

The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity*

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This article endeavours to look at the Jerusalem collection from a fresh perspective by examining the language of *κοινωνία* Paul employs to describe the project in Romans 15.26 and in 2 Corinthians 8.4 and 9.13. After adducing oft-neglected literary and documentary evidence, this essay argues that Paul's audience must have understood *κοινωνία* to bear significant political and socio-economic implications. This article concludes that the collection was aimed at establishing a new order of socio-economic equality and solidarity among the emergent Christ-believing communities, at both a local and global level, and across socio-cultural and ethnic divides.

Keywords: Equality/*isotes*, Jerusalem collection, *koinonia*, Paul, politics.

'What has Corinth to do with Jerusalem?' Long before Tertullian asked a similar question (*Praescr.* 7), we may assume that this was an objection some of the Corinthians put to Paul when he first mentioned the collection for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem (cf. Rom 15.26).¹ What, indeed, did the

* A shorter version of this article was presented at the annual conference of the *Society for the Study of Early Christianity* entitled 'Corinth—Paul, People and Politics', held at Macquarie University, Sydney, May 2011. Special thanks are due to L. L. Welborn and B. Nongbri for their assistance with earlier versions of this paper. I also wish to thank warmly J. M. G. Barclay and the anonymous reviewer for their valuable, critical comments.

¹ Note: There is no need to understand the term *πτωχοί* mentioned in Rom 15.26 (cf. Gal 2.10) as referring to an eschatological self-designation adopted by the Jerusalem believers, as has been propounded by K. Holl and D. Georgi, but persuasively refuted by L. E. Keck. In Paul, the word never bears an eschatological connotation, but always seems to qualify a state of socio-economic depression (apart from Gal 4.9). As recent socio-economic studies have confirmed, poverty must have characterised the majority of the inhabitants of Palestine as well as most of the members of Pauline communities. See K. Holl, 'Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältnis zu dem der Urgemeinde', *Sitzungsbericht der Berliner Akademie* (1921) 920–47; D. Georgi, *Remembering the Poor* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992) 17–18, 33–4; L. E.

privileged *Colonia Laus Iuliae Corinthiensis* have to do with the religious and cultural centre of the Jewish people?² What political treaty, economic agreement, socio-cultural connection, or even ethnic relationship existed between the two cities that could justify Paul's request? It is possible to imagine that some Corinthians may have been fairly perplexed at the purpose of the collection at first.³ However, our familiarity with the topic has somewhat prevented us from appreciating the sheer audacity and radical nature of Paul's project. True, it is not as though Gentiles were totally estranged to the idea of bestowing benefactions upon the Jews. Some so-called 'god-fearers', for whatever religious or socio-political reason, did show themselves benevolent through the sponsorship of buildings or the giving of alms, for instance (e.g., Luke 7.4; Acts 10.2).⁴ However, the collection Paul had in mind represented an act of charity altogether different. Indeed, this article will argue that it was intended to transcend geo-political, socio-economic, and ethnic distinctions in a revolutionary way, as well as redefine the social foundations of the emergent Christ-believing communities.

Keck, 'The Poor among the Saints in the New Testament', *ZNW* 56 (1965) 100–29; Keck, 'The Poor among the Saints in Jewish Christianity and Qumran', *ZNW* 57 (1966) 54–78. See also J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1969) 87–144; Z. Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* (London: Routledge, 1994); J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); E. W. Stegemann and W. Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999) 104–36.

- 2 This seems to have remained the name of the colony until at least the Flavian period. See M. E. H. Walbank, 'What's in a Name? Corinth under the Flavians', *ZPE* 139 (2002) 251–64.
- 3 Although they seemed eager at first (2 Cor 8.10), they soon retracted. Downs understands their reticence to be ethnically related. Mitchell esteems it is Paul's 'risky rhetorical strategy' in 2 Cor 8, which she thinks immediately follows 1 Corinthians, and his supervision of the collection that angered them. D. J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles* (WUNT 2/248; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 117; M. M. Mitchell, 'Paul's Letters to Corinth: The Interpretive Intertwining of Literary and Historical Reconstruction', *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth* (ed. D. N. Schowalter and S. J. Friesen; Cambridge: Harvard University, 2005) 307–38.
- 4 Augustus and his wife, for instance, showed themselves well-disposed towards the Jews and offered gifts and sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple out of their own revenues (Philo *Legat.* 157, 317–319). For other epigraphic evidence of gentile benefactors see, for example, MAMA 6.264 = *CIJ* 766; cf. B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris: Gabalda, 1967) #33, 34–6. Regarding a possible soup kitchen in Aphrodisias in which 'god-fearers' took part, see J. M. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-fearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1987); cf. E. A. Judge, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, 9 (Macquarie University: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 2002) #25, 73–80. The real identity of these 'god-fearers' remains a moot question. The term θεοσεβής itself may not necessarily reflect pious commitment but benevolent attitude towards the Jews (e.g., Poppaea, Nero's wife, is called θεοσεβής by Josephus in *Ant.* 20.195). See J. Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek?* (London: T&T Clark, 2002) 31–68, esp. 37–40.

If the Corinthians may have been somewhat puzzled at the significance and purpose of this collection, their perplexity seems nothing compared to that of modern scholars with respect to its actual theological motivations (as is illustrated by the enormous amount of secondary literature on the topic). It is beyond the purview of this article to offer a detailed review of the history of scholarship. It is sufficient to mention that the collection has been traditionally understood along four main lines of interpretation (which are not necessarily mutually exclusive): (1) the fulfilment of an eschatological event;⁵ (2) the expression of the Gentiles' moral and/or social obligation towards the Jews;⁶ (3) an ecumenical offering;⁷ (4) a charitable act in the form of material relief.⁸ What is particularly important for us to recognise is that an overwhelming majority of these treatises have primarily focused on the theological rationale of the collection, ignoring its more practical economic implications, or even its political dimension.⁹ For, as H. D. Betz has astutely remarked: 'A financial contribution which involved Greeks as donors and Palestinian Jews as recipients was certainly a political matter'.¹⁰ A 'matter of ecclesiastical politics', he concedes, but a matter of politics nonetheless, socio-economic politics, if I may add.¹¹ That is to say, it must have been more than a random act of generosity, which in and of itself may not have been worth all the trouble. Indeed, I shall propose that, for Paul, the whole enterprise was rooted in the conviction that the advent of the eschatological kingdom of God had inaugurated a new socio-economic order, which was to become

5 J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1959); K. F. Nickle, *The Collection* (Naperville: Allenson, 1966); Georgi, *Remembering*; S. Wan, 'Collection for the Saints as an Anticolonial Act', *Paul and Politics* (ed. R. A. Horsley; Harrisburg: Trinity International, 2000) 191–215.

6 Holl, 'Kirchenbegriff'; K. Berger, 'Almosen für Israel', *NTS* 23 (1977) 180–204; S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor* (WUNT 2/124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

7 That is to say, it was aimed at fostering unity and solidarity between the Gentile and Jewish sections of the church. See O. Cullmann, 'The Early Church and the Ecumenical Problem', *ATHR* 40 (1958) 181–9, 294–301; Munck, *Paul*, 290; J. Hainz, *Koinonia* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1982); Wan, 'Collection'; Downs, *Offering*.

8 D. G. Horrell, 'Paul's Collection: Resources for a Materialist Theology', *EpR* 22.2 (1995) 74–83; P. Vassiliadis, 'The Collection Revisited', *Deltion Biblikon Meleton* 11 (1992) 42–48; Meggitt, *Paul*, 159; Downs, *Offering*. The names herein cited are those of the main proponents. A neat classification is somewhat difficult as scholars' positions can often overlap, as is the case with Munck, Wan, or Downs, for example. For a more exhaustive and up-to-date review of the literature see Downs, *Offering*, 3–26. Cf. S. McKnight, 'Collection for the Saints', *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (ed. G. F. Hawthorne and R. P. Martin; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993) 143–7.

