

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF FRIENDSHIP IN ACTS 2:44-47 AND 4:32-37

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Since the mid-eighteenth century, scholars have acknowledged Luke's appeal to Greco-Roman friendship traditions in two summaries in Acts 2.44-47 and 4:32-37.¹

2 44-47 And all who believed were together and had all things in common, and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (RSV)

4 32-37 Now the company of all those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made to each as any had need Thus Joseph who was surnamed Barnabas (which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet (RSV)

Some studies have stressed descriptive matters, calling attention to Luke's highly idealized depiction of the early Jerusalem community These treat the

¹ J J Wettstein, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (2 vols, Amsterdam Dommerian, 1751-52) 2 470-71, L Cerfaux, "La composition de la première partie du Livre des Actes," *ETL* 13 (1936) 667-91, idem, "La première communauté chrétienne à Jérusalem (Actes 2, 41-5, 42)," *ETL* 16 (1939) 5-31, H Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia, Philadelphia Fortress, 1987) 23-24, 36, J Dupont, "La communauté des biens aux premiers jours de l'Eglise (Actes 2,42 44-45, 4,32 34-35)," in *Etudes sur les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris Cerf, 1967) 503-19, idem, "L'union entre les premiers chrétiens dans les Actes des Apôtres," in *Nouvelles Etudes sur les Actes des Apôtres* (LD 118, Paris Cerf, 1984) 296-318, L T Johnson, *Sharing Possessions Mandate and Symbol of Faith* (OBT 9, Philadelphia Fortress, 1973) 120, idem, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS 39, Missoula, MT Scholars Press, 1977) 1-5, H J Klauck, "Gutergemeinschaft in der klassischen Antike, in Qumran, und im Neuen Testament," *RevQ* 11 (1982) 47-79, D P Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts* (SNTU 6, Linz A Fuchs, 1982) 200-209

summaries as Lucan retrospective to a time when union of hearts and souls translated directly into sharing of possessions and the enriching of the community's spiritual life. Very often the question of a primitive communism or an early Christian social welfare program has dominated the discussion.² Also, comparisons with ancient non-Christian authors on the topic of utopia have represented Luke as a Hellenistic writer conversant with the secular traditions of his day.³

Formal comparisons between Luke and ancient authors on friendship, however, must remain general because the maxims he quotes, *ἅπαντα κοινά* (2:44; 4:32) and *ψυχὴ μία* (4:32) appear in a variety of different writers.⁴ By the time of Aristotle these aphorisms were already considered proverbial (*EN* 9.8.2 [1168b]). Despite their gnomic quality their meaning was not univocal.⁵ Furthermore, the variety of expressions similar to οὐδὲ εἰς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι (4:32b), shows that the definition of common and private was not universally agreed upon either.⁶ Whereas the attestation of these maxims over a broad period of time shows the vitality of the friendship tradition, their extensive use leads one to wonder exactly what Luke was thinking when he quoted them, and the question of meaning poses only one problem.⁷

² See E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) 233–35, M. Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church: Aspects of a Social History of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 31–34, F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Macmillan, 1920–33, repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 5:140–51. For further bibliography on the debate, see Klauck, “Gutergemeinschaft,” 48 n. 6.

³ See E. Plumacher, who suggests that Luke intended to alter the utopian tradition for his community, by portraying what the Greeks and philosophers valued, relative to the golden age, as characteristic of the early Christians in Jerusalem, who succeeded at shaping “eine Art von Idealpolis” (*Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller: Studien zur Apostelgeschichte* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972] 17–18). D. L. Mealand believes οὐδὲ εἰς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι ἀλλ’ ἦν αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κοινά is closer to Greek utopian traditions than friendship traditions (“Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions in Acts II–IV,” *JTS* 28 [1977] 97).

⁴ “Ἄπαντα κοινά” occurs in Plato, *Critias* 110C and κοινὰ πάντα in Plutarch, *Coniug. Praec.* 143A, Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* 168, and Lucian, *De Merc. Cond.* 19–20. Μία ψυχὴ is attested in Aristotle, *EN* 9.8.2 (1168b), *EE* 7.6.6 (1240b), Plutarch, *De Amic. Mult.* 96F, and Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* 168. For a complete list of ancient authors using these aphorisms, see Dupont, “La communauté des biens,” 505–9, 513–14, Cerfaux, “La première communauté,” 26–27, Plumacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, 17–18, and Klauck, “Gutergemeinschaft,” 48–52.

