborers.[29]

A telling comment made by Fiensy states the case succinctly: "Fewer and fewer people owned more and more [land] in Palestine" (24). Power and privilege prevailed. Here it is useful to recall Lenski's (Lenski 1984, 44) first Law of distribution: "Men will share the product of their labors to the extent required to insure the survival and continued productivity of those others whose actions are necessary or beneficial to themselves." It is almost immediately followed by a second to account for surplus: "Power will determine the distribution of nearly all the surplus possessed by a society" (ibid., 44-45). These two statements are classic representations of what transpired most frequently in ancient Palestinian agricultural society once Mosaic Law had been attenuated by Hellenistic and Roman Law.

How did freeholders lose their land? Oakman (1986) devotes an entire chapter detailing the process and what follows is greatly indebted to him ("The General Character of Economic Distribution in the Palestine of Jesus," chap. 2).

First of all, tenancy here is not the issue for tenants were not landowners. There were two kinds of tenants: 1) sharecroppers whose risk in a venture was shared with the property owner who received a variable rent based on amount produced; 2) tenants properly

[29] "Most people lived in villages…" (Pastor, 25). Pastor cites an Israeli researcher, Y. Portugali, who studied the western portion of the Jezreel Valley over the centuries and used a number, 45 persons per *dunam*, as the basis of his calculations for settlement patterns for villages, towns, cities within the territory. He then multiplied that number by the number of archeological sites discovered in the territory to project population figures for the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. His idea was inventive and creative, but no one knows for sure if all the ancient sites have been found (ibid.). To provide some scope for our understanding, a large field of a length slightly longer than an American football field and twice its width would, by this calculation, serve as habitat for 45 (adult?) persons.

so-called who paid a fixed rate to the owner and took all the risk. In the first case, if rains failed or insects plagued the land, both sharecropper and owner shared the misery. In the second case, if rains failed or insects plagued the land, the tenant was obligated to “pay the rent”! There were no excuses. Oftentimes, former freeholders became tenants or wage laborers, reduced to this penury as a result of having their properties confiscated to pay debt (to see how the process worked in a different era, see Pastor, 32).

Apart from failed rains and insect plagues, what factors made small land ownership so hazardous to the Palestinian farmer? A number of factors play into a very complex answer.

In part, small freehold loss is due to the nature of farming which exhausts the land. Unless land lies fallow to recuperate, as most Mediterranean peoples were aware, it will produce less and less (Columella, LCL 361:145, 155, etc.). The soil needs replenishment which is accomplished through organic growth, though it can also be strengthened by fertilization (which ancients practiced largely through manuring). Ancient Hebrew freeholders had little land to begin with and so a portion of what they had was fallow every other year (Applebaum, 652). Family subsistence became unfeasible from farm production alone when it could not produce the foodstuffs necessary to sustain life. Furthermore, what little they had had to lie fallow every seventh year (Morgenstern 1962).

In part, an increase in mouths to feed also led to impoverishment. Each additional person added to a family circle had to be fed from a farm plot whose size remained a constant. Oakman calculated that about 1⅓ acre of wheat would supply one adult per year. With plots ranging from 3 to 6 acres or so, the same Oakman reminds us that “these plot-

sizes represent actual peasant holdings" (61-62). Archeology confirms his remarks (Pastor, 25-29).

In part, simple farm maintenance helped reduce the subsistence available and added to the impoverishment. Not only did the freeholder have to supply his own seed for sowing, he also had to feed his livestock throughout the year (Columella, LCL 408:129). He could be inventive in this respect but fodder had to come from somewhere ("*nihil ex nihilo"*).

Other costs, additionally, reduced the subsistence available from farm produce. Apart from what he could fabricate himself with his wife and family, the farmer had to obtain whatever tools he needed through purchase or barter. He had to participate in his extended family socially, involving cult and various family celebrations: weddings, funerals, etc. All these combined costs ("replacement, household, and religious or ceremonial") have been reckoned by Oakman at 30% "at the very least" (66).

Lastly, and perhaps most expensively, he had to pay taxes on his produce. Such taxes could be direct (poll tax) or indirect ("tolls, duties, market, inheritance, etc.") and ate away at the subsistence the farmer sought for himself (ibid, 67). Where he borrowed money to meet his obligations, the only guarantee for his indebtedness was the land, a member of his family, or himself – "an act of despair by a man hopelessly in debt" (Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. 1962, 313). Who were the money-lenders? The wealthy elite.

Mid-sized Estates

Except to remind ourselves that freeholders who, along with the landless, frequently hired themselves out as day-laborers to supplement their pitiable revenues and had sufficient cause for grievance against the wealthy elite, this descriptive-analytical study

will focus now on the larger landowner who most frequently constituted the "wealthy elite". To make sense of the parable one has to have recourse to larger holdings, to examining mid-sized holdings, to considering "estates." What can be said about private holdings that were neither royal estates whether held by the king, or his family, his aristocrats, or gentrified officials nor the small family-run, freehold, ancestral properties? What, instead, about the mid-sized estates held in Palestine by wealthy Jew and Gentile alike? What information can we glean from literary and archeological sources? What about that segment of estates calculated to range between 80-500 *iugera* (c. 60-375 *acres*, 25-150 *hectares*, 70-550 *aroura*, 250-1500 *dunams*)?

Citing H. Dohr, Fiensy notes that there were two larger categories of land ownership: medium-sized estates and large estates. Mid-sized estates ranged from 50-315 acres while large estates (including royal estates) were greater than 315 acres in size (Fiensy 1991, 24).[30] What seems to be some common characteristics of the larger farm or estate or οἶκος are the following: 1) their owners most often did not reside on the property itself but tended to reside elsewhere, particularly in cities; 2) their properties were managed by bailiffs, supervisors, overseers (Latin: *vilicus*; Greek: οἰκονόμος, ἐπίτροπος, προεστηκώς); 3) those who worked on these estates were: slaves (Greek: παιδάριον, σῶμα, παῖς), lessors, tenants or leaseholders (μεμισθωμένος), and laborers including day-laborers (ἐργάτης, σῶμα) (Kloppenborg 2006, 550-583; Hamel 1990, 152).

According to a number of scholars of ancient Near Eastern anthropology, one phenomenon that prevailed among the various peoples of the Mediterranean basin was a

[30] See n. 25 (Fiensy, 62) which makes reference to Dohr's Ph. D. dissertation on estates in the writings of Cato and Varro. This note indicates that it was, in turn, cited by K.D. White in *Roman Farming* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970) pp. 385-87.

sense of "shame and honor" (Malina 2001, 27-56; Neyrey 2008, Chap. 5; Fiensy 1991, 24). Thus, if one was an estate holder, it was apparently *de rigeur* not to labor on one's own estate, shameful in fact; to keep face one had to employ a bailiff, or steward to manage one's property while as landowner one enjoyed the good life in a distant city ("socially or geographically" according to Hamel, 152.). This is particularly true if one owned the largest estates, particularly royal estates. Thus, the landowner in our target parable is, to a degree, "shameless" because he takes a personal interest in his estate, even to the extent of personally going out five times to hire day laborers. He follows the advice of Cato and Columella, and he is unusual doing so.[31] His practice varies from the usual by 180 degrees. This practice is quite remarkable and should be kept in mind when we examine the parable more closely. It is for this remarkable fact that one may assume that the landowner of the parable is most probably a newly-made mid-sized landowner.

Royal Lands

Royal estates have been identified in Palestine. There are about eleven in number and they have been mapped (Fiensy, 26).[32] Their existence has been documented both in literature and in archeological remains. It seems that some royal estates go back to Persian times. While these specific estates are not always literarily referenced for each specific historical period (Ptolemaic, Seleucid, Hasmonean, Herodian, Roman), the mere fact that the property remained in the same area and is testified to by archeological ruins strongly

[31] Cato and Columella both strongly advised estate owners to reside on their properties or at least to visit them frequently (Cato, LCL 283:7; Columella, LCL 361:13-15, 39). Romans used slaves on their estates as the cheapest source of labor. For Cato, slaves were merely chattel and day-laborers were an added, often unnecessary, expense (LCL 283:9). Columella advised a more enlightened, even compassionate, treatment of slaves, having discovered that this enlightened treatment resulted in greater productivity and thus more profit and less discontentment among the slaves (Columella LCL 361:91-95).

[32] For a more detailed review of relevant literature and archeological findings, see Fiensy, pp. 25-48.

suggests their continuance over time and supports the contention that winners took estates over from the losers, for "these were the best lands" (Fiensy, 25).

Call it culture, custom, practice or whatever, Herod the Great was notorious in his adherence to Ptolemaic Hellenistic observance, particularly when it served his interests. Applebaum ("Economic Life in Palestine" 1987, 657-658) culls a number of citations from Josephus who describes Herod's land acquisition practices: royal domain claims, inheritance, usurpation, confiscation, and appanage.[33] He presents evidence of the existence of a large Herodian estate that was located in Galilee in the western part of the Esdraelon Valley (658). Josephus provides some detail about the wealth Herod left at his death to his remaining family members and to Caesar and his wife, Julia (Josephus, *Ant*. 1987, XVII:188-190).

As Fiensy astutely observes, crown lands naturally were the choicest (Fiensy 1991, 25). The large estate in the "bread basket of Israel" (see above, p. 10) had been an estate of the Hasmoneans, and most probably the Persians, the Ptolemaics, and the Seleucids earlier on before it belonged to Herod the Great. Josephus provides us with the text of a Roman senatorial decree which treats of this precise property at almost this precise period (48-45 BCE):

> It is also the pleasure of the senate as to the villages which are in the great plain [i.e., the Jezreel/Esdraelon valley], which Hyrcanus and his forefathers formerly possessed, that Hyrcanus and the Jews have them [i.e., the villages], with the same privileges with which they formerly had them also (*Ant*. XIV:207).

The reason for the senatorial decree was to legitimize possession of this tract of land which had, no doubt, belonged to the Seleucids and to the Ptolemaics before it belonged to the Hasmoneans and subsequently to Herod. Furthermore, Fiensy notes the existence of the

[33] See, for example, *Ant*. XVII:305, 307; *Ant*. XV: 96; *Wars* I:362; *Wars* XVI:291.

Hephzibah Stele, an archeological find discovered in 1960 near Beth Shean/Scythopolis, dated to 201-195 BCE, that provides evidence that the eastern end of the same valley was given as a grant by Antiochus III to one of his satellite Seleucid henchmen. Its language replicates some of the Roman senatorial decree in that "ownership of villages" belongs to this στρατηγός (Fiensy 1991, 28-29). Thus the practice of owning tracts of land that included entire villages common to the Ptolemaic and Seleucid eras was still in use in Palestine in the Roman era and under their dominion more than two hundred years after the Hellenes came into power. In his observations, Fiensy additionally notes that "[such] private estates included not only vast tracts of land, but also in some sense the people called [λάοι] living in the villages who would work the land" (29; cf. Applebaum 1987, 656-661).

Ownership of land with villages on them is a feature discussed by M. Rostovtzeff in his *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* in which he claims that the Roman optic on such land possession was different from the Greek one.[34] He speaks of several types of land tenure. Besides city (πόλις) ownership, tracts of land were held by the emperor, his family members, aristocrats, temples and sanctuaries. He notes that "the largest part of Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria remained, as before [under the Hellenes] a land of villages and peasants" (Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* 1957, 256-257).

Since the landowner in our pericope contracts with the first group of day-laborers, it seems that his estate does not qualify as a royal estate, nor does it seem to be a temple or sanctuary holding for the workers are not tenants or slaves nor do they seem to be impressed

[34] Romans held that the villages were attached to a city and held citizenship in that city; Hellenes/Greeks held that the inhabitants of these villages were simply occupants "(πάροικοι or κάτοικοι)" and had no citizenship rights. The situation was a "source of friction between villagers and city aristocracy." (ibid. 256-257).

labor as would be the case were he the owner of the surrounding villages from which he draws his groups of workers.

Having completed a descriptive overview of landownership in Palestine for the sake of providing ourselves with a context to the parable, it seems useful now to examine how that land was put to use.

Ancient Viticulture: Sources

What are the resources from which moderns draw their knowledge of ancient viticultural and vinicultural practice? What can be said about their authors?

A brief foray into the digitalized version of the Loeb Classical Library reveals several individuals who wrote books on agriculture in ancient times.[35] Portions of their extant treatises covered the topic of vineyard cultivation quite extensively.

Cato the Elder (Marcus Porcius Cato, 234-149 BCE) wrote *de Agricultura* ("On Farming") several centuries prior to the early 1st century CE – the era that is the focus of this study (*Britannica* 2005, s.v.). His book covered viticulture as just one of the tasks a

[35] The digitalized version of the Loeb Classical Library (LCL) is an on-line subscription service of the Harvard University Press (http://www.loebclassics.com) which includes an expanded digital search feature. A number of ancient authors, Latin and Greek, make references to "wine", "vineyards", "grapes", "grapevines", "farms" and "agriculture." A digital search of these same words in the Loeb Classical Library of its literary works (produced in ancient "agricultural" cultures) would lead to an almost endless list of references. Research was, therefore, limited to book titles only in which these words appear. Cicero, for example, claims in his *De Senectute* (LCL 154:65) to have written a book on agriculture. If so, it no longer exists. Vergil's *Georgics* is a poetic paean to the bucolic life with occasional references to viticulture but it too was ignored. The Greek, Hesiod, wrote a little on agriculture and predated the Latins by several centuries and is often quoted by Latin writers. An exception was made in the case of Egyptian papyri. Rather than use the LCL search engine, recourse, instead, was made to the exceptional work of John S. Kloppenborg who collected and published virtually all papyri which made reference to land tenancy, viticulture and viniculture in an appendix to his study on the "tenants in the vineyard" which appeared in 2006 (Kloppenborg, Appendix I). However, a recent article claims that by 2012 only some 5,000 of the half million papyri discovered had been transcribed by that date. Perhaps more than 100,000 have been transcribed since as a result of a cooperative citizen initiative but these are not yet found in the LCL, (*National Geographic (History)*, July 2016, 4-5).

farmer should generally deal with. On agricultural practice Cato often cites other ancient authors that predated him and whose works are no longer extant (Cato, LCL 283).

Following Cato chronologically, the next major author who wrote on agricultural matters was Marcus Lucius Varro (116-27 BCE). He was a widely read scholar and a prolific writer whose only extant books are *de lingua Latina* ("On the Latin Language") and *Res Rustica* ("Farm Topics"). He wrote the latter for his wife, Fundania when he was almost 80 years old and intended it to serve her as a guide for managing her farm, cattle, and poultry, after his demise (LCL 283:161).

After Varro, the author who wrote most extensively and, in my judgment, most intelligently and enthusiastically about farming was Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella who was born in Gades (Cadiz) Spain c. CE 4 Much of his early youth was spent at a farm of his uncle, Marcus Columella, described as an expert farmer, in the Roman province of Baetica in Spain (LCL 361:xv). He studied law, served in the Roman military in Syria as a military tribune in the Sixth *Legio Ferrata* and died c. CE 75-78, it is presumed, at Taranto, Italy from an inscription found there.[36] The title of his principal work is *de re rustica*, "On the Subject of Farming". Columella also wrote *de arboribus*, "On Trees". A question arises whether the present LCL text might be a conflated version of the two works (ibid. xxiii). *De re rustica* is described by the editor/translator as "the most comprehensive and systematic of all treatises of Roman writers on agricultural affairs" (ibid. xv).[37]

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[36] (Columella, LCL 361 xv-xxi). The inscription reads: *L. Ivnio L. F. Gal. Moderato Colvmellae Trib. Mil. Leg. VI Ferratae* (i.e., dedicated to: *Lucius Junius, son of Lucius – Galeria – Moderatus Columella, Military Tribune, VI*th *Ironclad Legion*). The town of Gades belonged to the *Gal*eria tribe which furnished troops for the Sixth Legio Ferrata (ibid.).

[37] A description of the contents is given here: "The first book contains general directions regarding the choice of land, the water supply, the arrangement of farm buildings, and the distribution of various tasks among the farm staff. The second deals with agriculture proper, the ploughing and enrichment of the soil, and the care of various crops. The third, fourth, and fifth books are devoted to the cultivation, grafting, and pruning of fruit trees and shrubs, the vine and the olive. The sixth contains instructions for selecting,

There is a fourth writer, Pliny the Elder, whose writings on agriculture slightly post-date our period of interest. However, his works too contain references to lost works and frequently cites the three authors named above. The book he wrote on viticulture and the culture of the olive tree is Book XIV of his *Historia Naturalis*, ("Natural History") which is a virtual encyclopedia. It is most useful for learning the science and understanding that ancients held about a wide variety of things.[38]

Presentation Models

How does one present the subject of viticulture to readers with small familiarity with this topic and with agriculture generally? The best way I know of is by making use of some organizing principle to which detailed explanations and descriptions can be fixed (Carney 1975, 1-46). One such very useful principle is the annual calendar of seasons. Ancients performed their viticultural tasks by observing the seasons of the year: winter, spring, summer and fall. Each time of the year brought about its own tasks and activities. We will look at three calendars: all are ancient, but we also have one which is a modern compilation from ancient sources.

Similarly, another organizing principle that can prove useful is to look at viticultural activities from the point of view of the agency involved. All ancient writers seem to describe a threefold differentiation: owner, supervisor (overseer, steward), and worker –

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breeding, and rearing cattle, horses, and mules, together with a discourse on veterinary medicine. The seventh continues the subject with reference to small domestic animals, sheep, goats, swine, and dogs. The eighth has to do with the management of poultry and fish ponds. The ninth treats similarly of bees. The tenth, an experiment in hexameters…. [T]here was added an eleventh book containing a discussion of the duties of a farm overseer, a *Calendarium Rusticum,* in which the times and seasons for various kinds of farm labour are fixed in connection with the risings and settings of the stars, and a long chapter on gardening to supplement the treatise in verse. The twelfth book, written for the overseer's wife and defining her special duties, contains recipes for the manufacture of various kinds of wine and for the pickling and preserving of vegetables and fruits." (Columella, LCL 361:xvii-xviii).

[38] Cf. LCL 370. Pliny the Elder died in A.D. 79, pursuing his scientific curiosity initially and then seeking to serve his fellows at the eruption of Vesuvius. Cf. Letters of Pliny the Younger, LCL 55: VI, 16.

generally from the owner's point of view.[39] Such an organizing principle, superimposed upon an annual calendar of viticultural tasks, would serve as a helpful matrix for separating differentiated activities over the course of a year (Carney 1975, 1-46). Our parable, as well, names three agents: the owner, the steward, and the workers, all of whom match what ancients had to say about agents.

One significant difference, though, between the parable and what ancient writers have to say about vineyard workers needs additional exploration. Ancient writers speak about specialized workers who are named after the skills that are required: e.g., pruners, vinedressers, irrigators, etc. Some viticultural tasks can be done by any able-bodied worker while other specific viticultural tasks should only be done by workers that are skilled and expertly trained. Roman vineyards most often made use of slaves who could and did receive such training and performed the same task year after year under the slave owner's supervision (Cato, LCL 283 passim). The parable only speaks of workers obtained in the market place. No inquiry of any kind by the vineyard owner into the skills required is ever mentioned. Thus, it seems reasonable to believe that the landowner simply sought able-bodied workers to do vineyard tasks that required no special expertise or training. This element of labor-related skill serves as a third organizing principle; it is a third dimension that needs to be considered. In the simplest way of putting it, does the particular vineyard task require a skilled or an unskilled worker? Conversely, we can make the assumption that the landowner sought only able-bodied workers for his vineyard, helping us to narrow the

[39] In some cases, reference is also made to the wives or consorts of these people. This is particularly true when slaves were used as workers. An example would be the instructions given to the wife of the overseer or supervisor on how to concoct various flavored wines. See above, 32n37.

kind of urgent vineyard task they were hired for since skilled workers were not sought (Carney 1975, 347-362).

