

## Paul's κοινωνία with the Philippians: *Societas* as a Missionary Funding Strategy

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This article endeavours to illuminate the socio-economic dimension of Paul's κοινωνία with the Philippians. It initially adduces a representative sample of philological evidence which demonstrates that κοινωνία and its cognates (κοινωνός, κοινωνέω) frequently convey the sense of partnership in some economic enterprise, and establishes a semantic equivalence between κοινωνία and *societas* (partnership). It is then argued that, from a Roman socio-economic and legal perspective, Paul's κοινωνία consisted of a *societas unius rei* (i.e. *societas evangelii*), whereby Paul supplied the *ars* and *opera* (skill and labour), while the Philippians contributed the *pecunia* (funds) to ensure the progress of his mission.

**Keywords:** Paul, Philippians, κοινωνία, *societas*, mission, finances

### 1. Introduction

The question of the funding of Paul's mission and his seemingly incoherent attitude vis-à-vis financial support has been a major point of discussion in modern scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Numerous scholars have been reluctant to envisage that Paul could have been a willing recipient of financial and/or material resources.<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, the tendency has rather been to emphasise Paul's self-sufficiency and thus to deny him any strategic planning in the funding of his ministry activities. As 'the first artisan missionary',<sup>3</sup> Paul is commonly thought to have followed

1 For a most recent attempt to solve this quandary, see D. E. Briones, *Paul's Financial Policy* (New York: T&T Clark, 2013).

2 E.g. C. H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967) 72; F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (New York: Harper, 1959) 151–2; G. F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (Waco: Word, 1983) 18–19; D. Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Light of Disunity in the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 226.

360 3 G. A. Deissmann, *Paul* (2nd ed.; New York: Harper, 1957) 237.

either the rabbinic model of providing for his own subsistence through manual labour (cf. *m. Abot* 2.2, 4.5),<sup>4</sup> or the Cynic ideal of the working philosopher.<sup>5</sup>

Others have been less sceptical regarding Paul's expectation to receive material assistance from the communities he founded, however. Edwin A. Judge, for example, noted that Paul '[n]ormally ... expected to be supported at the charges of the groups who enjoyed his religious leadership'.<sup>6</sup> Bengt Holmberg likewise suggested that 'all of Paul's churches' were 'in principle obliged to support their apostle',<sup>7</sup> as may have indeed been the right of apostles or *Pneumatiker*, according to David L. Dungan and Dieter Georgi.<sup>8</sup> As his letters plainly attest, Paul certainly received from certain congregations some provisions (Phil 4.15–16; cf. 2 Cor 11.7–9), or at least enjoyed their hospitality (Rom 16.23; Phlm 22). His letter to the Philippians in particular reveals that he maintained a privileged relationship, a κοινωνία (1.5), with the community, which provided for his needs on a regular basis (καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δίς, 4.16).<sup>9</sup>

As will be argued throughout this essay, the κοινωνία language of Phil 1.5–7, and of 4.14–19, a passage which is characterised by an unusual concentration of technical financial terms (e.g. εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως, ἀπέχω, πληρῶω), is neither accidental nor incidental. In context, it is doubtful whether the cognates κοινωνία, (συγ)κοινωνός and (συγ)κοινωνέω bear the theological connotations that generations of commentators have ascribed to them,<sup>10</sup> and whether the surrounding *termini technici* were meant metaphorically or in a 'social way' to denote friendship.<sup>11</sup> For Paul had actually received some material and/or financial contribution, which he duly acknowledged in 4.18.

Noticing 'les expressions de la langue des affaires' in Phil 4.10–20, Jean Fleury posited that Paul and Lydia had established a commercial κοινωνία, whereby

4 E.g. M. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM, 1991) 15–16.

5 R. F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

6 E. A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale, 1960) 58.

7 B. Holmberg, *Paul and Power* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 89.

8 D. L. Dungan, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 4–27; D. Georgi, *Die Geschichte der Kollekte des Paulus für Jerusalem* (Hamburg/Bergstedt: Reich, 1965) 47. Cf. J. G. Strelan, 'Burden-Bearing and the Law of Christ', *JBL* 94.2 (1975) 267–70; W. Pratscher, 'Der Verzicht des Paulus auf finanziellen Unterhalt durch seine Gemeinden', *NTS* 25 (1979) 284–98; J. P. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 178–94.

9 The expression καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δίς implies more than two instances of a repeated action. Cf. BDAG s.v. ἄπαξ; W. Stählin, *TDNT* 1.381 s.v. ἄπαξ; L. Morris, 'Καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δίς', *NovT* 1.3 (1956) 205–8.

10 E.g. H. Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINΩNIA im Neuen Testament* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933) 73–9; G. Panikulam, *Koinōnia in the New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979) 80–6; F. Hauck *TDNT* III.805 s.v. κοινωνός.

11 G. W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 125 (with n. 23). Cf. P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987) 157–64.

they had become the ‘artisans actifs d’une sorte d’atelier commun dans la maison de Lydia’.<sup>12</sup> By virtue of their joint agreement, they had formed what Roman law viewed as a *societas universorum quae ex quaestu veniunt*, that is, a partnership in all the profits generated through commercial activities (cf. *Dig.* 17.2.7). As an associate, Paul was thus entitled to receive a share of the benefits of the partnership to provide for his own needs (χρεία, 4.16), as he had claimed while in Thessalonica.<sup>13</sup>

Drawing his inspiration from Fleury, J. Paul Sampley explored further the applicability of the Roman concept of *societas* to Paul’s dealings with the Philippians and investigated how the apostle might have adapted this model to his ecclesiological and evangelistic agenda.<sup>14</sup> He contended that Paul and the Philippians had ‘joined together in a consensual partnership in Christ for preaching the gospel’, that is, they had formed a ‘*societas Christi*’.<sup>15</sup> The Philippians’ contribution acknowledged in Phil 4.18 was thus nothing more than their reimbursement for work accomplished on behalf of the partnership.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, Sampley argued, Paul ‘co-opted *societas* as a way of expressing the nature and purpose of Christian life’, thereby making Christ ‘the goal of the *societas*’, and *societas* ‘a model of Christian community’ to emulate.<sup>17</sup>

Despite their commendable attempts to explain Paul’s economic exchanges with the Philippians according to first-century socio-economic conventions, Fleury and Sampley’s theses have not left a strong impression on scholarship.<sup>18</sup> Their argumentations have certainly not been without flaws. Against Fleury, it may be remarked, for example, that Paul considered his cooperation with the *whole church* in Philippi, and not just with Lydia, to consist of a κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, and not a (commercial) κοινωνία εἰς τὸ σκηνοποιόν, a κοινωνία εἰς τὴν πορφυροπωλικήν, or simply a κοινωνία εἰς τὴν κοινὴν τέχνην/ἐργασίαν/πραγματείαν, whose economic gains might have been divided between the partners.

12 J. Fleury, ‘Une société de fait dans l’église apostolique (Phil. 4:10 à 22)’, *Mélanges Philippe Meylan*, vol. II (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1963) 41, 47.

13 Fleury, ‘Société’, 53–4.

14 J. P. Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) ix–x, 1–7.

15 Sampley, *Partnership*, 51.

16 Sampley, *Partnership*, 52–3.

17 Sampley, *Partnership*, x, 68, 112–13.

18 E.g. L. M. White, ‘Morality between Two Worlds’, *Greeks, Romans, and Christians* (ed. D. L. Balch et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 206–15; Peterman, *Gift*, 123–7; Peterlin, *Philippians*, 177–81; L. Bormann, *Philippi* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) 181–7; J. Barnet, ‘Paul’s Reception of the Gift from Philippi’, *SVTQ* 50.3 (2006) 225–7. For slightly more positive responses, see B. J. Capper, ‘Paul’s Dispute with Philippi’, *TZ* 49 (1993) 193–214; S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck) 101; G. W. Hansen, ‘Transformation of Relationships’, *New Testament Greek and Exegesis* (ed. A. M. Donaldson et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 181–204.