9 Horrell and Vassiliadis are two notable exceptions. See P. Vassiliadis, 'Equality and Justice in Classical Antiquity and in Paul: The Social Implications of the Pauline Collection', *SVTQ* 36 (1992) 51–9; and Horrell, 'Collection'.

10 H. D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 68.

11 Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 68.

distinctive of the emergent Christ-believing communities on a global scale.¹² The Jerusalem collection was thus the practical expression of κοινωνία across socio-cultural and ethnic boundaries. It was the manifestation of a persistent concern for socio-economic equality and solidarity within the Christ-centred *ekklesia*.¹³ I will go as far as to say that it was the practical embodiment of an ecclesiastical ideal, which itself seems to have been inspired by that of the first Jerusalem community, the so-called ‘community of goods’ inaugurated after the Pentecost event (Acts 2.44; 4.32). In a sense, I shall argue for a greater degree of continuity between Paul’s model of community and that of the Jerusalem church. This perspective, it must be said, does not intend to demean the work of previous scholarship. Rather, it is meant to emphasise what seems to me to have been a neglected aspect of the collection by bringing a different set of questions to the material.¹⁴ This task is important in so far as, until recently, economic concerns, and the question of poverty in particular, have been much neglected issues in Pauline Studies.¹⁵ This article seeks to contribute to this new field of research and to provide some insight into what may well have been Paul’s overarching objective for this project.

To begin with, I propose to draw our attention to the ways in which Paul carefully describes the collection throughout his letters. In 1 Cor 16.1–4, Paul’s earliest reference to the project chronologically, he calls it a λογεία, which is the general term for any kind of voluntary, or compulsory, monetary collection.¹⁶ In

12 Wan, ‘Collection’, 196, hints in this direction but without elaborating any further.

13 Cf. Vassiliadis, ‘Equality’, 59: ‘Paul’s emphasis was not upon social *transformation* as such, but upon the *formation* of an ecclesial (eucharistic) reality that inevitably became the decisive element in creating a new social reality of justice and equality’ (italics original).

14 Typically, E. Bammel comments that Paul ‘does not devote particular attention to these matters... His eschatological orientation is too strong to allow him to seek amelioration of conditions which are in any way tolerable’. E. Bammel, ‘πρωχός’, *TDNT* 6.910.

15 Meggitt’s work remains fundamental in this respect. More recently, his main arguments have been further explored by S. J. Friesen, who has also proposed some possible ideological reasons for this neglect. These suggestions have been strongly contested by J. M. G. Barclay, however. See S. J. Friesen, ‘Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus’, *JSNT* 26 (2004) 323–61; Friesen, ‘The Blessings of Hegemony: Poverty, Paul’s Assemblies, and the Class Interests of the Professoriate’, *The Bible in the Public Square: Reading the Signs of the Times* (ed. C. B. Kittredge, E. B. Aitken, and J. A. Draper; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008) 117–28; J. M. G. Barclay, ‘Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen’, *JSNT* 26 (2004) 363–6. For more recent contributions, see B. W. Longenecker and K. D. Liebengood, eds., *Engaging Economics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); and B. W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). On poverty in the ancient world in general, see M. Atkins and R. Osborne, eds., *Poverty in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006); W. V. Harris, ‘Poverty and Destitution in the Roman Empire’, in *Rome’s Imperial Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011) 27–54.

16 LSJ, s.v. λογεία. Cf. A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies* (Winona Lake: Alpha, 1979) 142–3, 219–20; Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965) 104–5; J. H. Moulton

2 Corinthians 8, which could well be the earliest letter of what is now known as 2 Corinthians, as M. M. Mitchell has recently suggested,¹⁷ when the Corinthians' eagerness to give has cooled down, Paul then presents it as a divine privilege or gift, in which they can participate voluntarily and out of love (cf. ἀυθαίρετοι, 8.3).¹⁸ No less than eight times is the term χάρις indeed employed to refer to either the collection *per se*, or to God's favour enabling them to give (8.1, 4, 6–7, 9, 19; 9.8, 14; cf. 1 Cor 16.3).¹⁹ In 2 Corinthians 9, which many scholars consider to constitute a different letter,²⁰ the collection is then described several times as a διακονία [τῆς λειτουργίας] (9.1, 12–13; cf. Rom 16.31), and εὐλογία (9.5). As J. R. Harrison has amply demonstrated, in these two chapters Paul's rhetoric eventually results in a dramatic alteration and critique of the honorific conventions and social expectations of the Graeco-Roman system of benefaction.²¹ What remains unclear, however, is to what extent Paul's rhetoric is related to the actual nature of the project. Was it simply a charitable act in which the Corinthians were mere 'brokers' of God's grace, as the language of reciprocity somewhat evokes (cf. Rom 15.27)?²² Or was it primarily driven by the principle of ἰσότης introduced in 8.13–14, that is, by the necessity that there be a certain equality or fairness in the distribution of wealth within the early church (v. 14: ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης; cf. v. 13: ἀλλ' ἐξ ἰσότητος)? The reference to ἰσότης is deeply intriguing at this point, especially since it appears only five times in the Septuagint and in Pseudepigraphical literature (Job 36.29; Zech 4.7; *Letter of Aristeas* 1.263; *Ps.-Phoc.* 1.137; *Ps. Sol.* 17.41), and only one other

and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930) 377; BDAG, s.v. λογεία; G. Kittel, 'λογεία', *TDNT* 4.282–3.

17 Mitchell, 'Letters'.

18 Notice also the repetitions of προθυμία (8.11, 12, 19; 9.2), σπουδή (8.7, 8, 16), and τὸ θέλειν (8.10).

19 A precise categorisation of Paul's various usages of χάρις is difficult here. For a detailed discussion see J. R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* (WUNT 2/172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 294–303. Cf. G. W. Griffith, 'Abounding in Generosity: A Study of Charis in 2 Corinthians 8–9' (Ph.D. diss., University of Durham, 2005).

20 For a good review of scholarship on this matter, see M. E. Thrall, *Second Corinthians* (ICC 2; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994) 1–49; Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 10–25. For a more recent contribution, see Mitchell, 'Letters'.

21 Harrison, *Grace*, 294–344. Cf. Wan, 'Collection', 215, for whom '2 Corinthians 8–9 is...an anti-paternal statement'. See also S. J. Friesen, 'Paul and Economics: The Jerusalem Collection as an Alternative to Patronage', *Paul Unbound* (ed. M. D. Given; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010) 24–54.

22 On the language of reciprocity specifically, see Harrison's crucial contribution, despite the earlier work of Joubert, *Benefactor*. On the application of the concept of 'brokerage' to Paul's relationship with the Corinthians, see the recent article by D. Briones, 'Mutual Brokers of Grace: A Study in 2 Corinthians 1.3–11', *NTS* 56 (2010) 536–56.