Finally, ancient writers on viticulture sometimes made generic distinctions among the various related viticultural activities.[40] It is to the reader's benefit to keep these in mind. They have to do with: 1) the land itself (location, selection, types of acquisition and possession, terrain, tax considerations); 2) land treatment (soil types, fertilization, boundaries, and protection); 3) planting/sowing vines; 4) caring for/trellising vines; 5) disease/insect prevention; 6) harvesting; 7) processing (winemaking, fermentation, bottling, storing); 8) marketing (shipping). Common to virtually every ancient source who writes about viticulture are the strong admonitions to protect the vineyard and its harvest from thievery by humans and by animals. Israel has its watchtowers (Isa 5:1-7) and towers.[41]

Agricultural Calendars

Among ancient sources consulted for this descriptive-analytic study, I have found three agricultural calendars. The most ancient one is called the Gezer Calendar (Pritchard 1969, 320; Hochberg-Halton 1992, I:817). It has been dated to 925 BCE Though it gives a year twelve months and provides nine agricultural tasks, it does not name the month in which the specific tasks take place. These one must infer. Such an inference was given in

[40] E.g., Cato, LCL 283:3-7,

[41] Fiensy reports on archeological research conducted in Israel between 1971-1981 by Dar and Applebaum that led to the discovery of nearly 1200 "field towers" that seem particularly "perfect for wine-making" and, though constructed in the Hellenistic times, still functioned in the Herodian and post-Herodian eras. Their size, weight, and structure preclude construction by individual farmers. They were certainly not suited to vineyard defense. For more on the phenomenon, see Fiensy, 31-34 (and notes, for his sources). Other towers in Israel had a variety of functions: agricultural, funereal, defensive, route markers, and others (Banning 1992).

a chapter on the Gezer excavations, and a photo of the inscribed calendar tablet also appears there (Benjamin 2009, 215-225):

> August and September to pick olives; October to sow barley;
> December and January to weed; February to cut flax;
> March to harvest barley; April to harvest wheat and pay tithes;
> May and June to prune vines; July to pick the fruit of summer.[42]

By careful winnowing and digging in published papyri discovered chiefly in the arid sands of Egypt near El-Fayum/Philadelphia, John S. Kloppenborg has translated and republished a calendar of viticultural tasks taken from a papyrus found in the Zenon archive in his Appendix I: *Dossier on Vineyard Leasing and Operations*. In his comments on the papyrus finding, furthermore, he provides a month-by-month task listing from Zenon and adds to the original calendar by making references to similar activities found in other ancient writers on the topic of agriculture and viticulture (2006, 425-429).

A third agricultural calendar is found in the work of Columella who observes an astrological calendar. This means that Columella ties agricultural activity to the movement of the stars in the sky. His calendar seems finer than a 13-month lunar calendar or a horoscope with its 12 "houses" (*Britannica*, s.v. "horoscope"). One reason, perhaps, for this situation may be that the agricultural activity does not take an entire 28 days or more to complete. Additionally, some agricultural tasks (e.g. weeding) may require repetition throughout a growing season.

We have, therefore, three ancient calendars drawn from ancient sources: one from Hellenistic Egypt and its territories which included Ptolemaic Palestine, c. 200-100 BCE; one from Gezer in Palestine whose date ranges from 950-875 BCE, about the time that the

[42] In his translation of the Gezer Calendar, W.F. Albright does not name months but speaks of "his two months" or "his month" and identifies each with an agricultural task (Pritchard 1969, 320). Curiously, the Matthews and Benjamin translation omits the month of November (Benjamin 2009, 222).

kingdoms of Israel and Judah were separated; and one contemporaneous with the era of Jesus and the gospels that, most likely, extended the breadth of Roman influence from the Roman provinces of Spain to the Roman provinces of Syria and Judea. The one we will use to guide us, however, is the modern one from Kloppenborg, a conflated form of elements merged from the Zenon archive with elements from Varro and Columella, the two Romans most contemporaneous with Jesus of Nazareth (see below).

The schematic, outline form offered below needs a greatly extended explanation since it conflates activity elements that are suited to a well-established vineyard as well as activity elements that are suited to starting up a new vineyard. The activities required of each are different in most respects and there is nothing in the parable text targeted by this study that gives the slightest indication whether the vineyard to which the owner sends laborers is new or established. One might logically infer, however, that a landowner who constantly visits his vineyard is more likely than not to be concerned with a new vineyard. Its layout, its, planting, the varietals to be planted, its terracing, its care and staking, etc. are all tasks that require decisions from the very top.

Furthermore, in describing the activities of a new or an established vineyard, the size of the vineyard plot makes very little difference except in respect to labor requirements. Each has its own activities. What varies is size.[43]

Inferences about calendars are not difficult to make when one's inferences are supported by the modern science of climatology. Since recorded history reveals no dramatic climatological change for the Mediterranean basin for the past 5000 years (i.e.,

[43] A two-acre vineyard (5.87 *aroura*, 3.025 *iugera*, 8.09 *dunams*, and .809 *hectares*) actually produced 8,000 lbs. of grapes, far more than a husband-wife team was able to gather without mechanized assistance and additional manual labor – personal communication: Nancy Schade, co-owner of Schadé Vineyard, Volga, SD.

no ice age phenomenon), one can infer much about the climate in ancient times in certain areas from modern day records (*InIsrael* n.d.). When wet and dry seasons can be shown from climatological data for an area and these match and are suited to various agricultural activities that apply in wet and dry weather, one can be generally certain that the calendars are based on real life.

Monthly average temperatures for the cities of Haifa and Tiberias at the western and eastern ends of Lower Galilee respectively are obtainable from the Internet. Table One given below gives the average temperature for these two cities and reveals that the area is generally not subject to freezing temperatures.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Haifa	C°	8-17	9-18	8-21	13-26	15-25	18-28	20-30	21-30	20-30	16-27	13-23	9-18
	F°	46-63	47-64	47-70	55-78	58-76	64-82	68-86	70-86	68-85	60-81	56-74	48-65
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tiberias	C°	9-18	9-20	11-22	13-27	17-32	20-35	23-37	24-37	22-35	19-32	15-26	11-20
	F°	48-65	49-67	51-42	56-80	62-89	68-95	73-98	75-99	71-95	65-89	59-78	53-68

Table One: Average Lo/Hi Temperatures of Haifa and Tiberias in Israel. (*InIsrael* n.d.)

Haifa is a sea-side location with the concomitant weather moderation that a sea-side offers. Table One reveals that its effect is not felt at Tiberias which is only some 31 straight-line miles distant. However, Tiberias is the drier of the two environments (see Table Two).

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Haifa	Precip.	129mm	69mm	58mm	22mm	5mm	0mm	1mm	0.0mm	3mm	7mm	87mm	111mm
	Wet days	15	10	10	4	2	0	0	0	0	4	7	11
		Jan	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
Tiberias	Precip.	41mm	37mm	47mm	26mm	3mm	0mm	0mm	0mm	7mm	12mm	22mm	37mm
	Wet days	11	14	9	6	4	6	3	3	5	5	7	10

Table Two: *compiled from*: http://www.haifa.climatemps.com/ and http://www.holiday-weather.com/tiberias/averages. Accessed: 8/18/2016 (N.B. "Wet day" >0.1mm rainfall.)

When average rainfalls for these same two cities are compiled, they reveal the suitability of both climate and terrain for grape growing throughout Lower Galilee. Winkler and his associates claim that the "*vinifera* grape requires long, warm-to-hot, dry summers and cool winters" (Winkler, et al. 1974, 59; see pages 58-76).

Kloppenborg's Calendar Outline of Viticultural Events/Tasks:[44]

Late August/September/Mid-October:
-Harvest/vintage;

Late October/Mid-November:
-vine layering;[45]
-soil trenching, loosening;
- removal (cutting) of surface roots, *ablaqueatio*;
-first pruning (woody, hardened shoots);
-first hoeing (i.e., soil softening for rain absorption and weed removal);
-new vine transplanting (replacement);
-new shoot planting (replacement);

Late November/late December/etc.
-grafting (experimental purposes and vineyard control);
-pruning (continued);

[44] This outline format is excerpted from data taken from Kloppenborg, 425-29; (see 425 for related sources). Kloppenborg's outline has the advantage of comparative annual calendar dating taken from Varro, Columella, and other ancient sources.
[45] Explanation of viticultural terminology can be found in the *Glossary of Viticultural Terms* at the end of this study.

Late January/Late February
-new shoot planting (replacement, new vineyard establishment/continuation);
-pruning (continued);

Late February/Late March
-pruning completion;
- staking, trellising, and binding (chiefly with newer vineyards)
-digging (soil softening)
-grafting (if not completed earlier)
-thinning (new growth)

Late March/Late April
-second hoeing;
-fruit formation;

Late April/Late May
-fruit formation;
-bud removal/"flicking or pinching;"

Late May/Late June
-completion of staking, trellising, vine supporting;
-grafting (sic) [this activity is questionable for this time of year]

Late June/Late July
-thinning;
-second hoeing (third? fourth? An always acceptable vineyard activity);
-stripping extra leafage (allowing the sun to bathe the fruit);

Late July/Late August
-stripping extra leafage (several times during the summer).

Annual Calendar Narrative of Viticultural Events/Tasks

1) Late October/Mid-November:

   a. In an established vineyard, for the months that follow directly upon grape harvest and the activities related to wine-making,[46] the owner and his staff have

[46] The vintage process consists in the very careful collection of grapes during the months of late August, September, to mid-October. Even in the same vineyard, grapes ripen at a different pace depending on location, soil condition, varietal and moisture. Vineyard owners often plant different varietals so that the harvest process may be spread out to avoid hiring of additional labor. The decision to begin picking grapes for winemaking requires great skill and experience at knowing when the grape is properly mature. Picking grapes has its own ritual. Bruises and skin ruptures from improper and careless handling often leads to the

to prepare the vineyard for its annual dormancy stage.[47] This means clearing away vine tendrils which, since their appearance in Spring, have hardened and grown woody. At times a vine may die from a variety of causes and have to be removed. In its place, a new vine will be planted to replace it and provide fruit within a 3-5-year period. Such replacement can be accomplished in any one of several ways before winter sets in. One can "layer" vines, transplant a vine, or plant a new vine-shoot.[48] Where vines do not need replacement, they need pruning in preparation for the following year. Vine-pruning is a viticultural task that requires training and skill. Clumsy pruning can destroy a vineyard.[49] The owner in Matt 20: 1-16 did not seek pruners

b. A new vineyard begins with ground treatment, once a site has been selected, its soils studied, and its terrain protected and fortified.[50] A new vineyard will take anywhere from 3-5 years before it is fruit-bearing and tax-paying.

While tasking can be multiform and all on-going at the same time with different workers, some skilled and some without skills, an essential task is to dig up the area where the vineyard rows will be planted with newly rooted

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proliferation of molds, fungus, and downy mildew (Winkler et al. 439-502, 475-592). These and other diseases can affect the quality of the wine produced. Modern processing then requires cooling; in ancient times this was hardly possible (but see Fiensy 34n73 quoting Simon Dar, *Landscape and Pattern*. Oxford: BAR, 1986). Once collected, the grape is crushed so that the juice can be extracted. The grape skin surface itself contains the yeast necessary to ferment the mass of crushed liquid. The fermented liquid is then stored in containers that can release gases from this chemical process until they are sealed for preservation. Variations on these basic activities are possible pending a variety of additional purposes: e.g., wines from raisins; mixed wines; sweetened wines, etc., (Columella, LCL 408: 251 ff.; Winkler, et al. 1974, 667-693).

[47] As one can observe from the Table Two – climate averages – the winter months in Palestine do not suffer from freezing temperatures, yet the soil is softened and moisturized by rainfall from late October through April. These conditions permit a slow rooting and growth of newly planted vines.

[48] See the Glossary for details.

[49] "For a good pruner, each vine has a personality of its own" – personal communication from Nancy Schade; cf. n28 above.

[50] In Israel (and perhaps elsewhere) this usually meant terracing (see Glossary) and wall or tower building.

shoots, a task the owner in Matt 20:1-16 might have intended. Those familiar with viticulture recommend that the row areas should be approximately 3 feet wide, and 2-3 feet deep. This is an arduous, time-consuming task that does not require special skill, only an able body and a digging implement. In ancient times, the landowner supplied the work tools.[51] As the ground was dug up, other workers followed and planted the rooted shoots (acquired by purchase from elsewhere unless the landowner had a nursery) to the desired depth and at the desired plant spacing (Kloppenborg 2006, 430). Like digging, this task required no specialized skill but it did require some skilled supervision to make sure it was done properly; not a task for the workers of Matt 20:1-16.

The new vines are the ones that require cutting and removal of so-called "suckers" and "surface" roots. Winkler et al. say:

> Well before the vines start to bud in the second spring, a single furrow should be turned away along and away from each side of each row, and then the ridge should be hoed away at the vines. This procedure [*ablaqueatio*] will expose suckers and surface roots, which must be removed without leaving stubs…Vines properly suckered and surface-rooted during the first two years give no such trouble later (273-274).[52]

2) Late November/late December/etc.

   a. An established vineyard may require grafting for corrective purposes or for experimentation. Ordinarily this activity is unnecessary where care has been taken to train vines properly as they were reared in a new vineyard. However, it does require a skilled worker and the supervision of the foreman

[51] See IDB 3:315 for an illustration of an owner's name inscribed on work tools.
[52] The care and attention to these details indicate the degree of professional training required. For an extended discussion of the training desired for training young vines and pruning, see Winkler et al. 272-337.

who needs the approval of his owner. This is not a decision that is taken lightly. Pruning is merely a continuation of what was done in previous months since the work is tedious and time-consuming and reserved to those with expertise. Permanent vineyard workers most probably did this work, not day-laborers.

b. New vineyards need the careful and watchful eye of the vineyard owner to insure that viticultural affairs are being conducted properly and that no shortcuts or decisions are being made without his knowledge that might affect his profit. Having to wait 3-5 years for a return is asking a lot of an investor.[53]

3) Late January/late February [sic]

a. In established vineyards, the activity of pruning continues. Only where a vine has died does viticulture require replacement, the planting of a new shoot, or vine layering. For such replacement vines in their early years, the work of suckering and root-cutting will be necessary or else the replacement vines will turn out to be mavericks.

b. In new vineyards, the work of new shoot planting continues with trenching and digging of soil. Columella speaks of "quincunx" planting, i.e., where the distance of a vine plant from its surrounding, neighboring plants can best be illustrated by a common die with a five-spot on it (LCL 361:311). Such an arrangement would permit cultivation (hoeing and digging) by rows and by columns since all plants are equidistant from each other.

[53] "A vineyard's best fertilizer is the owner's footsteps". "Bottle Shock" (Pullman 2008)

Whether this arrangement was possible in Israel where terraces were frequently used is unknown.

4) Late February/late March

   a. In established vineyards, the period of dormancy would be coming to an end and new growth would be immanent. Hence, the work of pruning had to be completed by early Spring. The same is true of grafting. Particularly in Israel, the soil had to be dug and softened by hoeing so that the ground would be more receptive to the rainfall which would shortly be coming to an end. The vineyard would then be without much moisture for three to four months. Where new growth was appearing on established vines, the process of thinning had to be begun. This was a delicate operation that required great skill so as to balance the health of the vine and the production of fruit (Winkler et al., 313-318); not a job for day-laborers.

   b. In new vineyards, the newly growing vines need support to allow them to grow strong, straight and tall. Experience in California vineyards has shown that where such supports were lacking, there were extra costs "in labor, delayed bearing, and operating a vineyard". Even "greater skill and experience were required" (Winkler et al. 254). The purpose of supports is to create a vineyard that "does not interfere with cultivation and other vineyard operations" (ibid.)[54] Experts were required to do this work.

5) Late March/late April

[54] Without entering into detail, supports are four in kind: "stakes, vertical trellises, wide-top trellises, and arbors" and all are proven suitable to all varieties and conditions of grape growing (Winkler et al., 254).

a. In established vineyards, this time period gives the owner his last chance at making sure the ground is soft by a second hoeing. This is the period in which new, herbaceous growth appears, growth that will result in vine and fruit formation. Day-laborers could be hired to do this (Matt: 1-16).

b. In new vineyards, hoeing is equally beneficial, though it is hoped that by this time all the training, trimming, and staking has been accomplished and the new planting is oriented entirely on growing and maintaining existence. Care is necessary. In particularly dry country, some irrigation of new plants may be necessary.

6) Late April/late May

a. Fruit formation continues in established vineyards. Columella insisted that this time of the year "refuses us entrance to the vineyard because it is not expedient to disturb the fruit when it is in blossom" ((LCL 361:435). I am sure this meant a time of watchfulness to see to irrigation, pest control, and other non-invasive activities; however, the chief viticultural activities should have been accomplished by this time of the year and the vines allowed to grow and produce fruit.

b. New vineyards continue with their growth of young vines. "Young vines are disbudded during their development" by "flicking" the very soft and unwanted buds off the vine or "pinching" the unwanted buds off the vine. This activity forces the vine to grow in the desired direction and shape. The activity needs skilled workers.

7) Late May/late June

a. Kloppenborg's calendar speaks of the activity of grafting in established vineyards at this time. Most viticulturists question the value of such activity during this time of the year. The reason is simple: fruit is growing; grafting is a traumatic experience for a vine and should not be done at this time.

b. In new vineyards, though, the work of staking, trellising, and otherwise supporting vines should be completed at this time.

8) Late June/late July

a. Now that fruit has appeared on the vine in established vineyards, it is well to hoe the ground to maintain its softness and moisture. And this can be done more than once, even by hired day-laborers. Additionally, it is useful to strip some leaves from the vine, particularly those which shade the fruit from the sun. Thinning the vines of excessive growth can mean that the vine puts forth more energy in producing the grape bunch and that there is less weight on the vine cane. However, indiscriminate leafing can damage both vines and crop. It needs to be done by workers with some experience and training; it should also be done at the direction of the owner and under the watchful eye of a supervisor.

b. In a new vineyard, hoeing can take place. It is useful to keep down weed growth in order to destroy habitat for pests and insects and rodents. Hoeing can destroy pupae which grow on grasses and weed leaves and bury cocoons from which issue destructive moths and the like in the ground. Absence of grasses and the like discourage the presence of rabbits, rats and mice which gnaw on the trunks of young and tender vines.

9) Late July/late August

    a. While waiting for vintage in established vineyards, one can continue the practice of stripping extra leafage; however, the same cautions apply. The practice is not indiscriminate but according to need and suitability. In the meantime, owner, supervisor, and worker all have their eyes open for the moment when the grape reaches the acme of ripeness that will indicate that the vineyard is ready to be picked. Modern viticulture has the advantage of chemical analysis supplemented by a variety of analytical tools which test for sugar and acid content and the like. Ancients had no such tools and looked, instead, at color, plumpness, and taste. Weather, too, could control harvesting; a rainfall could do serious damage to a crop.

Summary

After briefly reviewing the geography and geology of Palestine and some applicable political history, we took a look at ancient agrarian society from the aspect of land ownership. We saw that land was viewed by ancients as the source of wealth and was considered the property of potentates. It belonged to pharaohs, emperors, kings and their clients to exploit, to share and to distribute the land as they wished. While Israelites held a different theology, their land practices were rather similar as a legal residue from a variety of invading influential polities and cultures, chiefly Persian, Hellenist, and Roman.

