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The Function of the Allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* in the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1–8)

Abstract: The allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* plays an important role in the intertextual-illustrative rhetoric of the Lucan parable of the unjust steward (Lk 16:1–8). People generally assume that good legal systems promote moral honesty and legal justice. Against this background, the Pauline idea of the presence of the law, but also its ineffectiveness in giving righteousness (Gal 3:19b; cf. 3:21), is quite difficult to explain. In order to illustrate this Pauline idea in his sequential hypertextual reworking of the Letter to the Galatians, Luke used the allusion to Aristophanes' comedy, which presented the classical Athenian legal system as likewise ineffective against the activity of the morally corrupt legal agent, the sycophant. The Lucan unjust steward not only uses the language of the Athenian sycophant, but also engages in similar, apparently legal but morally unjust activity, thus questioning the effectiveness of the whole legal system in promoting righteousness. The reworking of the sequence of Pauline ideas explains the meaning of the enigmatic parable of the unjust steward (Lk 16:1–8).

Keywords: Gospel of Luke, Aristophanes, Letter to the Galatians, law, grace, intertextuality

Among the Synoptic Gospels, only the Gospel of Luke contains the parable of the unjust steward (Lk 16:1–8). Since Christian antiquity, the overall meaning of this parable, especially the moral value of the conclusive statement of the master, who surprisingly praised the unjust steward (Lk 16:8), has been regarded as very unclear.[1]

Various suggested solutions to the riddle of the moral evaluation of the behaviour of the unjust steward can be found in scholarly

[1] See, e.g., D. Burkett, "Unrighteous Steward," 326, 331; F.J. King, "Funny Thing," 18–19.

literature, so there is no need to present them here. What is more important for the understanding of the Lucan parable, although it is not always noticed by biblical scholars, is the fact that it contains numerous literary allusions. In particular, it contains a rather evident allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds*.

1. Arguments for the Existence of an Allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* in Lk 16:3

Biblical scholars generally agree that in order to detect an allusion to another text in a given text in a scholarly persuasive way, a set of criteria for detecting literary borrowing should be applied. Scholars have recently proposed various sets of such criteria.[2] They may be variously termed, but they generally conceptually overlap with each other. In fact, they are based on a widely agreed-upon idea of what an allusion or an echo consists in, and what makes the detection of an allusion or an echo scholarly plausible. Therefore, there is no need here to argue for a particular set of criteria which would be somehow better than other ones. In this study, the set of criteria recently proposed by Travis B. Williams (*explicit reference*; *external plausibility*; *authorial tendency*; *recurrence*; *verbal agreement*, including *linguistic similarities* and *thematic similarities*)[3] will be adopted to the analysis of the allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* in Lk 16:3.

The statement of the unjust steward from the Lucan parable, namely, that he wonders what he should do because he is not strong enough to dig (τί ποιήσω…; σκάπτειν οὐκ ἰσχύω: Lk 16:3) linguistically resembles the statement of the sycophant from Aristophanes' play, namely, that he wonders what he could do because he does not know how to dig (τί… πάθω; σκάπτειν… οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι: *Av.* 1432). The *linguistic similarity* between the two texts is evidently close, although not compelling, if analysed in isolation from other levels of the intertextual relationship.

It should therefore be noted that there are also important thematic and contextual connections between the two statements. In both

[2] Cf., e.g., D.R. MacDonald, "Categorization of Antetextuality," 212.

[3] Cf. T.B. Williams, "Intertextuality and Methodological Bias," 179–181.

stories, the characters who utter these statements are middle-class men, who act as legal agents, but in order to survive they do something which is not morally honest. Aristophanes' legal agent, the sycophant, evidently abuses the law. He accuses strangers before the Athenian court, and before they appear before the court to defend themselves, he already despoils them of their property. Luke's legal agent, the steward, likewise abuses the law. He decides to diminish, in an apparently legal way, the amount of the debt of his master's debtors in order to be welcomed by them into their homes.

Moreover, the main characters in both stories are not ready to do the alternative, lower-class, and consequently socially shameful job of digging. They claim that they are not trained to dig, but it seems that they are in fact ashamed of doing it. Digging is thus presented in both stories as a morally decent but for some reasons rejected alternative to the actually pursued but morally questionable way of surviving. Therefore, the *thematic similarities* between the two stories are also close enough to postulate the existence of a conscious allusion to Aristophanes' play in the Lucan parable.

