THE (IM)POLITE JESUS: AN ANALYSIS OF JESUS' VERBAL *RUDENESS* IN
MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

by

Carlos Olivares

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Faculty of Arts
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ABSTRACT

(Im)politeness, understood as a description of *verbal* rudeness, seems to characterize aspects of the Matthean narrative, which in my view, have not received enough scholarly attention. My intention is to fill this gap, examining the concept of (im)politeness in this Gospel from the perspective of a first-century reader. I use an adapted socio-rhetorical approach, exploring the Gospel of Matthew as a synchronic narrative unit in order to find a literary purpose for the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness. To complement this approach, I use literary pragmatic and sociolinguistic methods as lenses for reading Jesus' (im)politeness in Matthew's story. I engage with Greco-Roman materials, paying attention to similar (im)polite words and expressions presented in Matthew's Gospel and the Hellenistic corpus of literature. Consequently, my purpose is to uncover the socio-cultural world encoded in this Gospel and compare the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness with that of other Greco-Roman characters in writings from the period.

The findings show that Jesus uses (im)polite words and phrases when debating, teaching and using metaphoric language in Matthew's Gospel. The findings also display numerous examples of verbal (im)politeness in Greco-Roman documents, revealing that (im)politeness in this time and in these texts differs from contemporary Western understandings. The Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness is in accordance with other Greco-Roman examples in which characters interact with people using (im)polite language.

To Karina,
for her faith in me and significant support during all these years.

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A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Unless indicated otherwise, New Testament quotations come either from the NA[28] *or New Revised Standard Version*. English translations of the LXX are from the *New English Translation of the Septuagint*. Quotations from the OT Pseudepigrapha are based on the edition of James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1983), unless noted otherwise. Finally, Greek and Latin texts from ancient authors are taken from the *Loeb Classical Library*, unless otherwise indicated.

Standard abbreviations for academic journals, commentaries, monograph series, biblical books and other ancient literature are used in the main text and footnotes. These are based on *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Only abbreviations not found in *SBL Handbook of Style* are listed below.

AEF	*Anuario de estudios filológicos*
AJPS	*Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*
Alétheia	*Alétheia-revista de estudos sobre Antigüidade e Medievo*
AttiCAntCl	*Atti. Centro ricerche e documentazione sull'antichità classica*
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibWor	Bible in Its World
BR/RB	*Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe*
CILT	Current Issues in Linguistic Theory
ClW	*The Classical Weekly*
ConJ	*Concordia Journal*
CRNS	*The Classical Review New Series*
CFC(G).	*Cuadernos de filología clásica: Estudios griegos e indoeuropeos*
CFC(L)	*Cuadernos de filología clásica. Estudios Latinos*
CIF	Cuadernos de investigación filológica
Cult. leng. Represent.	*Cultura, Lenguaje y Representación/Culture, Language and Representation*
DCLY	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook
DL	*DavarLogos*
EIS	*European Integration Studies*
Eos	*Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologae Polonorum*
ÉtCl	*Les études classiques*
Funct. Lang.	*Functions of language*
GEMA	*GEMA: Online Journal of Language Studies*
Historia	*Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*
IJCT	*International Journal of the Classical Tradition*
IJEL	*International Journal of English and Literature*
IJSL	*International Journal of the Sociology of Language*
JAAS	*Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary*
JGRChJ	*Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*
JHPrag	*Journal of Historical Pragmatics*
JPolR	*Journal of Politeness Research. Language, Behaviour, Culture*

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INTRODUCTION

One of the risks of any foreign social engagement is to judge negatively words, expressions and social gestures from a personal perspective because they look strange or deplorable to the cultural eyes of the interpreters. This kind of appraisal, which is based on the individual's background, is sometimes used to measure adversely everything that goes against modern and common conventions, putting aside all that looks out of place. Something similar, in my view, can be said when readers engage with ancient texts, in particular when certain behaviours, for example, appear to be functioning in a different way than they usually do in the interpreter's world. The topic of (im)politeness is a clear example of this.

Although the meaning of the term (im)politeness will be discussed in depth in chapter two, I think it is necessary to define it from the beginning to avoid confusion. (Im)politeness through this research is not understood as a category of social manners, as many societies understand this term, but as a description of severe language, disrespect and mockery when people interact with other people. Furthermore, (im)politeness is seen as a *social construction*, therefore, its evaluation and function should be based on cultural, social and circumstantial grounds. In fact, by putting the first two letters of the term in brackets (im), as many have done before,[1] I want to underline that specific characteristic, accentuating that the meaning of the term (im)politeness varies across cultures or situations.

As the object of my research I have chosen Matthew's Gospel, because, as we will see, it contains several (im)polite terms and expressions. *Evil and adulterous generation* (Matt 12:39; 16:4), *stumbling block* (16:23), *wicked slave* (18:32; 25:26), *lazy slave* (25:26), *brood of vipers*

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[1] E.g. Stephanie Schnurr et al., "Being (Im)polite in New Zealand Workplaces: Māori and Pākehā Leaders," *JPrag* 39 (2007): 712-729.

(12:34; 23:33), *hypocrites* (23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29) and *blind fools* (23:17), for instance, are just some of the many words or phrases that the Matthean Jesus uses when talking or teaching in Matthew's story.

Using an adapted version of socio-rhetorical criticism, my intention in this research is to examine how these words and expressions could have been understood for those reading or hearing the Gospel in the first-century C.E., namely, in the time when it was written.[2] My research, however, neither searches for the historical Jesus nor the Matthean community, but it is a literary-pragmatic and socio-rhetorical study, which considers in what way Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, namely the Matthean Jesus, uses specific designations when engaging with people or when instructing.

Methodologically, I analyse Jesus' (im)politeness using narrative, socio-literary and linguistic pragmatics tools, drawing attention to what other Hellenistic texts say about similar (im)polite languages. By doing so, I propose to decrypt the narrative world of Matthew's Gospel in order to imagine a possible way that first-century readers could have understood the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness.

My research consists of seven chapters. In the first of these I discuss studies dealing with the topic of (im)politeness from biblical and historical stances, revealing the need for a deeper analysis of this subject, especially in Matthew's Gospel. Closely related to the material in Chapter One is the exploration of a methodology for this study, which I undertake in Chapter Two. There I lay out the theoretical dimension of my research, describing the way I use an adapted socio-rhetorical approach as lenses for reading and establishing other complementary

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[2] I am assuming, as many have done, that the Gospel of Matthew was written in the first-century C.E. It is not my intention, however, to discuss if it was written before [e.g. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 19] or after the destruction of Jerusalem [e.g. Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 2], but simply to establish a general timeframe in which I can situate my research.

literary and Socio linguistic methods and models, such as pragmaphilology and historical sociopragmatic approach. I also discuss my hermeneutical presuppositions and the way in which I understand the topic of (im)politeness when reading Matthew's Gospel.

In Chapters Three to Six I engage in an examination of four pericopes in Matthew's Gospel. These are: Jesus' woes against the scribes and Pharisees in Matt 23 (Chapter Three); Jesus' rebuke against Peter in Matt 16 (Chapter Four); Jesus' use of the parable of the talents when teaching his disciples in Matt 25 (Chapter Five); and Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman in Matt 15 (Chapter Six). Using a narrative approach, I examine the purpose for the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness in each pericope, making way for pragmaphilological research, in which I analyse how specific (im)polite words and expressions function in Matthew's story and other Hellenistic literature.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, I turn to examine the topic of (im)politeness in other ancient documents, employing a historical sociopragmatic approach. I concentrate on the use of (im)polite language in Greco-Roman writings, with the intention of unlocking and comparing the social context encrypted in the Matthean text. In doing so, I seek a foundation from which to theorise in what way first-century readers could have interpreted Jesus' (im)politeness in Matthew's story.

CHAPTER 1

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING JESUS' (IM)POLITENESS

As indicated in the introduction, in this research I use the term (im)politeness not in the sense of social manners, but as a description of verbal violence, insolent language, contempt and sarcasm. Bearing in mind this meaning, although there are no studies regarding the topic of (im)politeness in the Gospel of Matthew, one can find a number of significant biblical and historical studies dealing exclusively with this theme. These examples, however, instead of forming an extensive study of the subject, illustrate the need for of a deeper and possibly more ample analysis of this topic. In this first chapter I argue for the necessity of such a study, especially in Matthew's Gospel, in light of the different contributions made by scholars regarding the subject of (im)politeness in biblical and ancient texts generally.

1. (Im)politeness from different viewpoints: Contributions

In this section, I analyse critically those authors who have engaged partially with the concept of (im)politeness in biblical and historical material. This will include the work of those who have undertaken a limited study of the Matthean gospel in relation to this topic.

1.1. (Im)politeness from a biblical and historical viewpoint

1.1.1. Luke Timothy Johnson

One of the most important contributions to the study of biblical (im)politeness is an article written by Luke Timothy Johnson in which he analyses the rhetoric of slander used against Jewish adversaries by New Testament's writers.[1] Johnson's intention, however, is not to

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[1] Luke Timothy Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *JBL* 108 (1989): 419-41. He mentions Matt 23:1-39; Luke 11:37-52; 7:30; 16:14; John 8:44-47; Rom 11:28; 2 Cor 4:3; 1 Thess 2:15-16; and Rev 3:9.

engage in a biblical interpretation but to show how *slandering* was understood in the Hellenistic

world and in what way this can be compared with its Jewish counterpart.[2] He argues that

defamation was a common practice among rival opponents in the first-century, which can be

found not only between Jews but also among Hellenists. Indeed, comparing Jewish slandering

with Hellenistic slandering, he claims that the NT's slander against Jews is "remarkably mild."[3]

In other words, the "way the NT talks about Jews is just about the way all opponents talked

about each other back then."[4]

   To understand Johnson's overall proposal, it is critical to suppose the existence of a

messianic sect instead of an organized group of Christians at the time that the NT was composed.

Rather than thinking of a separated and uniform movement, he considers that primitive

Christianity was a dispersed network of congregations, "whose boundaries of self-definition

were vigorously debated."[5] Thus, slander was not an anti-Jewish reaction, but a response to the

internal identity crisis that the "messianic" movement was experiencing[6] within a network of

different and diverse Jewish groups.[7]

   Johnson theorizes that the first century's Judaism was in fact a philosophy,[8] basing his

opinion on Josephus,[9] who described some Jewish sects as philosophies.[10] This assumption is

basic for Johnson, who illustrates how Hellenistic philosophers as well as Jewish writers

slandered their opponents in order to refute their ideas. In doing this, Johnson claims that the

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[2] Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander," 421, 423. For Johnson the best
approach to deal with the problem is not through theology but through the exercise of historical
and literary imagination, see ibid., 421.
[3] Ibid., 441.
[4] Ibid., 429.
[5] Ibid., 425.
[6] Ibid., 425-426, 428.
[7] For Johnson when the NT was written "neither Christianity nor Judaism had reached the point
of uniformity and separation that would characterize them in later centuries." See ibid., 428.
[8] Ibid., 429.
[9] Josephus, *J.W.* 2.119-166; *Ant.* 18.11-25.
[10] Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander," 429.

NT's defamatory language is representative of that used among opponents to a philosophical tradition. For Johnson, however, the purpose of slandering was also for edification of the philosophical school, in which the philosopher was a member, instead of being just a rebuttal of the adversary.[11] In fact, according to him, slandering could also be used in protreptic discourses, encouraging "the young to a life of philosophy."[12]

The importance of Johnson's proposal resides in its underlining the importance of understanding (im)polite and offensive expressions from a first-century perspective, describing a possible first-century notion of the term. The way that he uses and compares ancient writings with the biblical text is a strategic model which could be useful in establishing a methodological plan to understand the topic of (im)politeness in the Gospel of Matthew. One of the limitations of Johnson's suggestion, however, is that he does not engage with the interpretation of biblical texts, preferring to explore the community behind these texts.

1.1.2. Benjamin Thomas and Johan Coetzee

Another important contribution to the subject of (im)politeness is Benjamin Thomas' article in which he deals with the language of politeness in ancient Hebrew letters.[13] Thomas examines epistolary documents, such as, for example, the *Lachish letters*,[14] written between the eighth and sixth century B.C.E. using a philological perspective, and applying Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's sociolinguistic model to reach his conclusions.[15] Brown and Levinson's theory is "that most speech acts inherently threaten either the hearer's or the speaker's face

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[11] Ibid., 433.

[12] The opinion of Johnson is that in Matthew 23 the protreptic discourse is "turned inward to Matthew's messianic readers." Therefore, Matthew's attack on scribes and Pharisees would be addressed to rival teachers who were part of the community, framing the positive instructions of messianic disciples. Ibid., 433.

[13] Benjamin D. Thomas, "The Language of Politeness in Ancient Hebrew Letters," *HS* 50 (2009): 17-39.

[14] In his analysis he mentions letters from "Arad, Lachish, and Yavneh Yam" (ibid., 19).

[15] Ibid., 19.

wants, and that politeness is involved in redressing those face-threats."[16] In this model "face" is a theoretical construct understood in terms of public self-image, which, according to Brown and Levinson, every adult member of a society "wants to claim for himself."[17] It supposes that each person has a positive and negative "face." The "positive face" implies that every individual wants to be appreciated and accepted by others. The "negative face," on the other hand, entails that the same individual desires to act freely, namely, free from impositions.[18] On this basis, Brown and Levinson argue that there are basically two categories of politeness. On the one hand, negative politeness strategies are used to avoid offence by displaying respect. On the other hand, positive politeness strategies are employed to evade offence by showing friendliness.[19]

As shown above, in Brown and Levinson's model the analysis of politeness is focused on oral communication. In the case of Thomas' paper, however, rather than focusing on spoken language, he centres the analysis on written artefacts. According to him, a letter, which is written with a high degree of intentionality, provides a better methodological control for analysis, allowing the researcher to explore different politeness strategies.[20]

Thomas argues that the *praescriptio*, consisting of the address, greeting and blessing formulae, was the device used in ancient Israelite letters to designate the social status of both the sender and addressee.[21] In Thomas's opinion, any omission of these references "was grounds to consider the intentions of the sender as discourteous (i.e., impolite)."[22] If it is a superior, for example, who is addressed, the lack of any of these elements in the *praescriptio*, such as blessing

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[16] Gino Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2001), 4.
[17] Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 61.
[18] Ibid., 61-62.
[19] Miriam Meyerhoff, *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (London: Routledge, 2006), 84.
[20] Thomas, "The Language of Politeness," 18.
[21] Ibid., 20
[22] Ibid.

formulae, may be considered impolite by the one addressed.[23] The use and omission of this

praescriptio suggests a strong social hierarchalism, which in the case of the individual who is

sending the letter involves a high degree of politeness and deference. In fact, when an inferior

makes a special request "the degree to which politeness strategies are employed appears to be

augmented, since the face-threatening-act is more acute."[24] On the other hand, if it is this same

inferior who is being addressed, the *praescriptio* omits any reference to social status or greetings,

showing directness. In this case, the face-threatening act is reduced; therefore, it is not necessary

to be polite. However, as Thomas concedes, on some occasions, superiors may have "spoken

with courteousness to an inferior."[25] Although it seems that these were exceptions.

Johan Coetzee, who explores politeness strategies in some of the so-called *enemy*

Psalms,[26] uses a similar methodological approach to that of Brown and Levinson.[27] Unlike

Thomas however, who does not engage with the interpretation of biblical texts, Coetzee analysed

five Psalms from the Hebrew Bible, which he calls prayers, in order to establish their rhetorical

and social functions.[28] According to Coetzee, politeness "as a specific kind of speech-act

functions within each prayer in interrelated conversational structures aiming at influencing the

audience, in particular God to whom the prayers are normally addressed."[29]

Coetzee assumes that these prayers were "all prayed aloud in public," exploring the

argumentative effect that these could have on the audience.[30] In Psalm 3, for instance, the words

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[23] Ibid., 37-38.
[24] Ibid., 39.
[25] Ibid., 38
[26] Johan H. Coetzee, "Politeness Strategies in the So-Called 'Enemy Psalms': An Inquiry Into Israelite Prayer Rhetoric," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible: Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference* (JSNTSup 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 209-236. The Psalms are: 2, 3, 13, 41-43.
[27] Ibid., 210.
[28] Ibid., 209.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 209-210. According to Coetzee, this implies that "the petitioners take a socio-political

attributed to the enemies in v. 2, in which they say "there is no help for you in God,"[31] function as a face-threating act in which the supplicant gains God's sympathy.[32] Because the supplicant is 'losing face,' these words also work as a negative politeness strategy, putting pressure on God to respond.[33] On the other hand, in v. 3 the supplicant expresses a positive politeness when he claims that the Lord is "a shield around" him. This expression, however, functions also "as strong face-threatening speech-acts threating Yahweh's negative face," putting again pressure on God to give a quick answer.[34]

In Coetzee's opinion, some *enemy Psalms*, which were read aloud in public and used in cultic situations by individuals who were experiencing distress, should have persuaded the enemies of this person, who were hearing the prayer, "to terminate their threating conduct."[35] God had been invoked to "strike them and to deliver" the supplicant.[36] According to Coetzee, one of the sociological consequences of this reasoning is that these kinds of prayers do not have just a religious purpose but also a socio-political one.[37] The honour of supplicants and enemies is involved. This means that the purpose of the supplicants is to convince God to help them to restore their honour, putting their enemies to shame.[38] In other words, because Psalms are read aloud in public, the enemies are exposed and put on trial, transforming the prayer into "an odd

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risk of response from their enemies who might overhear, or hear about, their prayers. On the other hand, the petitioners rely on God and those present, who are all involved in the rhetorical situations when the prayers are spoken out loud in public, to respond to the benefit of the supplicants." See ibid., 209.

[31] Because Coetzee is following the Hebrew Bible, the versification of his article is different from what I present here (NRSV). See ibid., 218, no. 36.

[32] Ibid., 218.

[33] Ibid., 219.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 220.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 234.

[38] Ibid., 234. For Coetzee, "the invocation of violence by God against the enemies is an indications that the supplicants have reached their last resort in order to save their honour" (ibid., 235).

court case during which the supplicant holds power and acts as plaintiff, while the enemies find themselves in the dock."[39]

Considering that in this kind of prayer the powerless speaker uses indirect strategies in order to confront the powerful speaker, Coetzee argues that this explains the existence of positive and negative politeness strategies.[40] Nevertheless, he recognizes that it is impossible to conclude from these prayers that ancient Israelite culture could have a negative or positive politeness emphasis. What is clear, however, is that "supplications, in which the enemies play a prominent role, predominantly portray negative politeness."[41] And although praise can be used as a positive politeness strategy, it also can be employed in a negative way, in which the supplicant admits God's "superiority and his immunity from imposition"[42]

Because Thomas and Coetzee analyse the topic of (im)politeness using ancient Hebrew sources, their papers, in terms of historical (im)politeness, are important. Thomas has shown that comparing documents written in a specific period of time could be helpful in providing an understanding about a particular subject. Likewise, Coetzee's paper is an excellent example for showing the interest of some biblical scholars in studying the subject of (im)politeness in biblical texts. One of the limitations of both papers, however, is that they both examine only letters and ancient prayers, putting aside other documents, such as narratives, which could perhaps lead to different conclusions. Another problem with Thomas and Coetzee's articles is their use of Brown and Levinson's theory. Brown and Levinson's model has been widely criticized for ethnocentrism in applying a Western view to other cultures.[43] In other words, people using this

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[39] Ibid., 234.
[40] Ibid., 235.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 236.
[43] See, for example, Anna Trosborg, *Interlanguage Pragmatics: Requests, Complaints, and Apologies* (Studies in Anthropological Linguistics 7; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 28-29.

model run the risk of reading into ancient documents modern sociocultural perspectives. This situation shows the necessity of examining the topic of (im)politeness using a sociolinguistic model able to provide literary and historical meaning(s) of the concept.

1.1.3. Edward Bridge

Brown and Levinson's model is also used by Edward Bridge, who analyses the topic of biblical (im)politeness from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible and the *Lachish letters*. In the case of the Hebrew Bible, Bridge examines the linguistic elements used by Israel in its petition to pass across Edom's land (Num 20:14-17, 19).[44] Employing Brown and Levinson's politeness theory he observes strategies of politeness in Israel's request,[45] which "reflect diplomatic practice in the ancient Near East."[46] Israel promises, for example, to stay on the King's highway when they are passing through Edom's land and to pay for the water of Edom if they drink it (20:19), which, in Bridge's opinion, involves minimising the imposition entailed in its request.[47] According to the *Book of Numbers*, however, Edom denies Israel's request twice (20:18, 20). In Bridge's opinion, "in contrast to Israel, Edom is blunt" in answering,[48] showing itself "to be unreasonably rude," namely, impolite.[49] In fact, the way in which Edom responds is "a bald on-record statement," which in Brown and Levinson's model is judged negatively.[50]

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[44] Edward J. Bridge, "Polite Israel and Impolite Edom: Israel's Request to Travel Through Edom in Numbers 20.14-21," *JSOT* 35 (2010): 77-88. It should be noticed that my analysis of Bridge's work is not diachronic but thematic.

[45] Ibid., 79-83. According to Bridge, his "study will also affirm the usefulness of politeness theory as a tool to assist biblical interpretation" (ibid., 79).

[46] Formal characteristics that reflect diplomatic practice in the ancient Near East are: (1) Annunciation formula; identification of the sender along with status; (2) preamble, which summarizes the circumstances prompting the communication (20:14-16); and (3) the request proper (20:17); see ibid., 78.

[47] Ibid., 84, 86.

[48] Ibid., 85.

[49] Ibid., 79, 85-86.

[50] According to Bridge, "[p]oliteness theory indicates that bald on-record language is mostly used in three situations: when the speaker is socially superior to (has power over) the hearer,

In another study[51] in which he also uses Brown and Levinson's model,[52] Bridge argues that "Israelites tended to abase themselves when they gave thanks for a favour received or request granted," accepting a loss of face in order to avoid "expressing indebtedness to whoever gave the request/favour."[53] The most common example of self-abasement, according to Bridge, is the use of the master-slave deference in Hebrew Bible narratives,[54] which expands the hearer's face, showing how gracious the giver was to the speaker.[55] Bridge contends that this kind of language in biblical narratives may indicate that self-abasement was a feature of ancient Israelite culture, arguing that its presence is confirmed in the Lachish letters.[56] In Bridge's opinion, however, the motif of indebtedness disappears when self-abasement is used to thank God in the Hebrew Bible.[57] In fact, as he claims, by expressing self-abasement the speaker highlights "God's magnanimity alone," motivating God to answer the request.[58]

One of the problems with Bridge's work, as mentioned in the analysis of Thomas and Coetzee's papers, is the limitation of using Brown and Levinson's model as methodological lens. Bridge is aware of this, stating the necessity of using the model with caution.[59] In fact, he argues the possibility that authors/compliers could have "had a different system of grading politeness."[60] This is because, according to him, "the issue of culture is particularly important,"[61] which opens

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when the danger to the hearer's face is very small, or the speaker considers the matter important enough to override the need to redress face," ibid., 85.
[51] Edward J. Bridge, "Self-Abasement as an Expression of Thanks in the Hebrew Bible," *Bib* 92 (2011): 255-273.
[52] Ibid., 257-258.
[53] Ibid., 255, 257.
[54] Ibid., 255-257. He gives some examples, such as Ruth 2:13; 2 Sam 9:8; 16:9; 24:15 [14]; and 25:41, among others.
[55] Ibid., 258, 266-267.
[56] Ibid., 267.
[57] Ibid., 258, 268-272.
[58] Ibid., 258, 271-272.
[59] Ibid., 87.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid. However, Bridge also recognizes that "there is insufficient data in the Bible from which to describe a 'biblical culture' or 'biblical cultures.'" The question lies in determining if by

up the possibility of studying the topic recognizing the role that culture might play in interpreting (im)polite actions. Nevertheless, although Bridge recognizes the limitation of asserting a self-abasement practice in ancient Israel using the Hebrew Bible, he thinks it could be possible. In this respect, he argues that there are several ancient documentary texts that endorse the use of master-slave deference by one sector of Israelite society "in first temple period Israel that is the same as that in the Hebrew Bible."[62]

In another study, Bridge examines the topic of politeness in one group of those ancient documents, the Lachish letters (589-586 B.C.E),[63] using Brown and Levinson's model as well.[64] In his opinion, an analysis of the corpora shows a culture of high politeness, which is expressed in two ways: conventional greeting wishes and master slave deference.[65] In the first expression, conventional greeting wishes, the senders use a positive politeness strategy, involving a mutual "ground with the recipient by focusing on his interests."[66] In the second expression, master slave deference, the senders humble their own face, avoiding indebtedness to the recipient "by indirectly implying he is magnanimous; that is, he has acted on the basis of generosity."[67]

In contrast to Benjamin Thomas's conclusions, which, as stated before, also describe polite strategies in the *Lachish letters*,[68] Bridge admits the existence of differences between this kind of deferential language and the letters' content. He argues that even though the Lachish

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"Bible" he means the Hebrew Bible or also the New Testament.

[62] He mentions, for instance, the *Hebrew Language seal*, the *Lachish letters*, the *Mesad Hashavyahu Plea* and the *Arad 40* document. See Bridge, "Self-Abasement as an Expression of Thanks in the Hebrew Bible," 273.

[63] Edward J. Bridge, "Polite Language in the Lachish Letters," *VT* 60 (2010): 518-534. The reason why Bridge chose the Lachish Letters is "because of their small number, their dating to the late monarchic period (589-586 B.C), the importance they have for biblical Hebrew, and their frequent use of conventional language (master-slave deference, greeting wishes, and the self-abasement formula)." See ibid., 520.

[64] Ibid., 522-524.

[65] Ibid., 524-527.

[66] Ibid., 525.

[67] Ibid., 526.

[68] Thomas, "The Language of Politeness," 17-39.

letters reveal a culture of high politeness to a formal superior, they also display freedom to express personal views and even critique the sender's superior.[69] In this respect, Bridge claims that although it is impossible to know if this way of interaction was common in late monarchic Judah,[70] the Hebrew Bible also shows a culture of high politeness towards social superiors, indicating also freedom to communicate personal views and critiques.[71]

Accordingly, Bridge is of the opinion that the *Lachish Letters* along with the Hebrew Bible present similarities regarding the topic of politeness. This statement, however, is made in relation to the literary level, because, as Bridge himself acknowledges, "not enough information can be obtained from a literary text such as the Hebrew Bible to do more than speculate about conventions of politeness in biblical Israel."[72] In other words, it seems that Bridge does not assert that these kind of polite strategies were necessarily present in the Israelite culture, only in the Hebrew Bible.

Assuming such literary meaning, an important element in Bridge's paper is the fact that expressing differences and critiques may not be considered impolite. This point of view, however, contradicts Brown and Levinson's model, because in their opinion expressing disagreement is a face-threatening act that threatens the hearer's positive face.[73] Although Bridge does not comment on this contradiction, he does mention the use of imperatives by social inferiors in biblical narrative, for example, and in the *Lachish letters*. Brown and Levinson, as he recognizes, claim that only superiors should use imperatives. However, the way that the Hebrew

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[69] Bridge, "Polite Language," 527-533.
[70] However, he asserts that despite this lack of data, a superficial "comparison shows that the Lachish letters are more polite in terms of master slave deference than most narrated speech in the Bible." See ibid., 534.
[71] Ibid., 534.
[72] Ibid., 523. Although sometimes it looks like he blurs this distinction. For example, see ibid., 524, in which he talks about "ancient Israelites."
[73] See Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 113-117.

Bible and the *Lachish letters* use them may suggest that imperatives cannot necessarily be interpreted as impolite.[74] This means that since Brown and Levinson considers disagreement a face-threatening act, they fail in understanding literary texts in which imperatives or critiques are used by narrative characters.

Nevertheless, Bridge considers that the use of the Hebrew particle נא along with imperatives may indicate that these kinds of expression "often needed to be softened with a polite term,"[75] suggesting a courteous meaning. Although some scholars favour this argument,[76] Bent Christiansen disagrees, maintaining that the effect of this particle "is cancelled in the case of self-address or deliberation, resulting in a settled intention to act."[77] One passage that illustrates this case is Job 32:21, which is translated by Christiansen as "I have no intention of showing partiality,"[78] suggesting an imperative statement. Accordingly, by using the Hebrew particle נא in some sentences the biblical characters are not always trying to soften their words, but maybe to emphasize an intention.

1.1.4. Ludwig Köhler and Konrad Ehlich

Ludwig Köhler, who studies the form of conversations between different characters in the Hebrew Bible, provides another significant study in the field of biblical (im)politeness, in particular in the use of honorifics.[79] In his article Köhler focuses on the linguistic procedures of address, affirming that the most common form of address in the Hebrew Bible is very informal. In Köhler's opinion, it would consist of a simple "you" (e.g. Josh 9:8; Judg 13:17), giving it a

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[74] Bridge, "Polite Language," 523-524.
[75] Ibid., 524.
[76] See Timothy Wilt, "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Na'," *VT* 46 (1996): 237-255; and Ahouva Shulman, "The Particle נָא in Biblical Hebrew Prose," *HS* 40 (1999): 57-82.
[77] Bent Christiansen, "A Linguistic Analysis of the Biblical Hebrew Particle Nā': A Test Case," *VT* 59 (2009): 379-393.
[78] According to Christiansen, "the occurrence of nāʾ with the imperfect militates against the choice of the simple future declarative: 'I will not show partiality to anyone'" (ibid., 393).
[79] Ludwig Köhler, "Archäologisches. Nr.16-19," *ZAW* 40 (1922): 36-46.

very democratic and equitable social function.[80] This "you" could be accompanied by the addressee's name as well as by some expression that may summarize either the social or family status of the addressee (e.g. 1 Sam 22:12; 2 Sam 2:20; 2 Kings 9:5).[81] Köhler also suggests, as Bridge does, that the most polite form of address in the Hebrew Bible is the expression "my lord,"[82] which is not only spoken by slaves, but also by free people, which may imply a voluntary social submission (e.g. Gen 23:15).[83]

Although Köhler's intention is not to develop a theory of Hebrew politeness, his paper shows the possibility of analysing the topic of (im)politeness from the perspective of the text. Unfortunately, Köhler does not analyse the data. Nonetheless, Konrad Ehlich, who bases part of his analysis on Köhler's paper, has filled this gap. Ehlich affirms that in Ancient Israel "the development of a standard for what we might specifically call 'politeness' is not yet present in this system."[84] For that reason, according to Köhler, his findings suggest that although the master-slave relationship might gradually establish a basis on which "polite" forms of address would be understood in the future,[85] the meaning of "politeness" in the world of Ancient Israel, as currently understood, did not exist.[86] This statement contradicts Bridge's analysis, which, as mentioned before, seems to assume a modern understanding in his interpretation of actions of self-abasement. Ehlich also examines the development of politeness in Ancient Greece and

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[80] Ibid., 37-38.
[81] Ibid., 37.
[82] Ibid., 40.
[83] Ibid., 39.
[84] Konrad Ehlich, "On the Historicity of Politeness," in *Politeness in Language: Studies in its History, Theory, and Practice* (eds. Richard J. Watts et al.; rev. and enl. ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 89.
[85] Ibid., 86.
[86] Ibid., 89, 94.

Rome, asserting, as in the previous case, that it is not possible to link the contemporary meaning

of "politeness" with the forms of address that existed in those cultures around the first century.[87]

In terms of biblical (im)politeness, Konrad Ehlich's conclusions, which are partially

rooted in Köhler's findings, are significant. Ehlich's analysis suggests that it is probable that

ancient readers could have assessed the meaning of (im)politeness in a different way than we do.

Eleanor Dickey, in her study of the form of address in Classical and Post-Classical Greek works,

seems to confirm this assumption by questioning those who claim a universal understanding of

ways of addressing.[88] One of the limitations of Ehlich's paper, as well as Köhler's, however, is

their exclusive focus on honorifics. Honorifics are an important subject of research in the field of

(im)politeness' studies. Several investigations shown that honorifics can play different roles in

different cultures,[89] which have led some Bible scholars to explore the effect that these could

have in translating biblical texts into other languages.[90] The complication of just focusing on

honorifics, however, is that the problem of (im)polite expressions is not always addressed.[91] In

other words, its use may only focus on politeness, leaving aside expressions that might not

necessarily be considered polite.

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[87] Ibid., 92-93.

[88] Eleanor Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address: From Herodotus to Lucian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 256-258.

[89] E.g. Florian Coulmas, "Linguistic Etiquette in Japanese Society," in *Politeness in Language: Studies in its History, Theory and Practice* (eds. Richard J. Watts et al.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 299-323; and Megumi Yoshida and Chikako Sakurai, "Japanese Honorifics as a Marker of Sociocultural Identity: A View From Non-Western Perspective," in *Broadening the Horizon of Linguistic Politeness* (P&BNS 139; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 197-215.

[90] See, for example, J. L. Swellengrebel, "Bible Translation and Politeness in Bali," *BT* 1 (1950): 124-130; R. P. Kramers, "On Being Polite in Chinese," *BT* 14 (1963): 165-173; Masashi Takahashi, "Use of Honorifics in Japanese," *BT* 14 (1963): 174-177; C. M. Churchward, "Honorific Language in Tongan," *BT* 14 (1963): 191-196; and S. V. Vincent, "The Use of Honorifics in Burmese," *BT* 14 (1963): 196-197.

[91] Unless these are clearly addressed. Eleanor Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address: From Herodotus to Lucian*, 165-174; and Eleanor Dickey, *Latin Forms of Address: From Plautus to Apuleius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 163-185, show different kind of insults both in Greek and Latin, asserting the complexity of the topic.

1.1.5. Marina Terkourafi

In contrast to Ehlich's paper, which indicates that the significance of "politeness" in ancient societies, as currently understood, did not exist, Marina Terkourafi suggests the opposite, namely, that ancient cultures had a social regulatory role of (im)politeness norms, similar to the present.[92] In her article, Terkourafi examines the topic of (im)politeness from a diachronic point of view with the purpose of discovering "what is the object of a theory of im/politeness."[93] She undertakes a linguistic analysis, seeking linguistic behaviours that have become norms. In fact, the aim of her article is to understand (im)politeness norms, exploring the "relationships between them by studying the forms they took in different cultures and historical periods."[94]

Terkourafi suggests the existence of (im)polite norms in several ancient societies.[95] For instance, in an ancient literary Egyptian text called *The Instruction of Ptahhotep* (ca. 2414-2375 BCE), there are several instructions about "how to behave at the table (maxim 7), in the antechamber (maxim 13), and about speaking gently (maxim 25) and with restraint (epilogue, line 618)."[96] According to Terkourafi, it is possible to find similar instructions in other ancient Egyptian texts as well as in Ancient Near Eastern writings known as "wisdom literature." One of these didactic works is *Sirach* (180 BCE),[97] which, in Terkourafi's opinion, contains references to politeness norms in chapters 31 and 32, such as table manners and advice about speaking with moderation.[98]

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[92] Marina Terkourafi, "From Politeness1 to Politeness2: Tracking Norms of Im/Politeness Across Time and Space," *JPolR* 7 (2011): 159-185.
[93] Ibid., 160.
[94] Ibid., 162.
[95] Terkourafi's conclusions are based on her analysis of several corpora. She explores written texts from Ancient Egypt, India and China. She also examines classical Arabic and Western literature. Likewise, she studies texts writing in the Middle Ages as well as contemporary corpora.
[96] Ibid., 163.
[97] I am using the date provided by Terkourafi.
[98] Terkourafi, "From Politeness1 to Politeness2," 163-164.

After displaying and analysing similar data, Terkourafi concludes that (im)polite norms have existed during all historical periods and cultures, claiming the existence of a social regulatory role, which "is fundamental to the preservation of a social order, resembling in this respect religious and moral principles."[99] In this sense, (im)polite norms are the object for a theoretical understanding of (im)politeness, implying that the current meaning of (im)politeness is equivalent to synchronic understandings of the term.

Because Terkourafi also examines the subject of (im)politeness in ancient literature, her paper, in terms of historical (im)politeness, is valuable. One of the problems with Terkourafi's conclusions, however, resides in its emphasis on the role of social norms as exclusive regulators of (im)polite behaviour.[100] In sociolinguistic terms, this kind of approach may be catalogued within the so-called "social norm" view, which "reflects the historical understanding of politeness generally embraced by the public within the English-speaking world."[101] It takes for granted that every society possesses specific rules, which may be codified in protocol manuals and in the language, evaluating some actions that are against or in favour of the norms as negative (impolite) or positive (polite) behaviour respectively.[102] In this respect, a diachronic analysis of the topic of (im)politeness may fail in analysing the meaning of (im)polite norms in distinct societies and cultures, omitting varied time frames as well as different literary genres.

Nonetheless, although the "social norm" view has few adherents,[103] it is probably true that the meaning of (im)politeness should be "based upon and concern itself with how lay

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[99] Ibid., 179.
[100] Cf. Stefanie Alexa Stadler, "Multimodal (Im)Politeness: The Verbal, Prosodic and Non-Verbal Realization of Disagreement in German and New Zealand English" (Ph.D. diss., University of Auckland, 2006), 31.
[101] Bruce Fraser, "Perspectives on Politeness," *JPrag* 14 (1990): 220.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Fraser, "Perspectives on Politeness," 221. See, for example, Saeko Fukushima, *Requests and Culture: Politeness in British English and Japanese* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), 28.

members understand and evaluate the social norms governing interaction which, obviously, includes im/politeness."[104] In other words, it is necessary to take into account the meaning of (im)polite expressions or gestures in different societies in order to understand their social and historic meaning.[105] Accordingly, it could be useful in situating the concept of (im)politeness in a time and culture different from ours. The complication in this case resides in establishing a model of reading (im)polite expressions in a specific period of time, such as first-century C.E., for example, having as background the social, cultural, literary and historical meaning of certain (im)polite words and phrases.

1.1.6. Andrew Wilson

Many of the papers evaluated thus far deal with the Hebrew Bible or other ancient documents. Andrew Wilson, on the other hand, has engaged with the topic of politeness in the New Testament. In an article entitled *The Pragmatics of Politeness and Pauline Epistolography: A Case Study of the Letter of Philemon*, Wilson argues that Paul uses several polite strategies in order to gain what he is looking for, namely, Philemon's forgiveness of Onesimus.[106] These strategies are based on Geoffrey Leech's model of politeness,[107] which in turn is grounded in Grice's Cooperative Principle.[108] The latter claims that participants in a conversation share similar criteria in the development of their interaction, such as a common goal and mutual understanding.[109] This assumes the existence of a previous agreement between those interacting,

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[104] Derek Bousfield, *Impoliteness in Interaction* (P&BNS 167; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007), 46.
[105] Cf. Ibid., 46-47.
[106] Andrew Wilson, "The Pragmatics of Politeness and Pauline Epistolography: A Case Study of the Letter to Philemon," *JSNT* (1992): 107-119.
[107] Ibid., 110.
[108] Geoffrey N. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (Longman: London, 1983), 79-151.
[109] H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts* (eds. Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan; New York: Academic Press, 1975), 45.

which in Grice's opinion consists in following some rules related to a determined conversational behaviour.[110]

In the case of Leech's model, he proposes several maxims, such as the "modesty maxim," for example, which function as strategies of politeness.[111] The "modesty maxim" is used when an individual "maximize[s] dispraise of self,"[112] which, according to Wilson, is employed by Paul in his letter to Philemon.[113] Before interceding for Onesimus, Paul, instead of calling himself an apostle, as he commonly does (e.g. Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1), claims to be a "prisoner of Christ" (Phlm 1, 9-10). In Wilson's opinion, Paul is "seeking to boost Philemon's status by diminishing his own,"[114] arguing that Paul is using the "modesty maxim" in order to mitigate what he is going to request.[115] In other words, Paul is not giving a command, but using an indirect and very friendly way to intercede for Onesimus.[116]

What is important in Wilson's analysis is his interest in examining the topic of politeness from a New Testament perspective, using a sociolinguistic approach. He fails, however, in assuming uncritically Grice's Co-operative Principle, on which Leech's theory is based.[117] Grice's Co-operative Principle does not have a universal application;[118] therefore, Wilson's analysis may be based on an English perception of the text. For example, the "modest

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[110] Ibid., 45-49.
[111] Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, 79-151.
[112] Ibid., 136.
[113] Wilson, "The Pragmatics of Politeness," 113.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Wilson, "The Pragmatics of Politeness," 115-116. According to Leech, indirect illocutions tend to be more polite "because they increase the degree of optionality" and "because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be." Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, 108.
[117] Although Wilson recognizes that Grice's Co-operative Principle has been criticized by certain linguists, he claims that "it is valuable in that it is the only model which seeks to define probabilistic rules ('maxims' and 'principles') for politeness strategies and to incorporate these within a wider process model of language use which gives attention to textual as well as interpersonal considerations." Wilson, "The Pragmatics of Politeness," 110.
[118] Stadler, "Multimodal (Im)Politeness," 32.

maxim," as used by Wilson, functions as a strategy to obtain something using indirectness as a stratagem. Nonetheless, several studies suggest that in some cultures it is preferable to be direct than indirect,[119] because in this kind of society it is more important to be sincere than to keep distance and formality.[120] Likewise, as many studies have shown, imposing is a situational factor, which can be seen as threatening in one society, while in another may be culturally accepted.[121] In consequence, this theory could function in Western societies, but would lack the facility for understanding or explaining cultural and social differences in different international societies.

1.2. (Im)politeness in specific Matthean texts

From the above, it is clear that some scholars have engaged with the topic of impoliteness in ancient and biblical documents. The same can be said about specific New Testament passages. Nevertheless, because my objective is to examine the topic of (im)politeness as it functions within the Gospel of Matthew, I will focus my attention only on this Gospel, drawing attention to those pericopes in which Jesus has been understood as impolite.

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[119] Tatiana Larina, "Directness, Imposition and Politeness in English and Russian," *Research Notes* 33 (2008): 33-38; Anna Wierbzbicka, "Different Cultures, Different Languages, Different Speech Acts," *JPrag* 9 (1985): 145-178; and Shoshana Blum-Kulka, "The Metapragmatics of Politeness in Israeli Society," in *Politeness in Language: Studies in its History, Theory and Practice* (eds. Richard J. Watts et al.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 255-280.

[120] Sonia Bailini, "La cortesía en la enseñanza del Español a Italianos," in *Studies in Contrastive Linguistics: Proceedings of the 4th International Contrastive Linguistics Conference: Santiago de Compostela, September 2005* (eds. Cristina Mourón Figueroa and Teresa Moralejo Gárate; Cursos e Congresos da Universidad de Santiago de Compostela 170; Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2006), 79-80.

[121] See, for example, Carmen García, "The Three Stages of Venezuelan Invitations and Responses," *Multilingua* 18 (1999): 391. Cf. Carmen García, "Politeness Studies on Venezuelan and Cuban Spanish," in *Research on Politeness in the Spanish-Speaking World* (eds. María Elena Placencia and Carmen García; Mahwah: Lawrence Erlabaum, 2007), 91-104; and Stadler, "Multimodal (Im)Politeness," 32.

1.2.1. (Im)politeness and the Canaanite woman

In relation to (im)politeness, the most significant studies have analysed the pericope of the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21-28). Here, after a request made by a Gentile woman in favour of her daughter, Jesus says that it would not be "fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (15:26). These words have been interpreted from contrasting angles, resulting in different explanations. While some scholars argue that it should be explained symbolically in terms of mission and salvation,[122] others think that the phrase is an insult[123] and should be considered morally offensive.[124]

The one who best summarizes these interpretative differences is Ulrich Luz, who says that the interpretation of this phrase "oscillates among an excuse that renders the saying harmless" and one which "dismisses the insult of the comparison with the dogs, explaining it historically in terms of the social tensions of the area, and indignation over Jesus' narrow-mindedness."[125] Two examples of the first analysis are Alan McNeile and William Barclay, who fill the narrative with descriptions that are not present in the text. While McNeile affirms, "we may be sure that a half-humorous tenderness of manner would deprive them [Jesus' words] of all their sting,"[126] Barclay suggests that the tone and the look of Jesus were full of compassion for

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[122] E.g. Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew* (NIBCNT; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 152-153; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (SP 1; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 235; and Theodore Henry Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 135-136.
[123] Sharon H. Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 69; and Barbara E. Reid, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (NColBC; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 84.
[124] Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 61-62. Cf. Francis W. Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 342, who argues that the explanations received by this passage "are so many tokens of the embarrassment of commentators in their desperate attempts to get away from the incredible insolence of the saying."
[125] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2001), 340.
[126] Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew: The Greek Text* (London: Macmillan, 1915), 231.

this woman; therefore, his words could not be interpreted as an insult.[127] To my mind, McNeile

and Barclay are right in suggesting that gesture and body language are important in the

transmission of the message,[128] but they fail to draw the reader's attention to the fact that these

are absent from the pericope. The intonation of the voice, for example, is a critical element in a

conversational interaction, which in turn, depending on the culture, could be interpreted as

polite[129] or rude.[130] The problem, however, is that from a literary perspective it is impossible to

know the intonation or stress on certain words. Furthermore, an analysis of the body language is

useless in exploring a literary text, unless they are explicitly recorded in it. And this is not the

case here.

One important specific contribution to the topic is a paper titled "Matthew 15:21-28: A

Test Case for Jesus' Manners," by J. Martin Scott, in which Jesus' treatment of the Canaanite

woman is addressed.[131] Scott claims that Jesus has failed the test of politeness, and it is

impossible to save him from "the conclusion that he is simply rude."[132] Because historical-

criticism has been unable to give a compelling explanation for Jesus' attitude,[133] he proposes

analysing the text using a narrative critical approach.[134] In this regard, he asserts that the story of

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[127] See also J. Ireland Hasler, "The Incident of the Syrophoenician Woman: (Matt xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30)," *ExpTim* 45 (1934): 460, who affirms that Jesus' eyes winked when he made his refusal. Cf. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001), 2:142.

[128] Renée Hirschon, "Freedom, Solidarity and Obligation: The Socio-Cultural Context of Greek Politeness1," in *Linguistic Politeness across Boundaries: The Case of Greek and Turkish* (P&BNS 88; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001), 30-31.

[129] Anne Wichmann, "The Intonation of Please-Requests: A Corpus-Based Study," *JPrag* 36 (2004): 1521–1549.

[130] Stadler, "Multimodal (Im)Politeness," 134-135.

[131] J. Martin C. Scott, "Matthew 15:21-28: A Test-Case for Jesus' Manners," *JSNT* (1996): 21-44.

[132] Ibid., 43.

[133] Ibid., 25-28.

[134] Ibid., 30. Scott says, however, that his intention "is neither to justify nor to explain away Jesus' rudeness. Rather, it is to accept it as a given in the text and to seek to understand its narrative and theological function." Ibid., 31, no. 23.

the Canaanite woman belongs to a single narrative unit (13:54-16:20).[135] In this narrative section there would be an increasing "sense of frustration in Jesus as he encounters one disappointment after another as the narrative unfolds"[136] as well as a sequential developing of negative stories regarding disputes, misunderstanding and lack of faith.[137]

In Scott's opinion the Canaanite woman can be distinguished from the disciples in that she is narratively portrayed in a positive way. While they are described as having "little faith," for example, she is depicted as having great faith.[138] Furthermore, in contrast to the disciples, who are incapable of grasping the metaphorical sense of Jesus' words when he advises them to be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:5-12), the Canaanite woman immediately understands the symbolic words of Jesus concerning the statement "take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (15:26).[139] According to Scott, since the narrative has previously mentioned the gathering of twelve baskets with leftover bread, the woman understands that "even when the 'children' have been fed, there is more than enough left over even in the scraps for the outsiders to be fed."[140] In this sense, when she responds that "even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (15:27), she is showing her ability to grasp the metaphorical meaning of the multiplication of bread (14:13-21), underlining the universal scope of the Gospel's message. In this context, in Scott's opinion, Jesus' rudeness towards "the woman allows her to play the role which the reader has by now come to expect of

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[135] Ibid., 31.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., 35. According to Scott, "there is a growing sense of despair and frustration in Jesus throughout these chapters, which seems to come to a head in the encounter with the woman. The death of John the Baptist precipitates a crisis in the narrative, which goes unresolved because Jesus is unable to find time alone. John's death points forward in the narrative to the opening of the next major section of the Gospel at 16.21, where Jesus has to point out to the disciples that his own journey is one which will follow a path of suffering, leading ultimately to his untimely death" (ibid., 41).
[138] Ibid., 41.
[139] Ibid., 39-40.
[140] Ibid., 40.

Jesus."[141] Thus, her actions would help the reader of Matthew's Gospel to reconsider his or her narrow perception of salvation. Nevertheless, it is not just the reader who needs a "conversion," but also Jesus, who through his rudeness shows also a limited vision regarding the message of God.[142] Accordingly, Jesus' rudeness evidences that the persistent faith in God shown by the Canaanite woman may "override the exclusive attitudes even of those who purport to be God's agents."[143]

In relation to biblical studies about (im)politeness, Scott's paper is very important. First, he is concerned with the literary meaning of the pericope, exploring the Gospel as a narrative. Secondly, his intention is to explore Jesus' behaviour from the perspective of rudeness, which in the case of this research is significant. One of the weaknesses of his article, nonetheless, is his negative evaluation about Jesus' manners, which he bases on the Gentile origin of the woman, overlooking other Matthean pericopes in which Jesus interacts with other Gentiles in a more positive way. It seems that he has been trapped within his own view about (im)politeness, ignoring the Gospel story as a whole.

1.2.2. (Im)politeness in Matt 23

Another chapter in which Jesus delivers (im)polite expressions is Matt 23. Phrases such as *hypocrites* (Matt 23:13–15, 23, 25, 27, 29) and *blind guides* (23:16, 24) are illustrations of this.[144] Although not many scholars have studied or explored these sayings of Jesus from the

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[141] Ibid., 42.

[142] Scott, "Matthew 15:21-28," 43. Several authors claim the possibility that the pericope shows a transformation of Jesus in his encounter with the woman. E.g. Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," 70-72; Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 200-203; and Daniel Patte, "The Canaanite Woman and Jesus: Surprising Models of Discipleship (Matt. 15:21-28)," in *Transformative Encounter: Jesus and Women Re-viewed* (BIS 43; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 42-45.

[143] Scott, "Matthew 15:21-28," 43.

[144] E.g. Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 452, says that Matt 23 "is beyond question a masterpiece of vituperation."

perspective of (im)politeness, there are some examples. Basing his opinion on Luke Johnson's paper,[145] for example, John Nolland asserts that it is important to set the content of Matt 23 "into the cultural context of ancient conventions of polemic and not modern conventions of politeness."[146]

Warren Carter expresses a similar view, when he affirms that for many Christians "this is a very embarrassing chapter,"[147] which should be interpreted in the light of the polemical and stereotypical nature of the language that ancient people used to attack their opponents.[148] Like Nolland, Carter also grounds his commentary on Johnson's article,[149] providing several historical examples regarding rudeness and mockery.[150] Some of these examples, however, are also based on Davies and Allison's commentary,[151] which, as Johnson affirms, claims that these kinds of verbal attacks were common in Jewish contexts.[152] About this last point, Moshe Weinfeld reinforces this statement suggesting that most of the accusations of hypocrisy in Matt 23 are based on rabbinic literature.[153] He shows several examples in which Jewish sources use harsh expressions against ideological opponents. An illustration of this is the description of Pharisaic hypocrisy, which can be found in some portions of the *Talmud* and in some *Qumran* documents.[154]

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[145] Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander," 419-441.
[146] John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 921.
[147] Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading* (JSNTSup 204; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 449.
[148] Ibid., 450.
[149] Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander," 419-441.
[150] Carter, *Matthew and the Margins,* 450-451.
[151] E.g. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988-1997), 3:258, also have based the argument in their commentary about Matt 23 on Johnson's paper.
[152] Ibid., 3:259.
[153] Moshe Weinfeld, *Normative and Sectarian Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (LSTS 54; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 279.
[154] Ibid., 282-283.

One can see that Johnson's article has had significant influence on many authors. In all these cases the understanding of Matt 23 is based on the analysis of ancient literature, whose authors commonly used defamation as a tool of discussion. Weinfeld's paper, moreover, has also made an important contribution in analysing the text from the perspective of other Jewish sources.[155] The limitations of these studies, however, reside in the fact that they have centred their discussion on Matt 23, leaving aside other pericopes in which (im)polite expressions also appear.

Anthony J. Saldarini also argues that Matt 23 is an example of a common religious polemic between religious communities, which "can serve to establish the identity and boundaries of the polemicist's group and weaken the power and attraction of the opposing group."[156] Saldarini, however, unlike other authors, contrasts the Jesus of Matt 23 with the Jesus of other Matthean pericopes. For him Jesus' attack in Matt 23 would be in opposition to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in which he teaches his disciples to be glad and pray when people persecute them (5:12, 44). In fact, as he points out, Jesus' behaviour in Matt 23 also contrasts with the image presented in Matt 12:19-20 in which the Gospel of Matthew citing Isaiah says that "he [Jesus] will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick…" (Is 42:1-2).[157] In order to understand these differences, Saldarini proposes that the intention of the Gospel of Matthew is to delegitimize the Jewish leaders and legitimate the Matthean community "as the true leaders of Israel, accurate interpreters of the Bible and the authentic messengers of God's will."[158] Using a

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[155] Johnson's article also mentions some Greek sources to make his point about the Jewish way of discussion.

[156] Anthony J. Saldarini, "Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 659.

[157] Ibid., 660.

[158] See Saldarini, "Delegitimation of Leaders," 661, 667; and Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (CSJH; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 46-67.

redaction approach, Saldarini claims that Matthew's Gospel uses Mark (Mark 12:37-40) and Luke's traditions (Luke 11:37-52) to build its denunciation against the scribes and Pharisees.[159] In doing this, Matthew's intention is to denounce the Jewish opponents who were living in the city in which the Gospel was written, undermining their authority.[160]

Saldarini's contribution is based again on the assumption that ancient people commonly insulted their opponents in order to delegitimize them. Unlike other authors, on the other hand, Saldarini rightly underlines the apparent contradictions that could exist between Jesus' (im)politenes and softness in the Gospel of Matthew. The purpose of his paper, however, is mainly an analysis of Matt 23, ignoring other pericopes in which (im)politeness is also a part.

David Sim is also interested in examining the Matthean Jesus in relation to his pacifist and violent outlooks, referring to those harsh expressions contained in Matt 23.[161] Sim claims that Jesus is described delivering "a series of stinging verbal attacks" against the Pharisees and scribes in Matt 23 because of the complex social setting of Matthew's community, which would reflect "a very bitter dispute between the evangelist's Christian Jewish community and the proponents of Formative Judaism."[162] In this sense, Jesus' words would suggest an existing conflict in the Matthean community.[163] Sim is more interested in exploring the community behind the elaboration of the Gospel, focusing on Matt 23 but leaving aside other pericopes in which (im)politeness is also present, as does Saldarini.

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[159] Saldarini, "Delegitimation of Leaders," 669.
[160] Ibid., 672-678.
[161] David C. Sim, "The Pacifist Jesus and the Violent Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew," *HvTSt* 67 (2011): 1-6.
[162] Ibid., 4.
[163] Cf. Sean Freyne, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus," in *'To See Ourselves as Others See Us': Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity* (eds. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 117-143, who also argues that Matthew reflects the conflict between the Matthean community and their Jewish opponents.

Regarding verbal (im)politeness, some Biblical scholars have analysed certain (im)polite expressions in Matt 23. Craig Keener, for example, focuses on the phrase "brood of vipers" (3:7; 12:34; 23:33), evaluating it as an insult[164] aimed directly against the Pharisees.[165] It is an insult, in Keener's opinion, because this is the way that ancient writers understood the phrase. One point of similarity between Luke Johnson and Craig Keener is that they both claim that harsh expressions were a normal practice among ancients.[166] In view of this, Keener argues that historical sources inform us that vipers kill their mothers during birth, therefore, the expression "brood of vipers" would mean that the Pharisees were guilty of parricide, "which ancient Mediterranean peoples regarded as one of the worst conceivable crimes."[167]

In this regard, Keener claims that both in Matt 3:7 as well as Matt 23:33 the Pharisees are depicted as descendants of the prophets;[168] pointing out the immediate context of Matt 23:33, which also describes them as offspring of those who murdered the prophets (23:30-31). Thus, the expression "brood of vipers" would mean that "these apparent heirs of the prophets share the guilt for killing them,"[169] being unfaithful to their honourable lineage.[170] Although Keener's historical analysis is quite detailed, and in my view compelling, he does not engage in a comprehensive literary analysis, which may provide an important element in understanding the topic of (im)politeness in the Gospel of Matthew, giving it a narrative purpose.

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[164] Craig S. Keener, "'Brood of Vipers' (Matthew 3.7; 12.34; 23.33)," *JSNT* 28 (2005): 4, 6, 9.
[165] Ibid., 4, 5, 9, 11.
[166] Ibid., 10. The difference, however, is that Keener, unlike Johnson, assumes that Matthew is a Jewish writing that reflects a rivalry among Pharisees and other factions for a more prevailing position in early Syro-Palestinian Judaism. This would explain Matthew's emphasis on Pharisees. Nevertheless, rather than discussing the existing community behind the text, as Johnson does, Keener is more interested in examining what the Matthean text intends to communicate.
[167] Ibid., 7, 8. Keener even argues, "such guilt extended to animals," which is clear, according to him, when one analyses the work of Aelian, who "regards the hippopotamus as the most wicked of creatures because it eats its father (*Nat. an*. 7.19)."
[168] Ibid., 9.
[169] Ibid., 10
[170] Ibid., 11.

1.2.3. (Im)politeness and verbal violence

In the Matthean parables one can find terms such as *wicked* (e.g. 18:32; 25:26), *lazy* (25:26) and *worthless* (25:30), which show violent (im)polite speech. In this specific case, as far as I know, no study has been conducted in the area of (im)politeness. Barbara Reid, nonetheless, deals with the issue of violence in the Matthean parable endings.[171] In her essay she defines violence as "exertion of force so as to injure or abuse another."[172] According to Reid, "such force can be physical, mental, emotional, psychological, or economic,"[173] ignoring sadly any reference to verbal violence, which is apparently employed by some characters in the Matthean parables.

The same can be said about some authors who have examined violence from a Matthean perspective. Warren Carter, for example, examines the manner in which the Gospel of Matthew constructs violence, classifying Jesus and God as agents of it, while the Pharisees are the objects of such.[174] He, however, does not engage in an analysis of verbal violence.[175] Shelly Matthews, likewise, deals with "ethical issues in reconstructing interreligious violence in antiquity," giving as an example the Gospel of Matthew.[176] Nonetheless, as in the previous cases, there are not references to verbal violence.

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[171] Barbara E. Reid, "Violent Endings in Matthew's Parables and Christian Nonviolence," *CBQ* 66 (2004): 237-255; and Barbara E. Reid, "Matthew's Nonviolent Jesus and Violent Parables," in *Parables* (Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics; Waco: Baylor University, 2006), 31-32.

[172] Reid, "Violent Endings," 238.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Warren Carter, "Constructions of Violence and Identities in Matthew's Gospel," in *Violence in the New Testament* (eds. Shelly Matthews and Leigh Gibson; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 89-90.

[175] Cf. Marla J. Selvidge, "Violence, Woman, and the Future of the Matthean Community: A Redactional Critical Essay," *USQR* 39 (1984): 213-223, who although states that "there are many statements in Matthew that contain violent implications, both physical and verbal" (ibid., 214), she does not engage with an explicit analysis of verbal violence.

[176] Shelly Matthews, "Ethical Issues in Reconstructing Intrareligious Violence in Antiquity: The Gospel of Matthew as a Test Case," in *Walk in the Ways of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza* (ed. Shelly Matthews et al.; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 334-350.

2. Filling in the gap: Purpose

As the above analysis suggests, although the subject of biblical (im)politeness has not received much attention, it is still possible to find significant initial analyses of it. These contributions, however, show the necessity of a much deeper and perhaps more comprehensive analysis. First, there is not an exclusive study, at least in the Gospel of Matthew, dealing with the concept of (im)politeness. Secondly, although there are some studies that have examined some aspects of the theme, many of them are based on a contemporary understanding of the term, which would reflect the scholar's own cultural understanding about the concept.

In view of this, I intend to undertake a study of the topic of (im)politeness in the Gospel of Matthew from the perspective of a first-century reader/hearer. In light of the current literature in the field, it will be important to define in depth what (im)politeness means proposing a methodological approach which can be useful in determining the presence of (im)polite speech in the Gospel of Matthew as well as establishing in what way a first-century reader/hearer could have understood it.

This involves analysing the topic of (im)politeness from both a literary viewpoint, taking into consideration sociolinguistic models of reading (im)polite words and expressions. At a first stage, I propose to explore the Gospel as a narrative unit, using synchronic literary tools, in order to consider its narrative purpose. At a second stage, I engage with first-century literary materials, with the purpose of analysing them in relation to similar speech language presented in this Gospel.[177] A detailed explanation of these topics will be made in the following chapter.