Among those who managed to obtain such land largesse, we distinguished three kinds of landowners: the small freehold (property generally between 4-8 acres as archeological research shows and sometimes slightly larger), the mid-sized estates (property from 50/60 – 300 acres) whose owners tended to be city-dwellers and who

managed their properties through overseers while living off “the fat of the land”, and large estates (300 or more acres) which often tended to be crown lands, royal estates, or properties from potentates used to reward their servants and military.

Land use of whatever size most often included viticulture and viniculture for this was a well-recognized source of profit and wealth, chiefly through export.[55] Making use of ancient sources, we learned how ancients managed their vineyards, the activities they engaged in at various times of the year, the kinds of skills they demanded of their work force. We also learned that the work force could consist of slaves, tenants, sharecroppers, and the otherwise unemployed whether freeholders or not.

Throughout this chapter, we made observations about the οἰκοδεσπότης who figures in our parable. We conjectured that this landowner must have held extensive property, that he was probably Jewish and not so “shame-bound” that he would refuse to work his own property, that he was probably not an owner of slaves, tenants, or λάοι from villages and was thus unable to impress a labor force, that he did not seek particularly skilled workers and, finally, that the work he wanted done in his vineyard was viticultural but unspecified. He might have possessed a vineyard that was new, needing planting of young vines with all its attendant activities. In the next chapter we need to look at one more interesting and thoroughly Mediterranean interaction before we apply scriptural hermeneutics.

[55] Kloppenborg notes “a strong orientation toward export rather than purely local consumption” (302).

Chapter Three

Evil Eye

In Chapter One, these words appear: "[the passage] contains a clear but rare reference to the Mediterranean belief in the 'Evil Eye'(p. 1)." These words appear as well: "something will be said…about the 'Evil Eye' (p. 7)." Chapter Three keeps that promise.

Several people have published books on the phenomenon called the 'Evil Eye'. Among them are: Frederick Thomas Elworthy, a 19th century philologist who contributed to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and who died in 1907 (Barron 1958); and Edward S. Gifford, Jr. M.D., a 20th century ophthalmologist who pursued an interest in the folklore of vision (1958). A third is an anthropological collection edited by Clarence Maloney that indicates modern diffusion, traits, and meanings of the Evil-Eye belief. All attest to pervasiveness of the Evil Eye in ancient as well as in modern societies. I myself can add to their testimony.[1] The first two authors go into great detail (the Elworthy book is 471 pages long while the Gifford book is a mere 216 pages in length). They note that the phenomenon is attested to in the bible and supply most of the scriptural references given herewith: Deut 15:9; 28:54, 56; Job 7:8; Pss 35:21; 54:7; 59:10; 92:11; Prov 6:13; 23:6; 28:22; Isa 13:8; Lam 2:4; Ezek 8:15 Tob 4:7; Sir 14:10; 31:13; Matt 6:22-23; 20:15; Mark 7:22; Luke 11:34ff; Gal 3:1 (Elworthy, 1958, p. 6; see also Elliot. 1993. *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?* 67; Elliot, 1991). Elworthy, Gifford and Maloney attest to its antiquity, predating the era of Jesus, our specific concern, as well as its extensiveness and universality

[1] See Appendix III for a firsthand personal account by Bro. Frank Presto, scj, who was accused of casting the Evil Eye in 2009. He first told me his story orally and I asked then for a written account of the event which is published here exactly as I received it from him on 02/02/2015.

among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and African Animists in literary and archeological sources (Elworthy, Gifford, Jr. M.D.; Maloney).[2]

A number of modern biblical scholars have investigated the superstition as it appears in the bible. One scholar in particular, John H. Elliot, has done a number of hermeneutical studies on a variety of biblical Evil Eye passages. The particular merit of his scholarship lies in the fact that he is a "charter member" of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) group named the "Context Group" defined in a Google search as "a working group of international scholars committed to the use of the social sciences in biblical scholarship (accessed on 09/25/2016)." In an article entitled "Fear of the Leer" Elliot pulls together in orderly fashion the Elworthy, Gifford, and Maloney materials along with those from a number of other, mainly German language, sources (Elliot, "The Fear of the Leer" 1988).[3] His extensive work is the basis of most of what follows. It is his "social science" outlook that seems most beneficial.[4]

Elliot notes that belief in the Evil Eye infests the Circum-Mediterranean world. The social anthropologist Clarence Maloney notes that it is far more extensive than just the Mediterranean world. Besides among Italians, Greeks, and Tunisians, the belief is found in Ethiopia, India, the Philippines, Guatemala, Mexico and elsewhere (*The Evil Eye* 1976 xvii-xix). Elliot goes on to observe the more common features of the belief. Both literary

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[2]It is my understanding that Elworthy was credited for an entry on the Evil Eye published posthumously. ("Evil Eye" 1912, V:608-615).

[3] Elliot has published four other works on the cultural phenomenon of the Evil Eye: ("Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye", 1990; "The Evil Eye in the First Testament: The Ecology and Culture of a Pervasive Belief", 1991; and "Matthew 20:1-15: A Parable of Invidious Comparison and Evil Eye Accusation", 1992; "The Evil Eye and the Sermon on the Mount: Contours of a Pervasive Belief in Social Scientific Perspective," 1994). For further details, see the bibliography.

[4] For more on the "social science" outlook in sacred scripture, see Elliot's "Social Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: More on Methods and Models" (*Semeia* 1986, pp. 1-33), and *What is Social Scientific Criticism?* (1993. Minneapolis: Fortress Press).

evidence and archeological remains testify to its existence: “Belief in the Evil Eye…has spanned the world and the centuries” (Elliot 1992, 53). The primal elements of the belief are that a living biological eye can, willy-nilly, emit and inflict unspecified and unlimited evil upon a being or an entity, animate or inanimate, without restriction unless otherwise protected and thus prevented. This baneful power is exercised through the eye, it is believed, which has a direct connection to the heart, an element featured in the discourse on the Mount (Matt 6:22-23 ‖ Luke 11:34-36).[5] The rationale for its use, or to use Elliot’s term “it’s ecology,” is associated with envy and the ancient supposition that the world contains only limited good and that what one person possesses implies that another person is deprived of the same good. Thus all people everywhere are, in a sense, competitors for the same good. While Elliot’s supposition about ecology works for the ancient world, what about its ecology for the modern world where there is no “limited good” concept? The rationale is strikingly incomplete, at least to moderns.

To ward off the Evil Eye, to deflect its power, to weaken or even entirely to negate its bane, imaginative apotropaic devices were used in ancient times. People would not only set up devices and displays in public places but privately make use of protective means that included wearing colors, amulets and charms, and making physical gestures. The apotropaic devices (miniature eyes, eyes “under attack,” phallus and testicle symbols, etc.) were often found portrayed as floor mosaics, on door lintels, as neck pendants or earrings,

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Elliot[5] Dale C. Allison treats, at length, the ancient understanding of the eye as an emanating power or force, an effluent rather than an influent or receptive faculty ("The Eye is the Lamp of the Body (Matthew 6.22-23 = Luke 11.34-36)"), 1987). See below (p. 52) for a confirmation of this notion from the philosopher, Plutarch. Dr. Richard Lux has reminded me that “biblically the heart is the seat of will/intentionality, NOT emotion as in American culture” (private communication).

and as statuary at ancient sites, as archeological discoveries reveal. (Noy, 2006, vol 6: 584-585; von Dobschütz, "Charms and Amulets (Christian)", 1911, vol III:413-430).

Here, in what to me appears additional illogical reasoning, those who were capable of exercising the Evil Eye were generally thought to be "persons with unusual physical features". Elliot lists them as: having "joined eyebrows," blindness or ocular impairment, physical deformities, disabilities, social displacement or deviance, persons who were strangers, foreigners, exotics, or enemies (Elliot 1992, 53).[6]

No social commentator has been able to explain why such people were more envious than any other, particularly more so than those who did not cast an Evil Eye or were not accused of "bewitching" another.

Furthermore, with additional illogical reasoning, the idea that the only evil that one person wishes upon another is to covet persons (i.e. spouse, children, servants or slaves) or goods or to begrudge another's success and fame also does not make sense. There are other kinds of evil. Modern bible translations take Evil Eye found in the original Greek as a code word for "envy" and I like to think that they are to some degree assisted by the context which, in translating the word ἀγαθός to mean *generous,* allows them to improperly translate the words ὀφθαλμὸς πόνερος as *envy*.[7] The use of these two English words in translation exercise a reciprocal influence that may distort the meaning of the two Greek words πονερός / ἀγαθός. Thus, *generous* has it counterpart in *envy* while *good* more literally has its counterpart in *evil*.[8]

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[6] See Appendix IV: appearance causes a person to be viewed as a *progettatore,* or bewitcher.
[7] Cf. (Hiesberger 2005); for ἀγαθός the following words are used: *good* (1x), *kind* (1x), *generous/generosity* (6x) appear in the eight Catholic New Testament versions. Of the eight versions, only the Reims-Douay version with its rendition of *good* for ἀγαθός is not recent (Matt 20:15).
[8] In part, Elliot makes a similar point when he examines 15 English and foreign language translations of the Greek. He states that the translators render the "assumed connotation" of the expression. He thinks what is actually expressed deserves deeper inquiry (1992, 56).

In this respect, it seems that many have followed the reasoning of a near-contemporary of Jesus, Plutarch of Boeotia, who wrote of the Evil Eye claiming it to be fact, "an unexplained phenomenon." What is the "fact"? An "Evil Eye" can inflict harm. How? There is no satisfactory answer but that should not prevent us from accepting the "fact" since seeking to answer unexplained phenomena leads us to become philosophers, the highest human goal. An entire dinner discussion covers the question of the Evil Eye in Book V of Plutarch's "Table Talk" in *Moralia*.[9] The five guests express various degrees of belief and disbelief in the Evil Eye and their discussion ranges widely. Plutarch testifies of himself that he believes the body emanates continuously and the "most active stream of such emanations is that which passes out through the eye" producing "many effects" (Plutarch, LCL 424:421). Whether envy is the cause of the Evil Eye is debated; Patrocleas declares it to be so while Soclarus, his fellow table-guest, raises some question (Plutarch, LCL 424:425, 427).

To avoid the impression of possessing such formidable power, according to Elliot, ancients were expected to be generous and, above all, to avoid any praise or expression of admiration – unless it was accompanied by a disclaimer, citing Moss and Cappanari, Swiderski, Dionosopoulos-Mass, Spooner, Remnick in Maloney (*The Evil Eye*, 1976).[10] Elliot goes on to say that on the meaning of the parable there is no "exegetical consensus," particularly in the past. Presently, too, despite new ways of attempting to get at the meaning, the same thing appears to hold true for the simple reason that "none accord it

[9] "On those who are said to cast an evil eye." (Plutarch 1969, LCL 424:416-417; 432-433).
[10] Maloney's book, it should be noted, is an anthropological study of modern expressions of the belief. Whether ancient and modern belief in the evil eye is identical is never stated. That he and his contributors are aware of the antiquity of the belief can be discovered on p. xiv where he states that "the history of the diffusion of the belief must be complex" and attempts to explain it are controverted.

[i.e., belief in the Evil Eye] any significance for the meaning of the parable as a whole" (1992, 56).

Elliot's keen eye also notes what so many other translators and commentators have overlooked: "this reference to the Evil Eye invokes a powerful concept of Jesus' and Matthew's culture and, in addition, occurs at the climactic point in the parable" (57). Consequently, he proceeds to ask three important questions: about the relevance of the Evil Eye concept to the story, about what he terms "the cultural script," and, finally, whether envy is implied (57-58) and attacks the questions he raises in reverse order.

First of all, Elliot affirms that envy is implied in Matt 20:1-16. He does so by quoting both a pagan and a Christian author who describe envy at length: Aristotle in his *Rhetorica* (II.10 1387b-1388a) and St. Basil the Great in *Homily 11* "On Envy" (MPG 31: 372-385) – providing actual lengthy citations (Elliot, 1992, 58-59). When one reads what both have to say about envy, it becomes obvious that the citations serve as "straw men." Reading these observations, one is certain to find, by a comparison to the gospel text, at least some part of what is described in the citations. The remarks on envy from Basil do so with even greater weight because some terms (transliterated by Elliot) reflect the "bewitching" phenomenon: βάσκανος, βασκανία. Thus it becomes easier to say that in Matthew the Evil Eye is motivated by envy. While this may be so, I think a slightly better case can be made that a reference to envy may be motivated by the need to teach the apostolic college (19:27-30) and, too, a better explanation of the Evil Eye remark needs to be found.

Secondly, Elliot attempts to suggest that a "cultural script" may provide an Evil Eye contextual setting and himself suggests some of its elements. He speaks of a "Greek

contest world" where envy, conflict, and competition is endemic and where the prevailing notion is that "all goods are in limited supply and can never be increased but only redistributed" according to rules of "honor and shame" (1992, 59). Elliot quotes sociologist Alvin Gouldner: "Envy is prone to occur in a social system where a man's own situation is appraised and experienced as satisfying or dissatisfying by comparing it with another's" (59). While Elliot's suggestion is a plausible one, even satisfying, the question arises whether it is the only one. Can an Evil Eye setting be ascribed to something other than envy?

Thirdly, as if in response, can a case be made that the Evil Eye belief is relevant to the narrative? The answer, surely, is "yes" on a number of accounts. Elliot himself has suggested that envy is the motive for the "grumbling" engaged in by the workers of the first group hired who thought they would receive more than those first paid. To quote Elliot: "In Evil Eye cultures, any overt expression of this envy will be perceived as evidence of possessing an Evil Eye and will often be challenged with an Evil Eye accusation meant to expose and denounce the offending individuals" (60). What is not said is that, as the statement stands, in place of the word "envy," any named evil could fit. Among the possible comparisons capable of provoking an Evil Eye response that the text itself directly and indirectly suggests are: the burden of the work, the heat of the day, the separate provenance of the workers, and their social status vis-à-vis the landowner, none of which have any connection to the wages paid. Besides envy, the text itself indicates Evil Eye possibilities for anger, resentment, injustice, village identity or pride, and bias.[11] However, in this parable the narrator helps us in this regard by stating "they thought they would receive

[11] Elliot himself recognizes this fact. He indicates other situations where Evil Eye suspicion can occur, limiting himself only to scriptural and pseudepigraphal sources (Elliot 1992, 55).

more" (Matt 20:10a). And in direct discourse, the claim is made: "you have made them equal to us" (Matt 20:12b).

Elliot, finally, clearly situates the landowner's cultural behavior and response to the perceived Evil Eye threat. By naming the threat, the landowner calls down public attention to it and corresponding shame which was viewed as odious in antiquity, discredits the worker, returns him in his proper social order, and, in effect, admonishes him for his deviancy (1992, 61). This is the way the Evil Eye threat and counter-threat was handled in the cultures of the Mediterranean world.

The Evil Eye reference found in the Greek and in a few older English and some foreign language versions of the New Testament should not be lightly taken by moderns who disbelieve in the sorcery of the Evil Eye. There is enough evidence to show that Matthew certainly did not. Its presence in a parable of Jesus constitutes a significant factor from a social-critical point of view, a modern branch of historic-criticism.

It is time to turn now to other hermeneutical techniques to help peel away the layers of unknowing that obscure the object of this analytical and descriptive effort. We look first at linguistic concerns to make sure we understand all that language can tell us. We turn, then, to an examination of the form of this narrative, its sources, its redactional history, and how commentators have interpreted the parable. In this last regard, some limitations must necessarily apply. Chief among them is having a clear grasp of form and redaction criticism. Among them, also, are concerns about having every available resource at hand, in every available language. This is simply not the case. And, fortunately, this exercise is intended to be a descriptive-analytic study of a selected pericope of Sacred Scripture. This particular aim also implies limits.

Chapter Four

In this chapter, our focus will be on the actual text of the pericope. Initially we want to be as certain as we can be that we have the most verifiable version of the no-longer extant prototype (Porter and Pitts 2015, 21).[1] This will involve textual criticism or "lower criticism" (Epp 1992, 413). Within this verifiable and more likely version of a text, it will then be necessary to examine the text linguistically for denotations, connotations, and historical lexical usage since that text with all its concomitant meanings will ultimately be used for an exegesis. Since the text includes descriptions of viticultural/vinicultural labor and social practices, some linguistic references to these areas will be inevitable.

Once satisfied on textual and linguistic scores, we will be able to turn to the content of the pericope to see whether it has any known source in antiquity, considerable or slight. It was noted above that the parable had not been found replicated in any other canonical gospel. What about scriptural apocrypha and pseudepigrapha? What about pagan sources? Is it replicated in some form in those sources? Should the likelihood occur of some pre-existent version of this parable, what can be said of the actual rendition found in Matthew? How and why might it have been changed? Can any reasonable inferences be made from a redaction-criticism point of view? Additionally, can any reasonable inferences be made from a form-critical point of view, its shape and construction? Anything that can be obtained from this wider historical-critical overview will be welcomed and usefully

[1] "The textual critic must ascertain the text [i.e., the NT *quasi*-original] itself before the exegete can begin to ascertain the meaning of the text (Porter and Pitts, 21)." While the sense of the statement seems obvious, it bears repetition.

employed and accounted for in the final exegesis of the target text in the last chapter, Chapter Five.

It must certainly be noted that the text should not and will not be isolated from the rest of the Gospel of Matthew, nor from the rest of Sacred Scripture. When the final exegetical account is made, if the rest of Matthew and the remainder of the biblical writings can illumine the target text or vice versa, then use must properly be made of them. Initial focus on the text alone, however, is the equivalent of looking at the literal sense of it. Its place in the overall composition and narrative is an expansion of that literal sense, a "relational sense," in which a seemingly independent story (parable) is added to illustrate some related point and more fully expands the scope and understanding of the entire gospel or, at the least, a segment of that gospel.

Textual Considerations

Appendix I contains a Greek text of Matthew 20:1-16 and a parallel English text in columnar forms. The Greek text is taken from Kurt Aland et al. *Novum Testamentum Graece,* 28th Edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012). What appears there as NT text is the fruit of the editorial committee's deliberate examination of all the textual variants related to this pericope within their purview.[2] This appendix will serve as our "base text." As the editors themselves remind us, the critical apparatus found in the Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament can help us only with the principal variants (Aland, et al. 2008, 7*; Aland, Aland and Karavidopoulos, et al. 2012, 55*).

[2] Hereinafter, NA. Since the time of Erasmus, the discovery, collection and use of ancient papyri, ancient uncial and minuscule parchment or vellum manuscripts, lectionaries, other ancient language versions, and citations in the Fathers predating the invention of the press have grown geometrically with their discovery and provide textual critics with the necessary fodder to conduct their quest to reproduce the "original text" (Porter S. E., 2000, p. 1212; Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, & Metzger, 2008; Epp, 1992; Porter & Pitts, 2015, *passim*). See also Metzger, 1994.

In the following treatment I am guided almost entirely by observations found in *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism* in Chapters 6 and 12 (Porter and Pitts 2015, 91-99; 157-184). Their observations treat the critical apparatus used by our source document (i.e. NA^{28}) and point out debated differences between the apparatus used in NA^{27} (1*-44*) and that used in NA^{28} (46*-88*). At the same time, in these words, they note that the Greek text remains the same for the gospels in the two editions: "NA^{28} incorporates the *Editio Critica Maior* for the Catholic letters along with making some changes in the apparatus… Since the textual changes are… (about 30 in all), students need not rush out and buy this updated edition…" (ibid, p. 157).

