The Samaritan ‘brought him to an inn’: Revisiting πανδοχεῖον in Luke 10:34

Introduction

It is all about the Samaritan

The interpretation of the parable of the Samaritan is well presented in parable research. In most interpretations, the focus of interpretation is on the actions of the Samaritan (Lk 10:33–35) vis-à-vis the actions of the priest and Levite (see Lk 10:31 and 32, respectively); the Samaritan, a bad character, surprisingly turns out to be the hero of the story. As a consequence of this focus, the ‘meaning’ or ‘moral’ of the parable is also found in the actions and character of the Samaritan. Crossan’s (2012:59–64) interpretation is more or less representative of this ‘stock interpretation’: within its cultural, social, political and religious context, the parable is about ‘good’ people (Levite and priest) who fail to help, and one of the ‘bad’ people (a Samaritan) who helps. In the parable, bad turns into good – ‘a cultural paradox, a social contradiction in terms’ (Crossan 2012:60).

Because of this focus in the interpretation of the parable, and its consequential meaning, not many interpreters have focused on two other aspects of the parable, namely, the inn and the innkeeper (respectively Lk 10:33 and 34–35; see Longenecker 2009:427; Oakman 2008:173). In most cases, because of the focus on the Samaritan, nothing is made of the inn to which the wounded man is taken, as is the case with the innkeeper in whose care the wounded man is left. For many, the inn and the figure of the innkeeper simply do not play any role in the meaning of the parable.

It is also about the inn and innkeeper

In a few cases, some interpreters of the Samaritan give attention to the inn and innkeeper in the parable, either believing that these two aspects of the parable do not play a role in the meaning of the parable, and if they do, the role of the inn and innkeeper is to highlight the actions of the Samaritan. Scott (1989:200, n. 53), for example, states that innkeepers were not well noted for exemplary behaviour, but makes nothing of this remark in his interpretation of the parable. Snodgrass (2008:347), as a second example, states that although inns were dangerous places, few options existed for travellers who needed lodging. Travellers, including Jews (including scrupulous Jews), therefore frequently stayed in inns. These remarks, however, play no role in his interpretation of the parable. Blomberg (2012:296) mentions that innkeepers were often nefarious.
characters and links this trait of innkeepers to the surprising care lavished on the victim by the Samaritan. Donahue (1988:133), in his interpretation of the exceptional actions of the Samaritan, refers to a law of the time which stated that a person with an unpaid debt could be enslaved until the debt was paid. This, he argues, was the situation of the injured man when left behind at the mercy of an innkeeper, ‘a profession that had a bad reputation in antiquity for dishonesty and violence’ (Donahue 1988:133). However, by entering into a contract with the innkeeper to pay for the other bills the injured man may incur, the Samaritan assures his freedom and independence. Thus, again, the focus is on the good Samaritan, this time in relation to a ‘bad’ innkeeper (see also McCracken 1994:138).

A few interpreters of the parable, however, believe that the inn and innkeeper in the parable, as tropes of the negative, play an important role in the intended meaning of the parable. According to Zimmermann (2015:310–312; see also Zimmermann 2007:545–546), the importance of the inn and innkeeper with regard to the meaning of the parable lies in what we ‘know about this individual and institution in antiquity’ (Zimmermann 2015:310). In Hellenistic-Roman ancient times, Zimmerman argues, two different kinds of inns existed: non-commercial inns (known as κατάλυμα) and commercial inns (known as πανδοχεῖα). The first kind (a κατάλυμα), according to Zimmermann, was based on the obligation of hospitality, while the commercial kind (a πανδοχεῖα) carried a bad reputation because it was considered dishonourable to take money from a guest. In addition, persons who frequently commercial inns almost exclusively came from the lower classes, commercial inns had no hosts of their own (which influenced the standards of manners at these inns) and female employees of these inns, as a normalcy, fulfilled the sexual wishes of guests. Because of this, inkeeping was seen as a despised occupation, almost always practised by non-Jews. Based on this distinction, Zimmermann argues that the inn referred to in the parable is of the commercial kind; the inn and the innkeeper are, respectively, referred to as a πανδοχεῖα (Lk 10:34) and a πανδοχεῖον (Lk 10:35) and there is an emphasis on payment by the Samaritan. These aspects of the parable, Zimmermann concludes, have an important bearing on the meaning of the parable. Not only is a Samaritan (a foreigner, unbeliever and idolater from a Jewish perspective; see Zimmermann 2015:309) depicted as one who exemplifies the fulfilment of the Torah law of the love of one’s fellow man, but also, of all people, a despised non-Jewish innkeeper.

Oakman (2008:175–177), like Zimmermann, portrays commercial (public) inns in a negative light. Public inns, according to Oakman (2008:175, citing Stählin 1967:19, n. 135), were notorious in the ancient world for being ‘primitive, dirty and noisy’, and ‘innkeepers were not noted for their humanitarian sentiments’ (Oakman 2008:175, citing Danker). As support for his point of view, Oakman lists Strabo (Geogr. 12.8.17) and Philo (QG4.33), Papyrus Egerton 2:1,15 m. ‘Abodah Zarah 2:1,16 b. Teranit 21a17 and m. Yebamot 16.7,18 all texts that paint inns, innkeepers and people staying in inns in a negative light. How does this relate, for Oakman, to the meaning of the parable? More or less the same as for Zimmermann: The kingdom is found in immoral places, and in the actions of a hated foreigner.

Longenecker (2009:427) also believes that the figure of the innkeeper in the past has been overlooked in the interpretation of the parable. Although not abundant, he further believes that the evidence illustrating common attitudes to innkeepers in the ancient world is not negligible as it ‘is virtually unswerving in depicting innkeepers as widely known to be morally dubious and not to be trusted’ (Longenecker 2009:430). As evidence for this negative depiction of innkeepers, he cites Plato (Leg. 11.918), Josephus (A.J. 3.276) and m. ‘Abodah Zarah 2:1.14 To this evidence, in using the work done by Casson on travel in the ancient world, he adds an inscription found in an inn in Pompeii, criticising an innkeeper for watering down his wine too much, and a remark made by the 2nd-century physician Galen that he knows innkeepers who have been caught selling human flesh as pork (see Casson 1994:214–215). How does this negative depiction of innkeepers in the ancient world contribute to the meaning of the parable, according to Longenecker (2009)? In the parable:

the innkeeper is one who notably steps out of caricature, just as the Samaritan steps out of caricature throughout 10:33-35.

