The weeping sinner: a short story by Luke?

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ABSTRACT
The difficulty and the ambiguous nature of any distinction between Luke and his possible non-Markan information with regard to Lk 7.36-50 are exposed. This is shown by means of three topics: the language of the pericope, consideration of the story in the context of the Gospel as a whole, and the inner contradictions and inconsistencies claimed by scholars. As we now have it, the pericope is a reasonably coherent whole that fits well into the world of Lukan narrative and theology. Apart from the use of Mark, its sources are hard to ascertain.

1 INTRODUCTION
The story of Jesus' anointment, with the fascinating tangle of agreements and contradictions in its variants (Mt 26.6-13; Mk 14.3-9; Lk 7.36-50; Jn 12.1-8), has inspired a labyrinth of scholarly theories about its transmission and redaction. It would be beyond the scope of this article, focusing on the Lukan version, to document even the most important opinions and arguments presented. My aim is to reconsider the issue of the nature of Luke's redaction and his possible sources. However, to clarify my position it is necessary to explain briefly that I believe Mark's version to have influenced all the others. Unless we assume Matthaean priority, it is evident that the Markan anointing scene has the most repercussions in the others, for nearly all of it could be collected out of these. Also, I believe the Johannine account to be somehow dependent on the Lukan; John's rather strange description of Mary rubbing the surplus ointment off Jesus' feet with her own hair being the result of combining the versions of Mark and Luke, whether by the fourth evangelist or an intermediary oral tradition (contra, Coakley 1988:241-56).

To turn to Luke: most scholars have assumed that he used another source for his anointment scene as well as Mark, either an oral tradition or written material; if written, then probably a fragment, even though the L source as an integral document as opposed to disparate fragments has recently been defended (Paffenroth 1997). It is wise to allow for the influence of oral transmission in cases like this, where very different variants seem to elaborate the same theme. We should not rule out the possibility of earlier tradition where there is any room for it. If we consider an evangelist even a

tolerably good writer, we should reckon with the possibility that he may not have left obvious marks of the use of a source every time he drew on traditional material. In the case of Lk 7.36–50, too, it is possible that Luke was influenced by some special L tradition beside the anointment story of Mark. Nevertheless all attempts to point out where and how this influence is to be seen are more or less problematic and unsatisfactory.

We land in difficulties as soon as we try to determine the nature of this non-Markan tradition. Every indication of it, every perceived seam in the course of the narrative, can be explained in several plausible ways. The features that have been taken to mark redaction and tradition, or even earlier and later pre-Lukan tradition, seem especially ambiguous once we accept the fact that writers and theologians will not always have been perfectly logical. A redactor may have been pulled in different directions by various influences, not only by the use of several separate traditions; and even as impressive a theologian and author as Luke may have been inconsistent simply because he was human, or because he himself had many proverbial axes to grind.

In this article I seek to point out the difficulty and the ambiguous nature of any distinction between Luke and his possible non-Markan information. As we now have it, the pericope is a reasonably coherent whole that fits well into the world of Lukan narrative and theology. Apart from the use of Mark, its sources are hard to ascertain.

Three topics will be discussed to test this view. The first is the language of the pericope. Secondly, it is necessary to consider the story in the context of the Gospel as a whole. Finally, the inner contradictions and inconsistencies claimed by scholars have to be reconsidered.

2 THE LANGUAGE OF THE PERICOPE

Much has been written on the Lukan and un-Lukan features in the language of Lk 7.36–50. It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer an in-depth analysis, but I hope to shed some light on the linguistic evidence that has been presented to prove or disprove the strong influence of a non-Markan source in this pericope. The results vary, which is hardly surprising once one considers how little agreement there is as to how linguistic methods like word statistics and stylometry should in practice be applied to the search for Luke's possible sources.

First of all it will be emphasised that typically Lukan vocabulary and constructions abound throughout the pericope. Since the detailed analysis of Joel Delobel, it has been generally accepted that for instance the words έτες, καταλλήλεις, πόλεις, άρακτος, καλεῖν, υπολαμβάνειν, γαίρεται, προειρήσθαι must be considered Lukan vocabulary, and that Luke's preference is obvious also in the generous use of δέ, in the combinations καί ἐδοκεῖ, ἐδοκεῖ δέ, and ἀποκριθεὶς...ἐδίνει, in the use of ἔλθων with the infinitive, of λέγειν with προς and the accusative, of the genetivus absolutus and of the word στῆσαι to emphasise Jesus' actions (Delobel 1966:421–444; cf Frei 1978: 31–99). It is evident that the pericope owes its present language and vocabulary to
Luke's redaction, as even a defender of a written L variant of the anointment story can admit (Bovon 1989:389). Whatever its origins, Luke seems to have reworked all parts of the pericope. But does the language of the pericope betray features that can be seen as clearly un-Lukan? Are there elements that would most probably not have been composed by the evangelist?