The corpus of textual witnesses comprising papyri and parchments, scrolls, and codices, containing words found in the canon of New Testament writings is immense and probably not yet complete.[3] While some ancient documents are preserved in their entirety (or nearly so) others are fragments. All have witness value as textual scholars seek to re-constitute the prototype of each gospel, letter, account, and book of canonical scriptures. Other textual scholars seek to establish the manner of textual transmission so that how the church functioned in its infancy may obtain some historical enlightenment. Humanists seeking to re-constitute the works of a Tacitus or a Varro (to give an example or two) envy biblical scholars for the plethora of materials available to them.

With 27 books of the New Testament, and with each geographical entity and church in ancient times eager to have its own copies leading to such an abundance of documents, it is no wonder that copyists, no matter how faithful to their task, would make changes in the text they were copying: mostly through lack of attention and various kinds of

[3] Cf. 20n27 in Chapter Two above.

inadvertence, or sometimes in an attempt to clarify and even correct. The result? Arguably no one extant text is the same as any other. Mere statistical probability warrants against such a presumption. Yet, such variances and discrepancies are relatively few in single documents when the whole New Testament is taken into consideration.[4]

Once modern scholars began to look at what witnesses wrote, they had two serious methodological problems on their hands: how to distinguish differences between a reading, a variant, and a variant-unit (Porter and Pitts, 91) on the one hand and textual families or text types on the other hand (Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* 1989, 48-72). Both problems are interrelated and thus complicate text-critical methodology.[5] For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that variant-units largely serve as the basis for observations found in the critical apparatus of the $NA^{27/28}$ editions as well the editions of the $UBSGNT^{4/5}$. Both publications had the same editors and the text is identical though their publication purposes vary.[6]

Several technical terms were used above: *reading, variant, variant-unit* and *textual family*. These deserve definition and a modicum of explanation drawn largely from a seminal article, "Variant Readings: Classification and Use" (Colwell and Tune 1964).[7] Porter and Pitts rely upon this article almost entirely, with additional help from Epp and Fee whom they cite (Porter and Pitts, 91-93).

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[4] Consider, for example, the critical apparatus found at the page bottoms of NA^{27} and NA^{28} which serve to indicate and trace the changes made by copyists among various extant copies.

[5] Consideration of the methodology and scope of textual criticism lies far beyond the aim of this exercise. More detailed explanations can be found throughout in *The Text of the New Testament* (Aland and Aland 1989) and in *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Porter and Pitts 2015), to name just two of several titles. Text naming protocols and significant texts by name are omitted in my treatment.

[6] UBSGNT is an acronym for "The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament" which published their edition chiefly for bible translators while the NA editions chiefly serve NT textual critics and biblical scholars (Porter and Pitts, 157).

[7] Definitions and explanation will be found in the Glossary.

Textual analysis of our pericope reveals the following: there are variant-units in the following verses: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.[8] Only verses 1-2 and 11 are immune from some variation. Only differences and their manner of differing will be noted in the treatment below; in all respects the judgment to include or exclude such variances from the final published text defers to the judgement of the expert editors of these critical works. As will be seen below, concern for the authenticity of the text is unnecessary.[9]

Verse 3: a **replacement**: 3 witnesses including D use ευρεν for εἶδεν.[10]

Verse 4: an **insertion**: a number of witnesses do insert μου after ἀμπελώνα.

Verse 5: an **omission**: a number of witnesses omit δε before ἐξελθὼν; and a few **transpose** the words: ἕκτην καὶ ἐνάτην ὥραν to read in this order *1 4 2 3*.

Verse 6: two **insertions**: ωραν after ἑνδεκάτην and αργους after ἑστῶτας; witnesses for each insertion are very similar by textual family.

Verse 7: two variant **insertions**: μου after ἀμπελώνα (see v. 4 above) according to some witnesses; the other insertion adds an expanded statement that reads μου και ο εαν ᾖ (ην 579) δικαιον λη(μ)ψεσθε according to some witnesses.

Verse 8: **omits** αυτοις after ἀπόδος according to a few witnesses.

Verse 9: a **replacement**. Some witnesses have ελθοντες δε in place of καὶ ἐλθόντες.

Verse 10: three **replacements** in this verse which contains the highest number of variances. Some witnesses replace καὶ ἐλθόντες with ελθοντες δε (cf. v. 9). Other witnesses replace πλεῖον with πλειονα and witness D replaces it, instead, with πλειω. Finally, there are four **transpositional** orders found for [τὸ] ἀνα δηναρίον καὶ αὐτοί; some witnesses have *2-5*, others have *1-3*, others have *4 5 2 3*, other still others have *4 5 1-3*.

Verse 12: a **transposition**: some witnesses transpose the two words ἡμῖν αύτοὺς.

Verse 13: a **transposition**: some witnesses have ειπεν ενι αυτων in place of ἑνί αὐτῶν εἶπεν (witness Δ uses μοναδι instead of ενι), and Vaticanus uses αυτων

[8] Compare: Hagner 1995, 568-69.
[9] Remarks made by Bruce M. Metzger confirm this judgment (Metzger 1994, 41).
[10] Following the practice used in the NA apparatus, no accents or breathing marks are added to the textual variations.

ενι ειπεν. Finally, some witnesses make a **replacement** for συνεφώνησάς μοι with συνεφωνησα σοι.

Verse 14: a **replacement**: Vaticanus replaces δὲ with εγω.

Verse 15: an **omission**: Some witnesses omit the word [ἣ]. Some witnesses also **transpose** the words ὅ θέλω ποιῆσαι with ποιησαι ο (ως W) θελω.

Verse 16: an **insertion** at the end of the verse: πολλοι γαρ εισιν κλητοι, ολιγοι δε εκλεκτοι is found in many witnesses.

Linguistic Considerations

After examining and accepting the validity of the Greek text, it is important to turn to the next element of the plan presented at the beginning of this chapter: to look at denotations and connotations and historical lexical usage, not of every last word in the pericope but particularly of the singular Greek words found in the target text and those important words on which special early first century CE meaning rests. These are identified and given in English in the order in which they appear in the Greek text.

Because their target semantic area encompasses the period of interest (i.e. the Herodian and post Herodian era – 40 BCE to CE 41) the most useful sources to be consulted in this respect are the following: Kloppenborg, Arndt and Gingrich, and Louw-Nida.[11] In his treatment of *The Tenants in the Vineyard* Kloppenborg has his entire Appendix I indexed with a brief glossary of words and their locations in the papyri documents he consulted (550-83). Arndt and Gingrich's lexicon is limited to New Testament and early Christian Greek and avoids confusing Attic Greek with the Koiné Greek. Louw and Nida's lexicon of the New Testament is set up entirely on semantic domains.[12]

[11] See bibliography. Hereafter, (K) = Kloppenborg; (BADG) = Arndt and Gingrich; and (L-N) = Louw-Nida.
[12] For additional information, consult the bibliography.

In completing this semantic analysis, I rely on my own judgment, informed largely by the analytic research already described. For the reader's benefit, here I draw up a comprehensive paragraph of those words in English, based, however, on the order of the Greek text. Beginning with verse 1 through 16: *householder [house, holder], hire, laborer, vineyard, agree, denarius, marketplace, idle, steward, pay, wage, think, grumble, equal, bear, burden [of the day], [scorching] heat, begrudge [evil eye]*. The meaning of the words *kingdom* and *like* is deferred to Chapter Five where, after reviewing statements of a few select exegetes, an exegesis shall be made that employs what has been learned in this analytical descriptive study: namely, how the parable elements and account resemble ("are like" – ὁμοίος) the "kingdom of the heavens" ("kingdom of God)."

- **οἰκοδεσπότης**, οἰκος, δεσπότης (***Householder*** *[house, holder]*): οἰκοδεσπότης is a neologism by Attic standards and refers to the overall authority/ownership of a person (δεσπότης = *Lord, master,* owner) over objects and people (i.e. slaves). That would certainly mean a house, or household, or even an estate. The word, οἰκος, is problematic in this regard for its range of meaning extends from a house or dwelling, to a large building, city, family, descendants or nation, property and possessions (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 57.210). Thus the word can subsume territory belonging to an owner (see Acts 7:10 for a contemporaneous example).[13]

[13] In fact, according to the *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, the word can mean "the landowner of a (relatively large) vineyard plantation" and cites Matt 20:1 as one of 8 NT instances (Swanson 1997, s.v.). K. H. Rengstorf has a lengthy article in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* on the word δεσπότης and notes that its principle denotation is to express power: of a master over a slave, an absolute rule like a Persian monarch or Roman emperor, the kind of astrological power that planets were said to have over people and events, and was used by both Philo and Josephus to apply to God, emphasizing his omnipotence. One can see why the word would combine with οἰκος; οἰκοδεσπότης, thus, "denotes the 'master of the house' who has control over the οἰκος in the widest sense" and "parallels the Semitic בעל הבית, which like the NT οἰκοδεσπότης denotes the owner of the house in the most comprehensive sense" (Rengstorf 2000, s.v.).

- **μισθόομαι** (***hire***)*:* used in the middle voice, the word means to *hire, engage* laborers for oneself by an arrangement for wages or compensation (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 57.172).
- **ἐργάτης** (***workman, laborer***): in contrast to one who is engaged in some activity or doing something like an apostle, the meaning here is restricted to employment by labor (see Luke 10:7) for some recompense (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 42.43); usually employed for a single day (K, 559).
- **ἀμπελών** (***vineyard***): described as a derivative from ἀμπελός (BADG, s.v.), the word means an orchard, garden, or farm of grapevines; a vineyard (L-N: 3.28; K, 553).
- **συμφωνέω** (***agree***): the word can be applied to both things or people. With things, its meaning indicates "fitting in or together, matching, harmonizing" and often used in reference to construction (L-N: 64.10; see Luke 5:36). With people, it generally means to agree, to come to some kind of arrangement or agreement, often between two parties. (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 31.15).[14]
- **δηνάριον** (***denarius***): "…a Roman silver coin normally worth about 18 cents [certainly not a modern monetary evaluation]… [I]t was a workman's average daily wage.…"[15] Louw-Nida add the adjective "common" to workman (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 6.76). It was a loan word in rabbinic literature.
- **ἀγορά** (**market, market place, business center**): The most useful construct t**o** use for understanding an ancient ἀγορά is to distinguish it from an **ἐμπόριον**. The

[14] Especially useful for grasping the variety of "contractual" or "agreement" meanings found with this word, cf. H. G. Liddell & R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, s.v.
[15] See, however, Douglas Oakman, "*The Buying Power of Two Denarii*" 1987.

locations may be identical but the emphasis differs, with buying/selling as the principle emphasis of the latter. The former, rather, focuses on the activities that can take place in it: BADG lists some: playing children, work seekers, for loafers and elderly gossips, public events, lawsuits, and civic life, all events that affected communal life (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 57.207).

- **ἀργός** (***idle, unemployed, lazy, useless***): An idle person in a marketplace would most probably be looking for work; thus "unemployed" is the proper translation in this instance. Without the negative connotation, "idle" simply means "without work." Scattered throughout the NT, however, the word has a range of connotations: lazy, careless, useless, and indifferent. (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 88.248, 30.44, 65.36, 72.21, etc.)
- **ἐπιτροπός** (***manager, overseer, steward, foreman, guardian***): This Greek word appears only here in Matthew. Luke uses it of Chuza (8:3), "a highly placed official in Herod's retinue, perhaps head of his estate. The term is also used of governors and procurators" in writings of Herodotus and Josephus (BADG, s.v.; L-N:37.86, 36.5). Normally, it meant one who commanded workers, or assigned their tasks on behalf on an owner or authority.
- **ἀποδίδομι** (***to give out, give, give up, yield; to meet a contractual obligation, pay , pay out, fulfill -wages, taxes, responsibilities-; to restore to an original owner, give back, return – things, persons; to recompense good or bad, render, reward; exchange – sell, trade, ransom***)**:** As one can see from the list of synonyms, this is a well-traveled word with a wide range of semantic uses (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 57.153, 38.16, 13.136, 90.46, 23.199; K, 554).

- **νομίζω** (**to follow or practice what is customary; to form an idea about something but with some degree of tentativeness, think, believe, hold, consider**): This verb expresses a wide range of suggestibility, from actual, normal, usual, expected practice to belief that something is normal practice, or thinking and holding and considering something actual practice. It states nothing definite except that the thinker believes that something is definite, common tradition or practice (i.e. "presumably true but without particular certainty". (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 31.29).
- **ἴσος** (***being equivalent in number, size, quality, equal***): This Greek word is a word that appears only in Matthew. It, too, is singular in this respect. While the neuter singular or plural can function like an adverb, it is used here as the adjective it is by form (ἴσος, η, ον). It is used of things and persons: same gift, same degree, equal to God, equal amount, equal amount in return. (BADG, s.v.; L-N:58.33)**.** This word appears only here at this location in Matthew.
- **γογγύζω** (**to express oneself indistinguishably in low tones, to grumble, murmur; to speak secretly, to whisper**): the verb itself does not indicate or distinguish approbation or disapprobation; the context must do that by some signal. Louw-Nida take the word in a negative sense, to complain (33.382). (BADG, s.v.; L-N). This word appears in Matthew only here.
- **βαστάζω** (**to sustain a burden, carry, bear – physical or figurative things – carry away, remove; without/with moral implication; e.g. pilfer, steal, take**): This word "carries" many meanings and is often found in combination as an idiom with an additional four nouns expressing pregnancy, information, suffering unto

death, and slavery. (BADG, s.v.; L-N:15.188, 15.201, 25.177, 35.32, 90.80, 31.55). This word appears in Matthew only here.

- **βάρος** (**weight, burden, hardship or something particularly oppressive**): The word also signals the high point on a scale of measure (our "barometer") as well as a claim of importance. (BADG, s.v.; L-N:22.4, 78.23, 65.56). This word appears in Matthew only here.
- **καύσων** (**heat, burning sun**): This word appears in Matthew only here. In the LXX, it can also add the element of the scorching east wind. It implies a heat so intense that it causes suffering or a sunburn. (BADG, s.v.; L-N:14.67).
- **ὀφθαλμός** (**eye as an organ of sense perception; sight; eye as figure for mental or spiritual understanding**): (NB, when coupled with **πονηρός**, often used as a metonym for jealousy or stinginess)[16]. According to Louw-Nida, this word is used variously in idiomatic expressions that express temporality, location, as well as promotion/hindrance of understanding. (BADG, s.v.; L-N: 8.23, 24.16, 23.24, 88.165 and 23.149, 57.108, 27.50, 32.25, 67.114, 24.43, 24.34, 83.34, 23.69).
- **πονηρός** (**morally or socially worthless, wicked, evil, bad, base, worthless, vicious, degenerate; physically base or worthless; painful, serious, virulent** – of an illness). The word is used adjectivally to describe a person or transcendent being or a thing and substantively as a wicked or evil-intentioned person, an evildoer, even as the "evil one," the devil, or Satan. (BADG, s.v.; L-N:88.165, 57.108, 12.35, 12.38).

[16] See Chapter Three above for greater detail.

These 18 words, judged to be interpretative key or cornerstone words, have been examined in the light of lexicographers and semanticists of the New Testament.[17] Additionally, five unique words found just once in Matthew have been identified. Whether they prove to be significant is yet to be determined. At this point, and for the moment, we have completed our linguistic examination. It is time to consider whether this parable, which appears, only in Matthew and in no other Synoptic Gospel, nor in any other real scriptural source or theoretical scriptural source construct, has roots elsewhere; and, if so, what modifications it might have undergone. It is time to begin our source and redaction criticism.

Sources and Editorial Considerations

According to scholars best in a position to know, biblical redaction criticism is problematic enough but redaction criticism in Matthew is extremely difficult (Jones 1995, 14). Initially, scholars attempt to pre-define redactional passages, i.e., those characteristic bits and pieces of a biblical text that reveal when a composer-writer-redactor-editor might engage in a certain kind of writing that serves to connect (or modify?) oral and written traditions which make up the substance of a text (i.e. "what Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). Some examples will serve to illustrate. Scholars are generally agreed that the following are redactional passages: 1) OT quotations and "formulaic passages" (e.g. "the last shall be first" Matt 20:16); 2) condensed summaries (e.g. Matt 16:21); and 3) transitional material (e.g. Matt 19:1-2); (Stein 1992, V:642).

[17] See, for example, footnotes 299-322, (Jones 1995, 414-17). He simply cites M.D. Goulder, "Characteristics of the Parables in Several Gospels" from *Journal of Theological Studies* (19) 1968, 51-69, and adds four additional words of his own. Jones thus extensively treats 12 of the 18 words listed above.

Once scholars get beyond these generally accepted norms, the fun begins. How and why one scholar disagrees with another that a word, a phrase, or even a sentence is redactional makes for interesting reading…for experts. It is precisely why it is prudent and rational behavior to attempt, before the fact, to imagine how a writer would attempt to sew or weave together elements of an inherited story, or parts of a story. However, once a story is written, speculative arguments on the results descend to vocabulary and syntax, and differing and irreconcilable views of these lead to interminable publications in journals.

One recourse frequently used by redaction and source critics in their speculations is that of a "pre-" source (Jones 1995, see n. 18, 17-18). This works rather well when Matthew's source is the Gospel of Mark, or "Q", or both, but it proves troublesome when scholars cannot agree on what that hypothetical source contains, when, where, and whether it was re-formulated, what methodology was used, and what stages it went through.[18] When the same source might be rabbinic, there are an additional two problems: 1) historicity, and 2) an additional layer of interpretation (Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* 1994, 1-33). These specific problems are not considered here. Some topical references to words, phrases, and notions found in our target parable are identified in their rabbinic sources but a full-blown examination of whether and/or how these served Matthew is beyond the scope of this analytical-descriptive exercise. Here the option is description only and not extensive analysis. Of course, non-rabbinic sources are considered and the problems of redaction generally repeat themselves. Citations from rabbinic sources follow.

[18] Far better informed scripture scholars hold the same or similar opinions than the one expressed here, e.g.: "Such reconstruction of the pre-Gospel history involves considerable theorizing" (Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*. 1993, 7).

Talmudic Sources

"See how many unemployed people there are in the market-place" – b. Berakhot 2:6, III.1.G. (See Matt. 20:3, 6-7); Pesah 4:1, III.1.D. (Ibid.). "Hire day-laborers at dawn" – b. Yoma 3:1, II.1.D. (See Matt. 20:1). "Working day in the field extends from sunrise until the stars appear and the laborer returns home on his own time afterward; but he goes to work in the time of his employer, starting from home at sunrise" – b. Baba Mesi'a 83 B. (See Matt 20:1, 8). "…just as in the case of fish in the sea, the water covers them so the evil eye does not rule over them, so in the case of the descendants of Joseph, the evil eye cannot rule over them" m. Baba Batia 8.3, 1.4.E. (see Matt 20:15).

> "A (1) A day worker collects his wage any time of the night. B (2) And a night worker collects his wage any time of the day. C (3) A worker by the hour collects his wage any time of the night or day. D (4) A worker hired by the week, a worker hired by the month, a worker hired by the year, a worker hired by the septannate – E [if] he completed [his period of labor] by day, collects any time that day. F [If] he completed his period of labor by night, G. he collects his wage any time during the rest of that night and the following day" – m. Baba Mesi'a 9:11 (See Matt 20:8-15).

