An interpretation from the ideology of the text

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ABSTRACT
The concept of "ideology" is highly discussed in literary theory. This study wants to demonstrate the value of the concept by using it as an interpretive device. After preliminary remarks on the narrative perspective of the text under discussion, it connects this text with the more encompassing ancient ideologies on οἶκος or Νῦν and on slavery. A short survey of the whole of the gospels/Text demonstrates that Luke's text is a typical mixture of adaptation and critique. This applies also to Luke 12:35-48. Supposing the contemporary οἶκος or Νῦν ideology the text undermines its value: κύριος are made into δοῦλοι and service is preferred above domination.

After all the profound considerations and interpretations we also need to take a more mundane look at the text. Cui bono? Whom does the text benefit? Which and whose interests are served and furthered? The (tentative) definition of a text in a context of economic substructures, in concrete ideologies which have not lost their material origin, in the description of the text's perspective in the light of the subscribed or rejected interests, all these are important aspects of such a consideration. They are certainly not the whole agenda of a so-called materialistic reading of a text - the language aspect is absent - but questions which in other readings are missing, if not completely, then at least substantively. That is why I want to limit myself to them.

1 THE PERSPECTIVE
It is not beneath the dignity of an exegete to start with elementary matters such as the perspective from which the sentences are spoken (or written) and an analysis of the applied imagery to find the implicit interests. The text deals with slaves and with their labour, with a master who acts as a slave (v 37) and with slaves who are called blessed (v 37, 43). If the interests of the slaves are not central here....

Let me start at the beginning, with the description of the slave labour itself. The master expects as a matter of course that his slaves will stay awake when he goes to a marriage feast and that they will open the door immediately when he knocks (v 36), no matter what the hour, till the second and even third watch - that is, way beyond midnight. I think that the fact that this is presumed to be self-evident, indicates the real perspective. This reality takes it as quite normal that slaves are at the beck and call of the master, day and
night. When he leaves the house, they must stay awake because the master can return and they must then open the door immediately. The effect is even greater because the text speaks about a *number* of slaves. The whole house is in uproar because the master is celebrating. The slaves do not take part in the celebration: they are in the service of the house where the master is the central point. The text does not think from the point of view of slaves. The position of the master determines the real point of view and from this position the text speaks about the slaves.

Precisely the same image applies to verse 37: a master who acts like a slave. He girds himself, allows his people to take their place, and passes along the table and serves them. We see how the slave is described as a servant: In the middle of the night he must set aside his own needs and interests. The text runs parallel to 17:7-8:

> Who of you who owns a slave for ploughing or minding cattle will tell him: Come along at once and sit down at the table and eat? Will he not rather tell him: prepare my meal, gird yourself and serve me while I eat and drink: you can eat and drink later?

Slaves are supposed to be at the beck and call of the master. Their interests are the master's interest: their own take second place.

This perspective, starting from the κύριος position and not from the δοῦλος position, is even more expressly present in the final parable about the faithful and intelligent slave-manager who has been appointed over the slaves (vv 42-48). Again, as a matter of course, the master determines everything, telling the slave what to do; the fate of the slave is in the master's hand. The master can promote him (v 44), but he can also quarter him (v 46). The master has the right to have the slave whipped and will determine the number of stripes for particular misdeeds (vv 47-48). The master can demand that the slave returns what has been given to him and he can claim what he has entrusted to him (v 48). The position of the master is untouchable; the position of the slave is one of dependency and uncertainty. The master is omnipotent, the slave can only do as he is told.

The most eloquent passage is the detail about the master's fantasy, about what a slave might think in his heart: "my master will not return yet" (v 45), together with the description of the slave's behaviour: that he will beat the male and female slaves and eat and drink his fill (v 45). Such a presentation of facts is only possible from the perspective of the slave-master:

> The moment I leave the house, there will be uproar. A slave is evil and untrustworthy. If I do not oversee him, my possessions will be lost.

I am not saying that the slave-master is wrong in his fantasies and his reasoning. I do want to stress that the text speaks from the perspective of the κύριος. His position is not in question and no mention is made of his possible part in the wrongdoing. The text considers only the result - which is not good - and throws all blame and responsibility on the slave. Be careful with slaves
because they can be very untrustworthy and, if given a chance, will abuse power.