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[177] In doing this, as stated in the introduction, I am not seeking to reconstruct the Matthean community or to track the historical Jesus, but to propose a possible way in which a first-century reader/hearer could have understood some of the words performed by the Matthean Jesus, which in our contemporary Western context could be interpreted as (im)polite.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY, PRESUPPOSITIONS AND DEFINITIONS

As stated, my intention is to examine the topic of (im)politeness in the Gospel of Matthew from the perspective of a first-century reader. This involves establishing a methodology that allows me to analyse the subject using literary and socio-historic lenses. In order to do that, I use an adapted socio-rhetorical approach, combining it with other methodologies.

In what follows, I delimit and explain in what way I am using socio-rhetorical criticism, laying out also my hermeneutic presuppositions. Furthermore, because an examination of the theme of (im)politeness entails sociolinguistic considerations, I also discuss the subject from a sociolinguistic perspective, defining in depth in what sense the term (im)polite is understood in this investigation, and choosing complementary methods and models in my reading of Matthew's Gospel.

1. Methodology and presuppositions

I intend to study the subject of (im)politeness in the Gospel of Matthew using a socio-rhetorical methodology. Because socio-rhetorical criticism focuses on the text as well as the world in which the interpreter lives,[1] it is important to acknowledge the presuppositions and cultural locations of interpreters.[2] In view of this, before establishing in what manner socio-rhetorical criticism is used in this study, I locate myself in a social, religious and cultural context.

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[1] Vernon K. Robbins, "Divine Dialogue and the Lord's Prayer: Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Sacred Texts," *Dialogue* 28 (1995): 126-130.
[2] See Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 96-99.

1.1. Presuppositions: Locating myself

According to Rudolf Bultmann "the question whether exegesis without presuppositions is possible must be answered affirmatively if 'without presuppositions' means 'without presupposing the results of the exegesis.'"[3] Nevertheless, as he quickly clarifies, a reader never engages a text without presuppositions, but on the contrary, approaches "the text with specific questions or with a specific way of raising questions and thus has a certain idea of the subject matter with which the text is concerned."[4] This suggests that interpreters should be reasonably honest, mentioning in what way their previous understanding and social and religious background may impact their readings. My case is no exception.

Although I was raised within a Chilean liberal catholic family, when I was twenty years old I decided to become a Seventh-day Adventist. I chose to study theology, becoming a Seventh-day Adventist parish pastor a few years later. Nonetheless, even though I am a Chilean citizen, in my theological formation I have studied in Chile, Brazil and Argentina. To some extent, those countries have shaped my life and the way I see the society. Moreover, the fact that I am currently a New Zealand permanent resident living and studying in Auckland, a cosmopolitan city, has also probably influenced my cultural and social horizon from which I understand cultures and read texts.

As an Adventist, I have learnt to read the Bible from the perspective of faith, which means to acknowledge its spiritual and textual authority.[5] As a matter of fact, in my personal

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[3] Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" in *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann* (trans. Schubert M. Ogden; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961), 289.

[4] Bultmann, "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" 289. In this sense, it seems that Bultmann agrees with Martin Heidegger, who argues that interpreters approach texts bringing a pre-configured understanding to the process of interpretation, which "is never a *presuppositionless* apprehending of something presented to us" (emphasis supplied). See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 191-192.

[5] Frank M. Hasel, "Presuppositions in the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Understanding*

and academic life, I hold the Bible in high esteem.[6] This high appreciation of the Bible has not prevented me, however, from studying it from a critical perspective, especially when one considers the word *critical* as a synonym of *analysis* or *evaluation*,[7] namely, undertaking a "detailed examination of the elements or structure of something."[8]

The word *critical*, moreover, also entails the notion of *suspicion*, although in my opinion not necessarily with the meaning within ideological criticism.[9] In my view, the notion of *suspicion* expresses, for example, the idea of criticizing the *traditional* understanding that every text has had over the years. This implies that, although my Christian community and my cultural background have had an impact on my way of reading the Bible, on the other hand, their influence has to be measured critically. In this respect, I admit that one needs to be conscious of the importance of seeing how ideological perceptions may affect our understanding of the past. In this regard, I accept Fernando Segovia's opinion about the need to analyse ancient texts without the presuppositions of contemporary empires and historical colonialisms.[10] Indeed, in the process of my Ph.D. research, I have found a significant modern English cultural ethnocentrism in analysing negatively some (im)polite expressions or behaviours registered in the Gospels, just because in some contemporary English-speaking societies these are understood and judged in a negative way.[11] Many of these (im)polite expressions or behaviours,

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Scripture: An Adventist Approach (ed. George W. Reid; Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 27-46.
[6] This is also an adventist posture. See Peter M. van Bemmelen, "The Authority of Scripture," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach* (ed. George W. Reid; Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 75-89.
[7] Cf. David E. Aune, "Historical Criticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 101.
[8] S.v. *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.
[9] Cf. Tina Pippin, "Ideological Criticism, Liberation Criticism, and Womanist and Feminist Criticism," in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (NTTS 25; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 268.
[10] Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 125-126.
[11] E.g. Scott, "Matthew 15:21-28," 21-44.

nevertheless, can be decoded differently by other cultures and societies. My own interpretation, based on my personal ethnic background, can serve as an example of that. The same can be said about ancient societies, which can also present differences in comparison with modern cultures and values.

The purpose of this chapter is to make these distinctions clear, establishing how the concept of (im)politeness can be considered a modern social construct. In ascertaining such discrepancies, interpreters analyse ancient documents, decoding cultural institutions and values from texts. By using an adapted socio-rhetorical approach, I seek to decode the world encrypted in Matthew's Gospel, searching for phrases or expressions regarding Jesus' (im)politess. By doing so, rather than emphasizing the horizon of the contemporary reader, I prefer to focus my attention on the possible reader localized around the first-century. So, I examine how Jesus' (im)politeness operates in Matthew's narrative and reconstruct in what manner Jesus' (im)polite expressions or words function in other ancient texts as well as how these were decoded or understood by ancient readers. It is my contention that by comparing Jesus' (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel with other ancient documents, one could envisage how ancient readers could have understood those (im)polite expressions contained in the text. These assumptions are significant for this study, which will be developed in depth throughout this chapter.

1.2. Methodology

Socio-rhetorical criticism brings together into a combined approach several methodologies, which have the purpose of interpreting the text from different perspectives.[12] In methodological terms, socio-rhetorical criticism is a textually-based method,[13] which engages

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[12] Vernon K. Robbins, "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation," in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 192.
[13] Vernon K. Robbins, "Socio-Rhetorical Criticism: Mary, Elizabeth and the Magnificat as a Test

with the text "as though it were a thickly textured tapestry,"[14] allowing "the characters, actions

and episodes in a text" to function "as mirrors that reflect back and forth on one another."[15]

Using this approach, the interpreter assesses several textures such as *inner texture*, *intertexture*,

social and cultural texture, *ideological texture* and *sacred texture*.[16]

      Because my investigation is related to literary and socio-historic analysis, I have chosen

to focus on *inner texture*, *intertexture*, and *social and cultural texture* in order to examine the

topic of (im)politeness in the Gospel of Matthew. In what follows, I explain each of these

textures in order to establish my proposed methodological approach to my topic.

1.2.1. Inner texture: The text and the reader

     Inner texture refers to linguistic features such as repetitions, progression, opening, closure,

analogies and the use of narrative and communicative patterns between people,[17] which may help

the interpreter to read and listen to the ways "the text uses the words."[18] Focusing on *inner*

texture the reader is able to examine narrative images using narrative criticism,[19] which

approaches texts from a text-oriented perspective, analysing them synchronically.[20] Narrative

criticism focuses on two aspects of the narrative: story and discourse.[21] The first describes the

way in which the *settings*, the *events* and the *characters* of the story operate together in the

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Case," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (JSNTSup 109; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 164.

[14] Robbins, *Exploring*, 2.

[15] Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 18.

[16] Robbins, *Exploring*, 2-3.

[17] Robbins, "Divine Dialogue," 131.

[18] Robbins, *Exploring*, 7.

[19] Vernon K. Robbins, "The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 309-312.

[20] Petri Merenlahti and Raimo Hakola, "Reconceiving Narrative Criticism," in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (JSNTSup 184; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), 18.

[21] Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1999), 20-21.

development of the plot. The second refers to the study of the rhetorical devices within the story, showing in which manner the story is told.[22]

Analysing the story in this way involves assuming a communicative process between the author and the reader. In narrative criticism, however, neither author nor readers are flesh-and-blood individuals, but are inferred from the text itself.[23] The author, who is called implied author, uses a narrator to tell the story, and this narrator guides readers in the narrative.[24] In this communicative process, readers search for narrative strategies in the text, which can help them to understand the implied author's intention.[25]

The implied reader is also seen as a hypothetical concept, which is also presupposed in the narrative itself.[26] In narrative criticism, the reader "is the one in whom the intention of the text achieves its realization,"[27] assuming that he or she should know everything that the story presupposes to be known, eliminating "everything that the text does not assume the reader knows."[28] In this regard, I presuppose the existence of a first-century *informed* reader/hearer able to understand ancient texts as well as historical aspects of the story as this reader is encoded into the Matthean text.[29]

In consequence, *inner texture* will assist me in examining the literary role that (im)politeness could have in the Matthean world in which (im)polite words occur, opening up

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[22] Mark Allan Powell, "Literary Approaches and the Gospel of Matthew," in *Methods for Matthew* (MBI; ed. Mark Allan Powell; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47.
[23] Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), 147-151.
[24] Marguerat and Bourquin, *Read Bible Stories*, 10.
[25] Ibid., 15.
[26] Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 19-21.
[27] Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Reflections on 'the Reader' of Matthew's Gospel," *NTS* 34 (1988): 456.
[28] Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 20.
[29] Mark Allan Powell, "Expected and Unexpected Readings of Matthew: What the Reader Knows," *AsTJ* 48 (1993): 31-51. Cf. Margaret Hannan, *The Nature and Demands of the Sovereign Rule of God in the Gospel of Matthew* (LNTS 308; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 16-17.

the possibility of analysing the implied reader encoded in the text and the socio-cultural world in which s/he is located, as well as examining the encoded meaning that these (im)polite words could have had in the social world in which these were listened to or read.

1.2.2. Intertexture: Ancient texts and the reader

Intertexture refers to the interaction of the text with other texts as well as materials,[30] such as institutions, events and objects, for instance.[31] Using this approach, the interpreter could explore cultural, social and historical features encoded in the text[32] as well as the way in which language in a text relates to the language of other texts.[33]

Considering that (im)politeness is a research object in linguistic pragmatics, I am also complementing this texture using a historical pragmatic methodology. As *intertexture*, historical pragmatics, which is a combination between historical linguistic and pragmatics,[34] "focuses on language use in past contexts and examines how meaning is made."[35] It can be divided into two main approaches: pragmaphilology and diachronic pragmatics.[36] Pragmaphilology is a synchronic study, which examines "pragmatic aspects of historical texts in their sociocultural context,"[37] focusing on one specific stage of the language.[38] In this sense, a pragmaphilological approach focuses on the ways in which words and phrases can be understood in their historical,

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[30] Robbins, "Divine Dialogue," 133.
[31] David B. Gowler, "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Textures of a Text and Its Reception," *JSNT* 33 (2010): 195.
[32] Robbins, *Exploring*, 58-68.
[33] See Vernon K. Robbins, "Oral, Rhetorical, and Literary Cultures: A Response," *Semeia* 65 (1994): 82-88.
[34] Andreas H. Jucker, "Historical Pragmatics," *Lang Linguist Compass* 2 (2008): 894.
[35] Irma Taavitsainen and Susan Fitzmaurice, "Historical Pragmatics: What it is and How to Do it," in *Methods in Historical Pragmatics* (TIEL 52; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 13.
[36] Andreas Jacobs and Andreas H. Jucker, "The Historical Perspective in Pragmatics," in *Historical Pragmatics* (P&BNS 35; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), 4.
[37] Andreas H. Jucker, "Historical Pragmatics," in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (ed. Keith Brown; Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 330.
[38] See Irma Taavitsainen and Andreas H. Jucker, "Trends and Developments in Historical Pragmatics," in *Historical Pragmatics* (Handbooks of Pragmatics 8; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 12; and Jacobs and Jucker, "The Historical Perspective in Pragmatics," 11-13.

ideological, material and textual contexts.[39] Diachronic pragmatics, on the other hand, analyses

the historical process of language, examining and comparing the changing meaning of words

across time.[40]

Because my intention is to analyse the theme of (im)politeness in a particular time, I will

use a pragmaphilological approach, which implies a synchronic and literary methodological

perspective. In terms of (im)polite studies, Dániel Kádár and Jonathan Culpeper have published

an edited book using this approach, in which the topic of (im)politeness is analysed from a

historical perspective.[41] According to them, a "way to explore (im)politeness in texts is the so-

called 'corpus method', that is, the reconstruction of (im)polite behaviour through the

comparison of several corpora." [42] These *corpora* imply the existence and analysis of ancient

documents, which in the case of the present study involves texts written in a *Hellenistic world

language*.[43] These texts include Greco-Roman Hellenistic and Post-Hellenistic writings, Jewish

Greek literature and New Testament documents. Moreover, I will limit my study to the period

from the fourth-century B.C.E through the first-century C.E.[44] Although sometimes I handle

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[39] Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice, " Trends and Developments in Historical Pragmatics," 22.
[40] Jacobs and Jucker, "The Historical Perspective in Pragmatics," 13; and Jucker, "Historical Pragmatics," 330.
[41] Dániel Z. Kádár and Jonathan Culpeper, "Historical (Im)Politeness: An Introduction," in *Historical (Im)politeness* (Ling Insights 65; Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 13.
[42] Ibid., 19.
[43] According to Adolf Deissmann, "Hellenistic Greek with Special Consideration of the Greek Bible," in *The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays* (JSNTSup 60; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 39-43, the *Hellenistic world language* is a better and more precise definition than Koine Greek, dating it between 300 B.C.E and 500/600 C.E.
[44] Considering that the Hellenistic period is commonly dated between 323 B.C.E to 31 C.E. [Andrew Erskine, "From Alexander to Augustus," in *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (ed. James J. Clauss and Martine Cuypers; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 17-29], I asssume 323 B.C.E. as a starting point of my analysis, but also I include first-century C.E. post-hellenistic documents. The reason why the first-century C.E. is the *terminus ad quem* of my analysis is due to Matthew's Gospel being written around this date. However, having in mind that it is almost impossible to know when exactly some documents were written, I also examine Greek writings composed by authors whose death is dated to around 120 C.E., such as Plutarch or Strabo, for example; or pseudepigraphal Jewish texts whose dating goes no further than 120 C.E. Moreover, in view of the fact that, as Francisco Rodríguez Adrados seems to suggest, Atticism can be

these ancient documents independently, in general I treated them as just *one corpus*, omitting any distinctions among them, such as Jewish writings and non-Jewish writings, for example.

One important consideration about pragmaphilology is that it does not expect to "draw conclusions about the everyday language of the period in question, but rather about the way in which authors chose to represent it."[45] In this manner, rather than claiming to know in which way people *used* a determined expression, pragmaphilology seeks to understand in which manner specific terms *functioned* in literary objects.

In this regard, a study of *intertexture*, along with pragmaphilology, will help me to explore in what form (im)polite expressions are encoded and may have operated in Matthew's Gospel and other Greco-Roman Hellenistic and Jewish Greek writings.

1.2.3. Social and cultural texture: A reading model

The *social and cultural texture* turns scholarly attention to three specific aspects that find echoes or leave traces in a narrative text, namely, social response to the world, social systems and institutions, and cultural alliances and conflicts.[46] The reader engages societies and cultures existent in the world as they are represented or encoded in the text.[47] In this sense, socio-rhetorical criticism establishes a bridge between social-scientific and literary criticism, analysing

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considered a new stage of literary Koine [or, as mentioned, *Hellenistic world language*]. See , Francisco Rodríguez Adrados, *A History of the Greek Language: From its Origins to the Present* (trans. Francisca Rojas del Canto; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 196-202. Taking into consideration that my work deals with words and no grammar, I also include in my pragphamilological analysis some first-century C.E. Atticists, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for instance. Finally, it is my contention that the Hellenistic world language, as presented in New Testament documents, which includes Matthew's Gospel, shares sometimes similar vocabulary, which will be seen in the next chapters.
[45] See Pakkala-Weckström, "Chaucer," in *Historical Pragmatics* (Handbooks of Pragmatics 8; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 220. Cf. Andreas H. Jucker, "Slanders, Slurs and Insults on the Road to Canterbury: Forms of Verbal Aggression in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales," in *Placing Middle English in Context* (TIEL 35; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 369-370.
[46] Robbins, "Divine Dialogue," 138.
[47] Gowler, "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation," 195.

texts "written in the context of the first-century Mediterranean world," through a tentative image of the Mediterranean world.[48]

In order to establish this *tentative image*, socio-scientific criticism uses anthropological and sociological models to represent the social world in which the biblical narrative is located.[49] Using this method, socio-scientific criticism argues that the interpreter is able to evaluate the text from ancient social and cultural assumptions, such as honour and shame, for example,[50] decolonizing the text from North American and European interpretations.[51]

One of the strengths of socio-scientific criticism is precisely its sensitivity to socio-cultural and historical differences.[52] In my opinion, it is evident that ancient cultures differ from the way that modern societies understand values or institutions. The notion of *honour and shame* is an example of this. According to Bruce Malina, *honour* is understood as "the value of a person in his or her own eyes," and "in the eyes of his or her social group,"[53] which in turn, can be ascribed or acquired.[54] *Shame*, on the other hand, involves losing that value, becoming a shameless and dishonoured social person.[55] The ascribing, acquiring or losing of that value is played out in a challenge-riposte context.

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[48] Vernon K. Robbins, "Social-Scientific Criticism and Literary Studies: Prospects for Cooperation in Biblical Interpretation," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (ed. Philip Francis Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 277.
[49] Jerome H. Neyrey, "Social-Scientific Criticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 180-189.
[50] See, for example, Richard Rohrbaugh, "Honor: Core Value in the Biblical World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament* (ed. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris; London: Routledge, 2010), 109-125.
[51] Robbins, *Exploring*, 75-76.
[52] This is one of the main presupossitions of the method. See John Elliott, *Social Scientific Criticism of the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1995), 37-40.
[53] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (rev. and enl. ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001), 30.
[54] Ibid., 32-33.
[55] Rohrbaugh, "Honor," 113-115.

It is clear that in terms of understanding Jesus' (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel the function of honour and shame, as a cultural framework, is significant. The problem, however, is that the social scientific perspective on these values has serious limitations. Louis Joy Lawrence has summarised them very well, criticising the methodology's understanding of culture as a static entity, as well as its less than adequate attention to the diversity within the anthropological models she identifies.[56] Nevertheless, even though Lawrence may be right in her assessments,[57] it is also true that the notions of honour (Matt 15:4, 6, 8; 19:19; 27:9) and dishonour (13:57) are clearly represented in the Matthean text. The problem may be in labelling the concept *honour/shame* as the pivotal, namely, exclusive value of the first-century Mediterranean world.[58] In other words, the notion honour/shame is important; but, as F. Gerald Downing correctly affirms, it is only dominant or pivotal, when "it is clearly shown to be."[59]

In this respect, Jerome Neyrey, who examines the function of honour and shame as key categories in Matthew's Gospel makes a significant contribution.[60] However, even though his work is valuable, its main limitation is that he assumes, as was mentioned above, a deterministic, uniform and abstract way of reading cultures.[61] In view of this, two aspects must be underlined. First, what is important in determining the function of honour and shame codes in the text is to

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[56] Louise Joy Lawrence, *An Ethnography of the Gospel of Matthew: A Critical Assessment of the Use of the Honour and Shame Model in New Testament Studies* (WUNT 165; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 22-36. Cf. Michael Herzfeld, "Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems," *Man, New Series* 15 (1980): 339-351.

[57] See a defense of the model of honour and shame in Zeba Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," *JBL* 128 (2009): 591-612. Cf. David G. Horrell, "Introduction: Social-Scientific Interpretation of the New Testament: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (ed. David G. Horrell; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 7-12.

[58] As socio-scientific criticism claims. See, for example, Malina, *The New Testament World*, 27-57; and Rohrbaugh, "Honor," 109-125.

[59] F. Gerald Downing, "'Honor' among Exegetes," *CBQ* 61 (1999): 55.

[60] Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998), 35-68.

[61] Cf. Lawrence, *Ethnography*, 19-21.

follow Downing's suggestion and to examine what is encoded in the text regarding such features.[62] Second, considering that (im)politeness is a research object in linguistic pragmatics, it is important to establish a sociolinguistic model for reading Jesus' (im)politeness in texts, respecting cultural and historic barriers. The first point can be undertaken by using an *inner textural* and *intertextural* approach. In relation to the second, however, I need to turn to an exploration of how to incorporate a study of (im)politeness from a sociolinguistic perspective.

2. (Im)politeness from a theoretical viewpoint

Richard Watts,[63] among others,[64] claims that it is necessary to differentiate between first-order politeness and second-order politeness in order to understand the term properly. In the following I discuss and make evident the importance of distinguishing between the two when engaging with the topic from the viewpoint of interpreters.

2.1. First-order politeness

First-order politeness is the everyday notion of the concept. In other words, it is the way that common people interpret it, defining the term in relation to cultural and social contexts in which this is communicated. According to Gabriele Kasper, first-order politeness is the "empirical input to politeness theories."[65] This means that the object of study is precisely the way in which politeness is commonly used and understood by native speakers of any language.[66]

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[62] See a similar approach in David A. DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 18-19.
[63] Richard J. Watts, *Politeness* (Key Topics in Sociolinguistics; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.
[64] See, for example, Richard J. Watts et al., "Introduction," in *Politeness in Language: Studies in Its History, Theory, and Practice* (ed. Richard J. Watts et al.; rev. and enl. ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 3; and Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, 30-35.
[65] Gabriele Kasper, "Politeness," in *Handbook of Pragmatics* (ed. Jef Verschueren et al.; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003), 2.
[66] Andreas H. Jucker, "Politeness in the History of English," in *English Historical Linguistics 2006: Selected Papers from the Fourteenth International Conference on English Historical*

In English, for example, a common-sense notion of the term is given by *The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, which defines polite as "behaving in a way that is socially correct and shows understanding of and care for other people's feelings."[67] In a similar way, English synonyms for the word polite involve concepts such as courtesy, refinement, culture and civility.[68] On the other hand, the word 'impolite' can be described in opposite terms, represented by the words rude,[69] bad mannered,[70] discourteous, ill mannered and indelicate.[71] Accordingly, the English meaning of (im)politeness may be understood in relation to social conduct, respect and consideration.

The problem of defining politeness from an English perspective, however, is that one measures other cultures and societies from an English first-order meaning, ignoring the fact that the English term 'polite' is a social and historical construct. Etymologically, it derives from the Latin *politus*, which in turn comes from the word *polio*, meaning, "polish" or "smooth."[72] Around the 17th century, the English term referred to a person "of refined courteous manners,"[73] linking politeness with the social behaviour of high society people.[74] According to Norbert Elias, it was probably in the feudal world of the Middle Ages where the term 'polite' acquired the meaning postulated in the 17th century. In his opinion, in the high Middle Ages, members of the court began to communicate with each other according to their social values, designating codes

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Linguistics (ICEHL 14), Bergamo, 21-25 August 2006 (Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science: Series IV, CILT 2; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008), 6.
[67] S.v. *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.
[68] S.v. *Webster's New World Roget's A-Z Thesaurus*.
[69] S.v. *The Oxford American Dictionary and Language Guide*; and C*ambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.
[70] S.v. *The Oxford American Dictionary and Language Guide*.
[71] S.v. *Webster's New World Roget's A-Z Thesaurus*.
[72] See Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1966), 1210; and s.v. *A Dictionary of the Latin Language*.
[73] S.v. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*.
[74] Rosina Marquez-Reiter, *Linguistic Politeness in Britain and Uruguay a Contrastive Study of Requests and Apologies* (P&BNS 83; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000), 1-2.

of behaviour in order to differentiate themselves from those who were not associated with them.[75] Thus, acting as a member of the "court" s/he may be described as a "courteous" person,[76] namely, those "having courtly bearing or manners."[77] In France, however, the French term *courtoisie* was later reshaped by the Latinate notion of civility, namely, the Western 'manners,'[78] reaching the upper class around the 17th century[79] and establishing a contrast between civilization (good manners) and the barbarous (ill manners).[80] In this reshaping the upper classes were not only involved in developing social manners but also concerned "with a civilized society in which the consideration that one person owes to another becomes crucially important in order to maintain and balance" the social power structure.[81]

Accordingly, as Félix-Brasdefer has argued, English politeness contributes to creating a "hierarchical and elitist social structure in which social differences were enforced."[82] Therefore, historically speaking, it has been used to underline social differences and express respect for others.[83] From this viewpoint, English politeness is a cultural and social creation, acquiring its common significance from a specific historical situation,[84] which transferred its meaning not

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[75] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 63. For a list of medieval manners, see 63-65, 84-99.
[76] See a similar origin for the Spanish word "cortesía" (courtesy) in Rosina Márquez-Reiter and María E. Placencia, *Spanish Pragmatics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 164-166.
[77] J. César. Félix-Brasdefer, *Politeness in Mexico and the United States: A Contrastive Study of the Realization and Perception of Refusals* (P&BNS 171; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008), 8.
[78] Elias, *The Civilizing Process,* 53.
[79] Ibid., 70.
[80] Ehlich, "On the Historicity of Politeness," 95.
[81] Marquez-Reiter, *Linguistic Politeness,* 2.
[82] Félix-Brasdefer, *Politeness,* 9.
[83] Félix-Brasdefer, *Politeness,* 9. Cf. Peter France, *Politeness and its Discontents: Problems in French Classical Culture* (Cambridge Studies in French 35; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4.
[84] Cf. Andreas H. Jucker, "'In Curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest' Politeness in Middle English," in *Historical (Im)politeness* (Ling Insights 65; Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 197.

only to French and English, but also to other European languages, such as Spanish,[85]

Portuguese,[86] German[87] and Italian.[88]

People from Western culture, for example, who mostly use the term (im)polite in the

sense of manners or etiquette,[89] may consider the Matthean Jesus as rude and ill mannered

because their contemporary social rules so indicate. In fact, as Wierzbick has pointed out, there

has been a significant ethnocentrism in analysing some non-English expressions as rude just

because in English they sound this way.[90] Sociolinguistic studies, however, suggest that there are

differences about the way that speakers from different language groups interpret verbal

conversations, refusals and compliments. This means that it is necessary to contextualize these

expressions from a linguistic and cultural perspective in order to understand what they mean.[91]

2.2. Second-order politeness

Second-order politeness is a technical expression, which seeks to establish a theoretical

understanding of the concept using a sociolinguistic approach. Thus, second-order politeness

approaches the term (im)politeness by pragmatic means, looking to establish a theoretical notion

of the theme. So, in order to understand theoretically first-order politeness, scholars have

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[85] Henk Haverkate, *La cortesía verbal: Estudio pragmalinguístico* (Biblioteca románica hispánica. Estudios y ensayos 386; Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1994), 11.
[86] Juliana França Macek, "Aspectos da Polidez Lingüística em *Sheng* - Língua Urbana de Nairóbi" (Mh.T. thesis., Universidade de São Paulo, 2007), 17-19.
[87] Dmitri Zakharine, "Die Ökonomie westeuropäischer Höflichkeit in ihren geographischen Grenzen," *Sprachreport* 1 (2003): 4.
[88] Aldo D. Scaglione, *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry & Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 253.
[89] See Watts, *Politeness*, 41-45.
[90] Wierbzbicka, "Different Cultures," 145-146.
[91] See some examples in Edmund A Ronowicz, "Aussies are Friendly and Poles aren't Rude: Some Remarks on Overcoming Problems in Intercultural Communication," *PSCL* 30 (1995): 31-44; A. Sophia S. Marmaridou, "Semantic and Pragmatic Parameters of Meaning: On the Interface Between Contrastive Text Analysis and the Production of Translated Texts," *JPrag* 11 (1987): 721-736; Jihyun Kwon, "Expressing Refusals in Korean and in American English," *Multilingua* 23 (2004): 339-364; Derrin Pinto, "Are Americans Insincere? Interactional Style and Politeness in Everyday America," *JPolR* 7 (2011): 215-238.

developed several linguistic approaches,[92] i.e., second-order politeness theories. The most

influential of these theories is commonly known as the *face-saving view*, which was developed

by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson who have extended Goffman's findings regarding the

notion of *face*.[93] As previously stated, the concept of *face* is understood in terms of public self-

image,[94] which is expressed in positive and negative terms. The *positive face* occurs when people

desire to be valued and recognised by others. The *negative face*, in turn, arises when people

want to act free from obligations.[95] In Brown and Levinson's opinion, people generally tend to

maintain each other's *face*, avoiding any conflict that could undermine their interaction.[96] In

order to explain this tendency, they also assume the notion of rationality, which means that each

person has "certain rational capacities," allowing them to act "judiciously" when they choose the

means to meet their objectives.[97]

Brown and Levinson claim that although *face* and *rationality* could differ from one

culture to another, both possess universal features.[98] These characteristics, according to them,

may be appreciated in what they call a *model person*,[99] who, theoretically, would desire to be

"unimpeded" and "approved of in certain respects."[100] They postulate that certain types of acts

threaten the *face* of the *model person*, in particular those acts "that by their nature run contrary to

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[92] According to Fraser, "Perspectives on Politeness," 219-236, politeness theories could be classified into four linguistic approaches: the "social norm" view, the "conversation maxim" view, the "face-saving" view and the "conversational contract" view.
[93] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 61; and Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour* (London: Allen Lane, 1972).
[94] Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 5.
[95] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 61-62.
[96] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 61. Cf. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 10-11, 15.
[97] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 64-65.
[98] In this case they also are following Goffman's ideas regarding universality. See Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 44-45. Cf. Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 62, 65.
[99] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 58-59.
[100] Ibid., 58.

the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker."[101] Establishing the way in which these

acts could affect people is an important element in this view. This is because the principle on

which Brown and Levinson organize their theory rests on the assumption that "some acts are

intrinsically threatening to face and thus require 'softening.'" Acts, such as requests, suggestions,

advice, refusals, pledges and orders, for example, portray a threat because the speaker would be

pressuring the addressee in order to attain a specific purpose.[102] On this basis, Brown and

Levinson propose some strategies to soften, in a polite manner, these acts based on linguistic

approaches, which in turn are determined by cultural and social variables related to the speaker

and hearer.[103]

    In Brown and Levinson's view, the meaning of politeness is based on avoidance of

conflict. The problem with Brown and Levinson's theory, to my mind, however, resides

precisely in this aspect, namely, in a negative evaluation of the act of discussion.[104] This premise,

in my view, is an ethnocentric perception.[105] A study by Deborah Schiffrin, for instance, shows

that some Jewish contemporary speakers use "arguments as a vehicle of sociability,"[106] which

instead of causing a rift between the speakers would create a proximity link between them.[107]

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[101] It is important to say that by *act* they include not just verbal communication but also non-verbal communication. See Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 65. In this case Brown and Levinson are assuming Grice's notion of a Cooperative Principle. See Márquez-Reiter and Placencia, *Spanish Pragmatics*, 154, who affirm that in the *face-saving view* polite strategies "are interpreted as rational deviations from" the Cooperative Principle. See also Grice, "Logic and Conversation," 41-58.
[102] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 65-68.
[103] Ibid., 68-83.
[104] Gabriele Kasper, "Linguistic Politeness: Current Research Issues," *JPrag* 14 (1990): 194-195.
[105] Watts et al., "Introduction," 9-10.
[106] Deborah Schiffrin, "Jewish Argument as Sociability," *LSoc* 13 (1984): 332.
[107] Schiffrin, "Jewish Argument as Sociability," 332-333. See also Alexandra Georgakopoulou, "Arguing About the Future: On Indirect Disagreements in Conversations," *JPrag* 33 (2001): 1897.

This may mean that, in certain cultural settings, people would favour discussions in order to engage in personal interactions.[108]

The *face-saving theory* has also been criticized for its claims of universality.[109] In contrast to Brown and Levinson's approach, Yoshiko Matsumoto argues that the Japanese notion of *face* is different from the European and American perception of the term, because in Japanese culture the concept is related to a group rather than individuals, which would acknowledge the interdependency that could exists between the speakers.[110] In fact, as she says, the "preservation of face in Japanese culture is intimately bound up with showing recognition of one's relative position in the communicative context and with the maintenance of the social ranking order."[111] Likewise, as some New Testament documents show, socio-scientific criticism claims that ancient people, in particular the Mediterranean culture, were strongly group-oriented,[112] not modern individualists;[113] therefore, this suggests that the ancient notion of *face* was probably different from our modern understanding of the term.

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[108] David A. Lee and Jennifer J. Peck, "Troubled Waters: Argument as Sociability Revisited," *LSoc* 24 (1995): 47.

[109] Watts et al., "Introduction," 9-10; Mayumi Usami, *Discourse Politeness in Japanese Conversation: Some Implications for a Universal Theory of Politeness* (Tokyo: Hituzi Syobô, 2002), 226.

[110] Yoshiko Matsumoto, "Reexamination of the Universality of Face: Politeness Phenomena in Japanese," *JPrag* 12 (1988): 405. Cf. Carl G. Hinze, "Chinese Politeness is not about 'Face: Evidence from the Business World," *JPolR* 8 (2012): 11-27; and Onuigbo Nwoye, "Linguistic Politeness and Socio-Cultural Variations of the Notion of Face," *JPrag* 18 (1992): 309-328.

[111] Matsumoto, "Reexamination," 415. However, Margaret Ukosakul argues that in Thai culture, also an Asian society, the evidence is different. She claims that for the Thai the notion of *face* is sometimes equated with ego. In order to "protect the face," they use politeness strategies, such as indirectness, avoidance of confrontation and criticism. See Margaret Ukosakul, "The Signifcance of 'Face' and Politeness in Social Interaction as Revealed Through Thai 'Face' Idioms," in *Broadening the Horizon of Linguistic Politeness* (P&BNS 139; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 117-125.

[112] Bruce J. Malina, "Collectivism in Mediterranean Culture," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament* (ed. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris; London: Routledge, 2010), 17-28.

[113] Neyrey, "Social-Scientific Criticism," 185.

A neglected aspect in Brown and Levinson's theory has been the establishing of an explicit model for the expression of impoliteness.[114] Jonathan Culpeper has endeavoured to fill this gap by analysing strategies designed to cause *social disruption*, such as using taboo words or derogatory nominations, among others.[115] In this sense, while Brown and Levinson have associated politeness with social harmony,[116] determining strategies to avoid conflicts,[117] Culpeper, on the other hand, suggests a confrontational framework in order to understand the concept.[118]

In terms of interpretation, generally speaking, Culpeper affirms that the meaning of impoliteness is related to specific circumstances, which will determine whether the speaker is or is not impolite.[119] In other words, the concept of (im)politeness could be relative, associated with existing cases in which impolite expressions are uttered with strategic purposes.[120] At the same time, these circumstances may also be connected to the hearer, who interprets as impolite specific expressions that originally did not carry such an intention.[121]

Although Culpeper's opinion regarding impoliteness has evolved over the years, in his definition there still remain the concepts discussed above.[122] Currently, however, he also argues

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[114] Márquez-Reiter and Placencia, *Spanish Pragmatics*, 156.

[115] Culpeper, "Towards an Anatomy of Impoliteness," *JPrag* 25 (1996): 350, 357-358.

[116] Cf. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, 82, who claims that politeness, is "to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place"; and Robin Tolmach Lakoff, "The Limits of Politeness: Therapeutic and Courtroom Discourse," *Multilingua* 8 (1989): 102, who affirms, "[p]oliteness can be defined as a means of minimizing confrontation in discourse..."

[117] Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 1. Cf. Robert T. Craig et al., "The Discourse of Requests," *Human Communication Research* 12 (1986): 437-468, who critic Brown and Levinson's polite strategies, proposing new ways of dealing with the concept.

[118] Culpeper, "Towards an Anatomy of Impoliteness," 355-358

[119] Ibid., 353-355

[120] Jonathan Culpeper et al., "Impoliteness Revisited: With Special Reference to Dynamic and Prosodic Aspects," *JPrag* 35 (2003): 1545-1579.

[121] Jonathan Culpeper, "Impoliteness and Entertainment in the Television Quiz Show: The Weakest Link," *JPolR* 1 (2005): 36-40.

[122] Jonathan Culpeper, *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 22-23.

that "an understanding of impoliteness does not depend on the recognition of intentions."[123] This

means that for Culpeper expressions or acts considered aggressive by the hearer do not

necessarily involve an *intentional* impolite action. In fact, many of them may be caused by

misunderstanding, social factors or even an unconscious act of the speaker.[124]

An important aspect in Culpeper's perspective is the influence that circumstances could

play in understanding impoliteness. In other words, the meaning of impoliteness may depend on

the situation.[125] Bruce Fraser and William Nolen are correct, in my opinion, when they assert,

"no sentence is inherently polite or impolite. We often take certain expressions to be impolite,

but it is not the expressions themselves but the conditions under which they are used that

determines the judgment of politeness."[126] From a literary viewpoint, it could be helpful to

examine the narrative context in which the impolite act is expressed as well as to consider the

literary purpose that it could have in a story, paying attention to the socio-historical

circumstances in which these were performed. A paper written by Susan Fitzmaurice, for

instance, is an example of this kind of analysis. Fitzmaurice, following Culpeper's approach,[127]

engages in a study of the meanings of politeness in eighteenth-century England, situating not

only the nature of impoliteness in a historical, social and generic context, but also exploring and

comparing eighteenth-century literary texts.[128]

Equally important in Culpeper's view is the role that the hearer has in interpreting

(im)politeness. As Gino Eelen claims, "there are two sides to (im)politeness: the production of

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[123] Ibid., 23.
[124] Ibid., 48-56.
[125] Culpeper, *Impoliteness*, 22; and Culpeper et al., "Impoliteness Revisited," 1549-1550.
[126] Bruce Fraser and William Nolen, "The Association of Deference With Linguistic Form," *IJSL* 27 (1981): 96.
[127] Susan Fitzmaurice, "Changes in the Meanings of Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England: Discourse Analysis and Historical Evidence," in *Historical (Im)politeness* (Ling Insights 65; Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 92.
[128] Ibid., 92-111.

behavior by a speaker and the evaluation of that behavior by a hearer. Both are essential and

indispensable elements of any notion of (im)politeness."[129] In the case of a literary text, it would

be important to understand the way in which (im)polite actions are interpreted by readers. In a

modern and diverse world, as was elaborated through all this chapter, the interpretation of

(im)politeness by readers/hearers vary across cultures. The same can be claimed for ancient

societies. To my mind, an understanding of second-order politeness is based on the assumption

that the concept of (im)politeness is culture-specific and should be understood in historic and

sociocultural terms. One of the challenges of this supposition is to create a methodological

bridge between contemporary and ancient readers. Socio-scientific criticism, as was mentioned,

seeks to establish that bridge using anthropological models in its evaluation and understanding of

ancient cultures. My proposal, however, is to examine the topic of (im)politeness in Matthew's

Gospel, a first-century C. E. document, using a synchronic historical sociopragmatic model of

reading.

　　　According to Culpeper, a historical sociopragmatic approach, unlike pragmaphilology, is

concerned "with any interaction between specific aspects of social context and particular

historical language use that leads to pragmatic meanings."[130] In other words, while

pragmaphilology seeks to understand in which manner specific terms *function* in literary

objects,[131] historical sociopragmatics, on the other hand, focuses on the use of the language in

socio-cultural situational contexts, exploring how these contexts "engender norms which

speakers engage or exploit for pragmatic purposes."[132] In other words, a historical

sociopragmatic approach seeks to construct and understand particular elements using socio-

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[129] Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, 96.
[130] Jonathan Culpeper, "Historical Sociopragmatics: An Introduction," in *Historical Sociopragmatics* (Benjamins Current Topics 31; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011), 4.
[131] Pakkala-Weckström, "Chaucer," 220; and Jucker, "Slanders," 369-370.
[132] Culpeper, "Historical Sociopragmatics: An Introduction," 4.

historic and literary lenses, looking not only to decipher the social context encrypted in the text

but also "deploy theoretical concepts by which that relationship can be treated."[133] A practical

example of this approach is given by Culpeper himself, who along with Elena Semino, analyses

the use of the verbs *curse* and *wish* in early modern English witchcraft narratives, arguing that an

appropriate study of these verbs must take into consideration the social and cultural context in

which they were uttered.[134]

A significant assumption regarding the way historical sociopragmatics engages and

understands contexts is that it presupposes that the reconstruction of these settings is made on the

basis of written documents.[135] In this regard, a historical sociopragmatic approach seeks to

decode social contexts as these are encoded in the socio-cultural texture of the text itself just as

socio-rhetorical criticism seeks to do.[136] As a matter of fact, a social and cultural texture analysis

of a text explores the way it interacts with society and culture, focusing on the dynamic between

the 'voices' of the narrator and the characters in texts. As Robbins claims, "[s]ocio-rhetorical

criticism views voice in text as the medium for the 'consciousness' or '[v]ision' of the characters

and the narrator, who are 'concretizations drawn from a represented world'."[137] These voices, in

my view, can be explored in detail by paying attention to the way phrases and words interact in

documents. A task of this kind is perfectly done by historical sociopragmatic, which focuses on

semantic and sociocultural context specifically as well as "the relationship between language and

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[133] Ibid., 3. Historical sociopragmatics can be either diachronic or synchronic (see Ibid., 3-4).
Because my purpose is to analyse Jesus' (im)politeness in a specific point of time, I am using it
as a synchronic tool for reading Matthew's Gospel. The same strategy is used when I engage
with ancient data.
[134] Jonathan Culpeper and Elena Semino, "Constructing Witches and Spells: Speech Acts and
Activity Types in Early Modern England," *JHPrag* 1 (2000): 97-116.
[135] Culpeper, "Historical Sociopragmatics: An Introduction," 4.
[136] Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 33-36
[137] Ibid., 34.

its situational context."[138] Such decoding seeks to lead to an understanding of how specific acts, phrases or actions, for example, were understood and functioned in the time when the text was produced. These given points, to my mind, suggest a complementary function to socio-rhetorical criticism, which will help me in exploring Jesus' (im)politeness in Matthew's story.

This kind of approach also serves to differentiate modern readings from ancient readings. Johanna Wood, for instance, examines the letter of a noble woman from a fifteenth-century standpoint,[139] affirming, for example, that while "from a modern perspective the closing phrase, 'no more at this time' might be considered abrupt, impolite and indicative of a breakdown in communications, from the fifteenth-century point of view it is formulaic and unremarkable."[140] In this manner, by using a historical sociopragmatic approach, the interpreter of a topic such as Jesus' (im)politeness, for example, can engage with a text such as Matthew's Gospel and explore the topic of (im)politeness from the text itself, envisaging how these actions operated in other texts and were understood in the first-century. This corpus, moreover, can also include Roman texts, focusing on topics rather than specific words. My intention in the following chapters is to carry out that task.

In summary, in order to understand Jesus' (im)politeness from a first-century perspective, I am using a historical sociopragmatic approach, which is a complement of pragmaphilology.[141] In this sense, I am following Culpeper's model of reading (im)politeness, which implies examining situational, historic, cultural and social barriers. Using literary and socio-historic

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[138] Jonathan Culpeper, "Historical Sociopragmatics," in *Historical Pragmatics* (Handbooks of Pragmatics 8; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 77.
[139] Johanna Wood, "Structures and Expectations: A Systematic Analysis of Margaret Paston's Formulaic and Expressive Language," in *Historical Sociopragmatics* (Benjamins Current Topics 31; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011), 9-36.
[140] Ibid., 33.
[141] See Culpeper, "Historical Sociopragmatics: An Introduction," 3, who explains that historical sociopragmatics fits pragmaphilology in the sense of historical analysis of languages in texts.

linguistic strategies I intend to examine ancient documents, respecting ancient and sociocultural differences.

3. The term (im)politeness in this research

As the above discussion suggests, the interpretation of (im)politeness is based on cultural assumptions.[142] It means that its effect for those who are hearing or reading the Gospel of Matthew is related to social and historical presuppositions. In this sense, judging if Jesus was impolite or polite should not be grounded in contemporary understandings, specifically Western interpretation. In fact, the term must be understood as culture-specific, which implies that some actions classified as impolite or violent in Western society may not have the same negative and ideological meaning in other cultures.

In this sense, the term (im)politeness is a social construct, which, when examining ancient documents, should be studied as contextually socio-cultural and as a literary construct in order to understand its social and narrative purpose. It suggests that (im)politeness should not be judged in moral or ethical terms, as commonly (post)modern English society does, but in light of its own narrative and ancient cultural background.[143] As a matter of fact judging some expressions as (im)polite can be an anachronistic and ethnocentric appraisal. Consequently, my reading of Matthew's Gospel is based on the assumption that the first-century reader may have had a different notion about first-order (im)politeness than our own first-order notion of the term. It is my contention, that an analysis of the socio-cultural texture of the text encodes those elements, evoking the first century reading of the text.

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[142] I am not arguing against the universality of the concept of (im)politeness, but about the way that it is cross culturally interpreted. In fact, it seems that (im)politeness is universal, but some "aspects of politeness are strongly culture-bound." See Stadler, "Multimodal (Im)Politeness," 32.
[143] Cf. Kádár and Culpeper, "Historical (Im)Politeness: An Introduction," 17-19.

Nevertheless, in order to analyse in what manner a reader from the first-century could have understood (im)politeness in texts, it is necessary to determine in what way I understand (im)politeness. In other words, I need a modern strategic starting point from which I can establish what (im)polite terms, expressions and gestures deserve to be studied. As stated before, I am not suggesting a moral interpretation of (im)politeness, but a comparative literary reading of (im)polite expressions as these are shared by ancient documents and the Gospel of Matthew. Taking the above into consideration, I define (im)politeness not in the sense of social manners, but specifically in the sense of severe language, disrespect and mockery, among other modern Western views of verbal disruption. Moreover, in my analysis, I make a distinction between profane and offensive words. I understand the first term as a vulgar and dirty expression, while the second as a disturbing and hostile word, which, however, does not convey an indecent message. This latter point will be established as my pragmaphilological analysis takes place. Therefore, in my study, I only engage with *verbal* (im)politeness, leaving out other (im)polite actions that could be present in the Matthean text.

4. Summary

In summary, my intention is to read Jesus' *verbal* (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel using an adapted socio-rhetoric approach. This method considers several textures from which the interpreter can examine a text, such as *inner texture*, *intertexture* and *social and cultural texture*. An *inner texture* analysis of the text will assist me in studying the narrative function of Jesus' *verbal* (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel, not only giving me the chance of exploring the implied reader and the social-cultural world encoded in the text, but also of examining the encoded meaning that (im)polite speeches could have had in in the social world encoded in Matthew's story.

An *intextural* analysis of the Matthean text will help me to examine the way (im)polite words and phrases interact with other written texts, allowing me to explore cultural, social and historical aspects presented in Matthew's story. I complement my *intextural analysis* with pragmaphilology, a synchronic historical pragmatic methodology, which seeks to understand the manner in which specific terms *functioned* in literary objects, focusing on the ways these are understood in historical, ideological and textual contexts.

A *social and cultural textural* analysis of Matthew's story will aid me in understanding social and cultural differences represented or encoded in the text, creating a tentative image of the Greco-Roman world of the first-century C.E. In order to represent the social world in which the biblical narrative is situated, socio-rhetorical criticism uses socio-scientific anthropological and sociological models. To my mind, socio-scientific notions of values, such as honour and shame, for example, are valid to the extent these arise from the text itself. Therefore, I am using an honour and shame context only when the Matthean text itself provides such a framework.

Nonetheless, instead of using a socio-scientific model in my analysis of Jesus' *verbal* (im)politeness, I use a historical sociopragmatic approach, which is a complement of pragmaphilology. A historical sociopragmatic approach seeks to reconstruct cultural and social contexts from texts, in order to understand how readers in the period when the text was produced understood (im)polite speech. Because I assert that the interpretation of the concept of (im)politeness is culture-specific, which should be understood in historic and sociocultural terms, I am following Culpeper's model of reading (im)politeness, respecting ancient and sociocultural distinctions. In subsequent chapters I will implement these concepts in my analysis of Jesus' (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel.

CHAPTER 3

YOU HYPOCRITES! BEING (IM)POLITE WITH SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

Matt 23 is fertile soil for (im)polite terms and expressions. Phrases such as *brood of vipers* (Matt 23:33) and *whitewashed tombs* (23:27) are just two examples of Jesus' diatribes against the scribes and Pharisees (23:13-36). In this chapter, I analyse Matt 23 in light of a challenge-riposte context,[1] dividing it into two parts. In doing so, I seek to unlock the socio-rhetorical world encrypted in Matthew's story. First, using a narrative approach, I engage with Jesus' criticism of the scribes and Pharisees, examining what is true honour in Jesus' view. Second, I narratively study Jesus' woes against the scribes and Pharisees applying a pragmaphilological approach, in which I consider in what form certain words and phrases operate in Matthew's Gospel and other Hellenistic texts.

1. Narrative analysis: True and false honour in Jesus' view

Matt 23 can be divided into three narrative portions: (1) Matt 23:1-4; (2) Matt 23:5-12; (3) Matt 23:13-36. In each, Jesus speaks about the Scribes and Pharisees, intensifying his tone until it reaches a verbal and (im)polite climax. In the following discussion, I examine each of these portions narratively, paving the way for a pragmaphilological analysis of Jesus' words.

1.1 Do not do what they do

Jerusalem is the general spatial setting where Jesus' speech against the scribes and Pharisees occurs in Matt 23 (cf. 21:1, 10). However, he utters it somewhere in the temple (cf. 21:23; 24:1).[2] The allusion to the temple is important. Jesus' first activity after entering

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[1] Cf. Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 141.

[2] In narrative terms, Jesus enters the temple in Matt 21:23, engaging immediately in a discussion

Jerusalem is in the temple (21:12), in which he engages in his first argument with some religious leaders in Jerusalem (21:15-17), serving as a starting point for what will happen later in Matt 23. As a matter of fact, since Jesus' entry into Jerusalem several challenge-riposte contests between him and different groups are held in the temple. These will intensify as the narrative goes on (e.g. 21:15-17; 21:23-27; 22:15-46).[3] As the reader sees, Jesus firstly uses parables to talk against them (21:45-46), employing symbolic stories and characters as instruments of rebuke (cf. 21:28-22:14).[4] This strategy will, however, change in Matt 23, in which Jesus openly faces the scribes and Pharisees. This operates as the climax of Jesus' and the religious leaders' challenge-riposte.[5]

Before Matt 23, the scribes and Pharisees appear in partnership in at least two scenes (12:38; and 15:1). In each scene both groups are portrayed in clear opposition to Jesus (12:38; 15:1), working as Jesus' enemies. The first time, however, that the scribes and Pharisees are mentioned together is in the Sermon on the Mount. There, Jesus challenges his audience to exceed the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη; 5:20) of the scribes and Pharisees. The noun righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), used in Matthew's Gospel seven times, evokes a right conduct before God (3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32),[6] anticipating Jesus' discussion about the scribes' and Pharisees' comportment in Matt 23 (23:2-7). Indeed, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns his audience

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with the chief priests and the elders. The only narrative indication that Jesus leaves the temple is 24:1, which may suggest that the content of Matt 23 is also uttered in the temple courts.

[3] In literary terms, Jesus' first discussion with the religious leaders occurs in Matt 9 (9:1-8). This initial conflict, however, is not, as Kingsbury proposes, "acutely confrontational," but only preliminary. In chapter 12, on the other hand, such confrontation increases in intensity, suggesting a conflict that "is beyond reconciliation" [See Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story," *Int* 46 (1992): 349-354]. In Matt 21:15-17 the conflict continues its course, but it is in Matt 23, clearly, in which it reaches its maximum expression.

[4] Cf. Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21.28-22.14* (SNTSMS 127; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 98-130.

[5] Leif E. Vaage, "The Woes in Q (and Matthew and Luke): Deciphering the Rhetoric of Criticism," (SBLSP 27; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 603.

[6] According to Benno Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought* (SNTSMS 41; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 120, δικαιοσύνη "is used consistently by Matthew to refer to God's demand upon man to live according to a specific norm, the law." Cf. Robert G. Bratcher, "'Righteousness' in Matthew," *BT* 40 (1989): 228-335.

to be careful of practicing their righteousness "before others in order to be seen by them" (6:1; cf. 6:2-19), an idea that is repeated and employed again against the scribes and Pharisees in Matt 23, who, as will be mentioned, only want to capture people's attention (23:2-7).

The reason why the Matthean Jesus only refers to the scribes and Pharisees in Matt 23, omitting other religious leaders, is not easy to ascertain. In literary terms, some argue that in Matthew's Gospel the religious groups, including the scribes and Pharisees, are portrayed in such a way that they operate as "a monolithic front opposed to Jesus," functioning as a single character in the narrative.[7] Accordingly, by mentioning the scribes and Pharisees in Matt 23 together, Jesus alludes to the whole group of his opponents, using the scribes and Pharisees as an example.[8] To my mind, however, perhaps by denouncing the scribes and Pharisees in Matt 23, Jesus contrasts their righteousness with the righteousness that his audience must have (3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32), exemplifying his point by using the same group of religious leaders given in the Sermon on the Mount (5:20). If that were the case, Jesus juxtaposes these two kinds of righteousness, expressing the outcome of one and another in terms of honour, and providing not only practical examples that illustrate why the actions of the scribes and Pharisees are wrong but also showing in what way they have a false honour.

However, despite the subsequent negative assessment shown above, Jesus' speech in Matt 23, initially addressing the crowds and his disciples (23:1), starts with a very positive view of the scribes and Pharisees.[9] The scribes and Pharisees, says Jesus, sit on Moses' seat, "therefore do and observe what they tell you" (23:2-3 NJB). For the reader, the allusion to

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[7] E.g. Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 58.
[8] David E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (NovTSup 52; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 41-46. Cf. Richard A. Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 79, who argues that the mention of the scribes and Pharisees "is a rhetorical device intended to instruct the followers by describing the opponents, the antitype of the disciple."
[9] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28* (WBC Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 657, 659.

Moses is an important feature in introducing such a favourable view. It is Moses who appears, along with Elijah, in Jesus' transfiguration (17:3, 4). His name, besides this case, is always mentioned in contexts of authority, for instance, when Jesus orders the man healed of leprosy to go to the priest and offer the gift commanded by Moses (8:1-4).[10]

According to Jesus, sitting on Moses' seat implies doing and observing whatever the scribes and Pharisees say (εἴπωσιν).[11] In Matthew's story, the verb λέγω (say), which is always employed to convey information and express ideas or opinions, is also usually used to quote the Hebrew Bible (e.g. 1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18; 3:3; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:14-15; 15:7-9; 21:4-5; 27:9-10). Therefore, having this in mind, the scribes' and Pharisees' authority may be based on the fact that they quote what Moses says.[12] That is, for Jesus, the source of their authority rests on Moses, not in them.

What emerges from the above is that Moses' seat in Matthew's story is a way of addressing metaphorically the scribes' and Pharisees' authority and social position, which

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[10] Indeed, in Matthew's Gospel, Moses is repeatedly quoted as an authority by several characters, a position that Jesus never questions (8:4; 19:7, 8; 22:24).

[11] Although there is some evidence of the existence of literal seats, made of stone, or receptacles for the Torah scroll in some synagogues [e.g. Kenneth G. C. Newport, "A Note on the 'Seat of Moses' (Matthew 23:2)," *AUSS* 28 (1990): 53-58; and L. Y. Rahmani, "Stone Synagogue Chairs: Their Identification, Use and Significance," *IEJ* 40 (1990): 192-214], it is still not clear if such a piece of furniture was present when Matthew's Gospel was written [Benedict Viviano, "Social World and Community Leadership: The Case of Matthew 23:1-12,34," *JSNT* (1990): 11]. In any case, although it may be possible to understand the phrase in a literal way, it seems to me that the "seat of Moses" of Matt 23:3 is also a metaphor [Cecil Roth, "The 'Chair of Moses' and its Survivals," *PEQ* 81 (1949): 110-111]. In my view, there are similar symbols in Matt 23, such as, for example, the "heavy burdens" (23:4) or the seats of honour (πρωτοκαθεδρίας) in the synagogues (23:6), which may suggest a metaphoric understanding of Moses' seat [cf. I. Renov, "The Seat of Moses," *IEJ* 5 (1955): 262-267].

[12] See Mark Allan Powell, "Do and Keep what Moses Says (Matthew 23:2-7)," *JBL* 114 (1995): 431-432; and Greg Alan Camp, "Woe to You, Hypocrites! Law and Leaders in the Gospel of Matthew" (Ph.D diss, University of Sheffield, 2002), 202. Some English versions (cf. NRSV) erroneously translate the verb λέγω as 'teaching' in Matt 23:3. Although in Matthew the verb διδάσκω (to teach) appears more than once, this is never used in Matt 23 (see 4:23; 5:2, 19; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 15:9; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55; 28:15, 20). This distinction, as Powell argues, eliminates the contradiction between Matt 23:2-3 and Matt 23:16-24 in which Jesus denounces the scribes' and Pharisees' teaching of oaths and tithe. In other words, Jesus is not saying that they have to obey what they teach. Jesus is against the scribes' and Pharisees' interpretation, criticizing not what Moses says, but what they say about Moses' writings.

explains why the crowds and Jesus' disciples have to do and observe what they tell them (23:1-3).[13] By doing so, Jesus publicly recognizes the scribes' and Pharisees' acquired honour, situating them in a position of respect. This privileged location, however, is immediately questioned by Jesus, who adds, "but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them" (2:3 NASB); a phrase that he will explain in the second narrative portion.

1.2. To be seen by people

Although the Matthean Jesus acknowledges the scribes and Pharisees' honour, which is based on Moses' authority, at the same time he also sees a problem with their praxis (23:4), arguing that what they do is only done to be seen by others (23:5). In Jesus' view, in order to get people's attention, the scribes and Pharisees perform several social interactions. These interactions, as the reader is informed, are made on the basis of the scribes' and Pharisees' desire to be honoured and respected by people (23:6-7). They love (φιλοῦσιν),[14] for instance,[15] to have the first seats (πρωτοκλισίαν; πρωτοκαθεδρίας) at special meals and in the synagogues as well as to be greeted in the marketplaces (ἀγοραῖς) and to be called rabbi (23:7), a title of deference in Matthew's story (e.g. 26:25, 49). The mention of different spatial settings, such as synagogues

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[13] Cf. Powell, "Do and Keep what Moses Says," 431-432.

[14] The verb φιλέω which, in the way that is used here, implies having a special interest in someone or something (cf. 6:5; 10:37 [BDAG, 1056]), controls the three nouns given by the Matthean Jesus in Matt 23:6-7. So, the scribes and Pharisees not only love (φιλοῦσιν) to have the first seats at banquets, but also they *love* the first seats in the synagogues and greetings in marketplaces (23:6-7). Likewise, it may be possible that the verb φιλέω also controls the verb καλέω, which appears as an infinitive together with the noun rabbi (23:7). So, the scribes and Pharisees also *love* to be called (καλεῖσθαι) rabbi by people (23:7).