"A R. Joshua says: 1) envy, 2) desire for bad things, and 3) hatred for people push a person out of the world." – m. Pirqe Abot2 2:11 (See Matt 20:15).[19]

From the Pirqe Abot comes the following:

A. R. Tarfon says, "(1) The day is short, (2) the work formidable, (3) the workers lazy, (4) the wages high, (5) the employer impatient. **2:15**
I. A He would say, "It's not your job to finish the work, but you're not free to walk away from it.
II. B "If you have learned much Torah, they may give you a good reward.
III. C "And your employer can be depended upon to pay your wages for what you do. D "And know what sort of reward is going to be given to the righteous in the coming time." **2:16**[20]

[19] All citations from rabbinic literature come from Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud. A Translation and Commentary* (2011) and *The Jerusalem Talmud. A Translation and Commentary* (2008).
[20] Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 678. According to Zvi Kaplan in the 2007 *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Tarfon" is reputed to have lived prior to CE 70 – c. CE 135 and saw the temple still standing. (Skolnik and Berenbaum, V19:512-513).

Other Sources

The NAG HAMMADI Gospel of Thomas has a "saying of Jesus" at *Logion* 4: "(1) Jesus says" 'The person old in his days will not hesitate to ask a child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. (2) For many who are first (in place) will become last, and (3) they will become a single one'" (K. Aland, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* 2005, 520; See Matt 20:16).

Josephus also speaks of payment of a laborer's wage (Ant. 4.288):

> After the same manner as in these trusts, it is to be, that we are not to defraud those that undergo bodily labor for him. And let it always be remembered, that we are not to defraud a poor man of his wages; as being sensible that God has allotted these wages to him instead of land and other possessions; nay, this payment is not at all to be delayed, but to be made that very day, since God is not willing to deprive the laborer of the immediate use of what he hath labored for (Josephus 1987, 122). (See Matt 20:8-11).

Topical allusions, like those that can be verified by examination of the passages cited above, can be illusory. While they may use the same words that relate to a particular topic they may not be pertinent. What comes through, however, are these truths: 1) a work day lasts from dawn to dusk; 2) apparently there were enough unemployed Jews throughout the post-Herodian history in the region as to merit its being remarked upon by the rabbis; 3) workers are always lazy; 4) employers are always generous; 5) work has moral implications; 6) the Levitical instruction, "you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning," (Lev 19:13), as Josephus notes, runs through Jewish tradition. Whether it was honored or not is difficult to say; the principle, however, obtained canonical status.[21]

[21] See n16 in Chapter Two above for some other references to wage payment found in Hebrew Scriptures.

As for the NAG HAMMADI citation, it is best classified as an allusion. As an allusion which contains many similar words (taken from Coptic and thus not really comparable to the Greek in the Gospel of Matthew, 20:16), it is, in reality, either a nonsense statement or it may be an arcane, esoteric statement comprehensible only to initiates.

After a qualified search into what traditions were to be found, and discovering only slight similarities and parallels between the target text and ancient writings, one has to admit somewhat tentatively that there are no ancient precedents for this text, at least none that I have been able to discover or detect. It would have been more exciting to have found something greatly similar in order to be able to examine the target text for signs of seams and patches to show how an earlier tradition had been incorporated into this singular Matthean text.

Unable, myself, to find an authentically legitimate source for our parable in Matthew, the parable itself needs to be examined in its location and in itself for its form and shape. What can be said about it? How is its form and shape alike other biblical passages? In what respects does it differ? How should it be characterized as literary output? Such queries will bring us to another aspect of biblical criticism called "Form Criticism."[22]

Form-Critical Considerations

In this 20th century development of biblical hermeneutics called "form-criticism", there remain some, perhaps many controversies. This exercise will not delve into the controversies, the history of form criticism, the philosophical and ideological suppositions

[22] For some brief general ideas about "form criticism" see R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Anchor Bible Reference Library New York, 1997), 22-23; *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ: 1990), 71:23-26; and E. V. McKnight, *What is Form Criticism?* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969); John Barton, "*Form Criticism: Old Testament,*" ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 838-841; Vernon K. Robbins, "*Form Criticism: New Testament,*" (ibid.), 841-844; Norman Perrin. *What is Redaction Criticism*? 2002.

that underlay the controversies. Instead it will restrict itself to making use of very general literary form classifications and genres that qualified scholars have provided.

Thus Matthew's product is classified in the *Lexham Glossary of Literary Types* as a "Gospel Narrative," i.e. "a narrative focused on the life and teaching of Jesus" (Mangum 2014, s.v.). Narrowing our scope, the target text is found between redactional seams at Matt 19:1-2 and 20:17 in which two passages Jesus is seen as changing from one physical location and moving purposefully to another. The target text is classified as a "Pronouncement Narrative," i.e. "an account where Jesus or the apostles address (19:3-20:16) the concerns of their detractors and engage in religious debate" (ibid, s.v.) part of which pursues the even narrower form (19:16-20:16) of an "inquiry," i.e. "the examination of facts, experiences, or principles in a search for truth, knowledge, or wisdom" (ibid, s.v.). Embedded within the inquiry is a "parable" (20:1-16), i.e. "a short, vivid, fictional story using figurative imagery to teach important truths" (ibid, s. v.).[23]

So developed is form criticism over the years that it has produced a number of typologies for parables and even a "parable exegesis" (Donahue 1990, 81:61). Classification of parables into genres and types, however, is complicated by two factors, "the peas under the mattress", so to speak.[24] One factor is the meaning of "the kingdom of God" (or "kingdom of heaven"). Very often a parable is used to explain and illustrate what the "Kingdom of God" is like.[25] In a nutshell, unfortunately, every scholar tends to view the kingdom of God diversely (Donahue 1990, 81:64). The second factor derives from the

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[23] Jones says the parable has been "described as an extended epic." He gives no source for his statement nor does he provide a definition of an 'extended epic' (*The Matthean Parables. A Literary and Historical Commentary 1995*, 422). On page 423, he indicates some of the characteristics of an "epic parable" but one is unsure whether he is also speaking of an extended epic.

[24] "Detailed critical work may be needed before the various genres to be studied can be disentangled" (Barton 1992, v2: 839).

[25] Our target parable begins: "The Kingdom of heaven is like a householder who…." (Appendix I)

very nature of figurative language with all its varieties: metaphor, simile, idiom, metonymy, etc. (Aristotle 1941, *Rhetorica*, *De Poetica* passim). It appears that the interaction of these two factors tends to complicate things (Robbins 1992, v2: 842).

A useful notion connected with form-criticism is found in the German *Sitz im Leben*, a term coined to define a "general, and in principle repeatable, occasion" for/in which a particular text or its original expression was used. Distinguishing when text types were used, in what various *Sitzen im* Leben, may help characterize parables. Upon entering Judea, was Jesus found among a number of vineyards as he walked toward Jerusalem, or was he, instead, used to speaking with his followers in this way? Has any scripture scholar attempted to connect Jesus' parable types to recurrent physical situations described in the NT? Barton states that "interest in recent years in the sociology of ancient Israel will both contribute to and benefit from form-critical studies of OT texts (2:840)." His observation applies to NT texts as well, including the concrete description of hiring practices and wage payment that characterizes the target text.

The Parabolic Form of Matthew 20:1-16

So then, how do scholars classify our target parable? Working in a discipline about which I know very little, I intend to be guided by Edgar V. McKnight whose book *What is Form Criticism* was republished in 1997 and which contains a pertinent segment entitled "*The Study of Parables: A Productive Use of Form Criticism"* (51-56). In the segment are listed a number of major biblical parable analysts, namely Adolph Jülicher, C.H. Dodd, Joachim Jeremias, and an oblique reference is also made to Rudolph Bultmann.[26] Brief

[26] Jülicher's works are in German and inaccessible to me; I can only summarize paraphrases of his remarks from others. It should be noted that in his book McKnight's citations of Jülicher come via C. H. Dodd. They are not remarks that McKnight himself translated from the original. Where it is possible, it is my

treatments of how each perceived the form of our target parable follow here according to the chronological order in which they were first published.

Adolph Jülicher "denied that the parables are allegories in any sense" (ibid, 51). The stories found on Jesus' lips come from "daily life" and are intended to make his point clear and provocative, leading up to a single point – "a general religious truth" (52). And, unfortunately, whereas he provides four parables as examples of this single point, the parable of the Owner of the Vineyard is not among them.[27] Thus, we are unable to go beyond Jülicher's generalizations about the form of our target parable.

C.H. Dodd, in turn, accepts some of Jülicher's proposals but differentiates himself from others. For example, Dodd holds that in protracted parables the addition of details may provide a "secondary significance" that needs to be taken into account. Dodd also differs from Jülicher over parable interpretation, believing that a "*specific* application" must be determined by the "*actual* situation in which Jesus taught" that is in turn related to "*particular* settings" (ibid. 52). More specifically, "Jesus' understanding of the kingdom… is shown by Dodd to be essential to the study of the parables" (ibid. 52-53).

Dodd does not treat the parable of the "Labourers in the Vineyard" as a "parable of crisis" or as a "parable of growth" but treats it under the "setting in life" in which his notion of the Kingdom of God predominates (Dodd 1961, 115-130, 131-145, 84-114). In his treatment of the latter, he explicitly calls attention to the *formgeschichte* school of gospel criticism and what it has to offer. While Dodd does offer exceptions, he does tend to hold that Kingdom parables are more likely to have originated with Jesus than with the church.

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intention to supplement McKnight by recourse to original texts. While Bultmann dealt at length with biblical forms in the NT, McKnight did not extensively cite him for parable forms.

[27] All four examples in Jülicher found in McKnight come via Dodd (McKnight 1997, 52).

His argument runs thus: the "setting in life" that faced Jesus was his ministry and his ministry was to preach the Kingdom of God.[28] Dodd's view then resulted from "an attempt to reconstruct [a parable's] original setting in the life of Jesus" (Dodd 1961, 84).[29] To be noted in many parables are "the interests of the church at a later date" (ibid. 91). Thus, it is implied that there are *Ur*-parables and the parables of a later date that have found their way into the canon of the gospels.[30]

Dodd frequently finds "the point" of a parable to be "the contrast between those whom the evangelists call the 'righteous' and 'sinners' respectively." He claims this is similarly the motive underlying "the Matthean parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard". This remark is the only indication of the form Dodd assigns to this parable which receives a very brief treatment of half a page (Dodd 1961, 91f).

In a more formal way Joachim Jeremias set about to expand the principles whereby the church transformed the parables of Jesus as Dodd contended on occasion. Many parables "express one and the same idea" and Jesus sought to express the "central ideas of his message in constantly changing images" (McKnight 1997, 55). McKnight's treatment of Jeremias covers less than a printed page and so a more detailed recourse is necessary, and who better a source than Joachim Jeremias himself?

In the opening chapter of his book on the parables of Jesus, Jeremias (1962, 11-22) expounds on the "problem". He attempts "to arrive at the earliest attainable form of Jesus' parabolic teaching" and, by making that remark, indicates that he is actively engaged in

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[28] "…Jesus saw in His own ministry the coming of the Kingdom of God…" (Dodd 1961, 85)
[29] "The original 'setting in life' of any authentic saying of Jesus was of course provided by the actual conditions of His ministry" (Dodd 1961, 84).
[30] The best exemplifications of these can be found his Chapter V called "Parables of Crisis" (Dodd 1961, 115-130).

form criticism. He conjectures that there are three levels or stages of tradition: Jesus' own, that of the primitive church, and the gospel writer/editor's redactional activity on the tradition he received from the church (ibid. 14, n11). How does the church influence the parabolic tradition begun by Jesus? Jeremias plausibly claims that "the process of treating the parables as allegories" began almost as soon as Jesus uttered them. He claims this "allegorizing" tendency was due to several factors: 1) "an unconscious desire to discover a deeper meaning"; 2) the fact that the Hellenistic world used "myths as vehicles of esoteric knowledge"; and 3) the fact that "allegorical exegesis was highly esteemed" in the Judaism of that era (ibid. 13).[31]

Since our object in this analytical-descriptive study is not the parable form itself but only one of its exemplifications, let us see what Jeremias has to say about our target parable in its canonical form: Matt 16:1-16. In the first place it is, he claims, a good example of a "frequently occurring change of audience" but also "the source of much allegorizing" from the earliest times (ibid. 33). He names Irenaeus and Origen and provides references to what they have to say about the "fivefold summons" in relation to salvation history. Jeremias dismisses their allegorizing remarks by claiming that the point is not the call but the payment (ibid. 34).

Continuing his pursuit of the original Jesus parable, Jeremias next strips away a portion of a verse that was joined to the text no later than by the second century and found in some witnesses: *for many are called but few are chosen*. Jeremias calls this a "common generalizing conclusion" taken from Matt 22:14 – thus making this a parable of judgment; however, this too misses the point which is not judgment but the "agreed wage" (ibid. 34).

[31] An illustration of Judaic "allegorical exegesis" can be found in the *Commentary on Habakkuk* (1QpHab) described by its translator as a main source for the study of Essene Bible exegesis (Vermes 2004, 509).

The next accretion to be peeled away, according to Jeremias, comes from Matthew who introduces a transposition of the order of a statement found Mark 10:31, the source Matthew used "to confirm the promises which Jesus has just made to the disciples, or as a warning against presumption" (ibid. 35). Matthew's intent is to indicate the "reversal of rank" that is to take place on the last day. Jeremias dismisses the entire notion by claiming that there can be "no great significance in the order of payment" (ibid. 35).

The next layer standing in the way of what Jesus is purported to have said has to do with context. Matthew's setting lends itself to an interpretation of the phrase *the last shall be first and the first last* that may be misleading. Jeremias contends that the interpretation is not: "'equal pay for all', but 'So much more pay for the last'" (ibid. 36). Removal of this logion found in v. 16 makes it possible for us, finally, to get at the message Jesus originally delivered:

> It is because of his pity for their poverty that the owner allows them to be paid a full day's wages. In this case the parable does not depict an arbitrary action, but the behaviour of a large-hearted man who is compassionate and full of sympathy for the poor. This, says Jesus, is how God deals with men. This is what God is like, merciful. Even to tax-farmers and sinners he grants an unmerited place in his Kingdom, such is the measure of his goodness. The whole emphasis lies on the final words: ὅτι ἐγω ἀγαθός εἰμι [because I am good] (ibid. 37).

Jeremias also contends that because of the accretions and transformations over time, this parable addressed initially by Jesus to those "who resembled the murmurers…Pharisees for example," was now applied to the Christian community (bid. 38).

One must admit that Jeremias makes a case that the truly professional scripture scholar might have to deal with. My case will appear in Chapter Five.

As for Rudolf Bultmann who receives an almost slighting reference in the McKnight book, his contribution to form criticism is simply to call parables "parables" and this is small help.

We turn to the problematic offered by "the premier Catholic scholar of the Historical Jesus [and] one of the greatest scholars of the historical Jesus in the 20th (and now 21st) century!!!"[32] John P. Meier is that scholar. The McKnight volume makes no reference to him because it was published before Meier's first book was published. In his most recent book Meier (2016, 230-362) claims that according to the criteria he uses in his research on the historical Jesus, only four parables can be ascribed to that same historical Jesus (The Mustard Seed, the Evil Tenants of the Vineyard, the Great Supper, the Talents/Pounds).[33] While the other four criteria as well as secondary criteria are not applicable and the potential independent witness value of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas is examined and dismissed, the only criterion of his that John Meier uses to come to this conclusion is *multiple attestation* which means that the object of historical research has to have more than a single witnessing tradition.[34] This witnessing tradition can take two forms: "(i) more than one independent literary source" and/or "(ii) more than one literary form or genre" (Meier 16).[35] In effect, Meier's conclusion seems to render this entire thesis-writing business on the Laborers in the Vineyard "moot," nothing more than an academic

[32] Personal communication from Dr. R. Lux.
[33] Respectively: Mark 4:30-32 ‖ Matt 13:31-32 ‖ Luke 13:18-19; Mark 12:1-11 ‖ Matt 12:33-43 ‖ Luke 20:9-19; Matt 22:2-14 ‖ Luke 14:16-24; Matt 25:14-30 ‖ Luke 19:11-27.
[34] The five criteria are: multiple attestation, embarrassment, discontinuity, coherence, Jesus' rejection and execution (12-21; 89-188).
[35] Meier listed and ranked his five criteria in Vol I of *A Marginal Jew*, published in 1991. In the intervening 25 years between that publication and his recent study of the parables, serious scripture scholars have had opportunity to examine, test, and controvert his criteria. In Vol V, Meier examines their views, reactions and contributions – particularly the "plausibility" criterion of Gerd Theissen in a "refresher course" (Meier 8-29). The upshot? Meier remains fully convinced that these criteria have kept him from distortion, deformation, falsification, and misrepresentation in his studies of the hypothetical "historical Jesus."

exercise.[36] He makes an extremely strong case. But, while his extensive research and wide reading support his thesis, often overlooked is his equally firm contention: "Let me emphasize once again: this is not to claim that I can often prove the opposite, that is, that this or that parable definitely does *not* [his emphasis] come from Jesus" (Meier 56). That affirmation alone happily allows parable interpreters to continue their work.

Even with this historicity *caveat* from Meier, one cannot controvert the Matthean parable. It has a literary existence, one that can be traced back to the first papyrus or manuscript in which it appeared. It should be noted that study of the parables from Jülicher onwards was always conducted, it seems, with a view to examining the "historical Jesus" as if to see in the parables a kind of archeological stratum, the details of which could be used to hypothesize for and against any claim that was made about Jesus. In recent years, some scripture scholars revolted against this purely historical approach, arguing that the text as text deserved study (Powell 1990, 2). According to Powell (ibid.), the chief advocate of this position was William A. Beardslee in his book *Literary Criticism of the New Testament,* GBS, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). Powell also lists Robert W. Funk, Dan O. Via, and John D. Crossan as practitioners of this approach. Thus historicity need not be the overriding preoccupation of anyone who seeks to explicate the meaning of a parable. If merely on literary grounds, parables would deserve treatment.

Finally, published within the last decade, Klyne R. Snodgrass (*Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, 2008) offers a "guide" to the parables of Jesus, a guide he terms "comprehensive." This tome of 846 pages dealing with the parables is almost encyclopedic in its coverage of three areas: the word of the parables, the intent

[36] "A mock judicial proceeding set up to examine a hypothetical case as an academic exercise" (Soanes and Stevenson 2004)

of the parable teller, and the discussions of modern scholars (xi). The book is a useful resource for one who seeks to describe and analyze the parable found in Matthew's gospel (20:1-16). Snodgrass's treatment is extensive and runs to 22 pages on that parable alone, exclusive of 4 pages of endnotes – some of which are quite lengthy and detailed.

Snodgrass's methodology is different from that employed in this descriptive-analytical study, and he often, with little or no foundation, makes affirmations or denials of interpretations offered by other scholars; regretfully so, for in general, I have found his observations consonant with my own extensive analysis based, I hope, on more concrete grounds.

To develop my last remark: in his treatment of the parable in a segment called "Decisions on the Issues" (171), under item 6 (175-177) "What did Jesus mean with the parable and what did Matthew mean?" Snodgrass responds by making affirmations and/or denials about what was intended and he also does the same for what scholars claim was intended or meant. He rightfully claims that interpretation is complicated when one does not know the intended audience. Thus he claims that the parable is addressed to the disciples ("I think"). He extends his reasoning, which is largely theological, to other affirmations and denials: "not contrasting works and grace;" not God's "extreme generosity;" all receive their wage, some more than expected; the owner is more charitable than generous; not about "equality" or "solidarity;" not about "equal pay for equal work;" first workers "compare" what they receive with last workers; etc., etc. These affirmations and denials are the result of Snodgrass's dialog with other scholars with whom, it must be admitted, he is greatly familiar. This descriptive-analytical study sought to avoid much of

that because, unlike Snodgrass, the focus of this analysis and description was mainly the text itself and not an analysis and description of the views of other researchers and scholars.