⁵ See, e.g., Plutarch, *Coniug. Praec.* 143A, where the maxim πάντα κοινά is applied to the mutuality of husband and wife, and Lucian, *De Merc. Cond.* 19–20, where it is used satirically to describe the hopes of Timocles for gain in the house of a wealthy Roman.

⁶ Plato, *Resp.* 5.462C, Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 90, cf. 9.14–15, and Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* 167–69. See Mealand, “Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions,” 97–98, Plumacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, 17, Cerfaux, “La première communauté,” 27, Dupont, “La communauté des biens,” 506.

⁷ Plumacher notes the difficulty of identifying Luke's sources for these traditions (*Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, 17–18).

Among philosophical schools alone there were important variations, and even within schools differences of opinion. Plato's understanding of friendship, for example, was more transcendental than Aristotle's.⁸ On the lips of a Pythagorean, friendship maxims could carry a democratic ring, whereas for an Epicurean they may have been more exclusive and self-serving.⁹ An early Stoic may have used them to point toward a unified notion of the cosmos and the basis of greater autonomy and self-sufficiency than their sentiments communicate at first glance. Middle and later Stoics could have interpreted them to mean all humans were bonded according to nature.¹⁰

Thus formal parallels gathered for comparison with Luke complicate our understanding of his intention. To grasp Luke's meaning it is not enough to say that he appealed to the well-known Greco-Roman tradition of friendship. Despite the apparent concern for harmony these traditions display, they themselves are not completely harmonious.

Although exact identification of Luke's sources for these maxims and ideas is not possible, a look at their context and function can provide a clearer idea of how his thought is like and unlike his contemporaries' on the matter of friendship. Luke's lack of a unified "philosophy" of friendship distinguishes him from other ancient authors on the topic. If anything, he is eclectic in his use of the notion. As a result, he seems more dependent on "popular" ideas of friendship, represented by a *topos* in his day, than on any particular philosophical interpretation of the tradition.¹¹ Whereas he can quote Pythagorean, Platonic, and Aristotelian maxims, his thought sounds Stoic as well. His interest lies not primarily in friendship but in using the notion of friendship for another purpose.

⁸ See Plato's doctrine of the "first beloved," the one original friend, for whose sake all others are said to be friends, in *Lysis* 219B–220B. This is a designation for the Good. Aristotle speaks of "primary friendship" as a nonuniversal category of definition (cf. J. C. Frafise, *Philia: La Notion d'Amitié, Essai sur un problème perdu et retrouvé* [Paris: Vrin, 1984] 226). See also Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The Origins of Classical Notions of Politics in the Theory and Practice of Friendship* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978) 97–101. For the relation of friendship to the Ideas, see *Phaedrus* 245B–246D.

⁹ See Epicurus, *KD* 14, 39, *Gnom. Vat.* 58, *D.L.* 10.120. Diogenes Laertius (10.11) contrasts the two, opposing the Epicureans to a community of goods because it implied mistrust. On their political involvement and the theory of the harmonic mean which balances social inequality, see Hutter, *Politics as Friendship*, 48–55. See also B. Frischer, *The Sculpted Word: Epicureanism and Philosophical Recruitment in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) 38, A. J. Festugière, *Epicurus and His Gods* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955) 28–29.

¹⁰ See E. Elorduy, *Die Sozialphilosophie der Stoa* (Philologus Suppl. 28.3, Leipzig: Dieterich, 1936) 160–80, H. C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963) 151–203, L. Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism* (Martin Classical Lectures 21, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966) 72.

¹¹ G. Bohnenblust has shown there was a *topos* on friendship (*περί φιλίας*) with stock elements used for different purposes among ancient Greek and Latin authors (*Beiträge zum Topos ΠΕΡΙ ΦΙΛΙΑΣ* [Berlin: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei von Gustav Schade (Otto Francke), 1905]).

Getting at that purpose uncovers a difficulty with previous examinations of the friendship ideal in Acts 2 and 4. Although it provides interesting parallels, the focus on utopian allusions obscures Luke's intention in appealing to the friendship tradition. Was Luke only interested in using this ideal to describe the early Jerusalem community as a golden age, or did he have some expectation for a practical effect on the life of his community? Attention to possible utopian allusions in these texts tends to undercut Luke's interest in the practical relation of rich and poor in the church of his day. A mere description of Christianity's first days as golden weakens the parenetic value of the friendship ideal for Luke's community.