A feature that strikes one immediately is the relatively large number of hapax legomena and other words and usages that are rare either within Luke-Acts or in the New Testament as a whole. As uncommon vocabulary has so often been seen as evidence for the use of a source, we would do well by examining these words at some length. They are listed as follows:

κομμίσειν (hapax in Lk-Acts)
ἀλάβαστρον (hapax in Lk-Acts)
βρέχειν (in the sense of wetting with tears hapax in NT)
ἐκμασσεῖν (hapax in Lk-Acts, in NT only here and in John 11.2; 12.3; 13.5)
χρεοκοφεῖτης (in NT only here and in Lk 16.5)
δανικότης (hapax in NT)
φαλίμα (in Luke-Acts only here and in Lk 22.48)
διαλείπειν (hapax in NT)

The list is lengthy, but it is by no means inconceivable that Luke could have used the words on his own initiative. To assess the significance of such a list correctly we need to keep in mind first of all that the vocabulary reflected in the New Testament is limited compared with Greek usage of the period. A word used rarely by the New Testament writers need not have been at all uncommon in contemporary usage. Given that 70 per cent of the words in the New Testament derive from fewer than 200 roots, which is considerably less than the vocabulary of a literate adult, we should expect a relatively large number of uncommon words. Luke has by far the largest vocabulary of the New Testament authors (Morgenthaler 1972:26-27, 166). His Greek is the most literary of the four evangelists, suggesting that he is the most widely read. It makes little sense therefore to ask where he could have found the words he uses. The use of a hapax 'does not prove anything pro or contra redaction' (Delobel 1992:1588). Both Matthew and Luke sometimes replace ordinary words in Mark with unusual ones of their own in passages where they otherwise follow Mark closely, like for example in Matthew's replacement of πολυτελής with βαρύτυμος in the anointment story (Mk 14.3/Mt 26.6).

The presence of unusual words, then, is not in itself an argument for a source. Scholars who rely on word statistics have built their theories of Luke's sources on the

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2 Morgenthaler 1972:19-26, 164-165. The length of the NT is altogether about 137 000 words. The vocabulary consists of about 5400 different words, of which the 170 most common make up 100 000. 1900 words are hapax legomena in the NT; nearly 4000 words occur fewer than six times.
distribution and frequency of certain words in different parts of Luke-Acts, as well as on Luke’s treatment of these words in Mark and Q. This is a highly problematic approach, and these scholars differ as to the criteria that should be used (cf. Goulder 1989:79–86; Paffenroth 1997:66–67; 94–95). In the case of an individual pericope, the unusual words and usages must still be weighed individually: no frequency of uncommon expressions can be set as a standard that points to the use of a source.

Our anointment story is a good example of how the exceptional nature of what happens in the pericope can necessitate the use of a specific vocabulary that does not prove anything about possible sources (Delobel 1992:1585). Half of the contents of our ‘uncommon words’ list are simply due to subject matter, for ἐκμασσαίον, φύλαξ, χρησιμελάτης, and δεινοστίς are all common words for phenomena that are relatively uncommon in the Gospels.

Κομίζειν and διαλέπτειν are not necessitated by the subject matter. Rather, they are quite ordinary words for any Greek author to use, though they do not happen to belong to the core vocabulary of the New Testament. Αλάβαστρον is explained by the Markan story (Mk 14.3). The poetic expression βρέχειν τοῖς δάκρυσιν probably echoes LXX Ps 6:7: ἐν δάκρυσιν μου τὴν στεφανὴν μου βρέξω. As the Septuagint influenced Luke strongly the adaptation need not point to a source. It could well be the work of the evangelist.

On the whole, if we do not believe that the number of hapax legomena alone is significant, the vocabulary of the Lukan anointment story provides no evidence for the use of a non-Markan source. How about the syntax?

We have observed already that Lukan constructions are to be found throughout the pericope. Especially since the analysis of Delobel (1966:424–444) it has generally been accepted that the language of the pericope is Lukan on the whole, and most scholars have based their views on the redaction of the story on other than linguistic evidence.

Recently, Kim Paffenroth has tried to reconstruct L, which he assumes to have been a single source and to have included Lk 7.36–50. He argues on essentially statistical grounds. He has been careful to emphasise that he requires several un-Lukan elements in a text, not only one, to take the text for pre-Lukan (1997:92–95). As un-Lukan he has listed the following six ‘stylistic elements’:

1) frequent use of καί
2) use of ἐκά
3) use of παρὰ with the accusative in the sense of ‘more than’
4) the use of the dative after a verb of speaking
5) the position of the numeral before the noun
6) the use of the historical present.