However, is it at all plausible that in his Gospel concerning the Jewish Messiah Luke consciously used a play of the pagan Greek comedist Aristophanes? In fact, it has already been suggested that in his Gospel Luke used motifs which are also present in various classical Greek writings.[4] In particular, the use of Socratic motifs in the Lucan work evidently attracts the attention of numerous scholars.[5] Likewise quite popular among scholars is the view that Luke knew and used Euripides' *Bacchae*.[6] The use of Aesop's fables in Lk 24:25 as well as Lk 7:24.32 has also been postulated.[7] Moreover, it has been argued that Aristophanes' plays were known to Paul the Apostle.[8] Therefore, it is quite plausible that in his literary activity the well-educated writer Luke knew and consciously used Aristophanes' plays. Accordingly, the criteria of not only *external plausibility*, but

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[4] Cf. M. Wojciechowski, *Wpływy greckie*, 183–185.

[5] See, e.g., S. Reece, "Jesus as Healer," 197–200; J.A. Cowan, "Paul and Socrates"; M. Kochenash, "Reframing Julius' Kindness."

[6] See, e.g., M. Kochenash, "Better Call."

[7] Cf. S. Reece, "Aesop."

[8] Cf. R.D. Griffith, "Paul's Knowledge."

also *authorial tendency* and *recurrence* favour the hypothesis of the existence of an allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* in the Lucan parable of the unjust steward.

For these reasons, the existence of an allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* in Lk 16:3 has already been postulated by a number of biblical scholars, including Reinhard von Bendemann,[9] François Bovon,[10] and Michael Wolter.[11] Accordingly, the scholarly interpretative tradition also favours the existence of such an allusion.[12]

2. Problems with the Allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* in Lk 16:3

It should be noted, however, that apart from the evident similarities between the two analysed texts, notable linguistic and thematic differences between them can also be observed. In Aristophanes' comedy, the sycophant does not know how to dig (σκάπτειν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι: *Av.* 1432). In the Lucan parable, the unjust steward is not strong enough to dig (σκάπτειν οὐκ ἰσχύω: Lk 16:3). If Luke knew and consciously used Aristophanes' play in his Gospel, why did he change the Greek verb from his source? In fact, it seems that both verbs in the respective stories convey the same idea of not being able to dig. If the allusion is analysed in itself, apart from other transformative factors, the reason for Luke's change of the verb is evidently unclear.

Moreover, Aristophanes' sycophant does his immoral job for his whole life. On the other hand, the Lucan unjust steward engages in his immoral activity only when he is dismissed from his previous position. Therefore, although the Lucan steward is at the end of the parable called unjust (Lk 16:8), he does not seem to be morally corrupt permanently, in contrast to Aristophanes' sycophant. If Luke

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[9] Cf. R. von Bendemann, *Zwischen ΔΟΞΑ und ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ*, 234 n. 85.

[10] Cf. F. Bovon, *Evangelium nach Lukas*, vol. 3, 76 n. 33.

[11] Cf. M. Wolter, *Lukasevangelium*, 546.

[12] Short references to Aristophanes' *Birds* in Lk 16:3, without further analyses of this connection, can also be found in, e.g., J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 798; G. Rossé, *Vangelo di Luca*, 621; M. Rosik, "L'amministratore," 84. On the other hand, T. Hoeren, "Gleichnis," 628 n. 54, denies the existence of this connection. J.A. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1100, does not notice this allusion.

knew and consciously used Aristophanes' play in his parable, then this transformation of a relatively simple classical character into a narratively evolving Gospel one is also intriguing.

How can these similarities but also differences between Aristophanes' *Birds* and Luke's parable of the unjust steward be adequately explained? Moreover, what is the function of the allusion to *Av.* 1432 in Lk 16:3?