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5. It is important to note that both Blomberg and Donahue, in their descriptions of innkeepers, provide no evidence for their negative depiction of the trait of inkeeping.

6. As evidence, Zimmermann (2015:311) cites a list of most despised professions from the poet Valerius Martialis, in which the innkeeper is named last.

7. Important to note here is that Stählin does not provide any evidence for this evaluation of public inns, except for a reference to Egerton 2:1 (see ed. Miller 2010:417).

8. ‘Carura forms a boundary between Phrygia and Caria. It is a village, and it has inns, and also fountains of boiling-hot waters, some in the Maeander River and some above its banks. Moreover, it is said that once, when a brothel-keeper had taken lodging in the inn (ἐν τῷ κατάλυμα) along with a large number of women, an earthquake took place by night, and that he, together with all the women, disappeared from sight’ (Strabo, Geogr. 12.8.17:4–6 [Jones, LCL]).

9. But he who is unlike this [i.e. unlike the wise man] does not have even his own house or a mind of his own but is confused and is treated contemptuously like those who, as it were, enter an inn (πανδοχεῖα) only to fill themselves and vomit in their passions (transl. of Marcus [LCL], quoted by Royse 1981:193).

10. Just then a leper comes up to him and says, ‘Teacher Jesus, in wandering around with lepers and eating with them in the inn (ἐν τῷ κατάλυμα), I became a leper myself. If you want to I’ll be made’ (Papyrus Egerton 2:1).

11. Cattle may not be left in the inns of the gentiles since they are suspected of shedding blood (m. ‘Abodah Zarah 2:1; see Danby 2011:439).

12. Once the Jews desired to send to the Emperor a gift and after discussing who should go they decided that Nahum of Gamzu should go because he had experienced many miracles. They sent with him a bag full of precious stones and pearls. He went and spent the night in a certain inn and during the night the people in the inn arose and emptied the bag and filled it up with earth (b. Teranit 21a, transl. by Soncino 5:105).

13. Once certain Levites went to Zoar, the City of Palms, and one of them fell sick by night, and that he, together with all the women, disappeared from sight’ (Strabo, Geogr. 12.8.17:4–6 [Jones, LCL]).

14. For the latter, see note 11. The reference to Plato and Josephus, which indeed pictures innkeepers in a negative light, is discussed below.

15. ‘May you soon, swindling innkeeper, feel the anger divine, you who sell people water and yourself drink pure wine’ (see Casson 1994:214).
As one with ‘a bad reputation … for dishonesty and violence’ (so Donahue), the innkeeper of the Samaritan story shows himself to be ‘good’, like the ‘good Samaritan’ himself. (p. 443)

From the above, it is clear that a case is made for reintroducing the institution of the inn and the trait of innkeeper – as negative tropes – as important aspects that contribute to the intended meaning of the parable of the Samaritan. The question is, however, whether we have literary evidence to differentiate between non-commercial inns (κατάλυματα), based on the obligation of hospitality, and commercial inns (πανδοχεῖα), based on payment for services rendered. Do we have convincing literary evidence that the latter had no hosts of their own, were almost always run by non-Jews, were dangerous places, primitive, dirty and noisy, that persons who frequented these inns came almost exclusively from the lower classes and that it always was the case at all these inns that female employees offered sexual favours as services? Also, do we have convincing literary evidence that innkeepers always were dishonest and violent, morally dubious and not to be trusted, never behaved in an exemplary manner, were nefarious characters, always tried to exploit their clientele and not noted for their humanitarian sentiments? In brief, is the literary evidence we have virtually unswerving in depicting inns and innkeepers in a negative light?

In an attempt to answer these questions, attention will first be given to a lexical study of the occurrences of κατάλυμα and πανδοχεῖον (and their derivatives) in available Roman-Egypt papyri, the LXX, early-Jewish literature and the works of Greek writers. Then, the evidence used by Zimmermann, Oakman and Longenecker to depict inns and innkeepers in an exclusively negative manner will critically be discussed. The article will conclude by engaging with the suggestion of Zimmermann, Oakman and Longenecker that these individuals and institutions carried in Hellenistic-Roman ancient times, should play a prominent role in the interpretation of the parable under discussion.

Κατάλυμα: Lexical study and possible meanings

Κατάλυμα in extant Roman-Egypt papyri

In extant papyri, dated from 275 BCE to 138 CE, there are 26 occurrences of κατάλυμα and its derivatives, of which one, SB 15249 (dated 199–100 BCE; origin unknown)16, is too fragmented to derive any meaning from καταλυμάτων used in the text. For the rest of the occurrences, it seems that κατάλυμα and its derivatives are used to refer to lodging as hospitality, lodging provided for free, lodging paid for, a dwelling or house, a room or quarter in a dwelling or house, or a stable for animals.

Katálýma, first, is used in extant papyri in reference to the organising or supplying of lodging for someone. P.Cair.Zen. II 59205 (dated 255–254 BCE; origin Kharabet el Gerza [ancient Philadelphia]) contains a fragment of a letter addressed to Zenon. The writer of the letter earlier wrote to Kriton, asking him to obtain lodging for him in Philadelphia and help his messenger, Herakleides, in some or other way. But, as he may have arrived in Philadelphia before Kriton, he now sends Zenon a copy of his earlier letter to Kriton, asking him to be kind enough to provide the lodging at once. In both cases, the lodging to be provided for is being referred to as καταλυμάτων.17 In P.Cair.Zen II 59254 (dated 252 BCE; origin ancient Philadelphia), in a letter from Phanias to Zenon, Phanias informs Zenon that he is coming to Philadelphia to review all the recruits who have received allotments in the Arsinoite nome and administer the oath to them. In preparation for the trip, he asks Zenon that lodging be prepared for him, as he is in poor health and would like to be with Zenon as long as possible. Again, the lodging to be prepared is described as καταλυμάτων:

κάλας οὖν ποιήσας καταλυμάτων μου ἐπομένας τόν γὰρ σωμίτοι εἴτερον ἀθελώνς διακισσόμενος. Thus you must prepare suitable lodging for me for a weak body state (sickness) he have taken. (P.Cair.Zen. II 59254, 3–4)