[15] The scribes and Pharisees also, says Jesus, "widen [πλατύνουσιν] their phylacteries and lengthen [μεγαλύνουσιν] their tassels" (23:5, NAB). Even though the meaning of the term phylactery is not easy to grasp [see part of the discussion in J. Bowman, "Phylacteries," in *Texte und Untersuchungen 73* (SE I; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), 523-538; and J. H. Tigay, "On the Term Phylacteries (Matt 23: 5)," *HTR* 72 (1979): 45-53], one can see that the scribes and Pharisees enlarge something that produces a clear effect in those who look at them. Likewise, in lengthening their fringes, there is a clear indication that they want to draw attention to themselves, using their garments as an excuse. So, by mentioning both examples, the Matthean Jesus illustrates in what way the scribes and Pharisees seek to attract the attention of others.

and marketplaces, shows not only how much the scribes and Pharisees love to be admired and respected by people in public, but also suggests that this kind of honour is only related to social recognition.[16]

Jesus, however, argues against this type of acquired honour, advising a different attitude for his listeners. Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, for example, who love to be called rabbi by people (23:7),[17] Jesus commands that they not to be addressed in this way. The motive, he says, is because (γάρ) his listeners have one teacher (διδάσκαλος), and they are all brothers (ἀδελφοί; 23:8). Matthew's Gospel employs ἀδελφός (brother) in two specific ways. On the one hand, it refers to biological brothers (1:2, 11; 4:18, 21; 10:2, 21; 12:46-48; 13:55; 14:3; 17:1; 19:29; 20:24; 22:24-25; 25:40). On the other hand, it is utilized in terms of community showing in what way members of this social group should treat each other (5:22–24, 47; 7:3–5; 12: 49-50; 18:15, 21, 35; 28:10). So, by saying, "you are all brothers" (23:8 NJB), rather than emphasizing social differences, the Matthean Jesus accentuates an equal treatment among his followers.[18] So, for

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[16] Both the words συναγωγή and ἀγορά describe public places in which people can openly be seen and acknowledged. In Matthew's story the word συναγωγή refers to a place where people can meet (6:2; 12:9) to learn (4:23; 9:35; 13:54), pray (6:5) and even be punished (10:17; 23:34). Likewise, the term ἀγορά also evokes a public space in Matthew's Gospel, in which children can play (11:16-17) and idlers or workers can sit (20:3), while they are waiting for a job (20:1-4). Cf. BDAG, 14, 963. Likewise, the term δεῖπνον, which the NRSV translates as *banquets* (23:6), alludes to "the main meal of the day," which is quite formal and generally elaborate [see LSJ, 375; BDAG, 215], suggesting a public and social recognition of those who are invited.

[17] Solomon Zeitlin asserts that the term rabbi is anachronistic in the Gospels [Solomon Zeitlin, "Beginnings of Christianity and Judaism," *JQR* 27 (1937): 392-393; S. Z[eitlin], "[Is the Title "Rabbi" Anachronistic in the Gospels?]: A Reply," *JQR* 53 (1963): 345-349; S. Zeitlin, "The Title Rabbi in the Gospels is Anachronistic," *JQR* 59 (1968): 158-160], which, in regard to my study, suggests that the term rabbi would not be understood as an honourable title in the first century C.E. In my view, his arguments are based on later literature, as Hershel Shanks has rightly argued, leaving aside the literary testimony of the Gospels themselves (Matt 23:7-8; 26:25, 49; Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; John 1:38, 49; 3:2, 26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). See Hershel Shanks, "Is the Title" Rabbi" Anachronistic in the Gospels?," *JQR* 53 (1963): 337-345; and Hershel Shanks, "Origins of the Title Rabbi´," *JQR* 59 (1968): 152-157.

[18] Néstor O. Míguez, "Continuidad y ruptura: Confrontación y conflicto. Elementos para una aproximación socio-política a Mateo 23-24," *RevistB* 48 (1986): 159.

the reader, there is a contrast between the arrogance shown by the scribes and Pharisees and the humility that Jesus' audience should have.[19]

In this regard, the Matthean Jesus asserts that honour is not based on public recognition. On the contrary, it is grounded in equality in status and service.[20] "The greatest among you," Jesus claims, "will be your servant [διάκονος]" (23:11). In other words, honour is achieved by serving, not being served. It is not obtained by occupying a privileged position in a social or religious event, as an expression of power, but by becoming a helper (23:11),[21] because, as Jesus claims, "whoever humbles himself shall be exalted" (23:12, NASB).

1.3. Jesus' woes against the scribes and Pharisees

The previous two narrative portions give a rationale for what comes after. While in the first twelve verses of Matt 23 Jesus refers to the scribes and Pharisees in the third person (23:1-12), from v. 13, however, Jesus turns to address the scribes and Pharisees directly, sharpening even more the tone of his accusations (23:13-36).[22] Jesus hones his denunciation by

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[19] Robert S. Barbour, "Uncomfortable Words VIII: Status and Titles," *ExpTim* 82 (1971): 138. The same can be said of two other titles mentioned by Jesus in Matt 23 (23:9-10). Even though it is not easy to determine the meaning of the word 'father' in the context of Matt 23 [e.g. John T. Townsend, "Matthew XXIII. 9," *JTS* 12 (1961): 56-59; and K. Kohler, "Abba, Father. Title of Spiritual Leader and Saint," *JQR* 13 (1901): 567-580], the reader can see a marked social distinction between being called brother (23:8) or father (23:9). In the same manner, although the interpretation of the term καθηγητής is also not clear [Bruce Winter, "The Messiah as the Tutor: The Meaning of Καθηγητής in Matthew 23:10," *TynBul* 42 (1991): 152-157], the existence of just one καθηγητής implies again a social difference, in which those who are called in that way are in a superior status to others (23:10). Jesus' negative evaluation seems to be against showing pride regarding titles or status, despising those who have none. Cf. Wendell Stephen Reilly, "Exegetical Notes: Titles in Mt. 23:8-12," *CBQ* 1 (1939): 250.

[20] Cf. Claudette Marquet, "Ne Vous Faites Pas Appeler Maître (Matthieu 23, 8-12)," *Christus* 30 (1983): 95-96; and Otto Knoch, "'Ihr Sollt Niemand Auf Erden Euren Vater Nennen' (Mt 23,9): Biblische Überlegungen Zu Eigenart Und Rechtem Vollzug Des Bischofs- Und Priesteramtes," in *"Diener in Eurer Mitte." Festschrift für Dr. Antonius Hofmann, Bischof von Passau zum 75. Geburtstag* (Passau: Passavia Universitätsverlag, 1984), 56-58.

[21] Míguez, "Continuidad y ruptura: Confrontación y conflicto," 159; Camp, "Woe to You, Hypocrites!," 219-220.

[22] Although some scholars claim that from v. 33 or 34 the Matthean Jesus starts a new topic or concludes the seven οὐαί [e.g. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg,

pronouncing seven woes against them (23:13-16, 23, 25, 27, 29),[23] each one accompanied by

different epithets and labels. The interjection *woe* (οὐαὶ) in itself operates as an adversative

literary marker, which not only introduces each one of Jesus' seven accusations, but also draws

the readers' attention, showing how shameful the scribes and Pharisees' conduct, speech and

teachings are.[24] They just want people's attention, neglecting what really matters.

In terms of content, the first six woes of Matt 23 can be arranged in three pairs of two (2-

2-2), which are united around similar ideas, concepts and purpose (23:13-28).[25] Such

arrangement, however, does not leave out the last woe (23:29-36), which although independent,

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2005), 92-93; and Hare, *Matthew*, 271-273], in my opinion such an argument is not very
convincing. In fact, there are several word connections between vv. 29-32 and vv. 33-36, such
as prophets (23:29-31, 34), righteous (23:29, 35), blood (23:30, 35) and the verb 'to murder'
(29:31, 35), which allows us to consider the unity of these verses in only one pericope. On the
other hand, because from v. 37 the Matthean Jesus refers to Jerusalem, changing the recipients of
his diatribe, I consider, as many scholars do, that here ends the last οὐαί of Matt 23 [e.g. Charles
H. Talbert, *Matthew* (PCNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 258; and Mary Kelly, "The Woes
against the Scribes and Pharisees," *SIDIC* 10 (1977): 17-22].

[23] In some Greek manuscripts there is another verse usually placed between v. 12 and v. 15
["woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a
pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation" (23:14, KJV)],
which seems to be an interpolation derived from Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47 [See NA[28] and
UBS[4]]. Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (3d ed. Stuttgart:
United Bible Societies, 2000), 50, gives two arguments for its exclusion: (1) Its absence from
the Alexandrian and the Western texts; and (2)"the fact that the witnesses that include the
passage have it in different places." Although textual evidence favours its exclusion, as many
Matthean scholars do [e.g. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 930, 933; and France, *The Gospel of
Matthew*, 865], there are also arguments for its possible authenticity [see J. M. Ross, "Some
Unnoticed Points in the Text of the New Testament," *NovT* 25 (1983): 62; and J.M. Ross,
"Floating Words: Their Significance for Textual Criticism," *NTS* 38 (1992): 154. Cf. J. Duncan
M. Derrett, "'Eating Up the Houses of Widows': Jesus's Comment on Lawyers?" *NovT* (1972):
2]. However, because such discussion is beyond the scope of my work, I follow the main
stream, leaving it aside.

[24] According to K. C. Hanson, the interjection *woe* can be translated in three possible ways: (1)
"O how shameful are those who…" (2) "Shame on…" or (3) "How disreputable are those
who…" See K. C. Hanson,"How Honorable! How Shameful! A Cultural Analysis of Matthew's
Makarisms and Reproaches," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 96-97.

[25] Although some Matthean scholars support this division [e.g. Davies and Allison, *Critical and
Exegetical Commentary*, 3:282-283; and Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 231] others have opted for
a different structure [e.g. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 932; and H. J. B. Combrink, "Shame
on the Hypocritical Leaders in the Church: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of the Reproaches
in Matthew 23," in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (eds. David B.
Gowler et al.; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 6-7]. To my mind, a division of
three pairs of two and one final woe (2-2-2-1) is based on internal clues, such as repetitions of
words and similar themes.

functions as Jesus' strongest final accusation, working as the highpoint of Matt 23.[26] In each, Jesus uses several images, mixing them up with (im)polite words and expressions. Jesus attacks, for example, the scribes' and Pharisees' emphasis on the outside, reiterating what he says about their love of being seen by people (e.g. 23:25-36). Likewise, he also attacks the scribes' and Pharisees' interpretation of religious matters, denouncing the mistakes in their teaching (e.g. 23:13-24).

A pragmaphilological analysis will reveal in what way Jesus' (im)polite words and phrases function as a way of shaming enemies in the encrypted world of Matthew's Gospel. Before doing that, however, it is important to recognise the presence of other (im)polite challenge-riposte contests in Matthew. Although mentioned in passing at the beginning of this section, there are several instances in Matthew's story in which the Matthean Jesus attacks his enemies (e.g. 21:15-17; 21:23-27; 22:15-46). This characteristic, however, cannot only be applied to the Matthean Jesus. The Pharisees, for instance, accuse Jesus of driving out demons by the prince of demons (12:24) and question Jesus' authority in front of a crowd (22:23-27). In fact, Jesus' words in Matt 23 can be seen as a reaction to a monolithic group of enemies which from the beginning attack Jesus employing (im)polite words and phrases against him (9:3, 10-11; 12:22-24; 16:1) and his disciples (e.g. 12:1-14; 15:1-2).

In summary, in Matt 23 the Matthean Jesus initially contrasts false and true honour by giving several examples, using the scribes and Pharisees as models. First, the scribes and Pharisees acquired honour is based on Moses' authority, which in turn is based on Moses' instructions (23:2-3). The Matthean Jesus, however, sees a problem with their practice of what they say (23:4), affirming that the scribes and Pharisees' deeds are done only to impress others (23:5). As Jesus affirms in Matt 23:11-12, the superlative adjective *greatest* must be understood

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[26] Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 665; and France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 868.

in terms of service, implying that true honour is achieved by serving others. In essence, the scribes and Pharisees are more interested in gaining people's attention and being respected rather than in showing a humble and sincere practical expression of service, and therefore, doing what Moses says. Jesus therefore prepares his audience for what comes, establishing from the beginning what is false honour among the scribes and Pharisees, and describing what true honour is in his view. For Jesus, such distinction is important, because, as we will see, the scribes' and Pharisees' wrong conception of honour brings negative consequences to people's lives. That is why Jesus strengthens and multiplies his accusations, changing radically the tone and directness of his words by pronouncing seven woes.

2. Pragmaphilological analysis: Shame on the scribes and Pharisees

My intention in what follows is to examine every pair of Jesus' woes as a single unit, including the last one, using a pragmaphilological approach. However, since the word ὑποκριτής is repeated in six of these seven woes (23:13–16, 23, 25, 27, 29), I discuss it separately. The result of that analysis is used in determining in what way the term ὑποκριτής operates in those woes in which it is mentioned, framing their narrative purpose.

2.1. The term ὑποκριτής

In Hellenistic writings, the word ὑποκριτής generally describes a person who recites a text, namely an actor.[27] There are some cases, however, in which it also designates those who

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[27] Strabo, *Geogr*. 11.14.12; Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.24.19; 4.1.165; 4.7.13; *Ench*. 17.1; Plutarch, *Lys*. 23.4; 26.4; *Crass*. 33.3; *Ages*. 21.4; *Demetr*. 44.9; *Alc*. 32.2; *Alex*. 10.2; 29.3; *Dem*. 1.2; 7.1; 22.5; *Adul. amic*. 50 E 10; *[Apoph. lac.]* 212 F 3; *Quaest. plat*. 1009 E 1; *Quast. conv*. 623 B 2; *Suav. viv*. 1096 B 7; *[Vit. X orat.]* 844 F 4; 845 A 7; 848 B 6, 9; 849 B 5; *De laude* 545 F 2; *An seni* 758 A 3; 797 D 9; *Alex. fort*. 337 D 11; *Praec. ger. rei publ*. 799 A 3; 801 E 7; 813 F 1; *Comp. Arist. Men. compend*. 854 C 5; *Glor. Ath*. 348 E 7; *Fac*. 941 A 1; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 14.109.2; 15.7.2; 16.55.3. Philo, *Prob*. 1.141; and *Let. Aris*. 219

perform an unreal role in life with the purpose of obtaining a specific benefit[28] or pretending

something falsely, such as in one of Plutarch's works, for example, in which he describes some

specific kind of people as detestable, "… pretenders [ὑποκριταὶ] of friendship, without a vestige

of honest speech, flatterers of the rich but despisers of the poor…" (Plutarch, *[Lib. ed.]* 13 B 8).

Mirroring a similar negative tone, some Hellenistic texts use the word ὑποκριτής in contexts of

deception, wrong deeds, betraying and dishonesty,[29] which clearly illustrates that it occasionally

displays more than one meaning,[30] in some cases negative, in particular when it assumes a

figurative role.

In Matthew's Gospel, however, the word ὑποκριτής is mainly used in negative terms. It

always evokes adverse images in Matthew's story,[31] presenting different angles and purposes,

such as false or wrong pretence behaviour (6:1-2, 5, 16; 22:18),[32] presumption of self-

righteousness,[33] inconsistency (7:5),[34] self-deception (6:1-2, 5, 16; 7:5),[35] and functioning also as

an allusion to wicked people in general (24:51).[36] Of special interest is Matt 15 in which Jesus

calls the scribes and Pharisees ὑποκριταὶ for the first time (15:7). According to Jesus, the scribes

and Pharisees are ὑποκριταὶ because they nullify the word of God in order to honour (τιμήσει)

their tradition (15:6). Rather God commands that one support and honour (τίμα) father and

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[28] For example, according to Plutarch, Cicero "induced Antonius, like a hired actor, to play the second role to him in defence of their country" (Plutarch, *Cic.* 12.4). In the same way, Plutarch informs, "Scipio's detractors said that he was the actor, but his friend Laelius the real author of his deeds" (Plutarch, *Praec. ger. rei publ.* 806 A 4). Cf. Plutarch, *Glor. Ath.* 345 E 8.

[29] E.g. Job 34:30; 36:13; Josephus, *J.W.* 2.586; Mark 7:6; and Luke 6:42; 12:56; 13:15.

[30] See Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23*, 91-123.

[31] Cf. Ulrich Wilckens, "ὑποκριτής," *TDNT* 8:566-568.

[32] Cf. J. Barr, "The Hebrew/Aramaic Background of 'Hypocrisy' in the Gospels," in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes. Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (JSOTSup 100; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 322-323.

[33] Stephen Gregory Price, "The Accusation of Hypocrisy in Matthew's Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1985), 120-139.

[34] Howard Marshall, "Who is a Hypocrite?," *BSac* 159 (2002): 137,

[35] Dan O. Via, *Self-Deception and Wholeness in Paul and Matthew* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 92-97.

[36] Marshall, "Who is a Hypocrite?," 142.

mother (15:4), but the scribes and Pharisees instruct people to give everything to God, leaving father and mother without honour (15:1-7). Citing the Hebrew Bible, Jesus affirms that the scribes and Pharisees are ὑποκριταὶ (15:7), because they honour (τιμα) God only with their lips, but their hearts are far from him, "teaching human precepts as doctrines" (15:8-9; cf. Isa 29:13).

Taking the above into consideration, in Matt 15 the term ὑποκριτής operates in two ways, revealing the scribes' and Pharisees' false honour. First, it is used as a form of exposing the scribes' and Pharisees' inauthentic pretensions to honour God, when in reality they do the opposite. Second, in their doing the opposite, the term shows the scribes' and Pharisees' teachings as inconsistent.[37] Such contradiction is based on their wrong views, because instead of emphasizing God's commandment, they highlight human tradition in place of God's instruction.[38]

In summary, from a pragmaphilological viewpoint the designation ὑποκριτής, when it is used in a figurative sense, displays mostly antithetical images, which, as will be observed, are repeated and expanded in Matt 23. So, by calling the scribes and Pharisees ὑποκριταί in Matt 23, Jesus establishes from the beginning the scribes' and Pharisees' teachings as characterized by inconsistency, presumption of self-righteousness and false pretences to honour God.

2.2. First pair: υἱὸν γεέννης

The first pair of woes focuses on the impact of the scribes' and Pharisees' actions on others (23:13-15).[39] First, Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of shutting up "the kingdom of heaven in people's faces" (23:13, NJB). They do not go in,[40] Jesus says, "and when others are

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[37] Cf. Ibid., 136.
[38] Cf. Price, "The Accusation of Hypocrisy," 142
[39] Talbert, *Matthew*, 258.
[40] The scribes' and Pharisees' exclusion is tacitly prefigured in Matt 5:20 in which the Matthean Jesus claims "unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never

going in," they stop them (23:15). Although the meaning of the kingdom of heaven is not easy to grasp, its positive presence is unmistakable (e.g. 5:3, 10; 8:11).[41] For that reason, for the reader, locking people out of the kingdom of heaven, as the scribes and Pharisees do, is seen adversely.

Secondly, the scribes' and Pharisees' actions affect other peoples' lives negatively. According to Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees cross sea and land to make a single proselyte (προσήλυτον), making the new proselyte twice as much a υἱὸν γεέννης as they themselves (23:15). So, while first the scribes and Pharisees prevent people from entering into the kingdom of heaven (23:13), here they make those they bring in υἱὸν γεέννης (23:15), a designation that even though it is not clear in meaning, evokes antagonistic images.

Two reasons explain such an antagonistic portrait. First, in Matthew's Gospel, the noun υἱός (son) is employed twice to describe antithetical characters (8:12; 13:38).[42] In like manner, in Matt 23 the noun υἱός, as referred to in the phrase υἱὸν γεέννης (23:15), can also be comprehended in an adversative sense. Second, the mention of the term γέεννα, along with υἱός, is significant in this negative understanding. From a pragmaphilological stance, every time that

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enter the kingdom of heaven." The reason for their exclusion may be given in Matt 7:21, in which Jesus claims, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."

[41] Although the meaning of the expression "kingdom of heaven" is not easy to understand, one can see its importance when Jesus talks about the possibility that people can be left out of it (5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23). So, the scribes and Pharisees do something that according to Jesus is cause for exclusion.

[42] In Matt 8:12, unlike those who eat with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (8:11), the children of the kingdom (υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας), are "thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." A similar negative approach is given in Matt 13:38, in which the children of the evil one (υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ), represented by the weeds of the parable of the same name (13:24-30), are thrown "into the furnace of fire," where there will be also "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (13:40-42).

the word γέεννα appears before Matt 23, it is employed in contexts of mutilation (5:29, 30; 18:19), destruction (10:28) and judgment (5:22).[43]

In the fourth book of *The Sibylline Oracles* the term γέεννα, as in Matthew's story, also has a negative connotation. There, the word appears in a context of judgment and punishment,[44] where God, after having raised humans from ashes, will preside in judgment over the world (*Sib. Or.* 4:176-191). "All that sinned in godlessness," *The Sibylline Oracle* reports, "over them shall earth be heaped to cover them, dark spaces of Tartarus and Stygian recesses of Gehenna" (4:186 [Bate]). As we can see, γέεννα here functions as a metaphor of castigation and rejection, in which sinners, unlike the pious who will live on earth again with God's favour (4:187-190), seem to be covered by mounds of earth (4:186).[45]

Likewise, though the term γέεννα does not appear extensively in Hellenistic literature, it does feature in three New Testament documents, displaying in all of them a similar adversative function (Mark 9:43-47; Luke 12:5; Jas 3:6).[46] James 3:6 deserves special mention in that the implied author talks in a figurative way about the negative influence of the tongue (Jas 3:3-12). "The tongue is a fire," says James, a "world of iniquity [ἀδικίας]," which stains [σπιλοῦσα] the whole body, setting "on fire the cycle of nature" (3:6). Though the tongue is small, James continues, "it boasts of great exploits" (3:5), describing it as "a restless evil [κακόν], full of

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[43] See also Matt 23:33, in which γέεννα is also used in a context of judgment. Besides, twice the Matthean Jesus links the term γέεννα to fire (5:22; 18:19), configuring a metaphoric place, into which people can also be thrown (5:29; 18:19; cf. 5:30). In all of these cases, the term generates unpleasant meanings.

[44] Cf. Chaim Milikowsky, "Which Gehenna? Retribution and Eschatology in the Synoptic Gospels and in Early Jewish Texts," *NTS* 34 (1988): 239

[45] In a similar vein, in *4 Ezra*, γέεννα also functions in a context of judgment (*4 Ezra* 7:26-44). However, because we have a Latin version of the book, γέεννα appears Latinised as *gehenna*, which, in the text, seems to be in parallel with a *place of torment* (mentioned in the same verse), operating in contrast to the *paradise of delight*, which in turn also seems to be in parallel with a *place of rest* (7:36). So, in *4 Ezra*, although the term γέεννα appears Latinised, it displays a hostile meaning, as the Matthean text does, also evoking images of rejection and judgment.

[46] See similar ideas regarding the term γέεννα in Matt 5:29-30; 18:8; cf. Mark 9:43-47; Matt 10:28; cf. Luke 12:5.

deadly poison" (3:8). What is interesting is that in v. 6 James traces the source from which the

tongue gets its negative fire. According to him, the harmful power of the tongue is set by the

γέεννα (3:6). In other words, the γέεννα is the origin from which all those evil things come.[47]

So, in James it is also possible to see an antagonistic function of γέεννα, especially considering

how James links the term to unfavourable words, such as evil [κακός], iniquity [ἀδικία] and the

verb to stain [σπιλόω], which, as mentioned, originated in the γέεννα.

In light of these associations, the phrase υἱὸν γεέννης (Matt 23:15) could be interpreted as

a shameful nickname, evoking an unpleasant and unflattering meaning. So, the saying involves

being an offspring of not only several antagonistic outcomes, such as punishment, rejection,

judgment, mutilation and destruction, but also a source of evil things, such as iniquity, deadly

poison and evil. In Matthew's Gospel one can appreciate a similar idea (5:22, 29-30; 10:28;

18:9; 23:33). The difference, perhaps, is that in Matthew γέεννα does not work as a source of

evil, as in James, but instead as a recipient of sin (5:29-30; cf. 18:9).[48] In any case, at least in a

metaphoric way, γέεννα is still a container of negative elements in the encrypted world of

Matthew's Gospel, operating as symbol of malicious and bad things.

Such negative meaning is overemphasised by the Matthean Jesus himself, by saying that

the new proselyte is made twofold more υἱὸν γεέννης than the scribes and Pharisees (23:15). In

doing so, Jesus pursues two things. First, Jesus' denunciation seeks to shame the scribes and

Pharisees using the phrase υἱὸν γεέννης ironically. Although the new proselyte is called υἱὸν

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[47] Some authors argue that in James 3:6 γέεννα is a symbol of the devil [e.g. Martin Dibelius and Heinrich Greeven, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 198; and Ralph P. Martin, *James* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1988), 116.] Although such interpretation is interesting, I cannot see the devil's presence, as literary character, in James' pericope.
[48] For example, "if your right eye causes you to sin," says Jesus, "tear it out and throw it away," because is better to lose one member than the whole body to be thrown into γέεννα (Matt 5:29; emphasis supplied). A similar approach characterizes Mark 9:43-47; and Luke 12:5.

γεέννης, the real υἱὸν γεέννης, as the reader knows, is the scribe and Pharisee. Jesus is quite clear about this point, charging the scribes and Pharisees with making the new convert twice as much υἱὸν γεέννης as *themselves* (23:15). So, bearing in mind that the phrase υἱὸν γεέννης evokes only negative meanings, which, as was mentioned, can be related to evil and bad things, Jesus is quite ironic in naming them in this way. In Matthew's story the scribes and Pharisees are depicted as concerned with righteousness (5:20), purity (15:1-20) and religious tradition and principles (12:1-8; 15:1-11). So, by implicitly naming them υἱὸν γεέννης, Jesus ironically states the opposite, namely, that they are a source of unrighteousness, impurity and human traditions. To put it more precisely, in Jesus' opinion, the scribes and Pharisees are not good people, as they presume to be (cf. 23:1-12), but sons of evil, sin and corruption.

Secondly, by saying that the new convert is twofold more υἱὸν γεέννης than the scribes and Pharisees (23:15), Jesus also denounces the negative effect of the scribes' and Pharisees' teachings over the new proselyte, highlighting in what way that influence is immensely worse than their own condemnation.[49] So, in Jesus' view, the scribes' and Pharisees' actions impact negatively in other people's lives, making them doubly more miserable than themselves. This is not the only time that Jesus denounces them with a similar charge in Matt 23.[50] In the first twelve verses of this chapter, the scribes and Pharisees are accused of tying up "heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay[ing] them on the shoulders of others;" but they do not lift even a finger to move them (23:4). In Matt 23:15, however, Jesus is sharper in his accusation, naming them in a way that is clearly (im)polite in the encoded world of Matthew's story. Therefore, by saying

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[49] The scribes and Pharisees' condemnation is underlined in Matt 23:33 in which Jesus asks them how they will escape being sentenced to γεέννης. It seems that in Matt 23:33 the Matthean Jesus uses the term γέεννα as a symbolic way of describing an adverse finale.
[50] Before Matt 23, there is at least one example in which the scribes and Pharisees, as a specific group, impact negatively on other people's lives. In Matt 15, parents are left without support, because of human traditions taught by the scribes and Pharisees (15:1-9).

υἱὸν γεέννης, Jesus dishonours, ridicules and censures the scribes and Pharisees, denouncing in a significant way their harmful influence.

In summary, the scribes and Pharisees are ὑποκριταί because they not only dishonour God, locking people out from the kingdom of heaven, but also show inconsistency in their proselytism, winning people, but making them even more disgraceful than themselves.[51] In both cases they contradict Jesus, whose ministry is an invitation to be part of the kingdom of heaven (e.g. 4:17; 5:3, 10, 19–20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 13:24, 31, 33, 44–45, 47), a summons that generates constructive and encouraging meanings (e.g. 5:10, 19-20), quite different to becoming a υἱὸν γεέννης (23:15). So, Jesus' accusation operates as a way of denouncing such shameful behaviour and such inconsistency, taking away in public their acquired honour and evangelistic reputation. As the reader will know, however, in comparative terms, this first pair of οὐαὶ is quite moderate compared to those that follow.

2.3. Second pair: μωροὶ and τυφλοί

The second pair of woes concentrates on the scribes' and Pharisees' blindness regarding oaths and tithes (23:16-24).[52] First, the scribes and Pharisees are blind guides because of what they say about taking oaths (23:16-22). According to the Matthean Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees affirm that whoever swears by the sanctuary or the altar means nothing (23:16, 18), but anybody who swears by the gold of the sanctuary or by the gift on the altar such a person is bound by the oath (23:16, 18). In both cases Jesus calls them *blind ones* [τυφλοὶ], explaining with a question the mistake of their rationale (23:17, 19). First, they contradict Jesus' teaching

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[51] Marshall, "Who is a Hypocrite?," 140.
[52] Talbert, *Matthew*, 258. The Matthean Jesus unites both οὐαὶ by mentioning the phrase blind guides (23:16, 19, 24) and by emphasising concepts of greatness and importance (23:17, 19, 23). According to Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 3:282, the phrase ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ (blind guides) forms an *inclusio* between both woes (23:16, 24), shaping them in just one pair.

regarding oaths (5:33-37).[53] Second, the scribes' and Pharisees' logic is misleading, for whoever

swears by the altar or the sanctuary swears in fact by everything that these two elements

represent (23:20-22).[54] So, they are *blind guides* (ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοί) because they focus on details,

such as the gift on the altar, instead of concentrating on the altar that sanctifies the gift (23:18-

19).[55]

Second, Jesus denounces the scribes' and Pharisees' tithing of mint, dill and cumin,

neglecting the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice, mercy and faith (23:23). In Jesus'

opinion, the reader/hearer should do these without omitting the others (23:23). Here again Jesus

calls them *blind guides*, accusing them of straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel (23:24).

The phrase or joke "strain out a gnat but swallow a camel" illustrates, in an ironic way, the

scribes' and Pharisees' emphasis just on the little things, neglecting the more important ones.[56]

So, by calling them *blind guides* (23:24), Jesus not only shows their incapacity to see what is

most significant but also their negligence in leading people into what really matters.[57]

The phrase *blind guides* also appears in Matt 15, providing the reader with another clue

regarding the way that this operates in Matthew's story. In Matt 15 the scribes and Pharisees ask

Jesus why his disciples do not wash their hands before eating, breaking the tradition of the elders

(15:1-2). Jesus' final response, that is preceded by a quotation from the Hebrew Bible, which

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[53] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 70-72, 231.

[54] Jacques Schlosser, "Des choses sacrées au Dieu vivant (Mt 23,16-22)," in *In Salz der Erde - Licht der Welt: Exegetische Studien zum Matthdusevangelium: Festschrift für Anton Vbgtle zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Lorenz Oberlinner and Peter Fiedler; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991), 294.

[55] In narrative terms, it seems that in Matthew's Gospel the term altar (θυσιαστήριον), which is used by Jesus as a spatial element in several passages (5:23-24; 23:35), represents something very important. In the Sermon on the Mount, for example, Jesus advises his audience to leave their gift before the altar if they remember that a person has something against them. Only after having done that, can he or she go and offer the gift at the altar. (5:23-24).

[56] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Receptacles and Tombs (Mt 23:24-30)," *ZNW* 77 (1986): 259.

[57] Marcello Del Verme, "I 'guai' di Matteo e Luca e le decime dei Farisei (Mt. 23,23; Lc. 11,42)," *RivB* 32 (1984): 296.

Jesus uses to accuse the scribes and Pharisees of teaching human precepts (Matt 15:7-9; Isa 29:13), considers as a mistake the rationale of the question. According to Jesus, eating with unwashed hands does not defile a person, because "it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles" (Matt 15:11; cf. 15:17-20). What is significant for the reader is that here, as in Matt 23, Jesus also calls the Pharisees *blind guides* (15:14).[58] They are *blind guides*, Jesus says, because they are leading other blind ones (15:14),[59] adding, "if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit" (15:14). By saying this, it seems that the Matthean Jesus associates blindness with religious illiteracy, ineptness or misinterpretation, regarding practical matters. Furthermore, by accusing them of leading people into a pit, Jesus denounces the scribes and Pharisees for making people as miserable as they are, directing them to the same disgraceful destiny that they themselves will experience (15:14).[60]

So, in Matthew's story, the phrase *blind guides* (ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ) carries only negative connotations, such as religious ignorance, intellectual inability, lack of understanding and carelessness in leading people. Now, although the phrase *blind guides* (ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ) is not repeated verbatim in other literature, a pragmaphilological analysis of the word *blind* (τυφλός) in some contexts evokes similar notions to those given above. In Hellenistic literature, such as Plutarch,[61] Josephus[62] and Philo's works,[63] for example, there are cases in which the word *blind*

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[58] To determine why just the Pharisees and not the scribes are mentioned in this verse goes beyond the scope of my investigation. My purpose here is only to show in what way the phrase operates in this pericope.

[59] Textual external evidence suggests that the last part of the phrase "they are blind guides of the blind" (emphasis supplied, 15:14) should be omitted (e.g. NIV, RSV). NA[28], however, brackets it, advising for a more cautious decision (cf. UBS[4]; and Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 31-32). To my mind, arguments of duplication or repetition are inconsistent in determining as invalid its inclusion.

[60] It seems that such a claim has been repeated in the first pair of woes (23:13-15), in which Jesus asserts, as was mentioned, that the new proselyte is twice as much more υἱὸν γεέννης than the scribes and Pharisees (23:15).

[61] Plutarch, *Stoic. rep*. 1046 B 4; 1049 C 11; *Comm. not*. 1063 A 8, 9; 1063 B 2, 6; *Ag. Cleom*. 2.5.1; *Def. orac*. 432 B 5; *Fort*. 98 A 10; *Tu. san*. 136 E 13; *Sol*. 12.10; *Pomp*. 70.2; *[Lib. ed.]* 2

functions in a figurative sense, linking blindness to unwise situations, ignorance or incapacity to understand.[64]

Jesus also underlines the negative meaning of the term τυφλός in this second pair by calling the scribes and Pharisees μωροὶ καὶ τυφλοί (23:17). For the reader, prior to the encounter of Matt 23, the word μωρός appears twice in the Sermon on the Mount, having on both occasions an adversative function. First, in the so-called Matthean Antitheses (5:21-48), the term functions as an offensive expression of anger.[65] According to Jesus, anybody who is angry[66] and calls his or her brother μωρός, for example,[67] becomes liable to the γέενναν of fire (5:22). Because the

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B 4; and *Virt. mor.* 450 C 2.

[62] Josephus rhetorically asks if Apion was "mind blinded when, in the interest of the Egyptians, he undertook to revile us and actually condemned them?" (*Ag. Ap.* 2.142). Thus the term functions perjoratively.

[63] E.g. Philo, *Leg.* 3.108; and *Conf.* 27. Cf. *Leg.* 3.109-110; *Cher.* 58; *Deo* 130; *Migr.* 18, 38 ["And he who sees is the wise man; for the foolish are blind, or at best dim sighted"]; *Her.* 76; *Prelim. Studies* 109; *Fug.* 144; *Somn.* 192; *Abr.* 84; *Mos.* 2.271; *Decal.* 129; *Spec.* 1.54; 2.77; 3.79; 4.5, 70, 189; *Virt.* 7, 172, 179; and *Legat.* 109.

[64] See Strabo, *Geogr.* 15.1.5; Theocritus, *Id.* 10.19; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.28.9; 2.23.22; 3.22.26, 103; 4.8.21. Cf. John 9:35-41; Rom 2:19; 2 Pet 1:9; Rev 3:17. In Rom 2:19, Paul also uses ὁδηγός (guide) and τυφλός, as Matthew's Gospel does, to describe those who think they are guiding somebody, but are wrong (Rom 2:17-24). See also Ps 145:8 [146:8]), in which the psalmist affirms that the Lord makes the blind wise (κύριος σοφοῖ τυφλούς, Ps 145:8 [146:8]), implicitly linking blindness with foolishness. Cf. Isa 42:16-22, in which the term blind seems to function in the sense of spiritual knowledge.

[65] Don B. Garlington, "'You Fool!' Matthew 5:22," *BBR* 20 (2010): 66-67.

[66] Some manuscripts contain the adverb εἰκῇ ("without a plan" or "purpose" [LSJ, 484]) in Matt 5:22 (see NA[28] and UBS[4]), suggesting that Jesus' critique is against those people who get angry with someone without any cause. According to Metzger, this adverb was probably "added by copyists in order to soften the rigor of the precept," which explains why it does not appear in the Greek text of NA[28] and UBS[4] (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 11). However, David Black disagrees, presenting several textual critical arguments in favour of its inclusion [David Alan Black, "Jesus on Anger: The Text of Matthew 5:22a Revisited," *NovT* 30 (1988): 1-8]. If Black is right, μωρός appears in a context in which anger is manifested without an apparent reason. In fact, Matt 5:22 in context parallels murder with getting angry (5:21), therefore it seems that this is not simply any kind of anger.

[67] Besides the word μωρός, the Matthean Jesus also mentions ῥακά (5:22), which can means either "empty head" [Robert A. Guelich, "Mt 5 22: Its Meaning and Integrity," *ZNW* 64 (1973): 39] or "fool" [BDAG, 903].

term is the result of anger, μωρός in Matt 5:22 functions as an unsettling word, disrupting human relationships within the community,[68] and operating as a verbal expression of the speaker's rage.

In its second occurrence μωρός appears in contrasts to φρόνιμος (wise). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus labels as φρόνιμος those who hear his words and put them into practice (7:24). The term μωρός, on the other hand, acts in opposition to such description, illustrating negatively the destiny of those who hear Jesus' words but do not act on them. Jesus exemplifies this meaning by giving a parable in which a μωρός person builds a house on sand, which is destroyed as soon as the rain and the winds beat it. So, μωρός, in Matt 7, although not functioning as a disrupting word, still evokes a negative unpleasant significance, portraying unwise, irresponsible and foolish behaviour (7:24-27).[69]

From a pragmaphilological perspective, the term also works in similar ways in other writings. Although in Hellenistic literature μωρός is at least once employed to describe the insipid taste of a root plant,[70] it is commonly applied to human beings,[71] describing imprudent and stupid behaviours or decisions.[72] Sometimes too, μωρός is used as a vocative or a human designation.[73] The term functions in an analogous manner in Philo,[74] the LXX,[75] the *Testament*

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[68] Considering the context in which Matt 5:22 is located (5:21-26), it seems that Jesus' words point to establishing right relations among members of the community (cf. 5:24), which can be broken when anger is present [cf. C.F.D. Moule, "Uncomfortable Words," *ExpTim* 81 (1969): 13, who, to my mind, rightly states that the next "clause, 'Therefore, if you are bringing your gift to the altar...' [5:23], drives home the impossibility of a right relation with God, without a right relation with one's fellow-man"]. Cf. Garlington, "'You Fool!' Matthew 5:22," 65-66.

[69] Cf. Garlington, "'You Fool!'," 70-71.

[70] Pedanius Dioscorides, *Mat. med.* 4.19.1. See LSJ, 1159.

[71] George Bertram, "μωρός," *TDNT* 4:832-833.

[72] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.22.19; 1.23.8; 2.2.16; 2.15.14; 2.16.31; 2.21.3; 2.23.33; 3.24.53; 3.24.87; 4.1.41, 138; 4.8.27, 39; *Ench.* 14.1; Plutarch, *Mulier. virt.* 256 C 5; *Cat. Maj.* 9.1; *Quaest. rom.* 285 D 7; *Garr.* 504 A 1.

[73] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.13.17; 3.22.85; 3.23.17; 4.10.32, 33; and Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 10.22.1. Cf. BDAG, 663.

[74] Philo uses it as vocative (Philo, *Cher.* 1.75) and as comparison between foolish and wise people (*Sobr.* 1.10).

[75] In the LXX the term is used as a human description in, e.g. Ps 93:8 [94:8]; Job 16:7; Sir 4:27; 8:17; 16:23; 18:18; 19:11-12; 20:13, 20; 21:14, 20, 22; 22:9-10, 12, 14, 18; 27:13; 33:5; 42:8;

of Levi (*T. Levi* 7:2),[76] and some *New Testament* documents,[77] and is employed in certain examples to contrast wise performances,[78] knowledge (Sir 21:18; 21:26) or even intelligence in people (21:16; cf. 22:11).

Carrying all these potential meanings, the term μωρός displays numerous unfriendly implications, operating as a hostile designation in the world encrypted in Matthew's Gospel. Whether it functions as a swear word or not, it is not easy to see, in particular when taking into consideration that it is impossible "to assume that the social meaning of an insult remains permanently fixed" in the data provided by texts.[79] This limitation, however, does not mean that the term μωρός lacks offensive meanings. One word that may summarise such meanings is 'stupid',[80] understanding it in the sense of ignorant or obtuse. Such connotation fits very well in the way that the figurative sense of *blind* operates in Matthew's world, which may imply that both terms stress the scribes and Pharisees' ignorance and stupidity in focusing on unimportant practical matters (23:23). That is why the Matthean Jesus faces them so strongly, denouncing their lack of understanding, foolishness and the negative and disastrous outcome of their guidance.

In summary, by calling the scribes and Pharisees μωροὶ and τυφλοί, the Matthean Jesus takes away their teaching authority, an honourable status, by publicly ridiculing their emphasis on little things. They are publicly shamed, because their teachings reflect only ignorance and foolishness. Ironically, in Matthew's story, the scribes and Pharisees appear as experts in several

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50:26; Isa 32:5-6; Jer 5:21.

[76] Cf. with the third Book of the *Sibylline Oracles*, in which μωρός is used as a description of foolish words (*Sib. Or.* 3:226).

[77] Paul uses it to portray human foolishness (1 Cor 1:25, 27; 3:18). In 2 Tim 2:23 and Titus 3:9 the word is also used to depict μωρὰς controversies.

[78] Eg., Philo, *Sobr.* 1.10; and LXX (Deut 32:6; Sir 20:13; Is 19:11); Cf. *T. Levi* 7:2.

[79] Dickey, *Greek Forms*, 167 (see also 168, 171, 173).

[80] BDAG, 663 and LSJ, 1158.

areas (e.g. 2:4; 9:3, 11; 12:2; 15:1; 17:10; 19:3), but this is clearly disputed by Jesus, who openly

accuses them of blindness, because they cannot see what is really more significant. That is why

Jesus also calls them ὑποκριταί (23:23), because they are inconsistent in their teaching, focusing

on insignificant areas and neglecting others that really matter.[81] In this regard, the scribes and

Pharisees dishonour God, showing ignorance. So, Jesus' denunciation works as a direct attack

against the scribes and Pharisees on their way of understanding practical issues. Jesus again

takes away their honour, highlighting the essence of their foolish and blind ignorance.

2.4. Third pair: ἁρπαγῆς, ἀκρασίας, ὑποκρίσεως and ἀνομίας

In the third pair of woes, there is a repetition of two adverbs of place, which the Matthean

Jesus uses to describe the value of what is *inside*, criticising the scribes' and Pharisees' emphasis

on the *outside* (23:25-28).[82] Jesus organizes these two adverbs around three specific verbs.

These are *to clean*, *to look* and *to be full*. First, in Jesus' argumentation, the scribes and

Pharisees are challenged to clean the outside of the cup and plate, while being accused of the fact

that on the inside they are full of ἁρπαγῆς and ἀκρασίας (23:25).[83] "First clean the inside of the

cup," Jesus says, "so that the outside also may become clean" (23:26).

Whether the images of cup and plate function as a metaphoric personification of the

scribes and Pharisees or work as a description of something else is not easy to ascertain.[84]

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[81] Marshall, "Who is a Hypocrite?," 140.

[82] Both woes are built around similar words and concepts (23:25-28). Synonymous words, for example, are: ἔξωθεν (outside), ἔσωθεν (inside) and γέμω/μεστός (full). In both examples the elements inside are listed in pairs of two. Moreover, in both examples, what is outside is not important.

[83] Although some manuscripts replace ἀκρασίας with ἀδικίας, ἀκαθαρσίας or πονηρίας (see NA[28] and UBS[4]), there is strong textual evidence supporting ἀκρασίας. Cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 50.

[84] The pericope has been interpreted, for instance, as a reference to (1) the scribes' and Pharisees' hypocrisy [e.g. Hyam Maccoby, "The Washing of Cups," *JSNT* (1982): 3-15], (2) Pharisees' attention to religious externals [e.g. Talbert, *Matthew*, 259] or (3) human life [e.g. David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 313].

However, at first glance it seems that Jesus' stress is on the cup and plate,[85] suggesting that the

scribes and Pharisees are guilty of overlooking what really matters.[86] Instead of focusing on the

internal, they put their emphasis on the exterior, losing sight of what is truly important. Such

accusation evokes the previous pair of woes in which Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of

neglecting what is significant (23:16-24), presenting them again as ignorant leaders.[87]

The scribes' and Pharisees' ignorance is manifest when the reader examines Jesus'

denunciation regarding what is inside cups and plates. As mentioned, these two elements are full

of ἁρπαγῆς and ἀκρασίας (23:25). Although in Matthew's story the words ἁρπαγή and ἀκρασία

appear only in Matt 23, there are abundant external examples showing how these terms operate

in negative ways in other writings. From a pragmaphilological perspective, the word ἁρπαγή, for

example, depicts actions such as robbery or plunder,[88] appearing sometimes in contexts of rape,[89]

and also in descriptions of an inner state of mind that leads to greediness and rapacity (cf. Luke

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[85] Jesus' critique, in fact, focusses on the superficial cleaning performed by the scribes and Pharisees (23:25-26). In this view, Jesus' emphasis and criticism is pitted against what they are doing.

[86] To my mind, at least in terms of my narrative analysis, the discussion regarding whether Jesus refers to Jewish purity laws [e.g. Jacob Neusner, "'First Cleanse the Inside'," *NTS* 22 (1976): 486-495; John Poirier, "Why Did the Pharisees Wash Their Hands," *JJS* 47 (1996): 217-233; and John C. Poirier, "A Reply to Hyam Maccoby," *JSNT* 22 (2000): 115-118] or just an every day description of dirty cups and plates [e.g. Maccoby, "The Washing of Cups," 7; and Hyam Maccoby, "The Law About Liquids: A Rejoinder," *JSNT* 20 (1998): 115-122] is irrelevant.

[87] In fact, in the same pericope Jesus calls the Pharisees blind, suggesting again a term related to ignorance (23:26). The reason why only the Pharisees are called blind in v. 26 goes beyond the scope of this work.

[88] E.g. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 11.61.7; 14.79.2; 16.49.6; 17:70.5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.30.2; 2.36.2; 6.81.4; 6.62.3; 8.19.5. Cf. LXX (Lev 5:21 [6:2]; Jdt 2:11; 1 Macc 13:34), *T. Jud.* 23:3; *T. Benj.* 11:1; 4 Macc 4:10. Philo: *Agr.* 1.83; *Conf.* 1.117; *Ios.* 1.213; *Decal.* 1.171; *Spec.* 1.204, 235; 3.158; 4.84, 196; *Flacc.* 1.5, 56–57, 62, 69, 105; *Legat.* 1.105, 122, 129, 302. See also Heb 10:34. Sometimes the term also describes the product that has been stolen. E.g. LXX (Nah 2:13 [2:12]; Isa 3:14; 10:2); Philo: *Legat* 122; and Josephus, *Ant.* 19.160; *J.W.* 2.57; 5.348; 6.317. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 19.166. It also involves being seized sometimes by force [Josephus, *Ant.* 19.166, 218, 222, 228, 238]. It is also sometimes used in figurative ways [*J.W.* 5.431; 6.225].

[89] E.g. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 4.63.1; 5.3.1; 5.5.1; and Josephus, *Ant.* 1.337; 5.339; *Ag. Ap.* 2.200.

11:39). The term ἀκρασία, likewise, also carries similar adverse connotations,[90] evidencing, along with the word ἁρπαγῆς, the scribes' and Pharisees' blindness (cf. Matt 23: 26). Paradoxically, in Matthew's story the scribes and Pharisees reveal a deep concern about uprightness, traditions and laws (cf. 5:20; 9:11; 12:12; 15:1-3; 19:3). However, according to Jesus, their emphasis on the outside has limited their vision, causing them to lose sight of those immoral or unlawful things that they abhor most.

As mentioned, although it is not clear whether Jesus refers metaphorically to the scribes and Pharisees or something else when using the images of cup and plate in the example given above, he is quite clear in his identification in what follows (23:27-28). Here Jesus employs the metaphor of a *whitewashed tomb* as a starting point [τάφος κονιάω], directly applying the picture to the scribes and Pharisees (23:27). The metaphor of a *whitewashed tomb* [τάφος κονιάω] points to something that aesthetically catches the eye.[91] Ironically, however, Jesus firstly focuses on what is inside of graves, mentioning bones of the dead and of all kinds of ἀκαθαρσίας (23:27). Then, using this figure as an analogy,[92] Jesus affirms that even though the scribes and

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[90] The word occurs in several negative contexts,. For example, in the *Psalms of Solomon* the author talks about a profane man (*Pss. Sol*. 4:1), who "is guilty of various sins and ἀκρασίαις" (4:3), paralleling the term *sin* with ἀκρασία. Likewise, Paul advises his married readers "do not deprive one another… so that Satan may not tempt you because of your ἀκρασίαν" (1 Cor 7:5), suggesting a meaning related to lack of self-control. In fact, there are several Hellenistic Jewish writings in which the word operates as a negative description of people without sexual self-control or another kind of unstoppable excess. Cf. Josephus, *Ant*. 3.314; 8.191; 16.226; *J.W.* 1.34; 2.324; 5.122; *Ag. Ap.* 1.319; 2.244; and Philo, *Opif.* 1.158, 164; *Cher*. 1.92; *Det*. 1.113; *Post*. 1.93; *Agr*. 1.101; *Somn*. 2.202, 204, 210; *Abr*. 1.94; *Ios*. 1.56–57; *Mos*. 2.164; *Decal*. 1.123, 169; *Spec*. 2.19, 135; 3.23, 34, 40, 49, 137; 4.122; *Virt*. 1.36, 143; *Praem*. 1.116; *Contempl*. 1.6; *Legat*. 1.14; *Prob*. 2.69.
[91] The term κονιάω evokes a meaning related to something aesthetically pleasing to the eye in some Hellenistic texts (e.g. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 13.83.3; 19.94.6; LXX [Prov 21:9, Deut 27:2, 4]). Cf. Markus Lau, "Geweißte Grabmäler. Motivkritische Anmerkungen Zu Mt 23.27-28," *NTS* 58 (2012): 463-480, who argues that the phrase suggests something visible and beautiful.
[92] To link both images the Matthean Jesus uses the adverb οὕτως in Matt 23:28, which is used here not only to refer to what precedes [BDAG, 741-742], but also as a way of connecting both images in just one theme. There are several connections between these two verses (vv. 27-28), which show that Jesus' denunciation is unmistakably directed against the scribes and Pharisees.

Pharisees on the outside look righteous to others, mirroring a *whitewashed tomb* (τάφος κονιάω), on the inside they are full of ὑποκρίσεως and ἀνομίας (23:28).

As mentioned above, Jesus' initial emphasis is on the *inside of graves*, mentioning bones of the dead and of all kinds of ἀκαθαρσίας (23:27).[93] The word ἀκαθαρσία summarises very well the negative and ironic meaning of the whole picture. In pragmaphilological terms, in several writings ἀκαθαρσία not only operates as a way of describing unclean or impure elements/people,[94] but also, in figurative contexts, it evokes "a state of moral corruption."[95] In all of these last cases, however, ἀκαθαρσία suggests negative perceptions, functioning as a counterpart of what is clean and morally pure. Ironically, in Matthew's story the scribes and Pharisees exhibit a strong view regarding cleanness and uncleanness (cf. 9:11; 15:1-20). But here, according to Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees are a source of impurity, becoming, paradoxically, what they hate most. So, although they look beautiful (φαίνονται ὡραῖοι) from the outside (23:27), as a *whitewashed tomb*, the truth is that in Jesus' view the scribes and Pharisees are unclean and sickening people.

The second two expressions appear in contrast to what is δίκαιος (righteous; 23:28). As a *whitewashed tomb*, which looks (φαίνονται) beautiful from the outside, here the Pharisees are presented as looking (φαίνεσθε) δίκαιοι (upright) to others, when in reality they are full of

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These are: "You are like whitewashed tombs" (23:27)/ "In the same way you [ὑμεῖς]" (23:28); "Look beautiful [φαίνονται ὡραῖοι]" (23:27)/ "Look righteousness to others [φαίνεσθε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δίκαιοι]" (23:28); "Full [γέμουσιν] of…" (23:27)/ "Full [μεστοὶ]" (23:28); "Bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth" (23:27)/ ὑποκρίσεως καὶ ἀνομίας (23:28).

[93] Although the term τάφος can refer to an ossuary [see Samuel T. Lachs, "On Matthew 23:27-28," *HTR* 68 (1975): 385-388], it seems better for me to translate it as tomb or grave, considering that in Matthew it is used only in such way [see Matt 23:29; 27:61, 64, 66-28:1]

[94] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5.33.5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 19.5.2; and LXX (Lev 5:3; 7:10-11; 15:3, 24-26, 30-31; 16:16, 19; 18:19; 19:23; 20:21, 25; 22:3-5; Num 19:13; Judg 13:7; 2 Sam 11:4; 2 Chr 29:5, 16; 1 Macc 13:48; 14:7).

[95] BDAG, 34. E.g. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.11.5, 8, 16; LXX (Lev 20:21; 1 Esd 1:40, 47; Prov 6:16; 24:9; Wis 2:16); *1 En.* 3:4; 10:11, 20, 22; *T. Levi* 15:1; *T. Jud.* 14:5; *T. Jos.* 4:6; *T. Ab.* 17:13; Philo, *Leg.* 1.52; 2.29; *Her.* 1.113. Cf. Rom 1:24; 6:19; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19; 5:3; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 2:3; 4:7.

ὑποκρίσεως and ἀνομίας (23:28).[96] If, as was mentioned before, δίκαιος involves being in accordance with what is correct,[97] the scribes and Pharisees are clearly to the opposite of such a description, suggesting the reader sees them as a group of deceptive people. In fact, as Jesus claims, they are full of ὑποκρίσεως, a word that connotes negative meanings in several writings, suggesting a false public "impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations."[98] So, the scribes and Pharisees are full of self-deception and false pretence, which is in line with what Jesus says in the first twelve verses of Matt 23 in which Jesus denounces the scribes and Pharisees for doing things only to get people's attention (23:3-7).

This negative designation is accompanied by the word ἀνομίας, a term that in Matthew's story emerges in contexts of rejection, designating those who are excluded from the kingdom (24:12).[99] In the same pragmaphilological vein, in Hellenistic texts the word also displays

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[96] The Matthean Jesus uses two words meaning full: γέμω (23:25, 27) and μεστός (23:28), meaning both the same thing (BDAG, 191, 635-636). It seems that by saying that they are full of every one of these accusations, Jesus claims that they are not partially flawed, but *totally and completely so*, which, considering the elements in discussion, makes Jesus' denunciation even more bellicose.

[97] Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and his World of Thought*, 120.

[98] BDAG, 1038. Polybius, for example, when describing the war between the Romans and the Celtiberians, mentions the Aravacae, who manifest ὑπόκρισιν in their speech, showing a humble and submissive attitude, when in reality "they were neither disposed to make complete submission nor to accept defeat" (Polybius, *Historiae*, 35.2.13). Cf. Polybius, *Historiae* 15.17.2; and Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.76.1. See also *Let. Aris.* 219; 2 Macc 6:25; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.211; 2.160; 13.220; 14.286; 15.204; 16.216; *J.W.* 1.628, 630; and Philo, *Deo* 1.103; *Migr.* 1.211; Her. 1.43; *Fug.* 1.34, 156; *Somn.* 1.205; 2.40; *Ios.* 1.67–68; *Spec.* 4.183; *Prob.* 1.90, 99; *Legat.* 1.22, 162; *Hypoth.* 11.15. Cf. Gal 2:13; 1 Tim 4:2; and 1 Pet 2:1.

[99] In the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-8:1), for instance, Jesus uses ἀνομίας to contrast those who practice wickedness, and are finally excluded from the kingdom of heaven (7:23), with those who do the will of the Father (7:21). In the same way, in the explanation of the parable of the weeds (13:36-43), the Matthean Jesus also employs ἀνομίας to differentiate those who will enjoy the kingdom of their Father (13:43), with those who commit wickedness, who instead of inheriting the kingdom are thrown "into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (13:41-42). A similar adverse meaning is given as the narrative progresses. Besides Matt 23, the term also appears in Matt 24, in which Jesus talking about the end of the age (24:1-3) affirms that because of the increase of ἀνομίας the love of many will grow cold (24:12). As in the previous two cases, the term functions in a context of exclusion and separation (cf. 24:36-51), also operating as a detrimental portrayal.

negative and adverse notions, expressing meanings related to illegal acts and lawless deeds.[100]

The LXX, for instance, many times equates the term ἀνομία with ἁμαρτία (sin),[101] calling

blessed those "whose lawless behavior [ἀνομίαι] was forgiven and whose sins [ἁμαρτίαι] were

covered over" (Ps 31:1 [32:1]). Bearing this negative concept in mind, the fact that Jesus claims

that the scribes and Pharisees are full of ἀνομία functions as a literary irony. As the reader

knows, the implied author refers to the scribes and Pharisees as people interested in observing

God's law and respecting human traditions (e.g. Matt 12:1-14; 15:1-2; 19:1-9), an idea that Jesus

denies here. They are, in Jesus' view, full of criminal acts, lawless people, who appear to be

good, while on the inside they are the opposite.

In summary, the scribes and Pharisees are ὑποκριταί for two reasons. First, they are

inconsistent in their teaching. By emphasising the outside, they disregard again what really

matters. Because, while the outside looks clean, the inside is full of those things that the scribes

and Pharisees hate most, such as impure and adverse moral acts. This carelessness shows not

only ignorance, but also dangerous aspects, which can be seen in their misleading teachings.

Second, the scribes and Pharisees are also ὑποκριταί because they pretend to be something

different to what they really are.[102] They are not beautiful and righteous people, but morally

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[100] E.g. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.67.11; 1.86.3; 3.56.3; Strabo, *Geogr.* 3.3.5; 17.1.12; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 10.3.2; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.16.45; Polybius, *Historiae*, 32.5.11; and Plutarch, *Amat.* 755 B 11; *De esu* 997 B 2; *Stoic. rep.* 1051 B 2; *Lyc.* 2.3.4. See also E.g. *1 En.* 97:6; 98:1, 5; 99:15; T. *Reu.* 3:11; *T. Levi* 2:3; *T. Zeb.* 1:7; *T. Dan* 3:2; 6:6; *T. Naph* 4:1; *T. Gad* 4:1; Job 43:4, 17; *Liv. Pro.* 4:15; *Pr. Man.* 1:12-13; *Pss. Sol.* 1:8; 2:3, 12; 9:2; 15:8, 10; Josephus, *Ant.* 15.348; *J.W.* 1.493, 544; 7.268; *Ag. Ap.* 2.158; Philo, *Leg.* 3.79; *Sacr.* 1.57; *Det.* 1.141; *Post.* 1.52; *Ebr.* 1.143; *Sobr.* 1.25, 48; *Conf.* 1.108; *Her.* 1.212, 300; *Mut.* 1.150; *Mos.* 2.165; *Spec.* 1.188, 279, 321; *Prob.* 1.76; *Legat.* 1.30; LXX (e.g. Gen 19:15; Exod 34:7, 9; Lev 16:21; 19:29; 20:14; 22:16; 26:43; Num 14:18; Deut 31:29; 2 Sam 14:9; 19:20; 22:5, 24; 24:10; 2 Kgs 7:9; 1 Chr 9:1; 10:13; 1 Esd 8:67 [8:70]; 8:69 [8:72]; 8:87 [8:90]; 9:2; Ezra 9:6-7, 13; Neh 3:37 [4:5]; 9:2; Jdt 5:21). Cf. Rom 4:7; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:14; 2 Thess 2:3, 7; Titus 2:14; Heb 1:9; 10:17; 1 John 3:4
[101] E.g. Exod 34:7, 9; Lev 16:21; Num 14:18; Neh 9:2; Ps 31:1 [32:1]; 31:5 [32:5]; 37:19 [38:18]; 50:4-5 [51:2-3]; 50:7 [51:5]; 50:11 [51:9]; 58:4 [59:3]; 84:3 [85:2]; 88:33 [89:32]; 102:10 [103:10]; 108:14 [109:14]; 140:4 [141:4]; Job 7:21; 10:6; 13:23; 34:37; Sir 23:11.
[102] Marshall, "Who is a Hypocrite?," 141.

ugly, impure, insincere and iniquitous leaders, who can deceive the audience, but not Jesus. In both cases they dishonour God, losing sight of practical issues and lying about themselves. For that reason Jesus shames them publicly, taking away their acquired honour, which involves removing their authority as teachers as well as their prestige as blameless and influential leaders.

2.5. The last woe: ὄφεις and γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν

In the last woe, Jesus' diatribe reaches its ultimate expression. In it Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of being assassins,[103] sharing the same guilt as their ancestors (23:29-36).[104] In the Matthean Jesus' opinion, although the scribes and Pharisees build tombs for the prophets, claiming that if they had lived in the days of their ancestors they would not have taken part with them in shedding blood (23:29-31), they are still guilty of the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom they murdered between the temple and the altar (23:35).

Although for the reader the identity of Zechariah may be impossible to ascertain,[105] the charge of murder against the scribes and Pharisees is clearly a significant focus. The vehemence of such imputation is elucidated by analysing the two occasions in which the verb to *murder* (φονεύω) is used prior to chapter 23 (5:21; 19:18). In both instances, the implied author employs

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[103] Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 3:282; and Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 232.