Ideologically we have the statement: there are good and evil slaves. The good ones should be made more dependent by way of extra gifts for services rendered and the evil ones should be punished, scourged and murdered, if need be. It seems to be an ideology which, indeed, is still widespread today.

2 THE UNDERLYING ΟÎΚΟΣ - OR ΝΩΣ - IDEOLOGY

I am well aware that with all these considerations the last word has not yet been spoken. The text needs to be seen in relation to the much wider ideology of the οίκος in the Hellenistic system, or in parallel, the ΝΩΣ ideology in Jewish society. On the basis of the material from the οίκος - treatises from Stobaeus and of the material from the Mishna, especially from Nashim, the Order of Woman, I would like to say the following.

The "house" is the basic unit in the economic, legal and political systems of the time. Since the possession of land, of fields for agriculture and of cattle depends on it, it has a special legal status supported by force of law. Only the οίκος can acquire possessions. There are proper, internal regulations about the division of labour and mutual co-operation. The "house" is the image of the πόλις, a focal point of the οίκονομικά of the city-state.

To get a clear image of this we can think of the Roman villa with its buildings, its multitude of slaves, the extensive landholdings and the dominus at the apex of the hierarchy. But we should not forget that the same system determines the lives of practically all people, albeit on a smaller scale. For the free citizen, life begins with the founding of a "house", and the acquisition of a wife, land and slaves. Origin, centre and focal point of all this is the man as κύριος or ba'āl. He is the captain of the ship. He creates harmony. He is the absolute authority. Everything is subject to him: first of all his wife, the management of his possessions (usually also the possessions which the wife brings into the marriage), the children and their education, the organisation of the work of the slaves and the hired hands. The master of the house, the οἰκοδεσπότης, the ba'āl habait, takes care also of the external relations: with parents, relatives and friends, a circle of people who expand the greatness of the οίκος. The οίκος and the κύριος are one and the same.

Before we look more deeply into the special position of the slaves, I would like to point out that Luke wrote his gospel against the background of this social reality. In a certain sense it is his point of departure which is not beyond discussion but, nevertheless, lies at the base of everything that happens in the story.

Let me start with the accepted situations, with the factual realities in the story which describe the interplay between the possession of a "house" and a man's relationship with his wife, his children, his parents, his possessions, his friends, neighbours and relatives, as well as with his slaves and cattle. This is quite a cluster. It would lead me too far afield to try to discuss all of it. But I
want to place it in evidence because it is needed, to be able to understand the impact of the texts under discussion. I shall just name a few of them: the relationship between Zechariah and Elizabeth at the birth of their child; the woman who bears a son "for her husband" (Lk 1:13) and who leaves it to him to name the child (1:59ff); the relationship between Jesus and his parents in the first years of his life and the way his father is determined; the function of the friends and "the house" in the story of the centurion and his sick slave (7:1ff); the intervention of parents in the healing stories; the mother when the story deals with a widow (7:11ff) but otherwise it is always the father who intervenes for his daughter (8:40ff) and for the young man who is possessed (9:37ff). There is also the question people ask when they are confronted with the demands of being Jesus' followers: should one not first bury one's father, and is one permitted to take leave of the "people of the house" (9:59ff). There are the host's demands of hospitality towards friends, brothers, relatives and neighbours (14:12f; 15:6 and, on the part of the woman, 15:9); the relationship with the slaves as told in the story of the father and his two sons (15:11ff); in the parables of the slave-manager (16:1ff), the ten slaves (19:11ff) and the vine-growers (20:9ff). Everywhere we find the οἶκος reality where the man as husband and master is seen in a typical relationship with his wife, his children, his friends, his cattle and slaves. In the parable of the great feast the people who do not want to come say,

_I bought a piece of land and must go and see to it; I bought five pairs of oxen and have to go and try them out; I married a wife and therefore I cannot come._ (14:18f).

The οἶκος ideology dominates all the people in the story.