In P.Cair.Zen. II 5924, in a letter from Apollonios to Zenon (dated 23 May 254 BCE; origin unknown), [καταλύματα carries the same meaning. In the letter, Zenon is instructed by Apollonios to personally show Peton, the chremastis (i.e. a businessman, money-getter or trafficker), the room (καταλύματα) prepared for him in which he will stay for one day, while attending to the case between Hephaistiados and Amenneos. Zenon must also attend to all other needs that Peton may have during his one-day stay.18 The same meaning of κατάλυμα occurs in PSI IV 341 (dated 256 BCE; origin unknown). In a letter addressed to Zenon, Apollophanes and Demetrios, brothers and wool weavers, inform Zenon that they are willing to come to Philadelphia to make same items requested by Zenon, most probably in an earlier letter in which they were invited to come to Philadelphia. In their reply to this earlier invite, they also declare themselves willing to teach others in the trade of wool weaving. For this, they need a place to stay and work. They therefore request Zenon to arrange with Nikias to organise lodging (κατάλυμα; see PSI IV 341.8) for them. The use of καταλυμάτων

16.58 1.5249.1–6 reads as follows:
1. [ -ca.?] γράφω [ -ca.?] 
2. [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
3. [ -ca.?] καταλυμάτων καὶ [ -ca.?] 
4. [ -ca.?] τινὶς Λεοντείδειας [ -ca.?] 
5. [ -ca.?] ὡς ἐκτητοῖς γράφω [ -ca.?] 
6. [ -ca.?] 
7. The texts of the papyri cited and discussed in this article are all taken from www. papyri.info. All translations offered are those of the authors.

17. P.Cair.Zen. II 59205, 1–7 reads as follows:
1. [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] ή ἡγεμονία κατὰ τῶν διακοινωνών [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
2. [ -ca.?] ποιησθῶν τίμιον αὐτὸν ἐπομένως [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
3. [ -ca.?] [κατα] λυμάτων σκόπων [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
4. [ -ca.?] ἐρωτᾶτο [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
5. [ -ca.?] λοιπὰ ἢν καταλυμάτων ἢ [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
6. [κατα] λυμάτων ἐμὸς [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
7. Φιλαξελεύρτων καταλύματα [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
8. [κατα] λυμάτων ἐμὸς [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
9. [κατα] λυμάτων ἐμὸς [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 
10. [κατα] λυμάτων ἐμὸς [ -ca.?] [ -ca.?] 

18. See P.Cair.Zen. II 5924.1–6 that reads as follows:
1. Ἀπολλώνιος ἄργους ἁγιόν ὄς ἐλέει παραβύπτων
2. Πέτον ὁ χρηστικός, παραβύπτων ἄργους
3. [καταλύματα] παρὶ ὡς καὶ τὸ ἀνέβαινες διὰ τίς ξενίας μίαν ἡμέρας διακοίνωσα γιὰ τὸν τῷ Εὐσταθίῳ
4. λοιπὰ καὶ Αμεννέως κόθος ἐν ἑαυτῷ
5. [κατα] λύματα παρὰ πάντα ἐν ἑαυτῷ

From Apollonios to Zenon greetings. As soon as he had arrived, Peton the chromastis, you must show with your own hands to him the provision quarters among you and give to him what is bidding for one day. For after hearing the case from Hephaistiados and Ammenes immediately he will return to us.
in SB VI 9564.8 also seems to carry the meaning of the provision of lodging. SB VI 9564 (dated 100–1 BCE; origin unknown) is a letter of recommendation for a priest in Tebtunis with regard to undertaking anti-Semitism in Memphis. In the letter, Herakles requests Ptolemaios, the dioiketes of Memphis, to find out what the situation is of a priest from Tebtunis. Recently, Memphis has been ‘nauseated by Jews’ (βεβλησθοντας ιουδαιους; see SB VI 9564.9), and because of this Herakles was worried about the priest. He thus asks Ptolemaios, as he earlier did for Artemidoros, to find out how the priest was doing, to make sure he was safe, and to furnish him with the same lodging (καταλύματι) as earlier. P.Cair.Zen. III 59410 (dated 275–226 BCE; origin ancient Philadelphia) also renders καταλύματος as lodging (see P.Cair.Zen. III 59410.5 and 10). Addressed to Zenon, the document seems to be a petition from a group of farmers in Psy representing the landowners wanting better accommodation. The reason for their complaint is most probably the fact that they were staying in a σταθμός (stable; see P.Tebt. III 1.804; P.Tebt. III 1.820).

We have, in terms of papyrological evidence, also three occurrences of καταλύματος that, in all cases, link the provision of lodging with payment. P. Petr. III 21 D (dated 27 August 225 BCE; origin Krokdoliopolis in the Arsinoite nome) has as content records of legal decisions in which peaceful settlements between parties, as ordered by the judge, are noted. In one case, Nikanor Diodoros is instructed to pay Hermogenes from the amount of 225 drachmae for lodging (καταλύματος) provided (see P. Petr. III 21 D.14–15). The second instance of καταλύματος occurs in Stud. Pal. II 3 (dated 217 BCE; origin Soknopaiou Nesos in the Arsinoite nome), reference is made to a dwelling (καταλύματος) belonging to the unknown writer of the letter that was offered for lodging for a price of 400 silver drachmae.

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Interestingly, κατάλυμα and its derivatives are also used in two cases in available papyri to describe the living or sleeping quarters as part of a house or dwelling. P.Bas. 7 (dated 138 CE; place of origin the Arsinoites nome in Egypt) has as content a loan agreement between Tapiomis Ephychonchos and Pakysis, son of Satabous. Pakysis has lent Tapiomis the sum of two thousand one hundred drachmas, with the interest rate of a drachma on the mina. The security for the loan provided by Tapiomis is a house located in Phamemoth, a village in the Arsinoites nome. The house is described as ‘οίκημα καταλύμα τοῦ ἐν σκεύη τῆς ἁγίας [και χαίρεται] καταλύματος’ (P. Bas. 7.8), which can be translated as ‘a house and courtyard, and two quarters and two courtyards each in the middle’. In P.Cair. Zen. V 99847 (dated 275–226 BCE; origin Philadelphia in the Arsinoites nome), a document in which an estimate is given

http://www.hts.org.za
of what it will cost to paint 38 windows of a house, χαταλύματι is used in reference to the windows in the king’s quarters:

1. ἐν τοίς χαταλύματι τοῖς βασιλέως τὰς θυρίδας τὰς ἐν τοῖς παροίχοις τοῖς χώσις σκηνοφόρας καὶ τὰς εἰς τὴν καταλύματι κυρίος ἐγένετο.