To move beyond the descriptive similarities between the friendship ideal and Luke's portrayal of the primitive Jerusalem community, it helps to consider the social function of these traditions in Acts. Does Luke's appeal to friendship tell us only how he understood the early community in Jerusalem to embody a high spiritual ideal? Could it not also disclose an underlying anthropology which relates partly to his universalist perspective? While living in a fairly stratified society marked by national, ethnic, and status differences, did Luke believe in a common humanity, capable of receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit in ways that overcame external social differences and shaped it into a viable *κοινωνία*? Did the friendship traditions, regardless of their origins and the difference of meanings attached to them, offer Luke the terminology to articulate an underlying view of social reality that he expected for his community? This study proposes that Luke used these friendship traditions in more than a merely descriptive or literary way.¹² Because of their social implications, they became a vehicle for encouraging the rich of his community to benefit the poor, by transferring to them some of the normal benefits well-off friends took for granted. Luke, then, used the friendship traditions to unify his community across social lines.

I. Social Implications of Friendship

In his work on the *Sitz im Leben* of the Lucan community, Robert J. Karris called attention to Luke's interest in friendship among members of his community.¹³ The scope of that study, however, prohibited a full discussion of how friendship functions in Luke-Acts. Whereas Karris believes that Luke used the friendship traditions in Acts 2 and 4 to promote friendship between poor and rich in his community, he does not press the social implications of

¹² L. T. Johnson sees the community of goods and the friendship traditions that support it as primarily literary (*Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 12–15, 220–22, and *Sharing Possessions*, 128).

¹³ R. J. Karris, "Poor and Rich: The Lukan *Sitz im Leben*," in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* (Perspectives in Religious Studies, Special Studies Series 5, Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, Edinburgh: Clark, 1978) 112–25.

that. He mentions, too, the Greco-Roman cultural tradition of reciprocal giving, but since his article deals mostly with Luke's Gospel, he does not discuss this in Acts.¹⁴ Moreover, he claims that Luke does not argue against the reciprocity ethic in Acts 2 and 4.¹⁵ Karris's basic conclusion about Luke's appeal to friendship is correct, but more can be said about it and how Luke uses friendship to question the cultural expectation of giving for a return. I would like to further the discussion by showing how, in Acts 2 and 4, Luke's appeal to friendship challenges the reciprocity ethic. He does this by suggesting how Lucan Christians can become friends across status divisions, thereby suspending the normal conventions of friendship in their day.

To consider Luke's use of the Greco-Roman friendship ideal this way is not unreasonable, for it was frequently situated within the context of a particular political philosophy.¹⁶ Firmly grounded in the life of the πόλις, friendship was normally sought by political equals, people of the same status. The discussion of who can be friends, with its stress on likeness and equality, bears this out.¹⁷ Yet the notion of equality was not an absolute one. Proportional or distributive justice became normative for determining the appropriate exchange between individuals: to each one his or her due.¹⁸ Questions of honor entered the picture too, as did those of benefit and reciprocity. Friendship had the capacity for being both a bond and a barrier; it had definite social implications.

Sometimes the use of maxims stressing likeness, such as τὰ πάντα κοινά or μία ψυχή are deceptive. This is especially true when elements of primitivism or utopian ideals are joined to them. To a certain extent golden age myths are interested in locating what is basically common to all humans. But they also use idyllic descriptions of the past to explain how things got to be the way they are in the present.¹⁹ They give the impression that in societies

¹⁴ He alludes to several texts from Acts in n. 24 (p. 117).

¹⁵ Karris, "Poor and Rich," 117 n. 23. Karris, however, acknowledges H. J. Degenhardt's note that Luke tried to counter a cultural tendency, among his Gentile constituents, against helping the poor (ibid., 115). Degenhardt did not address friendship and the reciprocity ethic primarily, but rather the lack of concern for the poor among non-Jews in the Greco-Roman world (*Lukas Evangelist der Armen – Besitz und Besitzverzicht in den lukanischen Schriften: Eine traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1965] 180–81, 221–22).