It is typical for Luke's gospel that, in central places in the text, sentences are inserted which blow this whole system apart like a time bomb. These are sentences which, in some way or other, have to do with following Jesus. I quote the more important, in order of growing impact:

Luke 14:12: _He said to his host: when you are having a party for lunch or supper, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives or rich neighbours..._

Luke 14:26: _If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple._

Luke 14:33: _So none of you can be my disciple without parting with all his possessions (cf 11:41; 12:15; 12:33; 19:8; cf also 3:11-14; 5:11; 18:22)._

Luke 18:29: _There is no one who has given up house or wife, brothers or parents, or children, for the sake of kingdom of God, who will not be repaid..._

Luke 21:16: _Even your parents and brothers, your relatives and friends will betray you and some of you will be put to death (cf 12:52f)._

Starting with the demand to change the culturally accepted hospitality, Jesus asks his followers to set aside their own οἶκος, the people as well as the pos-
sessions; a separation which can lead to mortal enmity and hatred by the ὀ-κός. At heart this is a description of Jesus' own lifestyle: he looks for friendship with publicans and sinners, separates himself from his own relatives and his place of origin, and will be betrayed by one of his friends with a kiss for the sake of some money.

Luke uses the ὀκός ideology to put an end to it from within and thus prepare the people to be ready to accept the demands of the kingdom of God. To understand our text (12:35-48) correctly we need to see that anti-ὁκός sentences such as these appear just before as well as just after our text:

Luke 12:33. possessions need to be sold and given away as alms; see also the parable of the division of the two brothers' inheritance and Jesus' refusal to be involved (12:13f), as well as the parable of the dumb, rich man (12:15ff);
Luke 12:52ff: Jesus' arrival divides the ὀκός from within: three against two and two against three; father against son, mother against daughter; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law.

3 THE MASTER AND HIS SLAVE(S)

It is time to go back to our text, to look more closely at the relationship between master and slaves or slave. The ὀκός ideology has a very specific set of rules for this. In the space available I can only highlight this quite specific political system which Luke's text briefly reflects. But this is absolutely necessary to understand the text. In exegesis there is an irresistible tendency, apparently, to undervalue the slave system of the ancient world, as is evident from all those translations which only see a "servant" in a δοῦλος, - to reduce the system to a kind of servility for men and women.

In classical antiquity an usually invisible but certainly unbreachable dividing line runs between free men and slaves. It is a distinction between two kinds of people of a different status and a different order. A slave is part of the possessions of the ὀκός. He does not have rights. In principle at least he cannot acquire money and he is not free to marry. So he cannot start his own ὀκός. His earnings and his children belong to the ὀκός of his master. Only through being freed can he cross the dividing line and even then there are a number of obligations which remain.

In principle the system is the same in the Hellenistic and the Jewish social structure. There is only one difference. There is a kind of mitigation in the system of internal Jewish slavery: a so-called Hebrew slave - in contrast to a so-called Canaanite (= pagan) slave - who belongs to a Jew enjoys some protection of the law. Hebrew slaves have the right to be set free after six years of slavery, a right which they do not have to use. They are not to be maltreated or abused and they enjoy the same protection of the law as free Jewish citizens.

All this does not mean that there are not many variations in the relationships between masters and slaves. It is clear that in an ὀκός with many slaves
the mutual relationships will be different from an οἰκός where there is only one or a very few slaves bound to the family for life. The most exploitative form of slavery happens in large landholdings. These were the exceptions in Palestine, but that does not mean that we cannot point to differences. In preparing this study I researched the words and deeds of the early Tannaim in relation to slavery: on the one hand there were Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai and his disciple Joshua ben Chananja, with Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus; and on the other hand Gamaliel II, his disciple Eleazar ben Azarja, and his son Chananja ben Gamaliel. It is stated of two from these rabbis that they themselves had slaves, namely of Eliezer and of Gamaliel. These two also dominate the Jewish discussion on slavery. There is a typical distinction between them. Rabbi Eliezer who is supposed to have had a number of slaves (see Ber 16b, a female slave has died; and Gitt 38b: he frees a slave because of a μινταν) is much stricter in doctrine than Gamaliel who only owns the one slave, Tebi. Rabbi Gamaliel is happy to find a reason to free his slave (but he is not allowed to do so!); he praises his slave as a disciple of Torah; he laments for him when he dies. Rabbi Eliezer always chooses the stricter way: the Hebrew slave may be forced to marry a Canaanite slave (and his possible children enter, therefore, into the possession of the master); the six years are to be kept even though there is a sabbatical year in between; freeing in case of maltreatment applies only under strict conditions; when his own slave dies, he does not want to hear about lamentations. He tells his disciples to say the same to him as when an ox or ass dies: may God replace your loss. There is nothing attractive about being a slave, but there is a lot of difference where one finds oneself.