2. In the LXX, κατάλυμα is also used to refer to a room or hall adjacent to or in close proximity to a ‘high place’, most probably the local sanctuary of a town, referred to in the LXX as a Βαμα (see LXX 1 Sm 9:12; 13, 14, 19, 25; 10:5; 11:8; 1 Chr 16:39; 21:29; 2 Chr 1:13). In 1 Samuel 9, Saul and his servant went to a town in the district of Zuph, looking for a seer. In the town they met up with Samuel, who was visiting the town to attend to the sacrifice on the ‘high place’, whereafter he would eat with some invited guests. When Samuel met up with Saul, he invited Saul and his servant to go with him to the ‘high place’. On arrival, Samuel then took them to the κατάλυμα (1 Sm 9:22 LXX) to eat with 70 others who were invited. In this context, κατάλυμα most probably refers to a room or hall in close proximity to the local sanctuary (‘high place’) in which a meal was eaten after the bringing of a sacrifice.

In Exodus 15:13 LXX, κατάλυμα is used as reference to the temple in Jerusalem. Exodus 15:1–18 is a song that Moses and the Israelites sang to the Lord after he led them out of Egypt. In the song, Egypt, as a place of slavery, is contrasted with the place God is leading them to, described by Exodus 15:13 as κατάλυμα ἀγνῶν σου (your holy dwelling). From Exodus 15:17, where reference is made to God’s mountain of inheritance (ὁρός κληρονομιάς; Ex 15:17), dwelling (καταλύματι) and sanctuary (ἀγίασμα), it can be deduced that the referent of κατάλυμα ἀγνῶν σου here most probably is the temple in Jerusalem.23 The use of καταλύματον in 1 Chronicles 28:12 LXX also relates to the temple, referring to the divisions of the priests and the Levites in the temple David was to build for the Lord. Κατάλυμα, moreover, are also used to describe the dwelling place of God before the temple was build. In 2 Samuel 7:6 LXX, the dwelling place of God is described as ‘ἐν καταλύματι καὶ σκηνῇ’, and in 1 Chronicles 17:5 LXX as ‘ἐν σκηνῇ καὶ ἐν καταλύματι’.

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Jeremiah LXX has three occurrences of κατάλυμα and its derivatives. Jeremiah 32:38 LXX uses κατάλυμα to refer to the lair of a lion,24 and in Jeremiah 40:12 LXX it is used to describe the places where shepherds let their flocks lie down to rest.25 In Jeremiah 14:8 LXX, κατάλυμα is used as a description of God’s absence. In contrast, 1 Maccabees 3:45 speaks of the presence of non-Jews in the sanctuary of the temple, referring to it as ‘ἐν τῇ ἅγιᾳ καταλύματι τοῖς ἱδόνοις’ (1 Macc. 3:45).

In Sirach 14:25, finally, κατάλυμα carries yet another meaning. According to Sirach, the man who mediates in wisdom is someone who pitches his tent close to her (wisdom), someone who lodges in a place (καταλύματι; Sirach 14:25) where he will experience good things and dwell in her glory.

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22. See also Odes 1:13-19: ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ καταλύματι συνιστήσαντι ἡγήμας κυρίου καὶ οὕτως αὐτῶν ὑποκείτον (Ex 4:24).
23. See also Odes 1:13-19: ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ καταλύματι συνιστήσαντι ἡγήμας κυρίου καὶ οὕτως αὐτῶν ὑποκείτον (Ex 4:24).
24. ἐκκατάλυσεν ὅπερ λαόν καταλύματα αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἐγένετο ἡ γῆ αὐτῶν εἰς ἄβατον ὑπὸ προσώπων τῆς μεθόριας τῆς μεγίστης (Mt 2:38 LXX).
25. Ῥήματα κτῆσιν τῶν ἁγίων ἔσται ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ τῷ ἁγίῳ παρὰ τῷ ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ καταλύματι καὶ κήπῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ τῇ ἁγίᾳ καταλύματι καταλύματι κήπῳ ἐν τῷ τῇ ἁγίᾳ καταλύματι κήπῳ (Jo 1:42 LXX).
We have one occurrence of κατάλυμα and its derivatives in early-Jewish writings. The Letter of Aristeas (also known as Aristes to Philocrates, dated 170 BCE)25 is dedicated to Philocrates and has as content the events surrounding the efforts of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 BCE) to have the laws of the Jews translated for his library. For this, he selects Aristeas to request the high priest, Eleazar, to send a body of scholars to translate their sacred scriptures into Greek (see Let. Aris. 1–8). When the translators arrive, Ptolemy orders to have them accommodated in the best apartments near the citadel (κατάλυμα… tà kàllista plèrion tôn àkrôn), thus showing them great hospitality.

Between Polybius and Diodorus Siculus, two Greek historians, κατάλυμα and its derivatives are used six times. In his Historae (written between 146 and 117 BCE), Polybius uses κατάλυμα as a reference to lodging expected and not provided,26 and as a reference to someone’s (that of Hasdrubal) house.27 Diodorus Siculus, in his Bibliotheca Historica (dated 36–30 BCE), uses the term and its derivatives four times. In one instance, κατάλυμα is used, like Polybius, to refer to someone’s house (see Diodorus Siculus, Bib. His. 37.27.1.8).28 The three other occurrences all refer to lodging provided as an act of hospitality, that is, free lodging (see Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 14.93.5.4,31 31.18.2.5,32 36.13.2.3)33.

Plato, finally, in his Protagoras 315D, refers to an apartment previously used by Hippocrates as a strong-room, that was cleared out by Callias and turned into a guestroom to make more space for his numerous visitors.34

Πανδοχεῖον: Lexical study and possible meanings

The LXX has no occurrence of πανδοχεῖον, and it occurs only once in extant Roman-Egypt papyri in the form of πανδοκουστά. This occurrence in the papyri comes from BGU VI 1468 (dated 2nd century BCE, origin unknown), a fragmented document which reads ‘τὸς -ας ᾿ανδοκουστά’ in line 3. This line can be translated as ‘the innkeepers’, from which nothing really can be derived except for the fact that innkeeping was a known trade in Roman Egypt.