[104] Although some scholars claim that from v. 33 or 34 the Matthean Jesus starts a new topic [e.g. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 150-157; and Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 673-678], in my opinion such argument is not very convincing. In fact, there are several word connections between vv. 29-32 and vv. 33-36, such as prophets (23:29-31, 34), righteous (23:29, 35), blood (23:30, 35) and the verb 'to murder' (29:31, 35), which allows us to consider the unity of these verses in only one pericope. On the other hand, because from v. 37, the Matthean Jesus refers to Jerusalem, changing the recipients of his diatribe, I consider, as many do, that here ends the last οὐαί of Matt 23.

[105] There are many theories about the identity of Zechariah son of Barachiah [Edmon L. Gallagher, "The Blood From Abel to ariah in the History of Interpretation," *NTS* 60 (2014):121-138]. See, for example, John Chapman, "Zacharias, Slain Between the Temple and the Altar," *JTS* 13 (1912): 398-410; Sheldon H. Blank, "The Death of Zechariah in Rabbinic Literature," *HUCA* 12-13 (1937): 327-346; J. Spencer Kennard, "The Lament Over Jerusalem: A Restudy of the Zacharias Passage," *AThR* 29 (1947): 173-179; and J. M. Ross, "Which Zechariah?," *IBS* 9 (1987): 70-73.

it as a demand, *you shall not murder* (5:21; 19:18), appearing either as an ancient saying (5:21) or as a commandment (19:17-18). In light of these two examples, from a pragmaphilological point of view, the verb to *murder* operates in legal terms before Matt 23, functioning in a phrase that prohibits such action. The text also indicates that if the prohibition is broken, it brings disastrous consequences to the offender, such as being liable to judgment,[106] or not entering into eternal life (19:16-18).[107]

As a legal term, the phrase *you shall not murder* (οὐ φονεύσεις; 5:21; 19:18) appears twice in the LXX (Exod 20:15 [20:13]; Deut 5:18 [5:17]), establishing God's commandment or rule,[108] a legal concept that, as was mentioned, is also present in Matthew's Gospel (5:21; 19:16-18). Ironically, however, although the narrator describes the Pharisees, for example, as people interested in keeping and respecting God's law (e.g. Matt 12:1-14; 19:1-9), their actions indicate the opposite. A clear example is given in Matt 12, in which the Pharisees conspire against Jesus, planning how to kill (ἀπολέσωσιν) him (12:14; cf. 21:45-43).[109] Such intention to kill Jesus, however, is part of the narrator's description, which informs the reader about it (cf. 12:14; cf. 21:45-43). In the same way, although the scribes, along with other religious leaders, are mentioned in Jesus' death prediction (16:21; 20:18), portraying them also as assassins, Jesus'

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[106] In Matthew's Gospel the term κρίσις (judgment) is mostly used in contexts of condemnation and rejection (e.g. 5:22; 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36, 41–42; 23: 33)

[107] For the reader the term ζωή (life) is always used in positive terms in Matthew's story, describing the importance of entering or leading either into life (7:14; 18:8, 9; 19:17) or eternal life (19:16, 29; 25:46). In each case, the term ζωή (life) is in opposition to different negative events and depictions, such as destruction (7:13), eternal fire (18:8), fire of γέενναν (18:9) and eternal punishment (25:46).

[108] Cf. Rom 13:9 and Philo, *Decal.* 36. Cf. Also with the phrase μὴ φονεύσῃς (you shall not murder) in Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Jas 2:11.

[109] The verb ἀπόλλυμι, which the implied author uses in Matt 12:14, conveys here the idea of killing Jesus [cf. Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 361; BDAG, 116]. In other words, it is not just a moral destruction, but in fact a physical elimination. As a matter of fact, in Matthew's Gospel the verb ἀπόλλυμι evokes different kind of destructions, such as killing (2:13; 10:28; 27:20; 21:41; 22:7), extermination or eradication (5:29, 30; 9:17) and dying as a result of some external cause (8:25; 26:52).

accusation is not public, but a conversation between himself and his disciples (cf. 16:21; 20:17-18).[110] In this last woe, however, Jesus openly and publicly accuses the scribes and Pharisees of murder, claiming that they are not what they seem to be, namely, observers of God's law, but breakers of God's commandments. So, according to Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees are really unlawful people, an accusation that goes against what they publicly hold to be.

Jesus illustrates his charge using two images. First, he calls them snakes (ὄφεις; 23:33). In pragmaphilological terms, before Matt 23 the word snake works in two different ways in Matthew's Gospel. On the one hand, it operates as a symbol of evil gifts (cf. 7:9–11), evoking a clearly negative meaning. On the other hand, it also functions as a positive characteristic of Jesus' disciples, who are advised to be wise (φρόνιμοι) as snakes and innocent as doves (10:16) when announcing the kingdom of heaven (10:5-16).[111] Although in Hellenistic literature the term *snake* commonly describes a specific type of reptile,[112] such description is not always positive. The term, for instance, is associated with being dangerous,[113] unexpected[114] and venomous reptiles,[115] which act as destructive plagues[116] and murderers of humans.[117]

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[110] As the narrative advances, however, the reader sees how these words becomes a reality in Jesus' story when Jesus is handed over to Pilate, the governor, to be executed (26:1-5, 57-66; 27:1-2, 20, 26). Now, although the scribes and Pharisees do not appear as taking part in Jesus' judgment and execution, they play an important role in Jesus' crucifixion (12:14; cf. 21:45-43; 27:62-66; 26:57; 27:41).

[111] The term 'snake' of Matt 10:16 can only be understood as something positive because it is accompanied by the adjective φρόνιμος, which qualifies it as something good. In the other two cases, on the other hand, the term appears alone (7:10; 23:33).

[112] E.g. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.33.4; 2.51.4; 2.9.6; 3.4.2; 3.36.4; 3.37.5, 6, 9; 3.54.3; 4.72.4; 4.76.5; Strabo, *Geogr.* 2.1.9; 11.7.4; 15.1. 73; 15.3.10; 16.4.9; Callimachus, *Hymn. Apoll.* 101, 91; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.246, 287; 3.154; *J.W.* 5.108; 7.282; LXX (Deut 8:15; Prov 30:19; Mic 7:17; Jer 26:22); and Philo, *Mos.* 1.192; *Conf.* 1.7; *Praem.* 1.90. See also *Jub.* 3:28; Job 43:8; Mark 10:19. Cf. Exod 4:3, 17; 7:15. On the other hand, a positive meaning is given in the LXX, which tells about a serpent made of bronze which was designed to save from death the people of Israel (Num 21:6–9). Cf. John 3:14

[113] Strabo, *Geogr.* 15.2.7; and Luke 11:11. Cf. Philo, *Leg.* 3.76.

[114] LXX (Gen 49:17; Eccl 10:8; Amos 5:19; Jer 8:17).

[115] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 3.47.2; 3.50.2. Cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.4.10; *T. Ab.* 19:15; LXX (Num 21:6); and Philo, *Opif.* 1.156; *Praem.* 1.90; *Agr.* 1.95.

[116] Strabo, *Geogr.* 3.2.6. Cf. 9.1.9; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica,* 1.33.4; *Liv. Pro.*

Of special mention is the fifth book of the *Sibylline Oracle*, which relates the term *snake* to a prince, using it in a figurative and derogatory way (Sib. *Or.* 5:25-30). It calls the prince a "terrible snake," accusing him of causing "grievous war, who one day will lay hands on his own family and slay them, and throw everything into confusion…" (5:29-30). Similarly, the term also appears as an offensive designation in Plutarch in which the king "in an angry undertone" calls Themistocles "subtle serpent of Hellas" (Plutarch, *Them.* 29.1). In Matt 23, the Matthean Jesus also links the term to people, using it likewise in a figurative form. By doing so, Jesus establishes a symbolic parallel between snakes and the scribes and Pharisees, with this term functioning as an offensive designation and invoking a similar charge, namely, like snakes, the scribes and Pharisees also murder humans.

Such an accusation, however, becomes even worse when analysing some figurative aspects of the term *snake* in other Hellenistic literature. In this literature, the snake becomes the devil's vessel,[118] described as an envious (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.41) and subtle being,[119] which is blamed for being responsible for the human fall.[120] As a consequence of being responsible for the fall, the snake is cursed by God, reshaping its form into something different and clearly not beautiful.[121] So it seems that Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of acting on behalf of the devil, becoming the devil's vessel. For the reader, a similar charge is made by the Pharisees in Matt 12, where they accuse Jesus of driving out demons by Beelzebub (12:24). Ironically,

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3:17; and 1 Cor 10:9.

[117] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 4.72.4; 5.58.4; and LXX (Job 20:16; Wis 16:5). In the LXX is also used as a symbol of idolatry (2 Kgs 18:4). See other negative meanings in Sir 21:2. Cf. *Pss. Sol.* 4:9.

[118] *L.A.E.* 16:4-5; 26:1. Cf. Rev 12:9 and 20:2 in which the *old snake* is called Satan and Devil.

[119] LXX (Gen 3:1); *L.A.E.* 16:2; and Philo, *Leg.* 2.53, 71, 106.

[120] LXX (Gen 3:1-7); *L.A.E.* 18:1-6; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.48–49; and Philo, *Opif.* 1.156-157. Cf. 2 Cor 11:3.

[121] LXX (Gen 3:14-15); *L.A.E.* 26:1-4; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.48–49; and Philo, *Leg.* 3.65, 75.

according to Jesus, they are really the ones whom the devil is using, acting as dangerous, poisonous, diabolic and destructive snakes, which, as demonstrated, are under God's curse.

Jesus, in addition, also calls them a *brood of vipers* (γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, 23:33), a phrase that is repeated two times before Matt 23, always evoking an adverse meaning (3:7; 12:34). In Matt 3, the saying operates as a way of exposing the Pharisees' and Sadducees' true heritage. Although the Pharisees and Sadducees claim to have Abraham as father (πατέρα), God, according to John the Baptist, can raise up Abraham's sons from stones (3:9).[122] So, by calling them a *brood of vipers*, John takes away the Pharisees' and Sadducees' parentage, replacing it by another one, namely, a viper ancestry.[123] So, for John, instead of being Abraham's descendants, the Pharisees and Sadducees are offspring of vipers (3:7).

In Matt 23 the phrase *brood of vipers* operates in a similar way. As John the Baptist does with the scribes' and Pharisees' ancestry in Matt 3 (3:9), Jesus likewise replaces the scribes' and Pharisees' ancestry with the ancestry of a viper in Matt 23 (23:30, 32-33).[124] In Matt 23, however, the Matthean Jesus is more specific, adding a new element. The scribes' and Pharisees' ancestry is one full of blood and killing (23:30), an accusation that is shared by the scribes and Pharisees, whom, as mentioned, Jesus also accuses of being murderers (23:34-36).

From a pragmaphilological perspective, a quick look at how the word *viper* (ἔχιδνα) operates in other literature may help in determining what kind of murderer the saying is referring to. In the *Testament of Abraham*, for example, it is used in a figurative context as a general

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[122] According to John, the Pharisees and Sadducees think that having Abraham as father (3:9) will exclude them "from the wrath to come" (3:7). However, John argues that the only way of avoiding it is to "bear fruit worthy of repentance" (3:8,10). Therefore, by calling them a brood of vipers, the Matthean John undermines their heritage, which they think is enough "to flee from the wrath to come" (3:7).

[123] Cf. Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:304, who argue that the phrase *brood of vipers* "stands over against the self-designation, 'children of Abraham.'"

[124] Both pericopes use the noun πατήρ (father) when referring to ancestors. See 3:9; 23:30, 32. Unlike Matt 23, however, John links that ancestry to Abraham (3:9).

description of a specific kind of snake (*T. Ab*. 17:14; 19:14–15). In like manner, in New Testament documents, the word *viper* only occurs in Luke, echoing Matt 3:7 (Luke 3:7),[125] and Acts which portrays a poisonous snake (Acts 28:3, 6). Regarding this last occurrence, it seems that in Hellenistic literature, especially in one of the writings of the poet Nicander,[126] the term refers to a specific destructive and venomous snake.[127]

Nicander, additionally, informs readers that the (female) viper, as the viper-male covers her, "fastens upon him, tearing him with her foul fang, and cuts off the head of her mate (Nicander, *Ther*. 128-131 [Gow and Scholfield]). Nicander's description suggests that *vipers* are not only killers, but also murderers of their own kind, namely, their own family. In fact, Nicander informs that "in the act of birth the young vipers avenge their sire's destruction, since they gnaw through their mother's thin flank and thereby are born motherless" (*Ther*. 131-134).

In relation to the above, it seems that Keener is correct in arguing that the phrase "brood of vipers" in Matt 23 is used to denounce the scribes and Pharisees as parent-murderers.[128] However, as seen, vipers are also partner-murderers, which suggests a broader meaning, implying that vipers, in general, kill without distinction, including their own people. So, when in Matt 23 the Matthean Jesus affirms that the scribes and Pharisees "are descendants of those who murdered the prophets" (Matt 23:31), this means that they are also offspring (γέννημα)[129] of

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[125] Unlike Matthew's Gospel, however, Luke makes the crowds the recipient of John's designation (3:7)

[126] See Nicander, *Ther*. 129, 232, 334, 517, 673. Cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica,* 4.38.2; Pedanius Dioscorides, *Mat. med.* 2.19.1; 2.31.1; 2.41.2; 2.81.1; 5.14.1. Also (although implied) see Strabo, *Geogr*. 15.1.45, 73; Plutarch, *Crass*. 32.5.6; Pedanius Dioscorides, *Mat. med.* 3.45.5.

[127] See John Scarborough, *Pharmacy and Drug Lore in Antiquity: Greece, Rome, Byzantium* (Variorum collected studies series 904; Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), V:8-9. cf. Werner Foerster, "ἔχιδνα," *TDNT* 2:815-816. Pedanius Dioscorideson, on the other hand, advises his readers to use vipers' flesh or fat for medicinal reasons (Pedanius Dioscorides, *Mat. med.* 2.16.1, 2; 2.76.19). In this last case, it seems the term *viper* functions in a positive way.

[128] Keener, "'Brood of Vipers,'" 3-11.

[129] The term γέννημα describes what is produced or born, such as children or offspring, for

family-murderers, sharing their same guilt (23:29-32). Moreover, because the scribes and

Pharisees are also an offspring of vipers, they likewise act as assassins, as their parents do,

killing and crucifying, as Jesus announces, those whom he will send (23:34-35).

Another passage in which the phrase *brood of vipers* occurs is Matt 12:34. Overall, in

Matt 12 the expression functions as a condemnatory sentence against the Pharisees' words. In

this passage, the Pharisees argue that Jesus casts out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons

(12:24), when in fact Jesus drives them out by the Spirit of God (12:28-32). As the reader is

informed, Jesus considers blasphemous the Pharisees' inappropriate misidentification (12:31),

because, as he claims, "whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this

age or in the age to come" (12:32). In light of this tragic announcement, the reader can observe

that the phrase *brood of vipers* works in a setting in which what is said plays a significant role.[130]

In fact, after calling the Pharisees a brood of vipers, Jesus asks in Matt 12 how the

Pharisees can speak [λαλεῖν] good things when they are evil, considering that "out of the

abundance of the heart the mouth speaks [λαλεῖ]" (12:34). According to Jesus, "the evil person,"

a clear reference to the Pharisees, "brings evil things out of an evil treasure" (12:35), a

description that allows the reader to connect the phrase *brood of vipers* with careless words and

negative eschatological judgment (12:36-37). So, by calling the Pharisees a *brood of vipers* in

Matt 12, the Matthean Jesus is perhaps describing the Pharisees' words as the venom of a

viper,[131] portraying them as the brood that inflicts that venom.

The image presented above is seen in several scenes in Matthew's Gospel. As vipers, for

example, the scribes and Pharisees behave as toxic people when they face Jesus in Matthew's

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example. See BDAG, 194; and LSJ, 334.

[130] The constant repetition of the verbs λέγω (12:23–25, 31–32, 36) and λαλέω (12:36, 46), and the noun λόγος (12:32, 36–37), shows how important the role of *verbal interaction* is in this pericope.

[131] Cf. Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 113, 478, 855.

Gospel, delivering noxious venom when engaging in discussions or accusations (9:3, 11, 34; 12:2, 14, 24, 38; 15:1-2; 16:1, 6; 19:3; 21:15-16; 22:15, 34-35; 26:57; 27:41, 62). In Matt 23, the scribes and Pharisees described as vipers also inject venom in people's lives, by teaching them wrong and misleading instructions, focusing on incorrect aspects of the law or misinterpreting practical matters, for instance (23:1-28). Accordingly, it seems that the saying *brood of vipers* also works as a way of paralleling viper venom with the scribes' and Pharisees' words and teaching. The Matthean Jesus therefore not only accuses the scribes and Pharisees of being murderers of their own kind, but also destructive and poisonous teachers.

In summary, Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of homicide. By using images of snakes and vipers, Jesus condemns them, illustrating not only how harmful and dangerous the scribes and Pharisees are, but also how poisonous their instruction can be. That is the reason why the scribes and Pharisees are also ὑποκριταί, because they are inconsistent in what they say and what they do regarding killing prophets and righteous people. While they appear to be God's law-keepers, their actions show the inverse, which will be seen as the narrative advances. In fact, it seems that they, the scribes and Pharisees, are also ὑποκριταί because they pretend to respect or honour God's law, while they are in fact assassins. Ironically, God's law, according to Matthew's Gospel, says, "[y]ou shall not murder," which will be clearly broken by them on the occasion of Jesus' trial and crucifixion (26:1-27:66). So, it seems that Jesus' accusation prepares the reader for what is coming, namely, Jesus' trial and death at the hands of the Jewish leaders.

3. Jesus' (im)politeness and the scribes and Pharisees: Unlocking the encrypted world

The above data reveals a world in which (im)polite words are used in challenge-riposte contests. In the encrypted world of Matthew's Gospel, enemies interact in verbal battles, using

offensive designations as verbal ammunition. Whether such verbal interactions were also presented in other first-century encrypted worlds or not, is still an issue to consider. The analysis of this latter topic will be done in Chapter Seven. So far, what is clear is that from a pragmaphilological point of view, Jesus' (im)polite words and phrases are hostile and provocative in Matt 23 and other Hellenistic writings, and at times by way of offensiveness and sarcasm.

Due to the brevity of the data, there is no clear indication that any of Jesus' (im)polite words in Matt 23 explicitly operate as swear words *per se*. Although some of them describe situations in which speakers express their anger, such as μωρός and ὄφις, for example; at least in Hellenistic texts such designations do not seem to operate as swear words. Nonetheless, this does not mean that these two terms do not entail offensive and unpleasant meanings in Hellenistic writings. In fact, the reason for Jesus' (im)politeness is informed by that offensiveness. The above data indicates that Jesus' words function as weapons, having the purpose of not only silencing the scribes and Pharisees, but also shaming them, taking away their honour. According to Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees not only deceive themselves, having a wrong view of what true honour is; but also affect other people's lives, which, as Jesus claims, is dangerous. In view of this, Jesus' (im)politeness operates as a way of denouncing them in order to protect their audience against them. This element suggests an encrypted world in which (im)polite interactions are played out in order to prevent and warn people and audiences against wrong ideas, shaming those who dare to proclaim or teach what in the opinion of the attacker is wrong.

CHAPTER 4

GET AWAY BEHIND ME, SATAN! BEING (IM)POLITE WITH PETER

This chapter deals with Jesus' (im)politeness to Peter in Matt 16:21-23, in which the Matthean Jesus rejects and rebukes Peter by using (im)polite words. First, I study the passage from a narrative perspective, focusing on the general context where the passage is located (Matt 16:13-28). A narrative study will help in determining a literary purpose for the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness, evidencing a challenge-riposte contest. Second, I analyse the words σατανᾶς and σκάνδαλον uttered by Jesus against Peter (16:23). By using a pragmaphilological approach, I seek to establish in what way these two words operate in Matthew's Gospel and other Hellenistic writings, ascertaining negative functions and semantic meanings. By doing so, I seek to unlock the socio-rhetorical world encoded in Matthew's story.

1. Narrative analysis: Honour and shame in contrast

In this section I propose to read Jesus' (im)polite words to Peter in terms of their overall context. First, I examine Matt 16:13-20, in which Jesus praises Peter. Second, I analyse Matt 16:21-28, in which Jesus shames Peter. I suggest examining both pericopes as a single unit,[1] focusing on similarities and contrasts.[2] To my mind, in narrative terms, there is a rhetorical

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[1] Although Kingsbury [Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Structure of Matthew's Gospel and His Concept of Salvation-History," *CBQ* 35 (1973): 451-474; and Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (2 ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 40-93], among others [e.g. Tommy B. Slater, "Notes on Matthew's Structure," *JBL* 99 (1980): 436; and David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (JSNTSup 31; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989)] claims that the phrase ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο in Matt 16:21 indicates a new beginning; in my opinion this expression does not show a new start, but is a descriptive link between both scenes (16:13-20; 16:21-28). E.g. Frans Neirynck, "ΑΠΟ ΤΟΤΕ ΗΡΞΑΤΟ and the Structure of Matthew," *ETL* 64 (1988): 46-59; and Wim J. C. Weren, "The Macrostructure of Matthew's Gospel: A New Proposal," *Bib* 87 (2006): 178-180, 190-191.
[2] Cf. R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; London: The Tyndale Press, 1966), 161, who mentions similar connections regarding this pericope. Cf. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew in History: Interpretation, Influence, and Effects*

pattern across both passages, providing a narrative framework from which one can understand better Jesus' (im)polite words to Peter (see figure 1).

Matt 16:13-20 **Jesus praises Peter**	Matt 16:21-28 **Jesus rebukes Peter**
Jesus asks his disciples about himself (16:13-15)	Jesus explains to his disciples what is going to happen with him (16:21)
Peter answers (16:16)	Peter rebukes Jesus (16:22)
Jesus praises Peter (16:17-19)	Jesus rebukes Peter (16:23)
Jesus instructs his disciples (16:20)	Jesus instructs his disciples (16:24-28)

Fig. 1: Narrative pattern between Matt 16:13-20 and 16:21-28

1.1. Honouring Peter (Matt 16:13-20)

The geographical setting of Matt 16:13-20 is Caesarea Philippi (16:13), which, is only mentioned here in the Gospel.[3] In this area Jesus asks two questions of his disciples (16:13, 15), receiving two different replies (16:14, 16). Jesus and Peter's interaction is important, establishing a narrative difference.

1.1.1 Peter answers

Jesus asks two questions of his disciples. In the first, Jesus wants to know what *people* say about the identity of the *Son of Man* (16:13), a designation given to Jesus in Matthew's gospel (cf. 8:20; 11:19; 12:32).[4] According to the narrator, Jesus receives four responses. Some

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(Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 65, who claims that Matt 16:21-28 "seems to be an antithetical and chiastic reprise of 16:13-20.
[3] The narrator uses the noun μέρος in describing Caesarea Philippi, implying a geographical area (district or region), rather than a specific town. Cf. BDAG, 633. See, also, Matt 2:22 and 15:21.
[4] In Matthew's Gospel the title *Son of Man* is used by Jesus himself to describe his death (e.g. 17:12; 20:18; 26:2), resurrection (12:40; 17:9) and his parousia (10:23; 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64). Cf. Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Title Son of Man in Matthew's

think that he is John the Baptist (16:14a), others believe that he is either Elijah (16:14b),

Jeremiah (16:14c) or one of the prophets (16:14d). Despite these differences, however, these

characters have one feature in common in Matthew's Gospel: all of them can be considered

prophets.[5] This feature leads the reader to understand that people see Jesus in Matt 16 as a

prophet (16:14), which, as the narrative progresses, will become even clearer (21:1, 46).[6]

Three times in Matthew's story, prophets are paralleled with righteous people (10:41;

13:17; 23:29), which suggests their prominent position. Righteous people, for instance, are

presented in opposition to the unjust, sinners and hypocrites (5:45; 9:13; 13:40-43; 23:28; cf.

25:37, 41), showing that being called righteous involves "being in accordance with high

standards of rectitude."[7] Accordingly, in the narrative, people label Jesus in unmistakably

positive terms, assigning him honour and respect. In this sense, calling someone a prophet may

indicate an important status within the Matthean narrative world. Nonetheless, according to the

narrator, Jesus is more than that. He is the Messiah (cf. 1:1, 16-18).

In the second question, however, Jesus' messiahship is clearly revealed. In this question,

instead of asking about people's views in general, Jesus is interested in knowing the opinion of

his *disciples* (16:15). Peter is the only one who answers, calling him "the Messiah, the Son of the

living God" (16:16). It is not strange for the reader to read about Jesus' messiahship since he is

already named in this way early in the narrative (1:1; cf. 1:18).[8] The reader notices, however,

that it is always the implied author who refers to Jesus' messiahship before chapter 16.[9] In Matt

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Gospel," *CBQ* 37 (1975): 193-202.

[5] John the Baptist (3:1; 11:11-12; 14:2, 8; 17:13), Elijah (11:14; 17:3-4, 10-12; 27:47, 49) and Jeremiah (2:17; 27:9).

[6] M. Jack Suggs, "Matthew 16:13-20," *Int* 39 (1985): 292.

[7] BDAG, 246. In the passion narrative, Jesus is portrayed as a righteous man (27:19) who, because of the religious leaders' envy (27:18), dies unjustly (27:4, 24).

[8] Cf. 1:16 (cf. 1:17) in which the narrator explains that Joseph is the husband of Mary, "of whom was born Jesus, *who is called the Messiah*" (emphasis supplied).

[9] In Matt 2, the narrator depicts Herod calling the chief priests and the scribes to ask them where

16, on the other hand, it is Peter who calls Jesus the Messiah (16:16), becoming the first character to label Jesus in this way in Matthew's story (16:16). And even though three other characters will speak of Jesus' messiahship in the passion narrative (26:63, 68; 27:17, 22), the reader knows that unlike Peter's statement, none of these characters *claim* that Jesus is the Messiah.[10]

Peter also calls Jesus *Son of the living God* (16:16). The Matthean Jesus is called *Son of God* four times before Peter's statement (4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33). In the first three, the devil (4:1) and two demoniacs (8:28) name him in this way (4:3, 6; 8:29). The last time, it is the disciples (14:22) who state that Jesus is the *Son of God* (14:33). Therefore, even though Peter in Matt 16 addresses Jesus' messiahship for the first time, other characters, including the disciples, have referred to Jesus as the *Son of God* earlier. As the narrative unfolds, the reader is informed that Jesus is again called *Son of God* by several characters in the passion narrative (26:63; 27:40, 43, 54).[11] The implied author reports that the first of these characters, the high priest, wants to know if Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of God" (26:63). This is the second and last time, besides Peter's statement, where the term *Messiah* and *Son of God* are articulated together,[12] which could

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the Messiah would be born (2:4). Similarly, in Matt 11 the implied author informs the reader that John, who is in prison, hears what the Messiah was doing (11:2-3). In neither case the characters mention the word Messiah but the narrator.

[10] This is clear for the reader. First, the high priest asks Jesus if he is the Messiah (26:63). Jesus' answer allows the high priest to declare that Jesus has spoken blasphemy (26:65). Second, a group of unnamed characters, probably members of the Sanhedrin (cf. 26:59), make fun of Jesus, "saying, 'Prophesy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?'" (26:68). Third, in order to differentiate Jesus from Barabbas, Pilate calls Jesus the Messiah twice (27:17, 22).

[11] Besides the high priest, who is the first one in calling him Son of God in the passion narrative (26:63), the narrator mentions three groups of characters. The narrative setting in which these three groups of characters refer to Jesus as the Son of God is in the Golgotha (cf. 27:33). These are: (1) an unnamed group who are just passing by (27:39-40); (2) the chief priests, the scribes and elders (27:41-43); and (3) the centurion and those who are with him (27:54).

[12] The phrase "the Messiah, the Son of God" is presented verbatim by the narrator in both passages (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ [16:16; 26:63]). The only apparent difference is the word "living," added by Peter (the Son of the *living* [ζῶντος] God [emphasis supplied; 16:16]), which, however, appears in the question made by the high priest: "I put you under oath before the *living* [ζῶντος] God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God" (emphasis supplied;

imply a synonymous relationship between the two.[13] If this were the case, Peter is reasserting Jesus' messiahship calling him also *Son of God*. Therefore, according to the narrative, Peter thinks that Jesus is not just a prophet, but also *the Messiah*, the *Son of God*.

1.1.2. Jesus praises Peter

In reply, Jesus calls Peter μακάριος, which in Matthew's Gospel describes those who are favoured by specific circumstances (5:3-11; 11:6; 13:16; 16:17; 24:46),[14] evoking in each case a very high distinction.[15] By doing so, the Matthean Jesus confers honour on Peter, which is clearly underlined when Jesus calls him by his name (16:17-18). As the reader knows, Peter is the first and only disciple whom Jesus identifies by name in the Gospel of Matthew (cf. 17:25),[16] indicating appreciation and distinctiveness in relation to his peers.[17] Indeed, Jesus accentuates Peter's honour by calling him "Simon son of Jonah" (16:17). This reveals that Jesus acknowledges and positively evaluates Peter's ascribed honour.

Jesus claims that Peter's answer is not the product of flesh and blood (σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα) but by God's revelation (16:17b). In Matthew's story, the verb ἀποκαλύπτω (to reveal) is used in the

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26:63).

[13] Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Title 'Son of God' in Matthew's Gospel," *BTB* 5 (1975): 3-31.

[14] BDAG, 610-611.

[15] In the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-8:1), for example, those who are blessed either will see God (5:8) or will inherit the earth (5:5). Likewise, in Matt 13, Jesus asserts that unlike those who cannot understand his teaching (13:13), the disciples are blessed because they can see and hear (13:16), adding that "many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it" (13:17). So, calling someone μακάριος in the Gospel of Matthew implies a high distinction, given by God, which prophets and righteous people would have wanted to receive also.

[16] Besides Peter, Jesus mentions John the Baptist (11:4, 11-13, 18; 21:25, 32), Elijah (11:14; 17:11, 12), Moses (19:8) and Daniel (24:15) by their names. In none of these cases, however, does Jesus refer to one of his disciples.

[17] The narrator mentions the name of Peter (4:18; 8:14; 10:2; 14:28-29; 15:15; 16:16, 18, 22-23; 17:1, 4, 24; 18:21; 19:27; 26:33, 35, 37, 40, 58, 69, 73, 75) or Simon (4:18; 10:2; 16:16-17; 17:25) several times in Matthew's story, locating him in a distinctive position in relation to his peers.

sense of disclosing something in order to be fully known (10:26; 11:25, 27).[18] In Matt 16 the

term ἀποκαλύπτω is employed in a similar way, accentuating that it was not by flesh and blood

(σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα), namely human understanding,[19] that Peter knew about Jesus' messiahship but

by the father in heaven (16:17). In other words, Jesus praises Peter not only for his response but

also for the revelation received from God (16:17), who has chosen him "to be the honored

recipient of the fundamental revelation of who Jesus is."[20]

    After praising Peter for his response, Jesus says, "on this rock [πέτρα] I will build my

church" (16:18), promising also to give him the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" (16:19). The

first reference is obscure. Since there is a grammatical gender disagreement between πέτρα, a

feminine noun, and Πέτρος, a masculine noun, it is complicated, at least from a syntactic

perspective,[21] to determine the identity of the rock mentioned by Jesus.[22] In fact, the probable

existence of a wordplay encoded in the Matthean text between Semitic and Greek

terminologies,[23] which might help the reader/hearer to understand the word πέτρα as referring to

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[18] L&N, 1:338. Cf. Matt 11:25, in which Jesus praises his father "for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing [ἀπεκάλυψας] them to little children."
[19] The reader understands the word σάρξ in terms of physical body or human being (e.g. 19:5, 6; 24:22; 26:40-41; cf. BDAG, 915). Likewise, regarding the use of the noun αἷμα, it is commonly employed it in reference to people's life by the narrator (23:30, 35; 26:28; 27:3-4, 24; cf. BDAG, 26). Accordingly, the reader interprets that the narrator is using both terms together as a reference to human understanding.
[20] Hare, *Matthew*, 189.
[21] It is not clear for the reader, because there is no direct antecedent for ταύτῃ since πέτρα has not been used before in the pericope. In Matt 7:24-25, on the other hand, the antecedent of πέτρα is οἰκία (house), which is also feminine, allowing the reader to understand the relationship between *rock* and *house*. Moreover, there is no syntactic agreement between σὺ εἶ Πέτρος (you are Peter), where Jesus addresses Peter using a personal pronoun, and ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ (on this rock), where Jesus uses a demonstrative pronoun (ταύτῃ).
[22] The interpretation of Matt 16:18, as Ulrich Luz claims, "has been a battleground for exegetes for a long time." See Ulrich Luz's claim, "The Primacy Text (Mt 16:18)," *PSB* 12 (1991): 41.
[23] E.g. Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr: A Historical and Theological Study* (rev. and enl. ed. London: SCM Press, 1962), 192-193; Thomas J. Finley, "'Upon This Rock': Matthew 16.18 and the Aramaic Evidence," *Aramaic Studies* 4 (2006): 133-151; and Agustín del Agua, "Derás narrativo del sobrenombre de 'Pedro' en el conjunto De Mt 16,17-19: Un caso particular de la escuela exegética de Mateo," *Salm* 39 (1992): 17-32.

Peter, is also ambiguous.[24] This may suggest that the Matthean Jesus might not be referring to Peter, but something different,[25] which for the reader is not simple to ascertain.[26] This issue ends, however, when the reader reads the next reference in which Jesus clearly refers to Peter (16:19), promising to give him "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (16:19).

According to the Matthean Jesus, the keys will allow Peter to bind and loose on earth, which will be replicated in heaven (16:19b). As the narrative unfolds, the same image of tying and untying appears again in Matt 18 (18:18). In this specific case, however, Jesus words are in the plural, promising the act of binding and loosing to his disciples (cf. 18:1-3), who are the hearers of the whole section (18:1-20). Hence, it is possible to think that Peter is acting as a representative of the whole group in Matt 16:19,[27] placing him again in a position of honour and distinctiveness in Matthew's Gospel.

The narrator ends this scene by commenting that Jesus "sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah" (16:20), which reminds the reader of other scenes with similar negative orders (8:4; 9:30). The difference now, however, is that this is the first time in which Jesus assumes his messiahship in the narrative.[28] In other words, according to the implied

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[24] See Chrys C. Caragounis, *Peter and the Rock* (BZNW 58; Berlin: Gruyter, 1990), 9-57. Cf. William Arthur Wordsworth, "The Rock and the Stones," *EvQ* 20 (1948): 9-15. See also Raymond E. Brown et al., *Peter in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974), 93, who recognize that other interpretations, besides the wordplay πέτρα and Πέτρος, are also possible.
[25] Caragounis, *Peter and the Rock*, 88-89.
[26] Some scholars think that the Matthean Jesus is refering to Peter [e.g. Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle,* Martyr, 212-217; Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Figure of Peter in Matthew's Gospel as a Theological Problem," *JBL* 98 (1979): 76. Others believe that it is a reference to Peter's statement in which he confesses Jesus' messiahship [e.g. Herbert Morrison Gale, "A Suggestion Concerning Matthew 16," *JBL* 60 (1941): 255-260; Henry A. Corcoran, "Viewing Biblical Narratives Through a Literary Lens: Practicing Narrative Analysis on Matthew 16: 16-20," *Christian Education Journal* 7 (2010): 308]. On the other hand, some scholars affirm that Jesus is referencing himself [e.g. See Victor Armenteros, "A Rock in the Path: Possible Jewish Readings of Matthew 16:18," *DL* 8 (2009): 59-73; Oscar Jacob Frank Seitz, "Upon this Rock: A Critical Re-Examination of Matt 16:17-19," *JBL* 69 (1950): 340.
[27] Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 211-212.
[28] After Matt 16 there are two possible self-references made by Jesus regarding his messiahship.

author, Peter was correct in his statement, endorsing the achieved honour received from Jesus (16:13-20).

In summary, Jesus acknowledges Peter's response by labelling him in positive terms. Peter's honour is attained because of his answer, positioning him on a high and very distinguished level within the narrative world of Matthew's Gospel. In other words, Peter has successfully passed the challenge-riposte presented by Jesus.

1.2. Shaming Peter (Matt 16:21-28)

The narrator starts Matt 16:21-28 with the phrase ἀπό τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς (from that time on Jesus began; 16:21), an expression that is already known to the reader (4:17; cf. 26:16).[29] By using this phrase, the narrator places the story in an indeterminate geographical and temporal setting.[30] And even though the narrator does not explicitly inform the reader where the story of the pericope takes place, it is clear that it happens *after* the events of the previous section (16:13-20), connecting both pericopes into one narrative flow (16:13-28).[31] In this last scene, however, Jesus' attitude towards Peter changes, which dramatically contrasts with the events registered before.

In the first one, Matt 24:5, the Matthean Jesus uses an indirect statement ("many will come using *my name* and saying, '*I am the Christ*,' and they will deceive many" [emphasis supplied; cf. 22:41-46); in the second one, on the other hand, Jesus is quite clear in affirming his messiahship ("tell us if you are the *Messiah*, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, '*You have said so*.'" [emphasis supplied 26:63-64).

[29] As mentioned before, the phrase ἀπό τότε ἤρξατο does not necessarily mean that the narrator is starting a new theme in Matthew's Gospel [e.g. Kingsbury, "Structure of Matthew's Gospel," 451-474; and Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 40-93], but only linking what follows with what precedes [e.g. Neirynck, "ΑΠΟ ΤΟΤΕ ΗΡΞΑΤΟ and the Structure of Matthew," 46-59].

[30] The next geographical marker is in Matt 17:22, which informs the reader that the disciples (cf. 17:19) "were gathering in Galilee" along with Jesus. This may mean that the events of Matt 16:21-28 could also be located in the region of Caesarea Philippi. However, the text does not say anything about that, therefore, for the reader, the geographical setting of the events recorded in Matt 16:21-28 remains unknown.

[31] This does not mean, however, that the pericope begins *immediately* after the events described in the preceding narrative unit. The intention of the narrator, as the reader observes, is just to notify that after Peter's statement Jesus explains to his disciples what will happen with him in Jerusalem (16:21).

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1.2.1. Peter rebukes Jesus

The story opens up with Jesus explaining to his disciples that he δεῖ, namely, *must* go to Jerusalem "and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (16:21). As the narrative progresses, the verb δεῖ is used to indicate obligation of any kind (18:33; 23:23; 24:6; 25:27), "often with the implication of inevitability" (cf. 17:10; 26:35, 54).[32] By using the verb δεῖ the narrator is stating from the beginning the unavoidability of what Jesus is going to predict, namely, his death and resurrection. In fact, as the story advances, Jesus' prediction about his death and resurrection is repeated and developed further (17:22-23; 20:17-19; 26:2),[33] stressing the inevitability and importance of Jesus' fate (16:21).

As a result of Jesus' prediction, Peter is described as taking Jesus aside (προσλαβόμενος; 16:22a). The verb προσλαμβάνω in its middle voice conveys the sense to take or lead off somebody to oneself,[34] which means that Peter leads Jesus "away from the others" (16:22a),[35] describing not just a simple movement, but also a personal conversation between Jesus and Peter.[36] According to the narrator, after taking Jesus to himself, Peter begins (ἄρχω) to rebuke him. The use of the verb ἄρχω, also in its middle voice (to begin), reminds the reader what the narrator has said one verse before about Jesus (16:21). There, the implied author states that Jesus

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[32] L&N, 1:671.

[33] The development of these predictions is done in the passion narrative. In Matt 17 Jesus affirms that he will be παραδίδοσθαι (handed over) into the hands of men (17:22). Then, in the passion narrative, Judas is described as handing him over (26:15-16, 21, 23-25, 45-46, 48; 27:3). Likewise, in Matt 20 Jesus also says that the religious leader "will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified" (20:19). Then, in the passion narrative, Jesus is mocked (27:29, 31, 41) and crucified (27:35). Finally, in Matt 26 Jesus informs his disciples that he will be handed over and crucified at the Passover (26:2).

[34] BDAG, 883.

[35] Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 528.

[36] The text does not say, however, that Peter and Jesus are chatting privately [Cf. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 688]. In fact, Matt 16:24 informs readers that after Peter's words Jesus talks to his disciples. In this sense, it seems that the scene happens in public, namely, in front of Jesus' other disciples.

began to show (ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς δεικνύειν) his disciples that he must suffer and die (16:21). In Matt 16:22, however, the narrator states that Peter began (ἤρξατο) to reproach Jesus for having said that, contradicting Jesus' statement.

The reader is informed that Peter starts to rebuke (ἐπιτιμᾶν) Jesus. The verb ἐπιτιμάω, which derives from τιμάω, meaning *to honour*, is commonly used in the sense of blaming or rebuking.[37] In Matthew's Gospel it expresses a strong disapproval of someone (19:13; 20:31),[38] often to prevent something (12:16).[39] It is also employed as a command, "with the implication of a threat," such as, for example, the occasion when Jesus rebukes the winds and the waves in Matt 8 (8:26).[40] Therefore, according to the reader, when Peter rebukes Jesus in Matt 16 (16:23), he is not only censuring Jesus for what he has said but also ordering him to avoid the adverse fate he has announced.[41]

Accordingly, despite the inevitability of Jesus' prediction, Peter disagrees, reproaching him in order to convince Jesus to change his mind.[42] The narrator depicts Peter's words and

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[37] Ethelbert Stauffer, " ἐπιτιμάω," *TDNT* 2:623-624.
[38] L&N, 1:435.
[39] Cf. George A. Barton, "The Use of ἐπιτιμάω in Mark 8:30 and 3:12," *JBL* 41 (1922): 234-235; and BDAG, 384.
[40] L&N, 1:425. Cf. Matt 17:18, in which Jesus rebukes a demon who possesses a boy, commanding it to come out.
[41] The verb ἐπιτιμάω also evokes the act of censorship and command in Matt 19:13 and 20:31. The intensity of Peter's words is made clear when he addresses Jesus saying ἵλεώς σοι, Lord (16:22c). The adjective ἵλεως along with the pronoun σύ should be taken together, considering them as an idiomatic phrase, meaning either "mercy to you" [Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 528] or "far be it from," [BDF, 71] establishing a synonymous correspondence with the second clause (οὐ μὴ ἔσται σοι τοῦτο), in which Peter, in order to prevent Jesus' death, uses a double negation (οὐ μὴ), telling him: "this must never happen to you" (16:22d). In any case, by using this phrase, the narrator presents Peter protesting against Jesus' prediction [cf. Friedrich Büchsel, "ἵλεως," *TDNT* 3:301.], maybe because Peter wants to protect Jesus [cf. Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 2:142].
[42] James M. Efird, "Matthew 16:21-27," *Int* 35 (1981): 286.

actions using strong terms, which are intended to serve as a trigger for Jesus' response in the next narrative portion (16:23).[43]

1.2.2. Jesus rebukes Peter (16:23)

After listening to Peter's words, Jesus turns (στραφεὶς) and faces Peter (16:23a). Depending on the context, the verb στρέφω (to turn) can depict either the action of turning back with the purpose of attacking someone (7:6) or can be used to describe an individual who wants to see or talk with another person (9:22).[44] In narrative terms, the narrator may be using the verb in both ways, which is confirmed as soon as Jesus addresses Peter employing (im)polite expressions.

Jesus rejects Peter's advice telling him "Get behind me" (ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου), calling him also σατανᾶς [Satan] and describing him as σκάνδαλον (16:23). These latter two terms (σατανᾶς and σκάνδαλον) will be analysed in depth in the pragmaphilological section, demonstrating the strength and (im)politeness of Jesus' rebuke. In any case, the initial phrase ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου (16:23a) illustrates very well Jesus' (im)politeness toward Peter. The verb ὑπάγω appears for the first time in Matt 4 when Jesus rejects Satan in the desert (4:10). In both cases, ὑπάγω is used in the imperative mood and in the second grammatical person,[45] meaning probably "go away" or "be gone."[46] Accordingly, the phrase ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου along with the designation

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[43] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 634.
[44] Cf. BDAG, 948. The verb στρέφω is a participle in Matt 16:22 (στραφεὶς), which is dependent upon the verb λέγω (to say) in the sentence structure. This means that its translation is based on the main verb (λέγω), which implies that the narrator is describing Jesus turning back with the purpose of facing and talking to Peter.
[45] In Matthew's story, with the exception of Matt 13:44 and 26:24, the verb ὑπάγω is always in the imperative and in the second person (plural or singular). See 4:10; 5:24, 41; 8:4, 13, 32; 9:6; 16:23; 18:15; 19:21; 20:4, 7, 14; 21:28; 26:18; 27:65; 28:10.
[46] See BDAG, 1028.

σατανᾶς [Satan] evoke the scene when the devil tempts Jesus in the desert (4:10),[47] giving to

Peter a symbolic satanic role in the scene.[48]

Unlike Matt 4, however, in which Jesus orders the devil to stay away from him (4:10), in

Matt 16:23a the Matthean Jesus also adds the improper preposition ὀπίσω, which means "after"

when it takes a genitive. So, although Jesus commands Peter to stay away, suggesting a public

reprimand,[49] by telling him ὀπίσω μου, he also asks Peter to *get behind him*, an expression that in

Matthew's Gospel commonly functions as an invitation to discipleship (4:19; 10:38; 16:24).[50]

The reason why Jesus rejects Peter calling him σατανᾶς and σκάνδαλον is explained in

the next clause, in which Peter is accused of not having in mind the things of God, but human

things (16:23c).[51] The sentence is formed around two different characters (16:23), God and

humans, who are united by the verb φρονέω (to think). Because they are separated by the

conjunction ἀλλά (but), the reader sees them as two opposite elements in the sentence,[52] which

are evaluated by Jesus differently. On the one hand, thinking about the things of God is

acceptable, while putting the mind to human things is improper.

As in 16:20, the narrator ends the scene with Jesus addressing his disciples (16:24). The

pericope starts with the adverb τότε (then), which sometimes is used by the narrator as a

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[47] E.g. Alexander Sand, *Das Evangelium nach Mathäus* (RNT; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1986), 338; and Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 689.
[48] Cf. Ulrich Luck, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (ZBK; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1993), 191.
[49] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 634.
[50] Dennis C. Stoutenburg, "'Out of my Sight!', 'Get behind me!', or 'Follow after me!': There is no Choice in God's Kingdom," *JETS* 36 (1993): 173-178.
[51] The narrator connects this sentence to the previous ones, in which Jesus rebukes Peter calling him σατανᾶς and σκάνδαλον (16:23), by using the conjunction ὅτι. Because the conjunction ὅτι is linking what was mentioned before, the reader understands it as an explanation. In grammar terms, this is a *causal clause*. The usual and most common construction of causal clauses is with ὅτι and the indicative, like in 16:17 and 16:23. See Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Biblical Language: Greek 2; 2d ed. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 237. Cf. Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 234, who also sees the next sentence as an explanation.
[52] Before Matt 16, the conjunction ἀλλά (but) is commonly used in adversative terms. See Matt 4:4; 5:15, 17, 39; 6:13, 18; 7:21; 8:4, 8; 9:12–13, 17–18, 24; 10:20, 34; 13:21; 15:11.

continuity marker.[53] Therefore, it seems there is a narrative progression between the previous

paragraph and this one. For the reader, the camera lens has now moved to the disciples, who are

the recipients of Jesus' words.

Unlike Peter who has previously instructed Jesus to elude the adverse destiny he has

pronounced (16:22), Jesus, on the other hand, claims, "[w]hoever wishes to come after [ὀπίσω]

me must deny himself, take up his cross [σταυρός], and follow me," accentuating that those who

want to save their life will lose it (16:24-25 NAB).[54] The reader notices that the implied author is

using again the improper preposition ὀπίσω (16:24). In Matt 16:23 Jesus rejects Peter, telling

him, ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου (go away behind me). Now, however, Jesus invites his disciples to come

ὀπίσω (after) him, which is understood by the reader as a request to follow Jesus (16:24).

Accordingly, and considering the way the improper preposition ὀπίσω works in

Matthew's story (4:19; 10:38), Jesus' (im)polite rebuke against Peter can also be understood in

terms of discipleship. The Matthean Jesus reproaches Peter, because he does not understand

what following Jesus means. That is why he invites Peter to get behind him, inviting him,

together with the other disciples, to "focus his attention on the necessity of unconditional

obedience in discipleship."[55] From this perspective, Jesus' (im)polite words operate as a way of

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[53] Cf. Matt 2:7, 16: 4:1; 15:12; 16:24; 17:19; 18:21: 19.27; 22:15; 23:1; 26:14; 27:3; 27:27. See a discussion about the use of τότε in Matthew's Gospel in Stephanie L. Black, "Sentence Conjunctions in the Gospel of Matthew: Καί, Δὲ, Τότε, Γαρ, Οὖν and Asyndeton in Narrative Discourse" (Ph.D. diss., University of Surrey, 2000), 193-228.

[54] See also the presence of the noun σταυρός (cross; 16:24). From a narrative perspective, it seems that in Matt 16 Jesus is reminding his disciples, including Peter, about what it means to follow him. Following Jesus, according to the narrator, involves being able to die in order to live (10:39; 16:25), which is stressed by mentioning the term σταυρός (cross). As the narrative unfolds, the implication of taking up the σταυρός (cross) becomes clear for the reader. It is Jesus who dies on the cross (27:32-50), suffering the ridicule (27:40, 42). In this regard, Jesus is inviting his disciples, in particular Peter, to accept a hostile destiny, presenting honour as embodied in responding positively to this challenge.

[55] Cf. Stoutenburg, "'Out of my Sight!'" 173-178.

making Peter see reason, functioning as a rhetorical strategy by which the reader can see how important Jesus' fate is.

There are other examples in Matthew's Gospel in which the Matthean Jesus rebukes his disciples using (im)polite terms when facing failure. On more than one occasion the Matthean Jesus calls them ὀλιγόπιστος (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8), meaning "ones of little faith or trust,"[56] which he uses as a rebuke against his disciples for having no confidence in what God and Jesus can do for them.[57] In Matt 8, for instance, Jesus' disciples show fear while Jesus is sleeping and a furious storm arises on the sea (8:23-27). The narrator informs the reader that Jesus' disciples wake Jesus, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing" (8:25). Jesus' response is immediate, calling them ὀλιγόπιστοι (of little faith), which functions in two ways. It operates as a way of censuring them for their fear during the storm, and for their lacking confidence in Jesus' power (8:26).[58] It works also as an invitation to discipleship, addressing their failure and giving them strength and courage when facing distress.[59] Accordingly, the Matthean Jesus sometimes rebukes his disciples using (im)polite designations when, for instance, they fail in their trust or lack understanding of him.

In summary, Matt 16:13-20 and Matt 16:21-28 show differences and contrasts between two interactions. In the first (16:13-20), Jesus honours Peter calling him blessed. Here, Peter achieves his honour due to his response, in which he acknowledges and confesses Jesus' messiahship. Besides, Peter is blessed *because* (ὅτι) he did not learn Jesus' messiahship by human means *but* (ἀλλά) by revelation of the Father (16:23). In the second (16:21-28), however,

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[56] E.g. LSJ, 1214; BDAG, 702.

[57] Cf. Jeannine K. Brown, *The Disciples in Narrative Perspective: The Portrayal and Function of the Matthean Disciples* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 106-107.

[58] William Thompson, "Reflections on the Composition of Mt 8:1-9:34," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 374; and Brown, *The Disciples in Narrative Perspective*, 104.

[59] David R. Bauer, "The Major Characters of Matthew's Story: Their Function and Significance," *Int* 46 (1992): 362-363.

Peter is shamed, losing his honour before Jesus. In this passage, Peter is rejected because he advises Jesus not to follow the Messianic path as presented by Jesus himself. Peter is rejected, and called σατανᾶς and described as σκάνδαλον *because* (ὅτι) he is "thinking not as God does, *but* [ἀλλά] as human beings do" (NAB).[60] In other words, whilst in the first case Peter successfully negotiates the challenge-riposte, in the second one he clearly fails.[61] The strength of Jesus' rebuke is better appreciated when examining the terms σατανᾶς [Satan] and σκάνδαλον (16:23) using a pragmaphilological approach; a task that will be done in the following section.

2. Pragmaphilological analysis: σατανᾶς and σκάνδαλον

As already stated, a pragmaphilological approach examines the way words operate in texts, seeking to establish a synchronic sense of their function and to evaluate meanings in specific texts. In what follows, I analyse two words, σατανᾶς and σκάνδαλον, exploring Matthew's Gospel and other Hellenistic materials in which these two terms are used. In doing so, I intend to demonstrate the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness when using these two words.

2.1. The term σατανᾶς

From a pragmaphilological perspective, the word σατανᾶς is only used negatively in Hellenistic literature. In the *Testament of Job*, for instance, which retells the story of the book of *Job*, σατανᾶς is portrayed in an unquestionably despicable way.[62] He is described, mainly in the first part of the book, as Job's adversary,[63] showing vile personality features (e.g. *T. Job* 6:4; 7:6, 12; 16:2; 23:1, 3, 11; 27:1; 41:5). He "is deceitful, personally vengeful, and works for the moral

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[60] Emphasis supplied.
[61] Cf. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 88.
[62] Christopher Begg, "Comparing Characters: The Book of Job and the Testament of Job," in *The Book of Job* (BETL 114; Leuven: Peters, 1994), 439-440.
[63] See Bradford A. Kirkegaard, "Satan in the Testament of Job: A Literary Analysis," in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture: Volume 2: Later Versions and Traditions* (LSTS 51; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 5-13.

deterioration of human beings."[64] An important aspect in the *Testament of Job* is that σατανᾶς is also called διάβολος (3:3; 17:1; 26:6), both terms being used synonymously.

In Matthew's Gospel, as in New Testament writings generally, the terms σατανᾶς and διάβολος are not only used in an interchangeable manner (Rev 12:9; 20:2) but also as given names.[65] In Matt 4, for example, while the narrator calls the tempter διάβολος (Matt 4:1, 5, 8, 11),[66] Jesus, on the other hand, addresses him as σατανᾶς (4:10), rendering the same character with different names.[67] This connection is important, helping readers to strengthen their negative notion of Satan. In narrative terms, the description of the διάβολος in Matthew's Gospel is absolutely negative for the reader. First, the word itself means *slanderer*.[68] This negative meaning, however, becomes clearer as Matthew's story goes on. In addition to Matt 4, in which the devil is portrayed as Jesus' antagonist, Matt 13, for example, depicts him as the ἐχθρὸς (enemy), who sows the bad seed in the parable of the weeds (13:38-39; cf. 13:25, 28). However, it is the *Son of Man*, namely, Jesus (cf. 8:20; 11:19; 12:32), who first sows the good seed in the same parable (13:37; cf. 13:24), which may suggest a battle between Jesus and the διάβολος for

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[64] Jennifer Ann Glancy, "Satan in the Synoptic Gospels" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1990), 18.

[65] Mark 1:13; 3:23, 26; 4:15; 8:33; Luke 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3, 31; John 13:27; Acts 5:3; 26:18; Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:15; Rev 2:9, 13, 24; 3:9; 12:9; and 20:2, 7. Moreover, he is also called the temper, as in Matthew's Gospel, (Matt 4:3; 1 Thess 3:5) and Beliar or Belial (2 Cor 6:15), as in the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs (*T. Iss.* 7:7; *T. Benj.* 3:8), among other names. See Enrique López Fernández, "'Satán,' De Nombre Común a Nombre Propio. Historia De Una Palabra," *Studium Ovetense* 17 (1989): 77. Likewise, the term διάβολος, as a given name, appears in Luke 4:2-3, 6, 13; 8:12; John 6:70; 8:44; 13:2; Acts 10:38; 13:10; Eph 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim 3:6-7; 2 Tim 2:26; Heb 2:14; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8; 1 John 3:8, 10; Jude 1:9; Rev 2:10; 12:9, 12; 20:2, 10.

[66] The διάβολος is characterized as a personal character in the Gospel of Matthew. For example, he tempts Jesus in person (cf. Matt 4:3, 11), receiving the rejection of Jesus as if it the διάβολος were someone who could be refused (cf. 4:10). Moreover, he can talk to Jesus (cf. 4:3, 5-6, 9), he can take and transport him (4:5, 8) and he knows and cites the Hebrew Bible (4:6).

[67] See Robert Charles Branden, *Satanic Conflict and the Plot of Matthew* (Studies in Biblical Literature 89; New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 43.

[68] BDAG, 226-227.

influence over human lives.[69] In other words, the διάβολος is "depicted as the one who sows lawlessness among humanity," which may explain why in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches his listeners to pray to be delivered "from the evil one" (6:13).[70]

Although it is not conclusive, it seems that in the LXX the term σατανᾶς is used as a proper name only in *Sirach* (Sir 21:27),[71] other books preferring διάβολος instead (e.g. 1 Chr 21:1; Ps 108:6 [109:6]; Job 1:6-7, 9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7; Zech 3:1-2). The problem emerges, however, in establishing if διάβολος refers to a proper name or is just employed as a narrative designation.[72] In any case, as a personal name, διάβολος appears in the LXX in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, which states that "through the envy of the devil death entered the world" (Wis 2:24).[73] In this, the writer is not only associating envy and death with the devil, showing the perversity of his deeds, but also linking him with the serpent of Genesis 3, which tempts and deceives the human race.[74] This relationship is quite clear in the Greek text of the *Life of Adam and Eve*, where the devil, who is also called Satan (*L.A.E.* 17:1), is openly presented as the tempter, retelling the story of Genesis 3 (Gen 3:1-7; cf. *L.A.E.* 15:3-16:2; 16:5; 17:4; 21:3). In the *Life of*

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[69] Glancy, "Satan in the Synoptic Gospels," 128.

[70] Glancy, "Satan in the Synoptic Gospels," 145. This implies that the phrase τοῦ πονηροῦ is a way of describing the *Evil One*, namely, Satan. About this assumption see, e.g. Raymond Edward Brown, *New Testament Essays* (New York: Image Books, 2010), 320-322; and Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:614-615.

[71] López, "'Satán,' de nombre común a nombre propio. Historia de una palabra," 28. Contra, John J. Collins, "Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach," in *Oxford Bible Commentary* (ed. John Barton and John Muddiman; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 681.

[72] For example, Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31, suggests that the term διάβολος should be interpreted in the LXX in terms of a given name. Contra, John G. Gammie, "The Angelology and Demonology in the Septuagint of the Book of Job," *HUCA* 56 (1985): 12-13, who asserts that at least in the book of Job, the word διάβολος should be interpreted as adversary.

[73] See William Horbury, "The Wisdom of Solomon," in *Oxford Bible Commentary* (eds. John Barton and John Muddiman; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 655.

[74] See Ernest G. Clarke, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 27.

Adam and Eve, the devil is described as an angelic opponent,[75] who employs a serpent (*L.A.E.* 17:4), which is also deluded by him (16:1-5), in order to deceive Adam and Eve (17:1-21:6).

Similarly, as in the two examples above, in Matt 4 the devil, or Satan, acts as a tempter (Matt 4:1-11), who tries to prevent Jesus' mission,[76] but is rejected strongly by the Matthean Jesus (4:4, 7, 10). In Matt 16, likewise, Jesus rejects Peter with the same passion and in the same manner with which he resists the devil, i.e., σατανᾶς in Matt 4 (4:10; 16:23),[77] which confirms that Peter is acting as the devil in the wilderness, tempting Jesus to avoid what he has previously said about his death. A similar association is seen in Mark's Gospel in which the Markan Jesus also rejects a character named Peter calling him also Satan (Mark 8:33).[78] Besides these two examples, however, there is no other Hellenistic text in which the term Satan is used against people as a rebuke. The closest one is Rev 2:9, where it is used to refer to "those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." In each of these cases, however, Satan is not used as a swear word *per se*, but probably as an offensive and negative name calling designation.

Another significant aspect regarding the term Satan occurs in Matt 25, in which Jesus announces the devil's punishment in an "eternal fire prepared for" him "and his angels" (Matt 25:41). In mentioning the devil's angels, Jesus portrays him as the chief of the demons. This leadership is made clear in Matt 12. Here, while the Pharisees accuse Jesus of driving out demons by Beelzebul, "the ruler of the demons" (12:24),[79] Jesus refers to Beelzebul as Satan

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[75] A. Piñero, "Angels and Demons in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve," *JSJ* (1993): 203.
[76] Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 55.
[77] Edwards, *Matthew's Story*, 61.
[78] Satan in Mark's story is described as a personal character, displaying negative images in several passages. See Mark 1:13; 3:23, 26; 4:15.
[79] For the reader, however, it is in Matt 9 in which Jesus is for first time accused of casting out demons by the ruler of the demons (9:34). In both cases it is the Pharisees who accuse Jesus (9:34; 12:24). Cf. Matt 11:18 in which John the Baptist is accused of something similar.