Against Sampley, it may be pointed out that it is not at all evident that, as a consensual contract, *societas* was ever understood (and utilised) as a sociological model that could foster close and enduring relationships among its *socii*, and, consequently, that a 'strong sense of community', 'individual self-determination', minimal 'social stratification' and 'quasi-brotherly' relationships were anticipated *benefits* of partnerships.<sup>19</sup> Generally speaking, trustworthy relationships among *socii* were a prerequisite rather than a by-product of *societas*.<sup>20</sup> Yet, what is perhaps most problematic about Sampley's interpretation is his underlying, though unproven, assumption that κοινωμία corresponded to Roman *societas* (in the socio-economic and legal sense of the term),<sup>21</sup> a conclusion which G. H. R. Horsley was prompt to question.<sup>22</sup>

This having been said, Fleury and Sampley have proposed a suggestive way of thinking about Paul's special relationship with the Philippians. Herein they deserve to be acknowledged as the forerunners providing the inspiration for the present study, which will argue that Paul's κοινωμία consisted of a strategic economic partnership, whereby the Philippians cooperated in his missionary activities by providing material and/or human resources, while he performed the work of the ministry.

## 2. The Assimilation of κοινωμία with *societas*

As pointed above, the greatest weakness of Fleury and Sampley's theses has been their failure to establish some semantic equivalence between κοινωμία and *societas*, which partly explains the general disaffection with their respective interpretations. A categorical dismissal of Fleury and Sampley's understanding is unwarranted, however. For as the Dutch scholar Peter J. T. Endenburg demonstrated long ago in his (overlooked) study of ancient Greek *zakengemeenschappen* (i.e. 'commercial associations'), κοινων- cognates are often employed in classical sources to describe economic partnerships.<sup>23</sup> This is

19 Sampley, *Partnership*, 106–8.

20 Cf. W. Broekaert, 'Joining Forces', *Historia* 61.2 (2012) 228. On the role of *amicitia* in *societas* more generally, see K. Verboven, *The Economy of Friends* (Brussels: Latomus, 2002) 279–82.

21 Sampley, *Partnership*, 12, 60–1.

22 G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, vol. III (Macquarie University: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1983) 19. Horsley did accept 'some points of overlap' between the two, however.

23 P. J. T. Endenburg, *Koinoonia en gemeenschap van zaken bij de Grieken in den klassieken tijd* (Amsterdam: Paris, 1937). Cf. LSJ s.vv. κοινωνέω 1.2., κοινωμία 1.b., κοινωνός 2; J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930) s.vv. κοινωμία, κοινωνός; F. Hauck, *TDNT* III.798 s.v. κοινωνός; J. Y. Campbell, 'KOINΩNIA and Its Cognates in the New Testament', *JBL* 51.4 (1932) 354, 362; Seesemann, *KOINΩNIA*, 15–6, 20–1; N. Baumert, *Koinonein und Metechein – Synonym?* (Stuttgart: Katholische Bibelwerk, 2003) 257–74.

particularly evident in several of Demosthenes' orations which make reference to *κοινωνία* in maritime trade (i.e. *συμπλοικὴ κ.*), mining (i.e. *μετάλλου κ.*), banking and tax-farming (i.e. *χρημάτων κ.*; e.g. Demosthenes, *Or.* 32, 34, 35, 56; cf. Plato, *Resp.* 343d, *Leg.* 632b, 861e; Isaeus, *Or.* 4.26; Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1159b 29, 1160a 9, 16–17, 1161b 11, *Eth. Eud.* 1241b 27).<sup>24</sup> Endenburg also noted that *(συγ)κοινωνός* could often designate a business friend or partner (e.g. Demosthenes, *Or.* 32, 34, 56),<sup>25</sup> and that *κοινωνέω* could be used in the sense of *συναλλάσσω* to denote business association or cooperation in financial matters (e.g. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1280b 22, 1328b 6–24; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.6.23; Demosthenes, *Or.* 37.10, 38).<sup>26</sup>

Endenburg's insights, which have never made inroads in NT scholarship,<sup>27</sup> can actually be confirmed by a detailed survey of documentary sources, which, significantly, have also been largely neglected by biblical scholars.<sup>28</sup> This oversight is particularly prejudicial since documentary sources generally reflect more accurately than literary sources the vocabulary, syntax and register of the New Testament, and are more representative of oral language and popular culture.<sup>29</sup> A meticulous examination of approximately 100 inscriptions and 370 papyri in which *κοινωνία*, *κοινωνός* and *κοινωνέω* appear certainly establishes that the sense of cooperation or partnership in some kind of enterprise, be it political, commercial or otherwise, is often conveyed by one of these three terms. It is beyond the scope of this essay to review in detail the bulk of the evidence.<sup>30</sup> Rather, the following section will only present a few relevant examples that illustrate this claim particularly well.

Although in the majority of the inscriptions *κοινωνέω* is employed in conjunction with partitive genitives such as *τοῦ ἱεροῦ/τῶν ἱερῶν, τᾶς/τῆς θυσίας/τῶν θυσιῶν, τῆς πανηγύρεως, τοῦ ἀγῶνος, τᾶς πολιτείας* to express participation

24 Endenburg, *Koinoonia*, 9–23, 146–9, 163–87.

25 Endenburg, *Koinoonia*, 45–6, 105, 167–78, 183–7.

26 Endenburg, *Koinoonia*, 97–8.

27 Among NT scholars, only Hainz and Baumert seem to have been aware of his work. See J. Hainz, *Koinonia* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982) 163 n. 7, 168 n. 42; Baumert, *Koinonein*, 11–14.

28 None of the major studies of *κοινωνία* and its cognates published in the last hundred years has given serious consideration to documentary evidence. Even Baumert, who claims to have conducted *eine umfassende Untersuchung* (as his sub-title indicates), examined only twenty-seven papyri and ten inscriptions, most of which were already referenced in Preisigke's *Wörterbuch*, Seesemann's *KOINΩΝΙΑ*, Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary*, LSJ and BDAG.

29 Cf. G. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965) 227–51; G. H. R. Horsley and J. A. L. Lee, 'A Lexicon of the New Testament with Documentary Parallels', *FilNT* 10 (1997) 60; G. Horrocks, *Greek* (London: Wiley/Blackwell, 2010<sup>2</sup>) 114–17, 147–52.

30 For a comprehensive catalogue of all the data collected, see appendices A and B in J. M. Ogereau, 'Paul's *Κοινωνία* with the Philippians: A Socio-Historical Investigation of a Pauline Economic Partnership', (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2014) 363–507.

in religious festivals (including the partaking of sacrifices),<sup>31</sup> in athletic or artistic contests,<sup>32</sup> or in the *politeia* of a city,<sup>33</sup> the verb can also occasionally evoke cooperation in a common enterprise. This connotation is apparent in a mosaic inscription from the Syrian basilica of Houeidjit Halaoua, which honours the collaborative effort of the benefactors in bearing the costs of the construction: Κοσμία καὶ | ὁ τιμ(ιώτατος) Κοσμᾶς | ἐκοινωνή||σαν ἐν τῷ | ἔργῳ τούτῳ ('Kosmia and the most honourable Kosmas partnered in this work', *SEG* 40.1380 bis; 471 CE).