Πανδοχεῖον in early-Jewish and Greek writings

In early-Jewish literature, Josephus refers to inns once. In a section on the laws which Moses prescribed, priests were submitted to a double degree of purity: they were not allowed to marry harlots, slaves, captives or those who made their living by cheating trades such as keeping inns (πανδοκουστά; see Josephus, AJ: 3.276). This is a clear negative reference to the trade of innkeeping.

Πανδοχεῖον and its derivatives occur several times in the work of Greek writers. Aeschines, in De falsa legatione 2.97, tells of the Athenian embassy that went to see Philip, of which nobody wanted to lodge with Demosthenes at the same inn (ἐξεποίησεν ἡπτάοικον ἑτέρας καταλύματα). Translation is from Polybius, Historae 32.13.4–1 (Paton, LCL).

30. Bibliotheca Historica 37.27.1.6–10 reads as follows: ἐπεμψαν τοὺς ἄρτοις διὰ δικαστήριον — ἐπόπευσεν τῷ τῶν Ἕλληνων ἐπιστασίων ἐρωτημάτων ἐπεμψαν τῷ τῶν Ἕλληνων ἐπιστασίων ἐρωτήματι. (Consequently the Roman people, when they learned of this generous act of Timasitheus, honoured him at once by conferring the right to public hospitality, and one hundred and thirty-seven years later, when they took Lipara from the Carthaginians, they relieved the descendants of Timasitheus of the payment of taxes and gave them freedom). Translation is from Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 37.27.1.6–10 (Walton, LCL).

31. Bibliotheca Historica 14.93.5.1–8 reads as follows: ὅπερ ὁ δήμιος τῶν Ῥωμαίων σεβάστως τῆς τοῦ Τιμασιθέου καταλύματος, παραχώρημα αὐτοῦ εἴτε δημόσιον ἐκεῖνο καταλύματα, καὶ μετὰ τοῦ ἐκείνου Ἐκκενώσας τοῦ τῆς ἐπιστασίας τὰς ἐπιστασίας οἱ Τιμισιθέους τῶν τοὺς ἐπιστασίας ἐπιστασίων ἐπιστασίων ἐπιστασίων (Consequently, they sent to his lodgings some embassy’s previous visit to Philip. 30. The same neutral reference to inns (πανδοχεῖον and πανδοχεῖον) and innkeepers (πανδοχεῖοι) occurs in Aesop’s Fabulae 301.1, 17 and 26, known as ‘The thief and the innkeeper’ (see Lenaghan 1967). Dionysius Halicarnassensis also has one reference to inns that seems to be neutral. In describing the city Gabii, he refers to its inns (πανδοχεῖα) that, when the city was still inhabited, were situated next to the highway (see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ant. rom. 4.53.1.6 [Cary, LCL]).

Some Greek writers, contrary to Josephus, refer to inns and innkeepers in a positive way. Polybius, in his Historiae 2.15.5–6, describes the last plain of Italy to the north, and refers not only to the abundance of food produced by this plain but also how cheap food and all other articles in this


dημώρων Αλκιών Πανδοχείων. [After he had spoken to the people from the rostra, and filled the people with religious awe, he was honoured with public lodgings and hospitality: but he was forbidden to wear the crown by Aulus Pompeius, a tribune of the people]. Translation is from Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 36.13.2.1–6 (Walton, LCL).

34. See Plato, Protagoras 315D.1–4: ‘γὰρ ὁ ἄρης καὶ Πρόδικος ὁ Κέλας— δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἐξ ἔκκενωσίας τοῦ τῶν ποιητικῶν τῶν ἑλληνικῶν τῶν ἑλληνικῶν ποιητικῶν τῶν ἑλληνικῶν ποιητικῶν ποιητικῶν ποιητικῶν… [ he was in a certain apartment formerly used by Hippocrates as a strong-room, but now cleared out by Callias to make more space for his numerous visitors, and turned into a guest-chamber]. Translation is from Plato, Protagoras 315D.1–4 (Lamb, LCL).

35. See also Demosthenes, in his De falsa Legatione 158.7, who refers to the hospitality (πανδοχεία) in Pherece in front of the Temple of the Twins.
region are. This is also the case with inns in the region; innkeepers, as a rule, provide their guests with everything they need at a fourth part of an obol per day, not charging for items and services individually.36 Aeschylus, in his Choephoroi 660–674, also gives a positive description of inns, describing them as houses that make all visitors welcome (δ’ ἐμπόροις καθώς ἄγκυραν ἐν δόμῳ πανδόκοις ἔννοιο; Aeschylus, Cho. 661–662). These places (inns) are then described as having hot baths, good bedding and the company of honest faces (see Aeschylus, Cho. 669–672 [Sommerstein, LCL]). Apart from two neutral references to inns,37 Epictetus, when discussing the faculty of moral purpose, argues that a moral purpose is something that has to be developed and deepened on a regular basis. One’s moral purpose in life, he argues, must always look for the right purpose; when this is set, a man becomes good (see Epictetus, Diatr. 2.23.36 [Oldfather, LCL]). A man becomes bad, however, when he thinks his moral compass is set. No good man, Epictetus argues, when traveling to his country stays at a good inn, and because he is pleased with the inn, he decides to stay there (καὶ διδόντων πανδόκοις καλῶν ἀρέσκαντος αὐτῷ τὸν πανδοκεύμα τῶν ἐν τῷ πανδόκειον) (see Epictetus, Diatr. 2.23.36 [Oldfather, LCL]).

36. See Polybios, Historiae 2.15.5–6: ποιεῖται γὰρ τῆς καταλύματος οἱ διδόντες την χάριν ἐν ταῖς πανδοκεῖσι, οἱ συμφοροῦντες παρ’ την καταλύσιμον, ἀλλ’ ἐρωτήσαντες πόσον τὸν ἄνθρωπον δέχεται. Ἡ θυσία τὸν οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸ πόλον παρείναι τοῖς καταλύμασις οἱ πανδοκεύτες, οἱ ἐκάστι πάντι ἔχον τὰ χρήματα, ἐπισνοοῦτοι τῶν δ’ ἐκ τετάρτου μέρος ἀμβολοῦ: σπανίως δὲ τοιαύτη ἐπισφένδυμα. [The cheapness and abundance of all articles of food will be most clearly understood from the following. Travelers in this country who put up in inns, do not bargain for each separate article, but ask what the charge per diem for one person. The innkeepers, as a rule, agree to receive guests, providing them with enough of all they require for half as per diem, i.e. the fourth part of an obol, the charge being very seldom higher]. Translation is from Polybios, Historiae 2.15.5–6 (Paton, LCL).