3. Sequential Reworking of Gal 3:19–21 in Lk 16:1–8

It has recently been suggested that the Gospel of Luke was written as a sequentially organized reworking of the contents of Paul's Letter to the Galatians, so that Luke in a systematic, strictly sequential, but on the other hand highly creative, hypertextual way literarily reworked the contents of this important Pauline letter in his own Gospel.[13]

According to this proposal, the character of the correspondences between the structurally parallel elements in the Lucan Gospel and in the Letter to the Galatians is highly diverse. The evangelist only exceptionally verbatim reproduced the corresponding phrases of the respective fragments of the Pauline hypotext. Usually, Luke illustrated the Pauline ideas from the structurally corresponding sections of the Letter to the Galatians with the use of various, mainly Marcan and scriptural but also classical Greek literary motifs. For this reason, the correspondences between the Lucan hypertext and its Pauline hypotext are generally very loose, truly hypertextual. They are conceptual (illustrating theological-halachic ideas etc.) rather than linguistic; they refer to images (movements, features, typical behaviour, etc.) rather than to words; they are creative rather than reproductive.

In this view, the hypertextual correspondences between the Lucan Gospel and the Letter to the Galatians are possible to detect in a scholarly verifiable way because they consistently appear in both works in the same order. Therefore, the lack of verbal repetition of the contents of the Letter to the Galatians in the Gospel of Luke is recompensed by the generally strictly preserved order of its use in

[13] See B. Adamczewski, *Gospel of Luke*.

the Lucan work. The detailed analysis of the sequentially arranged, conceptual correspondences between the Gospel of Luke and the Letter to the Galatians reveals that their common order can be traced down to individual sentences or even clauses, phrases, and words, and not merely to large thematic sections or pericopes.[14]

In particular, it has been suggested that the Lucan parable of the unjust steward (Lk 16:1–8) is a result of a sequentially organized but highly creative reworking of the section of the Pauline letter that concerns the powerlessness of the law, which was ordered by the hand of a mediator, but which was substituted with direct contact with God (Gal 3:19–21).[15]

This proposal needs some corrections and improvements. Let us follow the texts Lk 16:1–8 and Gal 3:19–21, analysing closely the sequentially organized connections between them and the ways in which the Lucan text seems to illustrate the particular ideas of the Pauline letter:

Lk 16:1–8	**Gal 3:19–21**
There was a certain rich man who had a legal manager (οἰκονόμος), and charges were brought to him that this man wasted his property. So having called him, he said to him: "What (τί) is this that I hear about you? Give an account of your legal management (οἰκονομία), because you can no longer be a legal manager (οἰκονομεῖν)." Then the legal manager (οἰκονόμος) said within himself: "What (τί) shall I do, for my lord takes away the legal management (οἰκονομία) from me? (Lk 16:1–3c)	What (τί) then the law (νόμος)? (Gal 3:19a)
I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. (Lk 16:3de)	It was added because of / for the sake of transgressions, (Gal 3:19b)

[14] Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Gospel of Luke*, 204–205, 207.

[15] Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Gospel of Luke*, 172–173. For a similar idea as concerns the relationship between Acts 15:6–29 and Gal 2:7–9, see B. Adamczewski, "Księga Amosa," 132–137.

Lk 16:1–8	Gal 3:19–21
I have known what I shall do, so that, when I am removed from the legal management, people would receive me into their houses." (Lk 16:4)	till the offspring comes to whom the promise had been made; (Gal 3:19cd)
So he called every one of (Lk 16:5a)	commanded through messengers (Gal 3:19e)
his lord's debtors (Lk 16:5a)	by the hand of a mediator. (Gal 3:19e)
and spoke to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And he said, "A hundred *baths* of olive oil." And he said to him, "Take your pieces of writing and having sat down quickly write fifty." Then he said to another, "And you, how much do you owe?" And he said, "A hundred *cors* of wheat." He says to him, "Take your pieces of writing and write (Lk 16:5b–7)	But a mediator is not for one, and God is one. (Gal 3:20)
fifty… eighty." (Lk 16:6f.7g)	Is the law contrary to the promises? This should not happen! (Gal 3:21ab)
The lord praised the legal manager (οἰκονόμος) of injustice (Lk 16:8a)	If there had been a law (νόμος) given (Gal 3:21c)
because he had made (ποιέω) things prudently. (Lk 16:8b)	which would have been able to make alive (ζωοποιέω), (Gal 3:21de)
For the sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light in dealing with their own generation. (Lk 16:8c)	really righteousness would have been from the law. (Gal 3:21f)

The opening Lucan idea of (*b'*) a legal manager (οἰκο-νόμος) being dismissed[16] from his legal management (οἰκο-νομία) because he apparently wasted the lord's property,[17] so hesitantly asking, (*a*) "What (τί) (*b*) shall I do, for my lord takes away the legal management (οἰκο-νομία) from me?" (Lk 16:1–3c), conceptually and linguistically, in a partly sequential way illustrates the opening Pauline idea of Paul hesitantly asking, (*a*) "What (τί) [is] then (*b*) the law (νόμος)?"