In an earlier and slightly more insightful inscription, *IEph* 1a.4, the law on the liquidation of debts after the war between Demetrius and Lysimachus around 297–296 BCE, a rare substantival participial form of προσκοινωνέω, τοῦ προσκοινωνοῦντος, is also used to describe creditors and landholders' *contractual agreement* (cf. ὁμολογέω, ll. 24, 25) regarding partial remissions of debts and reallocations of land: ἀντίγραφα δὲ λαμβάνειν τὸν γεωργὸν τῶν τοῦ τ[οκιστ]ῆ|τοῦ τοῦ αὐτῷ|προσκοινωνοῦντος καὶ τὸν [τοκιστὴν] τῶν τοῦ γεωργοῦ τοῦ αὐτ[ῶ]ι|προσ||κοινωνοῦντος τιμημάτων καὶ δανείων κτλ. ('and the landowner is to receive copies of the valuations and loans from the creditor partnering with him, and (vice versa) the creditor is to receive copies of the valuations and loans from the landowner partnering with him' etc., ll. 26–8).<sup>34</sup> Although this use of a participle is quite unusual, it is not without precedent. Demosthenes, for instance, designates those forming a business partnership for the concession of mines οἱ κοινωνοῦντες (μετάλλου) (*Or.* 37.38).<sup>35</sup>

While the verb is equally rare in papyri, it describes more often the action of partnering in some kind of business enterprise. For example, in the tax-revenue laws of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (*P.Rev.*, 259/8 BCE), associates of the tax-farmers are identified as those who have partnered with the chief contractor (ἀρχώνης) in the tax-farming concession (ὠνή): τῶν τι κοινωνούντων ... τῆ[ι] ὠνή[ι] (col. 22, ll. 2–3).<sup>36</sup> In the lease *SB* XVI.13008 (144 CE), two men, Haprokras and Demetrios, agree to partner (κοινωνέω) with a certain Dioskoros in the joint-lease of a date and olive grove: βουλόμε[θα] | κοινωνή[σ]ειν σοι ἕκαστος

31 E.g. *IKosSegre* 149; *IMagnMai* 33; *IG* IX.1 32.

32 E.g. *Illion* 1; *IDelphes* IV.152.

33 E.g. *SEG* 51.532, 40.394.

34 For a discussion of this complex law, see D. Asheri, 'Leggi greche sul problema dei debiti', *SCO* 18 (1969) 42–4, 108–14.

35 See also Polybius' discussion of the attribution of public contracts by Roman censors (*Hist.* 6.17.4), wherein he makes reference (without using a participial form) to those who associate (οἱ κοινωνοῦσι) with the *manceps* (or *auctor*) purchasing the contracts (οἱ ἀγοράζουσι).

36 Cf. the Byzantine tax-farming contract *P.Lond.* v.1660, in which the tax-collectors are said to partner together for half a share of all the profits and expenses: καθὰ προεῖπον ἐπὶ τῷ ἐ[ν] πάσ[ι] | κοινωνεῖν καὶ συμμετέχειν σοι εἰς τὸ ἐπιβάλλον σοι μέρος κατὰ τὸ ἡμισυ ('(it shall be) according to what was declared with regard to associating and partnering in [everything?] with you, to the extent of half a share of what falls to you', ll. 18–19).

[ἡ]μῶν κατὰ τὸ τρίτ[ον μέρος] πρὸς μ[όνους τοὺς ἐπικει]μένους τ[οῦ ἐνεσ]τῶ [το]ς ζ̄ (ἔτους) φοινι[κικο]ύς καὶ ἐλαικοῦ[ς] καρποὺς κτλ. ('we wish to partner with you, each one of us according to a third [share], in the harvest of dates and olives of the [present] 7th (year) [only]' etc., ll. 7-16). Each shall partake of a third of the harvest and pay to the lessor, Dioskoros, a levy of fifty-six drachmas (cf. ll. 18-24).

A similar sense of κοινωνέω can be observed in *P.Stras.* v.362 (149-50 CE), a lease between two farmers,<sup>37</sup> and in *P.Lond.* v.1794 (487 CE), a classic example of 'contratti di società per lavori o imprese commerciali'<sup>38</sup> between two fruiterers who agree to form a partnership and to share in all revenues and expenditures.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, the compound verb ἐπικοινωνέω is used in an analogous way in a number of documents such as the partnership contract *P.Köln* II.101 (274-80 CE),<sup>40</sup> and the lease *P.Oxy.* x.1280 (fourth century CE),<sup>41</sup> which provides another good example of a *societas negotiationis* (i.e. a commercial partnership).<sup>42</sup>

In contrast with κοινωνέω, κοινωνός is much more frequently attested as bearing an economic connotation in inscriptions and papyri, and, more precisely, as designating a business associate, as has in fact long been noted.<sup>43</sup> Particularly interesting are Roman inscriptions in which κοινωνός specifically refers to a partner, i.e. a *socius*, in a *societas publicanorum*. This can be inferred from several Asian epitaphs such as *IEph* 2245 or *Iasos* II.416, which make mention of the κοινωνοί in charge of the 5% manumission tax and the *portoria*

37 Ll. 4-6: βούλομαι ἔκουσίω[ς] καὶ αὐθαίρ[έ]τω[ς] κοινωνῆσαι σοι κατὰ τὸ ἡμ[ισυ] μέρος ὧν κ[α]ὶ σὺ τυγχάνεις μεμισθῶσ[θα]ι κτλ.

38 O. Montevecchi, *La papirologia* (Turin: Società editrice internazionale, 1973) 225.

39 Ll. 7-16: ὁμολογοῦμεν ἐτοιμῶς ἔχε[ι]ν κοινωνεῖν ἀλλήλοις εἰ[ς] τὴν προειρημένην τεχνὴν ὀπωρώνην [πρὸς ἐνιαυσιαῖον χρόνον λογιζόμενον ... ἐπὶ κοινῷ λήμματι καὶ ἀναλώμ[α]τι καὶ οὕτω ἡμᾶς παρασχεῖν κ[ο]ινῶς τα[.]... ια ἀναλώματα τῆς αὐτῆς τεχνῆς κ[αὶ] μετὰ τῆ[ν ἀπόδο]σ[ι]ν[?] τῶν φόρ[ω]ν καὶ τῶν ἀναλωμάτων ('we readily agree to partner with one another in the aforesaid fruit-dealing trade for a period of one year ... in every common income and expense and thus to pay in common the (...?) expenses of the same trade and with the [payment?] of taxes and expenses (...?').

40 Ll. 7-11: ὁμολογοῦμεν ἐπικοινωνῆσιν ἀλλήλοις εἰς ἐργασίαν βρυτανικῆς τέχνης ἐπ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἓνα καὶ μῆνας ἕξ. Note that the exact sense of βρυτανικός (= Βρετανικός?) remains unclear, though it probably refers to tin. See D. Hagedorn, 'Fünf Urkundenpapyri der Kölner Sammlung', *ZPE* 13 (1974) 127-9. Cf. LSJ s.v. βρυτανικός.

41 Ll. 4-7: ὁμολογῶ ἔκουσίᾳ καὶ αὐθαίρετῳ γνώμῃ συντεθῆσθαι με πρὸς σὲ ἐπὶ τῷ μοι ἐπικοινωνῖν σοι εἰς τὸν ψυκτῆρα τοῦ καμηλῶνος ('I acknowledge that I have agreed, voluntarily and of my own free will, to partner with you in (the lease of) the shelter of the camel-stable').

42 R. Taubenschlag, 'Die societas negotiationis im Rechte der Papyri', *ZRG* 52 (1932) 64. Cf. Montevecchi, *La papirologia*, 225.

43 Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* 1.815 s.v. κοινωνός; LSJ s.v. κοινωνός; Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, s.v. κοινωνός; BDAG s.v. κοινωνός 1.