37. In his Diatribai, Epictetus uses the example of a bed in an inn as the property of an innkeeper (καταλύτας εἰς τὰ πανδοκεῖα, ἐν τὰ πανδοκεῖα, ἐν τὰ πανδοκεῖα; Epictetus, Diatr. 1.24.141) as something you possess and simultaneously not possess, and property such as a house, a tavern (πανδοκεία; Epictetus, Diatr. 4.45.15 [Oldfather, LCL]) and slaves, which one should rather wish to loose than morals such as gentleness, generosity and patience. The reference to inns here is clearly neutral.

38. See Leges 8.842.2–6: μὴν γὰρ καὶ ἐμποροῖς καὶ καταλυτοῖς καὶ πανδοκεῖσι καὶ τεκνισμοῖς καὶ τεμπελαίοις καὶ ἐποτισμοῖς τῶν καὶ ἄλλων μερίων τυντοῦ τοῖς κόσεῖς. [For the lawyer of our State is rid, for the most part, of shipping and merchandise and peddling and inn-keeping and customs and mines and loans and usury, and countless matters of a like kind]. Translation is taken from Plato, Leges 8.842.2–6 (Bury, LCL).

39. In Respublica 9.580.4–5, Plato also uses πανδοκεῖον, but in this case it is used figuratively, referring to someone who hosts (πανδοκεῖον) ‘evil’ (see Plato, Resp. 9.580.4–5 [Emlyn-Jones & Preddy, LCL]).
the local sanctuary of a town (1 Sm 9:12; 13, 14, 19, 25; 10:5; 11:8; 1 Chr 16:39; 21:29; 2 Chr 1:13), the lair of a lion (Jr 32:38), the places where shepherds let their flocks lie down to rest (Jr 40:12) and as description of God’s absence (Jr 14:8). In 1 Maccabees 3:45, it carries the meaning of the presence of non-Jews in the sanctuary of the temple, and in Sirach 14:25 it is used to describe the lodging of a wise man in a place close to wisdom.

In the early-Jewish writings, κατάλυμα is used once in the Letter of Aristeas 1–8, with the clear meaning of free lodging provided as an act of hospitality. This is also the case with Diodorus Siculus, who uses κατάλυμα three times in this context (see Bib. Hist. 14:93.5.4: 31.18.2.5; 36.13.2) and Polybius and Plato each once (see Polybius, Hist. 2.36.1–5; Plato Prot. 315D). Both Polybius and Diodorus Siculus also use κατάλυμα once to refer to a house (see Polybius, Hist. 2.36.1–5; Diodorus Siculus, Bib. Hist. 37.27.1.8). Polybius (Hist. 32.13.1–4), finally, uses κατάλυμα to refer to free lodging expected, but not provided.

With regard to the use of πανδοχεῖον, we have seen that it occurs only once in extant Roman-Egypt papyri in the form of πανδοκευτρίας as a reference to innkeepers. In Josephus, there is one reference to innkeepers (πανδοκευτρία; see Josephus, A.J. 3.276), where the trade is described as a way to make a living through cheating.

Plato (Leg. 8.842d4, 11.918) and Aeneas Tacticus (Pol. 10.9), like Josephus, refer to innkeepers in a negative way. According to Plato, innkeeping is a despised trade, and Aeneas Tacticus questions the integrity of innkeepers because they take in persons with suspect backgrounds or persons known for suspicious behaviour. Aristophanes, in his turn, describes inns in a negative way. For him, all inns have bugs (Ran. 114–115). Note, however, that he distinguishes between brothels (πορνεῖα) and inns (πανδοκοκτρίας).

Several Greek writers refer to inns in a non-pejorative or neutral way (see Aeschines, Fals. Leg. 2.97; Aesop, Fab. 301, 17, 26; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ant. rom. 4.53.1.6; Epicetetus, Diatr. 1.24.14; 4.5.15; Strabo, Geogr. 5.3.9.15), while others refer to inns and innkeepers in a positive way. Polybius mentions the good service rendered by innkeepers in inns in some regions of Italy (see Polybius, Hist. 2.15.5–6), as is the description of Aeschylus (Cho. 669–674); inns make all visitors feel welcome, have hot baths, good bedding and the company of honest faces. Epicetetus, in his turn, states that a traveller sometimes stays at a good inn, and because he is pleased with the inn, he decides to stay there (Epicetetus, Diatr. 2.23.36). According to Epicetetus, no good man does this. The good man rather remembers that he is always travelling and therefore will find many more refined inns (Epicetetus, Diatr. 2.23.37).

Two references to inns, finally, are difficult to categorise as neutral, positive or negative. Aristophanes, in Ranæ 550, tells about a villain who once ate 16 loaves in an inn, and Strabo relates the story of an owner of a brothel who once took his girls to an inn, and that during the night he and all the women were overwhelmed by an earthquake and disappeared (see Strabo, Geogr. 12.8.17.4–6). Does a villain who ate 16 loaves in an inn make inns bad in principle? And when an owner of a brothel takes his girls to an inn, does it mean that all inns are equal to brothels, frequented by prostitutes?

Revisiting πανδοχεῖον in Luke 10:34

The study of the lexical use of κατάλυμα in available literature seems to indicate that we do not have enough evidence to make a clear-cut distinction between non-commercial inns (κατάλυμα), based on the obligation of hospitality, and commercial inns (πανδοχεῖον), based on payment for services rendered. Κατάλυμα, first, carries several different meanings in available papyri, the LXX, and the writings of Greek historians (e.g. a dwelling or house, a room or quarter, a stable for animals, the temple and divisions in the temple, the dwelling place of God before the temple was built, a room or hall adjacent to a sanctuary, the lair of a lion or resting place for sheep, or a description of God’s absence). Second, κατάλυμα is used to refer to lodging paid for, that is, in Zimmermann’s terms, a commercial inn (πανδοχεῖον). It is also used, in the third place, to refer to lodging provided for free, but not as an act of hospitality. Κατάλυμα, finally, indeed is also used to refer to accommodation provided as an act of hospitality in several instances. This meaning of κατάλυμα is attested in extant papyri (PCair.Zen II 59254, PCair.Zen. II 59204 and SB VI 9564), early-Jewish writings (Let. Aris. 1–8) and in the writings of Diodorus Siculus (Bib. Hist. 14:93.5.4: 31.18.2.5; 36.13.2), Polybius (Hist. 2.36.1–5) and Plato (Prot. 315D).