[16] R.A. Baergen, "Servant," 28, notes that the reader initially knows nothing about the responsibilities of the legal manager, but he surprisingly already knows that they have been taken away (Lk 16:1–2).

[17] Cf. D. Burkett, "Unrighteous Steward," 329.

(Gal 3:19a), which presumably fails to give inheritance (cf. Gal 3:18).[18] At this stage of the Lucan story, the character of the rich lord represents the Lord God, and the legal manager represents Paul[19] no more preaching the Mosaic law.

The subsequent Lucan image of the legal manager not being strong enough to dig and being ashamed to beg (Lk 16:3de) conceptually illustrates the subsequent Pauline idea of the law being added because of, or for the sake of, transgressions (Gal 3:19b). This connection will be analysed later in the context of the use of the allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds*.

The subsequent, somewhat surprising thought that in place of the previously espoused logic of the law, which the legal manager had to apply in his work (cf. Lk 16:1–3), now in dealing with people he has discovered the logic of grace[20] and future thankfulness,[21] because people should be thankful for the grace that they were offered (Lk 16:4),[22] conceptually illustrates the subsequent Pauline idea that in place of the previously ruling law (cf. Gal 3:19ab), now the offspring comes to whom the promise had been made (Gal 3:19cd). At this stage of the Lucan story, the character of the legal manager, who was removed from his legal management, so he resolved to grant a favour to people in order to arouse thankfulness in them in the future, represents Paul preaching a graceful promise (Gal 3:19d), which surpasses the Mosaic law (cf. Gal 3:16–18).

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[18] This proposal better reflects the role of the main character's hesitant question in the form of rhetorical soliloquy, "What (τί)…" (Lk 16:3b; Gal 3:19a), than the proposal offered in B. Adamczewski, *Gospel of Luke*, 172, which did not take this conceptual and linguistic connection into due consideration. Moreover, it reflects the function of the law (Gal 3:19a) as commanding people to do (ποιέω: cf. Gal 3:10.12) something (Lk 16:3b). For the rhetorical role of soliloquy in Lk 16:1–8, see A. Brobst-Renaud, "Soliloquy," 281–283.

[19] Cf. Jerome, *Epist*. 121,6: "Huius dispensator est Paulus," attributing this opinion to Theophilus of Antioch. See also F. Bovon, *Evangelium nach Lukas*, vol. 3, 82.

[20] Cf. W. Loader, "Jesus and the Rogue," 521; D.H. Reinstorf, "Parable," 6.

[21] Cf. J.S. Kloppenborg, "Dishonoured," 491; A. Brobst-Renaud, "Soliloquy," 282.

[22] Cf. L. Marulli, "And How Much Do You Owe," 201.

The subsequent idea of (*a*) calling every one of (*b*) the lord's debtors, who had with them legally binding, written records of debt, presumably written by the legal manager (Lk 16:5a), conceptually, in a sequential way illustrates the subsequent Pauline idea of the law which was (*a*) commanded through messengers (*b*) by the hand of a mediator (Gal 3:19e). For this reason, in order to illustrate the idea that the Lord's law was commanded to the Israelite people by the hand of Moses (Gal 3:19e), Luke created the surprising image of the debtors, and not the creditor, as keeping the written records of debt. Normally, it is the creditor who keeps the bill of exchange, signed by the debtor, in order to have a confirmation of the fact that the debtor owes something to him. This minor surprising detail betrays the fact that Luke creatively reworked here another text, and he was not entirely free in his literary composition. Moreover, the Lucan idea of the plurality of the debtors (Lk 16:5a), although later only two of them are mentioned (Lk 16:5b–7), probably illustrates the Pauline idea of the plurality of the messengers (Gal 3:19e).