Two of these in one pericope are, according to Paffenroth, already significant: it is unlikely that we would find two or more of these in a single pericope that had in fact been composed by Luke himself (1997:92–93). The problem with the method in my
opinion is that he disregards Luke's use of these devices on his own initiative. Paffenroth admits that Luke himself at times breaks these rules in his redaction of Mark, some more often than others (1997:86–92). To give an idea of the range of these 'exceptions', it is clear that the sixth 'un-Lukan element' is well attested in Luke's redaction of Mark: Luke has omitted 89 occurrences of the historical present in Mark, leaving only one (Mk 5.35/Lk 8.49). The second and the fourth item, on the other hand, are very much weaker. In spite of Luke's regular omissions of ἰδαν and of the dative after a verb of speaking in his redaction of Mark, these constructions are by no means anomalies in Luke-Acts. ἰδαν appears 46 times in the Gospel and 15 times in Acts. Luke has also inserted ἰδαν in the Markan material six times (Lk 8.12; 9.45; 20.14; 21.36; 22.30, 32); the dative construction has been added four times (Lk 9.12, 20; 18.29, 37). The dative with verbs of speaking is in Luke's text clearly less frequent than προς with the accusative. All the same it is common in the Gospel, λέγειν appearing with the dative 48 times in Luke 1–8, and not unusual in Acts, with 8 occurrences in the first eight chapters.

It is one matter not to favour a stylistic element and another to avoid it. Avoidance may be a justified description in the case of the historical present, but not for the rest of Paffenroth's 'un-Lukan elements'. Luke did not especially favour them, but they may nonetheless have been part of his vocabulary, when variation (e.g., the use of ἰδαν and of the dative indicating the person addressed) and effect (the frequent use of καὶ, the position of the numeral before the noun, and the historical present) were required. Also, the criterion of the significance of two of the listed elements in one pericope seems quite arbitrary.

Of Paffenroth's 'un-Lukanisms' all but the third are present in Lk 7.36–50, but only the first and the last possibly point to the use of a source. The rather clumsy καὶ-connected sentence in verses 37–38 does catch attention (cf Delobel 1966:469). Nevertheless its similarity in style to Acts 2.44–45, which is commonly considered redactional, should be noted. The use of the historical present (ἀποκρίνεται in v 40) is also noteworthy if we consider Luke's treatment of the Markan material. It is hard to understand, however, why Luke should be more willing to welcome the historical present from an L source if he really felt an aversion to it. As he eliminated it from Markan material he could certainly have done so with another source. It is more likely that Luke did occasionally use the historical present, even though he may have found excessive use thereof vulgar or monotonous. ἀποκρίνεται in particular occurs 10 times in Acts (2.38, 8.36, 10.31, 19.35, 22.2, 25.5, 22.24, 26.24, 25).

The language of the pericope, then, gives no conclusive evidence for the use of another source beside Mark. The use of καὶ in verses 37–38 may be the only visible sign left of the influence of another tradition, and that too is uncertain. But should we then expect anything more even if Luke did know such special tradition? After concluding that the general impression is Lukan, and that the evangelist must have redacted the story heavily, why should we look for any distinctly un-Lukan features in
it? Whatever he used, he would have used in his own way; if we had only this story, we probably could not discern the Markan kernel in it by examining the language. On linguistic grounds we may only say that Luke has shaped the story. He has not taken it in its entirety, or even near entirety, from any source: he has not repeated the sentences of someone else. Traditional information can be used in more ways than one. We cannot assume that the only way for Luke to use it would have been to take over blocks of older material unaltered, or at least in an identifiable shape. Linguistic arguments are therefore insufficient to account for the origins of the pericope.

An explanation must be sought from the content of the pericope. Before evaluating the consistency and inner unity of the story we turn to the links between this episode and its context, the Gospel of Luke.

3 THE LUKAN FEATURES OF THE STORY

The pericope of the sinful woman belongs to Luke’s theme of repentance and grace illustrated in the encounter of Jesus and sinful people. Pericopae of this theme share similar features of narrative and seem to express a common theological message. The sinful woman is linked to them by three important elements. These are 1) the ideal of humility, 2) great emotion, and 3) the triangle of the sinner, the contemptuous pious party, and the merciful representative of God.

Humility is clearly much admired in the third Gospel (cf. Goulder 1989:403), as can be seen in the behaviour of Peter (5.1–11), the prodigal son (15.11–32), and the tax collector in the Temple (18.9–14). These three are depicted as feeling themselves thoroughly unworthy and seeing their only chance in an appeal for mercy. Mary’s praise of the lowly (1.51–52) and the advice to seek the lowest place in the wedding banquet (14.10) are in line with this. The woman’s gesture of crouching down to caress Jesus’ feet corresponds with Peter’s throwing himself at the same feet, as well as with the tax collector who beats his breast and dares not raise his face.