time in the entire NT (Col 4.1).²³ The term itself is not alien to Greek thought, as H. Windisch noticed long ago ('Dies Wort...zwar ohne hebräisches Äquivalent...ist ein Terminus der hellenistischen Philosophie'), occurring numerous times in ancient discussions of legal and political theory.²⁴ In a civic context, ἰσότης denotes the sense of equality, fairness, and impartiality, in relation to justice (δικαιοσύνη/τὸ δίκαιον) and the law (νόμος), an ideal which is further expressed by the common compound nouns ἰσοπολιτεία or ἰσονομία (e.g., Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 8.11.5, 8.13.5; Diogenes Laertius 8.10; Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 17.9–10).²⁵ For Aristotle, 'reciprocal' or 'proportional equality' is what ensures the preservation of states (*Pol.* 2.1.5: τὸ ἴσον τὸ ἀντιπεπονηθὸς σῶζει τὰς πόλεις). When applied more specifically to human relationships, ἰσότης is then what enables the most perfect expression of friendship. Φιλότης ἢ ἰσότης ('equality is friendship'), the proverb indeed stated (Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 8.5.5; cf. *Eth. Nic.* 8.7.2–4, 9.8.2; *Eth. Eud.* 7.6.9; Iamblichus, *VP* 30.167–168).²⁶ Although the Greek principle seems to have informed Paul's reflection here, as Betz has confidently asserted,²⁷ Paul actually illustrated the kind of equality he had in mind by citing almost verbatim Exod 16.18 in the following v. 15.²⁸ Yet, in his recollection of Israel's story he omitted the important fact that after all the manna had been collected, exactly one omer was measured out and distributed to each so as to ensure equal provision of food. Paul thus seems simply to have wanted to emphasise that none had either too much (οὐκ ἐπλεόνασεν) or too little (οὐκ ἠλαττόνησεν), since each received as 'was fitting' (εἰς τοὺς καθήκοντας παρ' ἑαυτῶ; Exod 16.18), i.e., in proportion to their need. It is therefore unlikely that by appealing to the principle of ἰσότης and Exod 16.18 Paul wished to impose an exact equalisation of resources across all

23 The term is never found in Josephus, but it occurs 79 times in Philo (*Opif.* 1.51, 106; *Cher.* 1.105; *Sacr.* 1.27; *Plant.* 1.122; etc.). The adjective ἴσος is much more common, however (e.g., Exod 30.34; Lev 7.10; 2 Macc 9.15).

24 H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924) 258. Thus I agree with Georgi as to its Hellenistic origin, but disagree with his interpretation of 2 Cor 8.13 (*viz.*, ἐξ ἰσότητος = ἐκ θεοῦ), which fails to apply to v. 14. See Georgi, *Remembering*, 84–91, 138–40. Cf. G. Stählin, 'ἴσος', *TDNT* 2.345–8; Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 67–8; and Vassiliadis, 'Equality'.

25 LSJ, s.v. ἰσότης. Cf. *OCD*³, 771, *isonomia* and *isopoliteia*; and J. W. Jones, *The Law and Legal Theory of the Greeks* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956) 72–92.

26 Cf. J. Dupont, 'La communauté des biens aux premiers jours de l'église (Actes 2, 42.44–45; 4, 32.34–35)', *Études sur les actes des apôtres* (Paris: Cerfs, 1967) 516–8; L. T. Johnson, 'Making Connections: The Material Expression of Friendship in the New Testament', *Interpretation* 58 (2004) 160.

27 'What Paul had in mind in v 13 was no doubt the Greek virtue which played such a large role in law, politics, and morality'. Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 67–8.

28 This approach is not completely foreign to the Jewish tradition. Philo himself applies the same passage to the equitable, proportional distribution of food at the Passover festival (*Quis Her.* 191–3). Cf. Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 259; Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 69; and Griffith, 'Generosity', 182–217.

the churches, an impractical, if not impossible objective to attain. Rather, his edited citation suggests that the goal was to achieve a relative, proportional equality by restoring a certain balance between need and surplus. As G. Griffith has proposed, Paul was not so much advocating ‘quantifiable equivalence’ among the churches, but sought to implement a (dynamic) ‘process of equalization within the body of Christ where those who have a surplus share with others who have needs’.²⁹ G. Stählin is then also probably right to assert that Paul saw *ἰσότης*, ‘on the part of the Christian’, as ‘a regulative principle of mutual assistance, as in the ideal picture of Ac. 2.44f.; 4.36f.’.³⁰ If this were truly the case, then Paul’s ideal of *ἰσότης* among Jews and Gentiles would constitute another severe critique of the socio-economic and ethnic stratification of Graeco-Roman society.³¹

Yet, what is even more significant is Paul’s use of the term *κοινωνία* to describe the collection. It first appears in 2 Cor 8.4 and 9.13, and then in Rom 15.26, which, from a chronological point of view, is the last reference to the collection written from Corinth itself. Interestingly, in the latter two instances *κοινωνία* has generally been translated as a (monetary) ‘contribution/distribution’ (cf. Tyndale 1534, KJV 1611, RSV, NAS, NIV, NJB, ESV), ‘une contribution/dons’ (Louis Second 1910, Nouvelle Edition Genève), and ‘eine Sammlung/Kollekte’ (Zürcher Bibel 2008, Schlachter 2000; cf. Luther Bibel 1545: ‘eine gemeine Steuer!’), thereby differing from the more common rendition ‘fellowship’ or ‘sharing’ (or ‘communion’, ‘Gemeinschaft’).³² In modern times, this

29 Griffith, ‘Generosity’, 216.

30 G. Stählin, ‘ἰσοζ’, *TDNT* 2.348.

31 For most Greek city-states, *ἰσότης* was only conceivable among the male citizen body of a particular city. For examples of prejudice towards other ethnicities, see Isocrates 3.54, 170; 4.157–160; 5.16–17; 8.89; or Demosthenes’ derogatory comments against Philip of Macedon, ‘a barbarian from no honourable place, whence no decent slave can even be purchased’ (Demosthenes, *Or.* 9.31). Admittedly, this kind of animosity was as much politically motivated as ethnically related, but it is difficult to separate the two. Cf. Jones, *Theory*, 84–5. For evidence of ethnic tension in Egypt between Greeks or Romans and Jews or Egyptians, see for instance *BGU* 1210, *SB* 9564, or the letters of Claudius and Caracalla to the Alexandrians (*P.Lond.* 1912, *P.Giss.* 40). Similar tensions might have existed among the Jews themselves (if one takes the terms *Ἑλληνιστής* and *Ἐβραῖος* as ethnic markers; cf. Acts 6). Secondary literature on the topic of ethnic identity and interaction in the ancient world is constantly growing. For a recent study of Luke’s discourse of ethnic negotiation and hybridity in Acts (with a rich bibliography), see Eric D. Barreto, *Ethnic Negotiations: The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16* (WUNT 2/294; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

32 In 2 Cor 9.13, only the RSV, NAS, and ESV translate *κοινωνία* as ‘contribution’, while other versions prefer ‘fellowship’ or ‘sharing’. In 1 Cor 1.9; 2 Cor 13.13; and Gal 2.9, ‘fellowship’ is the term mostly employed (NKJ, RSV, NAS, NIV, ESV; the NJB translates as ‘partners/partnership’ in 1 Cor 1.9 and Gal 2.9, while the NKJ has ‘communion’ in 2 Cor 13.13). For other instances of the term in 1 Cor 10.16; 2 Cor 6.14; 8.4; Phil 1.5; 2.1; 3.10; and Phlm 6, the words ‘participation’, ‘sharing’, ‘partnership’, are more frequently used. Betz is one of the rare commentators to translate *κοινωνία* as ‘partnership’ in 2 Cor 9.13, while Furnish

interpretation seems to have been largely dependent on the influential work of H. Seesemann, upon whom F. Hauck relied heavily in his article in G. Kittel's theological dictionary.³³ Given the importance of this tool in biblical studies, it is hardly surprising that Seesemann's position was to be adopted by a string of commentators (except R. Jewett and the editor of BDAG who follow G. W. Peterman—see below).³⁴ Seesemann argued that in Rom 15.26 especially Paul gave the abstract word κοινωνία, which here signifies 'Mitteilbarkeit' (it is not clear to me what Seesemann understands by 'Mitteilbarkeit'), a concrete significance by associating it with the infinitive ποιήσασθα. So that, in this instance, it could only mean 'Kollekte'.³⁵ Notably, J. Y. Campbell, who had published his seminal study a year ahead of Seesemann, had come to the same (short-sighted) conclusion: 'Here [Rom 15.26] κοινωνία must mean "contribution". No parallel to this meaning is to be found in earlier writers.'³⁶ As we shall see, Campbell missed some important evidence, which his successors would not notice either. Hence, almost none of them would depart from his and Seesemann's conclusions.³⁷ But despite their confident assertions, it is highly questionable that Paul's audience would have

shows some awareness of this possible connotation. Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 124; P. V. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AB 32A; New York: Doubleday, 1984) 401, 412.