The particular motif of sinful humans being debtors (ὀφειλέτης) and owing (ὀφείλω) much to the Lord (Lk 16:5–7) is of course Pauline (cf. Gal 5:3 etc.). This motif was used by Luke also elsewhere, especially in the linguistically and thematically similar parable of a sinful woman and two debtors (χρεοφειλέται), who owed (ὀφείλω) two different amounts of money, and for whom their debts were gracefully cancelled (Lk 7:41).

The subsequent idea of the debtors taking the old obligations, expressed in the Hebrew terms of *baths* and *cors* owed to the legal manager's lord, and writing themselves, with their own hands, without any aid of the legal manager, new records of debt (Lk 16:5b–7)[23] conceptually illustrates the subsequent Pauline thought that now there is no need of the Mosaic mediator between God and humans (Gal 3:20). Moreover, the redundantly formulated idea of two debtors (Lk 16:5b–7) probably illustrates the Pauline thought that a mediator is not for one (Gal 3:20a). It should be noted that in the Lucan story there is no statement that the manager somehow confirmed the new

[23] Cf. G. Rossé, *Vangelo di Luca*, 622.

bills or the amendments which were made on the original ones.[24] Since he asked the debtors the amounts of their debts, he evidently did not even take the bills in his hands. His graceful mediation was oral and not written. This surprising minor detail of the story again betrays Luke's reworking of another text, so that the Evangelist was not entirely free in the composition of his own text. At this stage of the Lucan story, the character of the law-breaking manager, who apparently on behalf of the lord[25] orally offered grace to the debtors, and who was later praised by the lord for this fact, represents the converted Paul as the manager (οἰκονόμος) of the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Cor 4:1–2), especially the mystery of grace.

The particular motif of the law as a burdening, written (γράφω: Lk 16:6–7) record (γράμμα: Lk 16:6–7) was borrowed by Luke from Paul's letters (cf. 2 Cor 3:6–7 etc.) and conflated with the post-Pauline motif of a hand-written record of debt (χειρό-γραφον: Col 2:14).

The subsequent, likewise repetitively formulated idea of reducing the legally binding debt to fifty per cent and eighty per cent, but not cancelling it altogether (Lk 16:6f.7g), is theologically surprising. It clearly differs from the idea of gracefully cancelling the debts of two debtors in the linguistically and thematically similar parable of a sinful woman (Lk 7:42). Moreover, it clearly differs from the idea of wiping out the hand-written record of debt, which was presented in Col 2:14. In fact, it conceptually illustrates the subsequent Pauline idea of the law not being contrary to the graceful promises (Gal 3:21ab).[26] Moreover, the surprisingly rising percentage of the debt which still remains (fifty… eighty: Lk 16:6f.7g) probably further illustrates the Pauline idea of the lasting value of the law (Gal 3:21ab). The same Lucan idea of a gracefully reduced, but not entirely cancelled version of the law reappears in the Acts of the Apostles. In the Lucan account of the so-called Jerusalem council, the Gentile Christian law is similarly presented as a gracefully reduced, but not entirely cancelled version of the Mosaic law (Acts 15:10.19–21.28–29; cf. 21:25).

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[24] *Pace* J.K. Goodrich, "Voluntary Debt Remission," 564.

[25] Cf. D. Landry and B. May, "Honor Restored," 301.

[26] This connection was not taken into due consideration in B. Adamczewski, *Gospel of Luke*, 173.

The subsequent, morally surprising statement that the lord praised the legal manager (οἰκο-νόμος) of injustice (Lk 16:8a)[27] conceptually and linguistically illustrates the subsequent Pauline thought that a law (νόμος) was not given (Gal 3:21c).[28] At this stage of the Lucan story, the internally inconsistent character of the lord, who on the one hand employed a legal manager to keep his property and ordered him to give an account of his management (Lk 16:1–2), but on the other hand praised the manager who was unjust (Lk 16:8a), represents the Lord God, who on the one hand gave the law (Gal 3:19.21a), but on the other hand in fact did not give it (Gal 3:21c).