¹⁶ See Hutter, *Politics as Friendship*, 25–55.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Aristotle, *EN* 8.5.5 (1158a); 8.8.5 (1159b); 8.11.5 (1161a); 8.13.1 (1162b); 9.8.2 (1168b); Cicero, *De Amic.* 4.15; 6.20; Plutarch, *Quomodo adulator* 51C; *De amic. mult.* 96D–F; Diogenes Laertius 8.10; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 17.9–10. See also Böhnenblust, *Beiträge zum Topos ΠΙΕΠΙ ΦΙΛΙΑΣ*, 27, 39.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *Pol.* 2.1.5 (1261a); *EN* 5.3.7–17 (1130a–1131b); 5.5.6 (1133a); 8.8.5 (1159b); 8.9.1 (1159b). For Aristotle, even equality under political justice could be proportional (*EN* 5.6.4 [1134a]). See N. Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 92.

¹⁹ Baldry has shown how ancient authors, like Plato and Plutarch, use the myth of the golden age to comment on the deplorable state of society and to suggest how communities might better organize themselves (*Unity of Mankind*, 77, 162). See Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 90.2–6.

without private property there was no strife or division. Having all things in common ensured that everyone was friends. And so the texts frequently cited from Plato, where friendship maxims support the utopian ideal, tend to heighten the sense of perfection in these societies. But focusing on that aspect obscures the fact that the myth was not accepted uncritically.²⁰

Plato, for example, indulged himself in idyllic descriptions of primitive society, but even in his ideal state the perfect and harmonious community of goods could only be achieved among the Guardians.²¹ Relative to the question of human moral development he is critical of the primitive ideal. He asked in *Laws* 678b, "How can we possibly suppose that those who knew nothing of all the good and evil of cities could have attained their full development, whether of virtue or vice?"²² It is well to remember, too, that Aristotle rejected the common ownership of property because he did not believe it would result in harmony or that such property would be cared for properly (*Pol.* 2.1.8–10 [1261b–1262a]). As far as he was concerned it created division and strife rather than overcoming it (*Pol.* 2.1.15 (1262b)–2.2.6 (1263b)). Epicetetus shares this view when he notes a greedy and gluttonous side to human nature that results from the notion of common property (2.4.8–11; cf. Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 90.38).

That idea of the primitive common ideal, which frequently finds expression in idyllic descriptions of a golden age, inhibits easy interpretation of the two summaries in Acts. Several reasons make it difficult to apply the elements of the myth to the early Jerusalem community. First, if, as some have proposed, the Platonic version of the myth is the basis, then the apostles must correspond to the Guardian class, who owned no property since they were supported by the other classes of citizens in the state.²³ Technically speaking, they are the ones who hold all things in common in the Platonic ideal, not all people. This, of course, does not fit the Lucan picture of the Jerusalem community in Acts 2:44–45 and 3:32, where we are told that all the believers had everything in common and disposed their property for the good of all.

Therein lies the second reason for questioning Luke's appeal to utopia in these texts. Whereas harmony consonant with the utopian ideal is stressed in these summaries, it is evident that having all things in common did not require the absence of private property for all, usually associated with

²⁰ Seccombe includes this in his criticism of Mealand, but does not push the point (*Possessions and the Poor*, 201), cf. Johnson, *Sharing Possessions*, 124–25.

²¹ *Resp* 3 413C–417B, 5 462E–464B, 8 543A–C. On Plato and primitivism, see A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965) 155–68.

²² Translation taken from Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*, 164.

²³ *Tm* 18B, *Critas* 110D, *Resp* 3 416D–417B. See also Plumacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller*, 17–18; Mealand, "Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions," 97–98; Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church*, 8–9; Seccombe, *Possessions and the Poor*, 201–2.

non-Platonic versions of the golden age myth.²⁴ The stories of Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira show individuals who retained their property until there was need. After voluntarily selling it, they donated the proceeds to the community for the welfare of its members. This was done through a ritual gesture of placing the proceeds at the apostles' feet. Consequently, drawing a parallel between Luke's description of the primitive Jerusalem community and utopian myths does not resolve the fundamental tension in the texts.²⁵

Whereas some authors attempt to resolve that tension on the basis of source criticism, others point to a split in Luke's thinking.²⁶ On the one hand, he presents a general picture that states the ideal and, on the other, he shows the reality of life in the Jerusalem community: sometimes they realized the ideal, sometimes they fell short of it.²⁷

Hans Conzelmann, for example, claims that Luke is merely stating an ideal and does not intend it to influence charitable practice in the community of his day.²⁸ This only heightens the tension by creating a dichotomy between the theoretical and the practical, where the utopian ideal stands for a desired end which is nearly impossible to realize in practice. Such a view appears right, if one is looking primarily at the formal similarities between the description of a mythical golden age and Luke's description of the early Jerusalem community. But if the perspective shifts to the social function of

²⁴ M. Hengel is right to mention only those verses of the summaries (2:44 and 4:32) which do not deal with private property when he compares the picture of the primitive community to the myth of the golden age (*Property and Riches in the Early Church*, 8).