(i.e. customs tax).<sup>44</sup> Although the term never identifies publicans in papyri (*societas publicanorum* were never operative in Egypt),<sup>45</sup> it frequently designates partners in a tax-farming concession (e.g. *P.Rev.*, col. 10, l. 5; 259/8 BCE), associate officials supervising tax collections (e.g. κ. σιτολόγοι/ἀπαιτηταί/σιτομέτραι/ἐπιμεληταί),<sup>46</sup> associates in some business enterprise (e.g. *BGU* II.530; *P.Flor.* III.370), or at least people who shared the same professional activity and who may have been members of the same *collegium* (e.g. *PSI* III.202, *P.Leid.Inst.* 62). This illustrates quite well that κοινωνοί were generally understood to be bound by socio-economic and legal obligations.

Like κοινωνέω, κοινωνία can be employed to denote participation in religious festivals (κ. τῶν θυσιῶν/σπονδῶν/ἱερῶν),<sup>47</sup> or in some form of *politeia* (e.g. κ. τοῦ Πανελληνίου),<sup>48</sup> and can sometimes even refer to a political alliance.<sup>49</sup> Inscriptions in which κοινωνία indicates an economic partnership are admittedly rather rare. Several suggestive examples are nonetheless provided by a number of artefacts. For instance, pottery fragments from the Nymphaeum of Kafizin (ca. 225 BCE) make specific reference to a κοινωνία of flax and seeds, most likely some sort of commercial organisation.<sup>50</sup>

An equally interesting example is found in a *senatus consultum* concerning the city of Thisbae (Boeotia), which had contracted a κοινωνία with an Italian *negotiator*, Cn. Pandosinus: (VII) ὡσαύτως περὶ ὧν οἱ αὐτοὶ Θισβεῖς ἐνεφάνισαν περὶ σίτου καὶ ἐλ[αί]ου ἐαυτοῖς κοινωνίαν πρὸς Γναίων Πανδοσίνον

44 Epigraphists generally agree that these κοινωνοί were publicans. See J. and L. Robert, *BE* (1964) 158–9, §160; F. Dürrbach and G. A. Radet, 'Inscriptions de la Pérée rhodienne', *BCH* 10 (1886) 267–9; E. L. Hicks, 'Isasos', *JHS* 8 (1887) 113; H. J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974) 61.

45 See S. L. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (New York: Greenwood, 1969) 286–335; P. A. Brunt, 'The Administrators of Roman Egypt', *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 235–43.

46 E.g. *SB* XVIII.13134; *SB* X.10293; *P.Col.* VII.136, 137, 141. On the role of σιτολόγοι and similar administrators, see F. Oertel, *Die Liturgie* (Aalen: Scientia, 1965) 204–8, 214–22, 250–7.

47 E.g. J. H. Oliver, 'The Sacred Gerusia', *HesperiaSup* 6 (1941) 125–41, §31; *SEG* 4.247, 250, 255.

48 E.g. *SEG* 29.127.

49 E.g. *P.Schøyen* I.25 (46 BCE); *CIG* 4040 (col. 6, ll. 8–11; ca. 19 CE).

50 E.g. *IKafizin* 119: ἀπὸ τῆς Ζήν[ο]νος κοινονία[ς τῶν λίνου]ν κα[ὶ τοῦ] σπέρματος; *IKafizin* 265: [ἀπὸ] τῆς Ζήν[ο]νος κοινονία[ς vac τῶν λίνου]ν καὶ τοῦ σπέρμα[τος]. There is a remote possibility that this κοινωνία consisted of a professional and/or cultic association. However, such groups are more commonly called κοινά, θίασοι, σύνοδοι, ἔρανοι etc., and are usually identified by their activities (rather than by the name of their patrons). See F. Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909) 5–172; J. S. Kloppenborg, 'Collegia and Thiasoi', *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 1996) 16–29; I. Dittmann-Schöne, *Die Berufsvereine in den Städten des kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien* (Regensburg: Roderer, 2001) 15–25; C. Zimmermann, *Handwerkervereine im griechischen Osten des Imperium Romanum* (Mainz: Römisch-germanisches Zentralmuseum, 2002) 23–45.



γεγονέναι, περὶ τοῦ[του] τοῦ πράγματος, [ἐ]ὰν κριτὰς λαβεῖν βούλωνται, τοῦτοις κριτὰς δο[ῦ]ναι ἔδοξεν ('similarly, the same Thisbaeans have declared that a partnership has been established between them and Cn. Pandosinus concerning (the provision of?) grain and oil, on this matter it has been decided that judges are to be appointed for them, if they so wish', *IG VII.2225*. ll. 53–56; 170 BCE). Given the lack of contextual information, it is difficult to determine the exact nature of this κοινωνία and impossible to ascertain which Latin word was used in the original version.<sup>51</sup> However, it is highly probable that it corresponded to a partnership contract (i.e. *societas*), whereby Pandosinus assisted the Thisbaeans in supplying the occupying Roman forces with grain and oil.<sup>52</sup> Should this interpretation be correct, this inscription would constitute an important piece of evidence in support of the thesis that the socio-economic and legal concept of *societas* could be expressed in Greek by the term κοινωνία, as M. P. Foucart (*ed. pr.*), Theodor Mommsen and Claude Nicolet concluded.<sup>53</sup> At the very least, it illustrates that κοινωνία could refer to some commercial partnership between a single individual and a group of individuals (cf. Justinian, *Inst.* 3.25.5)<sup>54</sup> – precisely the kind of evidence Horsley once called for.<sup>55</sup>

In papyri, κοινωνία is most frequently used with the prepositions ἐπί, ἄπό or κατὰ, to denote the joint ownership or joint exploitation of a piece of property, be it some land,<sup>56</sup> a house (or share thereof),<sup>57</sup> animals,<sup>58</sup> workshops,<sup>59</sup> or even slaves.<sup>60</sup> Due to the lack of details or the lacunose state of the documents, it is sometimes difficult to determine which legal arrangement the prepositional phrase ἐπί/κατὰ/ἄπό κοινωνίαν/ῶ/ας implied, whether it consisted of a joint ownership (*communio pro diviso/indiviso*), a lease in partnership, a *colonia partiaria*,<sup>61</sup> or

51 Mommsen had no doubts, though: 'societas ea (nam alia res vocabulo quod est κοινωνία significari non potuit)' (T. Mommsen, 'XV. S.C. de Thisbaeis A.V.C. DLXXXIV', *Ephemeris* 1 (1872) 297).

52 The matter is complex and cannot be dealt at length here. It is very unlikely that this κοινωνία alludes to the lease (μίσθωσις) of Thisbean public land, since it had become *ager publicus* in 170 BCE when the city had surrendered. See M. P. Foucart, 'Rapport sur un sénatus-consulte inédit de l'année 170 relatif à la ville de Thisbé', *ArchMiss* 7 (1872) 370.

53 Foucart, 'Rapport', 331; Mommsen, 'Thisbaeis', 297; C. Nicolet, *L'ordre équestre à l'époque républicaine (312–43 av. J.-C.)*, vol. 1 (Paris: Boccard, 1974) 348.

54 Cf. Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, s.v. κοινωνία (*IG VII.2225* referenced as *Syll* 300).

55 Horsley, *New Documents* 3, 19. On plurilateral partnerships, see V. Arangio-Ruiz, *La società in diritto romano* (Naples: Jovene, 2006) 70–8; Broekaert, 'Joining Forces', 224–5.