The subsequent idea of the legal manager making (ποιέω) things prudently (Lk 16:8b) conceptually and linguistically illustrates the subsequent Pauline idea of being able to make alive (ζωο-ποιέω: Gal 3:21de).[29] However, the fact that the legal manager behaved prudently while he was unjust (Lk 16:8ab), an idea which runs contrary to the biblical idea of legal righteousness leading to sapiential prudence and success (cf. Deut 4:6 etc.), illustrates the Pauline thought that the law was not able to give life (Gal 3:21c–e).

The concluding thought that the presumably Gentile sons of this age, with their logic of grace and thankfulness in dealing with similarly minded people of their generation (cf. Lk 16:4–7), are more prudent than the sons of light (Lk 16:8c), so presumably the Jewish adherents of the law (cf. 1QS 1:3–9 etc.),[30] conceptually illustrates the concluding Pauline thought that righteousness in fact does not come from the law (Gal 3:21f).

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[27] Cf. J. Lambrecht, "Response to Garwood P. Anderson," 179; D. Seccombe, "Incongruity," 165–166; F. Mickiewicz, *Ewangelia według św. Łukasza*, vol. 2, 182–183.

[28] This connection, especially its linguistic component, was not taken into consideration in B. Adamczewski, *Gospel of Luke*, 173.

[29] This connection, especially its linguistic component, was likewise not taken into consideration in B. Adamczewski, *Gospel of Luke*, 173.

[30] Cf. W. Bindemann, "Ungerechte," 965–966; F. Mickiewicz, *Ewangelia według św. Łukasza*, vol. 2, 183; M.S. Wróbel, "Eschatological Spirituality," 349.

4. The Function of the Allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* in the Sequential Reworking of Gal 3:19–21 in Lk 16:1–8

In this context, it is possible not only to demonstrate the existence of the allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds*, but also to explain its particular form and its function in the Lucan parable of the unjust manager.

As was argued above, the Lucan image of the legal manager not being strong enough to dig and being ashamed to beg (Lk 16:3de) conceptually illustrates the Pauline statement that the law was added because of, or for the sake of, transgressions (Gal 3:19b). However, it is clear from the context of the Pauline statement that he regarded the law as being in fact useless as concerns giving inheritance (Gal 3:18) and powerless as concerns giving life and righteousness (Gal 3:21). Accordingly, in the Pauline view, although the law was added in relationship to the transgressions, it fails to protect individuals and the society from them.

The allusion to Aristophanes in Lk 16:3de illustrates this ambivalent Pauline idea of the presence of the law, but also its inability to give inheritance, life, and righteousness (Gal 3:19b; cf. 3:18.21). The illustrative function of the allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* explains the Lucan choice of this particular text in the parable concerning the powerlessness of the law. The classical text presents the abuse of the Athenian legal system by the sycophant. In Aristophanes' comedy, the Athenian law is ineffective in promoting moral honesty and legal justice because it permits the immoral sycophant to denounce some distant, ignorant people as transgressors of the law. Therefore, for the educated Hellenistic audience (cf. Lk 1:3), who certainly knew classical Greek plays, Luke could allude to Aristophanes' ironic story about the sycophant, who abused the Athenian law, in order to present in similar terms the Pauline idea of the ineffectiveness of the law in promoting righteousness. The Lucan character of the legal manager, who stated that he was not able to dig, so that he engaged in apparently legal but morally unjust activity (Lk 16:3–7), evokes Aristophanes' character of the sycophant, who likewise stated that he was not able to dig, so that he engaged in apparently legal but morally unjust activity. Accordingly, Luke borrowed into his parable the classical Greek idea of the ineffectiveness of the law against human abuses thereof, and

in this way illustrated the Pauline idea of the ineffectiveness of the law in promoting righteousness.

Moreover, the illustrative function of the allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* explains the Lucan change of the verb in the text which was borrowed from Aristophanes' play. In this classical comedy, the sycophant states that he does not know how to dig (σκάπτειν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι: *Av.* 1432). In the Lucan parable, the legal manager is not strong enough to dig (σκάπτειν οὐκ ἰσχύω: Lk 16:3d). In the context of the reworking of Gal 3:19b in Lk 16:3de, the Lucan change of the verb is understandable. The job of digging does not require any particular knowledge or skills. It rather requires physical strength. Therefore, in order to illustrate the Pauline thought that the law was added because of, or for the sake of, transgressions (Gal 3:19b), but it is in fact powerless as concerns giving inheritance, life, and righteousness (Gal 3:18.21), Luke substituted the classical comic idea of not knowing how to dig (ἐπίσταμαι) with that of not being strong enough to dig (ἰσχύω). The Lucan legal manager, who at this stage of the Lucan story represents Paul being brought up in the law, presumably knows how to dig, but he does not have the strength to dig.