- 33 H. Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINΩNIA im Neuen Testament* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933) 28–9; F. Hauck, 'κοινός', *TDNT* 3.808. Seesemann's interpretation may have been influenced by earlier translations, as is often the case in NT lexicography, according to J. A. L. Lee. Notably, the Vulgate (e.g., the 1598 Clementine version: *collationem aliquam facere*), the translations by Luther (1522) and Tyndale (1526), and the KJV (1611)—the versions upon which all future English and German translations have depended in significant ways—all show this understanding. Cf. J. A. L. Lee, *A History of New Testament Lexicography* (New York: Lang, 2003) 31–44.
- 34 So Dunn, despite an informed discussion on the significance of κοινωνία. J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (WBC 38B; Waco: Word, 1988) 870, 875. Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932) 231; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1957) 278; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 721–2; D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 898, 903–4. But see R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006) 927–8; BDAG, s.v. κοινωνία.
- 35 Seesemann, *KOINΩNIA*, 29. Seesemann was actually somewhat puzzled at first: 'Paulus bezeichnet hier mit κοινωνία die Kollekte selbst; das geht aus dem Zusammenhang eindeutig hervor. Es fragt sich aber, wie κοινωνία diese Bedeutung erhalten konnte' (28).
- 36 J. Y. Campbell, 'KOINΩNIA and its Cognates in the New Testament', *JBL* 51 (1932) 373.
- 37 See G. V. Jourdan, 'KOINΩNIA in I Corinthians 10:16', *JBL* 67 (1948) 114; P. C. Bori, *KOINΩNIA* (Brescia: Paideia, 1972) 84–6; J. M. McDermott, 'The Biblical Doctrine of KOINΩNIA', *BZ* 19 (1975) 71–72, 225. Hainz is not totally convinced by Seesemann's arguments; nonetheless, he understands Rom 15.26 as referring to 'diese Konkretion der Gemeinschaft im Gemeinschaftswerk der paulinischen Gemeinden'. Hainz, *Koinonia*, 110–12, 144–54. Others, still, prefer to emphasise the theological dimension of κοινωνία. See G. Panikulang, *Koinōnia in the New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979) 57.

understood the expression ‘κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι’ in the way they suggest. As Peterman rightly argued, the term κοινωνία never has the concrete significance of ‘(monetary) contribution’ in surviving ancient sources, its unusual collocation with τινά and ποιοῦμαι notwithstanding.³⁸ Instead, he suggested that Bauer’s understanding remained valid: ‘sie haben sich vorgenommen, e. enges Gemeinschaftsverhältnis herzustellen mit d. Armen’ (they have undertaken to establish a rather close relation with the poor).³⁹ Although Peterman’s study could hardly be said to be exhaustive—he adduced only three pieces of literary and epigraphic evidence—his intuition was nonetheless correct.⁴⁰ A more thorough investigation of about 25 inscriptions and 120 papyri containing the word κοινωνία, and ranging from IV BCE to VI CE, plainly shows that the meaning ‘(monetary) contribution’ does not occur⁴¹—I cannot be as definite *vis-à-vis* the literary sources, however, since I have only conducted a limited and sporadic examination of the 812 instances of the term prior to II CE found in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. In documentary sources (papyri and inscriptions), which perhaps best illustrate the everyday language of the time, κοινωνία is indeed mainly used to describe sharing in sacrifices (ἡ κοινωνία τῶν ἱερῶν/θυσιῶν; e.g., *SEG* 21.530; *SGDI* 3.3634),⁴² participation in the *politeia*, festivals or public projects (e.g., *SEG* 40.394; *IGDS* 117), marriage relationships (e.g., *I.Priene* 109; *BGU* 4.1051, 1052), political alliance (e.g., *SEG* 51.532), and professional associations or business partnerships (e.g., *P.Col.* 7.124; *P.Lond.* 2.311).⁴³ To the best of my knowledge, the phrase ‘κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιοῦμαι’ remains unattested in inscriptions and papyri.

Nevertheless, several analogous literary constructions may shed some light on the matter. In his *Antiquitates Romanae*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for instance, employs the expression ‘τὴν κοινωνίαν ἐποιεῖτο’ to describe the married life of a certain Arruns with a young woman (*Ant. Rom.* 13.10.2). A second set of examples comes from three of Aesop’s fables. In the first one, a lion, a donkey, and a fox enter into a ‘hunting partnership’: κοινωνίαν ποιησάμενοι εἰς ἄγρην (*Fab.*

38 G. W. Peterman, ‘Romans 15:26: Make a Contribution or Establish Fellowship?’ *NTS* 40 (1994) 457–63. Cf. D. P. Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke–Acts* (Linz: Fuchs, 1982) 205, who notes that κοινωνία never has such concrete significance in Philo’s corpus either.

39 Peterman, ‘Romans’, 463.

40 E.g., Polybius 5.35.1; Plato *Resp.* 371B, and a second-century inscription published by Rostowzew. See M. Rostowzew, ‘Die Domane von Pogla’, *JÖAI* 4 (1900) Beiblatt 37–46.

41 E.g., *P.Flor.* 1.41; *SPP* 20.15; *P.Corn.* 12; *SEG* 40.394; *Gonnoi* 2.111; *I.Magnesia* 44. A full list will appear in an appendix to my dissertation.

42 The expression ‘κοινωνία τῶν ἱερῶν/θυσιῶν’ is to be understood as referring to the ‘joint participation, by persons entitled through birth or invitation, in ceremonies and sacrificial food and in the blessings which rested thereupon’. W. S. Ferguson and A. D. Nock, ‘The Attic Orgeones and the Cult of Heroes’, *HTR* 37 (1944) 156 (cf. 76).

43 Enderburg observed many similar usages in literary sources. See P. J. T. Enderburg, *Koinoonia en gemeenschap van zaken bij de Grieken in der klassieken tijd* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1937) 105–49.

154).⁴⁴ In the second tale, only a lion and a donkey associate with each other: κοινωνίαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ποιησάμενοι ἐξήλθον ἐπὶ θήραν (*Fab.* 156),⁴⁵ while in the third one, a bat, a fish, and a shearwater decide to form a ‘business partnership’: κοινωνίαν ποιήσαντες ἐμπορεύεσθαι διέγνωσαν (*Fab.* 181).⁴⁶ Similarly, in one of Isaeus’s judicial orations, a certain Theopompus denies having made a pact with his brother Stratocles to divide the inheritance of their deceased cousin Hagnias in the following way: ὥστ’ οὐκ ἐνήν κοινωνίαν οὐδὲ διομολογίαν ποιήσασθαι περὶ αὐτῶν (Isaeus 11.21). It is difficult to imagine how, in any of these cases, someone would translate these expressions as ‘to make a (monetary) contribution’. But perhaps the most insightful parallels are found in Plato and Demosthenes. Towards the end of his *Laws*, Plato explains a rule in a way that strikingly resembles Rom 15.26 both syntactically and conceptually. ‘During the fruit harvest’, he writes, ‘all are obliged to form an association/partnership in such a manner’: ὁπώρας δὲ δὴ χρή κοινωνίαν ποιεῖσθαι πάντας τοιάνδε τινά (Plato *Leg.* 844D; cf. *Resp.* 371B).⁴⁷ Similarly, in Demosthenes’ third *Philippic* Oration one can read the following: κοινωνίαν βοηθείας καὶ φιλίας ποιήσασθαι (Demosthenes *Or.* 9.28). The precise sense of the phrase is not easy to determine, though in context it must be referring to the establishment (ποιήσασθαι) of a common agreement or partnership (κοινωνία) among the Greeks to help each other (βοηθεία) and unite politically and militarily (φιλία) against the threat of Philip of Macedon.⁴⁸

This political connotation of κοινωνία is not as unusual as it may first appear.⁴⁹ In *P.Schøyen* I 25, the famous bronze tablet of the treaty between the Romans and the Lycians, κοινωνία is added to the common formula ‘φιλία

44 Within the (oldest) Augustana recension (I), MS *Augustanus Monacensis* 564 alone has the variant ‘ποιησάμενοι’ instead of ‘σπεισάμενοι’. The later Vindobonensis (II) and Accursiana (III) recensions both have ‘ποιησάμενοι’. A. Hausrath and H. Hunger, *Corpus fabularum Aesopiarum*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1970) 180–8. Cf. B. E. Perry, *Aesopica*, vol. 1 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1903) #149, 378–9.