56 E.g. *P.Flor.* 1.41; *P.Col.* VII.124 and 125; *P.Corn.* 20.

57 E.g. *P.Stras.* IV.247 and 248; *P.Ross.Georg.* v.32.

58 E.g. *PSI* X.1119; *P.Sakaon* 71.

59 E.g. *BGU* XIX.2822.

60 E.g. *M.Chr.* 237.

61 This 'widespread form of land tenure in the Roman world' was a contract of intricate legal nature, which presented elements pertaining to *locatio conductio* ('lease') and elements pertaining to *societas*. D. P. Kehoe, *Investment, Profit, and Tenancy* (Ann Arbor: University of

even a *societas omnium bonorum*. In the instance of jointly owned property (*communio*), a partnership often imposed itself upon the landlords in any case, as they had to cultivate the estate or parcel of land in common.<sup>62</sup> Legally speaking, such arrangement would have effectively corresponded to a *societas omnium bonorum*, a partnership in which all the partners' assets were held in common and exploited towards a mutual interest (cf. *Dig.* 10.3.1; 17.2.1.1-2).<sup>63</sup>

More interesting, however, are examples in which κοινωνία essentially describes a business partnership. In *P.Bour.* 13 (98 CE), for instance, two traders agree to form a partnership to sell lentils at a local market: [Πετο]σ[ῖ]ρ[ι]ς Ἰρανούπ[ιος] καὶ Πετερμούθης Ἀ'πύγγιος, ἀμφοτέρω τῶν ἀπὸ Μέμφεως φα[κ]εψῶν, ὁμολογοῦ[σ]ι τεθεῖσθαι [πρ]ὸς ἑαυτοὺς μετοχὴν καὶ κοινωνίαν ('Petosiris, son of Iranouphis, and Petermouthis, son of Ephonychos, both from the (collegia?) of boiled lentils at Memphis, acknowledge to have formed with each other a partnership and (business) association', l. 1). In this case, the idea of a (legally binding) business association, i.e. '[e]in Gesellschaftsvertrag',<sup>64</sup> is unmistakable and is confirmed by the proximity of the term μετοχή, which also frequently designates economic partnerships in papyri,<sup>65</sup> and by the modalities and penalty clauses of the contract detailed further down (ll. 3, 6). This amply justifies Montevocchi's classification of this contract in her category of 'contratti di società', which, from the perspective of Roman law, would have been considered as a *societas negotiationis*.<sup>66</sup>

While *P.Bour.* 13 may seem unusual, this rare use of κοινωνία is in fact observed in three more documents:

- (1) *P.Flor.* III.370 (132 CE): a contract for the subletting of public land, which concludes with the unusual clause ἡ κοινωνία κυρία (l. 18) to reinforce the legal efficacy of the partnership.<sup>67</sup>

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Michigan, 1997) 11-12. Cf. S. von Bolla, 'Nachträge: III. Teilpacht (*colonia partiararia*)', *PW*[1] XVIII.2480-4; A. Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953) s.v. *coloni partiararii*, 396.

62 The matter is complex but need not distract us. See J. Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 173. Cf. R. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri, 332 BC-640 AD* (Milan: Cisalpino/Goliardica, 1972<sup>2</sup>) 239-43.

63 Cf. R. Zimmermann, *The Law of Obligations* (Cape Town: Juta, 1990) 453, 465-6.

64 P. M. Meyer, 'Juristischer Papyrusbericht v', *ZRG* 48 (1928) 615. Cf. A. C. Johnson, *Roman Egypt to the Reign of Diocletian* (Paterson: Pageant, 1959) 384-5, §234.

65 E.g. *P.Enteux.* 53; *BGU* IV.1123; *P.Mich.* v.348. Cf. Taubenschlag, 'Societas', 75-7; A. Steinwenter, 'Aus dem Gesellschaftsrechte der Papyri', *Studi in onore di Salvatore Riccobono nel XL anno del suo insegnamento*, vol. 1 (ed. S. Riccobono; Palermo: Castiglia, 1936) 488-9.

66 Montevocchi, *La papirologia*, 225. Cf. Taubenschlag, 'Societas', 65-6.

67 More common are the clauses ἡ ὁμολογία/μίσθωσις κυρία (e.g. *P.Fouad* 1.33; *P.Sakaon* 71; *P.Lond.* III.1168).

- (2) *P.Princ.* II.36 (195–7 CE): a partnership contract for what may have been the collection of some taxes (cf. λ[ο]γξύματα, l. 1), which may have closed in a similar way (ἡ κοινωνία [κυρία ἔστω], ll. 7–8).
- (3) *P.Lond.* v.1795 (sixth century CE): a partnership agreement (ὁμ[ολο]γίαν τῆς κοινωνείας, l. 14), whose purpose remains unclear but which involved substantial sums of money (χρυσολύ/ νομισμάτια δύο, l. 11; χρυσοῦ νομίσματα τρι[ί]α, l. 19).<sup>68</sup>

This succinct summary can hardly do justice to the wealth of documentary data available. It should nonetheless be sufficient to demonstrate that κοινωνία could often denote economic partnership. Documentary sources also illustrate that there existed a semantic equivalence between the polysemic and polyvalent terms κοινωνία and *societas*, whereby, depending on the context, κοινωνία could refer either to *societas* (in the broad sense of ‘partnership’), or to *communio* (in the broad sense of ‘shared possession’). This should vindicate Fleury and Sampley’s initial intuition that, from a socio-economic and legal perspective, κοινωνία could correspond to the Roman concept of *societas*, as a number of philologists and legal historians have in fact long recognised.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, since *societas* pertained to *ius gentium* (Gaius, *Inst.* 3.154),<sup>70</sup> the concept of partnership, whether it was expressed in Greek by κοινωνία or μετοχή, could have only been recognised as *societas*. One can almost be categorical on this point since there existed no other alternative of business association. Throughout the Republican and imperial eras, *societas*, whose rules hardly evolved,<sup>71</sup> remained ‘the *only transaction* allowing two or more parties to pool their assets for a common purpose’.<sup>72</sup> The fundamental question that remains to be answered, therefore, is whether κοινω- cognates assume a similar socio-economic connotation in Paul’s letter to the Philippians.

68 Cf. Taubenschlag, ‘Societas’, 75; Steinwenter, ‘Gesellschaftsrechte’, 503 n. 69; Montevicchi, *La papirologia*, 225.

69 E.g. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* 1.815–6; V. Arangio-Ruiz, “Societas re contracta” e “communio incidens”, *Studi in onore di Salvatore Riccobono nel XL anno del suo insegnamento*, vol. IV (ed. S. Riccobono; Palermo: Castiglia, 1936) 382–3; É. Szlechter, *Le contrat de société en Babylonie, en Grèce, et à Rome* (Paris: Sirey, 1947) 268–70; J. Andreau, ‘Roman Law in relation to Banking and Business’, *Ancient Economies, Modern Methodologies* (ed. P. F. Bang et al.; Bari: Edipuglia, 2006) 204–5; E. M. Harris, *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 150.

70 I.e. it could be formed between Roman and non-Roman citizens. For a basic definition, see Berger, *Dictionary*, s.v. *ius civile/gentium*, 527–9. Cf. D. Daube, ‘Societas as Consensual Contract’, *CambLawJ* 6.3 (1938) 385.

71 See É. del Chiaro, *Le contrat de société en droit romain* (Paris: Sirey, 1928) 289–303.

72 Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 467 (emphasis added).