The second part of the manager's utterance, which develops the allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* (Lk 16:3d), states that the legal manager was ashamed to beg (Lk 16:3e). This statement further illustrates the ambivalent Pauline idea of the law being added in relationship to transgressions (Gal 3:19b), but not giving inheritance, life, and righteousness, which are given through promise (Gal 3:18.21). The statement of the legal manager that he was ashamed to beg (Lk 16:3e) presents him as rejecting the logic of grace and thankfulness. In this way, it illustrates the Pauline idea of the law being added in relationship to transgressions (Gal 3:19b), but before the coming of the offspring to whom the promise was made (Gal 3:19cd). Accordingly, together with the linguistic allusion to the text of Aristophanes' comedy (Lk 16:3d), it conveys the ambivalent Pauline idea of the presence of the law, but also its ineffectiveness in giving inheritance, life, and righteousness.

Conclusion

The allusion to Aristophanes' *Birds* plays an important role in the intertextual-illustrative rhetoric of the Lucan parable of the unjust legal manager (Lk 16:1–8). People generally assume that good legal systems promote moral honesty and legal justice. Against this background, the Pauline idea of the presence of the law, but also its ineffectiveness in giving inheritance, life, and righteousness (Gal 3:19b; cf. 3:18.21), is quite difficult to explain. In order to illustrate this Pauline idea in his sequential hypertextual reworking of the Letter to the Galatians, Luke used the allusion to Aristophanes' comedy, which presented the classical Athenian legal system as likewise ineffective against the activity of the morally corrupt legal agent, the sycophant. The Lucan unjust steward not only uses the language of the Athenian sycophant (τί …; σκάπτειν οὐκ …: Lk 16:3d; cf. Aristophanes, *Av.* 1432), but also engages in similar, apparently legal but morally unjust activity. In this way, he questions the effectiveness of the whole legal system in promoting righteousness.

Accordingly, it can be argued that Luke was a well-educated writer, who in his sequentially organized reworking of the Letter to the Galatians creatively illustrated the ambivalent, not easily understandable Pauline idea of the law being ineffective in giving righteousness with the use of a similar idea borrowed from a play of the classical Greek comedist Aristophanes.

Funkcja aluzji do *Ptaków* Arystofanesa w Przypowieści o nieuczciwym rządcy (Łk 16,1–8)

Abstrakt: Aluzja do *Ptaków* Arystofanesa odgrywa ważną rolę w intertekstualno-ilustracyjnej retoryce Łukaszowej przypowieści o nieuczciwym rządcy (Łk 16,1–8). Ludzie zazwyczaj przyjmują, że dobre systemy prawne promują moralną uczciwość i prawną sprawiedliwość. Na tym tle Pawłowa idea obecności Prawa, ale także jego nieskuteczności w promowaniu sprawiedliwości (Ga 3,19b; por. 3,21), jest dość trudna do wyjaśnienia. Aby zobrazować tę Pawłową ideę w sekwencyjnym hipertekstualnym przepracowaniu Listu do Galatów, Łukasz użył aluzji do komedii Arystofanesa, która prezentowała ateński system prawny jako podobnie nieskuteczny wobec działalności moralnie zepsutego donosiciela prawnego: sykofanta. Łukaszowy nieuczciwy rządca nie tylko używa języka ateńskiego sykofanta, ale także podejmuje podobną, pozornie legalną, lecz moralnie niesprawiedliwą działalność, kwestionując w ten sposób skuteczność całego system prawnego w promowaniu sprawiedliwości. Przepracowanie

sekwencji Pawłowych idei wyjaśnia znaczenie enigmatycznej przypowieści o nieuczciwym rządcy (Łk 16,1–8).

Słowa kluczowe: Ewangelia według św. Łukasza, Arystofanes, List do Galatów, prawo, łaska, intertekstualizm

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