(12:26), using both terms interchangeably.[80] Thus, in relating Satan to Beelzebul, Matthew's

Gospel portrays the devil as the prince or leader of the demons.[81]

Other Hellenistic texts name various demoniac leaders in different ways.[82] In *Jubilees*,

for example, prince Mastema is the chief of the evil spirits (*Jub.* 10:7-8),[83] functioning as

humankind's antagonist (e.g. 11:5, 10; 17:16; 19:28; 49:2). It is he who, among other things,

helps the Egyptians in their intent to destroy Moses and Israel in the Exodus (48:9-18).[84] In

Jubilees, Mastema is clearly identified with Satan (10:11. Cf. 23:29),[85] associating the same

"leading demonic figure,"[86] but with different names.[87] So, it is interesting for the reader to

observe that Peter is not called *demon* but *Satan* in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 16:23). Therefore, if

Beelzebul, namely Satan, is the ruler of the demons, so Peter is compared to the chief, i.e., the

devil.

From a pragmaphilological perspective, what emerges from this analysis is that the word

σατανᾶς operates in negative contexts, evoking adverse meanings in literary texts. Although it is

never used as a profanity, it seems that it can be utilized in offensive ways when rebuking. In

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[80] See Branden, *Satanic Conflict*, 62; and Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 373.
[81] The term ἄρχων can be translated as both ruler and prince. BDAG, 140.
[82] E.g., Satan (*T. Dan* 5:6; 6:1; *T. Gad* 4:7; *T. Asher* 6:4), Satanael (*2 En.* 18:3; 31:4), Semyaz (*1 En.* 6:3; 8:3; 9:7; 10:11), Azaz'el (*1 En.* 54:5; 55:4) and Beliar (*T. Iss.* 7:7; *T. Benj.* 3:8). See George A. Barton, "The Origin of the Names of Angels and Demons in the Extra-Canonical Apocalyptic Literature to 100 A.D," *JBL* 31 (1912): 159-167; and López, "'Satán,' de nombre común a nombre propio," 49-52.
[83] J.C. VanderKam, "The Demons in the Book of Jubilees," in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt* (eds. Armin Lange et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 345.
[84] Among other things, is Mastema who sends spirits to "those who were set under his hands to practice error and sin and all trangressions, to destroy, to cause to perish and to pour out blood upon the earth" (*Jub.* 11:5). See also *Jub.* 11:10–12; 17:16.
[85] Philip S. Alexander, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (ed. Peter W. Flint and C. Vanderkam; 2 Vols; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2: 341-344.
[86] Andy M. Reimer, "Rescuing the Fallen Angels: The Case of the Disappearing Angels at Qumran," *DSD* 7 (2000): 346.
[87] Jacques van Ruiten, "Angels and Demons in the Book of Jubilees," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings - Origins, Development and Reception* (DCLY; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 600.

fact, the word σατανᾶς is never used in positive terms, always suggesting a hostile, defamatory or adversative connotation. The negative force of the term is also seen in its connection with the word διάβολος. Firstly, in semantic terms, the designation διάβολος itself conveys an unfavourable meaning, similar to the Matthean story's characterization of Satan. So, by using διάβολος as a proper name in Matthew's Gospel, the implied author is clearly establishing the negative function of Satan in the narrative. Secondly, by tagging the devil also as σατανᾶς, the implied author is echoing the way that some Hellenistic documents use the term. In this sense, Satan is not just an enemy, but also dishonest, a perjurer, a supernatural demonic leader, and a seducer and unreliable being who sometimes harms his victims.

In summary, unlike Matt 16:17 in which Jesus praises Peter, calling him blessed and Simon son of Jonah or Πέτρος (Peter); here, in Matt 16:23, Jesus rejects him, renaming him. By doing so, Jesus takes away Peter's honour. Instead of praising Peter, giving him respect and acknowledging his lineage, Jesus now attacks his identity, degrading him in an (im)polite way. In other words, Peter is not the blessed and honoured one any longer, but Satan, namely, the devil, the enemy, the tempter, the slanderous one and the ruler of the demon. In this guise, Jesus repels him with the words "get away behind me!" (16:23) (See figure 2).

Matt 16:17 Jesus praises Peter	Matt 16:23 Jesus rebukes Peter
You are blessed	Get away behind me!
Jesus calls Peter Σίμων Βαριωνᾶ (Simon son of Jonah) or Πέτρος (Peter)	Jesus calls Peter σατανᾶς (Satan)

Fig. 2: Contrast Between Matt 16:17 and 16:23

2.2. The term σκάνδαλον

After calling Peter σατανᾶς Jesus describes him as a σκάνδαλον (16:23). The word σκάνδαλον is commonly interpreted as "stumbling block"[88] or obstacle.[89] But this meaning is very limited, failing to express a more hostile and adversative sense.[90]

In Matthew's Gospel the noun σκάνδαλον is firstly used in the explanation of the parable of the weeds to describe those who are collected by the angels and destroyed in the end of the age (13:39-42). The announcement of their eschatological destruction (13:41-42) directly evokes the negative significance of the term σκάνδαλον, which is similarly stressed in the same parable when Jesus declares that those who are gathered by the angels are likewise called ἀνομία (13:41).[91] The term ἀνομία appears for the first time in the Sermon on the Mount (7:21-23). There Jesus uses it in a context of rejection, describing the exclusion of the *evildoers* (οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν) from the kingdom of heaven (7:23).[92] So, by placing it in parallel with the word σκάνδαλον together with the negative implications of ἀνομία, the implied author accentuates the adverse connotation of σκάνδαλον, suggesting a much stronger meaning than just "stumbling block." A pragmaphilological analysis of different texts provides clear examples regarding this semantic difference.

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[88] E.g. for instance, NRSV, TNIV, NIV, NASB, ASV, NET and REB. Cf. Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew* (London: S.P.C.K., 1976), 345; and J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel of St. Matthew* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 272.

[89] E.g. for example, NAB, NJB and TEV.

[90] Arthur Carr, "The Use of Σκάνδαλον and Σκανδαλίζω in the NT," in *The Expositor* (Fifth Series 8; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), 344; James H. Moulton, "Σκάνδαλον," *ExpTim* 26 (1915): 331-332; and James Moffatt, "Jesus Upon 'Stumbling-Blocks'," *ExpTim* 26 (1915): 407.

[91] The term ἀνομία conveys the idea of either the absence of law or non-observance of it (W. Gutbrod, "ἀνομία," *TDNT* 4:1085), describing those who "live as though there were no laws" (Cf. L&N, 1:757).

[92] In 23:28 and 24:12 the term is presented in opposition to righteousness and love. Moreover, both texts also appear in contexts of rejection.

The LXX provides some instances where the term σκάνδαλον can be understood as a trap, which it seems was the primitive etymological meaning of the term.[93] Leviticus 19:14, for example,[94] condemns those who put a σκάνδαλον before the blind. It seems that σκάνδαλον functions here as an obstacle or a snare,[95] thus conveying a clear negative sense. For that reason, it is a negative instruction, forbidding wrongdoing.[96] In general terms, however, in the LXX the word is mainly used in a figurative sense, meaning either ensnaring through temptation to sin or occasion for calamity (cf. 1 Sam 25:31; Ps 118:15 [119:165]).[97]

In the case of entangling in evil, for instance, Judges 8:27 says that Gideon made an ephod, which not only caused Israel's prostitution but also became a snare (σκάνδαλον) to him and to his family (cf. Ps 118:165 [119:165]; Hos 4:17; 1 Macc 5:4; Wis 14:11; Sir 7:6; 27:23; Jdt 12:2). On the other hand, in the case of calamity, Joshua 22:13 [23:13] asserts that if Israel joins the nations surrounding Israel (Josh 22:12 [23:12], these will be like snares (παγίδας) and traps (σκάνδαλα) for them; nails (ἥλους) in their heels, and spears (βολίδας) in their eyes (cf. Judg 2:3; 1 Sam 18:21; Pss 49:20 [50:20]; 105:35 [106:36]; Jdt 5:20). In both examples, the meaning of

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[93] See Georg Curtius, *Principles of Greek Etymology* (trans. Augustus S. Wilkins and Edwin B. England; 5th ed. London: John Murray, 1886), 1: 193-194; and Gustav Stählin, "σκάνδαλον," *TDNT* 7:339. Cf. T. Nicklin, "Stumbling-Block," *ExpTim* 26 (1915): 479.

[94] See also Psalm 68:23 [69:22], which parallels παγίς (snare or trap) and σκάνδαλον, establishing a meaning related to snare or traps (cf. Pss 140:9 [141:9]; 139:6 [140:5]; 140:9 [141:9]; Jdt 5:1).

[95] T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 622; and Stählin, 7:339.

[96] In fact, Leviticus 19:14 in context, shows several negative commands in which God (19:1-2) forbids the Israelites from doing certain practices, such as keeping for themselves the wages of a laborer until morning (19:13) or acting unjustly in judgment (19:15).

[97] Carr, "The Use of Σκανδαλον and Σκανδαλιζω in the NT," 345-347. The noun σκάνδαλον is also used in a negative way in 1 Sam 25:31 and Ps 118:15 [119:165]. In 1 Samuel 25:31, Abigail interceds for her husband before David, asking for his forgivenes (1 Sam 25:23-31). Because David wants to kill Abigail's husband Nabal (25:12-17, 32-33), she says that when David becomes the king of Israel, if he kills Nabal, the situation could be an abomination (βδελυγμὸς) and σκάνδαλον to David, in that he has shed innocent blood without cause (25:30-31). Similary, in Psalm 118:15 [119:165], the psalmist claims that there is great peace for those who love the law, and there is no σκάνδαλον to them.

σκάνδαλον is more than a stumbling block or obstacle. Indeed, its significance is associated with allurement to sin or disastrous consequences.

The same can be said of New Testament documents, where the noun σκάνδαλον occurs fifteen times.[98] In each occurrence the word is used in a figurative way, conveying the meaning of a trap (Rom 11:9), a hindrance (Luke 17:1; Rom 14:13; 16:17; Gal 5:11; 1 John 12:10), amazement (1 Cor 1:23) or temptation (Rev 2:14).[99] Two exceptions to the case, nonetheless, are Romans 9:33 and 1 Peter 2:8.[100] The phrase πέτραν σκανδάλου appears in these two verses meaning "stumbling block." What is significant in these examples is the use of the noun πέτρα (rock) along with σκάνδαλον, suggesting that the term σκάνδαλον *by itself* would not be understood to mean "stumbling block."[101] Another important aspect about these two texts is that both are used in a negative and contrasting framework (Rom 9:30-33; 1 Pet 2:7-8). Whilst those who believe in the rock will never be put to shame (Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:6), on the other hand, the same rock causes unbelievers to stumble, becoming a stumbling block to them.

The term σκάνδαλον also appears in the *Psalms of Solomon*, in which it is promised that God will save those who fear him in their innocence, saving them from "every illegal snare" (παντὸς σκανδάλου παρανόμου; *Pss. Sol.* 4:23). An interesting feature in this example is the use of the adjective παράνομος, meaning lawless,[102] qualifying the noun σκάνδαλον in a negative manner. In fact, a line before, in the same verse (4:23), the author states that God will save them from "deceitful and sinful people," placing these last words in parallel with the noun σκάνδαλον.

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[98] Matt 13:41; 16:23; 18:7; Luke 17:1; Rom 9:33; 11:9; 14:13; 16:17; 1 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:11; 1 Pet 2:8; 1 John 2:10; Rev 2:14.

[99] Juan Mateos, "Análisis semántico de los lexemas Σκανδαλίζω y Σκάνδαλον," *Filologia neotestamentaria* 2 (1989): 79-90.

[100] Contra, Moulton, "Σκάνδαλον," 331, who argues that both texts should be read in terms of snare or trap. In both cases, however, the term is still used in a figurative way. See a semantic analysis of these texts in Mateos, "Análisis semántico de los lexemas Σκανδαλίζω y Σκάνδαλον," 83-84.

[101] Carr, "The Use of Σκανδαλον and Σκανδαλιζω in the NT," 349.

[102] LSJ, 1319.

Accordingly, in the *Psalms of Solomon* the noun is again interpreted as an injurious form, carrying a sense of being entangled in sin or leading to ruin.

In Matthew's Gospel, the unfavourable meaning of the word σκάνδαλον becomes more provocative for the reader as the narrative unfolds. In Matt 18 Jesus affirms, "οὐαὶ (woe) to the world because of σκανδάλων! Occasions for σκάνδαλα are bound to come, but οὐαὶ (woe) to the one by whom the σκάνδαλον comes!" (Mat 18:7). In this context, the reader understands the term in relation to the verb σκανδαλίζω, which is-used a verse before (18:6). Outside New Testament documents,[103] the verb σκανδαλίζω appears only three times in the LXX (Sir 9:5; 23:8; 32:15) and once in the *Psalms of Solomon* (*Pss. Sol.* 16:7). While twice the verb possibly refers to a figurative trap (Sir 23:8; 32:15), in the other two instances, it is used in the sense of being captured by allurement (Sir 9:5; *Pss. Sol.* 16:7).

Having this in mind, from a pragmaphilological approach, the verb σκανδαλίζω, at least in the context of Matt 18,[104] functions as a description of immorality, coming from those who cause others to sin.[105] Jesus is unambiguous in affirming the adverse meaning of the verb, by stating that anyone "who is the downfall [σκανδαλίσῃ] of one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck." (18:6 NJB). In effect, the gravity of calling others σκάνδαλον is also emphasized by the pronouncing of woes in Matt 18, in which Jesus asserts "οὐαὶ (woe) to the one by whom the σκάνδαλον comes!" (18:7). In the Gospel of Matthew, as seen in Chapter 3, the term οὐαὶ is

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[103] Regardless of Matthew's Gospel, in the New Testament σκανδαλίζω is employed in two ways (see BDAG, 926): (1) "to cause to be brought to a downfall" (Mark 4:17; 6:3; 9:42–43, 45, 47; 14:27, 29; Luke 7:23; 17:2; John 16:1; 1 Cor 8:13) or (2) "to shock through word or action" (John 6:61; 2 Cor 11:29).
[104] As in the New Testament, in Matthew's Gospel the verb σκανδαλίζω is related to causing to sin or rejection (Matt 5:29–30; 11:6; 13:21, 57; 18:6, 8–9; 24:10; 26:31, 33) or is understood in the sense of causing a shock through word or action (15:12; 17:27). Cf. BDAG, 926.
[105] See BDAG, 926. Cf. Stählin, 1:774.

almost always employed to express pain or displeasure,[106] which would stress the calamity and

discontent of being called σκάνδαλον in Matthew's Gospel. A pragmaphilological analysis,

generally speaking, reveals several senses of σκάνδαλον in first-century writings, such as snare,

temptation, giving occasion for calamity, and stumbling block.[107] However, it is never used as a

swear word, although it clearly evokes something offensive, constantly operating in adversative

contexts.[108]

In view of the above, the meaning of σκάνδαλον encoded in Matt 16:23 may include

these multiple connotations. On the one hand, Peter is a σκάνδαλον in Matt 16 because he is

"being a hindrance" to Jesus, obstructing him from what he must do.[109] On the other hand, Peter

is also tempting Jesus,[110] becoming a snare in his way. In other words, he is not just a pitfall but

an adversary as well;[111] named as 'Satan', he is depicted as leading Jesus into temptation to

prevent his fate.

Therefore, the term σκάνδαλον cannot be understood only as stumbling block or

obstacle.[112] As Lenski notes, a person "may fall over a stumbling block and yet may rise

again."[113] In the case of a trap, the situation changes, because "merely to touch the bait affixed to

it would spring the trap, and Jesus would be caught in its death grip."[114] In this way, the term

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[106] See Matt 11:21; 18:7; 23:13-16, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:19; 26:24. Cf. BDAG, 734.
[107] Carr, "The Use of Σκάνδαλον and Σκανδαλίζω in the NT," 348.
[108] Mateos, "Análisis semántico de los lexemas Σκανδαλίζω y Σκάνδαλον," 90-91.
[109] See Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 529.
[110] Carr, "The Use of Σκάνδαλον and Σκανδαλίζω in the NT," 348.
[111] Allen C. Willoughby, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 181.
[112] Regarding these multiple meanings, to my mind, it seems impossible to associate the word σκάνδαλον with the word πέτρα (rock) in the sense of a stumbling block, as some author have argued [e.g., Schweizer, *The Good News*, 345; Donald Senior, *Matthew* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 192; and John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Dublin: Veritas, 1980), 185.].
[113] Richard. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel 15-28* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 641.
[114] Ibid.

σκάνδαλον reminds readers of the scene in which Satan tempts Jesus, which suggests again that Peter's role parallels Satan's role in Matt 16.[115]

In summary, Jesus rebukes Peter, calling him σκάνδαλον (16:23), because he was trying to convince him to change his mind regarding his prediction of his death (16:22). From this perspective, σκάνδαλον operates in the same sense as σατανᾶς, each one functioning negatively from a semantic point of view. Instead of being guided by the Father in heaven, as in Matt 16:17, Peter is now guided by Satan,[116] playing his role,[117] becoming an adversary, an instrument of enticement, who instead of being praised for receiving a revelation from the Father, is now rejected by putting barriers in the way of Jesus (see figure 3).[118] In fact, Jesus calls Peter σατανᾶς and σκάνδαλον *because* (ὅτι) he sets his "mind not on divine things but on human things," showing not only a wrong messianic understanding but also forgetting what following Jesus really means according to Jesus' own vision.

Matt 16:17-19 Jesus praises Peter	Matt 16:23 Jesus rebukes Peter
You are blessed, the recipient of the keys of the kingdom of heaven	You are σκάνδαλον
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven	You are setting your minds in human things, not in God's.

Fig. 3: Contrast between Matt 16:19 and Matt 16:23

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[115] See Mateos, "Análisis semántico de los lexemas Σκανδαλίζω y Σκάνδαλον," 82.
[116] Richard A. Edwards, *Matthew's Narrative Portrait of Disciples: How the Text-Connoted Reader is Informed* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 70.
[117] W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew* (AB 26; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 200.
[118] See B. A. E. Osborne, "Peter: Stumbling-Block and Satan," *NovT* 15 (1973): 188-190.

3. Jesus' (im)politeness and Peter: Unlocking the encrypted world

The above data indicates that Jesus' (im)polite words to Peter are used in a context in which a challenge-riposte contest between Jesus, the teacher, and his disciples, the followers, is being carried out. A pragmaphilological approach recognizes the (im)polite strength of Jesus' words to Peter, as they exhibit negative meanings, portraying Peter as an enemy, tempter and a damaging snare, and becoming an instrument of destruction. The analysed data, however, does not indicate that these two terms operate as swear words *per se*, although they do suggest offensive notions.

In light of the cultural milieu that emerges from the text, it is possible to suggest that Matthew's Gospel communicates a socio cultural world where (im)polite words are used as a challenge to discipleship, in which teachers engage with their students using strong words when interacting with them, taking away their honour. Such interactions, however, are not unique to this pericope. In fact, similar exchanges can also be seen in other scenes in which the Matthean Jesus addresses his disciples as ὀλιγόπιστος (as having little faith), for example, a term that seems to function as a rebuke in Matthew's Gospel (6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8), informing the reader that such engagements are part of the narrative world of Matthew's Gospel. Whether such interactions between teachers and followers also appear in other Hellenistic texts, and therefore, existed in other first-century encoded worlds or not, is an area yet to be explored. This exploration will be done in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER 5

WICKED, LAZY AND WORTHLESS SLAVE: BEING (IM)POLITE USING PARABLES

Parables, in my view, can be considered stories within stories.[1] They not only depict an imaginary world but also function as "forms of argument"[2] and pedagogical tools,[3] seeking, to my mind, to generate a response from the audience/reader.[4] In what follows, I analyse the narrative purpose of the parable of the talents in Matthew's Gospel (25:14-30), paying attention to the literary context in which it is located. Then, I focus on four (im)polite terms, establishing their (im)polite role within the story and in other Hellenistic texts by using a pragmaphilological approach. My intention in doing so is to unlock the socio-rhetorical world encoded in Matthew's story regarding literary purposes and (im)polite language in stories.

1. Narrative analysis: Context and story

A narrative analysis, establishing the literary context of the parable of the talents, provides help in determining the Matthean Jesus' intention in delivering it. Likewise, a narrative examination of the story defines in what sense several (im)polite words function within the parable's account, making way for a subsequent pragmaphilological analysis.

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[1] See Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 27.

[2] Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition* (trans. John Sturdy; London: SPCK, 1973), 23.

[3] Craig A. Evans, "Parables in Early Judaism," in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables* (MNTS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 66. Although parables can be seen in different ways, I have preferred to underline their argumentative and pedagogical purposes, which in my view are more explicit in Matthew's Gospel (e.g., 13:24-30, 36-43; 18:21-35; 21:28-32; 22:1-14).

[4] Madeleine I. Boucher, *The Parables* (New Testament Message 7; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1981), 16; and Erich H. Kiehl, "Why Jesus Spoke in Parables," *ConJ* 16 (1990): 249.

1.1. Narrative context: Parousia and behaviour

The parable of the talents (25:14-30) is part of a series of several parables pronounced by the Matthean Jesus on the Mount of Olives (24:3; 24: 43-25:46). According to the narrator, the Matthean Jesus, after leaving the temple, goes to the Mount of Olives along with his disciples, announcing the destruction of the temple (24:1-3). As a result of Jesus' words, the disciples approach him privately, asking him not only about the destruction of the temple, but also about a sign regarding his coming and the end of the age (24:3). Jesus responds to them with a discourse (24:4-42), which he illustrates using several parables (24:43-25:46). The parable of the talents is one of these (25:14-30), and part of a group of three parables dealing with the importance of being ready for the coming of the Son of Man (24:45-25:30).[5] The above indicates that the Matthean Jesus delivers the parable of the talents to his disciples, who become Jesus' only audience.[6] Therefore, the parable is probably located in a context in which one aspect of the topic of discipleship at least is being addressed.

The parable of the talents is preceded by the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), which ends with the saying that the disciples need to be ready, because they "do not know the day or the hour" (25:13). In literary terms, the parable of the talents is similar in many ways to the

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[5] These parables are *the parable of the wise and wicked servant* (24:45-51) and *the parable of the ten virgins* (25:1-13). See Emilio Salvatore, "La parabola dei talenti: Appunti per un approccio narrativo a Mt 25, 14-30," in *Credo ecclesiam: Studi in onore di Antonio Barrufo S.I.* (eds. Enrico Cattaneo and Antonio Terracciano; Napoli: M. D'Auria Editore, 2000), 141-146; and Daniel J. Harrington, "Polemical Parables in Matthew 24-25," *USQR* 44 (1991): 292.

[6] According to the narrator, when Jesus "was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately [κατ' ἰδίαν]" (24:3). In Matthew's Gospel, the phrase κατ' ἰδίαν literally involves a description of being alone either with oneself (14:13, 23) or with others (17:1,19; 20:17; [cf. BDAG, 466-467]). So, the phrase would mean that there is no one else around, therefore, the disciples are alone with him, evoking the occasion when Jesus explains to them privately the parable of the weeds (13:36). Although the scenarios of both passages are different (house/mountain; 13:36; 24:3), the motivations are quite similar. In Matt 13 the disciples ask Jesus privately about something that he said (the parable) and they did not understand (13:24-30, 36). Likewise, in Matt 24, the disciples approach Jesus privately asking him about something that he had stated (the destruction of the temple) and they had not comprehended (24:1-3).

parable of the ten virgins, describing similar topics, such as delay, return, and exclusion, for instance, but from different angles. A good example that shows this interrelationship is the fact that the parable of the talents starts with the phrase ὥσπερ γὰρ ("for it is as," 25:14), which is not only a strong connection between both passages, but also serves to inform the reader of two things. First, the parable of the talents is an explanation of Matt 25:13, in which Jesus invites his disciples to be awake, for they "know neither the day nor the hour."[7] Second, Jesus informs his disciples that he is going to continue talking about the kingdom of heaven (25:1),[8] an eschatological theme, which in Matthew's Gospel sometimes evokes images of judgment and condemnation (e.g. 8:11-12; 13:24-30, 37-43, 44-50; 22:1-14).

The parable of the talents likewise shares several connections with the parable of the wise and wicked servant (24:45-51), which precedes the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13). There are slaves and a master who goes and returns after an unspecific period of time (cf. 24:45-50; 25:14-20). Also, both parables describe slaves receiving charge of properties, portraying bad and good behaviours and reward and punishments (cf. 24:45-51; 25:14-30).[9] One significant point between the two, including the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), is that every pericope warns the audience/readers about ignorance regarding the day or the hour,[10] alerting them to be ready "for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour" (24:44; cf. 24:36, 42).[11]

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[7] Jan Lambrecht, *Once More Astonished: The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 178; and John Carpenter, B., "The Parable of the Talents in Missionary Perspective: A Call for an Economic Spirituality," *Missiology* 25 (1997): 166.

[8] The "kingdom of heaven" is introduced as a theme at the beginning of the parable of the ten virgins (25:1). Cf. John Paul Heil, "Final Parables in the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew 24-25," in *Matthew's Parables: Audience-Oriented Perspectives* (CBQMS 30; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1998), 196; and Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 3: 404.

[9] Jan Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure: The Parables in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 10; Louvain: Peeters, 1992), 240-241; and Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 526.

[10] Armand Puig I. Tàrrech, "La parabole des talents (Mt 25:14-30) ou des mines (Lc 19:11-28),"

The warning mentioned above, is an important narrative element in both the parable of

the wise and wicked servant (24:45-51) and the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), operating in

each case in terms of exclusion (24:50-51; 25:11-12). In each case the behaviour of the

characters while waiting for the return of the master or the new groom follow a similar literary

pattern (24:48-49; 25:3-7), whose outcome and final retribution is depicted in terms of

judgment.[12] As we will see, a similar sense is present in the parable of the talents (25:14-30).

Accordingly, the message in the parable of the talents is not only another metaphor for the delay

of the coming of the Son of Man, stressing the importance of being ready always,[13] but also an

image of judgment,[14] operating as "an apocalyptic warning about the conduct of the faithful

during the delay of the parousia."[15]

1.2. Story: Reward and rejection

In my narrative analysis, I divide the parable of the talents into two parts, establishing a

literary contrast between two groups of characters.[16] In doing so, I show in what manner the

theme of honour and shame functions in the story, in a context of challenge-riposte, and prepares

the way for the pragmaphilological examination of four (im)polite terms.

RCT 10 (1985): 270, 274-275.

[11] Markus Locker, "Reading and Re-Reading Matthew's Parable of the Talents in Context," *BZ* 49 (2005): 163.

[12] Karl Paul Donfried, "The Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) as a Summary of Matthean Theology," *JBL* 93 (1974): 420-421.

[13] R. T. France, "On Being Ready (Matthew 25:1-46)," in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables* (MNTS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 189.

[14] Tàrrech, "La parabole des talents," 276-278.

[15] Lane C. McGaughy, "The Fear of Yahweh and the Mission of Judaism: A Postexilic Maxim and Its Early Christian Expansion in the Parable of the Talents," *JBL* 94 (1975): 237.

[16] To my mind, the parable of the talents is a story of contrasts. Cf. J. M. Ross, "Talents," *ExpTim* 89 (1978): 307; and Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 2:356, who sees an antithetical structure between both groups of slaves (good and bad).

1.2.1. Entrusting, delay and reward

The story starts by informing the reader about a master who entrusts his property to his slaves because he is going to make a trip (25:14-15).[17] The term *talent*, as the reader can see, operates in the sense of money (ἀργύριον) in this passage (25:18, 27),[18] and it is this that the master distributes according to the personal abilities of his slaves (25:15). The first slave receives five talents, the second two and the third only one (25:15). Then the master undertakes his journey, without mentioning the time of his return (25:15). In the meantime, three scenes unfold. The first two depict a similar event. The slave with five talents as well as the one with two increases the master's property by one hundred per cent (25:16-17). The last scene, however, gives a twist to the story. The slave with only one talent goes and digs a hole in the ground and hides it (25:18), acting in contrast to his fellow servants.

In narrative terms, the master is the main character of the pericope[19] and his departure, delay and return are the leading motifs that generate the previous and consequent events of the story,[20] which evoke both the parable of the wise and wicked servant (24:45-51) and the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), in which one master and one new groom also show an analogous narrative scheme (24:46, 50; 25:5-6).[21] The delay, however, ends without warning, informing the reader of the return of the master, who after his long absence summons his slaves to settle accounts with him (25:19-30). As in the previous case, three scenes occur. The first two

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[17] It is not surprising that this man entrusts his property to his slaves. In previous parables we can see a similar idea, in which other slaves are commissioned with the same task (cf. 24:45-51; cf. 18:23-35). See Jennifer Glancy, "Slaves and Slavery in the Matthean Parables," *JBL* 119 (2000): 72-75.

[18] Cf. 26:15; 27:3, 5–6, 9; 28:12, 15). See J. Naegele, "Translation of *Talanton* 'Talent,'" *BT* 37 (1986): 441-443. Cf. LSJ, 236; and BDAG, 128.

[19] Cf. Salvatore, "La parabola dei talenti," 133; and Tàrrech, "La parabole des talents," 273.

[20] Cf. Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 226, 227.

[21] Schweizer, *The Good News*, 471.

comprise a similar pattern. The master praises the first two slaves. In the last one, however, the master shames the slave.

The master honours the first two slaves using the same phrase for each one of them, "[w]ell done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master" (25:21, 23).[22] The master honours his slaves using positive words, such as good and trustworthy (πιστός), evoking in some way the parable of the wise and wicked servant (24:45-51). In this parable, the Matthean Jesus asks his disciples, who "is the faithful [πιστὸς] and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time" (24:45). It is noteworthy that in both parables the word πιστὸς operates as a way of describing a responsible slave who is praised for carrying out the task assigned to him faithfully,[23] giving the term a positive meaning. Furthermore, in the parable of the talents both slaves are also called *good* [ἀγαθός]; a word that sometimes functions in opposition to the term *bad* [πονηρός] in Matthew's Gospel (e.g. 5:45; 7:11, 17-18; 12:34-35; and 22:10). In fact, as we will see, the master uses the term *bad* [πονηρός] as a verbal rebuke against the slave who hides the talent in the ground (25:25-26).

The reward received by both slaves in the parable of the talents is another important element to consider. The master promises them that he will put them in charge of many things (25:21, 23; cf. 24:47), inviting them to enter into his joy (25:21, 23). Firstly, by putting them in charge of his possessions, the master promotes them to a better position, assigning them more

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[22] In both passages the phrase appears verbatim: ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ· εὖ, δοῦλε ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστέ, ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἦς πιστός, ἐπὶ πολλῶν σε καταστήσω· εἴσελθε εἰς τὴν χαρὰν τοῦ κυρίου σου (25:21, 23).
[23] BDAG, 820-821.

responsibility. Secondly, whatever the phrase "enter into the joy of your master" entails,[24] it is clear that it evokes a great happiness,[25] operating as a positive response to the faithfulness of the slaves (25:20-23). In doing so, the master honours the slaves, giving them not only a new status within the household but also inviting them to be part of his joy, which stands in opposition with what the last slave experiences (25:24-30).

1.2.2. Disapproval and punishment

The camera lens now moves to the third slave (25:24-30), who, instead of multiplying the talent, goes off and digs a hole in the ground and hides it (25:18, 25). In his defence, the slave justifies himself accusing his master of being a σκληρὸς man (25:24-25), a word that, as we will see in the next section, can sometimes evoke negative and offensive meanings. What is clear so far, however, is that by calling the master σκληρὸς, the slave seems to be shifting the blame onto his master, alleging fear. Indeed, the reader is informed that the slave affirms that because he was so afraid of his master that he went off and hid the talent in a hole (25:25).

According to the story, the master reacts by calling him πονηρός and ὀκνηρός (25:26). In view of the context, the master employs these two words as a rebuke against the slave for not having invested the money with the bankers (25:26-27). These two designations, besides, stand

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[24] The phrase "enter into the joy of your master" has been interpreted, for example, as follows: (1) a metaphoric reference to the master's desire to share his joy with his slaves; namely, it is an invitation to participate in his personal happiness [e.g., Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 629; and France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 955]; (2) the phrase is an invitation to a banquet, which the master has prepared to share his happiness with his slaves [e.g., France, "On Being Ready," 188; and Joel R. Wohlgemut, "Entrusted Money (Matthew 25:14-28)," in *Jesus and his Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today* (ed. V. George Shillington; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 108; and (3) it is an invitation to "'enter' into the Kingdom of God" [Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (trans. S. H. Hooke; rev. ed. London: SCM Press, 1963), 60, no. 42]. Cf. J. Vara, "Dos conjeturas textuales sobre Mateo 25, 21.23 y Mateo 26, 32/17, 22 y par.," *Salm* 33 (1986): 81-86, who asserts that the grammatical form of the noun χαρά is incoherent within the sentence's structure, proposing a different wording, and interpreting it as an invitation to take care of the master's business.
[25] The word χαρά describes happy experiences and feelings in Matthew's Gospel (2:10; 13:20, 44; 28:8), and is sometimes used along with the adjective μέγας, evoking a "great joy" (cf. 2:10; 28:8).

in opposition to *good* and *trustworthy* in Matt 25:21, 23, which as seen, the master uses in positive ways when referring to his two first slaves (25:21, 23, 26).[26] By doing so, the story itself suggests a negative understanding of the terms πονηρός and ὀκνηρός, proposing that the last slave is neither *good* nor *trustworthy* as his fellows. Furthermore, the master's response, which clearly emerged in a negative context, seems to underline the fact that both characters, the master and last slave, seem to be attacking each other, using (im)polite words to name one another. An action of this kind appears to be describing a challenge-riposte contest, in which two characters, coming from two different social statuses, undertake a dynamic social interaction.[27]

The master's reaction and his slave's performance can be better understood by comparing the slave's behaviour with that of his fellows'.[28] Unlike the first two slaves, who after the departure of their master go immediately into business with the money, showing willingness to work (25:16-17); the last slave, on the other hand, shows extreme cautiousness,[29] preferring to hide his master's talent underground rather than make an investment (25:8, 25, 27). As a matter of fact, if he was so afraid of his master, by depositing the talent with the bankers, he could have not only guaranteed the return of the original money, but also received interest from it (25:27).[30] But, as the reader is informed, he does not do even that, acting in complete contrast to the other slaves.

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[26] Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (BibWor; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 276.

[27] The general tendency in social-scientific studies is to depict challenge-riposte contests as occurring only between equals [e.g., Joseph Plevnik, "Honor/Shame," in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, eds.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 107]. But, as Crook, "Honor," 599, correctly affirms, "challenges and ripostes did occur between parties of *unequal* status…" (emphasis supplied).

[28] Cf. France, "On Being Ready," 185, who argues that the "focus of the story is on the contrasting achievements and fates of the first two slaves in comparison with the third."

[29] E. Carson Brisson, "Matthew 25:14-30," *Int* 56 (2002): 309.

[30] David Steinmetz, "Matthew 25:14-30," *Int* 34 (1980): 174.

The master also calls him ἀχρεῖος, a word that seems to be acting in a derogatory way, as will be made evident in the next section. In the parable, however, the term is located in a context of rejection and judgment (25:28-30).[31] Unlike with his fellow servants, rather than being promoted, the master orders unnamed others to take the talent from the slave and give it to the one who has ten (25:28), possibly indicating that the master-slave relationship is over.[32] Besides, the master also commands that he be thrown into "the outer darkness," where, unlike his fellow slaves, he will not enjoy the joy of his master, but will be "weeping and gnashing" his teeth (25:30). So, while the master honours the first two slaves for their trustworthy work, the last one is humiliated, with the master taking away everything from him (cf. 25:29), including his honour as well.

Having taken into consideration the context in which the parable is located, what emerges from the above analysis is twofold. First, the Matthean Jesus uses the parable of the talents to illustrate the necessity of being ready always, inviting his disciples to behave responsibly, in relation to the kingdom of heaven.[33] As seen, an important element in the parable of the talents is the delay and absence of the master, which causes the events of the story as told in the parable. So, Jesus' disciples should behave correctly while the Son of Man delays his return.[34] Second, the Matthean Jesus also uses the parable of the talents as an image of judgment[35] and, paraphrasing from David Read, a warning against *existential [spiritual] paralysis*.[36] In it, Jesus informs and warns his disciples about the rewards and punishments that they will receive as a

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[31] See Tàrrech, "La parabole des talents," 276-278.
[32] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Law in the New Testament: The Parable of the Talents and Two Logia," *ZNW* 56 (1965): 193-194.
[33] Léopold Sabourin, "Il discorso sulla parousia e le parabole della vigilanza (Matteo 24-25)," *BeO* 20 (1978): 205-211.
[34] C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (rev. ed. Glasgow: Collins, 1961), 109.
[35] Tàrrech, "La parabole des talents," 276-278.
[36] David H. C. Read, "The Parable of the Talents," *RevExp* 62 (1951): 374.

result of their behaviour. If they behave as expected, they will be honoured. But if they do not, they will be punished and handled in the same way that the last slave is treated in the parable of the talents: thrown "into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (25:30).

In Matthew's Gospel there are several examples in which (im)polite words and actions are used to underline instructions in parables. These can also be understood in terms of (im)politeness, depicting sometimes verbal and physical violence against slaves. The parable of the wise and wicked slaves illustrates very well the latter point.[37] According to the narrator in that parable, the master will cut (διχοτομήσει) the slave "in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (24:51).[38] Another example occurs in Matt 18, in which the narrator says that the master, who is also a king (18:23), calls his slave *wicked* (18:32), adding "and in anger his lord handed him over to *be tortured* until he would pay his entire debt" (18:34).[39] The examples above depict the treatment of the slave in the

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[37] In the parables of Matthew's Gospel the slaves, as Glancy says [Glancy, "Slaves and Slavery," 80-81], are seized (18:28; 21:35; 22:6), imprisoned (18:30); treated with dishonour (22:6), beaten (21:35; 24:49), (18:34), killed (21:35; 22:6) and stoned (21:35).

[38] The verb διχοτομέω means literally "cut in two" (BDAG, 253). Some interpreters have understood it verbatim, which would entail that the slave was literally cut in two parts [e.g., Timothy Friedrichsen, A., "A Note on kai dichotomesei auton (Luke 12:46 and the Parallel in Matthew 24:51)," *CBQ* 63 (2001): 258-264; and Kathleen Weber, "Is There a Qumran Parallel to Matthew 24,51//Luke 12,46," *RevQ* 16 (1995): 657-663]. Others, however, have interpreted the term either as a mistranslation from the Aramaic [e.g., Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 57, no. 31; Fenton, *The Gospel of St. Matthew*, 395] or as a language expression [e.g., Paul Ellingworth, "Luke 12.46-Is There an Anticlimax Here?," *BT* 31 (1980): 242-243; and Otto Betz, "Dichotomized Servant and the End of Judas Iscariot (Light on the Dark Passages : Matthew 24:51 and Parallel: Acts 1:18)," *RevQ* 5 (1964): 43-58], which implies that the slave was punished severely, but not split into two. Cf. Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 763. In view of the metaphoric world of the parable, the probable meaning of the word should perhaps be seen in symbolic terms, which operates as a way of describing the severe punishment received by the salve. Contra, David C. Sim, "The Dissection of the Wicked Servant in Matthew 24:51," *HvTSt* 58 (2002): 172-184.

[39] Emphasis supplied.

same way as described in the parable of the talents, demonstrating a common way to address and treat slaves in the narrative world of Matthew's Gospel.[40]

In summary, in the parable of the talents, Jesus alerts his disciples to examine their behaviour when waiting for the coming of the Son of Man. To do this, Jesus tells a story about a group of slaves who are entrusted with money while their master is away. On the one hand, the first two slaves multiply the money, receiving a promotion and an invitation to enter into the joy of their master (25:20-23). On the other hand, the last slave is demoted and thrown "into the outer darkness" (25:30). He, unlike the other slaves, hides the talent underground, receiving his master's rejection and humiliation.[41] Both characters use different words in their verbal engagement, evoking a challenge-riposte contest. An important point in the parable is the fact that the master reproaches his slave because of his failed performance, using (im)polite words as a way of verbal rebuke. Whether these different words can be considered offensive or not, it is still a point to study. This will be taken up in the following section.

2. A pragmaphilological analysis: σκληρός, πονηρός, ὀκνηρός and ἀχρεῖος

In this section, using a pragmaphilological approach, I examine four words that appear in the parable of the talents. These are: σκληρός, πονηρός, ὀκνηρός and ἀχρεῖος. In my analysis I explore how these terms operate in Matthew's Gospel and other Hellenistic texts, revealing

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[40] Glancy, "Slaves and Slavery," 67-90.
[41] According to Richard Rohrbaugh, "A Peasant Reading of the Parable of the Talents/Pounds: A Text of Terror," *BTB* 23 (1993): 32-39, the hero of the parable is the third servant, which is used to criticize a first-century anti-capitalist's view about the master's desire to increase his wealth. [Cf. William R. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville: Wstminster/John Knox, 1994), 150-168]. Rohrbaugh bases his conclusions on the *Gospel of the Nazoreans*, which is cited by Eusebius of Caesarea, proposing to read the parable in light of this material. My analysis, however, is grounded only in Matthew's Gospel; therefore, my conclusions differ from Rohrbaugh considerably. See Wohlgemut, "Entrusted," 109-120, who critiques Rohrbaugh's work on several grounds.

Jesus' (im)politeness when warning his disciples about the importance of being ready when the

Son of Man delays his coming.

2.1. The term σκληρός

As seen, the last slave excuses himself before his master, arguing that he was so afraid of

his master that he preferred to dig a hole and hide the talent (25:25). The slave describes the

master as a σκληρὸς man, who reaps where he did not sow, and gathers where he did not scatter

seed (25:24). In Matthew's Gospel, the word σκληρὸς only appears here. In Hellenistic literature,

however, it occurs several times, where it sometimes operates as a way of describing hard or

cruel physical tasks. In *Exodus*, for example, the reader is informed how the Egyptians oppressed

the people of Israel, grievously afflicting their lives (Exod 1:13-14).[42] The word can also refer to

negative human behaviour, such as harsh responses or tough speeches,[43] which can cause

unpleasant impressions and negative reactions in the narrative world where these are uttered.[44]

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[42] See also Exod 6:9; and Deut 26:6. Cf. 1 Kgs 12:4; 2 Chr 10:4. The term is also used to describe harsh winds (e.g., Prov 27:16), hard food (e.g., Strabo, *Geogr*. 17.1.51; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.35.11; 3.16.7; Posidonius, *Frg*., 368.28), strong difficulties (e.g., Deut 1:17; 15:18; 1 Sam 1:15; 2 Sam 2:17; Ps 16:4 [17:4]; 59:5[60:3]), terrible pains (e.g., 2 Macc 6:30), dreadful thunders (Josephus, *Ant*. 2.343), hard noise (e.g., Josephus, *Ant*. 4.51), thick cloud (Josephus, *Ant*. 8.106), strong winds (e.g., Jas 3:4), heavy waves (e.g., Strabo, *Geogr*. 3.3.3; Agatharchides, *On the Erythraean Sea*, 44.4), heavy irons (e.g., Agatharchides, *On the Erythraean Sea*, 108.3), hard texture of rocks or stones (e.g., Josephus, *Ant*. 15.347; Strabo, *Geogr*. 17.1.50; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.57.5; 3.12.4; 17.71.5; Plutarch, *Caes*. 47.2; *Exil*. 599 D 3; and Agatharchides, *On the Erythraean Sea*, 25.2.), harsh body (e.g., Josephus, *J.W*. 2.107), heavy bones (e.g., Plutarch, *Quaest. conv*. 642 C 5), rough climate (e.g., Polybius, *Historiae*, 4.21.5), hard soil (e.g., Philo, *Spec*. 3.34; cf. Josephus, *J.W*. 4.537), rugged places (e.g., Strabo, *Geogr*. 3.3.3; 9.1.6; Posidonius, *Frg*., 20.6), rough grounds (e.g., Plutarch, *Flam*. 8.3), hard labours (e.g., Philo, *Mos*. 2.183), hard materials (e.g., Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud*. 15 D 8), heavy thunders (e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 9.55.2) harsh elements of nature (e.g., Philodemus of Gadara, *On Methods of Inference*, 39.18) and is employed in contrast to soft elements (e.g., Philo, *Migr*. 5; *Abr*. 239; and *Her*. 181).
[43] E.g., LXX (Prov 17:27); *1 En*. 1:9; 3:4; 27:2, 101:3; and *Pss. Sol*. 4:2; Plutarch, *Gen. Socr*. 586 D 1; and *[Apoph. lac.]* 218 E 9; 219 F 10; 220 A 1; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 17.114.3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 8.46.2; Jude 15. See also Strabo, *Geogr*. 14.2.28, in which the term operates as a way of describing harsh pronunciations. Cf. Agatharchides, *On the Erythraean Sea*, 21.41.
[44] E.g., LXX (Gen 21:11-12; 42:7, 30; 1 Kgs 12:13; and 2 Chr 10:1).

The term σκληρός can likewise describe hard actions,[45] heavy teaching (John 6:60),

inflexible lifestyles,[46] as well as harsh,[47] stubborn,[48] oppressive[49] and even cruel human

features.[50] The *Book of Samuel*, for instance, provides a good example of these characteristics,

contrasting Abigail's positive attributes with those of her husband, Nabal. The narrator pictures

her as "good at understanding and very beautiful in appearance," while her husband is σκληρὸς

and "mean in his practices" and "dog-like" (1 Sam 25:3). Josephus also repeats the story of

Nabal and Abigail, portraying Nabal as a σκληρὸς man "of bad character, who lived according to

the practices of the cynics" (Josephus, *Ant*. 6.296).

The negative literary function of the term σκληρὸς is not only confirmed as the story of

Nabal and Abigail unfolds (1 Sam 25:4-38; Josephus, *Ant*. 6.296-309), but can also be seen in

other Hellenistic texts as well. Diodorus Siculus also depicts the tyranny of a man called

Nearchus as σκληρὸς, portraying him as a cruel torturer (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*,

10.8.2). Similarly, Plutarch informs readers about the Spartans, who "were harsh and cruel

[σκληρῶς] to the Helots," listing several cruelties and harsh actions perpetrated by Spartans

against Helots (Plutarch, *Lyc*. 28.4).[51]

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[45] E.g., Strabo, *Geogr*. 17.1.33; Plutarch, *Phoc*. 2.7; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 3.10.4; 13.33.2; 27.16.2; 32.27.3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 2.49.5; Plutarch, *Dion* 10.4; *Virt. mor*. 442 C 9; *Num*. 17.1; and Acts 26:14.
[46] E.g., Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 9.10.3; 13.84.6; and Strabo, *Geogr*. 15.1.66.
[47] E.g., LXX (Gen 45:5; 49:3; Jdt 9:13; Zeph 1:14; Isa 5:30; 8:12; 20:2. Cf. Sir 3:26, 27; Song 8:6); *1 En*. 15:11; *T. Job* 20:6; *T. Sim*. 2:4; *Let. Aris*. 289; Philo, *Ebr*. 149-150; *Fug*. 42; Josephus, *Ant*. 8.217; 16.151; and *J.W*. 1.12.
[48] E.g., LXX (Num 16:26; Deut 31:27; Judg 2:19; Prov 29:19; cf. Isa 48:4; Bar 2:33); Philo, *Spec*. 1.306; 2.39; 4.128; *Praem*. 111. The term is even applied to animals, functioning also in a negative way (Sir 30:8).
[49] E.g., LXX (1 Sam 5:7; Isa 8:21; and 14:3).
[50] E.g., LXX (2 Sam 3:39; 1 Kgs 12:24; 1 Esd 2:23 [2:27]; Prov 28:14; Eccl 7:17; Isa 19:4; 27:8; 28:2); Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 8.41.6; Strabo, *Geogr*. 15.1.68; Plutarch, *[Lib. ed.]* 13 D 3; *Superst*. 164 E 3; *Quaest. conv*. 650 D 1; 712 B 6; *Brut*. 1.2; *Vit. pud*. 529 E 9; *Rect. rat. aud*. 46 D 12; and Polybius, *Historiae*, 4.21.3-4.
[51] Plutarch informs readers, for instance, that "oftentimes, too, they actually traversed the fields where Helots were working and slew the sturdiest and best of them. So, too, Thucydides, in his history of the Peloponnesian war, tells us that the Helots who had been judged by the Spartans to

In this way, from a pragmaphilological point of view, by calling the master σκληρὸς, the slave describes him as a harsh, stubborn, oppressive and probably cruel man. In fact, by saying that the master reaps where he did not sow, and gathers where he did not scatter seed (Matt 25:24), the slave depicts him as someone able to always get what he wants, no matter how. In other words, in the slave's opinion, the master is a kind of "rapacious businessman," who severely punishes failure, which terrifies the slave.[52] Whether the master's answer should be interpreted as a question or statement, validating what the slave has just said, is not clear.[53] What is certain, however, is that if the slave was so afraid, he could have well invested the money with the bankers (25:26-27). But the slave behaves in a cautious way, preferring to hide the talent rather than investing it.

In summary, in pragmaphilological terms, although the word σκληρὸς is not used as a profanity *per se*, it sometimes evokes negative meanings, describing bad and cruel people,[54] which may function in an offensive way. The reason why the slave names his master in this way

be superior in bravery, set wreaths upon their heads in token of their emancipation, and visited the temples of the gods in procession, but a little afterwards all disappeared, more than two thousand of them, in such a way that no man was able to say, either then or afterwards, how they came by their deaths" (Plutarch, *Lyc*. 28.3). See also Plutarch, *Lyc*. 28.4-6.

[52] Hare, *Matthew,* 287.

[53] Following the punctuation of the NA[28], the NRSV translates the verse as a question ["You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers…" (25:26-27)]. As with the NRSV, some scholars assert that the verse should be read as a question [e.g., Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew,* 237]. On the other hand, other scholars affirm that it can also be translated as a statement [e.g., Newman and Stine, *Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 778]. In both cases, however, it is hard to see whether the phrase means that the master agrees or not with the slave about his harshness. It seems that the master just repeats the slave's words, "neither affirming nor denying them" [Carolyn Dipboye, "Matthew 25:14-30: To Survive or to Serve," *RevExp* 92 (1995): 509]. However, an important detail is that the master omits the designation "σκληρὸς" in his statement [Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 3:409], maybe calling into questions the slave's statement [contra, Rohrbaugh, "A Peasant Reading of the Parable of the Talents/Pounds," 36, who calls the master a "greedy person"]. See Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 480, who affirms that the master's response does not necessarily mean that he accepts the slave's words "as a true description." See also Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 601, who translates the phrase as following: "On the assumption that I am hard and merciless, you should have been all the more diligent! (25:26-27)."

[54] Cf. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 1012.

is because he is afraid of him, which can also function as a form of shaming him, discrediting his instructions, especially when one considers the negative way in which the word σκληρὸς functions in many Hellenistic texts.

2.2. The terms πονηρός and ὀκνηρός

The master replies to the slave using two words: πονηρός and ὀκνηρός (Matt 25:26). In what follows, I examine both terms but separately.

2.2.1. The term πονηρός

The term πονηρός operates in several ways in Matthew's Gospel, always with a negative function such as evil assertions, bad internal thoughts or malign human actions (e.g. 5:11, 39; 6:23; 9:4; 15:19; 20:15). The term is addressed to people as a rejection (e.g. 12:34-35, 39; 13:49; 16:14; 18:32). As a matter of fact, the word operates negatively in passages in which it is employed to differentiate *good* people from *bad* people, for instance, functioning in contexts of refusal and judgment (e.g. 5:45; 7:17-18; 12:34-35; 13:49).[55] In any case, the negative sense of πονηρός can clearly be observed in Matthean texts where the word operates sometimes not only as an abstract principle of evil but also as a portrayal of the direct intervention of the devil in human lives (e.g. 5:37; 6:13; 13:19, 38).[56]

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[55] See also Matt 22:10, where Jesus tells a story in which slaves go out into the streets and gather all whom they find, "both good and bad," filling the wedding hall with guests. Although the term here does not function in a negative way, by comparing it with the term *good*, the Matthean Jesus differentiates it from what is good or better. In fact, it seems that the reader can identify one of the "bad" with the man without a wedding robe, who is thrown "into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (22:11-13).

[56] It is not easy to ascertain whether these texts refer to an abstract principle or portray the devil [e.g. Newman and Stine, *Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 146-147; and Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 1:538, 614-615]. In my opinion, these occurrences might possibly describe the latter. Cf. 12:45, in which the term is related to evil spirits. Cf. also BDAG, 851-852.

Similar meaning-making is repeated in other New Testament documents, in which the word occasionally appears along with other negative and unethical designations.[57] In Mark 7, for instance, the Markan Jesus states that "it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness [πονηρίαι], deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person" (Mark 7:21-23; cf. Matt 15:19-20). Likewise, as in the Matthean examples given above, other *New Testament* documents also used πονηρός in a negative way when describing people, portraying them as enemies or evil persons. In 2 Thessalonians, for instance, Paul asks his readers to pray for him to "be rescued from wicked and evil [πονηρῶν] people" (2 Thess 3:2. Cf. 2 Tim 4:18), evoking a clear negative sense of the term.

The same can be said of other Hellenistic texts,[58] in which πονηρός functions in a similar vein, suggesting antipathetic meanings,[59] in particular when it is applied to people.[60] An

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[57] For example: (1) evil assertions, bad internal thoughts and malign human actions: Mark 7:22, 23; Luke 3:19; 6:22; 11:34; John 3:19; 7:7; Acts 18:14; 25:18, 21; Col 1:21; 1 Thess 5:22; 1 Tim 6:4; Heb 3:12; 10:22; Jas 2:4; 4:16; 2 John 11; 3 John 10; (2) applied to people: Luke 6:35; 11:13, 29; 19:22; Acts 17:5; 1 Cor 5:13; 2 Tim 3:13; (3) the term functions in opposition to good, suggesting rejection or establishing a contrast between the two: Luke 6:45; 11:13; Rom 12:9; (4) the word portrays the personification of the devil: John 17:15; 2 Thess 3:3; 1 John 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18-19, or evil spirits: Luke 7:21; 8:2; 11:26; Acts 19:12-13, 15-16. The term is also used to describe evil time or days (Gal 1:4; 5:16; 6:13, 16) and evil (painful) sores (Rev 16:2).
[58] The terms can used to describe evil assertions, bad internal thoughts and malign human actions: e.g. Philo, *Her*. 296; *Praem*. 141; *Leg*. 3.237; *Post*. 71, 94; Josephus, *Ant*. 1.48, 61, 66; 2.22, 163; 4.251; 6.279, 296; *J.W*. 5.441; 6.395; *Life* 86; LXX (Gen 6:5; 8:21; 31:24, 29; 37:2; 39:9; 44:5; Exod 33:4; Num 11:1, 10; 14:36-37; 32:13; Deut 4:25; 9:18; 13:5, 11; 17: 2, 7, 12; 19:19-20; Judg 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1; 1 Sam 3:21; 8:6; 15:19; 25:3; 2 Sam 3:39; 11:25, 27; 1 Kgs 14:22; 15:26, 34; 16:19, 25, 30; 20:20; 2 Kgs 3:2; 1 Macc 1:15; 7:25; 11:8; Ezek 18:23; Bar 1:22; Jer 7:30; 25:5; Mic 2:9; Jonah 3:8, 10; Nah 1:11); *1 En*. 98:6; 101:1; *T. Reu*. 1:8; 4:9; *T. Sim*. 2:14; 4:9; 5:1; *T. Jud*. 13:2; *T. Iss*. 3:3; 6:2; 7:7; *T. Zeb*. 4:12; *T. Dan* 1:3; 3:1; 6:8; *T. Ash*. 1:8, 9; 2:2, 5, 7; 6:5; *T. Jos*. 3:10; 5:2; 7:8; *T. Benj*. 3:6; *T. Gad* 7:6; *T. Job* 23:4; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 1.1.3; 2.3.3; 2.18.3; 2.29.1; 2.44.2; 4.66.1; 5.5.4; 5.7.3; 5.10.2; 5.64.3.2; 5.67.1, 3; 6.24.2; 6.43.2; 6.46.3; 6.81.4; 6.85.3; 6.87.2, 5; 7.52.7; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.77.9; 2.60.1; 5.71.6; 16.54.4. The term is also used to describe either something terrible (*T. Reu*. 6:6; LXX [Gen 12:17; 50:20]; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 1.52.1; 5.54.3; and Philodemus of Gadara, *Piet*. 81 2350); evil time or days (LXX [Psalms 36:19 [37:19]; 40:2 [41:1]; 48:6 [49:5] 2 Macc 1:5]; Philo, *Conf*. 80); evil angels (Philo, *Gig*. 17); evil spirits (*1 En*. 15:9; 99:7; *T. Sim*. 3:5; 6:6; *T. Levi* 5:6; 18:12; *T. Jud*. 16:1; *T. Ash*. 6:5;

example of this is provided by two texts. In the *Antiquities of the Jews*, for instance, Josephus

contrasts Moses with other legislators, asserting that "[o]ther legislators, in fact, following fables,

have in their writings imputed to the gods the disgraceful errors of men and thus furnished the

wicked with a powerful excuse [πονηροῖς]" (Josephus, *Ant*. 1.22). Likewise, in the *Roman*

Antiquities, Dionysius of Halicarnassus states that "the noble traditions of the Roman

commonwealth have become so debased and sullied, that some who have made a fortune by

robbery, housebreaking, prostitution and every other base means [πονηροῦ], purchase their

freedom with the money so acquired and straightway are Romans" (Dionysius of Halicarnassus,

Ant. rom. 4.24.4). As seen, in pragmaphilological terms, in both quotations the word πονηρός

behaves in an adverse way, depicting enemies of society, as delinquents or villainous people, and

functioning in opposition to good and righteous citizens. This does not necessarily mean that it

operates as a swear word in the literary texts examined. What is clear, however, is that the word

clearly conveys offensive meanings,[61] though it is hard to recognise it as a swearing term *per se*.

Josephus, *J.W*. 7.185; LXX [Judg 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14-16, 23; 19:9; Tob 6:8]; or evil demons
(LXX [Tob 3:8, 17]).
[59] The term functions in opposition to good, sometimes suggesting rejection or establishing a
moral contrast between the two: e.g, Philo, *Post*. 95; *Deo* 18; *Ebr*. 28; *Conf*. 169, 180; *Legat*. 7,
91; *Praem*. 2-3; *Ios*. 83; *Opif*. 154; and *Leg*. 1.56, 60-61, 90, 100-101, 110; LXX (Gen 2:9, 17;
3:5, 22; 44:4; Lev 27:10, 12, 14, 33; Num 13:20; 24:13; Josh 23:15; 1 Sam 15:21; Psalms 34:12
[35:12]; Jer 24:2; Isa 5:20; Mic 3:2); *T. Ash*. 4:2; Philodemus of Gadara, *on Poems* 42.1;
Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 4.47.5; 4.83.3; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*,
1.93.3-4; 5.79.2; 9.10.2.
[60] E.g. Philo, *Deo* 20; *Ebr*. 14, 28; *Conf*. 24; *Leg*. 3:69, 71, 74; *Legat*. 166; and *Flacc*. 109;
Josephus, *Ant*. 1.53, 96; 2.55, 59, 149; 4.286; 6.33, 260, 285; *J.W*. 1.74, 212; 2.156, 258, 275,
304, 352, 373; 4.179; 7.438; *Life* 29, 133-134, 151, 290, 355; *Ag. Ap*. 2.37, 249; LXX (Gen
13:13; 28:8; 34:30; 38:7; Num 14:27, 35; 2 Sam 4:11; Esther 7:6; Prov 11:15); *T. Reu*. 5:1; *T.
Jud*. 10:2; 11:1; *T. Ben*. 5:1; *T. Job* 43:5, 17; Posidonius, *Frg*. 212; Philodemus of Gadara, *Piet*.
77A 2229; *on Poems*, 67 1; Strabo, *Geogr*., 5.2.5; 5.4.12; 7.6.2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant.
rom*. 3.72.7; 4.23.2; 4.28.3-4; 4.42.1; 4.44.1; 4.46.4; 4.47.2, 4; 4.79.1; 4.80.3; 4.81.2, 4; 5.25.3;
5.53.3; 5.65.1; 5.66.2; 5.68.2.; 5.77.6; 6.49.5; 6.60.1; 7.8.2; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca
historica*, 3.61.6; 5.79.2; 9.10.2; 9.33.1; 10.12.1; 11.87.4; 12.20.2; 13.31.3; 14.4.2; 14.69.1;
16.30.2; 16.65.3; 25.8.1; 26.15.1; 26.22.1; 27.1.2; 28.2.1.
[61] See, however, Dickey, *Greek Forms*, 168, who affirms that the term is not very offensive,
explaining that it "is often used where no real ill will is apparent." Dickey's conclusion,
however, focuses on the Classics, omitting any reference to it when engaging with post-classical

In summary, from a pragmaphilological viewpoint, although the word πονηρός does not necessarily function as a profanity itself, the way that it operates in different Hellenistic literature shows a categorically negative function. It describes detrimental actions, portraying also wicked people, including delinquents and villainous ones, namely, the scourge of society. If that were the case, in the parable of the talents the master considers his slave a criminal, whose actions and deeds are similar to villains. And even though the term does not work as a swear word, it seems that it functions in an offensive way, derogating the slave's performance.