### 3. Exegetical Insights on Phil 1.3–11 and 4.14–20

Unlike any other epistles, Paul begins his letter with a direct reference to the κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον he established with the Philippians, his συγκαίνονοι τῆς χάριτος (1.7). The mention might have seemed incidental if it did not assume a prominent role in the opening thanksgiving period of 1.3–11, which, as P. Schubert persuasively demonstrated, follows the regular syntactical pattern of Pauline thanksgivings, which generally announce ‘the occasion for and the contents of the letters which they introduce’.<sup>73</sup> For the sake of conciseness, the exegetical intricacies of 1.3–11 may be passed over. What is more important for us to focus on is the significance of Schubert’s proposed reading. If the construction εὐχαριστῶ ἐπὶ τινι (i.e. τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον here) is indeed that which is ‘most commonly used to express the cause for which thanks are offered’,<sup>74</sup> and if 1.3–11 does function programmatically, then it may be deduced that the Philippians’ κοινωνία in the gospel, which was expressed through financial and/or material support (cf. 4.18), provides *the* main reason for Paul’s initial thanksgiving, and, in fact, represents one major motive of the whole letter.<sup>75</sup>

Yet what is even more essential for us to determine is the actual connotation of κοινωνία in 1.5. In 1939, Schubert suggested that scholarship was in agreement on the question: ‘All interpreters agree that it means “for your *cooperation* in the gospel”.’<sup>76</sup> A more recent review of scholarship reveals that opinions in fact differ widely, although many commentators hold that (co-)partnership,<sup>77</sup> cooperation/*Mitarbeit*,<sup>78</sup> or participation/*Teilnahme* (in Paul’s evangelistic work),<sup>79</sup> is the dominant idea here. It is certainly difficult to see what other sense could be suitable in context. Neither marital union (κ. πρὸς βίου/γάμου), nor political alliance (or community), nor joint participation in cultic activities (κ. τῶν ἱερῶν/

73 P. Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939) 26–7.

74 Schubert, *Thanksgivings*, 77.

75 Cf. Schubert, *Thanksgivings*, 76–7.

76 Schubert, *Thanksgivings*, 73 (emphasis added). Most Bible translations (RSV, ASV, NKJ, NIV, ESV) render the clause by ‘partnership/fellowship in the gospel’, while German versions (Münchener NT, Neue Luther Bibel, Schlachter Bibel 2000) usually have ‘Gemeinschaft am Evangelium’.

77 E.g. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 16–17; F. F. Bruce, *Philippians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989) 31–3; Capper, ‘Dispute’, 206; M. A. Bockmuehl, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Black, 1997<sup>4</sup>) 60; Peterman, *Gift*, 99–103; G. W. Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 32–5, 47–8.

78 E.g. J. B. Lightfoot, *St Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1913) 83; K. Barth, *Erklärung des Philipperbriefes* (Munich: Kaiser, 1928) 8; J. Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1980<sup>3</sup>) 12, 45; P. T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 61–3.

79 E.g. P. Ewald, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1917<sup>3</sup>) 49–50; D. W. Michaelis, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1935) 13; P. Bonnard, *L’épître de Saint Paul aux Philippiens* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1950) 16.

θυσίων), nor the ownership or lease of assets in common (ἀπὸ/κατὰ/ἐπὶ κ.), appears to make sense. To render κοινωνία by ‘fellowship’ or ‘*Gemeinschaft*’ is hardly more helpful, for these words evoke a vague notion of togetherness or community. The best semantic alternative therefore seems to be the sense of cooperation or partnership, that is, of mutual involvement in a common enterprise (i.e. the proclamation of the gospel). This option certainly accords well with the subjective genitive ὑμῶν and ‘the critical qualifying phrase’ εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κτλ. (not τοῦ εὐαγγελίου), which, as Gerald W. Peterman and Charles J. Ellicott have aptly suggested, identifies the sphere of application of the κοινωνία (note the telic force of εἰς), rather than its ‘kind’ or ‘character’,<sup>80</sup> and marks the ‘object toward which the κοινωνία [is] directed’.<sup>81</sup>

Furthermore, this connotation resonates with that of ἐκοινώνησεν (εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως) in 4.15, and, to a lesser extent, with that of συγκοινωνήσαντές (μου τῇ θλίψει) in 4.14, which, in context, further alludes to the Philippians’ commitment to assist Paul with the material deprivations (cf. θλίψις) resulting from his missionary activities.<sup>82</sup> The significance of v. 15 has long puzzled commentators, who have variously interpreted it as an allusion to the Hellenistic principle of the maintenance of the *Pneumatiker*,<sup>83</sup> to epistolary exchanges,<sup>84</sup> to the Philippians’ oral response (of faith) to Paul’s preaching,<sup>85</sup> or even as an idiom denoting friendship or social reciprocity (*do ut des*).<sup>86</sup> Yet this λόγος δόσεως καὶ λήψεως may simply be understood as a Graecism of the common Latin expression *ratio dati et accepti* (cf. the Vulgate),<sup>87</sup> and thus as corresponding to a ledger of receipts and expenditures in which contributions were made (λήψεως), and from which money could be withdrawn (δόσεως) to cover the costs of Paul’s missionary activities.<sup>88</sup> Taking κοινονέω in the sense of ‘to partner/associate with’ and the prepositional phrase introduced by εἰς as

80 Peterman, *Gift*, 100–101.

81 C. J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon* (London: Parker, 1861) 5.

82 Cf. Baumert, *Koinonein*, 274.

83 Georgi, *Geschichte*, 47.

84 T. Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Deichert, 1900) 371.

85 O. Glombitza, ‘Der Dank Des Apostels iv 10–20’, *NovT* 7.2 (1964) 138.

86 Cf. Marshall, *Enmity*, 157–64; Peterman, *Gift*, 63–5, 146–51; P. Pilhofer, *Philippi*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995) 147–52.

87 Contra Marshall and Peterman, the accounting technicity of the expression, or of similar phrases, is preserved in the majority of cases. See Cicero, *Rosc. com.* 1.2, 4, 2.5, 3.8–9, *Verr.* 2.2.76, *De or.* 47.158, *Font.* 2.3; Valerius Maximus 3.7.1e; Seneca, *Vit. beat.* 23.5, *Ben.* 4.32.4; Velius Longus, *De ortho.*, p. 60 Keil, l. 13; C. Iulius Victor, *Ars rhetorica* 3.1 *De pragmatica* (l. 10).

88 For a more detailed discussion, see J. M. Ogéreau, ‘The Earliest Piece of Evidence of Christian Accounting: The Significance of the Phrase εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως (Phil 4:15)’, *Comptabilité(S)* (in press).

indicating the purpose or sphere of application of the agreed κοινωνία,<sup>89</sup> v. 15 is therefore best understood as evoking the joint establishment and joint administration of a common fund, as was indeed common of *societates* (cf. Cicero, *Verr.* 2.2.76, *Font.* 2; *Dig.* 3.4.1.1, 17.2.12, 17.2.82).