The great range of social possibilities realised in Luke's text makes this text very interesting. Before taking into consideration the parables of chapter 12, it may be important to have a quick look at the other texts:

Luke 7:2-10: The story of the centurion and his sick slave shows many typical traits. The relationship between master and slave is called ἐντυμος, a concept which runs from "honoured" through "beloved" to "precious" - an ambiguous concept, therefore, where interest and care are intermingled. That mixture gives a special colour to the story: sending men twice but finally not allowing Jesus to enter the house. Shy and insistent at the same time, the centurion describes his own position very well: "Being placed under authority I do have authority. I tell my slave, 'do this', and he does it."

Luke 14:16-24: In the parable of the great banquet the master has one slave who, all through the story, is being sent out: to tell the guests that the time has come; to bring in the poor and the lame, the blind and the crippled; to go out of the city and force the people from the lanes and hedges to come in. Here we find one slave who has a whole array of commands to fulfil. He does so without showing any apparent emotion. The master is at the house, busy commanding his slave.
Luke 15:11-32: In the parable of the father and his two sons slaves play a minor role, in keeping with their real function. When the second son has returned to his father the slaves are sent to bring the festive garment and the ring and the shoes. They are commanded to slaughter the fatted calf immediately. Slaves are at the service of people and surround those who are free. We see the same with the other son, when he returns from the field. He hears the music and the dancing and one of his slaves is sent to find out what is going on. This is a large landholding where slaves are run-of-the-mill.

Luke 16:1-13: The parable of the dishonest steward fits in this series, because a steward is always a slave. He is the *vilicus* who is used only in the case of large landholders where there is a need for a responsible slave-manager because of the multitude of people and things to do. In this case the manager is there only for the debtors: one hundred barrels of oil, a hundred bushels of wheat. When he will be dismissed, he hopes to find a place in their οἴκος (16:4).

Luke 17:7-10: "Who of you who owns a slave for ploughing or minding cattle...", shows a totally different situation. Here we have only one slave who is used to doing everything. After a day of work outside he is expected to help inside the house: to prepare the table for his master. Only when he has finished all that can he sit down and eat, and even then he has only done his duty.

Luke 19:13-22: The parable of the ten slaves deals with the peculium system: a small sum of money is entrusted to a slave who is to use it to make a profit for his master. The absence of the master increases the responsibility of the slave. Only profit will bring a reward. Just to keep the money safe is not enough and will even be punished. It is a way of thinking that would fit quite well in a capitalist system.

Luke 20:9-19: The slaves who in the parable of the vine-growers are sent by their master to collect his share of the harvest, suffer a really bad fate. Time and again they are scourged and thrown out. The story necessitates a climax of violence: scourging and sending away; scourging, abusing and sending back, wounding and throwing out. The son of the owner suffers an even worse fate, but that, as is well known, has to do with the place of the parable in the total gospel narrative.

Luke 22:50,56,58: The story ends in a certain sense as it began, with the mention of a couple of "real slaves": the slave of the high priest whose ear is cut off and whom Jesus heals immediately; and the female slave(s) in the house of the high priest, bringing Peter to deny Jesus. These are obviously house-slaves, part of a richer οἴκος. There is no indication of what their situation really is.

Conspicuous is the fact that in the main narrative "real slaves" are mentioned only twice: only the centurion and the high priest have a slave or slaves. All other mention of slaves happens in stories which are embedded or in
conditional sentences. The text of chapter 12 is no exception here. There are two parables in which slaves are mentioned.

In the parable of the returning master we hear only about waiting for and expecting the master. It does not seem very realistic to expect that everybody must stay awake in order to open the gate; even less realistic is the behaviour of the master who prepares a banquet for his own slaves in the middle of the night. That sounds more like surrealism beyond all fantasy.

The parable of the reliable and untrustworthy manager of the master's possessions draws again from the source of the rich slave-owner. There is a direct link with the untrustworthy slave-manager of chapter 16. In our parable, too, the presupposition is that we deal with a major enterprise. One of the tasks of the slave-manager is to "measure the wheat" in time: an expression known to me only in the context of the festive distribution of grain for the whole population of a city, or of the monthly rations in large cities like Rome or Alexandria. Whatever it implies, the supposition of the parable is that there are many slaves; that discipline can be maintained only through a reign of terror, with the threat of capital punishment and scourgings in various ways and measures. The closing sentences about "giving" and "entrusting" indicate that the peculium system is not absent. No one seems interested in how the slaves themselves undergo all this, but that should not be a surprise any more.