Does this latter use of κατάλυμα indicate that one of the meanings of κατάλυμα indeed is that of ‘non-commercial inn’, vis-à-vis commercial inns? The recent work of Bailey (2008:28–33) on the meaning of κατάλυμα in Luke 2:7 and Mark 14:14 (and par.)40 answers this question in the negative. According to Bailey, the use of κατάλυμα in Luke 2:7, 22:11, and Mark 14:14 refers to ‘a guest room in a private home’ (Bailey 2008:32; emphasis in the original). Simple village homes in Palestine, Bailey argues, consisted of only one room. This room was divided into an area where the family cooked, ate, slept and lived, and a lower area blocked off with heavy timbers where the family animals slept at night, with mangers normally dug out the lower end of the living room. Some homes often had an extra room exclusively for guests, attached to the end of the house, or situated on the roof (known as a κατάλυμα). This meaning of κατάλυμα, Bailey argues, makes perfect sense in the case of the story of Jesus’ birth in Luke, where Jesus was placed in the manger (in the living room), because the κατάλυμα [i.e. guest room and inn] was full. In Mark 14:14 and Luke 22:11, κατάλυμα carries the same meaning, an upper guest room in which Jesus and his disciples ate the Passover meal. Another good example of...
this use of κατάλυμα is Plato in Protagoras 315 D, where he reports that Callias turned an old storeroom into a guestroom to make more space for his numerous visitors.

It thus seems that κατάλυμα refers to the provision of lodging as an act of hospitality, but not in the sense of being a non-commercial inn. Also, one should remember that it is also used to refer to lodging provided for payment. Катάλυμα carries several meanings, as the available literary evidence suggests. This evidence, however, does not suggest the meaning of non-commercial inn as opposed to a commercial inn (πανδοχεῖον). To pitch the πανδοχεῖον the injured man is taken to in the parable of the Samaritan against a κατάλυμα therefore seems to overstretch an ‘opposition’ that does not really exist.

This conclusion is supported by the above lexical study of πανδοχεῖον and its derivatives. This study of πανδοχεῖον indeed has indicated that we find negative references to inns and innkeepers in available sources. Josephus (A.J. 3.276) describes innkeepers as cheats, Plato (Leg. 8.842d.4, 11.918) describes innkeeping as a despised trade, Aeneas Tacticus (Pol. 10.9) questions the integrity of innkeepers, while Aristophanes (Ran. 114–115) describes inns in a negative way. We do, however, have several non-pejorative or neutral references to inns and innkeepers (Aeschines, Fals. Leg. 2.97; Aesop, Fab. 301.1, 17, 26; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ant. rom. 4.53.1.6; Epictetus, Distr. 1.24.14; 4.5.15; Strabo, Georg. 5.3.9.15), as well as several positive references to inns and innkeepers (see Polybius, Hist. 2.15.5–6; Aeschylus, Cho. 669–674; Epictetus, Distr. 2.23.36–37). The evidence in this regard is virtually not unswerving in depicting innkeepers as widely known to be morally dubious and untrustworthy (contra Longenecker 2009:430).

Apart from these neutral, negative and positive references to inns, no convincing literary evidence indicates that πανδοχεῖα never had hosts of their own, and were almost always run by non-Jews. Although it is the case that inns referred to in available literary evidence are situated in non-Jewish territories, we simply do not have enough evidence of inns in Palestine to make a case for non-Jewish owners as hosts.41 We do, however, have some evidence to question the assumption that persons who frequented these inns came almost exclusively from the lower classes, and that Jews did not frequent commercial inns. According to Snodgrass (2008:347), because sometimes very few options existed for travellers who needed lodging, Jews frequently stayed in inns. This is clear from m. Gitin 8.9 (a divorced Jewish man and his wife staying at an inn; see Danby 2011:318–319), m. Yebamot 16.7 (a sick Levite left at an inn to recuperate; see Danby 2011:245) and m. Qiddushin 4:12 (a Jewish man may sleep in an inn with two women if one is his wife; see Danby 2011:329). In b. Sotah 48a, it is told that a rabbi was paid respect in an inn described by the rabbi as a beautiful place, and Tanhuma Mishpatim 6.1.1 recounts a story of two Jewish donkey drivers who hated each other but made up in an inn where they ate and drank together (see Snodgrass 2008:342). These texts do not only confirm that Jews frequented inns, but also show no evidence of inns being dangerous places or that scrupulous Jews frequenting inns. In the Greek sources, also no mention is made that persons from the lower classes frequented commercial inns.

But what then about the evidence cited by Oakman (2008:175–177) that describes inns as primitive, dirty and noisy, and that of Longenecker (2009:427–443) who describes innkeepers as widely known to be morally dubious and not to be trusted? Oakman, first, cites Stählin (1967:19, n. 135) as evidence for his point of view, but Stählin in fact gives no evidence for his point of view. Next, he lists Strabo (Geogr. 12.8.17), who tells a story about a brothel-keeper who had taken lodging in inns along with a large number of women. This story simply states that brothel-keepers sometimes stayed in inns, and cannot be used to argue that it was always the case. Next he cites Philo (QG 4.33) as evidence that persons sometimes enter inns, overeat themselves and then vomit in their passions. Does this count for all persons entering inns? Pappus Egeront 2:1 is next in Oakman’s list of evidence, the story about a leper who ate with other lepers in an inn. This, however, Stählin (1967:19, n. 135) states by citing Bell and Skeat, was not a normalcy. Because ‘lepers were usually excluded from public inns’. With regard to m. ‘Abodah Zarah 2:1, it can be argued that the main thrust of the tractate is rather a negative evaluation of Gentiles than inns, and b. Ta’anit 21a, a story about people staying in an inn who stole precious stones and pearls, can hardly be used to claim that all people staying in inns were thieves. In brief, does this event make all inns and innkeepers bad? Finally, can it simply be inferred from m. Yebamot 16:7 that the sick Levite left at the inn passed away because he was not looked after by the innkeeper? Moreover, does the fact that the deceased was buried by the innkeeper not point to the direct opposite, namely, that the innkeeper took care of the body?