In v. 18, Paul then finally acknowledges the Philippians' *leitourgia* by means of what most rightly recognise as an accounting *terminus technicus*, the verb ἀπέχω, i.e. 'to receive what is due',<sup>90</sup> which immediately gives the impression that the verse is modelled on the formulaic language of ordinary receipts. The great majority of exegetes nonetheless prefer to interpret the term *metaphorically*, which is not without posing some difficulties.<sup>91</sup> Paul has actually received something, which he duly acknowledges. He is not employing the verb *metaphorically*,<sup>92</sup> if by 'metaphor' we mean a figure of speech whereby a word or phrase conveying a particular idea is applied to a different word or phrase to suggest an analogous idea (traditional view), or a figure of speech whereby a conceptual domain is expressed in terms of another (cognitive linguistic view).<sup>93</sup>

The prevalence of the formulaic use of the first-person singular ἀπέχω in a wide range of documents from Egypt, Judea, Greece and even Italy,<sup>94</sup> and the fact that Paul did not use less technical verbs such as ἔχω/ἔσχον, δέχομαι/δεξάμην, λαμβάνω/έλαβον or κομίζομαι/έκόμισα, make it unlikely that Paul employed ἀπέχω casually. It is indeed more probable that Paul and the Philippians were well acquainted with the commercial specificity of the term. A similar reasoning may be followed regarding the verb πληρώω, which is usually translated as 'to be well/amply supplied',<sup>95</sup> but which, in a large number of documentary sources, has a more specific economic connotation, i.e. 'to pay in full'.<sup>96</sup>

89 For similar uses, see *P.Lond.* v.1794: ὁμολογοῦμεν ἐτοίμως ἔχε[ι]ν κοινωνεῖν ἀλλήλοις ἐ[ί]ς τὴν προεπιρημένην τεχνὴν ὠπωρώνην (ll. 7-8); *P.Lond.* v.1660: κοινωνεῖν καὶ συμμετέχειν σοι εἰς τὸ ἐπιβάλλον σοι μέρος κατὰ τὸ ἥμισυ (ll. 18-19); *P.Köln* II.101: ὁμολογοῦμεν ἐπικοινωνήσιν ἀλλήλοις εἰς ἐργασίαν βρυτανικῆς τέχνης (ll. 7-10); *P.Oxy.* x.1280: ὁμολογῶ ... ἐπικοινωνῶν σοι εἰς τὸν ψυκτῆρα τοῦ καμηλῶνος (ll. 4-7).

90 Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* I.211-14; LSJ s.v. ἀπέχω; BDAG s.v. ἀπέχω.

91 E.g. A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1915) 104; Peterman, *Gift*, 143; G. D. Fee, *Paul's Letters to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 451; Hansen, *Philippians*, 322-3.

92 Proponents of a metaphorical interpretation implicitly admit this since they accept the basic lexical sense 'to receive (what is due)' for ἀπέχω, even though they reject a technical economic connotation. See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 539-40; Fee, *Philippians*, 450-1; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 265-6; Peterman, *Gift*, 142-4, 161; Hansen, *Philippians*, 322-3.

93 For a basic introduction of metaphor theory, see Z. Kövecses, *Metaphor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) vii-xi, 3-13.

94 E.g. *O.Wilck.* 416; *BGU* II.526; *P.Yadin* I.17; *IG IX.1* 192; *T.Sulpicii* 13. On the formulaic usage of the verb, see C. Préaux, 'Aspect verbal et préverbe', *ChrEg* 29 (1954) 139-41.

95 See ESV, ASV, NAS, NIV, RSV, NKJ. Cf. LSJ s.v. πληρώω; BDAG s.v. πληρώω.

96 E.g. *P.Yale* I.65; *BGU* XVI.2607; *IGRR* III.488. Cf. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* II.321; Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, s.v. πληρώω.

This unusual concentration of commercial terms effectively attributes to Paul's discourse a markedly business resonance and locates it within a particular economic register, which he must have found suitable for the audience.<sup>97</sup> In pragmatic terms, Paul's language creates the strong impression that an actual business transaction has taken place: he has received all of that which was intended for him (by virtue of some obligation) (ἀπέχω πάντα), for he has been paid in full (πεπλήρωμαι, 4.18).<sup>98</sup> Epaphroditus has dutifully performed his *leitourgia* by delivering the supplies. He may thus be exonerated from any possible allegations of embezzlement and can be warmly commended for having fulfilled his duty at the peril of his life (cf. 2.25–30).

Paul thereby appears to have scrupulously followed the appropriate business conventions of his day in a way that is very suggestive of the socio-economic nature of his κοινωνία with the Philippians. This reveals that he was operating according to a particular socio-economic perspective or model, which he innovatively applied to his relationships with the Philippians who supported his missionary activities.

#### 4. Socio-Economic Analysis of Paul's κοινωνία with the Philippians

This study may be concluded with a succinct socio-economic analysis of Paul's discourse and κοινωνία with the Philippians. Significantly, while commentators have long recognised the economic resonance of 4.15–20, few have explored the socio-economic implications of the passage, preferring to appeal instead to various sociological or socio-theological models.<sup>99</sup> These attempts, however, have hardly elucidated Paul's business terminology and have generally led to an impressionistic characterisation of his relationship with the Philippians. In effect, they have failed to grasp the socio-economic significance of their κοινωνία, which is *the* interpretive key to their economic exchanges and cooperation in missionary work.

As has been highlighted, documentary sources unequivocally attest to the wide spread of ancient partnerships throughout the Roman world,<sup>100</sup> which were often labelled as κοινωνίαι. From a Roman perspective, these would have been treated as a type of *societas* since *societas* pertained to *ius gentium*. There is therefore no reason to doubt that *incolae* of a Roman colony such as Philippi, whether Roman citizens or not, would not have been cognizant of *societas*. In

97 So Peterlin, *Philippians*, 153.

98 Cf. Fleury, 'Société', 55–6; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 204; Capper, 'Dispute', 197–8.

99 E.g. Peterman, *Gift*; Briones, *Financial Policy*.

100 See also the Dacian *societas danistariae* (*CIL* III, pp. 950–1), the many (Baetican) *tituli picti* of Monte Testaccio mentioning *socii* (e.g. *CIL* XV.3730, 3881), or the partnership contract between Jewish and Egyptian potters for the lease of a pottery workshop (*C.Pap.Hengstl* 1.46).

fact, they must have been acquainted with its subtleties much better than most of us ever will, which requires that its purpose, characteristics and mechanisms be herein briefly expounded.

While the origins of *societas* remain uncertain, sources are generally clear on its main objectives and basic characteristics. Its principal aim was '[e]ssentially the union of funds, skill, or labour, or a combination of them, for a common [lawful] purpose which often had, but *need not have*, profit for its aim'.<sup>101</sup> Rather than being based on an 'antagonism of interests' between *socii*,<sup>102</sup> *societas* depended on the fulfilment of mutual obligations which were determined only by *consensus* (Gaius, *Inst.* 3.137), i.e. agreement, which could be expressed orally, in writing, or even tacitly.<sup>103</sup> These obligations could relate to 'un ensemble d'opérations déterminées', or simply to 'une seule opération' (*una res*), since 'aucun principe ne s'opposait à la limitation de l'objet de leur société'.<sup>104</sup>

What is particularly important to note is that, contrary to modern forms of partnership, *societas* could be established for the pursuit of non-capitalist aims and lacked entirely contractual formalism (Gaius, *Inst.* 3.136). It was initiated and terminated by the mere intention of the *socii* (Gaius, *Inst.* 3.135; *Dig.* 17.2.31), who could dispense with verbal or written formulae (*verba* and *litterae/scripturae*). By virtue of its consensual nature, *societas* was thus governed by the precept of *bona fides*, i.e. 'the reciprocal confidence, honesty, good faith of the parties, at both the conclusion and the execution of the assumed duties',<sup>105</sup> which bound *socii* to one another. The occurrence of *mala fides* ('dishonesty'), *fraus* ('fraud'), *dolus malus* ('deceit'), or *culpa levis* ('minor negligence'),<sup>106</sup> on the other hand, granted the right of an *actio pro socio* (Justinian, *Inst.* 3.25.9), a legal action which implied 'an allegation of breach of faith' that led to condemnation and *infamia*.<sup>107</sup> In other words, the *actio* rendered the dissolution of the *societas* effective and definite, since the *fides* necessary for the good conduct of the partnership was undermined (*Dig.* 17.2.63.10, 17.2.65 pr.).

This is an important point that Sampley's critics have generally misunderstood.<sup>108</sup> A *societas* was not held together by its legal status. *consensus* alone

101 W. W. Buckland, *A Text-Book of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963<sup>3</sup>) 506–7 (emphasis added). Cf. del Chiaro, *Le contrat*, 106; Arangio-Ruiz, *La società*, 63.