4 THE INTENDED AUDIENCE

To arrive at the meaning of the text against the background of the social embedding of the gospel, one more step needs to be taken. The audience, the listeners in the story and those who listen to the story, participate in the social context of the text. A number of things have become clear. In the story the hearers are supposed to be κυριοι who are (or can be) head of their own ὀικος. We find this in the text itself through the mashal about the master of an ὀικος who will not allow a thief to undermine his house, if he knows what time the thief will come (12:39): one's own house is the base of the ὀικος. As mentioned already, the textually implied ὀικος ideology indicates even more clearly the audience for which the text is intended. Only the interests of κυριοι are mentioned or considered. Possible slave-hearers profit only very indirectly from the text.

Therefore, the hearers in the story are κυριοι in the first place, but that is not the final word. The text itself creates a problem regarding the audience. In the middle of the text, where the parable on vigilance is followed by the parable on responsibility, Peter asks - as spokesman of the disciples at whom the address as a whole is directed (cf 12:22) - whether the first parable is meant only for the disciples or for everybody (12:41).

The answer must be found in the second parable about the trustworthy and untrustworthy slave. But how?
Jesus does not give a direct answer. To resolve this problem I will have to make, once again, a detour through the gospel. Our text deals with parables and therefore I can limit myself to that. Something quite remarkable has happened in the production of these parables. To explain this I need to distinguish the parables and the meshalim which are proper to Luke’s gospel and the parables which Luke has in common with Matthew and/or Mark. Let me begin with the latter. If one compares Luke’s version with that of Matthew and/or Mark one will notice that Luke starts from an economically lower level. There are some small, minor differences, as in the comparison of the man who builds a house on rock or sand: Matthew speaks explicitly about “his own house” (Mt 7:24,26), while Luke speaks in a more general way about “a house” (Lk 6:48,49); or as in the parable about the mustard seed: in Mark it is sown “in the soil” (4:31): in Matthew it is sown “in his own field” (13:31), but in Luke, “in his own garden” (13:19). Of greater importance, obviously, are the re-countings of the parables, the parable of the great banquet, of the ten slaves and of the angry vine-growers. With Luke it is always more simple economically. The master of the great banquet in Luke has only one slave (14:1ff), while in Matthew there are “slaves” in the plural, and the even even “other slaves”, even “a whole army” (Mt 22:ff). The parable of the ten slaves is cut down in the same manner in Luke: In the quantity of coins, pounds or talents, as well as in the division among the slaves: every one gets ten pounds as opposed to five, two or one talent (cf Lk 19:ff and Mt 25:ff). In the parable of the vine-growers we have Mark’s text as well, and again we see that Luke is more modest. Only one slave is being sent (and maltreated), while Mark and Matthew speak about a number of slaves (Mt 21:ff; Mk 12:ff; Lk 20:ff).

If we look at Luke’s own parables I need to make a distinction too. Some parables are in line with what I just said: the parable of the man with the two debtors - one who owes fifty and the other five hundred denarii (7:ff); the parable of the fig tree which does not bear fruit and which is being cared for by an appointed vine-grower (13:6): probably also the parables of the shepherd and his hundred sheep; the woman and her ten drachmae; the father and his two sons (15:ff); certainly the parable of the widow and the judge. The parables are not beyond the audience’s capability to imagine, if they are simple, free people. These things can happen to people to whom it is said: Who of you has a friend who comes in the middle of the night to ask for three loaves of bread and will not answer: "do not bother me; the door is locked and my children are with me in the bed" (11:ff); or who of you will not release his ox or ass even on the sabbath to take it to drink water (13:ff); or, if one of you wants to build a tower will he not first calculate the cost (14:ff); or who of you who owns a slave ploughing or minding cattle, will not say upon returning home, "prepare my meal" (17:ff).