45 Contrary to Hausrath and Hunger, Perry, *Aesopica*, #151, 379–80, prefers the witness of MSS *Novoebor.* *Pierponti Morgan* 397 and *Paris suppl. gr.* 690 (both of recension I).

46 Only in recensions II and III.

47 On the use of ὁπώρας to designate the fruit-harvest season during late summer, see LSJ, s.v. ὁπώρα. Cf. Xenophon *Hell.* 3.2.10: ἀπὸ ἡρινουῦ χρόνου πρὸ ὁπώρας.

48 This meaning is reinforced by the preceding clause: οὐδὲ συστήναι. Cf. also two similar expressions in Diodorus: συμμαχίαν ποιήσασθαι κατὰ τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν (Diodorus 15.62.3); συμμαχίαν ποιησάμενος πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν τῶν Μακεδόνων βασιλέα (Diodorus 15.67.4). In both cases, a political alliance is clearly in view, as H. Bengston also understands: ‘Der im wesentlichen durch die Anstrengungen des Demosthenes begründete Hellenische Bund beruhte auf einem gemeinsamen Freundschaftsvertrag zur gegenseitigen Hilfeleistung (κοινωνίαν βοηθείας καὶ φιλίας, Demosthenes, *Or.* 9.28–29)’. H. Bengston, *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums*, vol. 2 (Munich: Beck, 1975) 332.

49 Endenburg has collected a number of insightful examples in classical literature. See Endenburg, *Koinoonia*, 28–32, 65–7, 108–12.

καὶ συμμαχία', which usually officialises the political alliance between Rome and its allies (l.7: φίλι[α καὶ συμμαχία κ]αὶ κοινωνία).⁵⁰ Likewise, on the base of a *rotunda* dedicated to Hadrian, the Laodiceans from Syria identify themselves as the friends, allies, and κοινωνοί, 'political associates' or 'partners' we may translate, of the Roman people (φίλης συμμαχου κοινωνοῦ δήμου Ῥωμαίων; *IG II²* 3299 = *OGIS* 603; cf. *SEG* 45.2358).⁵¹ Unlike κοινωνία, the substantive κοινωνός is actually much more frequently attested in ancient sources as the object of the verb ποιέω, and generally refers to political allies, business associates, or the recipients of some benefaction.⁵² For example, in a II BCE honorary decree from Claros, a certain Polemaios is praised for his eagerness to make his fellow citizens his κοινωνοί in the conduct of his life upon returning victorious from sacred athletic contests: σπεύδων ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κοινωνοὺς ποιήσασθαι τῆς τοῦ βίου προαιρέσεως (ll. 11–13).⁵³ As the rest of the inscription makes clear, this meant that he would share generously of his good fortune and wealth with his city through the distributions of sweet wine and various other material and financial benefactions, such as ἔρανος loans which he extended to foreigners and refugees.⁵⁴ Here again, the way Polemaios is depicted as inaugurating his

50 See S. Mitchell, 'The Treaty between Rome and Lycia of 46 BCE', *Papyri Graecae Schøyen*, vol. 1 (ed. R. Pintaudi; Firenze: Gonnelli, 2005) 163–250. Cf. S. Follet, *Année Epigraphique* (2005), #1487, 514–20.

51 The long string of genitives is to be understood as being in apposition to 'ἡ πόλις Ἰουλιέων τῶν καὶ Λαοδικέων' found at the beginning of the inscription.

52 For political partnership, see for instance Plato *Leg.* 969c: ἀλλὰ δεήσεσιν καὶ μηχαναῖς πάσαις κοινωνὸν ποιητέον ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς πόλεως κατοίκισιν; Herodianus *Ab excessu divi Marci*: ὃν κοινωνὸν τῆς βασιλείας Μάρκος ποιησάμενος; Xenophon *Hell.* 2.3.19: βουλομένους τοὺς βελτίστους τῶν πολιτῶν κοινωνοὺς ποιήσασθαι τρισχιλίους. For partners in crime, see Antiphon 5.68: ὡσπερ οἶδε φασὶν ἐμὲ τῆς μὲν ἐπιβουλῆς οὐδένα κοινωνὸν ποιήσασθαι τοῦ θανάτου. For partnership with a god in sacrifices, see Plato *Ep.* 7.350c: σὺ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων βίᾳ τινὰ τρόπον σύσσιτον καὶ συνέστιον καὶ κοινωνὸν ἱερῶν Διονυσίῳ ἐποίησας; Demosthenes *Or.* 19.280: ἐπὶ ταῖς θυσίαις σπονδῶν καὶ κρατήρων κοινωνοὺς πεποίησθε. For conjugal partnership, see Xenophon *Oec.* 7.30: συζευγνὺς ἄνδρα καὶ γυναῖκα· καὶ κοινωνοὺς ὡσπερ τῶν τέκνων ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν (underlining mine).

53 This attitude starkly contrasts with that of Roman senators, who, during their conflict with the plebeians, were accused of being unwilling to associate politically and share of their prosperity with the *humiliores*: ἀπολίτευτα καὶ ἀκοινωνήτα πρὸς τοὺς ταπεινοτέρους φρονούντες (Dionysius *Ant. Rom.* 6.80.4).

54 L. and J. Robert, *Claros 1: Décrets hellénistiques* (Paris: Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1989), Col. 1, l. 12, pp. 11–17, 44. Robert (p. 22) indeed explains that χορηγία 'a le sens de "fourniture", tout ce que l'on peut donner, fournir, que ce soit argent, blé, frais pour une construction, huile, navires'. Cf. *SEG* 39.1243. Note: the real mechanics of ἔρανος loans between 'friends' remain a debated question (especially concerning the presence or absence of interest), although it seems quite clear that their purpose was to assist with urgent personal financial needs occasioned by weddings, banquets, funerals, ransoms, or even manumissions. See LSJ, s.v. ἔρανος; *OCD³*, 553; E. Ziebarth, "Ἐρανος", *PWRE* 6 (1909) 328–30; P. C. Millett,

‘politique de générosité envers le peuple’, is strikingly reminiscent of Paul’s language.⁵⁵ To return to the question of Rom 15.26, then, I would like to propose that Paul’s audience most likely did not understand the phrase ‘κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι’ to refer to a financial contribution *per se*. It is indeed more probable that they understood it to be describing some kind of partnership or association with socio-political ramifications, which Paul envisaged between the Gentile churches and their Judean counterparts, and which would ultimately manifest itself in the form of a concrete monetary gift.⁵⁶ This interpretation, I suggest, could easily be applied to 2 Cor 8.4 and 9.13 as well.⁵⁷

More generally, this particular translation issue should alert us to the fact that we must be more precise when we translate and reflect upon the significance of κοινωνία, which, we ought not to forget, is employed almost exclusively by Paul in the NT.⁵⁸ The term ‘fellowship’ (understand ‘spiritual fellowship’), which is quite a popular understanding, is often all too vague a word to capture fully the essence of what Paul is trying to convey.⁵⁹ As Betz noted long ago, κοινωνία is ‘drawn from the language of administration and law...and the legal meaning should not be ignored in favor of the personal or communal notion of fellowship’.⁶⁰ I would also like to add that it may actually be more helpful to think of κοινωνία as the noun derived from the adjective κοινός.⁶¹ Much like κοινωνία, this abstract word can assume various shades of meanings. In substantive form, it can designate the general public interest (Isocrates 14.21; Demosthenes *Ep.* 1.5, 9–10), public matters (Demosthenes *Or.* 18.257; *Res*

Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991) 153–9; M. I. Finley, *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens* (New York: Arno, 1973) 85–7, 100–106; E. E. Cohen, *Athenian Economy and Society* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1992) 207–15; Cohen, Review of P. C. Millett, *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens*, *BMCR* 03.04.10, n. p. Online: <http://bmc.brynmaur.edu/1992/03.04.10.html> (accessed 30/10/2011).