Nonetheless, Snodgrass expresses his understanding of the point of the parable in two statements that deserve repetition here, for essentially I have come to virtually the same conclusion as Chapter Five will reveal. "*The parable instructs us that God's treatment of his people, his judgment, is not based on human reckoning and human standards of justice"* (emphasis in the original, 176). "*…just as no one should begrudge a good man who goes beyond justice and gives to the poor, so no one should begrudge God's goodness and mercy as if God's rewards were limited to strict calculation*" (emphasis in the original, 177).

We began this chapter seeking to make the target text of this descriptive-analytical study the object of an intense and highly detailed examination. The initial concern was to verify whether we had a truly valid text, one that we could confidently make observations about and draw sustainable conclusions from. We learned that textual criticism has a discipline of its own and that its practitioners are subject to assessment by their peers. A very high degree of consensus seems to exist on the NA source that was used for this study.

The next step was to look at the lexical features of the object of this study. At this level there certainly is a much wider discrimination. In the present case, only 18 words from the basic text were deemed worth fuller examination. Here, even concordance by another author with the words selected in this study for fuller examination can only be haphazard. Judgment needed to be exercised and was. The results will be used in Chapter Five.

Once that task was concluded, attention was then turned to a search for possible sources upon which the target text might have been based. Given its singularity and

uniqueness, it seemed highly unlikely and so it turned out to be. However, the search was not profitless. A number of texts were found in rabbinic literatures and pseudepigrapha to have some useful similarities with the target text. One discovery may even illumine the order of payment, as will be seen.

Next form and redaction critical principles were applied to the text to learn whether anything could be learned on that score. We were troubled to learn that these disciplines tend to be highly hypothetical in their conclusions but slogged on. Assisted by the expertise of some, we attempted to analyze the text from a form-critical point of view and developed the conclusions given above. We also learned what chief experts in parable study had to say and were somewhat dismayed by the thesis of one scholar that our target parable is not to be found among those that can be ascribed to the historical Jesus. Now it is time to bring all that we have learned to bear on the target text. What can we say about it that extends the Kingdom of God among us?

Chapter Five

It is time now to compile all the analysis and description heretofore engaged in into one coherent whole, the organizing principle of which is Matt 20:1-16. The intent is to engage in disciplined hermeneutics for the purpose of drawing out every vestige of useful meaning from the pericope – a true exegesis; it is not to formulate a compendium of everything anyone had to say about this text; least of all is it intended to be an *eisegesis* wherein an ideology or personal bias is read into the scriptural text.[1]

The study of New Testament scriptures has interested and intrigued *aficionados* for something like two thousand years (cf. II Peter, 3:15-16). Yet while this kind of activity has gone on for two millennia, and may continue on into the Second Coming, its exercise in this particular study must come to an end. It is time to do so after having analyzed and described a number of features of the target text itself and the contextual elements related to it. To do a perfect study is a hopeless task. Perhaps, one can come close.

Present Status

Among the features and elements treated in our descriptive analysis, we were able to consider viticulture and viniculture as it was practiced in ancient times. We also briefly considered the geology, geography, history and politics of ancient Palestine, and of Galilee in particular, and how these affected both agronomy and land use. We took a deeper than usual look into ancient grape growing practices as these were dispersed throughout a calendar year.

[1] Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed. (s.v.)

Additionally, we took a more detailed look at our target text from various aspects of historical criticism. We examined the text for its integrity, for its lexical content and linguistic nature, for its singularities, for its dependence on earlier sources, looking for any original tradition before it was eventually modified by its author/redactor into what we have presently in our canon. We also examined the Mishnah for what it had to add.

All these preliminaries were intentionally designed to serve a hermeneutical purpose. The original goal, after all, was to discover how the story of a landowner with a vineyard and a need for a large number of workers is somehow like the Kingdom of God ("of the heavens"). This comparison is not a task we set for ourselves; it is the claim made by the originator of the parable (Matt 20:1). We will never know for certain whether the story is of a real person or a fictitious one even if we can validate and/or rationalize certain puzzling features of the story: the intermittent yet persistent search for workers, the intriguing order of payment, the equal payment given to all workers no matter the time they arrived, the resentment expressed by the first hired, the landowner's remark about the "evil-eye," and the owner's reference to his own generosity.

And even if the puzzling features cease to be puzzling, there are still the various theoretical and ideological propositions of significant biblical scholarship to deal with: shall we lean toward the notions governing parable interpretation proposed by Jülicher, or Dibelius, or Bultmann, or Dodd, or Jeremias? Can we then allow views of the "historical Jesus" to color our hermeneutics? Life is not simple.

Mistaken Assumptions

As an integral part of the hermeneutical enterprise, it seems to me that the first and best recourse is to consult the text itself as a way of precluding certain mistaken

assumptions often made.[2] A list of these follow, each with accompanying observations based on the text:

1. *The landowner, οἰκοδεσπότης, is Jewish*. Nowhere does the text make any reference to ethnicity or religion. The nearest hint to such may be found in v. 8, in which an instruction is given about payment at the end of the day in apparent compliance with Lev 19:13 and Deut 24:15. In this regard one must remember two facts: a) the laborers were hired for the day and normal procedure would be to pay at the end of the day; one cannot assume in this regard that Jewish employers were just and Gentile employers were unjust; repeated recurrences of non-payment would result in difficulty at hiring laborers; b) Galilee also had a history of mixed races dwelling side-by-side; it is unlikely that all vineyards had Jewish landowners when the territory actually had documented Hellenistic vineyards, Gentile cities, and military colonies established within its borders.[3] It is reasonable to assume that Gentile employers followed the pattern set by their Jewish neighbors who sought to comply with Levitical law. It is not reasonable to assume that there were two economically and socially diverse employment and wage systems in Galilee.
2. *There was a single market-place, ἀγορά, which the landowner repeatedly visited to find workers*. Most importantly, this assumption does not harmonize well with vv.

[2] Rather than replicate the study text in this final, conclusive chapter, the reader is reminded that it appears as Appendix I. The structure of this exegetical effort will follow the patterns set by recent exegetical treatments of the Gospel of Matthew, e.g. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Mathew 14-28* 1995, and Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* 2007: i.e., explanatory notes, and comment on the pericope. The "assumptions" made here are not necessarily ascribed to particular scholars; they are of the sort that "Everyman" makes.

[3] "The home of Jesus is the semi-pagan Galilee." Günther Bornkamm (1960). *Jesus of Nazareth*. Trans. From the 3rd German ed. By Irene and Fraser McCluskey with James Robinson. New York: Harper and Row; quoted in McKnight, 68. Fiensy also has a great deal to say about Gentile and Jewish landowners in Galilee (1991, 55-60).

6-7. If the owner had repeatedly visited a single market-place to find workers, he would certainly have hired the workers who, being available all day, claimed "no one has hired us" because the landowner was manifested as eager, even desperate, to find additional workers. More than likely, the landowner visited the market-places found in a number of different villages and hamlets within hiking distance of his vineyard, perhaps even in villages on land he owned, or dependent upon a city in which he dwelt. For one thing, multiple villages situated on separate hilltops for defensive purposes in an irregular terrain would provide a natural, unforced explanation of the spacing of the various hires – making a circuit and going about from village to village, even at some distance, to find needed workers for his vineyard during the course of a day. Furthermore, ancient Palestine has been described as a land of hamlets and "nucleated villages" rather than of isolated farmsteads, villas, or cities.[4]

Additionally, if any of the various villages "belonged" to him in a patronal sense, if they were his "clients" so to speak, this fact would do away with much of the arbitrariness that seems to drive his payment behavior (v.8).

3. *The order of payment is arbitrary, whimsical, "quirky"*. Is it really? If one examines the Talmud (b. Baba Mesi'a 83 b) one finds "the laborer returns home on his own time afterward."[5] It is therefore quite possible that the vineyard owner is not at all "quirky" or whimsical about payment. Instead the "good" image we would have of him would represent even greater considerate and sensitive goodness if he

[4] Applebaum, 641-646. Villages were generally defined as "without walls": Lev 25:29-31; Numb 21:25; 1 Sam 6:18; Esther 9:19; Ezek 38:11; Song 7:11. Oftentimes, they were legally linked to cities: cf. I Chron 7:28-29.

[5] See page 69 above in Chapter Four for a reference.

first paid those who were the furthest away (hired last) and allowed them to begin their return home soonest. This possibility is all the more realistic if we accept the observations made to the previous assumption about multiple market-places and their distance from the vineyard. Of course it is impossible to the date the Mishnah accurately or to learn its effective applicability to the era in which Jesus lived, but the order of payment would make sense and would be another, though oblique, indication of the goodness of the landowner. Thus he would appear generally good and not just good in one situation. Furthermore, it would cripple the tendency toward allegory found in some interpreters.

4. *The workers are hired to harvest grapes*. This is the reason most often alleged to explain why the landowner himself goes out to find workers several times during the course of a single day. It would seem that the work is urgent and that the landowner is under some constraint or duress.
    a. In favor of the notion that the workers are hired to harvest grapes I make the following observations:
        i. It is true that once grapes ripen unless they are quickly picked they will rot on the vine. Depending on the size of the vineyard and the market price of table grapes and wine produce, the financial loss to the landowner would definitely be substantial.[6] Weather, too, could impact the process. Proportionate to the size of the vineyard, a great number grape harvesters would be needed, particularly if the estate

[6] This is particularly true if the product was meant for export. See n11 below.

was even a mid-sized one, or if the ripened grapes were of a single variety.

ii. The workers that are hired are not sought, it seems, for any acquired or special skill. The text gives no indication of any inquiry by the landowner into labor skills. Grape picking does not require special skill but only a cutting tool and a collection basket, and these were normally supplied by the landowner (Kloppenborg 2006, 576).[7] Oversight of tool distribution, which varietals of grape were judged ready for picking, where the varietals were located in the vineyard, and actual work assignments would fall to the steward and this, most likely, was the reason why he was not involved in the actual hiring. Other harvest tasks like basket collection, cartage, cleaning, sorting, selecting, grape treading or pressing and storing would be given to the more highly skilled workers that the landowner employed year round because of their skills –supplemented on an as-needed basis (Cato LCL 283 *passim* and Columella LCL 361 *passim*).

b. In favor of the notion that, besides harvesting grapes, the laborers are hired to perform other seasonal vineyard tasks that do not require skilled labor and yet have a degree of urgency would be:

[7] Kinds of tools supplied to workers in Hellenistic Palestine (300 BCE-CE 300) included: shovel, ax, mattock, pruning knife, knife for cutting suckers, knife for cutting stakes, double-headed ax, hoe, spade, etc. (Kloppenborg 2006, 576-577).

i. Weather-unrelated: clearing, brush-cutting, burning, terracing, digging vineyard plots for planting new vineyards, particularly on large estates;

ii. Weather-related with predictably seasonal rainfall: hoeing, irrigating, sod-busting, and planting new vineyards with cuttings and quicksets.[8]

While all these unskilled labor tasks would be burdensome, not all would necessarily take place in the "scorching heat" of the day, though some certainly could (Kloppenborg 2006, 288).

5. *The landowner normally hired unskilled day workers, ἐργάτης. Au contraire!* This was normally the work of the steward.[9] As was noted above, however, if the steward were otherwise very busily occupied with urgent tasks, some other land agent with contractual powers might be used: the owner, the owner's son, a special delegate (Matt 20:1ff; 22:33-41).

Landowners normally resided in cities and ate and drank their produce, entertained lavishly to promote personal and family honor, and sought to establish patronage (Malina. 2001, 27-56). Again normally, the less they interfered with the profitability of their estates the more profit they made because most landowners of mid-sized and larger estates had little agricultural training (Columella, LCL 361:8-37). Their expertise, if they had any, was in finding honest and skilled managers.

[8] See pp. 39-41, Chapter Two above.
[9] See Cato's *De Agricultura* for an example of instructions on work assignments (Cato, LCL 283:6-9, 12-17).

Cato, Varro, and Columella all wrote instructions for landowners because most were ignorant of agronomy and its attendant agricultural practice and skills.

6. *The nature of a vineyard is such that it does not require specialized worker skills.* This is a false and unwarranted assumption. A vineyard is labor intensive and requires a year-round complement of specialized workers occasionally supplemented by the hiring of unskilled labor.[10] It does not make sense economically to carry unneeded workers on a payroll. The parable narrative says absolutely nothing about regular vineyard employees except the one reference to a steward (Matt 20:8). There would, however, have been many regular employees given the size of the unskilled labor force the owner went out to assemble and the size of the vineyard.[11]

   More importantly, a vineyard would have required specialists to trim, stake, plant, wall and terrace, de-bud and de-leaf the vineyard and other specialists to grow cereals and vegetable crops needed to feed the permanent workers (Kloppenborg 2006, 288).

7. *The work is a task that needs to be completed by the end of the day when payment is made*. This assumption cannot be sustained. A single hectare of an vineyard in Italy is the equivalent of 2.471 acres and requires an average of 25-32 worker days to harvest its grapes.[12] The calculus shows that to harvest a single acre of grapes in a single day would proportionately require an average of 10-13 workers to

[10] "Vineyards needed a relatively large, permanent labor pool" (Kloppenborg 2006, 288)
[11] I have deliberately avoided pursuing the notion that this landowner's vineyard in Galilee (?) was the base of an export operation, though there is evidence that the sheer volume of grape production was far greater than was needed for location consumption (Kloppenborg 2006, 302-303). Judea is equally possible for a *sitz im Leben*. Key to this consideration of export was the access to ports: distance, terrain, labor, cartage animals, etc.
[12] Rathbone 1981, 12-13 – as quoted in (Kloppenborg 2006, 289n41). See also 36n43, Chapter Two above.

complete. For a mid-sized estate containing a vineyard, or entirely devoted to grapes, the size was shown above to be between 60 and 375 acres. To harvest even a smallest estate of 60 acres in a single day would take between 600 and 780 workers. Having this in mind, one can easily surmise the need for a very large number of workers, especially at harvest time. This fact lends credence to parts of assumption # 4 above. Indeed, other vineyard tasks are equally labor-intensive.[13] However, the time constraints are not quite so severe as those demanded by ripened fruit. There is no textual evidence that absolutely precludes a hiring the next day or over days thereafter. In fact, subsequent hires over the following days would probably be expected.

8. *The landowner's vineyard is small, of a size that whatever the nature of the work, it can be accomplished in a single day.* Too much evidence suggests otherwise. The very presence of the landowner indicates that he is taking a personal interest in his extensive economic enterprise. The fact that he is present throughout the day would indicate that he stands to lose a great deal of money which would more likely be the case if his holdings were large (more than 375 acres) or even mid-size (60-375 acres). He is apprehensive. He hovers over the entire enterprise, engaging workers, possibly traveling about (see assumption # 2 above), spending an entire day in concern, even indicating the order of payment. He also has a steward in his employ. A small landowner would not be able to afford such a hire. Stewards are hired to supervise a permanent workforce, supplemented on occasion by a temporary

[13] "…viticulture was the most labor-intensive of ancient agricultural pursuits, requiring three times as many workers as olive cultivation, and four times as many workers as cereal and vegetable crops." This is based on a calculus provided by Cato and Columella themselves (Kloppenborg 2006, 287-288).

workforce (see # 4.a.ii above). The hiring of such temps would also indicate an extensive property. Lastly, smallholders normally did not have cash to dispense, yet in the parable the landowner had the ability to order his steward to pay a large number of workers from the villages (Matt 20:8). This aggregation of generally costly elements affecting a single vineyard operation makes one very hesitant to ascribe it to a single day's work or to call it small.

9. *The multiple hires were done for the sake of a single task.* Once an assumption is made, i.e., that the workers were hired to harvest grapes, it can the more easily be assumed that all the temporary workers were hired to do the same task. However, the work requirements of a vineyard are multiple. If this were grape-harvest season, it is certainly possible that workers from market-place A were hired to pick grapes, and workers from market-place B were hired to collect grapes, and workers from market-place C were hired to cart the collected grapes to the grape-crushing site where workers from market-place D cleaned out unsuitable grapes and debris from the mass of grapes before they were crushed. The workers from market-place E could have been employed in cleaning and preparing the vats and containers for collecting the grape juice. While there is no evidence to support this assumption, nothing in the parable can disaffirm it.
10. *The enmity between workers (chiefly between the first and last hired) is due exclusively to the fact that they were equally paid*. This is not really an assumption for it is acknowledged in the narrative (v. 11). However, it need not be the only reason for enmity. The ancient Middle East had a curious cultural belief and conviction about the economy, that it was limited and fixed and could not increase: what was an advantage for you meant a disadvantage for me (Malina. 2001, 81-

105). Villages were small, scattered settlements found most frequently on hill- or mountain-tops for defensive purposes, made up of generally clannish, extended family units (81-105). Throughout our consideration of various unwarranted assumptions about our target text, we have been subtly hinting that the workers are not merely singular "labor units" but that they have been hired in groups, i.e., in the market-places of the several villages, and that each group hire typified a clan or an extended family.[14] Thus an advantage to one group, clan, family hired in its village market-place meant a disadvantage to another group, clan or extended family hired in another market-place. While the dialog between the landowner and the representative, *ἑταίρε,* ("friend" v. 13) of the group hired first was about a denarius and the semblance of equity, there was a deeper meaning implied than just monetary concern. Honor and shame were equally involved since "honor and shame" were collective values, more than just personal attributes (Malina. 2001, 27-52).

11. *The goodness of the landowner is exclusively shown by his giving each laborer a denarius described as a "full day's wage."* Deciding whether a denarius is indeed a full day's wage from the aspect of economics in antiquity is beyond the scope of this study.[15] It certainly is claimed to be such (Betlyon 1992, 1088). The denarius factors into the parable at two places: it is the wage agreed upon between the landowner and the first group to be hired (v. 2); it also features as the wage actually paid to all the workers (vv. 9, 10, 13).

[14] Citing the earlier work of W. W. Fowler (pp 30 ff. *The City State of the Greeks and Romans*, London and New York, 1895.), Harper (1928, 108) lists four characteristics of an ancient Mediterranean village: member kinship, government by family-head council, common property holdings, and common worship.
[15] See, however, Oakman, "The Buying Power of Two Denarii" *Forum*, 33-38. 1987

Earlier I indicated that the order of payment may not have been arbitrary and refrained from claiming that it was deliberate (allowing the landowner to be able to make a point about his "goodness"), but that the order of payment may have favored those who lived the furthest distance away from the vineyard, a kind of additional and non-obtrusive measure of the landowner's goodness; so the payment of a denarius to each laborer is not the only mark of the owner's goodness. A third indication of the owner's goodness may be found in the treatment of the next assumption.

12. *"ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς" (v. 15, "with what belongs to me") refers only to money or liquid property*. By extension, in actual fact, it can refer to real property and its vastness is hinted at. It clearly suggests that the landowner has disposable income/wealth as well as real estate, liquid as well as fixed assets. The phrase is generally interpreted in light of a prior statement: "I choose to give to this last as I give to you; [or] am I not allowed to do what I choose…." One would be justified in concluding that "ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς" refers to a material thing, to money.

    Careful examination of the sentence in which the phrase is found, however, does not restrict the phrase to this exclusively materialist sense, particularly when the disjunctive particle *ἢ* ("or") may be a later interpolation (Metzger 1994). The sense might then easily be: "Am I not permitted to do what I want among my own [villages, people, things that belong to me]? Zerwick and Grosvenor note only that ἐν "may be instrumental." They also note that τὰ ἐμά means "not only <u>what belongs to me</u> but also <u>my business</u>" (20:15). It is lexically and grammatically possible that the landowner is announcing his obligation toward certain villages which he owns

or over which he has patronage. He is asking whether he hasn't the right and duty to take care of his own first.