The woman’s overflowing tears and kisses are in line with the strong emotions depicted in the sinner stories; mostly anguish and shame, but also love, trust and joy. The overpowering feeling often finds expression in a physical gesture. Peter kneels down suddenly; the sinful woman also kneels or bends down, kisses, and weeps; the prodigal’s father runs to embrace his son; the elder brother stays outside to express his indignation and sense of neglect; the tax collector’s shame and guilt show in his standing far behind, looking to the ground and beating his breast; Zacchaeus’ eagerness makes him run and climb a tree, and his great joy makes him hurry down from it (19.1–10).

Paffenroth has claimed that strong emotions, as well as physical contact between Jesus and other people, are a legacy from the lost L source as Luke regularly omits Jesus’ feelings and his touching people in Mark’s text (1997:39, 107). It is true that compared to the Gospel of Mark, the Lukan Jesus’ feelings are indeed much more veiled. This goes with Luke’s general tendency to depict Jesus as a more unearthly fig-
ure than Mark does; Luke’s Jesus both feels less openly and suffers less than Mark’s. Apparently Luke has theological reasons for his treatment of Jesus’ emotions in the Markan text, and the same is true of his treatment of Jesus’ body. However, these motives need not clash with the emotionalism of the sinner stories. It is the sinners, not Jesus, who are carried away by their feelings in these stories. The human feelings of Christ remain hidden even in the company of the repentant; strong emotion is betrayed only by the allegorical representatives of God, namely, the shepherd, the woman with the coin, and the father in chapter 15.

David Neale has analysed in depth the roles and significance of sinners and Pharisees in the Gospel of Luke. He argues convincingly that in the third gospel these characters, though of course originally based on history, no longer principally represent the historical reality of Jesus’ lifetime. They serve to illustrate the Lukan theology of repentance, and they are stylised for this purpose. Figures in these groups are theological stereotypes or, in Neale’s terms, archetypes or ‘religious categories’. They are tools for organising and giving shape to Luke’s message (Neale 1991:113–115, 103–108, 134).

In my own analysis I have observed that the characters in the Lukan sinner pericopae act in three typical roles. There is the repentant sinner, the representative of God—either an allegorical figure or Jesus—and the third party, namely, the pious critic. This is the contrast figure who sets the other two parties into relief. The sinner longs for forgiveness and the presence of the forgiver, the representative of God; the criticising figure heightens the tension by trying to deny the sinner the salvation available. The climax is reached when the forgiver justifies the sinner, teaching the critic a lesson.

The triangle has its roots in Mk 2.13–17, where Jesus befriends tax collectors and sinners even though the ‘scribes of the Pharisees’ would not let him in eat in their company. This theme is elaborated repeatedly in the Gospel of Luke. Altogether the triangle of God or Jesus, repentant sinners and contemptuous pious critics occurs in the Gospel six times: in Levi’s feast (5.27–32), in the setting of the parables of the lost

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3 Fitzmyer 1981:94–96. These are primarily christological: Jesus’ divinity is emphasised by playing down human feelings. Some omissions of feeling, namely, Jesus’ impatience at his disciples, as well as their doubt and bewilderment, are due to Luke’s wish to ‘save face for the disciples’. For the same reason, however, Luke sometimes adds feeling to the Markan story, as when the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane are depicted as ‘weary with grief’ (Mk 14.37/ Lk 22.45).

4 Luke ‘protects’ Jesus from much violent and degrading treatment: the people of Nazareth are not able to harm Jesus (4.29–30); likewise, Judas never really gets to kiss him (Mk 14.45/ Lk 22.47), and the flogging by Romans is never carried out (Mk 15.15–20/ Lk 23.22). Luke also often omits Jesus’ healing touch, but there are exceptions (13.13; 14.4; 22.51). The deletions of the healing touch—if they are not made simply for brevity—are perhaps meant to emphasise the meaning of the healing word.
(15.1-2), in the prodigal son (15.11-32), in the story of the sinful woman (7.36-50), in the parable of the tax collector and Pharisee (18.9-14), and in the story of Zacchaeus (19.1-10). Most of this material has been attributed to Luke's special sources by scholars championing Proto-Luke, L source or L Sondergut. Nevertheless, it is certain that Luke has an extraordinary interest in the sinner theme, and several authors have recently argued that the Lukan Jesus' identity as first and foremost the 'friend of sinners' is for the greatest part redactional (Goulder 1989; Neale 1991). Kiiunen (1992) in particular demonstrates Luke's elaboration of the theme of repentance both in his Gospel and in Acts; a consistent and powerful theology emerges, with clear links to the obviously redactional layer. Luke presents this picture with all his author's skill, and it fits his central theology (Lk 24.46-47; Acts 2.38, 5.30-31, 17.30). He also gives it an important place in the structure of his Gospel (Neale 1991:108-109, 188-190). The sinner motif is so beautifully developed and so far from casual in the Gospel that it is hardly conceivable without the conscious, creative, and theologically thorough work of the redactor. It seems justified to expect that Luke has done more than cutting and pasting to develop it. He may have had, and it is probable that he did have, traditional reminiscences and theology to work with, but it is improbable that he should have gathered one by one from tradition the pieces that, put together, form such a seamless unity in his own work.