55 Robert, *Claros*, 22.

56 Campbell, ‘ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ’, 373–4, himself admits that the meaning of κοινωνία in Heb 13.16 is ‘closely akin to that of Rom 15.26’, and bears the ‘sense of “partnership”, “going shares in an enterprise”, rather than the vaguer sense of “fellowship”’.

57 Cf. Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 46, 124.

58 Acts 2.42; Heb 13.16; and 1 John 1.3, 6–7, are the only six other occurrences.

59 I would argue that this sense need not be pressed except perhaps in 1 Cor 1.9, 2 Cor 13.13, and Phil 2.1, where Paul attributes to κοινωνία a more theological connotation.

60 Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 46.

61 Etymologists generally agree on this obvious link. See P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968) 552–3; H. von Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1: A–Ko (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universität, 2d ed. 1973) 892–3; R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010) 731. Cf. LSJ, s.v. κοινωέω.

Gestae 1.2: τὰ κοινὰ πράγματα = *res publica*), public funds (Demosthenes *Or.* 8.23; Xenophon *An.* 4.7.27; Aristotle *Pol.* 2.6.23), different sorts of socio-political entities such as the *polis*, leagues, local communities, subdivisions of the government (cf. Herodotus 1.67, 3.156, 5.109; Thucydides 1.90, 2.12; *SIG* 457; *P.Thead.* 17; *P.Oxy.* 1.54), clubs or associations, and what we would call professional ‘guilds’ (*SIG* 1113; *P.Oxy.* 1.53; *P.Oxy.* 1.84).⁶² In essence, however, it generally conveys the idea of commonality, and by extension, of community on the basis of a common bond. When employed to characterize social attitudes, J. de Romilly observed that κοινός often expresses ‘l’idée de partage’, ‘la bonté générale’.⁶³ Plutarch, for instance, associates it with the words εὐμενής and φιλανθρωπία in his depiction of Phocion’s natural benevolence (*Phoc.* 10.4), while in his encomium on Rome Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes the city as κοινοτάτην τε πόλεων καὶ φιλανθρωποτάτην (*Ant. Rom.* 1.89.1).⁶⁴ This may also explain why in Aristotle’s *Politics*, in which κοινωνία repeatedly refers to the basic socio-political units undergirding the fabric of society, the κοινωνία of the *polis* intrinsically implies, indeed demands from its citizens, sociability, communality, interdependency, and solidarity, thereby placing the Athenians, in theory at least, under the common obligation to assist one another.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, at the household level, κοινωνία requires mutual assistance and the sharing of all things among its members (Aristotle *Pol.* 1.3.12). Overall, it is highly significant that κοινός and κοινωνία appear to possess no particular religious connotation.⁶⁶ Therefore, I see no warrant to regard κοινωνία strictly as ‘ein religiöser Terminus’,⁶⁷ as Seesemann suggested, or to argue, as Hauck did, that the ‘κοινων- group...in Paul...has a directly religious content’.⁶⁸ Seesemann’s deduction that κοινωνία never has a secular meaning (‘einer profanen Bedeutung’) in Paul because it is often found in

62 Cf. LSJ, s.v. κοινός; Moulton and Miligan, *Vocabulary*, 350. On the infelicitous use of the term ‘guild’ to refer to ancient professional associations, see M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California, 1973) 137–8. Cf. W. Scheidel, I. Morris, and R. Saller, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007) 338–9.

63 J. de Romilly, *La douceur dans la pensée grecque* (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1979) 49 n. 1.

64 By contrast, the Jews’ exclusive sense of πολιτεύματα could sometimes cause them to be perceived as ‘μηδὲ κοινωνεῖν’ with the other nations (Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.257–258). Cf. D. L. Balch, ‘Two Apologetic Encomia: Dionysius on Rome and Josephus on the Jews’, *JSJ* 13 (1982) 119 n. 47.

65 See Millett, *Lending*, 52.

66 The definition of ‘religion’ as a category is itself problematic and the product of post-Enlightenment (Christian) intellectual debates. See B. Nongbri, ‘Paul Without Religion’ (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2008).

67 Seesemann, *KOINΩΝΙΑ*, 99.

68 F. Hauck, ‘κοινός’, *TDNT* 3.804.

proximity to religious terms ('religiöser Begriffen') such as χάρις and ἀγάπη, and therefore belongs to the same (lexical, presumably) sphere ('der gleichen Sphäre'), is not only methodologically flawed (because of the questionable 'religious vs. secular' nomenclature it introduces), but also manifestly incorrect.⁶⁹ Besides Rom 15.26 and 2 Cor 8.4 and 9.13 already treated in this article, other examples such as Gal 2.9 (δεξιᾶς κοινωνίας) or 1 Cor 10.16 (κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ/τοῦ σώματος) clearly demonstrate that a strictly 'religious' connotation cannot always be attributed to κοινωνία.⁷⁰ Furthermore, as Harrison's work has amply illustrated, the term χάρις cannot be said to possess a purely theological sense, but is most frequently found in the context of civic benefaction.⁷¹ Accordingly, this should caution us against systematically imposing our own theological 'colouring' upon the term whenever Paul uses it. If we do so, we might indeed run the risk of obscuring Paul's thought, which is not solely animated by lofty theological motives, but is also deeply concerned with social, political, and economic issues.

When κοινωνία is thus associated with ἰσότης, the socio-economic dimension of Paul's collection becomes even more evident. It evokes a certain sense of political unity and socio-economic equality within the (global) community of Christ-followers to an extent that is observed nowhere else in the NT except perhaps in Luke's summary depiction of the original Jerusalem community.⁷² The linguistic and conceptual similarities are indeed particularly striking. Twice in Acts 2.44 and 4.32, Luke describes the early disciples as being one soul (ψυχῆ μία), freely selling some of their possessions to provide for those in need, and holding everything in common (ἅπαντα κοινά). In 2.42, he actually defines such state of community as

69 Seesemann, *KOINΩNIA*, 99. For a critique of the philological methodology of the likes of Seesemann and Kittel, see J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1961).

70 In the first instance (Gal 2.9), J. P. Sampley has shown that it possesses a legal and commercial connotation. See J. P. Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ: Christian Community and Commitment in Light of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 21–50. Cf. Campbell, 'KOINΩNIA', 373. For further evidence in support of Sampley's argument, see the section 'Business partnership among the first Christians?' in the author's article '16. Customs Law of the Roman Province of Asia', *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, 10 (ed. S. R. Llewelyn and J. R. Harrison; Macquarie University: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, forthcoming). In the case of 1 Cor 10.16, κοινωνία (κτλ.) is best understood as simply meaning 'participation', as is often the case when it is followed with a genitive of the thing shared. See Campbell, 'KOINΩNIA', 357–8, 375.