2.2.2. The term ὀκνηρός

Like the examples given above, the term ὀκνηρός also functions in a similar negative way. As stated, ὀκνηρός is the second word used by the master in referring to his slave (Matt 25:26). In Matthew's Gospel it only appears here, although it is also used in other Hellenistic texts. In general, the Greek term ὀκνηρός depicts a person who "for various reasons or difficulties does not have the resolution to act,"[62] describing hesitation and laziness[63] in Hellenistic writings.[64]

The term does not have negative connotations all the time. But in some cases it evokes a clear and direct adverse meaning.[65] In the LXX, for instance, *Sirach* affirms that a "sluggard [ὀκνηρός] has been compared to a filthy stone, and everyone will hiss at his dishonor" (Sir 22:1). The same book also states that a "sluggard" [ὀκνηρός] can be "compared to cow dung of

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works.
[62] Friedrich Hauck, "ὀκνηρός," *TDNT* 5:166.
[63] See Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 790; and BDAG, 702.
[64] E.g. Josephus, *Ant*. 1.66; 2.236; 20.71; and *J.W*. 4.584; Philo, *Her*. 1.254; *Mos*. 1.8; *Spec*. 1.99; and *Virt*. 1.83; LXX (Prov 6:6, 9; 11:16; 18:8; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 26:13-16; 31:27; Sir 22:1-2; 37:11); Plutarch, *Cic*. 5.2; *Them*. 2.3; *Tu. san*. 120 B 1; [Lib. ed.] 12 D 3; Posidonius, *Frg*. 406; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 3.52.2; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 19.108.3; Dio Chrysostom, *Dic. exercit*. 6; Rom 12:11; and Phil 3:1.
[65] The *Book of Proverbs*, for example, uses the term ὀκνηρός in a very negative way, advising readers not to be lazy, for instance. E.g. Prov 6:6, 9; 11:16; 18:8; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 26:13-16; and 31:27.

dunghills; everyone who picks it up will shake [it] off his hand" (Sir 22:2). In both cases, ὀκνηρός functions in an offensive way, evoking rejection and public shame.

By calling the slave ὀκνηρός, the master seems to be responding to the slave's words in which he states that he has not done anything because he was afraid of his master (25:24-25). However, what the slave calls fear, the master calls laziness.[66] So, by calling him ὀκνηρός, the master appears to be using the term as an offensive designation, as in *Sirach*, in which the word describes filthy and repulsive images. However, whether the term can clearly be seen as a common and popular profanity or not, is not evident, neither in Hellenistic texts nor in Matthew's story. What is clear, however, is that it evokes offensive images.

In summary, using a pragmaphilological approach, πονηρός and ὀκνηρός suggest adverse meanings, describing mischievous and indolent people. Both terms operate in negative contexts, insinuating offense. This means that πονηρός and ὀκνηρός can be understood as operating antithetically to *good* and *trustworthy*. So, while the master praises the first two slaves using positive words, he also shames the last slave using negative and unpleasant designations. Therefore, from a pragmaphilological viewpoint, by calling him πονηρός and ὀκνηρός, the master first humiliates his slave, comparing him to bad people, such as criminals. And second, he stress his laziness, a term that indicates disgrace.

2.3. The term ἀχρεῖος

A similar negative connotation emerges when analysing the term ἀχρεῖος (25:30), which the master uses when expressing his final disapproval of the slave, removing him from

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[66] Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 490. Cf. Heil, "Final Parables in the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew 24-25," 198; and John Mutch, "The Man with the one Talent," *ExpTim* 42 (1931): 334.

responsibility (25:30). In Hellenistic texts the term ἀχρεῖος describes either a useless action[67] or an ineffective instrument.[68] The word, besides, can also be applied to people[69] or animals,[70] operating also in the sense of worthlessness.[71] When applied to people, it can sometimes imply rejection. Plutarch, for example, refers to an anonymous woman who rejects her son because he had deserted his post. In an epigram attributed to her, she says about him:

> "Off to your fate through the darkness, vile scion, who makes such a hatred,
> So the Eurotas flow not e'en for the timorous deer.
> Worthless [ἀχρεῖον] whelp that you are, vile remnant, be off now to Hades;
> Off! for never I bore Sparta's unworthy son" (Plutarch, *[Apoph. Lac.]* 241 A 1)

As seen, there are several (im)polite words used in the sentence with which the mother dismisses her son.[72] The term ἀχρεῖος is one of them, functioning as an adjective describing a whelp. This *adjectival function* evokes the parable of the talents of Matthew's Gospel, in which the master uses the term as an adjective, calling the man ἀχρεῖον δοῦλον (*worthless slave*, Matt 25:30). However, both in Plutarch and Matthew's Gospel, ἀχρεῖος not only operates as an adjectival expression of repudiation, but also evokes images of condemnation. While in Plutarch's text the *worthless* [ἀχρεῖον] whelp is sent off to a fate through the darkness and Hades (Plutarch, *[Apoph. Lac.]* 241 A 1), in Matthew's story the *worthless* slave is thrown "outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 25:30). The image

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[67] E.g., Josephus, *J.W.* 5.472; *Ant.* 5.28; 19:151, 207; Philo, *Spec.* 1.287; Plutarch, *Rect. rat. aud.* 40 A 10; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 17.84.6; Polybius, *Historiae*, 1.59.11; 11.24.6; and Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn.* 96.

[68] See Josephus, *J.W.* 5.268; LXX (Bar 6:15); Dio Chrysostom, *Ven.* 40; *Tyr.* 10; *1 Tars.* 64; *4 Regn.* 100. The word also describes useless occupations (e.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Ven.* 110) and plans (e.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Conc. Apam.* 7). In *New Testament* documents the word appears in Luke 17:10, in which slaves affirm that they are "unworthy of any praise" (BDAG, 160) because they have done only what they ought to have done.

[69] See Josephus, *Life* 50; *Ant.* 13.240; LXX (2 Sam 6:22); Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 14.22.4; 18.15.1; 19.35.5; Plutarch, *Fab.* 16.2; and Dio Chrysostom, *De philosopho* 7; *Ven.* 111.

[70] See Josephus, *Life* 117. The term can also refer to birds (*T. Job* 27:1).

[71] See BDAG, 160.

[72] For example, the woman calls her son κακός (evil, wicked), δειλός (coward) and Σπάρτας ἄξιον οὐδ᾽ ἔτεκον (Sparta's unworthy son).

of the outer darkness describes metaphorical images of rejection and condemnation in Matthew's

Gospel, which, along with the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth," is used as a metaphor of

punishment.[73] In fact, the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" operates in two ways. First, it

is as an "expression of self-reproach or unhappiness either for having lost the reward or for

having been rejected"; and second, it functions as exhibition of anger "for having been expelled

by force, after having been condemned."[74] Therefore, the parable of the talents depicts a

physical and verbal violent act addressed towards an incompetent slave.[75]

Accordingly, from a pragmaphilological point of view, ἀχρεῖος, occasionally and

especially in Matthew's story, is used to express rejection and disapproval, functioning as an

offensive designation. Because the data is too insignificant to be conclusive, it cannot be argued

that the term functions as a swear word. But, in light of the context in which the term is located,

it clearly carries an unpleasantly negative sense. In consequence, rather than being a useful

employee, as his fellow co-workers are, the last slave is said to be useless[76] and is rejected. By

calling him ἀχρεῖος, the master probably shames the slave publicly before casting him into the

outer darkness.

In summary, in pragmaphilological terms, ἀχρεῖος operates in an offensive way, which

along with πονηρός and ὀκνηρός, serves to underline the master's intention of dishonouring the

slave. First, the master shames the slave when he takes away his honour and demotes him,

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[73] See Guillaume I. Migbisiegbe, "Entering Into the Joy of the Master or Being Cast Out Into the Outer Darkness: Re-imagining the Eschatological Judgement in Matthew 25,30," in *The Gospel of Matthew at the Crossroads of Early Christianity* (BETL 243; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 607-619.

[74] See Carlos Olivares, "A Narrative Analysis of the Phrase 'Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth' in the Gospel of Matthew" (M.Th. diss., University of Auckland, 2010), 116-117.

[75] Having in mind the imperative mode and the active voice of the verb ἐκβάλλω (to cast out), the reader sees the violence of the passage by noticing that the slave is thrown out by force and against his wish into the outer darkness (cf. 8:12; 21:12, 39; 22:13).

[76] In some way the term ἀχρεῖος ironically represents the slave's final outcome as "one who fails to make a good investment" (BDAG, 160), as his fellow workers clearly did, and so he becomes unprofitable and useless.

throwing him into the outer darkness. Second, the master also dishonours the slave by describing him as *worthless*, contrasting his unprofitable performance with his co-workers'. In consequence, the master discredits his slave, using three (im)polite words, which evoke negative, adverse, offensive and condemnatory images.

3. Jesus' (im)politeness when using parables: Unlocking the encrypted world

What emerges from the above data indicates a world in which (im)polite words are used in parabolic contexts. In narrative terms, the parable of the talents is part of a group of several parables dealing with the delay of the Son of Man, depicting two different behaviours and their negative and positive consequences. The Matthean Jesus uses the parable of the talents to underline the importance of being ready, using images of judgment and rejection as a warning. The parable, which is a story within Matthew's story, seems to describe a challenge-riposte contest between the master and the slave, in which not only the master addresses his slaves using (im)polite words as rebukes, but also slaves talk back to their master employing provocative terms. A pragmaphilological study indicates that in the parable of the talents and other Hellenistic texts, σκληρός, πονηρός, ὀκνηρός and ἀχρεῖος evoke negative images, suggesting offense. In my view, however, there is no literary evidence attesting that these terms were employed as profane language *per se*.

Because the terms above are part of a parable, they represent what the speaker, in this case the Matthean Jesus, wants to underline, using a metaphoric context. In Matthew's Gospel there are several examples in which (im)polite words and actions are used to underline instructions in parables, which can also be understood in terms of (im)politeness, depicting sometimes verbal and physical violence. This suggests that in the encrypted world of Matthew's story, parables, or stories, can employ (im)polite terms and descriptions when masters and slaves

engage in arguments. Also, it looks like (im)polite terms can also be used to show the importance

of teachings or warnings when characters, in this case slaves, fail to perform as expected. The

use of similar literary devices and purposes in other Hellenistic texts is still something to

consider, in particular in stories dealing with masters and slaves. Such study will be done in

Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER 6

DOGS: BEING (IM)POLITE WITH A CANAANITE WOMAN

In this chapter I analyse the pericope of the Canaanite woman in Matthew's Gospel (15:21-28), in which the Matthean Jesus engages in a dialogue with a desperate woman who approaches him asking for help for her demon-possessed daughter (15:22). First, I pay attention to the narrative, establishing a broader literary context for the pericope of the Canaanite woman and determining in what manner Jesus' dialogue is metaphoric. Second, using a pragmaphilological approach, I examine the way the word *dog*, a term used by Jesus and the Canaanite woman, operates in Matthew's Gospel (15:26, 27). In doing so, I seek to uncover the socio-rhetorical world encoded in Matthew's story regarding (im)polite animal metaphors and (im)polite animal terms, such as dogs.

1. Narrative analysis: Contrasting two characters

The pericope of the Canaanite woman (15:21-28), in my view, can be divided into two acts. The first act begins describing a woman asking for help and ends with Jesus affirming an ethnic and geographical boundary for his mission (15:21-24). The second act starts by depicting the same woman, persisting in her plea, and closes with Jesus granting her request (15:25-28). The following section discusses each of these acts, establishing a contrast between two characters, the Canaanite woman and Jesus' disciples.

1.1. First act: Asking for help

The first act opens with Jesus withdrawing from the land of Gennesaret (cf. Matt 14:34-36) to the region of Tyre and Sidon (15:21). A Canaanite woman coming from that region approaches Jesus asking help for her demon-possessed daughter (15:22).

The mention of Tyre and Sidon, as the region where the events of the pericope of the Canaanite woman occur, is significant (15:21).[1] Although in Matthew's Gospel the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon seem to be characterised as bad people (cf. 11:21–22), the Matthean Jesus uses them as an illustration of repentance (11:21). Because, as Jesus indicates in Matt 11, "if the deeds of power" done in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in Tyre and Sidon, "they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (11:21). In doing so, the Matthean Jesus anticipates a better response to his message from the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon than from his own people.[2] Therefore, from a literary point of view, it seems that the pericope of the Canaanite woman, which tells a story of a female character coming from "around the boundaries" of that area (15:22),[3] serves to illustrate this point.[4]

Nonetheless, although her geographical provenance can be deduced from the text, her ethnic origin is not clearly stated. In fact, in narrative terms, it is not easy to establish if the term Canaanite cryptically indicates the geographical origin of this woman in Matthew's Gospel (15:22), and therefore, as many argue, her non-Israelite extraction.[5] As the first act goes on, however, her non-Israelite origin is made evident. After readers see Jesus' disciples urging Jesus

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[1] Although there are some historic and geographic issues regarding the geographical location of both cities [Gerard Mussies, "Jesus and 'Sidon' in Matthew 15/ Mark 7," *Bijdr* 58 (1997): 264-278], the narrator does not indicate that the Matthean Jesus enters into Tyre and Sidon, but only to the "geographical area" or the "district" where these cities are located.

[2] Scott, "Matthew 15:21-28," 35.

[3] The Greek text says ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων ἐκείνων (from that region). By using the noun ὅριον, a word that indicates a "marker of division between two areas" [BDAG, 723], the narrator seems to suggest that the woman comes from the boundaries of Tyre and Sidon, without mentioning where specifically she comes from [cf. Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 492]. In fact, it seems that in Matthew's Gospel ὅριον is always used in this general sense. Cf. 2:16; 4:13; 8:34; 15:39; 19:1.

[4] Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 631.

[5] Although historical studies usually interpret the term Canaanite as referring to geographical or ethnic origin, giving it different interpretative nuances [E.g., James W. Perkinson, "A Canaanitic Word in the Logos of Christ; or the Difference the Syro-Phoenician Woman Makes to Jesus," *Semeia* (1996): 64; and G. Schwarz, "Συροφοινικισσα Χαναναια (Markus 7. 26/Matthäus 15. 22)," *NTS* 30 (1984): 626-627], in my opinion, it is almost impossible to interpret the term in the same manner from a narrative perspective.

to send her away (15:23), the Matthean Jesus says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24), establishing an ethnic boundary to his mission. The term Ἰσραήλ (Israel) is important in determining this racial limit. Before Matt 15 the term Ἰσραήλ is used seven times, operating in each case as a geographical and ethnical description (2:6, 20-21; 8:10; 9:33; 10:6, 23). Phrases such as "to shepherd my people Israel" (2:6), "the land of Israel" (2:20, 21) and "in no one in Israel have I found such faith" (8:10), for example, illustrate very well the way the term depicts a limited boundary.[6]

The above becomes clearer when examining Matt 10:6, in which the phrase "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" is echoed in Matt 15:26. In Matt 10, the Matthean Jesus commands his disciples, "[g]o nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In Jesus' instruction, Gentiles and Samaritans are placed in opposition to the "house of Israel," making a division between them and Israel. Accordingly, it seems that by establishing this distinction and informing readers that the Canaanite woman is from around the region of Tyre and Sidon, the narrator is informing the reader that she is not an Israelite. In doing so, Matthew's story is alerting the reader that her story, as many other stories in Matthew's Gospel, is worth being heard/read.[7] As a matter of fact, the narrator uses the interjection ἰδού, a "demonstrative or presentative particle that draws

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[6] As the narrative goes on, phrases such as "the God of Israel" (15:31), "the twelve tribes of Israel" (19:28) and "King of Israel" (27:42), make openly explicit the limited boundary evoked by the term.

[7] Janice Capel Anderson, "Double and Triple Stories, the Implied Reader, and Redundancy in Matthew," *Semeia* 31 (1985): 75-76, locates the story of the Canaanite woman in the middle of a thematic chiasm, giving to her story a preponderant motif in the Gospel as a whole. In my view, however, her arguments are not convincing. First, the chiasm does not include other episodes in between, which will take the reader in other directions. Second, it does not take account of the healing of the boy in Matt 17, in which a father approaches Jesus asking also for help (17:9-21). Third, Jesus' speeches are not considered in the chiasm, such as chapter 13, which can be linked to chapters 5-7 or 18.

attention to what follows,"[8] in introducing the woman (15:22).[9] So, by using ἰδού, the narrator

claims the attention of readers from the beginning,[10] communicating to them that what follows is

important.

After introducing the Canaanite woman, the reader hears for the first time a female's

voice, becoming "the first time in the narrative that a woman has been given speech."[11] The

reader, as mentioned, is informed that the woman approaches Jesus asking for mercy for her

daughter who is severely possessed by a demon (15:22). Prior to Matt 15, Jesus heals every

demon-possessed person that is brought before him (4:24; 8:16; 9:32-33; 12:22; cf. 8:28-34),

indicating that he should not have any problem in helping the woman's daughter. But, as the

narrator informs readers, Jesus initially remains silent (15:23).

Jesus' silence is an odd feature in the pericope of the Canaanite woman and in Matthew's

story as a whole, which can be explained in at least two ways. First, it can be seen as an

obstacle, linking Jesus' silence with gender-bias and racial prejudice.[12] Second, it can be

interpreted in view of his later statement, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"

(15:24), operating as a literary device in which the Matthean Jesus indicates to the woman his

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[8] BDAG, 468.

[9] On several occasions, Matthew's Gospel uses ἰδού to present characters or events that will have an impact in the narrative (e.g., 1:20, 23; 2:1, 9, 13, 19; 3:16-17; 4:11).

[10] Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 441.

[11] Elaine Mary Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew* (BZNW 60; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 105. In Matt 9, readers are informed of a woman suffering from haemorrhages who comes up behind Jesus and touches the fringe of his cloak, saying to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well" (9:20-21). Unlike the Canaanite woman, however, who talks to Jesus audibly, Matt 9 describes only the woman's own thoughts (Ibid., 105, no. 124).

[12] Since the character in the pericope is both a non-Israelite and female, some speculate that because of both her gender and her race the Canaanite woman does not receive Jesus' attention immediately. E.g., Lazare S. Rukundwa and Andries G. Van Aarde, "Revisiting Justice in the First Four Beatitudes in Matthew (5:3-6) and the Story of the Canaanite Woman (Mt 15:21-28): A Postcolonial Reading," *HvTSt* 61 (2005): 943; and Alan H. Cadwallader, "When a Woman is a Dog: Ancient and Modern Ethology Meet the Syrophoenician Women," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 1 (2011): 35.1-35.17].

restricted mission and identity.[13] In any case,[14] Jesus' silence ends when his disciples enter the

scene.

An important but minor function in the pericope of the Canaanite woman is that of Jesus'

disciples. Jesus' disciples interrupt Jesus' silence, urging him to send the woman away because

she keeps shouting (κράζει) after them (15:23).[15] As the reader knows, the woman appears

yelling (ἔκραζεν) at the beginning of the story (15:22), perhaps not only indicating persistence,

which is made clear as the pericope advances (15:25-28), but in response to Jesus' disciples'

attitude toward her. In fact, it seems that Jesus' disciples seem to be blocking her way to Jesus,[16]

displaying an explicit negative role in their interaction with her.[17]

1.2. Second act: Metaphors, great understanding and faith

I divide the second act into two parts, which follows the narrative line of the pericope

(15:25-28). First, I propose to read the dialogue between Jesus and the Canaanite woman as a

metaphor (15:25-27). Second, I compare Jesus' disciples' understanding and faith in Matthew's

story with hers. In doing so, I establish a narrative base from which to engage in a

pragmaphilological analysis.

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[13] John Aranda Cabrido, *The Portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: A Narrative-Critical and Theological Study* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 195-196.
[14] Since the focus of my research is on *verbal* (im)politeness, I leave out gestures and silences, therefore, I do not explore Jesus' silence and (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel.
[15] Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 441, suggests that by saying ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν, "send her away," Jesus' disciples are perhaps asking Jesus to heal the woman's daughter [Cf. NJB "Give her what she wants"; and P. Benoit, *L'Evangile selon Saint Matthieu* (4 ed. Paris: Cerf, 1972), 108], because, according to Hagner, the verb ἀπολύω could also "be taken to mean 'set free'" [cf. Simon Légasse, "L'épisode de la Cananéenne d'après Mt. 15,21-28," *BLE* 73 (1972): 39; and Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 221]. However, although ἀπολύω can also mean to "release from a painful condition," "set free" or to "be pardoned" [BDAG, 117], in Matthew's Gospel it is never used in terms of healing. Cf. 1:19; 5:31–32; 14:15, 22-23; 15:32, 39; 18:27; 19:3, 7-9; 27:15, 17, 21, 26. Cf. Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 108-109; and Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 494, who also disagree with that conclusion.
[16] Sometimes the narrator of Matthew's Gospel uses the verb κράζω (to call out) to describe characters that are in the middle of a crowd and want to get Jesus' attention (9:27; 20:30-31).
[17] Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 339.

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1.2.1. Animal metaphors

The second act starts by showing the Canaanite woman kneeling before Jesus, saying, "Lord, help me" (15:25). Jesus' response, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs," (15:26) is quite intriguing, especially when considering the woman's response. She replies in similar terms, stating, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (15:27).

Although it is not easy to understand Jesus' dialogue with the Canaanite woman,[18] one important point to consider is the metaphoric language used by both characters.[19] Jesus' mention of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24), establishes an initial metaphoric sphere, which becomes clear as the pericope advances, in particular when readers pay attention to the presence of two animals: sheep (15:24) and dogs (15:26, 27).

Prior to Matt 15, the narrator and Jesus use several animal metaphors when referring to people or illustrating human behaviours.[20] In Matt 9:36, for example, the narrator informs the reader that Jesus feels compassion for the crowds, because they are harassed and helpless, "like

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[18] Jesus' dialogue with the woman have been interpreted (1) in terms of mission and salvation [e.g., Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 235; and Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 135-136]; (2) a test for the woman [e.g., Glenna S. Jackson, " A Source for Matthew's Story of the Canaanite Woman," *Proceedings EGL & MWBS* 14 (1994): 53; and Glenna S. Jackson, *Have Mercy on Me: The Story of the Canaanite Woman in Matthew 15:21-28* (JSNTSup 228; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 133-137]; (3) an encrypted teaching for Jesus' disciples [Douglas P. Hamilton, "The Syro-Phoenician Woman: Another Suggestion," *ExpTim* 46 (1935): 478; and James D. Smart, "Jesus, the Syro-Phoenician Woman and the Disciples," *ExpTim* 50 (1939): 472] and (4) acquisition of new knowledge, in which Jesus learns something new from the Canaanite woman, such as acceptance and inclusivity, for example [e.g. Gail R. O'Day, "Surprised by Faith: Jesus and the Canaanite Woman," in *Feminist Companion to Matthew* (ed. Amy-Jill Levine; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 114-125; and Patte, "The Canaanite Woman and Jesus: Surprising Models of Discipleship (Matt. 15:21-28)," 42-45]. An analysis and interpretation of Jesus' words goes beyond the scope of my research. What I will do, however, is to discuss the term *dog* and its metaphoric context.
[19] Cf. Cabrido, *The Portrayal of Jesus*, 196.
[20] E.g., sheep (7:15; 9:36; 10:6, 16; 12:11-12), pigs (7:6), dogs (7:6), wolves (7:15; 10:16), serpents (10:6), sparrows (10:29, 31), vipers (3:7; 12:34) and doves (10:16). See also Matt 3:16, in which the image of a dove is used to depict the Spirit of God descending on Jesus when he is baptized by John.

sheep without a shepherd." In the same vein, Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, advises his audience to "[b]eware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (7:15). In both verses, the Matthean Jesus employs metaphoric language in which humans are represented as animals.

As the narrative goes on, readers engage with other animal metaphors,[21] demonstrating that this is a common feature used by the Matthean Jesus when depicting people. In each one of these cases, animals are used in a symbolic sense, functioning either as positive or negative illustrations (e.g. 25:31-46). For instance, in Matt 10, the Matthean Jesus advises his disciples to be wise as *serpents* (10:16), while in Matt 23 Jesus castigates the scribes and Pharisees by naming them in the same way (23:33). In the first example, the term *serpent* is positive, whilst in the second, it is negative. The difference between the two verses is given by the context and it is related to the characteristics displayed by the text; *wise* in Matt 10 functions positively, and the association of serpents with *brood of vipers* in Matt 23 works negatively.[22]

A similar approach can be followed when examining the phrase "It is not good to take the *children's bread* and throw it to the dogs" (15:26, NASB).[23] The phrase, in my view, is clothed in metaphoric words. The terms *children* and *bread* are occasionally used, albeit separately, as metaphors in Matthew's Gospel (3:9; 23:37; 26:26), which seems to be replicated here in Matt 15. Indeed, Jesus has already used the metaphor "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24) and now continues using metaphoric language, especially animal metaphors (15:26).

The animal metaphor used in v. 26 is *dog*, a word that will be examined in depth in the pragmaphilological section, engaging with it in its Matthean context but also in other Hellenistic

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[21] E.g., sheep (18:12; 25:32-33; 26:31), serpents (23:33), vipers (23:33), little birds (23:37), hens (23:37) and young goats (25:32, 33).
[22] The negative function of the phrase *brood of vipers* in the narrative of Matthew's Gospel was examined in Chapter 3.
[23] Emphasis supplied.

material in which the term *dog* is used. What can be argued here, however, is that in terms of

grammar, the word *dog* in Matt 15:26 cannot be directly applied to the Canaanite woman. The

word is not only used in the plural rather than the vocative, but is also used in a metaphoric

sense. Therefore, to my mind, it is the metaphor as a whole that can be applied to the Canaanite

woman, not only the term *dog*. In any case, although Jesus does not directly address the woman

as a dog, the woman herself describes her situation in terms of *dogs* and *masters* when

responding "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"

(15:27). In my view, however, the woman in her response also refers to her situation in

metaphoric terms,[24] following Jesus' argument without any problem by using an identical animal

metaphor. The latter characteristic, the woman's ability to understand Jesus' metaphoric words,

is in contrast to Jesus' disciples' ability in Matthew's Gospel. This will be examined in what

follows.

1.2.2. Great understanding and faith

In my analysis of the following scenes, I locate the passage of the Canaanite woman in its

immediate context, revealing parallel terms and wordings.[25] In fact, in the section Matt 14:13-

16:12 there are several semantic and thematic correspondences with the pericope of the

Canaanite woman (see figure 4).[26] In establishing a broader context, I am able to compare the

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[24] The Canaanite woman follows Jesus' logic by mentioning *dogs* and *crumbs*, echoing the *dogs* and *bread* used by Jesus; adding a new element, *tables*, and replacing *children* by *masters* (15:26-27). The woman also uses other verb. While Jesus talks about *throwing* the children's bread to the dogs, the woman talks about crumbs *falling* from the masters' tables. So, to my mind, the woman's response, which follows Jesus' logic, is also clothed in metaphoric words.
[25] See Tino Lovison, "La pericopa della Cananea Mt 15, 21–28," *RivB* 19 (1971): 274-276; B. Rod Doyle, "Matthew's Intention as Discerned by his Structure," *RB* 95 (1988): 44-45; and Lucien Cerfaux, "La section des pains (Mc, VI, 31-VIII, 26; Mt., XIV, 13-XVI, 12)," in *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux* (3 Vols.; Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1954), 1: 471-485.
[26] Based on Elaine M. Wainwright, "A Voice from the Margin: Reading Matthew 15:21-28 in an Australian Feminist Key," in *Reading from this Place, volume 2, Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert;

portrayal of Jesus' disciples with that of the Canaanite woman, allowing me to highlight their differences. In what follows, I examine two thematics, namely, understanding and faith, which in my opinion emerge from these correspondences.

Healing activity (14:13-14)

Feeding five thousand (14:15-21)
        Disciples: "send the crowds away…" (14:15)
        Bread [ἄρτος] (14:17,19)

Walking on the water (14:22-33)
        Disciples (14:22)
        Peter: Little faith [ὀλιγόπιστος] (14:31)

Healing activity (14:34-36)

Discussing about purity issues with Pharisees (15:1-20)
        Disciples (15:2)
        Bread [ἄρτος] (15:2)
        Jesus' disciples do not understand [οὐ νοέω] (15:15-20)

The Pericope of the Canaanite Woman (15:21-28)
        Disciples: "send her away…" (15:23)
        Bread [ἄρτος] (15:26)
        Canaanite woman: Understands Jesus' metaphoric riddle (15:26, 27)
        Canaanite woman: Great faith [μέγας πίστις] (15:28)

Healing activity (15:29-31)

Feeding four thousand (15:32-39)
        Disciples: "Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?" (15:33)
        Bread [ἄρτος] (15:33, 34, 36)

Discussing about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:1-12)
        Disciples (16:5)
        Bread [ἄρτος] (16:5, 7-12)
        Jesus' disciples do not understand [οὐ νοέω] (16:9, 11)
        Jesus' disciples: Little faith [ὀλιγόπιστος] (16:8)

Fig. 4: Narrative context of the pericope of the Canaanite woman (14:13-16:12)

Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 138, 132-153; and Cerfaux, "La section des pains," 471-485. Unlike Wainwright, however, I do not arrange the scenes around a chiastic structure.

1.2.2.1. Understanding v/s lack of understanding

Although it is not easy to establish whether the metaphoric dialogue between the

Matthean Jesus and the Canaanite woman is based on a popular saying or proverb,[27] what is

unmistakable is that Matthew's Gospel portrays the Canaanite woman as a character able to

understand Jesus and capable of engaging in similar figurative speech.[28] In my opinion, the

woman's ability to understand Jesus' metaphor is a significant element in the pericope and in

Matthew's story as a whole, especially when it is contrasted to Jesus' disciples' performance.

Prior to the events of the pericope of the Canaanite woman, Jesus engages in a discussion

with the scribes and Pharisees, debating about purity issues (15:1-2). For Jesus, washing hands

before eating is not the problem. Because, as he claims, what really defiles a person is not what

goes into the mouth, but rather what comes from inside the person (15:11). Peter, who may be

acting as the spokesperson of the group of disciples (cf. 19:27), approaches Jesus requesting an

explanation of what he calls a parable (παραβολή), namely, an interpretation of what Jesus has

just said about purity and impurity (15:15).[29] By calling Jesus' words a parable, Peter recognizes

that they seem to be a riddle or illustration,[30] which needs further clarification.[31] Jesus seems

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[27] E.g., Alan P. Winton, *The Proverbs of Jesus: Issues of History and Rhetoric* (JSNTSup 35; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 26, 47, 132; and J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Law in the New Testament: The Syro-Phoenician Woman and the Centurion of Capernaum," *NovT* 15 (1973): 172.

[28] The Canaanite woman clearly understands and discusses Jesus' words by saying "yes, Lord, yet even [ναὶ κύριε, καὶ γὰρ]…" (15:27).

[29] In using the term παραβολή (parable), it is not clear whether Peter is referring to the previous saying against the Pharisees (15:12-14) or what Jesus says previously in v. 11. To my mind, the best option is v. 11, because it fits better with what Jesus explains in v. 17-20 [e.g., Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 2:534; and Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 436. Contra, Schweizer, *The Good News*, 326]. Furthermore, both passages share similar concepts and words, such as στόμα (mouth, 15:11, 17-18), κοινόω (to defile, 15:11, 18, 20) and ἐκπορεύομαι (to go out, 15:11, 18). Therefore, when Peter asks Jesus for an explanation (15:15), he refers to what Jesus says in v. 11, which is explained in vv. 17-20, fitting with the issue of impurity and purity.

[30] In Matthew's Gospel the term παραβολή operates as a metaphoric narrative or saying which the Matthean Jesus uses to illustrate his teaching [13:3, 10, 13, 18, 24, 31, 33-36, 53; 15:15; 21:33, 45; 22:1; 24:32. cf. BDAG, 759-760]. Jesus himself states that parables are difficult to understand, by saying, "the reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not

surprised, asking them why they are still without understanding (15:16). Jesus' surprise is based

on the fact that although Jesus' disciples had previously affirmed that they understand the secrets

of the kingdom, expressed through parables (13:51; cf. 13:10-17), now they appear to be

incapable of deciphering what Jesus is saying.

Jesus' disciples' lack of understanding is an important factor in Matt 15, especially when

the reader considers that after this episode a Canaanite woman appears, who, unlike Jesus'

disciples, shows that she is able to decode a metaphoric riddle.[32] In both cases, a comparable

issue is addressed, which, however, Jesus interprets in a different way. On the one hand,

although Jesus' debate with the scribes and Pharisees deals with purity issues, focusing on eating

matters, Jesus claims that what defiles people is not what they eat, but those things that proceed

from their hearts, such as evil intentions, murder or fornication (15:17-20). Likewise, although

Jesus' dialogue with the Canaanite woman apparently also centres around eating matters, such as

bread and *crumb*s, Jesus' intention is quite different, addressing the issue of restricting his

mission to the house of Israel (cf. 15:24). Unlike Jesus' disciples, however, who are unable to

decipher Jesus' words regarding the real source of contamination, the Canaanite woman, on the

other hand, understands what Jesus is saying, interpreting the reference to *children* and *dogs* on

the same figurative level that Jesus does.

Accordingly, the Canaanite woman stands in opposition to Jesus' disciples' lack of

understanding.[33] While she understands Jesus' parables, Jesus' disciples do not have a clue what

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perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand'" (13:13). In this way, by saying,
"Explain this parable [παραβολὴν] to us," Peter recognizes that he and his fellow disciples
consider that what Jesus' says in v. 11 is as complicated as a parable.
[31] This is not the first time that Jesus' disciples cannot understand Jesus' parables. In Matt 13,
Jesus' disciples also ask for an explanation of "the parable of the weeds of the field" (13:13),
therefore, the reader is not amazed at the disciples' slowness of understanding.
[32] Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 324.
[33] She appears also in opposition to the Jewish leaders [Anderson, "Double and Triple Stories,"
79], who are blind guides (15:14), unable to understand Jesus' ministry (9:13; 12:17) and

he is talking about. The same pattern is repeated in what follows later, with, however, some new

factors present. After the dialogue between Jesus and the Canaanite woman, Jesus moves on

from there to a mountain by the Sea of Galilee (15:29).[34] According to the narrator, a large

crowd come to Jesus, putting at Jesus' feet sick people whom he heals (15:30-31). After doing

this, Jesus feeds a multitude of four thousand people, besides women and children (15:32-38),

and then moves, apparently alone, to the vicinity of Magadan (15:39), engaging in a discussion

with the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:1-4). The narrator informs the reader that Jesus leaves the

Pharisees and Sadducees, while his disciples, who have forgotten to take bread, join him on the

shore of the lake (16:5).[35] Jesus' disciples' lack of understanding is manifested when Jesus tells

them to be on guard "against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (16:6), an observation

that they misunderstand, interpreting it as a rebuke for not having brought bread (16:7). In doing

so, Jesus' disciples show slowness in understanding Jesus,[36] because, as they figure out later,

Jesus is not talking about the yeast used in bread, but about being on guard against the teaching

of the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:12).

Therefore, whilst Jesus' disciples do not understand Jesus' riddles (15:10, 15-20; 16:6-7,

12), the Canaanite woman deciphers Jesus' words at once, establishing an encrypted and

metaphoric dialogue with Jesus with whom she speaks at the same level (15:26-28). So, the

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symbolic signs (12:39-41; 16:1-4). Cf. Mark C. Thompson, "Matthew 15:21-28," *Int* 35 (1981): 281.

[34] Some scholars have proposed that the feeding story in Matt 15 occurs in Gentile territory [e.g, Osborne, *Matthew*, 601]. In my view, however, it is difficult to affirm that, especially when there is nothing in the text indicating that Jesus is still around the region of Tyre and Sidon [see J. R. C. Cousland, "The Feeding of the Four Thousand Gentiles in Matthew? Matthew 15:29-39 as a Test Case," *NovT* 41 (1999): 1-23].

[35] The aorist verb ἐλθόντες could be interpreted as indicating the end of the journey, locating the episode on shore (16:5). Cf. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 651; and Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 458-459.

[36] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 167; Edwards, *Matthew's Narrative*, 67; and Brown, *The Disciples in Narrative Perspective*, 105. Twice the Matthean Jesus questions his disciples for their incapacity to understand what he refers to by the phrase "the yeast of Pharisees and Sadducees" (16:9, 11).

Canaanite woman discerns that Jesus is not referring to literal bread, for example, an element presented before, during, and after her story (14:17, 19; 15:2, 26, 33-34, 36; 16:5, 7-12),[37] but to something else.[38] She differs from the disciples, who either do not understand (15:15) or interpret Jesus' words in a literal way (16:5-7).[39] Therefore, the Canaanite woman's characterisation contrasts with that of Jesus' disciples in the chapters located around the pericope in that she displays understanding of metaphoric matters and they lack that capacity.

1.2.2.2. Faith v/s little faith

The second act ends with Jesus praising the Canaanite woman's great faith and healing her daughter at once (15:28). The woman's great faith is another significant element in the pericope,[40] which contrasts with the performance of Jesus' disciples before and after the Canaanite woman's story.

Prior to the pericope of the Canaanite woman, the reader is informed that the Matthean Jesus feeds a great multitude in an unknown setting (14:13-21). According to the narrator, when the crowds hear of the presence of Jesus in that place, they follow him on foot from the towns (14:13). As evening approaches, Jesus' disciples advise Jesus to "send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves" (14:15). The Matthean Jesus, however, has another plan in mind, multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish and feeding

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[37] Cf. David B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel* (JSNTSup 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990)*,* 144; and Doyle, "Matthew's Intention as Discerned by his Structure," 44-45.

[38] Since my focus is on Jesus' verbal (im)politeness, I am not engaging in an interpretation of the topic of bread, which has been interpreted in different ways. See, for example, Doyle, "Matthew's Intention as Discerned by his Structure," 45; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 600-601; and Cerfaux, "La section des pains," 471-485.

[39] Scott, "Matthew 15:21-28," 39-40.

[40] Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 222. See also Roy A. Harrisville, "The Woman of Canaan: A Chapter in the History of Exegesis," *Int* 20 (1966): 275-276, who proposes that the narrative emphasis of the pericope has to do more with the Cannanite woman and her faith than with the healing itself.

five thousand men, besides women and children (14:16-21). Immediately after this event takes

place, the narrator informs that Jesus makes the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of

him to the other side, while he dismisses the fed crowds (14:22).

The scene now changes, because after dismissing the crowds, Jesus goes up on the

mountain to pray, while his disciples are on the boat at a considerable distance (14:22-24). The

waves, according to the story, batter the boat, because the wind is against it, which does not

prevent Jesus appearing walking on the water, scaring his disciples, who mistake him for a ghost

(14:24-26). Peter, however, after requesting Jesus that he walks on the water,[41] gets off the boat,

and starts walking toward Jesus (14:28-29). But, suddenly, the scene makes an unexpected twist,

describing Peter sinking and crying out, "Lord, save me," because he is afraid (14:30). Jesus'

reaction is fast. He reaches out his hand and catches him, calling him ὀλιγόπιστε (14:31),

meaning little faith, which functions as a reproach in the pericope (14:30-32). This is made clear

when Jesus questions him for having doubted (14:31),[42] implying that the term ὀλιγόπιστε is a

censure of his inability to trust Jesus and "live according to one's beliefs in the midst of difficult

circumstances."[43]

Unlike the Canaanite woman, who is praised by Jesus because of her faith, in the passage

above Peter is rebuked because of his little faith. As the narrative continues, the disciples also

share this feature as a group.   As explained earlier, after the pericope of the Canaanite woman

the narrator describes Jesus moving to a mountain by the Sea of Galilee (15:29) where a great

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[41] Although at the beginning Peter's request is conditional ("if it is you"), this changes (14:28). The aorist of the verb κελεύω (κέλευσόν) is in the imperative, which may indicate that Peter's words are not a question, but an order or command, revealing, at least at the beginning that he is not scared of the situation.

[42] As the narrative unfolds, the reader is informed that some disciples also doubt Jesus after the resurrection (28:17), suggesting that the verb διστάζω (to doubt) operates in a negative way in Matthew's Gospel.

[43] Rachel Nicholls, *Walking on the Water: Reading Mt. 14:22-33 in the Light of its Wirkungsgeschichte* (BIS 90; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 93.

multitude bring sick people to be healed by him (15:29-31). After doing that, Jesus summons his disciples, telling them of his desire to feed the crowd (15:32). But instead of supporting Jesus' idea, Jesus' disciples question him, asking him where they could "get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd" (15:33). Although Jesus feeds the multitude anyway, what amazes the reader is not so much that the number of those who eat in the story is four thousand men, besides women and children (15:38), but Jesus' disciples' incredulity when questioning Jesus. The reader knows that this is not the first time in which Jesus feeds a multitude. As seen, in a previous scene Jesus gives food to about five thousand men, besides women and children (14:21). Therefore, by asking where they could get enough bread to feed this second crowd (15:33), Jesus' disciples show not only bad memory, but also lack of faith, which, evidently, stands in contrast to the Canaanite woman's performance.[44]

This contrast is made evident in the following scenes in which Jesus rebukes his disciples for their little faith, summarizing everything we have seen so far (16:5-12). As mentioned, after feeding the crowd, Jesus goes to the vicinity of Magadan, in which he discusses with the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:1-4), while his disciples, who have forgotten to take bread, join him on the shore of the lake (16:5). Jesus opens the dialogue telling them to be on guard "against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (16:6), a comment that they misunderstand, interpreting it as a failure for not having brought bread (16:7). Jesus, aware of their discussion, accuses them of ὀλιγόπιστοι (having little faith), reproaching them for their lack of understanding and accusing them of forgetting the past (16:8-11). The pericope seems to suggest that Jesus' disciples' discussion involves doubt in "Jesus' power to provide them with bread,"[45] and therefore little

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[44] Cf. Anderson, "Double and Triple Stories," 81.
[45] Fenton, *The Gospel of St. Matthew,* 263.

confidence or faith, failing to remember the two occasions in which Jesus had fed five and then four thousand people (14:13-21; 15:32-38).[46]

The Canaanite woman, on the other hand, shows opposite features.[47] While Jesus rebukes his disciples for having little faith (16:8), he praises the Canaanite woman for her great faith (15:28).[48] Faith is an important factor not only in the pericope of the Canaanite woman, but also in Matthew's Gospel as a whole (e.g. 17:14-20; 21:21; cf. 8:5-13; 9:1-7, 20-22, 27-30), which, as mentioned in passing in Chapter Three, is poorly manifested by Jesus' disciples' as they are represented through Matthew's story. Certainly, unlike Jesus' disciples, who show little faith (8:26; 14:31; 16:8; cf. 6:30), several characters display great and amazing confidence in Jesus (8:5-13; 9:1-7, 20-22, 27-30; 15:21-28).[49]

The pericope of the Centurion, for example, shares several links with the pericope of the Canaanite woman,[50] in particular in the topic of faith. Both passages portray non-Jewish characters with great faith (8:10; 15:28), who approach Jesus asking for healing either for a servant (8:6, 13)[51] or a daughter (15:22, 28). These individuals, in turn, are healed at a distance

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[46] Luck, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 185; and Luz, *Matthew 8-20,* 350.
[47] Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story*, 143-144.
[48] R. Mark Shipp, "Bread to the Dogs: Matthew 15:21-28 and Tensions in Matthew's Understanding of the Gentiles," *Koinonia* 2 (1990): 118.
[49] Heinz Joachim Held, "Matthew as Interpreter of the Miracles Stories," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (trans. Percy Scott; London: SCM, 1963), 291; and Brown, *The Disciples in Narrative Perspective*, 103.
[50] E.g., Beate Kowalski, "Wunder bei den Heiden: der heidnische Hauptmann (Mt 8,5-13) und die kanaanäische Frau (Mt 15,21-28)," in *Gospel of Matthew at the Crossroads of Early Christianity* (ed. Donald Senior; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 537-560; and Derrett, "Law in the New Testament: The Syro-Phoenician Woman and the Centurion of Capernaum," 161-186.
[51] Since the word παῖς can be translated as child or servant [BDAG, 750-751], some scholars have preferred translating it as boy or son [e.g., Joaquín González Echegaray, "Los esclavos en la Palestina del tiempo de Jesus," *Salm* 56 (2009): 108; and Theodore W. Jennings and Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Mistaken Identities But Model Faith: Rereading the Centurion, the Chap, and the Christ in Matthew 8:5-13," *JBL* 123 (2004): 467-494], which establishes a strong narrative connection with the daughter in the pericope of the Canaanite woman (15:22, 28). In my opinion, however, a narrative analysis of Matthew's story shows that the best way of interpreting the term παῖς in Matt 8 is as servant, not boy or son [see Carlos Olivares, "The Identity of the

and as the narrative states: "at that hour" (8:13; 15:28). On the other hand, there are also some

evident differences between the two stories, such as gender and social status, and some not so

obvious, such as location,[52] for example.[53] While the Centurion asks for help in Capernaum

(8:5), a place where Jesus made his home (4:13); the Canaanite woman, on the other hand, asks

for assistance in the region of Tyre and Sidon, which, as mentioned, does not belong to the house

of Israel. So, when Jesus grants her request, she not only becomes an anticipation or prototype

of Jesus' order to make disciples from all nations (28:19-20),[54] but also the fulfilment of what

Jesus says in the pericope of the Centurion. In this pericope, Jesus claims that many will come

"from all over the world,"[55] and will recline in the "kingdom of heaven" along with Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob (8:11) to celebrate an eschatological banquet where both Jews and gentiles will

be gathered. Such an event is in line with what the narrator says at the beginning of Matthew's

story, informing the reader that certain gentiles visited Jesus after he was born (Matt 2:1),[56]

anticipating not just the universal scope of Jesus' message[57] but also the inclusion of non-

Israelites[58] into the community of God.[59]

    In summary, the dialogue between the Matthean Jesus and the Canaanite woman appears

to be clothed in metaphoric words. The Matthean Jesus uses an animal metaphor, in which the

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Centurion's Pais in Matthew 8:5-13: A Narrative Approach," *JAAS* 13 (2010): 103-112]. Cf.
Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 354; and France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 311-312.
[52] Cf. Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 113.
[53] Another difference is that unlike the Canaanite woman's daughter (15:2) who suffers from
demon-possession, the reader does not know about the Centurion's servant's sickness, since his
medical condition is not declared except in general terms.
[54] Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (HTKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1986), 2: 32; and
Daniel S. Schipani, "Transforming Encounter in the Borderlands: A Study of Matthew 15:21-
28," in *Redemptive Transformation in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 122.
[55] Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 230.
[56] They are clearly gentiles because they arrived asking for "the king of the Jews" not for "their"
king (2:2).
[57] See Donald Senior, "Matthew 2:1-12," *Int* 46 (1992): 396-397; and Davies and Allison,
Critical and Exegetical Commentary, 2:18, 19.
[58] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 114. Cf. William R G. Loader, "Son of
David, Blindness, Possession, and Duality in Matthew," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 578.
[59] Bauer, "The Major Characters of Matthew's Story," 358.

term *dog* is used. The Canaanite woman is able is to understand and decipher Jesus' metaphoric

dialogue, engaging with him in a metaphoric exchange and recognising symbolic elements in the

conversation. Jesus is amazed and grants her request, praising her great faith, which in my

opinion stands in opposition to the performance of Jesus' disciples' who are characterised as

lacking understanding and having little faith. The narrator of Matthew's story also contributes to

her positive characterisation, locating her story and words in contrast to Jesus' disciples'

performance and portraying her as the fulfilment of Jesus' universal message. However,

although a metaphor, the fact that Jesus' words contain the term *dog* still remains. In what

follows, I examine the word *dog* using a pragmaphilological approach to several texts, seeking to

establish Jesus' (im)politeness.

2. Pragmaphilological analysis: κύων and κυνάριον

The aim of this section is to discuss how the word *dog* operates in Matthew's story and

other Hellenistic texts. Both Jesus as well as the Canaanite woman utilise the term κυνάριον,

diminutive of dog,[60] in their dialogue (15:26-27). The term κυνάριον morphologically differs

from κύων, also meaning *dog*, from which the word κυνάριον is derived.[61] A

pragmaphilological approach, which examines how *specific* words operate in literary texts, sees

this morphological distinction as something important, especially when readers observe

differences in the way they function.[62] In the following I highlight such differences, paying

special attention to the role played by the term κυνάριον in some documents.

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[60] BDAG, 575; and MM, 364.
[61] See Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots* (4 vols; Paris: Klincksieck, 1970), 604.
[62] See, for example, BDF, 111, which contrast the term κυνάριον with the term κύων of Luke 16:21, interpreting it as meaning "stray dogs."

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<center>2.1. The term κύων</center>

The word κύων appears only once in Matthew's story. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus advises his audience "do not give what is holy to dogs [κυσὶν]," and do not throw pearls in front of pigs, or they will trample them under foot and then turn and tear them to pieces (7:6). Even though the meaning of this proverbial saying is difficult to interpret,[63] what is clear is that Jesus uses the term κύων to describe a violent action in which people can get hurt,[64] indicating that κύων functions in an adverse way. From a pragmaphilological point of view, the term functions in a similar vein in other Hellenistic literature. Strabo, for instance, asserts that Onesicritus, a Greek writer who accompanied Alexander on his military operations in Asia, does not report the best traits of ancient peoples, "saying, for instance, that those who have become helpless because of old age or sickness are thrown out alive as prey to dogs [κυσὶν] kept expressly for this purpose" (Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.11.3). Likewise, Diodorus Siculus writes about Apollodorus, a Greek philosopher and historian, who states that some people from his time affirmed a certain man called Euripides "was living at the court of Archelaüs, the king of Macedonia, and that once when he went out in the countryside, he was set upon by dogs [κυσὶ] and torn to pieces…" (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 13.103.5).

In Hellenistic documents the word κύων also describes violent behaviours,[65] causing, for example, fear among people[66] and depicting actions in which κυσὶν attack, slay, eat, drink human

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[63] E.g., S. Llewelyn, "Mt 7:6a: Mistranslation or Interpretation?," *NovT* 31 (1989): 97-103; P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, "'Do Not Give What is Holy to the Dogs' (Matt 7:6)," *ExpTim* 90 (1979): 341; and Felix Perles, "Zur Erklärung von Mt 7 6," *ZNW* 25 (1926): 163-164.
[64] It seems that verbs describing the action of dogs and pigs entail violent and sanguinary actions. The verb καταπατέω (to trample), for example, involves "to tread so heavily as to injure" (BDAG, 523). In the same way, the verb ῥήσσω evokes violent meanings, such as "to render" and "to break asunder" (MM, 563).
[65] E.g. Dio Chrysostom, *Serv.* 18; and Strabo, *Geogr.* 17.2.1.
[66] E.g. Dio Chrysostom, *Diffid.* 20; and *Isthm.* 7; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 8.8.1.

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blood and tear people or animals into pieces.[67] However, in some examples, including some of

those given above, the word κύων also functions in symbolic terms, such as in the writings of

Dio Chrysostom who employs the term as a metaphor for cowardice (e.g. Dio Chrysostom, *Virt.*

[Or. 8], 17)[68] and as a negative description of people, informing the reader about a man who

"has the soul of a worthless cur" (Dio Chrysostom, *4 Regn*. 95).[69] Moreover, Chrysostom also

appears to be using the word κύων as a way of mockery, reporting the case of some people who

try to insult another character "by throwing bones at his feet as they would to dogs" (Dio

Chrysostom, *Isthm*. 9).[70]

Metaphorically, there are also cases in which the term κύων is employed as a negative

designation, operating either as a way of showing foolish behaviours (e.g. Prov 26:11), including

people's savageness (e.g. Philo, *Prob*. 90; *T. Job* 21.3), or as a metaphoric weapon to reveal evil

enemies (Pss 21:17, 21 [22:16, 20]; 58:7, 15 [59:6, 14]; Isa 56:10-11). In fact, there are

examples in which the word κύων operates in deprecatory or self-deprecatory terms, such as, in

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[67] E.g. Parthenius, *Narrationes Amatoriae*, 10.3; Dio Chrysostom, *Serv*. 5; Plutarch, *Sert*. 1.4; *Art*. 18.7; and *Quaest. rom*. 264 C 5; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.89; 4.81-82; Strabo, *Geogr*. 11.11.8; LXX (1 Kgs 16:14; 20:19, 23-24 [21:19, 23-24]; 22:38; 22:38; 2 Kgs 9:10, 36); Josephus: *Ant*. 6.187; 8.289, 361, 407, 417; 9.124; 12:213; 15:289; and *J.W*. 4.324; 5.526; 6.367. See alo Philo, *Contempl*. 40, who describes κυσὶν attacking people ferociously. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*. 20.16.2.
[68] Chrysostom gives voice to Diogenes, who asserts, "these antagonists do seem terrible and invincible to all cravens; but if you treat them with contempt and meet them boldly, *you will find them cowardly and unable to master strong men, in this greatly resembling dogs*, which pursue and bite people who run away from them, while some they seize and tear to pieces, *but fear and slink away from men who face them and show fight*, and in the end wag their tails when they come to know them" (Dio Chrysostom, *Virt. [Or. 8]* 17; emphasis supplied). Cf. *Isthm*. 7; *Invid*. 35.
[69] The quotation appears in a context which depicts an ambitious, selfish and hollow man ["He is most frantic and eager, however, to get money, *simply because success here is quickest and cheapest*, since money goes on piling up day and night and outstrips, I ween, the circuits of the moon." (Dio Chrysostom, *4 Regn*. 93-95; emphasis supplied).
[70] According to Chrysostom, people do that as a reaction to having been insulted, because of this character it is said, "[w]hen such people talked nonsense, *he usually scorned* them merely, but those that assumed airs and prided themselves on their wealth or family or some other distinction *he would make the especial object of his attack and castigate* thoroughly" (Dio Chrysostom, *Isthm*. 8-9; emphasis supplied).

First Samuel, for instance, when Goliath rebukes David, asking him, "'Am I like a dog, that you come upon me with a rod and stones?' And David said, 'No, but worse than a dog'" (1 Sam 17:43). Likewise, David talks about the injustice of being persecuted by Saul, asking him, "'[a]nd now after whom do you come out O king of Israel? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog and after one flea'" (1 Sam 24:15 [24:14]), employing the term κύων in a derogatory sense.[71] This offensive use of the term appears also in Hellenistic documents, which not only employ the word as an example of human's foolishness (2 Pet 2:22), but also as an unfavourable description of dangerous adversaries (Phil 3:2) and "everyone who loves and practices falsehood" (Rev 22:15).[72]

Of special interest, in pragmaphilological terms, is the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), which although it portrays a metaphoric world, still reveals important data regarding the κύνες location. The parable tells about a poor man named Lazarus, who lies at the gate of a rich man's home, longing "to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table," while κύνες come and lick his sores (16:20-21). As seen, Lazarus lies at the door of the rich man's house, therefore, the κύνες must be located outside of it,[73] probably describing a kind of inoffensive stray[74] and scavenger κύνες.[75]

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[71] Cf. Likewise, Abner calls himself "dog's head" 2 Sam 3:8. Cf. 2 Sam 9:8 ["dead dog"]; 16:9 ["dead dog"]; 2 Kgs 8:13 ["dead dog"]; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.186 ["did he perhaps take him for a dog, and not a man? 'No', replied David, 'not even for a dog, but something still worse'"]. Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 7.209.

[72] The implied author of the Book of Revelation gives the word κύων a quite negative effect, locating it in opposition to those who are blessed and have the right to the tree of life and access to the city (Rev 22:14), positioning it along with other negative terms, such as sorcerers, fornicators, murderers and idolaters (22:15).

[73] According to John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 829, instead "of a servant coming with the fallen scraps, the dogs come from having consumed the scraps and continue their meal with the juices that ooze from the afflicted man's sores." To my mind, however, there is nothing in the text indicating either dogs coming from the rich man's house or satisfied because they have been fed.

[74] In Derrett's view, the dogs of the parable "were apparently the Rich Man's dogs and not merely the ownerless, pariah dogs of the Eastern town" [J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Fresh Light on St. Luke XVI: Dives and Lazarus and the Preceding Sayings," *NTS* 7 (1961): 372]. However, in

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The data analysed so far suggests that the term κύων usually operates in Hellenistic literature in outdoor settings such as streets, the countryside or even outside cities.[76] Diodorus Siculus, however, apparently contradicts this assertion in one of his writings, informing the reader of how Gelon of Syracuse is helped by his dog when he was sleeping. Diodorus says that Gelon "cried out in his sleep, for he was dreaming that he had been struck by lightning, and his dog [κύων], when he noticed that he was crying out immoderately, did not stop barking until he awakened him" (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 10.29.1).

At first sight, the text above appears to be indicating that the κύων is inside the house, next to the bed. Such a reading, however, is incorrect in my opinion. There is neither a word nor anything else in the text that can remotely suggest such a thing. As the reader can see, the text does not even mention a room, a house or even a bed, only describing Gelon sleeping, which can also be accomplished outside the home.[77] In fact, the dog could well be outside, which, when it hears his master yelling, begins to bark. So, at least expressly, the term κύων does not operate here in that sense. A different opinion, however, can be drawn from an account written by Plutarch, which tells about the death of Alexander of Pherae at the hands of his wife's brothers. There, Plutarch describes a chained dog protecting Alexander's bedchamber from intruders, and

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my opinion, nothing in the text indicates that.

[75] Goodfriend suggest that dogs lick Lazarus' sores maybe as a way of showing their intention to eat him [e.g. Elaine Adler Goodfriend, "Could Keleb in Deuteronomy 23.19 Actually Refer to a Canine?," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (eds. David P. Wright et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 388-399]. But, in my view, the text does not say anything of the sort.

[76] E.g. LXX (1 Kgs 16:14; 20:19, 23-24 [21:19, 23-24]; 22:38; 22:38; 2 Kgs 9:10, 36); Josephus: *Ant.* 6.187; 8.289, 361, 407, 417; 9.124; 12.213; 15.289; and *J.W.* 4.324; 5.526; 6.367; Parthenius, *Narrationes Amatoriae*, 10.3; Dio Chrysostom, *Serv. 5*; Plutarch, *Sert.* 1.4; *Art.* 18.7; and *Quaest. rom.* 264 C 5; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.89; 4.81-82; Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.11.8. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 20.16.2

[77] Sadly, the context of the scene does not say anything about the location of the characters. After telling about this event, Diodorus changes the subject, describing how Gelon "was also once saved from death by a wolf." Unlike the previous scene, however, in this case Diodorus is more explicit, informing the reader that such an event happened when Gelon "was seated in a school" (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 10.29.1).

it is resting before the door of his master's room (Plutarch, *Pel.* 35.7-8). This demonstrates that

the term κύων does function in texts to locate the "dog" inside houses in Hellenistic literature,

describing a protective action, and evoking also positive meanings.[78]

However, regarding the example given above, since the κύων is portrayed as being

chained to the door (Plutarch, *Pel.* 35.7), the word still retains hints of a violent meaning. This

does not mean, however, that the word κύων only operates in violent terms in Hellenistic

literature. In the *Testament of Job*, for instance, Job remembers having a pack of eighty κύνες to

guard his flocks and two hundred other κύνες to guard the house (*T. Job*, 9.3). A similar

description is repeated in the canonical *Job*, which refers to "my shepherd dogs," showing

appreciation (Job 30:1). The same can be said of other Hellenistic documents, in which people

use κύνες for hunting [79] or for protecting their herds or houses from external visitors.[80] In fact, to

be fair, there are cases in which the word is used in clearly positive ways (e.g. Philo, *Abr.* 266;

Post. 161), describing either people in grief because their κύνες are dead (e.g. Plutarch, *Sol.* 7.4)

or loyal κύνες, as the dog of Xanthippus, the father of Pericles, which, since he could not endure

to be abandoned by his master, "sprang into the sea, swam across the strait by the side of his

master's trireme, and staggered out on Salamis, only to faint and die straightway" (Plutarch,

Them. 10.6)

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[78] Cf. Geoffrey David Miller, "Attitudes Toward Dogs in Ancient Israel: A Reassessment," *JSOT* 32 (2008): 498-500.

[79] E.g. Philo, *Spec.* 4.121; Parthenius, *Narrationes Amatoriae*, 15.1; 36.2; Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.4.5; Polybius, *Historiae*, 31.14.2; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*,1.87.2; 3.31.1, 3, 5; Plutarch, *Soll. an.* 959 B 10; *Alex.* 40.5; *Arat.* 8.1; and *Gen. Socr.* 576 C 12; *Pel.* 29.4; Dio Chrysostom, *Ven.* 16; *1 Regn.* 19; *4 Regn.* 34; and *De philosophia* 2. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 16.2.4.