Apart from these probabilities, there is also some evidence in the most obviously redactional layer for Luke's creativeness in this matter. In 15.1-2 Luke makes it the setting of chapter 15: 'Now the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, ‘This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them'.” This certainly redactional introduction makes the grumbling Pharisees and scribes the natural counterparts of the 'righteous people who do not need to repent' (15.7) and of the elder brother who begrudges the reception of the prodigal (15.25-32). Another passage that is rather widely seen to reflect the redactor's personal interest in the theme of sinfulness is the story of Peter's calling (Mk 1.16-20/Lk 5.1-11). Peter's confession of being a sinful man clearly refers to no past trespasses. Objectively, Peter is not a greater sinner in Luke's eyes than anyone else. Rather, Peter exhibits an attitude that Luke finds exemplary. The true believer is as humble as Peter and feels his or her sinfulness before God.

5 In 18.9-14 we see only two of the triangle characters in the spotlight, namely, the sinner and the critic. The third party, God, is present indirectly, as the recipient of the prayers; however, God's justification of the sinner is proclaimed by the storyteller, Jesus.

6 In addition to the major role of the theme of sinners, repentance and forgiveness in chapters 5-19, Neale remarks that it is foreshadowed in the Benedictus (1.76-79) and referred to in the end of the Gospel (24.46-47). He also notes that Luke brings the audience from all parts of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem in 5.17 mainly to witness the discussion on forgiveness, and that the episode of Zacchaeus (19.1-10) is the last incident in the Lukan Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.
The triangle structure in Lk 7.36–50 is twofold. There is firstly the triangle of the woman, Jesus, and the Pharisee. Secondly, there is the mini-triangle of the money-lender and the two debtors in the parable, of which the function is to illustrate how the parties in the main triangle relate to each other.

The woman is presented as the archetypal female sinner. That she is but vaguely identified enhances this position. Ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀμετωλός is probably Luke’s euphemism for a prostitute, as Simon’s attitude seems to suggest (Bovon 1989:390; Wiefel 1988:154; Schottroff 1990:319–320). Her flowing hair is shameful as it was considered indecent for women to be seen in public with hair that was not tied back and covered (Ilan 1996:129–32). The woman’s behaviour is simultaneously erotic, hysterical, and humble and remorseful to the extreme. The scene is moving but melodramatic and feels somewhat apologetic, for the woman’s utter penitence recommends her to the notions of a respectable readership. Prostitutes, like tax collectors, were conventional examples of sinners, and it is easy to conceive that a writer like Luke could use a prostitute to symbolise sinfulness in general (cf Delobel 1966:469). But it is as though Luke were being deliberately ambiguous about this so as to make it easier for his audience to identify themselves with the woman. She is not ‘a prostitute’, something to put off the respectable reader, but ‘a sinner’, which is what the apostle Peter has already called himself (5.8). ‘A sinner’ calls to mind the people Jesus has protected and chosen at Levi’s feast (5.27–32) and whom he is said to befriend (7.34).

The Pharisee and Jesus also have roles typical of the triangle. Tax collectors and prostitutes are paragons of sinfulness; Pharisees and scribes are their traditional antitypes and critics (Mk 2.13–17/ Lk 5.27–31/ Mt 9.9–13; Lk 7.29–30/ Mt 21.28–32; Lk 7.36–50; Lk 18.10–14). As such the Lukan Pharisees probably symbolise a more general idea, as is most clearly seen in the opening sentence leading to the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee (18.9): ‘He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.’ As Luke is here in the middle of teaching that is directed to Jesus’ disciples, not to his adversaries, it may be that the negative figure of the Pharisee is meant as a warning to priggish Christians, not only to Pharisees or their heirs. That Luke here uses the Pharisees as symbols, not necessarily of Judaism but of an attitude shared by some Christians and some Jews alike, unfortunately does not alter the fact that Luke has in this pericope stereotyped Pharisaism in a mainly negative way (Schottroff 1990:312). As Luise Schottroff has described, Simon serves as a contrast figure both to Jesus and the woman (1990:311). He represents false ideas of what God is like and what a prophet should be like, and his cold estimation of the woman sets off Jesus’ protecting and forgiving attitude. On the other hand, his detachment contrasts with the overflowing emotion of the woman.

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7 Delobel argues that the woman’s identity as a sinner and her extraordinary behaviour cannot be entirely redactional. Traditional influence is not impossible here, but nevertheless it is hard to see why the scene should have been beyond Luke’s capacity for literary creativity.
He is the one who is left out of all this forgiveness and love, and so makes the part of the sinner the more desirable.