102 Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 451.

103 Buckland, *Text-Book*, 481; Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 454; Berger, *Dictionary*, s.v. *consensus*, 408.

104 Del Chiaro, *Le contrat*, 61.

105 Berger, *Dictionary*, s.v. *bona fides*, 374.

106 For basic definitions, see Berger, *Dictionary*, s.v. *culpa levis*, 420; *dolus*, 440; *fraus*, 477; *mala fides*, 573.

107 Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 460–4 (citation at 460).

108 E.g. Bormann, *Philippi*, 187; J. Reumann, *Philippians* (New York: Doubleday, 2008) 147.

Reumann's rhetorical question is particularly illustrative of NT scholars' lack of



was the binding force between the *socii*. The distinction is subtle yet crucial, for it is counter-intuitive to moderns for whom the legality of a contract is what ensures, indeed enforces, its implementation. The Romans would have thought otherwise, considering *consensus* and *fides* as guaranteeing the fulfilment of obligations. Law only played a role when a prejudice occurred which could not be resolved amicably. In other words, an *actio* ‘did not aim at enforcing the obligations of the partners to make contributions to the (existing) *societas*; it was concerned, solely, with a general settlement of accounts between the two (ex-)partners involved in the litigation’.<sup>109</sup> At most, the *actio* served as a deterrent against fraudulent behaviour, and would have actually not exposed Paul to greater legal risks than his artisan activities already did.

Within this general framework, four main types of partnership have generally been identified:<sup>110</sup>

1. *societas unius rei*: a partnership towards a particular, profitable or non-profitable, objective or course of action (cf. Justinian, *Inst.* 3.25.6; *Dig.* 17.2.5 pr.);
2. *societas alicuius negotiationis* (most common): a partnership in any business enterprise (cf. Gaius, *Inst.* 3.148; Justinian, *Inst.* 3.25 pr.);
3. *societas omnium/universorum bonorum quae ex quaestu veniunt*: a partnership for all (non-specific) business affairs, which involved a sharing of the revenues thereby generated (cf. *Dig.* 17.2.7);
4. *societas omnium/universorum bonorum* (uncommon by 1–250 CE): a partnership whereby all of the partners’ assets were put in common (cf. Gaius, *Inst.* 3.148; Justinian, *Inst.* 3.25 pr.; *Dig.* 17.2.1.1, 17.2.1.3.1).

While Paul and the Philippians may have never given thought to this (juristic) classification (it was amply sufficient that they knew the purpose and terms of their *societas*), it may be useful to determine the category under which their partnership may have fallen. Given the non-commercial character of Paul’s *κοινωνία* εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and the uncommonness (and inappropriateness) of *societas omnium bonorum*, Paul’s *κοινωνία* may be best described as a *societas unius rei*, a partnership whose major non-profitable *res* was the εὐαγγέλιον, i.e. the proclamation of the gospel.

These basic characteristics having been laid out, it is now possible to conjecture how Paul’s *κοινωνία* with the Philippians may have operated and to reflect

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understanding of *societas*: ‘Would Philippian Christians have gone to court to “legalize” their association ...?’ Of course not. They did not need to.

109 Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 460 (emphasis added).

110 For helpful discussions of these various types, see Buckland, *Text-Book*, 507–14; Arangio-Ruiz, *La società*, 116–49; Zimmermann, *Obligations*, 451–5; Berger, *Dictionary*, s.v. *societas*, 708–9.

upon the potential reasons and significance of this preferred strategy. Although our knowledge of the circumstances leading to the formation and implementation of their κοινωνία is extremely limited, the consensual nature of *societas* allows one to conclude that both Paul and the Philippians had consented to the partnership, whether expressly or tacitly. Regardless of who took the initiative, both parties fully endorsed the decision to associate, which necessarily implies that Paul actually took a much more proactive and strategic approach towards the organisation and funding of his mission than what has usually been appreciated.

In the light of the basic structure of *societas* and the evidence of 4.15–20, it can also be deduced that Paul's main obligation to the κοινωνία was to supply his own efforts, time, energy, skills and missionary experience in promoting the gospel, i.e. the *ars* and *opera*. The Philippians, on the other hand, were to provide primarily the *pecunia*, i.e. financial and/or material resources. While this arrangement may seem odd, it was in fact a common distribution of responsibilities among *socii*, whose contributions need not have been equal or similar (cf. Gaius, *Inst.* 3.149; *Dig.* 17.2.5–6, 17.2.52.7; Cicero, *Rosc. com.* 10.27–12.37; *T.Sulpicii* 66).<sup>111</sup> The Philippians' regular contributions acknowledged in 4.16 and 4.18 thus did not constitute friendly *gifts* (i.e. χαρίσματα, δώρα, *donationes*), acts of charity (i.e. ἐλεημοσύνη), or loans (i.e. ἔρανοι, δάνεια, *mutua*), but corresponded to their capital investment to the account of the *societas*, the λόγος δόσεως καὶ λήψεως of 4.15. Paul could have then utilised the funds to pay for the operational and logistical costs of his missionary activities, as he proceeded to fulfil the purpose of their partnership. Hence, his acceptance of their δόμα was neither a denial of his Christ-empowered αὐτόρκεια (cf. 4.11–13), nor a sign of covetousness, in contrast with those who preached the gospel out of envy and personal ambition (1.15–17).<sup>112</sup> In any case, his heart was not set on the Philippians' δόμα itself, on personal gains at the detriment of his κοινωνοί, but (ἀλλά) he was eager (ἐπιζητῶ) to bear fruit (καρπός) for the *societas* (cf. 4.17), that is, to work towards the προκοπή of the gospel (cf. 1.12).

As to the actual reasons for Paul's appropriation of the *societas* model, they may have been several, though two immediate benefits stand out: (1) the flexible structure of *societas* itself; 2) the opportunity it afforded him to circumvent what may be broadly described as patronage, and thus to remain free from its social obligations. From a purely socio-economic perspective, *societas* represented an effective strategy to raise finances by combining Paul's own missionary expertise with the resources of a few individuals, who became his active *partners* in his

111 Szelc, *Le contrat*, 267, 272–8; Broekaert, 'Joining Forces', 224.

112 To employ the funds of the *societas* purely for his personal interest, however, would have constituted a breach of *fides*, which could have terminated the partnership (cf. Justinian, *Inst.* 3.25.4).

mission. Thus, it enabled him to make the most of limited financial and human resources without having to become dependent on wealthier individuals, who, for all intents and purposes, would have assumed a patronage role over him.

From a sociological point of view, the organisational flexibility of *societas*, its consensual nature and lack of hierarchy, ensured that Paul had a greater degree of freedom and initiative to fulfil the purpose of the κοινωμία as he best saw fit. Whether, as Sampley suggested, Paul adopted *societas* to cultivate his relationships with the Philippians remains questionable. *fides* and *consensus* were prerequisites rather than anticipated benefits of *societates*, which explains why they were primarily established between members of the same *familia* or *collegium*,<sup>113</sup> and why we never hear of Paul's κοινωμία with the Galatians or the Corinthians. Nevertheless, and this is perhaps Sampley's greatest insight, Paul may have valued the relative social symmetry, egalitarianism and mutual dependence that *societas* required of partners, which would have served his innovative agenda to remodel structurally social relations within the ἐκκλησία.<sup>114</sup> Whatever the case may be, Paul must have found *societas* to be a legitimate and effective means to sponsor his mission.

113 Broekaert, 'Joining Forces', 229.

114 Cf. E. A. Judge, 'Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul', *TynB* 35 (1984) 5–6.