[80] E.g. Philo, *Decal.* 114; Strabo, *Geogr.* 15.1.31; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.87.2; 17.92.1-3; Plutarch, *Soll. an.* 965 A 2; Dio Chrysostom, *Isthm.* 3; 1 *Regn.* 28; Agatharchides, *On the Erythraean Sea* (excerpta), 77

As in the example above, the *Book of Tobit* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* seem to indicate that Tobias and Judah have κύνες (Tob 5:17; 11:4; *T. Jud. 2:6*),[81] which suggests that the term κύων does not always depict stray or savage κύνες.[82] Actually, Plutarch informs readers that in Rome certain wealthy foreigners carry κύνες and young monkeys "about in their bosoms [and] fondling them" (Plutarch, *Per*. 1.1). And although it is true that such action does not please Caesar (*Per*. 1.1-2), indicating a negative function of the term in the quotation given above and displaying probably the behaviour of non-nationals,[83] it still shows that the term can sometimes operate in a clear positive sense. Similarly, Plutarch also describes κύνες buried with honour by their owners, affirming that people "should not treat living creatures like shoes or pots and pans, casting them aside when they are bruised and worn out with service," but they should be mild and gentle in their dealings with them and other animals (Plutarch, *Cat. Maj*. 5.4-5).

In summary, from a pragmaphilological viewpoint, the spatial setting of κύνες seems to be restricted in general to outdoors, but there are cases in which κύνες are also kept indoors. Furthermore, although there are examples where the term κύων is associated with violent or sanguinary actions, there are also several occasions in which the word connotes guardians of flocks, houses and humans, implying the presence of masters and a more sympathetic view.[84]

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[81] The presence of a dog in the Book of Tobit has been a field of intense debate. Although there are textual differences among the manuscripts, it seems that its mention is original. See Carey A. Moore, *Tobit* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1996), 188, 197-198, 261-262.

[82] Cf. Plutarch, *[Reg. imp. apophth.]* 186 D 5, who tells that Alcibiades, "owned a very beautiful dog [κύνα], for which he had paid two hundred and seventy-five pounds," indicating that κύνες not only have owners but also people can pay large sums of money for them. Cf. Plutarch, *Cat. Maj*. 5.2; and *Thes*. 31.4.

[83] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 1.83.3; 20.58.4, for example, informs that κύνες live among the Egyptians and they venerate them. Cf. Strabo, *Geogr*. 17.1.40; Plutarch, *Is. Os*. 356 F 3; 379 E 9; and Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn*. 130, who informs about the importation of κύνες from India.

[84] E.g. Joshua Schwarz, "Dogs in Jewish Society in the Second Temple Period and in the Time of the Mishnah and Talmud," *JSQ* 55 (2004): 253-267.

However, although the data suggests that the word κύων operates sometimes in positive terms, there are also instances, especially when it is employed as a metaphor, where it functions in a clearly adverse sense, depicting evil enemies and portraying them as κύνες. So, because the word κύων carries negative and positive connotations, the reader must examine the context in which the term appears, establishing also the spatial setting where it is located. This examination is important, in particular when the reader considers the differences between this word and the term κυνάριον, an analysis to which I turn now.

2.2. The term κυνάριον

In Matthew's Gospel the term κυνάριον appears twice, both times in the pericope of the Canaanite woman (15:26-27). Unlike the word κύων, however, which is used extensively in Hellenistic Greek literature, the term κυνάριον appears only a few times[85] in a small number of documents.[86] Yet, despite this limited data, it is still possible to evaluate in which way the term κυνάριον functions, showing differences between this word and κύων.

To begin with, while the term κύων evokes violent meanings (7:6) in Matthew's Gospel, κυνάριον is set inside a house, where κυνάρια (little dogs) are described eating "the crumbs that

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[85] The term κυνίδιον is another word for *dog* in Hellenistic literature, which also comes from the term κύων [see Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 604], also meaning little dog [LSJ, 1010]. In Hellenistic literature it operates as lap or household dog. See, for example, Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 31.38.1; Philo, *Spec.* 4.91; and *Praem.* 89; Strabo, *Geogr.* 6.2.11; Plutarch, *Aem.* 10.7; *[Reg. imp. apophth.]* 198 A 1; *Tranq. an.* 472 C 11; and *Quaest. conv.* 673 E 6. The same can be said of the word σκυλαξ, which also describes a little or young dog or simply a dog [LSJ, 1616]. See, for example, Philo, *Det.* 1.55; *Post.* 1.161; *Somn.* 1.49; *Spec.* 4.120; Polybius, *Historiae*, 31.29.7; and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 4.81.4.
[86] The reason why Connolly [A. L. Connolly, "κυνάριον," *NewDocs* 4:157-159] and Harrison [J. R. Harrison, "Every dog has its day," *NewDocs* 10:126-135] offer more examples than me is because they examine a range of materials before the Hellenistic era and after first century C.E.; two eras that go beyond the scope of my research. Besides, Connolly and Harrison analyse other materials, such as burial inscriptions and iconographic evidence,. On the other hand, it seems to me that sometimes they collapse the terms κύων, κυνάριον, σκυλαξ and κυνίδιον (and others) in just one word, which goes against my pragmaphilological approach.

fall from their masters' table" (15:27).[87] In New Testament documents the word κυνάριον

appears outside of the Gospel of Matthew only in Mark's Gospel (Mark 7:27-28), in which a

Greek woman, Syrophoenician by birth, approaches Jesus asking healing for her demon-

possessed daughter (7:24-30), a text which parallels the story of the woman called a Canaanite in

the Gospel of Matthew.[88] As in Matthew's story, the woman and the Markan Jesus engage in an

analogous dialogue, setting again the κυνάρια around the table (7:28). Unlike Matthew's Gospel

(Matt 15:27), however, in Mark's story, crumbs fall from the children's table, which locate

children and κυνάρια around or in the same setting (Mark 7:28). So, from a pragmaphilological

perspective, the term κυνάριον seems to evoke a more positive meaning than κύων,[89] liberating

the word from violent images and positioning it next to family members, including children.

As a matter of fact, from a pragmaphilological approach, the term κυνάριον is never used

to describe violent and sanguinary actions, as the term κύων does,[90] but as we will see, only

noisy and unfriendly activities. One of Plutarch's books shows these differences clearly. In it,

Plutarch tells how Aratus and his men liberate the Greek city of Sicyon from its tyrant rulers

(Plutarch, *Arat*. 2-4). As the reader is informed, Aratus' plan is to take the city using the wall

that surrounds it, so he sends one of his men to see if it is possible to do this (*Arat*. 5.3-4).

Although Aratus' men's report is positive, they inform him that it is not easy to approach the

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[87] The image of the house is given in Matt 15:24, in which Jesus alludes to the house of Israel (οἴκου Ἰσραήλ).

[88] Although Mark's story of the Syrophoenician Woman is usually seen as Matthew's primary source for the story of the Canaanite Woman, there are some scholars who consider Matthew's story as an independent account taken from other sources or created for literary purposes (for a discussion of the topic see Jackson, *Have Mercy on Me*, 10-11). It is not my intention here, however, to discuss or assume any redactional preference regarding both pericopes, but to describe how the term *dog* functions in Mark's Gospel.

[89] I agree with Donald C. Swanson, "Diminutives in the Greek New Testament," *JBL* 77 (1958): 146, who affirms that unlike κύων, which "has a neutral or bad sense," the term κυνάριον expresses a more positive meaning in New Testament documents. Cf. Connolly, "κυνάριον," 158-159.

[90] Cf. Connolly, "κυνάριον," 158.

wall undiscovered because some κυνάρια belonging to the gardener are bellicose and noisy (*Arat*.5.5). In order to carry out the plan successfully, Aratus sends Caphisias to take control of the situation at the gardener's house (*Arat*. 6.3). But, though Caphisias secures the gardener, he cannot do the same with the κυνάρια, which run away before he can catch them (*Arat*. 7.3). In this way, although Plutarch notes that the κυνάρια bark and run defiantly (*Arat*. 7.4; cf. 8.2), he never states that these attack or eat people, but, on the contrary, they run away from the presence of strangers.

From a pragmaphilological approach, an important point to discuss is the fact that Plutarch seems to use the term κυνάριον and κύων as synonyms in the above account. While, for example, Plutarch describes some noisy κυνάρια belonging to the gardener, Aratus, on the other hand, sends Caphisias to the gardener's house to shut up his κύνας (*Art*. 5.5; 6.3), employing κυνάριον and κύων as a description of the same kind of animal. To my mind, however, instead of using the term κύων as an exact synonym of the term κυνάριον, Plutarch seems to be using κύων in a general sense. The word κύων, in Plutarch's book, refers to a dog, while the word κυνάριον alludes to a specific kind of dog, namely, a little one. As the story unfolds, Plutarch makes clear this distinction, informing the reader about a huge (μέγας) hunter κύων on the watch located not at great distance from the wall, which does not notice Aratus' men approaching, until the κυνάρια belonging to the gardener appear barking and challenge him from below, causing the huge κύων to growl in response (*Arat*. 8:1-2).[91] So, in my view, by calling the κυνάρια also

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[91] However, although in Plutarch's works the word κύων sometimes operates in a negative sense (Plutarch, *Sert*. 1.4; *Art*. 18.7; and *Quaest. rom.* 264 C 5), there are several cases in which it also functions in positive terms (e.g. Plutarch, *Soll. an.* 959 B 10; 965 A 2; *Alex*. 40.5; *Arat*. 8.1; and *Gen. Socr.* 576 C 12; *Per*. 1.1; *Cat. Maj.* 5.4-5; *[Reg. imp. apophth.]* 186 D 5; *Thes*. 31.4; *Them*. 10.6; *Pel*. 8.2), suggesting that the term κύων in the account above may not evoke a negative meaning *per se*, but only describes noisy and inopportune animals.

κύνας, Plutarch's book does not equate the two terms,[92] but only uses the word κύων as a general description, establishing a difference in those cases in which a more specific kind of dog comes into view (*Arat.* 8:1-2). Therefore, to my mind, in Plutarch's book the reader is informed about a specific kind of κύων, which he depicts as a κυνάριον.

In addition, in Plutarch's text the term κυνάριον does not describe or identify stray or scavenger animals, as the term κύων sometimes does, but little household animals. Although Aratus' men talk about certain κυνάρια, which even though small (μικρός) are savage and noisy, they identify them as belonging to the gardener, taking away the meaning of *stray* (Arat. 5.5). Moreover, in highlighting that they are small (μικρός), Plutarch's purpose is not to inform about the size of the κυνάρια, but to report that although the κυνάρια are little, they are still very ferocious and rowdy. This point is important, because it seems that in some Hellenistic documents the term κυνάριον itself involves something smaller,[93] which probably explains why in Matthew's Gospel they are set around a table and inside a house (Matt 15:26-27).

One document in which the term κυνάριον clearly refers to an animal inside a house is a fragment attributed to Ptolemy VIII, Euergetes II.[94] It describes a custom among some children to have in their houses κυνάρια Μελιταῖα,[95] which even accompany them on their way to the gymnasium (Ptolemy VIII, Euergetes II, *Frg.* 8 line 7).[96] This description is significant, because

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[92] Cf. Connolly, "κυνάριον," 158, who seems to agree with the explanation above.

[93] See, for example, Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.3.13; 4.1.111, who locates the term κυνάριον along with other diminutives, such as little horse (ἱππάριον), using the term in a decreasing sense [cf. MM, 364]. Contra, BDAG, 575.

[94] See FHG 3:188.

[95] The term Μελιταιος refers to the origin of the κυνάριον described by Ptolemy VIII, Euergetes II, which, as Busuttil proposes, is probably an allusion to the island of Malta, meaning Maltese dog [see J. Busuttil, "The Maltese Dog," *GR* 16 (1969): 205-208; contra Harrison, "Every dog has its day," 127]. It is significant that the word κυνίδιον (little dog) also appears along with the term Μελιταιος in other Hellenistic literature, describing not only its geographic origin (Strabo, *Geogr*. 6.2.11) but also its close interaction with human beings, as in Plutarch, who informs of a κυνίδιον Μελιταῖον cuddling in the lap of a widow (Plutarch, *Tranq. an*. 472 C 11).

[96] Athenaeus, although with some variants, repeats this sentence around C.E. 2-3, ascribing it to

it shows without doubt a clear literary example in which people and κυνάρια interact under the same roof, giving the term κυνάρια a very positive meaning. This does not mean, however, that the word κυνάριον cannot also refer to creatures that operate outdoors. Plutarch, for example, locates the term κυνάριον around the gardener's house (Plutarch, *Arat*. 5.5; 7.3-5; 8.1-2), while Epictetus says that a κυναρίων can also be used for hunting (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 4.1.111). So, although some documents locate the word κυνάριον outdoors, it still functions in domestic contexts, operating positively in relation to human beings.

As mentioned, the term κυνάριον is a diminutive of κύων. In Matthew's Gospel there are several diminutives use by the Matthean Jesus or the narrator to describe different elements and people.[97] It is not easy to know the reason why Matthew's story employs diminutives.[98] On the one hand, while diminutives are occasionally used to depict young people[99] and little living creatures,[100] for example, on the other hand, there are instances where it seems that the Matthean Jesus uses diminutives without paying attention to the size of the element that is being described (Matt 25:33; cf. 25:32; 15:34; cf. 15:36). In the case of the term κυνάριον, however, it looks as though it operates in opposition to the term κύων in Matthew's Gospel (7:6; 15:26-27), therefore, it can be understood as emphasising its size and different meaning, but cannot necessarily be interpreted as an expression of endearing words, as Swanson affirms.[101] So, in my view, the

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the eighth book of Ptolemaeus' commentaries. See Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 12.16.

[97] See Swanson, "Diminutives," 134-151, who enumerates every diminutive occurring in the New Testament.

[98] From a Greek grammar perspective, it is not simple at all to understand the use of diminutives in the New Testament. See, for example, Keith Elliott, "Nouns with Diminutive Endings in the New Testament," *NovT* 12 (1970): 391-398. Cf. John A. L. Lee, *A History of New Testament Lexicography* (SBG 8; New York: P. Lang, 2003), 243-251.

[99] Little girl (κοράσιον, 9:24, 25; 14:11), young man (νεανίσκος, 19:20, 22) and young woman or slave-girl (παιδίσκη, 26:69).

[100] Small sparrow (στρουθίον, 10:29, 31) and young bird (νοσσίον, 23:37).

[101] Swanson, "Diminutives," 146. However, I disagree with Alan H. Cadwallader, *Beyond the Word of a Woman: Recovering the Bodies of the Syrophoenician Women* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2008), 74-81, who affirms that diminutives are used as verbal abuse. Although there are some

term κυνάριον functions in relation to its size in Matthew's story, describing a little and friendly animal, operating in contrast to the word κύων. This point is clearer, in my opinion, by analysing the way the Canaanite woman responds to Jesus (15:26). She uses the term κυνάριον along with the term ψιχίον, a diminutive of ψίξ (crumbs), meaning a very little crumb.[102] So, in the Canaanite woman's words, κυνάρια (little dogs) eat ψιχίων (little crumbs), suggesting that the language of the Canaanite woman operates in a diminutive sense, therefore the word κυνάριον should be understood in terms of its little size (15:26).[103]

From a pragmaphilological perspective, the data suggests that the word κυνάριον is never used in offensive terms. Unlike the term κύων, which is sometimes employed as a negative designation, the word κυνάριον only operates positively. In fact, as far as I know, the only example in which the term κυνάριον could be interpreted in a negative way appears in one of Epictetus' works, but even in this case the word is not employed as an offense. In it, Epictetus uses the term κυνάριον metaphorically as an example of human relationships, asking, "Did you never see dogs [κυνάρια] fawning on one another and playing with one another, so that you say, 'Nothing could be more friendly'? But to see what their friendship amounts to, throw a piece of meat between them and you will find out." (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 2.22.9). As already seen, although the term κυνάριον is used to illustrate the value of good and bad human relationships, still the word operates in a positive sense, describing a friendly bond between two κυνάρια. Furthermore, the word κυνάριον does not appear here as an offensive designation, but in a metaphoric phrase describing interaction between two people.

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examples in which diminutives can be used in a pejorative way, it does not mean that every case evokes the same meaning [see Walter Petersen, *Greek Diminutives in -ION: A Study in Semantics* (Weimar: R. Wagner Sohn, 1910), 169-184; and Swanson, "Diminutives," 146-151].
[102] BDAG, 1098.
[103] This point is clearer in Mark's Gospel (7:28), in which the Syro-Phonecian woman uses the term παιδίον (little children), a diminutive of παῖς (child), along with ψιχίον (little crumbs) and κυνάρια (little dogs).

As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, there are other examples in Matthew's Gospel in which the Matthean Jesus uses animal metaphors in his dialogues when referring to people (e.g. 10:16; 23:33, 37; 25:32). The employment in his teaching of animal metaphors is just an example of this varied and multipurpose use. As seen, Jesus' animal metaphors sometimes operate as negative designations (23:33; 25:32) but there are also cases in which these function in positive terms (10:16; 23:37; 25:32). In my view, the positive function of the term κυνάριον in Matthew's Gospel can be determined when it is compared with the term κύων, which evokes negative senses. The same can be said of Hellenistic literature, which also show differences between the two. As the Matthean Jesus does, Epictetus also uses a metaphoric image to compare people to κυνάρια, omitting any offensive reference. As a matter of fact, the analysed data, albeit little, does not suggest at all that the term κυνάριον functions as a profane word *per se* either in Matthew's Gospel or other Hellenistic writings.

In summary, from a pragmaphilological point of view, Hellenistic literature sets the word κυνάριον inside a house or around it, describing a little household animal.[104] Although sometimes the term κυνάριον evokes noise and bellicose activities, it is never associated with violent or sanguinary acts, such as attacking or eating people, as the term κύων sometimes does. In fact, the word κυνάριον always evokes good and favourable meanings, never depicting enemies and never used as a nickname for people, operating positively in relation to adults and children. Unlike the word κύων, whose context a reader must examine in order to establish whether it displays negative or positive views, the word κυνάριον, on the other hand, functions positively, regardless of the spatial setting where it is located. In fact, as previously mentioned, although Plutarch tells of some κυνάρια which bark and run defiantly (*Arat.* 7.4; cf. 8.2), he never indicates that these attack or eat people, but, on the contrary, they run away from the

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[104] Cf. Otto Michel, "κυνάριον," *TDNT* 3:1104

presence of strangers. This point is important, because by using the image of a κυνάριον in the pericope of the Canaanite woman, the Matthean Jesus does not refer to a κύων, but a friendly, non-violent, little, and household κυνάριον (15:26), which, as the Canaanite asserts, is even allowed to eat the crumbs that fall from the masters' table (15:27).

3. Jesus' (im)politeness and the Canaanite woman: Unlocking the encrypted world

The above data uncovers a world in which animal metaphors are used when illustrating or describing people. In Matthew's story, the Matthean Jesus employs several images containing animals or living creatures in his dialogues. One of these is the story of the Canaanite woman, in which the Matthean Jesus uses an animal metaphor, κυνάριον, meaning *dog*. Whether other animal metaphors also appear in other Hellenistic documents, and therefore, existed in other first-century encoded worlds or not, is an area yet to consider. Such exploration is done in Chapter Seven.

The data also evidences an encrypted world in which the term κυνάριον seems to operate in a positive manner. In Hellenistic texts, the term κυνάριον, unlike the word κύων, is never associated with violent or bloody acts but associated with adults and children indoors or outdoors. In fact, the data provided above shows that the term κυνάριον evokes positive meanings, never functioning in offensive ways in the corpora studied. There is no evidence that the term κυνάριον is employed as an undesirable nickname or used to scorn people. Likewise, the data does not indicate that it operates negatively either in Matthew's story or in other Hellenistic documents.

CHAPTER 7

(IM)POLITE CONTEXTS: BEING (IM)POLITE IN GRECO-ROMAN WRITINGS

In the four previous chapters I have analysed different passages associated with Jesus'
verbal (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 15:21-28; 16:13-28; 23:1-36; 25:14-30). In
each one I have undertaken a narrative exploration, seeking to find a narrative purpose for Jesus'
verbal (im)politeness; as well as a pragmaphilological analysis, establishing specific functions of
and Hellenistic echoes for determined terms. At the end of each chapter I have also raised
questions regarding similar purposes and functions in other ancient texts. In this chapter I intend
to address those queries, using a historical sociopragmatic approach, which as explained in
Chapter Two, is a complement of pragmaphilology.

Unlike pragmaphilology, historical sociopragmatics concentrates on the use of the
language in socio-cultural situational settings, examining how contexts "engender norms which
speakers engage or exploit for pragmatic purposes."[1] Using socio-historic and literary lenses, a
historical sociopragmatic approach enables a reader to establish and understand essential
elements of the social context encrypted in the text, as socio-rhetorical criticism claims to do.[2] It
also enables me to employ theoretical concepts by which to explore the relationship between
language and its social and cultural context.[3] Moreover, since historical sociopragmatics
explores social settings in which language and culture operates, I have also included Roman texts
written around the first-century C.E., which parallel and mirror similar functions given in
Hellenistic documents.

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[1] Culpeper, "Historical Sociopragmatics: An Introduction," 4.
[2] Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*, 33-36.
[3] Culpeper, "Historical Sociopragmatics: An Introduction," 3.

I have divided this chapter into four sections, each one dealing with specific areas of Jesus' verbal (im)politeness that I have previously explored, establishing a contrast between the data in Greco-Roman texts and modern understandings of the concept of (im)politeness. In doing so, I seek to demonstrate the differences existing between contemporary views and what Greco-Roman documents seem to suggest about Jesus' (im)politeness.

1. (Im)polite discussions

Matt 23 functions as the climax of Jesus' challenge and riposte contests with the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew's story. As seen, seven woes, followed by a plethora of (im)polite words and expressions, evidence Jesus' (im)politeness when facing them (23:13-36). A similar pattern can be seen in other Hellenistic texts,[4] in which (im)polite language is also used when addressing opponents.[5] In what follows I present two first-century Hellenistic authors who employ a similar approach. First, I deal with two works of Plutarch, an educated Platonist. Second, I engage with a work written by Josephus, an educated Jewish scholar.

By focussing on these two authors I want to underline the expanse of derogatory language in texts when facing opponents, and at the same time to point out that these kinds of speeches come from literate people. Plutarch's writings show constructed conversations in two narratives. Josephus, on the other hand, shows a rhetorical purpose when dealing with other people's ideas. However, unlike Matthew's Gospel, these two instances recreate a more drastic

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[4] Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander," 419-441.

[5] E.g. in the LXX there are several psalms in which authors use (im)polite language when referring to enemies (Pss 5, 6, 68 [69], 108 [109]). In a similar vein, Dio Chrysostom, when talking about the sophists, states, "some of the sophists will declare that I am guilty of impiety in gainsaying Homer and will seek to slander me to their wretched disciples, for whom I care less than for so many monkeys" (Dio Chrysostom, *Troj.* 14). Likewise, in some documents attributed to Paul one can see several (im)polite images and words. In Philippians, Paul calls his enemies κύνας (dogs, Phil 3:2), a term that, as seen in chapter 6, entails offensive connotations (Phil 3:2). Furthermore, Paul describes his opponents in Crete as "liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons," using the words of an old Cretan poet (Titus 1:12). See also 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Pet 2:22; Jude 4, 15, 18; John 8:44; 1 Tim 1:20; 1 John 2:18-22; Rev 2:2, 9; 3:9.

way of facing opponents, reproducing similar, and even worse verbal artillery than the Matthean Jesus does in Matt 23.

1.1. The (im)polite Plutarch

Plutarch's writings exemplify very well what happens when a character engages with ideological enemies and things become, at least from some western contemporary perspectives, uncivilised. In many of Plutarch's works one can see how Plutarch discusses and disagrees with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophical schools.[6] And, although Plutarch is not always negative or offensive when facing the Stoics and Epicureans, describing them sometimes in good and positive terms (e.g. Plutarch, *Comm. not*. 1059 A; and *Quaest. conv.* 635 F; 653 C),[7] Plutarch's tone radically changes when he confronts their philosophical point of views.[8]

In *De communibus notitiis contra stoicos*, for example, Plutarch describes a conversation between an academic philosopher called Diademenus and an unnamed interlocutor. The anonymous speaker thinks that the Stoics are excellent gentlemen, but they turn bitter and show malice when talking against the Academy (*Comm. not*. 1059 A). According to him, the Stoics talk against them "in anger, calling them sophist and corrupters of philosophers and subverters of methodical doctrines and many things still more monstrous" (1059 A, B). In retribution, the unnamed interlocutor calls them "babbling dotards" (1071 C 4), while Diademenus labels their teaching as "absurd" (1075 B; 1083 A), contending that the Stoic's understandings of love "do

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[6] See, e.g. Geert Roskam, "Plutarch's Attack on Epicurus' Ideal of an 'Unnoticed Life': Polemical Strategies in de latenter vivendo," in *El amor en Plutarco* (eds. Jesús María Nieto Ibáñez and Raúl López López; León: Universidad de León, 2007), 867-876; Jackson P. Hershbell, "Plutarch and Stoicism," *ANRW* 36.5 (1992): 3336-3352; and Jackson P. Hershbell, "Plutarch and Epicureanism," *ANRW* 36.5 (1992): 3353-3383.
[7] See Hershbell, "Plutarch and Epicureanism," 3364-3365; and Bernadette Puech, "Prosopographie des amis de Plutarque," *ANRW* 33.6): 4831-4893, in which there is a comprehensive list of Plutarch's friends, including Stoics and Epicureans, such as, for example, Alexandros and Philippos, among others.
[8] See some examples in Roskam, "Plutarch's Attack on Epicurus' Ideal of an 'Unnoticed Life'," 867-876.

not differ at all from gnats, for they delight in scum and vinegar but palatable and fine wine they fly from and avoid" (1073 A).[9]

In *Adversus Colotem*, however, Plutarch's spirit worsens,[10] becoming openly odious. In *Adversus Colotem* Plutarch describes a dialogue between Aristodemus and Plutarch himself. In it Plutarch criticises a book written by Colotes, a follower of the Epicurean philosophy, in which Colotes argues about the impossibility of living according to the doctrines of other philosophers.[11] Plutarch condemns Colotes' book for displaying boorishness (ἀγροικία), ribaldry (βωμολοχία) and insolence (ὕβρις), "presenting Socrates with 'grass' and asking how comes it that he puts his food in his mouth and not in his ear" (Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1108 B 3-8).

Plutarch admits that people could laugh when they "think of Socrates' unruffled wit," but it is quite different when Colotes abuses other renowned philosophers (*Adv. Col.* 1108 B 9-15).[12] Elsewhere Plutarch offers a list "of the most disgraceful terms to be found anywhere," coming from the Epicurean party when referring to several philosophers (Plutarch, *Suav. viv.* 1086 E 9-11).[13] Terms such as, "'buffoonery,' 'hollow booming,' 'charlatanism,' 'prostitution,' 'assassin,' 'groaner,' 'hero of many a misadventure,' [and] 'nincompoop,'" (*Suav. viv.* 1086 E 9-11), illustrate very well the Epicurean insolence, giving Plutarch a reason to attack also the audacity of Colotes,[14] who appears to be doing the same thing as his philosophical school.[15] Accordingly,

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[9] See other negative designations in, e.g. *Comm. not.* 1064 B, 1079 D, 1080 A.
[10] Hershbell, "Plutarch and Epicureanism," 3365.
[11] Colotes' book title, according to Plutarch, is "On the Point that Conformity to the Doctrines of the other Philosophers Actually Makes it Impossible to Live" (see Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1007 E 3-4; cf. *Suav. viv.* 1086 C 2, D 1).
[12] Plutarch mentions Democritus, Plato, Stilpon, Empedocles, Parmenides and Melissusis. Later, Plutarch also mentions Colotes attacking "the philosophers of his own time," but without mentioning any names (Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1120 C 1-3).
[13] Plutarch's list includes the following philosophers: Aristotle, Socrates, Pythagoras, Protagoras, Theophrastus, Heracleides and Hipparchia (*Suav. viv.* 1086 E 11-12, F 1)
[14] Eleni Kechagia, *Plutarch against Colotes: A Lesson in History of Philospohy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37.

Plutarch's (im)polite language can be explained as a reaction to Colotes' attack against important

philosophers. So, in the same way that Colotes mocks them, Plutarch does the same with him,

undermining Colotes' personality and attacking his work.

Plutarch confronts Colotes' opinions using logic and rhetorical strategies,[16] mingling his

arguments with (im)polite words and expressions.[17] Plutarch, for instance, insinuates that

Colotes is a coward, who only dares to attack dead philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato and

Parmenides, but loses heart when it comes to facing the living (*Adv. Col.* 1120 C).[18] Plutarch

also demeans Colotes' scholarship on more than one occasion, wondering how

> "frivolous can a man be! Not to inform himself of these men's views, then to father on them views that they did not hold, and in the conviction that he is exposing others to bring out in his own hand an exposure of his own ignorance and recklessness…" (*Adv. Col.* 1115 C).[19]

In fact, Plutarch compares Colotes' ignorance with "boys who have just begun to read,"

making fun of Colotes' inability to understand or recognise Epicurus' work when used by others

(*Adv. Col.* 1121 A). In this same line, Plutarch also satirises Colotes' understanding of

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[15] About Parmenides, for example, Colotes speaks of his "shameful sophistries" (Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1113 F 1-4). Colotes dismisses as "cheap and [a] sophistical tale" any information regarding Socrates as the wisest man on earth (116 E, F). Colotes also calls Socrates' arguments "charlatanism," saying one thing to people and then doing something else (1117 D).

[16] Margherita Isnardi Parente, "Plutarco contro Colote," in *Aspetti dello stoicismo e dell'epicureismo in Plutarco. Atti del II Convegno di studi su Plutarco, Ferrara, 2-3 aprile 1987* (ed. Italo Gallo; Ferrara: Quaderni del Giornale Filológico Ferrarese 9, 1988), 65-88. See also Aurelio Pérez Jiménez, "Retórica y crítica a los Estoicos en Plutarco: Relevancia estilística de una cláusula métrica en "De esu carnium" (II 6, 999 a-B)," in *Koinòs lógos: Homenaje al profesor José García López* (eds. Mariano Valverde Sánchez et al.; 2 Vols.; Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2006), 795-802 , who suggests that Plutarch uses literary and stylistic resources in one of his works to reveal the Stoics' incoherency when they argue against vegetarianism.

[17] See, for example, Geert Roskam, "Arguments as Boxing Gloves: Ethics of Philosophical Polemics in Middle Platonism," *ÉtCl* 76 (2008): 210-230.

[18] In Plutarch's view, Colotes "did not moderate his tone because he was respectful, or he would have shown the same respect to their betters" (*Adv. Col.* 1120 C).

[19] See also *Adv. Col.* 1115 A, in which Plutarch directly attacks Colotes asking him rhetorically, "[i]n what wilderness did you write your book, that when you framed these charges you failed to look at their writings or take into your hands Aristotle's works…" A little further, Plutarch again doubts Colotes' scholarship, wondering, "where in Plato's writings did Colotes find this tucked away?" (1115 C, D).

philosophical notions, imagining that what Colotes really gets from these discussions is the same "response that a performance on the lyre gets from an ass" (*Adv. Col.* 1122 B).[20] This latter description, an ass listening to a lyre, was, it seems, a common proverb in Plutarch's time, describing uneducated, foolish and disrespectful people,[21] which Plutarch uses comically as a way of scorning his opponent.

Although elsewhere Plutarch affirms, as Geert Roskam correctly points out, that a good philosophical debate "should be a pleasant conversation rather than a boxing match", Plutarch seems to be doing the opposite when engaging Colotes' ideas (e.g. Plutarch, *Virt. prof.* 80 B, C).[22] This ambivalence reflects, perhaps, Plutarch's view about what he thinks is under attack, which he considers to be important enough to be defended using the same rhetorical and (im)polite strategies used by the Epicurean school.[23] This is an important point to consider. Plutarch faces his opponents using rhetorical and (im)polite language with the purpose of subverting his enemies' ideas and attacks. To carry out the task, Plutarch sets up a rhetorical strategy, along with an amount of verbal ammunition. This tactic in some way resembles the logic of the Matthean Jesus' speech in Matt 23, which also confronts his opponents because of their wrong beliefs and deceitful praxis using verbal ammunition.

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[20] Plutarch also argues that Colotes' understanding is like "slime and confusion that he dumps on himself and his master" (*Adv. Col.* 1110 E). Likewise, Plutarch also attacks Epicurus, who according to him acts with the "purest effrontery" (1111 B 5). In relation to the Epicureans, Plutarch seems to make fun of them, saying, "you yourselves, compacted to atom and void, neither of which has any sensation" (1113 E). Cf. *De Sera Numinis Vindicta*, in which Plutarch recreates a dialogue between some people who call Epicurus' tenets an "absurd and false argument" (Plutarch, *Sera* 548 C 4).

[21] See E. L. von Lutsch and F. G. Schneidewin, *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* (Gottingae: Apud Vandehoeck et Ruprecht, 1839-1851), 1:291, especially note 33, which offers a comprehensive list of sources using the expression. Cf. E. L. von Lutsch, *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* (Gottingae: Sumptus Fecit Libraria Dieterichiana, 1851), 2:193.

[22] Geert Roskam, "Arguments as Boxing Gloves," 204-231.

[23] Kechagia, *Plutarch against Colotes*, 37.

1.2. The (im)polite Josephus

Against Apion, by Josephus, encapsulates in just one work the arguments presented above. Unlike the previous examples, however, here things turn considerably more bitter. In *Against Apion*, Josephus seems to be defending Jews against anti-Jewish propaganda,[24] and also praising Judaism. In doing so, he presents Judaism to his readers either as an acceptable and "true philosophy"[25] or maybe, as Steve Mason proposes, to "encourage potential converts to Judaism."[26] In any case, what is clear is that in his book Josephus vilifies a range of opponents who attack Judean antiquity and Jewish culture (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.1-5; 2.1-2),[27] using several (im)polite expressions and words when referring to them. Worthy of note is Josephus' attacks against a Greco-Egyptian scholar of Greek literature called Apion.

Literary evidence suggests that Apion was a famous character in Josephus' time,[28] and his reputation among Josephus' contemporaries, and future ancient scholars, was negative and

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[24] Martin Goodman, "Josephus' Treatise Against Apion," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (ed. Mark Edwards et al.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 45-58 (55-58).

[25] See Aryeh Kasher, "Polemic and Apologetic Methods of Writing in Contra Apionem," in *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (AGJU 34; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 143-186 (154). Contra, Gunnar Haaland, "Josephus and the Philosophers of Rome: Does Contra Apionem Mirror Domitian's Crushing of the 'Stoic Opposition'?" in *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (JSJSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 297-316.

[26] Steve Mason, "The Contra Apionem in Social and Literary Context: An Invitation to Judean Philosophy," in *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context With a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (AGJU 34; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 187-228 (222). Contra, Victor Tcherikover, "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered," *Eos* 48.3 (1956): 169-193, who proposes that Jewish literature was addressed to the Jews of Alexandria, contending any apologetic or missionary purpose.

[27] Although the name of many anti-Jewish critics is not stated, Josephus mentions a few by name, such as, for example, Manetho (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.227-230; 251–252, 287–288, 296; 2:16), Apollonius Molon (2.145, 255, 258), Lysimachus (1. 304; 2.16, 20, 145, 236) and especially Apion (2.2, 9, 12, 17, 23, 25, 28, 32–33, 36, 41, 48-50, 56, 60, 62, 65, 69, 73, 78, 80, 82, 85, 88, 91, 96, 98, 100, 115, 120-121, 124-126, 130, 132-133, 135, 138, 140, 142-144, 148).

[28] E.g., M. Wellmann, "Aegyptisches," *Hermes* 31 (1896): 249-253, examines and underlines Apion's influence, among many other ancient writers. Cf. Seneca, *Ep.,* 88.40.

viewed with amusement.[29] Pliny the Elder, for example, reports with a hint of irony that

Tiberius Caesar used to call Apion "the world's cymbal," and Pliny agrees with the judgment,

saying "though he might rather have been thought to be a drum, advertising his own renown"

(Pliny the Elder, *Nat. praef.* 25). Apion's self-advertisement, however, is clearly given at the end

of the sentence, in which Pliny asserts that Apion was of the opinion that people "to whom he

dedicated his compositions received from him the gift of immortality" (*Nat. praef.* 25).

Taking into consideration Apion's opinion, Josephus focuses on such self-impressions

and not only describes him badly, but also mocks him. Apion, according to Josephus, displays

"pure buffoonery [βωμολοχίαν]" and "gross ignorance [ἀπαιδευσίαν]" in his writings (Josephus,

Ag. Ap. 2.2-3). Josephus describes him not only as "a man of low character [φαύλου]," but also

a "charlatan [ὀχλαγωγός]" (2.3), "wicked [πονηρὸς]" and an "ignorant [ἀπαίδευτος]" person

(2.37-38, 130). He adds that Apion's life was as dissolute [πονηρὸς] as his language" (2.135-

136), being impossible to deny the "ignominy [μοχθηρίαν] of his race" (2.29). Josephus' words,

however, get worse when he accuses Apion of "telling lies" regarding Jewish history.[30] Apion

affirmed that "Jews kept an ass's head," made of gold, within the Jewish's temple,[31]

"worshipping that animal and deeming it worthy of the deepest reverence" (2.80).[32] Josephus'

response is quite severe and could also function as a joke. He not only denies such accusations

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[29] See Cynthia Damon, "The Mind of an Ass and the Impudence of a Dog': A Scholar Gone Bad," in *Kakos: Badness and Anti-value in Classical Antiquity* (Mnemosyne Supplements 307; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 335-364 (364); and John M. G. Barclay, "Josephus v. Apion: Analysis of an Argument," in *Understanding Josephus: Seven Perspectives* (JSPSup 32; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 200.

[30] Josephus calls Apion a liar, or describes him as such, several times throughout his book. E.g., 2.6, 12, 2.28-29, 32, 115; 295.

[31] From 2.52 to 2.113 there is a lacuna in the Greek texts, which is supplied by Latin manuscripts.

[32] It seems that other authors besides Apion, although in different forms, make mention of this story. See Bezalel Bar-Kochva, "An Ass in the Jerusalem Temple-the Origins and Development of the Slander," in *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (AGJU 34; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 309-326

but also asserts that Apion's wrong information is based on the fact that he had "been gifted with the mind of an ass and the impudence of the dog" (2.85). A littler further Josephus continues discussing Apion's misunderstanding, reporting a new fable.[33] In this instance, Apion tells about a man called Zabidus, who "snatched up the gold head of the pack-ass (as he facetiously calls it)," when Jews and Idumeans were in war, taking it with him to an Idumean city (2.113-114). Before giving several reasons against Apion's report (2.116-120), Josephus wonders if "may we not, on our side, suggest that Apion is overloading the pack-ass, that is to say himself, with a crushing pack of nonsense [μωρολογίας] and lies [ψευσμάτων]?" (2.115).[34]

Josephus, either emulating a method taught in Roman rhetorical schools[35] or creating an imaginary law-court scene,[36] discredits and mocks, as he does with Apion, those opponents or witnesses that are against his view of history. In other words, in Josephus' view, Jewish antiquity and culture are at stake; therefore, in order to defend these two points, an appropriate strategy is necessary. As seen, Josephus uses a polemical and apologetic approach when

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[33] Another of Apion's fables, as Josephus informs, is also linked to Antiochus (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.89-109). Apion asserts that Antiochus also "found in the temple a couch, on which a man was reclining, with a table before him laden with a banquet of fish of the sea, beasts of the earth, and birds of the air, at which the poor fellow was gazing in stupefaction" (2.91). According to Apion, this man was part of an annual practice, in which the Jews "would kidnap a Greek foreigner, fatten him up for a year, and then convey him to a wood, where they slew him, sacrificed his body with their customary ritual, partook of his flesh, and while immolating the Greek, swore an oath of hostility to the Greeks" (2.95).

[34] Finally, before finishing his accusations against Apion, Josephus seems to rejoice at Apion's death. Josephus informs that an "ulcer on his person [Apion's] rendered circumcision essential; the operation brought no relief, gangrene set in, and he died in terrible tortures" (*Ag. Ap.* 2.143). Regarding this, Josephus claims, "I cannot, therefore, but regard the penalty which Apion paid for maligning his country's laws as just and appropriate" (2.143).

[35] E.g., Robert G. Hall, "Josephus, Contra Apionem and Historial Inquiry in the Roman Rhetorical Schools," in *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context With a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (AGJU 34; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 229-249, who argues the possibility that Josephus had a Roman rhetorical education, which teaches how to discredit any witness that is against the writer's view. Cf. Jan Willem van Henten and Ra'anan Abusch, "The Depiction of the Jews as Typhonians and Josephus' Strategy of Refutation in Contra Apionem," in *Josephus' Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context With a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek* (AGJU 34; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 270-309, who propose that Josephus is following rhetorical strategies.

[36] E.g., Barclay, "Josephus v. Apion," 194-221.

referring to Apion's scholarship and character, exhibiting an aggressive and rhetorical burlesque tone. This kind of bitter and hostile writing is not uncommon in Greco-Roman texts, letting us theorise that this sort of approach was not familiar to first-century readers. In fact, as Aryeh Kasher claims, "the defamation of persons and their character was one of the better-known rhetorical tactics adopted in the courts of law" in Josephus's time.[37] Accordingly, the data suggests that Josephus is following a common practice of his epoch when facing slandering opponents, and he "is by no means excessive in comparison with that of his contemporaries."[38]

A historical sociopragmatic approach indicates that Greco-Roman materials show that most vilifications function as a means of destroying one's enemies' ideas, life and career.[39] Charges of using supernatural forces, such as the *evil eye* accusations, to convince people,[40] seem to be a common place in Hellenistic texts. In fact, imputations in which mockery or *ad hominem* attacks on the sexuality, intelligence and moral life of ideological adversaries, among others epithets,[41] appear to be common rhetorical strategies among Hellenistic authors. These rhetorical strategies echo in ancient Greek writings,[42] employed by authors to attack and win verbal

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[37] Kasher, "Polemic and Apologetic Methods," 163, 170-185.

[38] Barclay, "Josephus v. Apion," 201-203 (203).

[39] Andreas B. Du Toit, "Vilification as a Pragmatic Device in Early Christian Epistolography," *Bib* 75 (1994): 403-412.

[40] Antón Alvar Nuño, "Ocular Pathologies and the Evil Eye in the Early Roman Principate," *Numen* 59 (2012): 295-391; Matthew W. Dickie, "Heliodorus and Plutarch on the Evil Eye," *CP* 86 (1991): 17-29; John Elliott, "The Evil Eye in the First Testament: The Ecology and Culture of a Pervasive Belief," in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (eds. David Jobling et al.; D. Jobling Et Al. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 147-159; and John H. Elliott, "Paul, Galatians, and the Evil Eye," *CurTM* 17 (1990): 262-173.

[41] J. Albert Harrill, "Invective Against Paul (2 Cor 10: 10), the Physiognomics of the Ancient Slave Body, and the Greco-Roman Rhetoric of Manhood," in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on his 70th Birthday* (ed. Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 189-213

[42] E.g., Nancy Worman, *Abusive Mouths in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 186-201.

battles.[43] Furthermore, the orations of Cicero[44] and Sallust,[45] and the poems of Catullus,[46]

among other Greco-Roman authors and literary styles,[47] illustrate, and even exceed by far, what

was presented above, evidencing several rhetorical (im)polite strategies and scenarios when

facing opponents.[48]

In a similar vein, since the works of Plutarch and Josephus display ironic humour and

jokes when dealing with ideological enemies, these should be treated in rhetorical terms as well.

An almost identical pattern can be seen in other Greco-Roman texts in which humour and irony

play an important role.[49] These examples, however, in many cases not only seek to make people

laugh but also transgress codes and vindicate or criticise social issues.[50] In fact, jokes and

sarcasm, including black humour, are employed in different Greco-Roman texts as verbal

strategies to establish or destroy assertions in order to create impact on readers.[51] Seneca, for

instance, uses a wide spectrum of techniques of dark humour in his work Thyestes, exposing the

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[43] Jennifer Wright Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* (Gender, Theory, and Religion; New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 19; and Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (rev. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 81-163.

[44] E.g., Francisco Pina Polo, "Cicerón contra Clodio: El lenguaje de la invectiva," *Gerión. Revista de Historia Antigua* 9 (1991): 131-150; and Anthony Corbeill, "Ciceronian Invective," in *Brill's Companion to Cicero Oratory and Rhetoric* (ed. James M. May; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 197-218.

[45] Anna A. Novokhatko, *The Invectives of Sallust and Cicero: Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Sozomena 6; Berlin: Gruyter, 2009), 18-21.

[46] W. Jeffrey Tatum, "Social Commentary and Political Invective," in *A Companion to Catullus* (ed. Marilyn B. Skinner; Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 333-353.

[47] Virginia Muñoz Llamosas, "Insultos e invectiva entre Demóstenes y Esquines," *Minerva* 21 (2008): 33-49.

[48] Valentina Arena, "Roman Oratorical Invective," in *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric* (eds. William Dominik and Jon Hall; Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 149-160.

[49] Juan Gil Fernández, "La risa y lo cómico en el pensamiento antiguo," *CFC(G)* 7 (1997): 29-54.

[50] Jacqueline Long, "Julia-Jokes at Macrobius's Saturnalia: Subversive Decorum in Late Antique Reception of Augustan Political Humor," *IJCT* 6 (1999): 337-355; and G. Giangrande, "Aspectos del sentido del humor en la Grecia antigua," *Veleia 20* (2012): 373-374.

[51] Germán Santana Henríquez, "Humor y misterio en Plutarco, el caso del incendio del templo de Ártemis Efesia," in *Estudios sobre Plutarco: Misticismo y religiones mistéricas en la obra de Plutarco (Actas del VII Simposio Español sobre Plutarco, Palma de Mallorca, 2-4 de noviembre de 2000)* (eds. Aurelio Pérez Jiménez and Francesc Casadesús Bordoy; Madrid: Ediciones Clásica, 2001), 243-254.

moral condition of the characters that perform sarcastic, and grotesque or monstrous actions.[52]

In other instances, however, jokes operate as argumentative strategies, as in Cicero, who laugh and mock at his opponent to win judicial cases.[53]

In Matthew's Gospel, the Matthean Jesus also employs humoristic and ironic strategies when facing his enemies. In Matt 15, Jesus' disciples approach him informing him that the Pharisees had taken offense when Jesus rebuked them because of their accent on human traditions (Matt 15:1-9). Jesus' answer is quite ironic when replying, saying, "[l]et them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit" (15:14). Likewise, in Matt 23, Jesus attacks the scribes and Pharisees because of their emphasis on little things, such as the giving of tithes of mint, dill and cumin, rather than focusing on more important areas, such as justice, mercy and faith (23:23). The Matthean Jesus mocks them using an ironic image, maybe a joke, accusing the scribes and Pharisees of "strain[ing] out a gnat but swallow[ing] a camel!" (23:24). In other words, they can see the *little* gnat, but are unable to see the *big* camel; therefore, as Derrett ironically says, the scribes and Pharisees "are really near-sighted!"[54] A significant element regarding this sort of humour is its rhetorical purpose, in particular in the art of oratory.[55] In the logic of this argument, from a historical sociopragmatic approach, ironic humour, including jokes, should be seen also as literary devices, which seek to create a rhetorical effect[56] when two parties engage in a discussion.

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[52] Gary Meltzer, "Dark Wit and Black Humor in Seneca's Thyestes," *TAPA* 118 (1988): 309-330.
[53] Edwin Rabbie, "Wit and Humor in Roman Rhetoric," in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (eds. William Dominik and Jon Hall; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 207-217.
[54] Derrett, "Receptacles and Tombs (Mt 23:24-30)," 259.
[55] Salvatore Attardo, *Linguistic Theories of Humor* (Humor research 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 29-30.
[56] See, for example, Mika Hietanen, *Paul's Argumentation in Galatians: A Pragma-dialectical Analysis* (LNTS 344; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 169.

Social-Scientific criticism describes this kind of (im)polite engagement as an indicator of agonistic cultures; a term that portrays ancient group-oriented societies as permeated by a competitive spirit of challenge and riposte in which honour and shame play an important and decisive role.[57] Accordingly, the attacks of Plutarch, Josephus and the Matthean Jesus against their ideological adversaries are done to shame these adversaries in order to receive honour themselves, honour which is given by those who are convinced by their logic and rhetorical argumentative strategies. By doing so, honour is acquired when obtaining positive results when debating, in particular when good and logical strategies, including ironic arguments and jokes, are used.

In some modern cultures, however, that sort of (im)polite discussion could be misunderstood today, especially in those cultures in which the meaning of politeness is based on avoidance of conflict. Although an evaluation of this type is valuable in terms of understanding contemporary impoliteness, a problem arises when such an evaluation is understood as universally applicable, giving it an ethnocentric tone.[58] As seen in Chapter Two, other modern cultures see contestations as socially positive engagements[59] and means of personal interactions,[60] suggesting that the interpretation of (im)polite discussions is based on cultural grounds. The same can be said concerning ironies when people dispute. In pragmatic terms, irony can be used indirectly to cause disruption,[61] suggesting an (im)polite meaning. However, irony can also be relevant depending on the context on which this is uttered[62] and likewise be

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[57] Halvor Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. Richard L Rohrbaugh; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 17, 21, 28-30.
[58] Watts et al., "Introduction," 9-1.
[59] Schiffrin, "Jewish Argument as Sociability," 332-333.
[60] Lee and Peck, "Troubled Waters," 47.
[61] Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, 82.
[62] Salvatore Attardo, "Irony as Relevant Inappropriateness," *JPrag* 32 (2000): 793-826; and Manfred Kienpointner, "Varieties of Rudeness: Types and Functions of Impolite Utterances," *Funct. Lang.* 4 (1997): 264-266.

understood differently from culture to culture.[63] In fact, Western people today interpret ironic speech, including ironic humour, in different ways, mainly based on situations in which speakers disagree.[64] It can communicate both "bonding and biting," giving it, on the one hand, "a positive management of social differences," but on the other hand, a competitive and aggressive tone, making "it more difficult for an opponent to react."[65] This means that ironic speech should be treated in relation to the purpose and setting in which it is expressed, in particular when it is used in discussions.

The above discussion indicates that (im)politeness can also be analysed in terms of the conditions and reasons for why (im)polite speech is spoken. As a matter of fact, as mentioned in Chapter Two, from a theoretical point of view the interpretation of (im)politeness is not only based on cultural grounds but also related to three specific topics: (1) strategic circumstances,[66] (2) the settings in which (im)polite words are uttered[67] and (3) the role of the hearer/reader when interpreting them.[68]

In view of the above, and having in mind these three latter points, I conclude that from a historical sociopragmatic approach first-century readers could have understood Jesus' (im)politeness in Matthew 23, and other passages where the Matthean Jesus engages in challenge-riposte contest with the scribes and Pharisees, as a rhetorical strategy and a normal

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[63] E.g., Shinichiro Okamoto, "Politeness and the Perception of Irony: Honorifics in Japanese," *Metaphor symb.* 17 (2002): 119-139; and Xose A. Padilla Garcia and Belén Alvarado Ortega, "Being Polite through Irony," in *Dialogue in Spanish: Studies in Functions and Contexts* (Dialogue Studies 7; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010), 55-68.
[64] E.g., Robert F. Gotcher, "Invective, Irony, Sarcasm and Other Negative Tropes in Pro-Life Rhetoric," *U. St. J.L.* 3 (2009): 26-45.
[65] Helga Kotthoff, "Responding to Irony in Different Contexts: On Cognition in Conversation," *JPrag* 35 (2003): 1408-1409.
[66] See Culpeper, *Impoliteness*, 22; Culpeper, "Towards an Anatomy of Impoliteness," 353-355; and Culpeper et al., "Impoliteness Revisited," 1545-1579.
[67] Timothy Jay and Kristin Janschewitz, "The Pragmatics of Swearing," *JPolR* 4 (2008): 267-288.
[68] Culpeper, *Impoliteness*, 48-56; Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, 96.

verbal engagement between two parties in disagreement, suggesting a harsh first-century environment "in which the values subtext was informed by attempts to increase honour and to elude shame."[69] Two reasons can be given to support this. First, Jesus' (im)polite language and irony in relation to his enemies could have been regarded as a tactical weapon, used by the Matthean Jesus to shame and defeat his opponents. The Matthean Jesus is responding to previous attacks coming from different Jewish authorities through the Matthean story. Likewise, Matt 23, as other passages, shows that Jesus regards the scribes' and Pharisees' teaching as wrong and needing to be exposed. Plutarch and Josephus evidence two similar motives and strategies when dealing with ideological enemies, exposing their ideological wrongness and using rhetorical (im)polite language and ironic humour to shame them. Secondly, in light of the above data, it seems to me that first-century readers habituated to this form of discussion could have seen Jesus' (im)politeness as something expected, especially coming from a teacher in disagreement with other teachers. Moreover, by considering the bulk of insults and mockery presented in Greco-Roman literature, Jesus' (im)politeness could have sounded mild, as Johnson claims, in comparison to other Greco-Roman characters and authors.[70]

2. (Im)polite teachers

Another facet of Jesus' (im)politeness is seen when dealing with his disciples' failure in Matthew's Gospel, such as in Matt 16, in which the Matthean Jesus calls Peter "Satan" and describes him as σκάνδαλον (Matt 16:23). In light of this example, and other related passages in Matthew's story (e.g. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8), I examine two Hellenistic documents in which (im)polite words and expression are used by teachers or orators when rebuking disciples or

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[69] Jeremy Punt, "Violence in the New Testament and the Roman Empire: Ambivalence, Othering, Agency," in *Coping with Violence in the New Testament* (STAR 16; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 32.
[70] Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander," 441.

audiences. First, I deal with Mark's Gospel. Second, I examine two orations delivered by Dio Chrysostom.

By dealing with Mark's Gospel it is not my intention either to search for the historical Jesus or to engage with the Markan community. I simply propose to examine it from a literary perspective.[71] In doing so, I only want to show how Mark's story describes a teacher rebuking his disciples' failure, serving as a point of comparison with Hellenistic texts, such as Dio Chrysostom's writings and Matthew's story.

2.1. The (im)polite Markan Jesus

The narrator of Mark's story presents Jesus on more than one occasion (e.g. Mark 4:1; 6:2; 11:21; 14:45) as a teacher or instructor, who is followed by a group of disciples (e.g. 1:14-20; 2:13-16; 4:35; 6:1). Although in Mark's Gospel Jesus' disciples generally "succeed in giving the assistance Jesus requests,"[72] the disciples' performance is clearly portrayed as a story of

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[71] As with Matthew's Gospel, Mark's Gospel also tells Jesus' story. As many have shown, there are differences and distinct emphasis between the two stories [e.g. Camille Focant, "Mc 7,24-31 par Mt 15,21-29: Critique des sources et/ou étude narrative," in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (BETL 110; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1993), 39-75; and David C. Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark: Did Matthew Intend to Supplement or to Replace his Primary Source?," *NTS* 57 (2011): 176-192]. One of them is the way that Jesus' disciples are presented. Since I am not engaging in a study dealing with the historical Jesus, I do not take any position about which Gospel copied or relied on the other.

[72] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Disciples/Crowds/Whoever: Markan Characters and Readers," *NovT* 28 (1986): 118. To my mind, Malbon rightly summarises Jesus' disciples' positive view in Mark's Gospel: "Peter's statement that 'we have . . . followed you' (10:28) fulfils Jesus' earlier command to 'Follow me' (1:17). The apostles successfully preach and exorcise demons (6:12-13, 30), as Jesus appointed them to do (3:14-15). Jesus' disciples procure the boat (3:9), the colt (11:7), and the room (14:16) he requests. They are unable to multiply bread in the wilderness (6:37), but they do help Jesus distribute it (6:41; 8:6). They do not manage to go before Jesus to Bethsaida (6:45), but they do arrive there later with Jesus (8:22). They do wait with Jesus while he prays at Gethsemane (14:32), although Peter, James, and John cannot stay awake (14:33-42); yet, as the Markan Jesus notes, 'the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak' (14:38)." This positive view, however, does not exclude the fact that Jesus' disciples in Mark are also presented in a negative way.

failure.[73] Mark's story, for instance, portrays Jesus' disciples showing lack of total

understanding more than once (4:13; 7:18; 8:17, 21).[74] One example that illustrates this negative

feature occurs in Mark 6 in which the narrator describes Jesus coming to his disciples by walking

on the water as they strain "at the oars against an adverse wind" (6:45-52). At first Jesus'

disciples mistake him for a ghost, but after he climbs into the boat and the wind dies down,

Mark's Gospel depicts them as being amazed by what they have just witnessed (6:51). But by

describing Jesus' disciples' astonishment the narrator of Mark's Gospel is not praising them, but

may in some way be criticising them.[75] They are amazed, as the narrator informs, because (γὰρ)

"they did not understand about the loaves" (6:52), a reference to the previous feeding miracle

(6:30-44). So, Jesus' disciples' amazement functions as a negative description of their inability

to grasp Jesus' actions and words.[76] In the same scene, the narrator also describes Jesus'

disciples' hearts as hardened (6:52), an expression that Jesus himself will directly use to rebuke

his disciples for their failure to understand his actions a little later in the story (8:17-19).

This hardness of heart seems to operate as a severe statement in Mark's Gospel. The

motif of the hardness of heart appears in Mark 3, used by Jesus to denounce his opponents'

unbelief,[77] obstinacy[78] and hostility toward his ministry (3:5).[79] Accordingly, the Markan Jesus

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[73] As Larry W. Hurtado affirms, it is a common assumption among Markan scholars to recognise "the negative way in which the twelve are treated in Mark's Gospel." See Larry W. Hurtado, "Following Jesus in the Gospel of Mark - and Beyond," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (ed. Richard N. Longenecker; McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 17, 21,.Cf. Joseph B. Tyson, "The Blindness of the Disciples in Mark," *JBL* 80 (1961): 261-268; and Robert C. Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role," *JR* 57 (1977): 398-405.

[74] David J. Hawkin, "The Incomprehension of the Disciples in the Marcan Redaction," *JBL* 91 (1972): 491-500.

[75] Cf. Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 434; and William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 237-238. Contra Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 335.

[76] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 273.

[77] Jeffrey B. Gibson, "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mark 8.14-21," *JSNT* 8 (1986): 31-47.

uses this (im)polite expression to rebuke and prevent his disciples from falling into "the same

unbelief that has afflicted the opponents."[80] Elsewhere, Jesus rebukes his disciples for cowardice

(δειλός) when they panic in the middle of a storm, asking them rhetorically "have you still no

faith?" (4:40). It is worth noting that the Markan Jesus does not accuse his disciples of having

little faith, but for totally lacking it (4:40). This reproach is also severe.[81] Unlike other minor

characters who show great faith in Jesus in Mark's story (2:5; 5:34; 10:52), Jesus' disciples

evidence the opposite, failing to grasp Jesus' identity and "the scope of God's action in Jesus."[82]

In other words, it seems that the Markan Jesus disputes his disciples' trust and cleverness (cf.

7:18), which evidences not only the negative characterisation of Jesus' disciples by Mark's

Gospel, but also the (im)politeness of a teacher or instructor when rebuking his disciples or

students' failure.

This (im)polite rebuke has to be seen, however, in light of the whole story in which the

Markan Jesus, the main character, operates as an instructor who seeks to teach his followers his

way of life (cf. 4:1; 6:2; 11:21; 14:45). The Markan Jesus' (im)politeness when rebuking his

disciples is informed by the assumption that he represents a pedagogic and religious authority in

Mark's Gospel. In fact, the Markan Jesus uses (im)politeness language with his disciples as a

strategic pedagogical way of making them think and re-evaluate their mistakes, and correct them

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[78] J. Armitage Robinson, "Πωρωσις and Πηρωσις," *JTS* 3 (1901): 84. Cf. Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark* (Edimburg: T&T Clark, 1912), 123, who suggest that the phrase denotes "blunted feelings and moral sensibilities."
[79] Sug-Ho Lee, "An Exegetical-Theological Consideration of the Hardening of the Jewish Religious Leaders' Hearts in Mark 3:1-6," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 27 (2006): 596-613.
[80] Sug-Ho Lee and Jan G. van der Watt, "The Portrayal of the Hardening of the Disciples' Hearts in Mark 8:14-21," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65 (2009): 4.
[81] Some Greek manuscripts seem to be softening Jesus' rebuke by replacing οὔπω ἔχετε πίστιν (have you still no faith?") by πῶς οὐκ ἔχετε πίστιν, meaning "how is it that ye have no faith?" (KJV). But, as Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 84, affirms, the reading οὔπω ἔχετε πίστιν "has by far the best external support." See NA[28].
[82] Kent E. Brower, "'Who Then is This?' Christological Questions in Mark 4:35-5:43," *EvQ* 81 (2009): 295.

when following him. Accordingly, pedagogic authority, (im)polite language and negativeness

when dealing with failure seem to be three important elements to have in mind when interpreting

the Markan Jesus' (im)polite language when rebuking his disciples; three characteristics that are

also presented in the next example.