The simple little parable of the two debtors shares many features with Luke's other parables. The opening sentence seems Lukan. As the debts are of a relatively small scale, one can also discern Luke's interest in the life of ordinary people. Even the sums of five hundred and fifty denarii may point to the redactor, as the number five and the proportion of ten to one are relatively frequent in the third Gospel (cf Goulder 1989:98-99, 401-402).

The little parable is firmly embedded in the story and forms an essential part of it. It looks like a tool for and an illustration of Luke's triangle motif. This will be argued below as we turn to the inner logic and unity of the pericope.

4 THE INNER UNITY OF THE PERICOPE

During the last century the great majority of scholars have assumed that the pericope betrays conflation of traditional and redactional parts because it is illogical in many ways. The problems perceived are all connected with the issue of how the parable of the moneylender (vv 41-42) fits into its context. There is some discrepancy between it and the following comparison between the woman and the Pharisee (vv 44-46). Moreover the key to the whole pericope, verse 47, seems to combine the parable and the behaviour of the woman (vv 36-38) in a problematic way: it contains two contradictory views of love and forgiveness. The inner inconsistency of the story has again and again been explained by distinction between redactional and traditional blocks. Needless to say there is little agreement as to which parts are which.

There certainly are inconsistencies in the text, but the first procedure should be to examine whether multiple authorship is necessary as an explanation. Some of the discrepancies may have been produced by Luke alone.

John Kilgallen has recently claimed that the parable does not apply to the situation in Lk 7.36-50, as the Pharisee Simon is a much blacker figure than the debtor with the smaller debt, who still did love a little (1991:309-11). It has to be admitted that nothing positive is said of the Pharisee in verses 44-46; as Delobel expresses it, the parable only contains the contrast of 'much-little'; in the later verses the contrast is sharpened to 'all-nothing' (1992:1582).

But what should be concluded of this? That the parable must necessarily be older than the rest of the story, or that verses 44-46 must be younger, are not the only solutions.

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8 As Goulder, 1989:401, explains, especially Lukan parables often open with someone having something, instead of a reference to the kingdom of God or of heaven, for instance. Cf 'a moneylender had two debtors' with 'a man had a fig tree' (13.6); 'if one of you had a hundred sheep' (15.4); 'a woman having ten silver coins' (15.8); 'a rich man had a steward' (16.1); 'which of you who had a slave' (17.7).
Kilgallen's opinion that the role of the smaller debtor is incompatible with Luke's view of the Pharisee has much to do with the fact that he interprets the figure of Simon in the light of 18.9–14, where the Pharisee did not go home justified: 'there is no 'little justice' ascribed to the Pharisee (of 18.9–14), despite all his good deeds, and likewise there is no forgiveness ascribed to Simon in our story' (1991:311 n19). According to Kilgallen, then, Luke had no desire to present Simon in a good light, as one who had been forgiven even a little, and the parable therefore is applied only at most to two people, the woman and Jesus.

I think it probable that Luke did intend the other debtor to portray the situation of Simon. I suggest that we read the pericope Lk 7.36–50 in the light of Lk 15.11–32 instead of Lk 18.9–14. A quite different picture of Simon emerges if we choose the brother of the prodigal instead of the Pharisee in the Temple as the clue to his character. In the opening of the chapter (15.1–2) the redactor himself gives a reason to connect Pharisees with the following parables. In chapter 15 there is room even for the righteous, even though it certainly is the sinners who bring most joy both to heaven's angels and to the father in the parable. The elder brother has his place in his father's home, though he would not like to welcome the prodigal. Simon looks at the sinful woman as the elder brother looks at the prodigal; neither of them is yet able to see in the returning sinner a penitent and suffering human being. In the eyes of the elder brother the prodigal is simply 'this son of yours who has devoured your property with prostitutes' (15.30); the sexual sin provides another link between the pericopae if we are right about Luke's intention to depict the woman as a prostitute.

That Luke himself might be responsible for a slightly inconsistent attitude towards the Pharisee in the anointment story is hardly inconceivable if we consider how many different parts the Pharisees play in Luke's double work—negative, positive and neutral alike. Apparently Luke uses the Pharisees to represent several groups and attitudes; apart from their usual casting as the archetypal hypocrites and enemies, they are connected with Jewish Christians (Acts 15.5), and the teachers and family of Paul (Acts 5.32; 22.3; 23.6–9), and twice they protect Jesus and the apostles from a violent death (Lk 13.31; Acts 5.33–40). Especially the last role seems to make it clear that at least sometimes the Lukan Pharisees indeed do 'love a little'.