71 Harrison, *Grace*. Cf. the section 'The χάρις of Augustus', in J. Ogereau, 'Customs', *New Documents* 10 (ed. Llewelyn and Harrison).

72 Bartchy, Furnish, and Seccombe make a similar connection in passing, but fail to elaborate further. See S. S. Bartchy, 'Community of Goods in Acts: Idealization or Social Reality?', *The Future of Early Christianity* (ed. B. A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 311–12; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 419; Seccombe, *Possessions*, 203. Note: I am well aware of the issue of the authorship of Acts, but for the sake of convenience I shall name its author Luke.

being in *κοινωνία*—which is the only time the term appears in the Gospels and in Acts.⁷³ The problem of the historicity of these two allegedly ‘fictional’ passages has been amply commented upon in the past.⁷⁴ There is no need for me to expand on this issue in any detail, except to say that for Luke’s overall apologetic purpose to have borne some sort of credibility and legitimacy, his account must have rested upon a factual historical foundation of some sort.⁷⁵ As R. M. Grant has asserted, the ‘situation Luke described in Acts was not just the product of his imagination’.⁷⁶ But what is perhaps more important for us to reflect upon is the rhetorical function of these passages. Although it is quite possible that the Essenes influenced early forms of ecclesiastical community—‘Essene tenets and practices...at least provide concrete and tangible evidence for a Palestinian matrix of the early church as it is described in Acts’⁷⁷—it is improbable that Luke’s description was driven by the Qumran community ideal, which required new members to surrender all private property upon entrance (1QS 1.11; 5.1–3, 6; cf. Josephus *B.J.* 2.120–122; *Ant.* 18.18–22; Pliny *Nat.* 5.17). The two groups indeed differed significantly in some aspects of their administrative structure.⁷⁸ Similarly, it is not necessary for us to envisage Luke as ‘borrowing’ the topic of the Pythagorean ‘golden age’,⁷⁹ a utopia which

73 So Dupont, ‘communauté’, 504–5: ‘Luc...s’est expliqué lui-même sur ce qu’il entend par la *κοινωνία* des premiers chrétiens quand il précise, aux vv. 44–45: “Tous les croyants ensemble avaient tout en commun (ἅπαντα κοινά)”’.

74 In 1977, Johnson already noted the ‘considerable attention’ devoted to the topic in NT scholarship. L. T. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (Missoula: Scholars, 1977) 1. For a brief review of the history of interpretation and the substantial amount of secondary literature on the topic, see B. J. Capper, ‘Community of Goods in the Early Jerusalem Church’, *ANRW* 26.2: 1730–74. For a negative assessment see E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) 190–6; H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 24; R. I. Pervo, *Acts* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009) 88–91. For a more positive assessment, see M. Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church* (London: SCM, 1974) 31–4. This issue of historicity concerns the whole book of Acts in general. See for instance M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: SCM, 1956) 102–8; E. Haenchen, ‘The Book of Acts as Source Material for the History of Early Christianity’, *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; London: SPCK, 1968) 258–78; M. Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

75 So Seccombe, *Possessions*, 209.

76 R. M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society* (London: Collins, 1978) 101. Cf. Bartchy, ‘Community’, 312.

77 J. A. Fitzmyer, ‘Jewish Christianity in Acts in Light of the Qumran Scrolls’, *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. Keck and Martyn) 253.

78 Fitzmyer, ‘Jewish Christianity’, 239: ‘the comparison of the early Jewish Christian church with the Essene communities brings out fundamental differences far more than resemblances’. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 234–5; Hengel, *Property*, 32–3. The exegetical deductions of Capper, ‘Community’, regarding supposed similarities are much less convincing.

79 The language Iamblichus employs can sometimes be intriguingly close to that of Luke, but linguistic resemblance alone is not sufficient to posit a genealogical relation (e.g., *VP* 168: *κοινὸν γὰρ πᾶσι πάντα καὶ ταῦτα ἦν, ἴδιον δὲ οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν ἐκέκτητο. καὶ εἰ μὲν ἠρέσκετο τῇ*

was later developed more fully by Plato.⁸⁰ Holding women and children in common is certainly not in view here, nor is the complete abolition of private property really suggested.⁸¹ What is more, Plato's ideal, which, on his own admission, was mostly applicable among the Guardians (*Resp.* 3.413C–417B, 5.462E–464B, 8.543A–C), failed to be embraced by Graeco-Roman society at large.⁸² It was severely criticised by the likes of Aristotle (see especially *Politics* ch. 2), Epictetus (2.4.8–11), and Seneca (*Ep.* 90.38–40), and even ridiculed by Aristophanes in his *Ecclesiazusae*. L. Cerfaux's word of caution thus remains valid: 'Les réminiscences littéraires des Acts ne doivent pas créer d'illusion. En réalité, les principes chrétiens sont tout autres que ceux des pythagoriciens, des stoïciens (qui ont repris le thème à leur façon) ou des Esséniens'.⁸³ Therefore, it is perhaps best to appreciate Luke's language as echoing aphorisms as to what constituted perfect friendship, τελεία φιλία,

κοινωνία). On the methodological difficulties associated with the identification and analysis of such 'parallels', see S. Sandmel, 'Parallelomania', *JBL* 81 (1962) 1–13; L. M. White and J. T. Fitzgerald, 'Quod est comparandum: The Problem of Parallels', *Early Christianity and Classical Culture* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 13–39. Cf. A. C. Mitchell, 'The Social Function of Friendship in Acts 2:44–47 and 4:32–37', *JBL* 111 (1992) 255–72.

80 On the Pythagorean 'communitistic living', see Iamblichus, *VP* 6.20, 17.72, 18.81, 35.257. Cf. Dupont, 'communauté', 506; J. C. Thom, "'Harmonious Equality": The Topos of Friendship in Neopythagorean Writings', *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald; SBLRBS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 1997) 80–103. Establishing the authenticity of Iamblichus's account, which was written at least 900 years after the alleged facts, is notoriously difficult. The same problem applies to several (Doric) Neopythagorean excerpts, Pythagorean letters and sayings collections, from the Hellenistic and early Roman periods (although some of these claim to have been written by Pythagoras, Archytas, or Timaeus, they clearly display Platonic, Peripatetic, or Stoic influence). For a helpful discussion on Iamblichus's possible sources and these Hellenistic Neopythagorean fragments, see D. L. Balch, 'Neopythagorean Moralists and the New Testament Household Codes', *ANRW* 26.1: 380–411. Cf. Thom, "Equality", 78–93.

81 Acts 4.32 has given commentators most trouble: καὶ οὐδὲ εἷς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῶ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι. However, as Dupont has pertinently commented: 'il est clair ici que les chrétiens restent légalement propriétaires de ce qui leur appartient, mais au lieu de le traiter en possession privée, ils le mettent à la disposition de tous. Les biens personnels deviennent "communs", non par suite d'une aliénation, mais en raison de la libéralité dont usent leurs propriétaires.' J. Dupont, 'L'union entre les premiers chrétiens dans les actes des apôtres', *Nouvelles études sur les actes des apôtres* (Paris: Cerfs, 1984) 300. Cf. Haenchen, *Acts*, 192.

82 It is actually debated whether Plato himself believed in the utopia, or whether he meant Socrates' description of Callipolis to be ironic. See D. R. Morrison, 'The Utopian Character of Plato's Ideal City', *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (ed. G. R. F. Ferrari; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007) 232–55.