The Lucan parables say a little more but that is because they are narratives. They do not go beyond the limits of the imaginary, economic possibilities of owners of a simple οἶκος.
That is quite different in the remaining parables which deal with very rich people: the parable of the rich landowner who has put the harvest in sheds to enjoy life (12:16ff), the parable of the untrustworthy slave-manager who remits enormous debts without the knowledge of the master (16:1ff); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19ff). These three parables (and perhaps we should reckon among these the father with his two sons) have a touch of unreality which make them rather improbable. A farmer does not stop working; a slave-manager cannot remit debts just like that; a meeting between rich and poor from the bosom of Abraham sounds beautiful but is rather imaginary. The point of these parables is different anyway. They want to say to the rich that their way of acting is not wise; that they should stop getting all worked up about riches and possessions; that they should make another, better choice if they want to have access to the kingdom of God.

My own position will be clear by now. Luke's text stands on the side of the free κύριοι who live their lives in a simple οἶκος. There is awareness of riches but not from within. The rich are interested in beautiful clothes and expensive σωμόσει; they squander their possessions and want to enjoy life (see 8:14 and 21:34), but their hopes will be destroyed unless they change their lifestyle. They should follow the example of the rich women who follow Jesus and help support him with their possessions (8:1ff): or of the rich publicans, Levi and Zacchaeus, who have become hospitable and unselfish (5:27ff; 19:1ff).

For the last time I want to return to Luke 12:35-48. What is the situation in these texts? They are synoptic texts in a complicated way (see Mk 13:32ff and Mt 24:45ff) and one could expect them to be less exuberant, and simpler from an economic, financial point of view. The strange thing is that precisely here, and only here I think, this is not the case. The parable about vigilance which runs more or less parallel with Mark 13:32ff has a wider scale in Luke. He wants all the slaves to stay awake, in this way increasing greatly the dependence of the slaves, while Mark, more realistically, demands only that the doorkeeper stays alert. That means that for Luke the return of the κύριος has taken on some kind of royal air. The dependence of the slaves is greatly increased.

Something similar happens in the parable of the trustworthy and untrustworthy slave. Luke's text is on a level with Matthew's. It is even more expansive in words (the "distribution of the grain" among "his family") as well as in action, holding the possibility of various kinds of whippings and punishments. Within Luke's gospel this text goes beyond anything which we can find elsewhere in the gospel: a master who holds his dominium without restriction.

5 CONCLUSION
The text raises a question about who the intended audience is: only the disciples or everybody? Obviously, everybody. The text is not addressed only to Peter and the disciples, to the kind of people who have their own boat and
can earn their living with their own labour (see 5:1ff). The text goes beyond that. It does not exclude the disciples as the intended audience, but looks beyond them to people who have a higher income, ultimately to people who economically have reached the top: the owners of a large landholding where strict discipline is needed to keep order and make a profit. The intended target audience could be the very top of the rich.

But when these people, from the disciples to the very rich, listen to the text, something happens to them. Addressed as κύριοι, they change little by little into slaves. In the beginning that does not seem too bad. They are compared to "persons" who should stay awake to await the return of the master; and when the master has arrived and they, as slaves, have opened the gate, they are allowed to lie at the table and they are served as κύριοι by the κύριοι, although they are slaves.

But in the second parable this changes. Since they are seen as slaves in the text, they are involved with a κύριος who calls them to account (notice the special reference to this κύριος in 12:41 and 12:42). Surely they will get a reward if they have fulfilled their task well, but the scene ends with a whole range of possible punishments. Moreover, the eating and drinking and the getting drunk on the slave's part imparts a very strange sense of reality for the rich; a reality which in the beginning is not sensed, but which nevertheless comes into being when the rich man listens to these texts. From the narrative point of view it is an exact description of the rich man's behaviour. And if he wants to avoid the punishments, he must take these references to heart.

What happens in this text is really what I showed happening in relation to the οἶκος ideology. Everyone who wants to follow Jesus will find himself in conflict with the existing culture and economic reality. He will have to renounce his οἶκος and it is even possible that his own οἶκος will turn against him. As I pointed out already: this is what happens in the text just before our passage (12:33) and just following it (1:52ff). The same is true for the κύριος-ship: everyone who wants to follow Jesus must acknowledge that he is "under authority": to be, as κύριος, a slave of the κύριος (see also 1:38 - ἵδε ἡ δούλη κύριου - where it is said that this recognition is a condition for Jesus' own birth). The text is, therefore, a message for the masters and the employers. I hope that the slaves who may have heard this passage of the Lucan narrative have experienced some subtle and ironic enjoyment.

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