The evidence cited by Longenecker, already discussed, is his reference to an inscription found in an inn in Pompeii, criticising an innkeeper for watering down his wine too much, and a remark made by the 2nd-century physician Galen that he knows innkeepers who have been caught selling human flesh as pork. Does this by default mean that all innkeepers watered down the wine they sold too much, and that all innkeepers sold human flesh as pork? To the contrary, b. Baba Mez’ira 86a relates the story of an innkeeper who sold bad wine and, when he realised what happened, felt sorry about it. Does this then mean that all innkeepers were persons with integrity? This would be hard to argue, as will it be to argue that all inns and innkeepers were bad because of a few negative anecdotes that can be listed.

41 Baieley, for example, is of the opinion that the inn into which the wounded man was taken was a Jewish inn, and these ins were situated in Jewish villages. The wounded man therefore most probably was taken to a Jewish inn in Jericho, run by its Jewish owner (Bailey 2008:295–296). Bailey (1983:53–54) believes that even Jewish commercial inns had very unsavoury reputations. In Targum Jonathan, for example, the word ‘prostitute’ is regularly translated as ‘woman who keeps an inn’. In scholarship on the parable of the Samaritan, it thus seems that any kind of πανδοχεῖον is Plato in Protagoras 315 D, where he reports that Callias turned an old storeroom into a guestroom to make more space for his numerous visitors.
A different lens: Travel in the ancient world

Instead of seeing a κατάλυμα and a πανδοχεῖον as two opposed options for lodging in the ancient world, Casson (1994:197–218) provides a comprehensive description of the options that were available to a traveller in the ancient world. If the traveller was in service of the government, he would have stayed over at the nearest facility maintained by the cursus publicus. If he was well-to-do, he most probably would have owned a house at the intended destination. When people with means had no such property at the intended destination, they normally arranged to stay with friends, family, business associates or other acquaintances as many houses often had separate bedrooms for guests. This kind of lodging most probably refers to a κατάλυμα – not a non-commercial inn (Zimmermann 2015:310), but free lodging based on the principle of hospitality (Bailey 2008:32).

Where such hospitality was unavailable, travellers would sometimes pack tents and camp out, or stay at an inn (πανδοχεῖον). Inns were situated along the major routes, strategically placed (a day’s travel apart), and normally a traveller could choose between two or more available inns. Inns normally provided the traveller with the basic minimum: food, a night’s lodging and if hired wagons or animals were used, a change of either or both. Some of these inns were considered respectable and, therefore, designated by the term hospitum [place of hospitality] or deversotium [place for turning aside; see Casson 1994:204], while others were distinctively low class, known as caupona. These inns catered for slaves, sailors and carters, and their dining rooms normally were basically a tavern. In both these kinds of inns, prostitutes were among the services offered, and it was the choice of the traveller to make use of this service or not. Casson’s description of the different options for lodging, when travelling in the ancient world, fits well with the results of the lexical study on κατάλυμα and πανδοχεῖον described above. Several examples of a κατάλυμα [free lodging based on hospitality], as well as positive and negative references to inns (a πανδοχεῖον) and innkeepers, were identified.

Conclusion

On the basis of Casson’s comprehensive study on travel in the ancient world that inter alia focuses on inns, and the lexical study conducted above on κατάλυμα and πανδοχεῖον and their derivatives, the following conclusions can be made. First, to distinguish between a κατάλυμα as a non-commercial inn based on hospitality and a πανδοχεῖον as a commercial inn based on payment for services rendered as two opposing options for lodging – the one good and the other bad – seems to be the wrong point of departure when interpreting the parable of the Samaritan. This distinction does not seem to be supported by the evidence from available sources. Moreover, the designation ‘non-commercial inn’ seems to be a contradictio in terminis. Second, as payment is involved, the injured man in the parable is most probably taken to an inn (πανδοχεῖον). Inns, in principle, were commercial, and commercial inns in the ancient world, the evidence suggests, sometimes were positively evaluated (as hospitum) and sometimes less positive (as caupona). It was for the traveller to decide in which inn to stay, and what services to make use of offered by the inn chosen to stay in. Not all inns were bad, not all innkeepers were dishonest and not all guests in inns were thieves. But sometimes inns were bad, innkeepers were dishonest and guests were dangerous thieves.

If it is argued that the inn the injured man was taken to by the Samaritan plays a role in the meaning of the parable, it will first have to be proved that the inn referred to in the parable was of the unrespectable kind. And this is simply not possible to prove when the available evidence, as discussed above, is taken into consideration.

There may be, however, one small clue in the parable that can help the interpreter to make some decision with regard to the standing of the inn referred to in Luke 10:34 and 35. Luke 10:33 tells us that when the Samaritan came upon the injured man and saw him, he felt compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη). The word used here ‘carries the connotation of a visceral reaction (i.e. he felt it in his guts)’, indicating deep and true compassion, a reaction that ‘signals the drive to restore wholeness’ (Levine 2014:96).22 If ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, by implication, means that the Samaritan wanted the best for the injured man, would he have left him behind at a ‘bad’ inn at the mercy of a ‘bad’ innkeeper? Most probably not. Rather, because he felt compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη) for the injured man, he would have left him behind at an inn in which he knew the injured man could get better, with someone he knew and trusted, and with someone who knew him well enough to know that he will pay any outstanding costs incurred on his return. For the 1st-century listener of the parable, this would not have been abnormal.

The inn (πανδοχεῖον) and innkeeper (πανδοκεύς) in the parable, therefore, do not function to show that the innkeeper, like the Samaritan, shows himself to be ‘good’, or that the kingdom is found also in immoral places. The inn and innkeeper rather function in the parable to help in identifying the Samaritan for what he is, namely, a despised merchant. This, for the 1st-century listener of the parable, would have been abnormal; a merchant, who normally exploits people, shows remarkable compassion. Herein lies the thrust of the parable, as will be argued in a follow-up to this article.

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Competing interests

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22 See also Luke 7:13, where ἐσπλαγχνίσθη is used to describe Jesus’ response when he saw the widow of Nain at her son’s funeral procession, and Luke 15:20, where ἐσπλαγχνίσθη is used to describe the reaction of the father to the return of his lost son.
Authors’ contribution
E.V.E. and R.J.v.N. equally contributed to the research and writing of this article.

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