13. *The aphorism in v. 16 appears to refer to the order of payment, last/first, which leads invariably to the first being paid last*. Is it possible that the obligation the landowner is under is not a contractual one but a patron's obligation to take care of the least/last of his dependents and dependencies? If so, the point of the parable melts away and becomes non-controversial. In which case it could be asked: what's the point? Why divert attention away from the order of payment? And if the purpose is precisely to divert attention away from the order of payment, what then becomes the "point" that Jülicher claimed parables led to? Perhaps, the point was the "evil-eye" remark (see below, p. 104, v. 16).
14. *Envy or jealousy is a suitable image for the "evil-eye"*. Is it? Modern English translations often substitute a metaphor or a metaphorical statement for the original Greek πόνηρος ὀφθαλμός (v. 15) and frequently use "envy" or "jealousy" as a suitable equivalent. By doing so, they define and thus limit the "evil" that in antiquity the "eye" was said to emanate (Allison, Jr. 1987). Thus they seriously undermine earlier statements of Jesus found in Matthew which connect the heart (Matt 15:18ff) with the eye (Matt 5-7). It is out of the heart that intentional and deliberate evil proceeds and Jesus lists the various kinds of evil that the heart is capable of.[16] A better translation of πόνηρος ὀφθαλμός in the sentence would be: "or do you wish me evil because I am good"?

[16] I am reminded that "biblically (in both testaments) the heart is the seat of the will and intentionality" (Personal communication from Dr. Richard Lux).

> The fact is that the first hired/last paid group could, indeed, be jealous or envious of the landowner's wealth but somehow, in context, those evils seem pointless. They do no injury to the landowner. They do him no harm. They themselves seethe. It's not the landowner's wealth that has done them an apparent harm (though in fact he kept his contractual bargain and they were paid a day's wage) and of which they might be envious or jealous. Rather it the landowner's use of his wealth that did not fit in with their preconceived sense of justice and which they subjectively saw as injurious.[17] The landowner himself is seen as an enemy. Murder, revenge, theft, bodily harm and injury are among the physical evils they might wish to inflict on him as "enemy." And in antiquity an "evil-eye" was believed quite capable of emanating power to accomplish these evils (F. T. Elworthy 1912, s.v.).[18]

Exegetical Considerations of Matt 20:1-16

Hopefully, by looking at these various assumptions we have cleared the landscape of some obstacles we might have tripped over as we focus on the object of this descriptive analysis or analytical description. We turn to the exegesis of Matt 20:1-16. We intend to follow a paradigm often witnessed in modern biblical commentaries.[19] First we examine select sources that treat the target text.[20] They are all listed in the bibliography. Next in order will be to present each verse along with useful notes to assist in interpretation. Most often, the notes will simply recall research previously made, particularly in Chapter Four. Finally, a commentary on the target verses will be offered to the reader in the hope that he

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[17] See assumption # 10 above.
[18] See also: F. T. Elworthy 1958; Gifford 1958; Maloney 1976.
[19] See n2 above.
[20] Among the many that were examined some are outrageously outdated and inflict abuse by use of allegorical interpretation, something we expressly desired to avoid (see Chapter One, p. 3). Most, we find, are cursory and not useful and will be excluded from our listing. Others, particularly German sources, are not listed because of a deficiency on my part. Hence we give reasons why this bibliography is "select."

or she will find elucidation and come to a better understanding of the parable of the "Owner of the Vineyard" and how it/he may be likened to the Kingdom of God (kingdom of the heavens).

Notes: (Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition – see Appendix I)

v. 1: *the kingdom of heaven* (οὐρανῶν) is compared to a scenario that plays out during the course of an entire day. Harrington calls attention to the exceptional fact that it is the landowner/*householder* (οἰκοδεσπότης) rather than the steward who goes out to do the hiring (283). *Early in the morning* was the time that hiring began; in this respect the gospel account accords with traditions described in various rabbinic sources (see pp. 68-69 above).

v. 2: *laborers*: these are day-laborers as evidenced by the fact that a mutually acceptable *agreement* between householder and workers was made; slaves were merely kept while tenants paid a flat rate for land use or else received a portion of land-use produce. *Denarius*: Hagner (33b:570) points out that the mutual agreement was for the normal/average day's wage which, even if accumulated over time, would never result in making a poor man and his family wealthy. It was merely sufficient to keep him (and his family) alive. *Vineyard*: the work place is specifically indicated but the nature of the work is not.

v.3-4: *others standing idle*: the earlier hiring is repeated though at a different hour. Moreover, it takes place in a market-place (ἀγορά), something not mentioned in the first hiring. Another difference is noted: no contractual arrangement is made with the second group; they are merely told that they will receive "what is right" (ὅ...δίκαιον δώσω ὑμίν).

v. 5: *He did the same.* The implication is that the householder/landowner repeated his previous third hour hiring at the sixth and ninth hours. Again, a market-place is not mentioned. Hagner (33b:570) notes that "the work of the vineyard had some urgency about it that made the master interested in hiring as late as 3:00 in the afternoon, or indeed as late as 5:00."

v. 6-7: *About the eleventh hour he went out.…* No motive is given; it may have been out of simple curiosity that the householder/landowner went to the usual hiring place (a market-place) or out of pressing need at this late hour. At any rate, *he found others standing.…idle all day.* Inquiring of them the reason for their idleness, he hears that no one had hired them. It is precisely here that Harrington (2007, 283) asks a series of pointed and useful questions: why did the householder fail to hire a full complement of workers? Why did he need more workers at the end of the day? Was the work so pressing? Were the workers hired earlier incompetent? Harrington's response is to claim that such questions "fail to take the story on its own terms" and thus deflates the excited interest he arouses with his questions. It is he who forgets that a parable is a "high context" narrative which must have the hearers/readers (and in his case, interpreters) supply what the text fails to supply. At the same time, unlike Hagner, Harrington does not ascribe "unworthiness" to the workers because the text says they were "idle" or unemployed.

v. 8: *When evening came*: the householder gives instructions to his steward to pay the day-laborers. It appears that he is following Jewish or local custom which required payment at the end of the day (Lev 19:13). There are no indications of the number of people to be paid – other than the fivefold search of additional workers – nor does the text indicate where they are to be paid. A reasonable presumption is that they are paid where they

work. The only instruction given by the householder/landowner, in addition to ordering payment, is the fact that he also orders the payment to be made from the "last to the first." Interestingly, in this verse, the householder/landowner is referred to with a different term; he is called *owner of the vineyard* (κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος). This introduces an entirely new element, one that may hark back to v. 1 and the "kingdom of heaven." It conveys the sense that the vineyard must truly be extensive and well managed – a royal domain? – if its owner receives the kind of appellative that is often used of God. Harrington indicates that it is only here, at the payment, that the term is introduced (284).

v. 9: [those] *hired…*[at] *the eleventh hour…received a denarius*: the payment is made in the presence of all those hired previously; Harrington calls them "spectators through the entire process" (283). Surely, if the landowner/householder is "good" and is intended to be an image of God and his goodness "in the kingdom of heaven," then making spectators of those hired earlier to demean them and humiliate them (even if by teaching them a 'lesson') is not in keeping with that image. There must be some other reason for this "last to first" arrangement. However, it is not expressed.

v.10: *each…received a denarius…*[although] *they thought they would receive more* – i.e., the members of the first group hired. They were the "spectators" who were witnesses throughout. They witnessed how each group hired, though at different hours of the day, was paid the same amount: one denarius. No proportionality ruled here among these other groups; all were given the same amount and the first group hired witnessed that sameness.

v. 11: Yet, they assumed that, for some reason, they, as the first hired, would receive more – in justice, as they perceived it. When they received the same and the pattern remained

identical, they were obviously disappointed because they *grumbled at the householder*. This grumbling (γογγύζω) or whispering-to-each-other seems to have taken place in the presence of the householder/landowner thereby indicating that he, too, witnessed the payment of the denarius to all the day-laborers.

v. 12: When people in a group speak, individuals speak their separate minds. A group is not a Greek chorus; there is not one single, uniform message that issues forth. What the gospel records as their statement may be a compilation of the several things that issued forth from individuals in the group: "*These last worked only one hour*." "*You have made* [these last] *equal to us*." "[We] *have borne the burden of the day*." "[We have borne] *the scorching heat*." These diverse though integrated statements are part of the genius of the parable maker.

v. 13: *he replied to one of them*: given the honor/shame paradigm that prevailed in the Mediterranean Basin, it is hardly likely that the householder/landowner would attempt to respond to the several statements heard from the group. Instead he speaks to a single person, perhaps a spokesperson. In speaking to him he refers to him as *friend*, though any one of the group who served that function would have been addressed the same way; in other words, all are "friends." *I am doing you no wrong*: I am keeping my agreement with you. The elements introduced as complaints, *only one hour, equal to us, burden of the day, the heat* were all present and known about when the contract was made between the householder/landowner and the workers. No new element has been introduced that might invalidate the contractual agreement. Only the fact that the

householder/landowner chose to pay the identical amount contracted with the first group to all the groups has become the "serpent in paradise."[21]

v. 14: *take what is yours*: the denarius is yours, you have the right to it. I am keeping my agreement with you. What I have given to others is really no business of yours. *this last*: only the order of payment is intended; there is absolutely no other meaning intended. The statement has no implications for history, for personal value or worth, for race or religion, to reward, to all those elements, in other words, that served as basis for allegorical interpretation on the part of so many biblical interpreters.

v. 15a: *Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?* This verse is suggestive and may have a double meaning. The Jewish understanding of wealth during the theocracy held that God was the owner of all things, including the land of Israel and personal wealth was his gift in blessing. In turn, he expected the wealthy to be good to those not so blessed: Lev 25:35-38; Prov 14:31; 30:8-9.

v.15b: *Or do you begrudge my generosity?* This verse hides the Evil-eye reference found in the original Greek (ὀφθαλμός πονηρός) *or is your eye evil because I am good?* In conjunction with the previous verse, 15b implies the obverse to the goodness that belongs to one who owns all and chooses to do what he wills; *can I not be good? Can I not distribute my blessings as I will? Will you do me evil because though I own all things, I am good and generous and bless?* We must remind ourselves that immediately upon concluding verse 15, verses 17-19 of the same chapter contain an explicit warning about the evil Jesus will be facing upon his arrival in Jerusalem. The warning of the evil to befall one who is good is prefigured by this Evil-eye reference.

[21] My mother had a 'wisdom' saying: she used to tell her children that "every paradise has its own serpent" when they were disappointed for some reason.

V. 16: In simplest language, this verse doesn't belong here. It is out of place. It disrupts the flow. I actually believe it is the work of some later redactor who misunderstood the reason for "first/last'–last/first" in the payment order. As my hypothesis, it is unverifiable and thus not really sustainable.

Comment:

The owner of a vineyard, a landowner of a significant estate that employs an overseer or steward, is up very early to engage day-laborers. This is his intent.[22] All that dramatically follows is somehow illustrative of how the kingdom of the heavens (i.e., God's kingdom, His kingly conduct) operates. The landowner is awake with a purpose, a plan, at which he works throughout an entire day. While the text does not explicitly say so, the plan must have been formulated the day before, probably with his steward.[23] Normally, stewards hired day-laborers; it was beneath the honor and dignity of estate owners to engage in employment activities.[24] Now, perhaps, between the two, or in consultation with the permanent vineyard workers, they had decided that the grapes were ripe for picking, or that a new vineyard property was ready for spading, or that some other vineyard task needed to be done, a task that required a very large labor force with no specific skills whose work would be directed by the very knowledgeable and experienced overseer or steward.

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[22] See BDAG s.v. ἐξέρχομαι. This Greek verb frequently, but not necessarily, signals the place from which the departure is made: if a thing, with ἐκ; if a person, with ἀπό. It may or may not mention a destination. With living subjects, it can mean *to move, go out;* it can also mean *to move, go away from an area*.

[23] Unable to remember the source, I recall a story I heard or read many years ago about Andrew Carnegie who offered anyone $25,000 if he or she could improve his efficiency. Andrew Carnegie is said to have paid the amount to a young man who advised him: "Begin tomorrow's work today!"

[24] However, see Matt 21:33.

Even before the crack of dawn, the landowner leaves his villa or city residence for a market-place in a village near his estate so that he can hire workers to begin the task(s) as soon as it is light.[25] The location the landowner comes from is not specified in the text.

A negotiation is made; the owner comes to an agreement with this first group from this first village market-place for a denarius a day and sends them off to his vineyard (Levine 2014, 206-207). The complement of this first group of day-laborers, however, is insufficient for the task and the landowner is aware of that. Perhaps, in his discussion the previous evening, by name and location he and his steward chose villages which could supply the number of men that were needed to deal with the task or tasks.

Having hired all the men available in one village, the landowner returns home (perhaps, for food) to the city he dwells in, or to his villa, before setting off on foot for another village at a later time in a different direction where he discovers a group of unemployed men eager for work.[26] He hires them with a promise to pay "whatever is just" rather than making any contractual arrangement that specifies a specific wage. It is equally possible that he traveled directly from the first to a second village, arriving at the third hour, where he hired the men available after promising to pay what is "just."

Walking, traveling, hill-climbing at the sixth and ninth hours (which are inexact time periods) the landowner reached the third and fourth village. There he met the same

[25] "Hire day-laborers at dawn" b. Yoma 3:1, II.1.D; "he goes to work in the time of his employer…" b. Baba Mesi'a.

[26] Hamel, p. 153: "Day laborers not attached to the estate of a landowner were subject to periods of unemployment and want. They were hired when large undertakings made their help necessary, at harvest time, for plowing, transportation, and construction projects. Unemployment seems to have been high, even at harvest time, when workers would be waiting around town squares at different hours of the day." I have never found a reference that suggested that the 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 11th hours were the usual times at which the unemployed reconvened in a market square. Once arrived to seek employment in a market-place, they remained till hired or left to work their own farms or gardens.

situation: unemployed men passing time in the village square awaiting employment.[27] He hires them under identical conditions and dispatches them to the tasks that await them in his vineyard.[28]

The same conditions apply to a fifth village, perhaps at some distance or on the border of his extensive property.[29] He would repeat his offer and give the same instructions after learning that they were eager to work but that "no one has hired us." Unemployment was endemic. The owner never accuses these workers as being "idlers" or lazy; no recrimination is implied in the text. Though ready for employment, no one employed them.

Finally, toward the end of the day, this Jewish/Gentile landowner instructed his steward to pay all his day-laborers. And because he was sensitive to the distances they traveled to reach his vineyard, he wished to pay those furthest away so that they could be the first to begin to make their way home. They were the last he found, most probably "at the eleventh hour". Those who lived the nearest were probably the first hired, so they would be paid last since they would have the shortest distance to travel home.

All are gathered together to meet the steward who brings the cash. Shame attached itself to a landowner who involved himself in "money" matters. And so the payment is made in public by the steward. And this is where the trouble begins. Notice that no group complains about the order of payment – not even the first group – probably because it was

[27] It seems likely, therefore, that employers could access a village market-place at any hour of the day and find unemployed workers. Was this "standard practice"? There seems to be no other explanation for their continuous presence. Fiensy notes that laborers could be hired "by the hour" (85).
[28] Snodgrass (2008, 167) believes that neither the workers in the middle hours nor the steward are essential to the story.
[29] Another scenario would have the owner travel by donkey or conveyance attended by servants. In this case, he might travel back to his vineyard to learn that his manpower needs were not yet complete and then set out again. Such travel arrangements suited a landowner who was wealthy. One must always keep in mind that parables were "high context" narratives. Hearers would supply a number of details familiar to them but not to us.

understood: people are paid in the order of the distance they must traverse to get home. Notice, also, that no group – other than the first – complains about the amount they received. They all receive a denarius. All receive a full day's wage.

Sharing the same humanity, I contend that all the groups had the identical sense of justice and equity and believed that they should be paid proportionately to "the burden of the day and the scorching heat." By that sense of justice, those hired at the third hour should have received 9/12 of a denarius but obtained more and so they were content and kept silence.[30] The same pattern was true of those hired at the sixth hour. Justice for them would have been satisfied with 6/12 or half a denarius. They got more and so, they, too, were content and kept silence. And how about those hired at the ninth and eleventh hours respectively? In justice, they should have received a quarter and a twelfth of a denarius respectively. In fact, however, they received more than their sense of justice had any right to expect. So, they were content and kept silence.[31]

With all but the earliest group, whatever the laborers' sense of justice and expectation, it is exceeded by the landowner's goodness and generosity. If the landowner's treatment represents God and his treatment of humanity, then certainly these details fit and comply with the parabolic likening the situation to the Kingdom of the heavens (of God).

The first group to be hired has the identical sense of justice and expectation. And they obtain what was contracted for. Justice obtains. However, they compare their outcome to that of the other workers, what they received to what they thought they should receive, claiming that they had born "the burden of the day and the scorching heat." They

[30] Amy-Jill Levine seems to hold a similar view (*Short Stories by Jesus*, 213).
[31] Perhaps the reason none but the first group complain is that they all come from villages that belong to the landowner. He is their "patron" so to speak. They may not dare complain. Yet he seems to care for them and is sensitive to their needs.

conveniently forget that the early morning hours are cool, and that "scorching heat" only begins about the third hour of the morning and remains through the sixth and ninth hours. They exaggerate somewhat to make their case, naturally.

What seems to irk those hired in the first group more than all else is a seeming violation of their sense of justice: "you have made them equal to us." The "burden" and "scorching heat" issues are mere doublespeak and camouflage.

It is a fact that in God's (created) kingdom humans expect God to act in ways of their own devising. A common refrain is: 'there is no God because, if there were, He would not allow humans to suffer." God, though, is just with a sense of justice that humans are incapable of grasping (Ps 50:4-7).

If Joachim Jeremias is correct in his hypotheses about re-application of the point of parables, it might be that it involved the "last/first" – "first/last" paradox. It might be that the first group hired represents Judeo-Christians in Antioch who are resentful of the presence of Hellenistic Christians in "their" Church. An earlier layer found in oral tradition of the Jesus Followers might be that the first group hired represents Jewish Jesus Followers who resent the presence of Greek-Speaking Jews or Samaritans among the Jesus Followers. The earliest layer might be that Jesus saw the first group as Pharisees and Sadducees who resented that tax-farmers and sinners were the very people that Jesus sought table-fellowship with. In the Kingdom of the heavens God is desirous of saving all. This is a cursory observation about the parabolic tradition that professionals might wish to explore.

There is a final detail in the parable, that of the baneful "evil-eye." Its presence in the parable may be indicative of its layering in the parabolic development that J. Jeremias hypothesized about.

1. If envy and jealousy were meant for inclusion by the presence of the symbol of the "evil-eye," little or nothing is known of the relations between Judeo-Christians and Hellenes. Resentment, perhaps, existed among Judeo-Christians at God's call to Hellenes to be saved, but hardly envy or jealousy; and conflict in its various forms between the two groups is not attested to.
2. At an earlier level in the tradition it is known that Hellenes complained with what appears to be jealousy at the treatment Jewish Followers of the Way received (Acts 6:1ff). The same Greek root for "murmuring" (in nominal rather than verbal form) is used. But while the source of the complaint is identified, it did not lead to conflict and bloodshed and was settled amicably by the twelve once the question came up and all were satisfied. The conflict was temporary and hardly worth modifying a parabolic tradition for.
3. The earliest tradition of conflict was that between the Jewish religious establishment (high priest, Sadducees, and elders) and Jesus. And the gospels (including Matthew's), though written long after, also contend that the Pharisees had an inimical intent toward Jesus and may not merely have wished his death but helped secure it. The use of the Mediterranean belief in the evil-eye in this parable may be the closest Jesus came to publically testifying to the presence of evil in the Kingdom of God, to his design, to part of his plan to deal with it.