2.2. The (im)polite Dio Chrysostom

Two speeches delivered by Dio Chrysostom to the people of Tarsus and Alexandria

illustrate very well the way in which an instructor or teacher, in this case also an orator and

moralist,[83] uses (im)polite words and expressions when facing failures in the behaviour of his

audience. In both cases the audience is not an enemy, but people who had gathered to hear an

instructor tell them about a better way of life. Furthermore, both speeches have similar features

in common,[84] especially an (im)polite style when accusing audiences. In his speech to the

people of Tarsus, Chrysostom's tone is almost abusive, attacking and probably making fun of

them because of their addiction to making some kind of noise with the nose (Dio Chrysostom, *1

Tars*. 31-33, 50).[85] Although there is no satisfactory explanation regarding the meaning of this

sound and why it appears to be so horrendous to Chrysostom,[86] what is clear is that in

Chrysostom's opinion this sound is an indication that "the Tarsians are engaged in some morally

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[83] Edmund Berry, "Dio Chrysostom the Moral Philosopher," *GR* 30 (1983): 70-80. Whether Chrysostom can be considered a philosopher or not is hard to tell. Maybe he was a philosopher, but in his own way. What is clear, however, are his virtues as orator as well as moralist. See Aldo Brancacci, "Dio, Socrates and Cynicism," in *Dio Chrysostom. Politics, Letters, and Philosophy* (ed. Simon Swain; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 240-260.
[84] See Hans von Arnim, *Leben und Werke des Dio von Prusa* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhanglung, 1898), 448-455.
[85] Berry, "Dio Chrysostom," 78.
[86] Chrysostom describes the situation using the word ῥέγκω. The meaning and function of the word in the speech has been explained in different ways. For a detailed survey, see Christina Kokkinia, "A Rhetorical Riddle: The Subject of Dio Chrysostom's "First Tarsian Oration"," *HSCP* 103 (2007): 149-159.

questionable activity."[87] For Chrysostom this kind of "conduct shames the city and disgraces it as a state" (*1 Tars*. 34), making it a brothel (*1 Tars*. 36) and its inhabitants catamites (κίναιδος, *1 Tars*. 54) and hermaphrodites (ἀνδρόγὺνος, *1 Tars*. 64).[88] In fact, the noise, according to him, is a symptom of "shamelessness" (ἀναισχυντία), "licentiousness" (ἀσέλγεια, *1 Tars*. 35), "wantonness" (ὕβρις) and "madness" (ἀπόνοια, *1 Tars*. 50), terms that function as a rhetorical and implied description of those Tarsians who cause such obscure opprobrium.

In the second speech, however, Chrysostom's (im)politeness becomes more explicit. This oration is well known for the frankness with which Chrysostom accuses the people of Alexandria of moral corruption, unruly behaviour and social disorder when attending the theatre and hippodrome.[89] Chrysostom's target group, however, is not every Alexandrian citizen, but probably "the masses as opposed to the elite or leading men of the city" (cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Alex*. 31).[90] Chrysostom's main critique focuses on the Alexandrian's emphasis of giving top priority to amusing moments at the expenses of others more serious.[91] In this sense, Chrysostom's goal in his speech is to rebuke the masses for their lack of seriousness (cf. *Alex.* 1-2), inviting them to humourless and responsible behaviour.[92]

Chrysostom's criticism is based perhaps on a social foundation, because the Alexandrians do not behave as the aristocrats or those who are in power do, which might explain Chrysostom's

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[87] Lawrence Kim, "Figures of Silence in Dio Chrysostom's First Tarsian Oration (or. 33): Aposiopesis, Aaraleipsis, and Huposiôpêsis," *GR* 60 (2013): 33.
[88] Christopher Prestige Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 73.
[89] William D. Barry, "Aristocrats, Orators, and the "Mob": Dio Chrysostom and the World of the Alexandrians," *Historia* 42 (1993): 82; J. S. Sheldon, "'Plus ça Change'. Ancient Alexandria according to Dio Chrysostom and Others," *Classicum* 35 (2009): 25-30; and E. K. Borthwick, "Dio Chrysostom on the Mob at Alexandria," *CRNS* 22 (1972): 1-3.
[90] Barry, "Aristocrats," 90; and Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom*, 36.
[91] Joana Campos Clímaco, "Alexandria romana por Dion Crisóstomo, Dion Cássio e Herodiano," *Alétheia* 1-2 (2011): 68.
[92] Mercedes López Salva, "Reflexiones de Plutarco y de Dión de Prusa sobre las ciudades griegas del este y su relación con Roma," *Faventia* 12 (1990): 29.

(im)politeness when dealing with his audience. According to Chrysostom, there are two groups of δῆμος (people), the *good* and the *bad* (*Alex*. 27-28). The *good* δῆμος is "reasonable and gentle," "disposed to accept frankness of speech and not to care to be pampered in everything," "showing respect for good men and good advice, grateful to those who admonish and instruct" (*Alex*. 27). On the other hand, the *bad* δῆμος, the more prevalent kind, "is both bold and arrogant, difficult to please in anything, fastidious, resembling tyrants or much worse than they" (*Alex*. 28). Although the Alexandrians resemble the second,[93] Chrysostom clearly expects the first reaction from his Alexandrian audience (cf. *Alex*. 29), in some way advising them to follow the aristocratic rules (cf. *Alex*. 32), which means to "be deferential, obedient, willing to suffer, and perhaps even take verbal abuse from the good men of the city."[94]

Chrysostom starts his speech describing the Alexandrian's masses as "frivolous," "heedless," and "practically never at a loss of fun-making and enjoyment and laughter" (*Alex*. 1-2). And, although on some occasions he praises the city for its greatness (e.g. *Alex*. 35-36), when referring to the masses' behaviour at social events Chrysostom's (im)polite tone worsens. Chrysostom accuses them of being "out of their senses and deranged" (*Alex*. 42; cf. 41) and talking "more foolishly" than barbarians (*Alex*. 56), describing them in different ways, such as, for example, "women of low repute" (*Alex*. 32), "cowards" (*Alex*. 43), "shameful" (*Alex*. 50), "savage[s]" (*Alex*. 69), "irrational[s]" (*Alex*. 73), "worthless," "buffoons," (*Alex*. 86), "wretched," "raving creatures," (*Alex*. 87), "stupid[s]" (*Alex*. 95), poor "in judgment and understanding" (*Alex*. 97), "flighty," and "easy-going, inclined to admire petty things, with a weakness for trivialities" (*Alex*. 96).

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[93] Berry, "Dio Chrysostom," 78.
[94] Barry, "Aristocrats," 93.

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A historical sociopragmatic approach indicates that the list given above shows not only (im)polite language against an audience who has failed in understanding a better way of life, but also evidences how it is used to describe or exaggerate negative moral and human features. (Im)polite language is used creatively, displaying negative ethic standards, sexual explicitness and mockery, among others. It also underlines a conflictive background between a speaker, and his way of seeing the moral life, with an audience that seems to be accepting the reproach.

In some modern's societies in which conflict is seen negatively, Chrysostom's (im)politeness could be evaluated as inappropriate. But a negative opinion of conflictive disputes, however, as discussed in the previous section, is culture-specific and can be challenged based on cultural differences.[95] Besides, in pragmatic terms, as mentioned, the interpretation of (im)politeness involves evaluating three things: (1) strategic motifs,[96] (2) settings and (3) the effect of (im)polite expressions on hearers/readers.[97] Having in mind these three points, it seems to me that Chrysostom's (im)politeness seems to be grounded in a pedagogical authority when rebuking his audiences. As the Markan Jesus does, Chrysostom also uses (im)polite language to underline the moral situation of the audiences, attacking specific aspects of the problem in order to help them see their mistakes and correct them. In historical sociopragmatic terms, the (im)polite language used by both appears to be commonplace in some Hellenistic texts when describing teachers or instructors dealing with audiences' or followers' failures.[98]

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[95] Watts et al., "Introduction," 9-1; and Lee and Peck, "Troubled Waters," 47.

[96] Culpeper, *Impoliteness*, 22; Culpeper, "Towards an Anatomy of Impoliteness," 353-355; and Culpeper et al., "Impoliteness Revisited," 1545-1579.

[97] Culpeper, *Impoliteness*, 48-56; Eelen, *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, 96.

[98] Cf. Gal 3:1, in which Paul calls the Galatians ἀνόητος, a term that when applied to individuals denotes "unintelligent, foolish, [and] dull-witted" people, suggesting an unpleasant qualifier. See BDAG, 84. E.g. LXX (Deut 32:31; Ps 48:13 [49:12]). See also *Let. Aris.* 1:136; Josephus: *Ant.* 6.43; 8.243, 264; 9.255, 265; 10.7, 15; 12.191; *Ag. Ap.* 2.255; Philo: *Somn.* 2.163, 208; *Mos.* 1.293; *Spec.* 2.254; *Legat.* 1.367; Polybius, *Historiae*, 8.11.2; Strabo, *Geogr.* 15.1.70; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 5.67.2; 5.68.5; 6.47.3; 6.60.4; 6.61.4; 6.64.3; 10.30.4; 15.3.5; and *Thuc.* 32.23.

In view of the above, I conclude that from a historical sociopragmatic approach first-century readers could have regarded the (im)polite rebuke of the Matthean Jesus against Peter in Matt 16 as something expected, in particular coming from teachers who deal with people who fail and do not understand their teaching. Two reasons can be given for this. First, Jesus' (im)polite rebuke is given with the purpose of showing Peter his mistake regarding the Matthean Jesus' messiahship, seeking to lead Peter to understand the importance of Jesus' death. Second, Jesus' (im)polite language finds similar echoes in other Hellenistic texts, such as in Mark's Gospel and Chrysostom's writings. This means that first-century readers could have seen Jesus' (im)polite language in Matt 16, for example, as a normal way of rebuking someone who is slow in understanding and needs to change his or her view regarding specific aspects of a teacher's philosophy.

3. (Im)polite stories

In Matthew's story, Jesus uses parables to illustrate ideas or important concepts when teaching, such as in the parable of the talents where Jesus advises his disciples to keep watching (25:14-30), since they do not know the day or the hour of the Parousia (cf. Matt 25: 13; 24: 36-42). In this parable, the Matthean Jesus describes a master who employs (im)polite language when rebuking one of his slaves, calling him *wicked*, *lazy* and *worthless* (25:24-30). Because in my view, parables are stories within Matthew's story, I propose to read them in light of this literary distinction. In this section, I examine how Hellenistic stories, in particular New Comedy texts, demonstrate similar characteristics to the Matthean parables, using (im)polite language when treating the non-success of slaves.

3.1. The (im)polite masters

New Comedy is a Hellenistic dramatic form of theatre that, instead of treating openly

political or social issues, as, for example, the works of Aristophanes do, "portrays the struggles

of young citizens in love in a realistic, if heavily stylized, five-act marriage plot."[99] Menander's

comedy is an example of this type of literature,[100] which follows the pattern given above,

depicting humorous and dramatic scenes where characters in love have to go through different

sorts of obstacles to get married.[101] One important element in Menander's work is his subtle

characterisation, presenting characters in contrasting pairs, such as the figure of a clever and

stupid slave or a helpful and unsympathetic father.[102] This contrasting feature in some ways

resembles some parables in Matthew's Gospel (e.g. Matt 18:21-35; 21:28-32; 24:45-51), in

particular the parable of the talents, in which two hard-working slaves are contrasted with a lazy

one (25:14-30). In Menander's work, likewise, slaves are represented as characters loyal to their

masters,[103] and even though they do not have significant roles, some slaves actively participate in

the development of the plot.[104] Although this last element is not totally represented in Matthew's

story, especially when considering the central part of the slaves in the parable of the talents (e.g.

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[99] Susan Lape, "Menander's Comedy," in *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (ed. James J. Clauss and Martine Cuypers; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 282.
[100] Although some people may dispute whether Menander is a Hellenistic author or not, the point is that his work is not only chronologically located after the death of Alexander, situating it within the Hellenistic period, but also it focuses on similar Hellenistic topics, characteristic of the New Comedy, such as "family drama and erotic complications." See Kathryn Gutzwiller, *A Guide to Hellenistic Literature* (Blackwell Guides to Classical Literature; Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 50.
[101] Thomas B. L. Webster, *An Introduction to Menander* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1974), 14-24.
[102] Gutzwiller, *A Guide to Hellenistic Literature,* 54.
[103] Jaime Rossich Franquesa, "Personajes femeninos de Menandro," *Convivium* 19 (1965): 42-43.
[104] Antonio Aloni, "Il ruolo eello schiavo come personaggio nella commedia di Menandro," *AttiCAntCl* 7/8 (1976): 35-36; and W. Thomas MacCary, "Menander's Slaves: Their Names, Roles, and Masks," *TAPhA* 100 (1969): 277-294.

25:14-30; cf. 24:45-51), the presence of submissive slaves and authoritarian masters clearly

establishes a link between Matthew's parables and Menander's comedy.

Both Matthew's parables and Menander's comedy not only show slaves suffering

physical abuse by their masters (e.g. Matt 24:51; 25:30; cf. Menander, *Dysk.* 467; *Sam.* 305-307,

320-322, 622)[105] but also (im)polite language when masters, or other freemen,[106] express their

anger at slaves' wrong behaviour or decisions (e.g. Matt 18: 32; 25:26, 30).[107] In the play

Perikeiromene, for example, Moschion accuses his slave Daos of being "a loud-mouthed

charlatan, detested by the gods! [ἀλαζὼν καὶ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸς εἶ]" (Menander, *Perik.* 268).

Elsewhere, masters voice their desire to see slaves being blasted by all the gods[108] calling them

rogues [μαστιγία] (*Dysk.* 140; cf. *Perik.* 324), heathens [ἀνόσι'] (*Dysk.* 595), crooks [ἱερόσυλέ]

(*Epitr.* 935), wretches [ἱερόσυλος] (*Sam.* 677) and blackguards [ἀσεβής] (*Sam.* 321).

The New Comedy in Roman literature also witnesses authors describing slaves in comic

plays. One of them is Plautus, who portrays some slaves in leading roles,[109] especially tricky and

clever ones,[110] with an "intoxicating mixture of gaiety, wit, ingenuity, and ruthlessness."[111]

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[105] Cox Cheryl, "Coping with Punishment: The Social Networking of Slaves in Menander," in *Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Greek Comic Drama* (eds. Ben Akrigg and Rob Tordoff; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 162-168.

[106] Freemen also use (im)polite language when expressing their anger against slaves. Knemon terrorises the slave Getas, of course metaphorically, threatening him to eating him alive ([κατέδομαί γε ζῶντα] Menander, *Dysk.* 469), wishing him to be damned, smashed and blasted to perdition by the all gods ([κακὸν κάκιστά σ' οἱ θεοὶ ἅπαντες ἀπολέσειαν] Menander, *Dysk.* 600-601).

[107] (Im)polite language can also be seen between slaves. For example, Daos calls Sosias, "a shit [σκατοφάγος γὰρ εἶ]" (Menander, *Perik.* 394) – an insult [A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: A Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 499], meaning literally dirt-eater [LSJ, 1605]. Cf. Menander, *Perik.* 396 in which Daos says, "go to hell [ἄπαγ' ἐς κόρακας]" to Sosias.

[108] E.g. [ἅπαντες ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί] Menander, *Dysk.* 139; and [σ' ὁ Ζεὺς ἀπολέσαι] Menander, *Sam.* 689.

[109] Annalisa Rei, "Villains, Wives, and Slaves in the Comedies of Plautus," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations* (ed. Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan; London: Routledge, 1998), 92-108.

[110] E.g. the slave Chrysalus in the play Bacchides. See Benjamín García-Hernández, "La estructura dramática de las Báquides de Plauto," *CFC(L)* 15 (1998): 119-131.

Plautus' texts also contain abundant scenes dealing not only with the physical punishment of slaves, a common characteristic in Greco-Roman writings,[112] but also with (im)polite language addressed by masters against slaves.[113] From a historical sociopragmatic approach, and in light of this amount of data, it seems that it is a commonplace in Hellenistic and Roman literature to see masters punishing or rebuking slaves using (im)polite language, which clearly evokes some parables told by the Matthean Jesus, where a similar (im)polite verbal discourse is also represented.

The rationale of the New Comedy, however, relies not only on comic stories and funny slaves, but also seeks to communicate a message able to engage readers and audiences with real life situations. Menander's comedy, for example, can be interpreted as a cryptic critique against the social establishment, in which different characters underline negative views and values.[114] At the same time, Roman citizens could have identified themselves with the clever slave, "because they lived in common conditions of status mobility and anxiety."[115] As a matter of fact, slaves in the New Comedy, although abused, sometimes operate as moralising agents,[116] acting perhaps as a catalyst for their master's desire and attributes.[117] In Menander's comedy, for example, the

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[111] See C. Stace, "The Slaves of Plautus," *GR* 15 (1968): 77.

[112] James J. Tierney, "Some Attic Elements in Plautus," *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad. Sect. C* 50 (1944): 54-55.

[113] Dickey, *Latin Forms*, 178, offers several examples of (im)polite language addressed by masters against slaves, giving a literal translation. E.g. compedium tritor "shackle-rubber" (PIautus, *Pers.* 420), crux "crucifix" (*Pers.* 795), stimulorum seges "crop of goads" (*Aul.* 45), stimulorum tritor "goad-rubber" (*Pers.* 795), suduculum flagri "whip's whipping-post" (*Pers.* 419). See also "fount of iniquity [Scelerum caput]" (*Bacch.* 829), villain [scelus and furcifer] (*Amph.* 558; cf. *Asin.* 678; *Capt.* 578), reprobate [improbe] (*Amph.* 571). Even Mercury, the god, calls the slave Sosia "miscreant [*sceleste*]" (*Amph.* 1028) and "gallows-bird [furcifer]" (*Amph.* 285).

[114] T. B. L. Webster, *Studies in Menander* (Classical Series 7; 2d. ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960), 59-67.

[115] Lape, "Menander's Comedy," 284.

[116] E.g. Enrique Sánchez Cristóbal, "Función dramática del servus en Terencio," *Faventia* 11 (1989): 46-48.

[117] See, for example, Lora L. Holland, "Euclio's Solitary Slave: Staphyla in Plautus' Aulularia," *NECJ* 35 (2008): 21-30.

figure of slaves operates as a literary device used to reach or create a dramatic point in the story, meaning that their physical and verbal punishment cannot be read only in terms of vicious cruelty,[118] but also in terms of drama. A modern approach to the issue of course has moral limitations, but from a first-century viewpoint, in which "slaves and slavery were part of the fabric of everyday life,"[119] it makes more sense.[120]

In Matthew's Gospel one can see a similar pattern. The Matthean Jesus' parables rely on the figure of slaves to illustrate, teach or denounce other characters' ideas demonstrating that using slaves as literary personages (e.g. Matt 18:21-35; 24:42-51) was indeed a characteristic that seems to be ubiquitous in the world of many Greco-Roman texts. The Matthean Jesus invites his audience to identify themselves with the good slaves, seeking to create a positive link, especially in terms of behaviour and the rewards obtained. This identification, however, does not imply an encouragement to analyse the physiological emotions of slaves "as real individuals but in terms of comic stereotypes that supported the ideology and institution of ancient slavery."[121] In this sense, the employment of (im)polite language against bad slaves in the Matthean parables can be seen as a dramatic literary device, which pursues a rhetorical aim. This rhetorical aim should be interpreted in light of the whole story line in which every parable is located, establishing a narrative connection between the parable and the story as a whole, which also

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[118] See David Konstan, "Menander's Slaves: The Banality of Violence," in *Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Greek Comic Drama* (ed. Ben Akrigg and Rob Tordoff; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 157-158.
[119] Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 129, uses these lines when referring to the historical Jesus and his employment of the figure of slaves in his teaching. Although my work is not related to the historical Jesus, I think Glancy's point regarding the ubiquitous presence of the slave is worth noting.
[120] Plutarch, for example, prefers Menander's work over Aristophanes', praising the quality of the language and the beauty of style of Menander's texts but never complains about any kind of abuse (Plutarch, *Comp. Arist. Men. Compend.* 853-854).
[121] J. Albert Harrill, "The Psychology of Slaves in the Gospel Parables: A Case Study in Social History," *BZ* 55 (2011): 74.

seems to entail rhetorical features.[122] Accordingly, masters abuse their slaves using (im)polite

language in Matthew's parables as a way of stressing the importance of Jesus' message.

Thus, although it is a matter of debate whether or not the presence of slaves in Hellenistic

dramatizations reflects complete historical and social contexts,[123] I conclude that from a

historical sociopragmatic approach, the important point here is that first century readers could

have treated the Matthean Jesus' parables as dramatic stories, whose (im)polite language may be

regarded as part of the language of the stage which seek to call on public attention. Three reasons

can be given to support this opinion. First, several narrative elements in some Matthean parables

resemble characteristics of the plays of the New Comedy, such as an intriguing plot and

contrasting characters presented in pairs: good/bad masters and good/bad slaves. Secondly, the

previous point involves the assumption that the (im)polite language against slaves in the

Matthean parables has to be seen as part of a literary scheme, which seeks to produce a sense of

reality and urgency in the development of the plot. Thirdly, the Matthean parables resemble New

Comedy in terms of drama. In other words, instead of making first-century readers laugh, the

Matthean parables could have created a more serious atmosphere in which the (im)polite

language could have been understood as a rhetorical warning, for example about the Matthean

Jesus' kingdom or the Parousia (Matt 24:1, 13-14).

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[122] About Matthew's rhetoric see, in particular, George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (SR; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 101-102 (101-104), who affirms,"[o]f the four Gospels, Matthew's makes the widest use of all aspects of rhetoric. He arranges his Gospel into distinct parts which perform specific rhetorical functions, and he is concerned not only to establish the ethos of Jesus' authority and the pathos of his suffering, but consistently to provide his readers with something close to logical argument."
[123] E.g, see the discussion in Jennifer A. Glancy, "Slavery, Historiography, and Theology," *BibInt* 15 (2007): 200-211; and J. Albert Harrill, "The Slave Still Appears: A Historiographical Response to Jennifer Glancy," *BibInt* 15 (2007): 212-221.

4. (Im)polite metaphors

Jesus' dialogue with the Canaanite woman is written in metaphoric terms. The mention of *lost sheep*, *dogs* and a *masters' table* (Matt 15:24-27), for example, illustrates a symbolic conversation in which metaphoric elements communicate a message. In what follows, I show several metaphoric examples of animals in Hellenistic literature, engaging also with examples of animals in modern culture. In doing this, I want to propose a way of reading the term *dog* in the passage of the Canaanite woman in Matthew's story, with the socio-cultural and linguistic lens of a first-century reader.

5.1. The ancient (im)polite animals

From a linguistic stance, "metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain,"[124] altering a word or phrase "from its literal reference to a new and often wide field of reference."[125] To modify these terms, metaphors use different physical objects as domain targets, such as the human body, animals, plants, and social issues;[126] domains that are not necessarily identically related but encoded, giving ironic as well as asymmetric correspondences.[127] Hellenistic texts provide several illustrations of this sort.

In *Jeremiah*, for example, a variety of animals is used as metaphors of the people of Israel, operating as descriptive and literary critical devices.[128] Chrysostom, likewise, in his

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[124] Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2nd. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

[125] Elaheh Fadaee, "Symbols, Metaphors and Similes in Literature: A Case Study of 'Animal Farm'," *IJEL* 2 (2011): 21.

[126] Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 18-28.

[127] Roger Tourangeau and Robert J. Sternberg, "Understanding and Appreciating Metaphors," *Cognition* 11 (1982): 203-244.

[128] Sheep (e.g. Jer 23:1-4), horses (e.g. 5:8; 8:6) and lions (e.g. 12:8). See Benjamin A. Foreman, *Animal Metaphors and the People of Israel in the Book of Jeremiah* (FRLANT 238; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 35-248, who although he examines animals as metaphors in the Hebrew Bible, offers several examples also given in the LXX. Cf. Pierre J.P. Van Hecke, "Metaphorical Shifts in the Oracle Against Babylon (Jeremiah 50-51)," *SJOT* 17 (2003): 68-88.

discourse addressed to the Alexandrians describes the Alexandrian populace as "a concentrated dunghill piled high with the sweepings of every kind" (Dio Chrysostom, *Alex.* 87) and "some Centaur or Cyclops in his cups and amorous, in body strong and huge but mentally a fool" (*Alex.* 95).[129] Clearly the latter two examples employ negative images to depict a situation, suggesting that in some cases texts use metaphoric language in (im)polite ways. But the negative descriptions given above are certainly accommodated to specific circumstances and genre.

Proverbs and sayings also contain animal metaphors in Hellenistic texts. In the LXX, for instance, Wisdom literature offers a wide range of animal metaphors, such as, for example, dogs (Prov 26:11, 17; Eccl 9:4), horses (Sir 48:9), lions (Prov 19:12; 20:2; 22:13; 26:13; 28:1, 15; Eccl 9:4; Sir 4:30; 25:16; 27:10, 28; 28:23,), serpents (Prov 23:32), snakes (Prov 23:32; 30:19; Eccl 10:8, 11; Sir 12:13; 21:2), vipers (Sir 39:30), lambs (Prov 27:26), sheep (Prov 27:26; Song 4:2; 6:6), eagles (Prov 23:5; 30:19), ravens (Song 5:11) and pigs (Prov 11:22). The presence of animal metaphors in these texts operates as an artistic, rhetorical and pedagogic device,[130] presenting in the figure of animals several admonitions and moral instructions.[131]

In the same way, Ancient Greek proverbs display similar characteristics and the same moral emphasis.[132] Around the first century, numerous proverbs are characterized by domestic and wild animals, in many cases using "animals that are perceived as 'symbols' par excellence of specific qualities, positive, and, more often, negative: the donkey, the pig, the dog, the mouse,

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[129] Cf. Chrysostom, *Alex* 28, in which Chrysostom attacks the Alexandrians, using a simile, for acting as "a multifarious and dreadful beast, like those which poets and artists invent… combining in a single shape of unreal existence attributes borrowed from manifold natures." See also *Alex*. 58, 63-66, 82, 97.

[130] Tova Forti, "Animal Images in the Didactic Rhetoric of the Book of Proverbs," *Bib* 77 (1996): 48-63

[131] See, for example, Tova Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs* (VTSup 118; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 25-86, who although she deals with the Hebrew Bible, her work provides a great insight within the field of biblical animal imaginary, engaging sometimes (at least in the footnotes) with the LXX.

[132] H. P. Houghton, "Moral Significance of Animals as Indicated in Greek Proverbs" (Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 1915), 26-32

the lion, the fox."[133] The *dog* metaphor/s, however, constitute a complex motif in Greek

proverbs. On the one hand, proverbs describe the figure of dogs as "an outcast unworthy of

burial; greedy; lustful, disgusting in tastes and habits, savage, selfish, ubiquitous, ungrateful,

changeable, vengeful, [and] unreasonable."[134] On the other hand, dogs are seen in Greek

proverbs "as pet, teachable, susceptible to good influences as well as bad, fastidious, useful,

loyal, [and] alert."[135] From a historical sociopragmatic approach, this suggests that an

interpretation of the term *dog* in a symbolic space can call forth positive and negative images,

making it a complex and composite (im)polite metaphor.

Metaphors can also be part of the language of stories, as fables, for example. In literary

terms, fables function as "fictitious, metaphorical narrative[s],"[136] seeking to describe or create

imaginative new meanings and discourses using figures of speech[137] based on nature.[138] In

Judges, for instance (cf. 2 Sam 12:1-7), readers are informed of an imaginative story about

talking trees that want "to anoint a king for themselves" (Judg 9:7-15). The story, which for

many resembles a fable,[139] uses metaphoric elements to establish a narrative point. In light of the

context in which the fable is located, the reader sees it as a negative account (9:1-6). The figure

of trees, however, does not convey a negative image *per se* but serves to fulfil an illustrative

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[133] Emanuele Lelli, "Towards a Classification of Greek Proverbs," *Paremia* (2007): 142.
[134] Houghton, "Moral Significance of Animals as Indicated in Greek Proverbs," 32.
[135] Ibid. One of the limitations of Houghton's study, however, is the wide scope of his research, which exceeds the scope of time proposed in my analysis. But I think his summary of the figure of dogs in proverbs is probably correct.
[136] Gert-Jan van Dijk, *AINOI, LOGOI, MYTHOI. Fables in Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Greek Literature, with a Study of the Theory and Terminology of the Genre* (Mnemosyne 166; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 113
[137] See Paul Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," *NLH* 6 (1974): 95-110.
[138] A definition of the term fable is very complex. Here I am using it in its metaphorical stance. Dijk, *AINOI, LOGOI, MYTHOI*, 3-115, offers a comprehensive analysis of the topic.
[139] E.g. Silviu Tatu, "Jotham's Fable and the Crux Interpretum in Judges IX," *VT* 56 (2006): 105-124; and Edwardneil Benavidez and Doreen Benavidez, "Truth and Integrity: Considering the Issue of Standard (Judges 9:7-21)," *AJPS* 13 (2010): 125-142.

purpose that in the text as a whole suggests adverse meanings. This latter point is important.[140]

Sadly, unlike the fable of the talking trees given above, in many Hellenistic fables the context or

reason why these are told is sometimes provided within the tale itself or not given at all. This

means that the literary purpose of different figures has to be inferred from the stories.

In general, in Hellenistic texts, fables follow a similar literary pattern as the stories from

classical tradition and other sources, introducing animals and people as main characters.[141] A

major exponent in the classical tradition is Aesop's works in which human traits are assigned to

foxes (e.g. Aesop, *Fab.* 1, 10, 15, 24, 27), snakes (e.g. 51, 128, 176, 573), dogs (e.g. 52, 92, 120)

and cats (e.g. 165, 244, 389), for example, offering messages applicable to human affairs.[142]

Aesop also locates humans along with animals in his fables, such as, for example, "the farmer

and the snake" (*Fab.* 51), "the gardener and his dog" (*Fab*. 120) and "the farmer and his ox"

(*Fab.* 582).

Hellenistic texts, influenced by Aesop,[143] shadow Aesop's fables, also using animals

when telling fables and establishing a similar literary role. For instance, Phaedrus not only

recognises Aesop as his main source when introducing his first book of fables but also gives it

two purposes: "it moves to laugher, and by wise counsels guides the conduct of life" (Phaedrus,

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[140] The same can be said of the fable told by Chrysostom in his speech to the Alexandrians in which he uses animals to illustrate his sermon giving it mythological imprint (Dio Chrysostom, *Alex.* 63-67). The context suggests a negative meaning, in particular when he directly advises them to consider "if you wish to hear it, and don't be vexed if I tell it" (*Alex.* 63). See Suzanne Said, "Dio's Use of Mythology," in *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters, and Philosophy* (ed. Simon Swain; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 169-170.
[141] Francisco Rodríguez Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable* (Mnemosyne 201; 3 vols.; trans. Gert-Jan van Dijk. Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1:528-529.
[142] Edward Clayton, "Aesop, Aristotle, and Animals: The Role of Fables in Human Life," *Humanitas* 21 (2008): 179-200.
[143] E.g. Dio Chrysostom *Alex.* 63-65; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 1-49. See, for example, Graham Anderson, "Some Uses of Storytelling in Dio," in *Dio Chrysostom: Politics, Letters, and Philosophy* (ed. Simon Swain; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 154-157. See also Michael Wojciechowski who argues for an Aesopic influence in New Testament documents [Michael Wojciechowski, "Aesopic Tradition in the New Testament," *JGRChJ* 5 (2008): 99-109. Cf. David Flusser, "Aesop's Miser and the Parable of the Talents," in *Parable and Story in Judaism and Christianity* (eds. C. Thoma and M. Wyschogrod; Paulist: New York, 1989), 9-25].

Fab. 1: Prologue). This suggests that when Phaedrus tells stories about frogs (e.g. 1:2, 6, 24,

30), dogs (e.g. 1:4, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27) wolves (e.g. 1:1, 8, 10,) and lambs (e.g. 1:1), among many

others animals, he uses them as illustrative figures with the purpose of creating a moral

imperative for his readers. As in Aesop's fables, Phaedrus also locates human along with animals

in his stories (e.g. 1:22; 2:7; 3:2; 4:1; 5:10), portraying animals sometimes as cleverer and more

intelligent than men (e.g. 1:15, 23). Accordingly, the data above indicates that the mention of

animals in Hellenistic texts, especially when these are used for imaginative motives, are not

always loaded with negative meanings *per se*; but the presence and significances of these figures

have to be measured in light of contexts and sometimes interpreted in pedagogical and

metaphoric terms.

5.2. The modern (im)polite animals

Today, the metaphoric understanding of animals is complex and varies across cultures

and languages.[144] In some languages the metaphor of people as animals offers many distinct

forms, evoking negative and positive senses, many constructed on asymmetric contradictions and

cultural and geographical differences.[145] Likewise, there are some differences regarding the

metaphor of dogs, which evoke negative or positive meanings depending on the context in which

these are uttered. In Zulu, for example, when the term *dog* is applied to human beings it refers to

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[144] E.g. see Lixia Wei and Bee Eng Wong, "A Corpus-Based Study on Snake Metaphors in Mandarin Chinese and British English," *GEMA* 12 (2012): 322 (311-324), who affirms that the snake when used in metaphorical expressions "work[s] differently in Mandarin Chinese and British English, because the snake expressions have a much more derogatory meaning of man in Chinese but more a derogative meaning of woman in English."

[145] See Shelley Ching-yu Hsieh, "A Corpus-Based Study on Animal Expressions in Mandarin Chinese and German," *JPrag* 38 (2006): 2206-2222; Ramiro Martín Hernández, "Reflexiones en torno al léxico animal en Francés y en Español," *AEF* 28 (2005): 213-228; Silvia Molina Plaza, "De mujeres, gatos y otros animales: Paremias y locuciones metafóricas y metonímicas en Inglés y Español," *Paremia* 17 (2008): 91-99; and Francisco Villegas, "Los animales en el habla costarricense," *Hispania* 49 (1966): 118-120.

people from a low-class, describing an inferior person or a person of low and coarse habits.[146]

On the other hand, in some societies in which Spanish is the first language, the term dog is

polysemic, evoking meanings such as loyalty, loneliness, suffering, protection and aggression.[147]

In Spanish, besides, the term *dog* can also be used in a derogatory sense, meaning lascivious,

when applied to a woman, .[148] This usage, however, sometimes varies from one Spanish culture

to another in which related terms are also used as a way of showing appreciation and social

engagement among young women.[149]

Nevertheless, as an offensive definition, although the negative meaning of the term *dog*

when applied to women is also seen in English and others languages,[150] one cannot say that it is

seen in the same way in every language. In fact, it might not be totally correct to affirm the

universality of a semantic derogation for females when using the metaphor of dog. In Persian

proverbs, for example, although there is subtle and minimal semantic imbalance in animal

expressions when referring to women, it seems that "[s]exism and semantic derogation are not

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[146] Eric A. Hermanson and J. A. du Plessis, "The Conceptual Metaphor 'People Are Animals' in Zulu," *SAJAL* 17 (1997): 53.

[147] Blanca Elena Sanz Martin, "Polisemia de los zoónimos perro y gato: Valores antitéticos," *Onomázein* 25 (2012): 133.

[148] Almudena Fernandez Fontecha and Rosa María Jiménez Catalán, "Semantic Derogation in Animal Metaphor: A Contrastive-Cognitive Analysis of Two Male/Female Examples in English and Spanish," *JPrag* 35 (2003): 771-797; and Irene López Rodríguez, "Of Women, Bitches, Chickens and Vixens: Animal Metaphors for Women in English and Spanish," *Cult. leng. Represent* 7 (2009): 77-100.

[149] In some Spanish speaking societies the word "zorra" (vixen) is more commonly used than "perra" (she-dog, or bitch) when referring to women. "Zorra" is used sometimes as a social expression of bonding and care. See Víctor Sánchez Corrales, "Metáforas zoonímicas de humanos en el Español de Costa Rica: Caballo, yegua/burro, perro-perra, vaca y zorra. Estudio diferencial contrastivo," *Káñina* 35 (2012): 27-36. Cf. Israel Sanz Sánchez, "Creatividad léxica an una jerga gay de la frontera México-Estados Unidos," *Hispania* (2009): 151, who argues that many animal metaphors, such as perra (bitch), are used among Mexican gay men to create affective images of inclusion between them.

[150] Grzegorz A Kleparski, "Lusta, Mint a Disznó: A Hunt for 'Correlative' Zoosemy in Hungarian and English," *SAR* 1 (2002): 17-18; Pedro José Chamizo Domínguez and Magdalena Zawislawska, "Animal Names Used as Insults and Derogation in Polish and Spanish," *PHi* (2006): 137-174; and N. Černá, "Imagen del hombre y la mujer en las fraseologías Española y Checa" (Bachelor's Thesis, Univerzita Palackého V Olomouci, 2012), 24-27.

revealed in Persian expressions as much as other languages."[151] And, even though when the term

dog is applied to women, Persian proverbs, although evoking negative correspondences, do not

have sexual connotations.[152] The same can be said of Chinese language in which a woman of

easy virtue is called "fox-spirit"; a blond prostitute is a "gold-hair-cat"; and an evil woman a

"tiger-aunt," lacking any reference to dogs and sexual involvement.[153] Significantly, even the

negative meaning of the English term *bitch* cannot be seen as historically permanent. The term

bitch was first and generally employed to depict a female dog, but around 1400 C.E. started

being used as a derogative description of a "promiscuous woman in general and a prostitute

specifically."[154] Likewise, there is no literary evidence to affirm that the term dog was used in

Hellenistic Greek to refer to a lascivious woman either.[155]

The above suggests that the interpretation of animal metaphors across languages is

strongly shaped by social and historical influences. In some way, as Pethó and Heidrich propose,

"[l]anguage can be regarded as a mirror of our thoughts," suggesting that language is determined

by ideas and culture.[156] For example, while in some modern English-speaking cultures animal

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[151] Azam Estaji and Fakhteh Nakhavali, "Semantic Derogation in Persian Animal Proverbs," *TPLS* 1 (2011): 1217. Cf. Moayad Sharab et al., "La imagen del perro en la paremiología Jordana: Traducción y contraste con el Español," *Language Design* 14 (2013): 39-59, in which there is no references to female dogs in Jordan proverbs.

[152] Nakhavali, "Semantic Derogation," 1215. According to Nakhavali, "shrew, cruelty, and unfaithfulness are attributed to women through 'dog' expressions in Persian" proverbs (Ibid., 2015). In the case of men, the proverbs involves to see "men more inferior than" dogs (Ibid., 1216).

[153] See Robert Kiełtyka and Grzegorz A Kleparski, "On the Indo-European Nature of Non-Indo-European Animal Metaphor: The Case of Chinese Zoosemy," *SAR* 4 (2007): 95-96.

[154] Charles A Collins, "Bitch: An Example of Semantic Development and Change," *Lambda Alpha Anthropology* 16 (1984): 68.

[155] Lexicons do not provide any related meaning that could connect the term *dog* (κύων) with a lascivious woman in Hellenistic texts. See BDAG, 579, 575; LSJ, 1015. The same can be said of the diminutive (κυνάριον).

[156] Eszter Pethó and Balázs Heidrich, "Differences of Language From a Cross-Cultural Perspective," *EIS* 4 (2005): 94.

metaphors could be seen as a form of verbal abuse,[157] in other non-English speaking societies it could suggest the opposite.[158] This is so, for example, in the Tzintzuntzan society, in which animal metaphors "operate as a barometer of social ideals and relationships, and thereby, despite their generally abusive nature, promote community harmony and cohesion."[159] Likewise, in Serbian, for instance, although the metaphor of dogs is "used extremely rarely in vocatives," and therefore there are no English correspondences, there are several examples in which animal names are used either as terms of abuse or endearment.[160] In the latter sense, "it is size that matters more than anything else," therefore, "the names of the offsprings of many animals that people do not usually like are nevertheless used affectionately," such as "my little mouse," "my kitten," and "piglet," which although used invectively in other contexts, "the negative motivation is overridden by the addressor's positive feelings towards the addressee, typically a young child or a loved person."[161]

This latter example not only shows again the complexity of the topic, but also stresses the force of diminutives, which in some languages can denote something more singular, intimate and powerful than in English.[162] Indeed, in some languages diminutives are mainly used as expressions of affection, setting up a friendly context between speakers, but also functioning as

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[157] E.g. Edmund Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse," in *New Directions in the Study of Language* (ed. Erich H. Lenneberg; Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1964), 23-63.

[158] Olga Mori, "Designaciones de animales en la creación metafórica del lenguaje popular," in *Energeia und Ergon, Sprachliche Variation - Sprachgeschichte - Sprachtypologie, III. Studia in honorem Eugenio Coseriu (2)* (Tübinger Beiträge Zur Linguistik 300; Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1988), 313-322.

[159] Stanley Brandes, "Animal Metaphors and Social Control in Tzintzuntzan," *Ethnology* 23 (1984): 214.

[160] Sabina Halupka-Rešetar and Biljana Radić, "Animal Names Used in Addressing People in Serbian," *JPrag* 35 (2003): 1900.

[161] "Typically," as Halupka-Rešetar and Radić, affirm, "it is the names of young animals that are used here, due to the fact that they are small, helpless, and cuddly" (ibid.).

[162] E.g. Marina Terkourafi, "Politeness in Cyprus: A Coffee or a Small Coffee?," in *Politeness in Europe* (Multilingual Matters 127; Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005), 277-291.

oral strategies to soften negative statements.[163] This means that in some cultures diminutives

mainly operate in positive terms, reducing social distance, increasing affective interactions,[164]

and sometimes working as a sign of politeness.[165]

This latter point is quite relevant to our discussion, because as mentioned in Chapter Five,

the word *dog* used by the Matthean Jesus in Matt 15:26-27 is a diminutive (κυνάριον), evoking

maybe a neutral or at least less adverse meaning/s in readers coming from cultures in which

diminutives play positive roles. Whether first-century readers could have interpreted the

diminutive in the same way or not is matter for discussion. In fact, although some argue that the

Ancient Greek diminutive entails a negative force,[166] and therefore its meaning involves an

offensive stance, such an assumption is debatable.[167]

In view of the above, I conclude that from a historical sociopragmatic stance, and in light

of the socio-cultural complexity of the topic and some literary elements mentioned above, the

Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness when using the word *dog* should be understood in view of the

following points. First, the term *dog* appears in a metaphoric dialogue in Matthew's Gospel,

therefore, its use has to be evaluated in imaginative and rhetorical ways. Second, the presence of

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[163] Muhammad A Badarneh, "The Pragmatics of Diminutives in Colloquial Jordanian Arabic," *JPrag* 42 (2010): 153-167.

[164] Alejandra Regúnaga, "Morfología derivativa: Consideraciones en torno al uso de diminutivos en la ciudad de Santa Rosa (La Pampa-Argentina)," *Anclajes* 9 (2012): 251-262; Dan Jurafsky, "Universals in the Semantics of the Diminutive," in *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society February 12-15, 1993: General Session and Parasession on Semantic Typology and Semantic Universals* (eds. Joshua S. Guenter et al.; Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 1993), 423-436; Javier Sologuren, "Fórmulas de tratamiento en el Perú," *NRFH* 8 (1954): 241-256; and Francisco Santibáñez Sáenz, "Conceptual Interaction and Spanish Diminutives," *CIF* 25 (1999): 173-190.

[165] Maria Sifianou, "The Use of Diminutives in Expressing Politeness: Modern Greek Versus English," *JPrag* 17 (1992): 155-173; Francés Karttunen, "Conventions of Polite Speech in Nahuatl," *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 20 (1990): 281- 296; and Martha Mendoza, "Polite Diminutives in Spanish," in *In Broadening the horizon of linguistic politeness* (P&BNS 139; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 163-173.

[166] Cadwallader, *Beyond the Word*, 74-81.

[167] See, for example, K. Katramadou, "The Greek Diminutive" (Ph.D. diss., Rand Afrikaans University, 2000), 36-73; and Petersen, *Greek Diminutives*, 169-184.

animal metaphors seems to be ubiquitous in Hellenistic literature, therefore, first-century readers could have seen the image of a *dog* as a common imaginary concept, metaphorically interpreted in light of the context in which it is uttered or assigned. Third, although the use of diminutives in Greek literature is complex, a pragmaphilological approach suggests a non-offensive meaning for the diminutive term *dog*, operating in a distinct semantic way rather than assuming its normal lexeme in Hellenistic literature. Fourth, although the Matthean Jesus does not call the woman a dog directly, some may argue that the dialogue may suggest that. Even though in my opinion such identification is not based on the Greek construction of the sentence, the image of a little dog as a symbol of a person can also be seen in Epictetus (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 2.22.9), for example, which neither assigns derogatory nor sexual meanings as some contemporary cultures do to the term.

Yet, even though a metaphor, some argue that first-century readers may have understood the term κυνάριον as offensive not because of the word itself but because the Canaanite woman is compared with an animal.[168] But, in light of the cultural and social context in which the Matthean text is set, such appreciation is not totally correct.[169] Evidence suggests that in general many ancient people loved animals,[170] especially dogs.[171] Even, the assumption that the term

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[168] For example, Judith Gundry-Volf, "Spirit, Mercy, and the Other," *ThTo* 51 (1995): 517, affirms that the use of the diminutive κυνάριον "may suggest the meaning 'little dogs, puppies,' which would also make the epithet non-pejorative. Yet the contrast between children and dogs remains." Cf. Grant LeMarquand, "The Canaanite Conquest of Jesus (Mt 15:21-28)," *ARC* 33 (2005): 242. But, there are many examples in which Jesus compares other people with animals, which does not mean that the contrast between the animals and them remains (e.g. 13:47; 18:10-14; 25:31-46).

[169] Cf. Harrison, "Every dog has its day," 129.

[170] Steven H. Lonsdale, "Attitudes Towards Animals in Ancient Greece," *GR* 26 (1979): 146-159; Francis D. Lazenby, "Greek and Roman Household Pets," *CJ* 44 (1949): 245-252; and Francis D. Lazenby, "Greek and Roman Household Pets," *CJ* 44 (1949): 299-307.

[171] E.g. Preston Day Leslie, "Dog Burials in the Greek World," *AJA* 88 (1984): 21-32; and Helen M. Johnson, "The Portrayal of the Dog on Greek Vases," *ClW* 12 (1919): 209-213. Greek grave-reliefs show a similar emotional connection between dogs and people. See, for example, Ernst Pfuhl and Hans Möbius, *Die ostgriechischen Grabreliefs* (Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1977), Tafel 23, no. 98; Tafel 186, no. 186; Tafel 46, no. 234; and Tafel 72, no. 435,

dog, in general, was a derogatory designation in Jesus' time used by Jewish people to refer to Gentiles is highly debatable both historically and literarily.[172]

Therefore, in my view, first century readers could have interpreted the diminutive term *dog* in Matt 15 as a metaphoric reference; instead of it functioning to offend or insult the Canaanite woman, it was given to illustrate a point, as many metaphors do. Contemporary readers, especially those coming from contemporary Western societies, may regard the term as insulting. An opinion of this kind, as demonstrated above, is not only based on cultural grounds, but also involves reading every animal metaphor in Matthew's Gospel as insulting, including those in which Jesus' disciples are called *snakes* (Matt 10:16) and other people are compared to *sheep* and *goats*, for example (25:31-46), thus negating any metaphoric assumption. Furthermore, as mentioned, there is not first-century Hellenistic literary evidence suggesting that the diminutive of the term *dog*, or the lexeme *dog* itself, was used as a derogatory term when referring to non-Jews or pagans. Therefore, to my mind and in light of the methodological lens used when reading Jesus' (im)politeness, I suggest that the Matthean Jesus uses the diminutive of the term *dog* in the pericope of the Canaanite woman in a metaphoric way. The meaning and interpretation of whole metaphor, however, goes beyond the scope of this research.

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among others.
[172] Several scholars affirms the use of this derogatory meaning in the first-century C.E. by Jewish people to refer to Gentiles [e.g. César G. Carhuachón, "Hermenéutica desde un contexto de inmigración," *Cuadernos de teología* 27 (2008): 16; and Gundry-Volf, "Spirit, Mercy," 517;]. However, it is difficult to support that assertion from a literary and historical perspective. Although sometimes the term is not used in positive ways in some Jewish writings, this does not mean that it was a nickname for Gentiles [cf. Mark D. Nanos, "Paul's Reversal of Jews Calling Gentiles 'Dogs' (Philippians 3: 2): 1600 Years of an Ideological Tale Wagging an Exegetical Dog?," *BibInt* 17 (2009): 448-482]. The only way to support such a statement is to include later rabbinic writings, which, in my opinion, may have developed the idea after the first-century era. Cf. Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 238.

2. Summary

There are several examples in Greco-Roman literature showing characters that use (im)polite words when facing enemies. This data reveals an agonistic society in which characters shame enemies when they disagree with their teaching and worldviews. (Im)polite words operate as *ad hominem* attacks, exposing different aspects of the individual who is attacked, such as moral failures or intellectual disability. Equally, irony and jokes function to shame enemies, using funny language or sarcastic illustrations to reveal illogic points or nonsense teachings. The Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness clearly operates as in the examples given above, especially in Matt 23, in which the Matthean Jesus rebukes and mocks the scribes and Pharisees, exposing their erratic behaviour and teachings.

The topic of (im)politeness can also be seen when teachers or instructors rebuke students or philosophers thus exposing their failures. The data suggests that by using (im)polite designations, teachers and instructors seek to stress the importance or seriousness of their philosophic thinking, in which specific aspects of life, opinions or behaviours are addressed. Furthermore, by doing so, the teachers' or instructors' rebuke operates in discipleship terms, in which they invite their followers to change and correct their wrong paths and attitudes. The Matthean Jesus' rebuke against his disciples seems to function similarly. By using (im)polite terms, Jesus not only reproves them but also pursues to help them to amend their wrong ways.

In a literary vein, several Greco-Roman stories describe masters using (im)polite language when attacking their slaves' failures. It is common to find masters abusing their slaves verbally in Greco-Roman literature, in particular in disappointing or intriguing circumstances. Some parables told by the Matthean Jesus, also employ (im)polite language when masters rebuke slaves, mirroring an analogous literary characteristic. Besides, these kind of stories not only

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have the purpose of making people laugh but also of inviting them to consider some specific aspects directly or indirectly as demonstrated in the tales. The same can be said of the Matthean Jesus' parables, which, more than trying to make people laugh, seek to evoke a more serious and significant message regarding Jesus' teaching.

Finally, animal metaphors appear in several Hellenistic texts, such as proverbs and fables, for example, operating either in positive or negative ways. The positive or negative meaning of animals as metaphors, however, cannot only be seen in function of the negative features of the animal addressed but also in view of the context in which its image is located. There are cases, for example, in which animal metaphors are used in rhetorical and educational ways, operating as positive literary illustrations. This data suggests that the presence of animals, in particular when these are named in metaphoric contexts, can evoke positive and negative meanings. The Matthean Jesus, in my opinion, uses the image of a little *dog* to illustrate metaphorically a point; a metaphoric point that, according to the narrator, the Canaanite woman clearly understands (Matt 15:27).

CONCLUSION

In this study, I set out to examine the topic of Jesus' verbal (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel from the perspective of first-century readers. After examining specific theoretical modern material on the subject of (im)politeness, I argued for the necessity of a study dealing with the subject as well as developing a way of reading ancient texts in relation to this topic. Consequently, I proposed to read the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness using an adapted socio-rhetoric method, which I complemented with pragmatic, linguistic and socio-historic approaches. Using this approach, I examined four pericopes in which (im)polite elements are present, and a final chapter in which I discussed other Greco-Roman materials that mirror some of the (im)polite words used by the Matthean Jesus. Here I lay out my conclusions, recognising limitations and giving recommendations for further studies.

Modern cultures generally regard (im)politeness in different ways. There are differences from one culture to another, in which one can see polysemic meanings of verbal (im)politeness and everything that (im)politeness entails. In a similar vein, and because of the cultural horizon from which interpreters come, such differences can also be seen in Matthean studies. Although it seems that in some modern Western societies, in particular some English-speaking countries, the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness could be understood in negative terms, one cannot say the same about other societies in which (im)politeness is seen differently. This means that interpreters run the risk of treating the Matthean Jesus as (im)polite because of personal, cultural, ethnic, theological and ideological backgrounds. That is why I have undertaken to read this (im)politeness from the perspective of first-century readers, using the tools provided by a modified socio rhetorical approach, which enabled me to recreate and compare modern pragmatic understandings with those unlocked in ancient texts.

The tools mentioned above consisted in bringing together three related methodologies: a narrative, pragmaphilological and historical sociopragmatic approach. Because an *inner textural* analysis of a text enables a scholar to explore the ways language is used to convey a message, I examined four Matthean pericopes (Matt 15:21-28; 16:13-28; 23:1-36; 25:14-30) employing a narrative methodology, paying attention to linguistic, argumentative and narrational patterns. By using a narrative approach, I was not only able to identify a literary purpose for the Matthean Jesus' (im)politeness, but it allowed me to isolate specific words that functioned as a rebuke and communicated negative meanings in Matthew's story as a whole.

My following step was to engage in an *intertextural* analysis of those particular words referred above. Attention to *intertextuality enables an interpreter to* examine the interaction of the text being studied with other materials, such as written documents, exploring cultural, social and historical features represented in the text. Since a study of verbal (im)politeness in texts requires an examination of specific literary expressions that seem to effect (im)polite meanings, it was essential to establish a pragmatic literary study within which to compare and build social understandings. A pragmaphilological approach gave me tools to reveal negative and positive meanings in determined words. Unlike lexicons, which list vast amounts of diachronic data and usually omit any synchronic reference, a pragmaphilological approach works in synchronic and limited contexts, determining how words operate in a *specific* literary corpora of a *specific* period of time. This characteristic was significant in my research, limiting chronologically the scope of my study and revealed meanings only related to Matthew's Gospel and the Hellenistic era.

The meanings uncovered by the pragmaphilological approach showed, in at least three cases, (im)polite connotations: (1) when the Matthean Jesus verbally castigates the scribes and Pharisees, (2) when the Matthean Jesus rebukes his disciples and (3) in the parable of talents, in

which the Matthean Jesus tells a story about an unnamed master who reproaches one of his slaves using (im)polite words. In each of these cases, the terms displayed negative, unpleasant and adverse meanings. Nonetheless, although a pragmaphilological approach in the cases mentioned above indicates the offensive senses possible in the Matthean Jesus' words, it also suggests that in none of these cases can the words be classified as swear words themselves. On the other hand, the diminutive term *dog* in the pericope of the Canaanite woman, neither displayed offensive meanings nor derogatory senses. In fact, it seems that it revealed meanings related to little and mainly friendly household animals.

Along with pragmaphilology, I also used a synchronic historical sociopragmatic approach. This enabled me to examine the social and cultural texture of Matthew's Gospel, which from a socio-rhetorical perspective lets readers establish a link between social-scientific and literary criticism, engaging with the world characterised or encrypted in the text. Since in my view the social-scientific perspective has limitations, I complemented it with a historical sociopragmatic approach. Historical sociopragmatics interacts with determined aspects of social context and historical language, examining pragmatic meanings encoded in texts. Unlike historical criticism, for example, whose main focus is on determining the historical process and evolution of texts; historic sociopragmatics engages with texts synchronically, analysing encrypted data and language in a cultural pragmatic context. This characteristic was also significant in my research, allowing me to address the topic of Jesus' (im)politeness in relation to other texts, such as Greco-Roman writings, and also to theorise regarding first-century readers' interpretations of the topic under research.

The emerging data indicated that a historical sociopragmatic approach describes a world in which (im)politeness can be understood differently than in contemporary meaning-making.

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The form in which discussions are described in Greco-Roman texts suggested an agonistic society in which (im)polite words and ironic expressions function to win ideological and verbal battles. In this regard, socio-scientific criticism suggests that winners acquire honour while losers are publicly shamed. Although it sounds strange now, it seems it was a commonplace in the Greco-Roman world to witness (im)polite challenge and riposte contests between ideological enemies. The Matthean Jesus is no exception, displaying similar (im)polite features when arguing with opponents through the narrative, in particular Matt 23, in which he chastises the scribes and Pharisees using a vast amount of creative (im)polite words, expressions, ironies and jokes to shame them. I concur with scholars, such as Johnson, who conclude that polemical (im)polite language was a common characteristic in first-century C.E. But I disagree in characterizing Jesus' (im)polite language as slander, in particular when paying attention to the rationale given by the Matthean Jesus when attacking his opponents in Matt 23.

Conflict was also seen in the way teachers or orators treat audiences in Greco-Roman literature. Historical sociopragmatics describes a world in which teachers rebuke audiences using (im)polite language, suggesting also challenge and riposte contests. The data showed, however, that the act of shaming followers in Matthew's Gospel is done as a way of discipleship. The same can be said of other corpora, in which characters likewise shame their audiences using (im)polite designations to challenge, teach or invite them to follow a much more correct way of life.

Regarding the above, the data also suggested that the topic of (im)politeness in Matthew's Gospel and Greco-Roman literature is manifest through certain rhetorical features. Rhetoric is an important element when engaging in any conflict as represented in Greco-Roman texts, indicating that in some cases (im)polite words are uttered with rhetorical and strategic

purposes. This involves understanding the topic of verbal (im)politeness in rhetorical terms of persuasion and encoded communication. The figures of masters, slaves and animals in Greco-Roman literature function to illustrate this latter point very well. In the parable of the talents, Jesus tells a story about a master who rebukes his slave using (im)polite designations, which operate as a rhetorical way of teaching the audience about the importance of behaving well while waiting for the parousia. In literary terms, the parable is a story like many in Greco-Roman literature in which masters rebuke a slave (im)politely, seeking to produce a response from readers/hearers. Likewise, the metaphoric use of a little *dog* in the pericope of the Canaanite woman also functions rhetorically. Proverbs and fables use animals in diverse ways, portraying positive and negative features. The data showed, however, that the focus is not on the animal but in the allegoric story that the animal represents. Accordingly, the figure of slaves and animals operate as metaphors in Matthew's Gospel and Greco-Roman texts, being used as symbolic examples to teach a lesson.

In conclusion, first-century readers, habituated to conflictive, open, humorous, different and incisive ways of engaging with people, as testified by Greco-Roman texts, could have seen the Matthean Jesus as a teacher, orator or philosopher, who, when teaching, discussing and employing metaphors, uses verbal (im)politeness with the purpose of underlining the importance of his preaching and the seriousness of the coming of his kingdom.

All this having been uncovered, one of limitations of my research, however, is that I studied only the Matthean Jesus' *verbal* (im)politeness, leaving aside other areas that are worthy of study. In view of this, several areas for further research on impoliteness in Matthew's Gospel deserve future attention. First, since my focus was uniquely on Jesus' *verbal* (im)politeness, more work needs to be done on researching Jesus' (im)polite gestures or silences in the pericope

of the Canaanite woman, for example, in which the narrator informs that Jesus "did not answer her at all," when asking for the healing of her daughter (Matt 15:23). A historical sociopragmatic discussion of the topic of silence and (im)politeness could reveal and demonstrate existing differences between contemporary and ancient perspectives. Second, further pragmatic research needs to be undertaken on the (im)polite language or behaviour evident in other Matthean characters in parables, such as guests saying 'no' to the king's invitation for the wedding of his son (22:1-6); or in metaphoric proverbs, as when the Matthean Jesus compares his audience to children sitting in the marketplaces, calling to one another "[w]e played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn" (11:16-17). Third, a focussed exploration of the *nice* or *gentle* Jesus, ways in which readers see the Matthean Jesus, also needs consideration at least from the perspective of some contemporary Western societies. A pragmaphilological and historical sociopragmatic approach of the words of *the nice* or *gentle Matthean Jesus* could not only unlock Jesus' friendliness or gentleness when talking, teaching or even rebuking, but also uncover encrypted social meanings and behaviours in other Greco-Roman literature. In doing so, it could be important also to contrast, understand and perhaps integrate the nice/gentle and (im)polite Jesus in Matthew's story in just one complex literary character. It is these and other studies that this current thesis opens up as future research possibilities, extending our knowledge of both the Matthean Gospel and the Matthean Jesus.

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