I see only one problem in Simon's role as the debtor who has been forgiven but little and therefore loves only a little, and I think it is one that did not bother Luke. The problem is that the woman, represented by the debtor who owed more, is being forgiven by Jesus and therefore loves him, which is what Jesus in verses 44–46 accuses the Pharisee of not doing. The inner logic takes for granted that Jesus and God are to some extent identical. Jesus does not simply proclaim God's forgiveness as just any rabbi, for in the world of the pericope it is meet and proper that love should especially be felt towards Jesus, not only towards God. On the historical level a Pharisee might have agreed that he, too, was a pardoned debtor of God, and still not have seen why he should go kissing Jesus for that. From the Pharisees' point of view the story is
unfair in demanding that Simon feel any special love towards Jesus, but Luke is not thinking like this. Both he and his audience take for granted that Jesus has the right to represent God in this story, as in the Gospel in general. The woman's actions, the application of such a parable and the contrasting of the woman to the Pharisee in verses 44-46 build a sensible and credible whole only if one accepts the right of Jesus to forgive in God's name and be loved in return as God would be loved. The clue to the whole story is Jesus' identity as the one true agent of God's grace.

Verse 47 has often been regarded as the redactor's attempt to unite two separate items, the woman's action and the parable. The first part, 'therefore I tell you, her many sins are forgiven, for she loved much', fits the woman well, as she first displays love and is consequently forgiven. The second part, 'but the one who is forgiven little, loves little', refers to the parable, where the debtors are pardoned and then respond with greater or smaller love. It cannot be denied that there is a logical contradiction here, if our question is which comes first, love or forgiveness.

Many scholars have tried to do away with the discrepancy in verse 47 by explaining, that the conjunction ὅτι should not be taken to introduce 'the reason why the fact is so, but whereby it is known to be so' (Fitzmyer 1981:687; Wiezel 1988:156; Nolland 1989:358). This would make the woman's love the consequence of her forgiveness, not the reason for it. The solution is difficult to defend. Of the 175 cases of ὅτι in the Gospel of Luke, not one can be interpreted in this way; by far the most natural interpretation is the simple 'for' or 'because' (cf Delobel 1966:470-71). Accepting the forced grammatical solution appears at first sight to solve the logical problem, as it connects verse 47 harmoniously with the parable. In the whole of the pericope, however, the contradiction in the order of love and forgiveness goes far deeper than just verse 47. In the parable, it is the moneylender who first pardons the debts and the debtors who respond with great or small love. In the story, it is the woman who first shows love and Jesus who responds to it by proclaiming forgiveness. Without the need to harmonise the whole into a logically consistent theology, it would hardly occur to the reader that the woman could have been forgiven previously, as this would render the forgiveness proclaimed both in verse 47 and in verse 48 quite meaningless.

The point is that Luke may not have considered the question of the sequence of love and forgiveness at all. The shift in logic is much like that in chapter 15, where the initiative for human repentance and reconciliation seems to waver between the sinner and God. The shepherd and the woman rejoice, for they have found what they themselves have laboriously searched for (15.6, 9); still, the explanation is that there is joy over the sinner who repents, as if it were up to the sinner alone to repent (15.7, 10). Similarly, it is the prodigal son who returns to his father who merely waits at home; nevertheless the father rejoices because the son has been found (15.24, 32), as if someone had been searching for him. Such contradictions need not always be caused by redactional seams. Luke apparently sees the relationship of God and the repenting individual as a circle of reciprocal love that can perhaps be entered at any point. The
only thing that is clear is that, for Luke, the more there is forgiveness, the more there is love and joy on both sides. Much of the scholars' feeling that where salvation is concerned, the initiative of God and the initiative of a human being can never coexist in the mind of one individual, is due to post-reformation theological sensitivity. Schottroff is correct in her terse comment, that the text is contradictory about the sequence of love and repentance because it is not interested in the question (1990:321).

As many scholars have observed, the end of the story echoes two Markan pericopae (Mk 2.5/Lk 5.20; Mk 5.34/Lk 8.48). The borrowed elements fit well into the whole of the narrative. The proclaimed forgiveness (v 48) confirms the point that the whole scene—both the woman's action and the following discussion—has been making: that Jesus is the one endowed with God's authority to forgive. The marvelling question of the spectators' choir (v 49) emphasises this. The sending in verse 50 confirms that the woman's life has been healed like the woman with haemorrhage was healed. The literary link perhaps results from ways in which both women represent female sexuality in a disconcerting, unorderly state. The 'repeated opening formulæ' (Bovon 1989:389) of σύνει δὲ are natural and necessary as on the first occasion Jesus turns from the Pharisee to address the woman (v 48), and on the second the spotlight turns again to Jesus after the reaction of the other guests (v 50).