Envy or jealousy, if at all deserving expression, should have been directed toward the workers who received the same amount as the workers of the first group. But by this time, most probably, they were well along their way home in the order they were paid. It is also possible that the single person, the "friend" to whom the landowner spoke, alone complained about what his companions felt. It is hardly likely that the landowner would

have “shamed” or dishonored himself by debating his authority, rank and position with a group in a public debate.

Even though almost telegraphic in language and style, there is so much in this “high context” parable that can be explained without recourse to allegory. Allegory seems to be an attempt to blanket bias and prejudice with the cloak of biblical approval. And one recurrent bias almost universally found in the interpretation of this parable is anti-Semitism. The parable is explainable without recourse to anti-Semitism.

Afterword

Throughout this descriptive-analytic study, a great number of questions were posed. Only some of them were answered directly. Some were indirectly answered without much fanfare. Some went unanswered. And some, finally, are unanswerable, at least so far. A colleague of mine has often told me that the only “really stupid question” is the one that remains unasked.

The various questions asked served a number of purposes. Some were pointed and were designed to direct the research. Some were related to an aspect of that research but if taken seriously would have led off in a random direction. Some were taken less seriously as if to say: “the limitations placed on me and the limitations I placed on myself do not allow me to pursue this matter further.” Some may have been rhetorical, a literary equivalent of throwing hands up into the air and asking: “What now?”

Yet, when all is examined closely, the most important questions have been dealt with: what kind of vineyard urgency would drive a landowner to seek employees throughout the course of a day, doing something he does not normally do? how might the landowner be likened to the “kingdom of heaven?” what really does last/first – first/last mean? does the parable mean much more when the Mediterranean Evil-eye construct is

employed other than as a synonym? what really was the source of aggravation for the first group that led them to “grumble?” Can we be absolutely sure the day-laborers were sought to harvest grapes? Is the landowner “universally good” and suitable as an icon for God or does he have a flawed sense of justice when he fails to pay more than the contracted amount to the first group? Is allegory really needed to interpret this parable? We think these questions have been answered. However, it is foolish to think all questions have been asked and answered.

Appendix I

Matthew 20:1-16

Greek:

Ὁμοία γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότῃ, ὅστις ἐξῆλθεν ἅμα πρωῒ μισθώσασθαι ἐργάτας εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα αὐτοῦ. **2** συμφωνήσας δὲ μετὰ τῶν ἐργατῶν ἐκ δηναρίου τὴν ἡμέραν ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα αὐτοῦ. **3** καὶ ἐξελθὼν περὶ τρίτην ὥραν εἶδεν ἄλλους ἑστῶτας ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἀργοὺς **4** καὶ ἐκείνοις εἶπεν· ὑπάγετε καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν ᾖ δίκαιον δώσω ὑμῖν. **5** οἱ δὲ ἀπῆλθον. πάλιν [δὲ] ἐξελθὼν περὶ ἕκτην καὶ ἐνάτην ὥραν ἐποίησεν ὡσαύτως. **6** περὶ δὲ τὴν ἑνδεκάτην ἐξελθὼν εὗρεν ἄλλους ἑστῶτας καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί ὧδε ἑστήκατε ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἀργοί; **7** λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἡμᾶς ἐμισθώσατο. λέγει αὐτοῖς· ὑπάγετε καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα. **8** ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης λέγει ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος τῷ ἐπιτρόπῳ αὐτοῦ· κάλεσον τοὺς ἐργάτας καὶ ἀπόδος αὐτοῖς τὸν μισθὸν ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῶν ἐσχάτων ἕως τῶν πρώτων. **9** καὶ ἐλθόντες οἱ περὶ τὴν ἑνδεκάτην ὥραν ἔλαβον ἀνὰ δηνάριον. **10** καὶ ἐλθόντες οἱ πρῶτοι ἐνόμισαν ὅτι πλεῖον λήμψονται· καὶ ἔλαβον [τὸ] ἀνὰ δηνάριον καὶ αὐτοί. **11** λαβόντες δὲ ἐγόγγυζον κατὰ τοῦ οἰκοδεσπότου **12** λέγοντες· οὗτοι οἱ ἔσχατοι μίαν ὥραν ἐποίησαν, καὶ ἴσους ἡμῖν αὐτοὺς ἐποίησας τοῖς βαστάσασιν τὸ βάρος τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τὸν καύσωνα. **13** ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς ἑνὶ αὐτῶν εἶπεν· ἑταῖρε, οὐκ ἀδικῶ σε· οὐχὶ δηναρίου συνεφώνησάς μοι; **14** ἆρον τὸ σὸν καὶ ὕπαγε. θέλω δὲ τούτῳ τῷ ἐσχάτῳ δοῦναι ὡς καὶ σοί· **15** [ἢ] οὐκ ἔξεστίν μοι ὃ θέλω ποιῆσαι ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς; ἢ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός ἐστιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀγαθός εἰμι; **16** οὕτως ἔσονται οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι.[1]

[1] Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th Edition. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), Mt 20.

Matthew 20:1-16

English:

[1] "For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. [2] After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3] And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; [4] and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. [5] Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. [6] And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' [7] They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' [8] And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' [9] And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. [10] Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. [11] And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, [12] saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' [13] But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? [14] Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. [15] Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' [16] So the last will be first, and the first last." [1]

[1] Catholic Biblical Association (Great Britain), *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition* (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994), Mt 20:1–16.

Appendix II

Relation of Wine Production to Planted Area

A simple Google inquiry into how many lbs. of grapes might one expect from a two-acre vineyard (see n34 in Chapter Two above) was the result of an initial confusion that ultimately resulted in greater clarification. It is not the area of a vineyard that can be used to predict product tonnage; rather the grape harvest tonnage itself from a defined area (*acre*, *hectare*, *iugera*, etc.) is the result of a number of factors: the varietal itself, the location of the vines, the amount of water absorbed by the grape berry, its acidity and sugar content, the weather during the growing season, etc., etc. Thus the tonnage produced from a two-acre vineyard can vary from year to year.

A more useful question, then, would be to ask: how many gallons of wine can normally be produced by a certain tonnage of grapes? In this respect, there are a number of wine-producing websites that might supply answers to the question if supplied with a tonnage. Cornell University has a website that appears academically respectable enough and suggests that 150 gallons of wine per ton of grapes is the volume of wine one can expect – within a range of 120-180 gallons. The metrics used in the website article are not questioned here but accepted (Gerling 2011).

Thus, if the two acres of vineyard referred to in n34 (Chap. Two) produced 8,000 lbs. of grapes (4 tons), one might expect 2 X 150 gallons of wine, resulting in 300 gallons of wine per acre or 600 gallons overall. With proportionate measurements, this can serve as a standard for judging production by area as reported in Columella (LCL 361:255). One *iuger* should produce slightly over 198 gallons of wine on average. Of course, Columella does not use the *gallon* as a standard measure; he uses the *urna* and *culleus* instead as his

standard measures. Instead Columella reports a yield of 600 *urnae* (> 2050 gallons) of wine per *iuger* according to his sources, Cato and Varro, slightly more than 10 times a greater yield than reported above, with the base being the *iuger* not the *acre*. Is this plausible? Gerling states: “A recent agricultural survey from the European Union listed a range of 35 to 400 hl/ha. If we convert these numbers to tons/acre using 150 gallons per ton, we get a range of 2.5 to 28.5 tons/acre” (ibid.). This is quite impressive. Translated in tonnage per *iuger*, the range would be 1.6 to 18.8 tons/iuger. Whether yields were as high in Palestine in ancient times one can only conjecture. Even so, the workload for harvesters would have been immense.

Appendix III

"Frank and the evil eye incident"

When: Late September 2009, probably Sunday afternoon, in the mid to late afternoon

Weather was warm, mild and very sunny.

Where: In Perugia

Along the Corso Vannuci heading north towards the Piazza IV Noviembre (I still have my map) in the vicinity of the police department's substation.

Corso Vannuci is the street if you want to be seen in Perugia. It's the commercial boulevard for Perugia with the trendy shops, the movie theaters, the outdoor restaurants and the best place in the city for gelato (I know, I tried many different places).

Piazza IV Noviembre is on the north end of the Corso Vannuci. It is a gathering space for many throughout the day and night, especially the steps of the cathedral. The Palazzo dei Priori (municipal offices) and the Cattedral San Lorenzo form two of its borders. The Fontano Maggiore within the Piazza is major point of interest. The Piazza and Corso Vannuci are busy throughout the day and night with shoppers, tourists and people who use it for walking (or to see/be seen).

This area is on the crest of the highest hill in Perugia. On the far south end of the street is a park where the mountains of Umbria are visible. Assisi can be seen in the distance on a clear day. Corso Vannuci is pedestrian only, for the most part. Some vehicle traffic moves around the east side of the Piazza.

Who was involved in the event:

Me (with my limited knowledge of Italian)

Older lady, not completely certain of her age but her clothing suggested she was not from Perugia (did not have the same sophistication of either the locals or the tourists). She was not a gypsy – did not have their clothing either. She seemed to be alone or unaccompanied.

Two members of the municipal police of Perugia

Gang of local tough dudes from the area – had seen them often

Other tourists, shoppers, folks being seen.

What was I doing?

I was walking back towards the Piazza. Residence was just west of the cathedral (Priests' house). Had been walking the Corso in the middle of the weekend afternoon (probably was Sunday), enjoying the people, the sights and aromas of the street. Looking forward to gelato before I went back to studies. The Italian term for what I was doing would be *"Io ho fatto una passeggiata."*

Because of the bright sun, I had sunglasses on. These wrapped around my regular glasses and reduced glare on the sides as well as the front. I had learned the hard way that these were necessary in the mid to late afternoon sun.

What happened?

I was walking. The older lady approached me in a loud voice and began proclaiming that I had given her the 'evil eye'. Somehow she had seen through my sunglasses and noticed my right eye and its asymmetrical look (following the various reconstruction surgeries).

As I continued walking, trying to lose her, she continued yelling about the evil eye. She was visibly upset and I would say distraught. Vocal tone was loud, confrontational and 'aggrieved'. She attracted the attention of the local tough dudes who now took notice of the situation. I don't remember if she actively sought their attention but they definitely started moving in our direction.

The two police officers, male and female, who were on station that afternoon, exited their office and approached (probably 100 feet away from their post). The local dudes stopped moving towards us. Others began to mill at 'respectful' distance for Italians, most kept walking.

The older lady went to them, continuing to scream that I had given her the evil eye, that I had done her harm. In the usual Italian manner, she was in their faces, wagging her finger, while pressing her argument and case.

The officers heard her side of the conversation. I remained in place, partially worried about the local tough dudes, partially wanting to disappear, partially wanting to tell my side of the story. After she finished with her account, both officers and the older lady turned to me and asked what happened. They were polite.

I then informed them that I was a student of the Universita per Stranieri a Perugia and showed them my student ID (had been carrying it since arrival in August). I informed them that I was living at the Casa dei Sacerdoti and was heading there when she stopped me.

I then attempted to explain that I did not give her the evil eye. I attempted to explain that my right eye was not the same as the left because of the cancer diagnosed in 2002 and the operations that occurred in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. I stated that I was in the process of 'faccio una passeggiata" (at which the officers smiled if my memory is still correct).

The older lady again started to wail and contend I had given her the evil eye and she was distressed. The male officer asked me to remove my sunglasses and then my regular eyeglasses. I complied (scared at what might happen but still in control, somewhat). Both officers carefully examined my face, comparing the two eyes. I did point out the scar tissue on the side and underneath my nose.

The officer instructed me to put my glasses back on. The male officer turned to the older lady and stated one word rather loudly: BASTA! The female officer thanked me for my time and stated she thought my grasp of Italian was rather good for a two month student (probably was communicating at the same level of a first grader although we had just learned the basics for past tense which helped). Neither officer was hostile or aggressive with me or the older lady up until this point.

As the officers began to move away, the female officer looked over at the local tough dudes who may have decided they did not want to be involved or seen anymore. The crowd moved away.

The older lady continued her ranting and followed them into their substation. I quickly moved out of the area and back to the house (which had a large wooden gate/door securing the initial access point which would hide me from the sight of others, for the time being), forsaking my gelato treat.

Aftermath:

Did tell my story to others students who were living in the house during supper. Interesting discussion did ensue as the two Italians who were part of the house tried to explain the older lady's reaction and reasoning.

Did relate the events to the instructor that was handling the 'culture' aspect of the course (Italian A2). She also attempted to explain the notion of evil eye among Italians, especially its historical flavor. I wish I could remember most of what she related but I did not include this in my class notes (which I still have). I do recall she said that rural Italians in some areas still hold this belief and that the way one looks at them can be significant.

Did not see the older lady again. Did see the local tough dudes but they did not bother me in the remaining time I was in Perugia. It may have helped that the after-dinner strolls were in the company of other students or the dudes did not care anymore.

Glossary of Technical Terms

Ablaqueation: "An operation formerly described by [this] convenient word…. Cf. Palladius, II, 1, *Januario mense locis temperatis ablaqueandae sunt vites, quod Itali excodicare appellant, id est circa vitis codicem dolabra terram diligenter aperire, et purgatis omnibus velut lacus efficere, ut solis teporibus et imbribus provocantur*." [During January, when the weather is mild, vines must be ablaqueated; the Italians call the process "root opening" {cutting away the surface roots – see Kloppenborg, 426}, i.e., the area around the vine root is worked with a pick-axe and, after trimming everything away, a basin or depression is made around it so that the vines can be stimulated by moisture and moderate warmth – author's translation]. NB: this process is normally applied to vine plants only in their 1st-3rd year (see Winkler, et al., 273-274).

Binding: (see "training"); a ligature to a vine-bearing support. The binding needs to be soft and flexible enough not to cut the vine plant.

Bud: a vine growth that normally develops "at each node just above the leaf…consist[ing] of three partially developed shoots with rudimentary leaves [leaf bud: sterile] or with both rudimentary leaves and flower clusters [fruit bud]" (Winkler, et al. 1974, 84-85).

Cane: (related to a shoot, q.v.): the autumnal stage of a shoot after maturing. A first season growth that has become woody (ibid.).

Cutting: is a "cane [i.e. a current season growth] of medium size with space between nodes of moderate length" that are well-nourished and well-matured

Grafting: the process of uniting a scion (q.v.) with a stock plant (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v.). Grafting may serve several purposes: to enable fruiting on roots resistant to certain pests; to enable fruiting on roots suited to certain soils; to change fruiting on an established vineyard, etc. (Winkler, et al., 205). There are four types of grafting: bench, bark, cleft, and notch grafting. Details of each exceed the scope of this study (see ibid., 207-219).

Hoeing: a means of "loosening, turning, or stirring of soil" by use of a mattock (q.v.) "around and between growing plants." Generally, it's purpose is to "destroy weeds", "to facilitate…irrigation…incorporate manures and fertilizers into the soil…to help control certain pests…and to promote absorption of water where other vineyard operations have compacted or puddled the surface" (Winkler, et al., 371). Hoeing can reduce insect breeding environments, kill insect pupae, and bury insect cocoons (ibid. 504).

Layering: a means of vine-propagation recommended when "cuttings [q.v.] can be rooted only with great difficulty" or to "replace occasional missing vines"

(Winkler, et al., 203). Winkler et al. list three ways that layering can be done (ibid. 203-205). Details are beyond the scope of this study.

Mattock: "a digging and grubbing tool with features of an adze and an ax or pick" (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., 2003; s.v.).

Pruning: is the removal of living matter from the vine; if it is done for flower clusters, immature clusters or their parts, the practices is called thinning. It is done to living canes, shoots, and leaves, it is called pruning. Its essential purpose is crop control and weight distribution (Winkler, et al., 287). See also training.

Quickset: is a "green or softwood cutting allowed to take root in a nursery" (Winkler et Al. 202).

Readings: "are the individual variant forms that make up a variant unit" (Porter and Pitts, 91)

Scion: is a "detached living portion of a plant joined to a stock in grafting and usually supplying solely aerial parts to a graft" (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., 2003, s.v.).

Shoot: is the "succulent growth arising from a bud {q.v.). (Winkler, et al., 85).

Staking: (see training). This process provides a temporary (6-10 years) support for a grapevine until it is strong and rigid enough to stand alone. (Winkler, et al., 254).

Suckering: is "the removal of undesired shoots that originate on the trunk [of a vine] and below the ground" (Winkler et al., 315). See *Ablaquaeatio.*

Terracing: is a "method of growing crops on sides of hills or mountains by planting on graduated terraces built into the slope. Though labour intensive, the method has been employed effectively to maximize arable land area in variable terrains and to reduce soil erosion and water loss" (*Britannica* 2005, s.v. "terrace cultivation").

Textual family: a theoretical construct used to explain general similarities among a series of NT textual copies in relation to their presumed origin. According to the Alands, "only the Alexandrian text, the Koine text, and the D text are incontestably verified" while other texts, text groups, text types, and text families are "dubious" (Aland and Aland, 67-71).

Thinning: a generalization for a process of judicious removal of first year plant growth: "buds, shoots, or leaves while they are green or herbaceous" (Winkler, et al., 313). Among the varieties of thinning are: disbudding, topping young vines, suckering (or "removal of undesired shoots that originate on the trunk and below the ground"), pinching, topping, and removal of mature leaves (ibid. 314-318).

Tower: is an installation in a vineyard intended to serve as protection against thievery, store equipment, serve as temporary housing or as refuge in danger (Banning 1992, VI:622). Frequently found in the Mediterranean basin, it is featured in Isa 5:1-7. Some towers may have been used in cooling (n32 above).

Training: "…the purpose of training is to produce vines (a) of a shape that facilitates cultivation, insect and disease control, pruning, and harvesting, and, that are (b) economical to maintain and (c) capable of producing fruit of the desired type and in good quantity. In a well-trained vineyard the aims of any system of pruning are: (a) to facilitate pruning and harvesting…(c) to spread the fruit so as to prevent its forming masses of interlocked clusters; (d) to hold the bearing surface at a height that provides good leaf exposure and (e) to keep the permanent parts of the vines free of large wounds" (Winkler, et al., 272).

Transplanting: the lifting and resetting of a [young] plant to another soil or location (Merriam-Webster, 11th ed., 2003, s.v.)

Trellising: (see training). The process of providing a permanent support for a grapevine. There are three types: vertical, wide top, and arbor; for details, consult Winkler et al. 254.

Trenching: is an old-world practice for soil-nutriment purposes. "…the fertile soil, together with added organic matter or other fertilizers, is placed down in the root zone, and the exhausted subsoil is brought to the surface to be enriched by natural weathering and fertilizer application. Trenching is usually done to a depth of 2 to 3 feet (Winkler, et al., 242-243).

Variant (textual): is a "variation in any form between two or more Greek manuscripts" (Porter and Pitts, 92).

Variant-unit: is a "passage or section of the Greek NT where our MSS [manuscripts] do not agree as to what the Greek text is" (Porter and Pitts citing from Colwell and Tune, 91)

Vineyard (established): a vineyard on the produce of which a tax would normally be required. In a patron-client relationship, sometimes a large estate was exempted from such tax through the influence of the patron. Produce of an established vineyard could be expected after the fourth or fifth year of its initial existence.

Vineyard (new): a vineyard on the produce of which no tax on produce would normally be required. Produce from a new vineyard was hardly likely and all energy is devoted to bring it to a state where it will produce fruit by the fourth or fifth year and thus become profitable.

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