83 L. Cerfaux, 'La première communauté chrétienne à Jérusalem (Act., II, 41–V, 42)', *ETHL* 16 (1939) 28.

sayings which are well-attested in the Graeco-Roman culture of the time.⁸⁴ The proverb ‘κοινὰ τὰ φίλων’ is indeed quoted by such notable authors as Plato (*Resp.* 4.424A; *Lysis* 207C; *Leg.* 5.739C), Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 8.9.1), Euripides (*Orest.* 735; *Phoen.* 243), Cicero (*Off.* 1.51: ‘*ut in Graecorum proverbio est, amicorum esse communia omnia*’), Martial (2.43.1), Seneca (*Ben.* 7.4.1: ‘*omnia dicitis illis esse communia*’), Philo (*Abr.* 235; *Mos.* 1.156), Plutarch (*Adul. amic.* 65A), Iamblichus (*VP* 19.92), Diogenes Laertius (8.10), and some Cynic philosophers ([Crates], *Ep.* 26; [Diogenes], *Ep.* 10).⁸⁵ For Aristotle, friendship actually consisted of being in κοινωνία: ἐν κοινωνία γὰρ ἡ φιλία (*Eth. Nic.* 8.9.1; cf. 8.12.1, 9.12), he affirms, so that brothers and friends (ἐταίροι) have πάντα κοινά (*Eth. Nic.* 8.9.1). In an appeal to his Hellenistic audience, Luke thus seems to have intended his slightly idealised portrayal of socio-economic equality to constitute the evidence that the early church was capable of achieving the highest level of social harmony—and perhaps he also meant to encourage his audience to pursue the ideal (if we allow for these summaries to bear some performative ethical potential).⁸⁶ It could attain what many considered to be the ultimate goal, and most intimate form, of social intercourse, that which defined the very essence of friendship. In a sense, Luke may simply have wanted to illustrate the fact that the early church’s ‘spirit of openness and sharing...constituted true κοινωνία friendship’.⁸⁷ And, as A. C. Mitchell has incisively remarked, he did so with a precise goal in mind: ‘to unify his community across social lines’.⁸⁸ Intriguingly, Luke’s thought on this matter appears particularly close to that of Paul, perhaps closer than has generally been accepted.⁸⁹ Indeed,

84 For instance, the expression ‘(ἄ)παντα κοινά’ appears in Plato *Critias* 110C; Plutarch *Conjug.* 143A; Iamblichus *VP* 30.168; Lucian *Merc.* 20; while ‘μία ψυχή’ is attested in Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 9.8.2 and *Eth. Eud.* 7.6.9; Plutarch *De Amic. Mult.* 96F; Iamblichus *VP* 30.167–168. This was first noticed by J. Wettstein in 1752, if not earlier by Calvin, according to Johnson, *Possessions*, 2. For a more detailed list of ancient authors using these aphorisms, see Dupont, ‘communauté’, 505–9, 513–14.

85 A. J. Malherbe, ed., *The Cynic Epistles* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1977) 76–7, 102–5. For more references, see Dupont, ‘communauté’, 507–9; Seccombe, *Possessions*, 200–203; D. L. Mealand, ‘Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions in Acts 2–4’, *JTS* 28 (1977) 96–99; and Johnson, ‘Connections’. One should note, however, that there seems to have been a certain variation as to the way these ancient intellectuals understood and applied the saying. See Mitchell, ‘Friendship’, 256–7.

86 See the recent study by D. A. Hume, *The Early Christian Community* (WUNT 2/298; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

87 Seccombe, *Possessions*, 208.

88 Mitchell, ‘Friendship’, 258 (emphasis mine). For Keck, ‘The Poor’, 105, his concern was for “eschatological egalitarianism”.

89 This might be explained by the fact that the Jerusalem model later inspired Paul, or less likely, in my opinion, that Luke used some of the material of Paul’s letters to compose his summaries. Cf. M. S. Enslin, ‘Once Again, Luke and Paul’, *ZNW* 61 (1970) 253–71; Enslin, *Reapproaching Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972).

as J. Dupont once observed: ‘cet idéal correspond fort exactement à celui que Paul caractérise par l’*ισότης*, “l’égalité”, qui doit régner entre les chrétiens’.⁹⁰

To conclude, then, this article has endeavoured to provide a different perspective on the Jerusalem collection by exploring the political and socio-economic dimension of *ισότης* and *κοινωνία*, which, I have argued, represent the key motives of the entire project. When examined in the context of ancient literary and documentary sources, it becomes obvious that the two terms do not primarily bear the theological connotations that generations of scholars have ascribed to them. Paul’s rhetorical appeal to *ισότης* and *κοινωνία* rather suggests that he had very concrete objectives in mind. His intentions seem to have extended beyond the mere alleviation of poverty by means of charitable giving. Indeed, he appears to have aimed at reforming the structural inequalities of Graeco-Roman society that were also becoming apparent in the early church (cf. 1 Cor 11.17–22), by fostering socio-economic *ισότης* between Jews and Gentiles and by establishing a global, socially and ethnically inclusive *κοινωνία* among them.⁹¹ Needless to say, this deeply challenged ancient socio-political theories and dissolved ancient prejudices based on socio-ethnic distinctions.⁹² In light of these deductions, one is therefore compelled to challenge M. Hengel’s conservative conclusion that ‘[i]n the Pauline mission communities...we no longer come across the eschatological and enthusiastic form of sharing goods which we assume to have been practised by the earliest community in Jerusalem’.⁹³ The thought that the socio-economic ideal of the early church quickly vanished

⁹⁰ Dupont, ‘communauté’, 512.

⁹¹ Cf. Horrell, ‘Collection’, 80 (see especially his conclusion). Meggitt, *Paul*, 173–5, also somewhat hints in this direction. Regarding the oft-assumed universal ‘ethnic neutrality’ of Paul’s vision of the early church and the difficulties of this interpretation, see C. Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, then Heirs* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007). In his study of Acts 16, Barreto argues that Luke adopts a position somewhat similar to Paul’s: ‘Luke does not erase ethnic difference’, but he is ‘carving out a space for this emerging Christian community...by embracing the ambiguities of a hybrid posture’. Barreto, *Negotiations*, 25.

⁹² Cf. Wan, ‘Collection’, who interprets the collection as an act of resistance against both Jewish ethnocentrism and Roman imperialism.

⁹³ Indeed, for Hengel, *Property*, 35: ‘in the long run the form of “love-communism” practised in Jerusalem was just not possible. It was impossible to maintain a sharing of goods in a free-form without the kind of fixed organisation and common production which we find, say, at Qumran’. This is a common interpretation. See for instance Nickle, *Collection*, 24: ‘it was implemented in what proved to be an unrealistic, short sighted manner’; or Dodd, *Romans*, 230: ‘Filled with a sense of their unity as “brethren”, they instituted a system of partial and voluntary communism. But they carried it out in the economically disastrous way of realizing capital and distributing as income...when hard times came, the community had no reserves of any kind.’ Cf. K. Lake, ‘Notes XII: The Communism of Acts II. and IV–VI and the Appointment of the Seven’, *Additional Notes to the Commentary* (ed. K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury; Vol. 5 of *The Beginning of Christianity, Part I: The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. F. J. F. Jackson and K. Lake; London: MacMillan, 1933) 147.

because of its unrealistic and impractical 'communism' indeed fails to do justice to the evidence concerning the collection. In a similar vein, Haenchen's conclusion that 'the primitive Church also realized the *Greek* communal ideal'⁹⁴ ought to be reconsidered. The early church did not fulfil it, rather, it superseded it.⁹⁵ For, in theory at least, and in practice for a short while at first, it brought Jews and Gentiles together into a global community of faith in an unprecedented way. Furthermore, as Paul's collection exemplifies so well, it fostered socio-economic equality and solidarity across socio-cultural and ethnic divides in a manner that no Greek socio-political utopia had ever dared to envisage.

94 Haenchen, *Acts*, 233. Cf. Mealand, 'Community', 99.

95 Regarding the concept of equality in particular, Vassiliadis, 'Equality', 53–4, remarks: 'during nearly the whole period of ancient Greek thought, "equality" remained a strictly legal term... It never succeeded in touching what we generally call the "social dimension"'.