To sum up this discussion, I do not see the contradictions in this pericope as clearly betraying redactional seams. Multiple authorship is not the only plausible explanation. In spite of its inconsistencies the text seems consistent enough to have been produced by one mind, and the discrepancies appear explicable in terms of Lukan ideology. This is not to say that the author could not have used any traditional material apart from the Markan anointment story; the parallelism of the ending to Markan endings indicates that he did use some. But unless we happen to know the source, as in the case of Mark we do, we most probably never will be able to distinguish traditional from redactional elements with any certainty. The author-redactor has transformed the components, not just added one to another. He has not built a house out of Lego blocks; rather, he has baked a cake.

5 CONCLUSIONS: THE MAKING OF THE STORY

It is not a new or a very radical thing to say that the Lukan anointment story is not historical in the sense of being a faithful description of an incident in Jesus' life. It cannot be that, because it is too evidently a variant of the other synoptic anointment stories, only written in Lukan language, formed with Lukan literary devices and expressing Lukan theology. The identity of Simon as a Pharisee, the concentration on sin and forgiveness and the emerging theology, are all typical of the third Gospel, as has long been known. But what will have been the role of the evangelist in the making of this story? How much did he inherit from others?

It is obvious that Luke did not write in a void. The question is, in what way do we assume tradition to have influenced him and how do we expect it to show in his writ-
ing? The classical form-critical and redaction-critical idea that Luke would have embedded identifiable blocks of traditional material in a frame of his own does not seem to suit our story. It is improbable because the story is so characteristically Lukan, in detail as well as in general. With the exception of the Markan ending sentences, one cannot distinguish between traditional and redactional components, as all parts of the story seem thoroughly Lukan.

Nor can one easily assume that Luke would have got the main lines of his anointing story from an earlier L version, only reworking the language. In the first place this would be to postulate another Luke before Luke, as the very essentials of the story fit the whole of his Gospel so well. Secondly, the fact that Luke omitted the episode of the woman in Bethany supports the idea of his great creativity in Lk 7.36–50. Had Luke found two different anointing stories, one in Mark, one in L tradition, he might have repeated the Markan at the corresponding point in his narrative. The repetition would not have been very obvious; the anointment stories as they now stand are much more difficult to recognise as doublets as, for instance, in Lk 9.1–5 and Lk 10.1–11. Nor is there any reason to think that the burial reference, which is the climax of the Markan scene, would have been offensive to Luke in any way. The best explanation for the absence of the woman of Bethany from the third Gospel is that Luke somehow knew that her story had already been told.

So it would seem that the great lines of the story are Luke’s and that no component has necessarily been taken over from any source as such. As I see it, we have two basic alternatives as to how Luke composed the pericope. The difference between them is not very great.

The first alternative, represented by Reinhard Frei and Michael Goulder, could be called the Mark imagination and empty desk model (Frei 1978:298–302; Goulder 1989:397–406). Luke would have created the scene freely to express his own theology of repentance, remodelling the Markan anointing story in a way that seemed suitable to the purpose. The logic is that of Occam’s razor: as no other traditional influence is absolutely necessary, no more is assumed.

The second alternative would be to admit that Luke is the main creator of the story as we know it, and that he is influenced by Mark, but to leave open the issue of other traditional influence. The logic here is that if we cannot know what components, besides Mark, Luke used, it does not follow that he could not have used anything else. It just follows that we cannot know. The advantage of this perhaps rather flat maxim is that it prevents us from forgetting that the writers of the New Testament, in our case Mark and Luke, were not the only early Christians though they are the ones we know best. We may count on the influence of other people as well, even where we are unable to demonstrate it.

What could this influence have been like in our story? I repeat that we can only hypothesise. There might have been an anecdote with some elements of Lk 7.36–50 in it—for instance a weeping woman or a prostitute, perhaps even anointing or criticism
from the Pharisees or some other party. Or there could have been the parable in some form, perhaps circulating freely and used in sermons; or maybe just a reminiscence (correct or not) of a prostitute follower of Jesus, to name only some of many very uncertain possibilities. It is obvious that if we are correct in assuming that Luke has worked very freely here, as is admitted by his treatment of Mark, there can be no possibility of reconstructing possible L information.

As far as can I see, neither alternative can be ruled out on the grounds of the language or the consistency of the pericope. Which one we will find more convincing depends to a great extent on our views on other issues: what our general image of Luke as a redactor is, what we assume of oral tradition in Luke's day and how we understand the general attitude of the early Christian authors to their tradition.

Either way, the story as we now have it is essentially a Lukan creation. Its language is on the whole strongly Lukan. It resembles other specially Lukan pericopes about sinners and repentance closely, both in its theology and in its narrative features. The strength and unity of this theme in the Gospel indicates a decisive and creative attitude on the part of the redactor. Even if Luke did inherit some elements for his story from non-Markan tradition, his own role in shaping Lk 7.36–50 and the other sinner pericopes must have been crucial. To return to my title: our episode is essentially a short story by Luke, whatever its original components may have been.

WORKS CONSULTED


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