²⁵ The same goes for comparisons with the Qumran sectarians, whose practice of a community of goods is sufficiently different from Luke's view of the Jerusalem community to discount it as a model (see Johnson, *Sharing Possessions*, 126–27, idem, *Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 4, Degenhardt, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, 202–7). D. L. Mealand gives a good summary of the state of the question regarding the community of goods at Qumran ("Community of Goods at Qumran," *TZ* 31 [1975] 126–39). For a detailed comparison between Qumran and Acts 2 and 4, see H. Braun, "Qumran und das Neue Testament. Ein Bericht über 10 Jahre Forschung, 1950–1959," *TRu* 29 (1963) 149–59, J. A. Fitzmyer, "Jewish Christianity in Acts in Light of the Qumran Scrolls" in *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. L. Keck and J. L. Martyn, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 241–44, Klauck, "Gutergemeinschaft," 52–79.

²⁶ Source theories abound, see J. Dupont, *The Sources of Acts: The Present Position* (London: Darton, Longmann & Todd, 1964) 32–61, 67–91, Foakes Jackson and Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity* 5:141–47, Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 193–96.

²⁷ Cf. M. Del Verme, "La Comunione dei beni nella comunità primitiva di Gerusalemme," *RivB* 23 (1970) 377–82. Dupont resolves the tension by emphasizing that there is no legal transfer of goods implied in the expression "they held everything in common." Affection, he says, impels the Christians to put what they have at the disposal of others. And a needy person can ask something of another as if it belonged to him ("La communauté des biens," 508). This makes the owner more an administrator of common goods than a donor. But does that not say more than the text itself? In my opinion Luke wants active participation of those with property in the life of the community. Johnson sees the community of goods restricted to the early days of the church, since it follows the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost but is not evident in subsequent outpourings of the Spirit (*Sharing Possessions*, 128).

²⁸ Conzelmann, *Acts*, 24, cf. Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 5.

friendship in these texts, the tension has less to do with perfect society versus imperfect society than with the use of property: common (κοινός) versus private (ἴδιος). The resultant view shows Luke not opposing theory to practice, but rather taking up a very practical matter of community organization.

The ancient discussion of the place of property and ownership in a well-ordered state supports the view that Luke is being very practical about the use of possessions in his community. Especially helpful are authors who share anti-utopian views and uphold the right of private ownership, while still advocating common or public use of property.

Aristotle asks the question of function in the *Politics*: “But is it better for a city that is to be well ordered to have community in everything which can possibly be made common property, or is it better to have some things in common and others not?” (2.1.2 [1261a]).²⁹ And again: “In connexion with this we have to consider the due regulation of property in a community that is to have the best political institutions: Should property be owned in common or privately?” (2.2.1 [1262b]). Despite the appearance of a high ideal in the image of a well-ordered city and the best political institutions, Aristotle’s aim is quite practical: how will property be held? The options are three: private ownership, common ownership, or a mix of both. He attempts to overcome the disadvantages of holding property in common by showing how it can be both common and private. Key is the interpretation of κοινὰ τὰ φίλων from the standpoint of function (πρὸς τὸ χρησθαι): “. . . for individuals while owning their property privately put their own possessions at the service of their friends and make use of their friends’ possessions as common property (2.2.4–5 [1263a]). He concludes, “It is clear therefore that it is better for possessions to be privately owned, but to make them common property in use . . .” (2.2.5 [1263a]).³⁰

Much later, Cicero represents a similar concern from a middle Stoic point of view. The text is from *De Officiis*:

This, then, is the most comprehensive bond that unites together men as men and all to all, and under it the common right to all things that nature has produced for the common use of man is to be maintained, with the understanding that, while everything assigned as private property by the statutes and by civil law shall be held as prescribed by those same laws, everything else shall be regarded in the light indicated by the Greek proverb “Amongst friends all things in common” (51).³¹

Although he uses the language of a high ideal for all humans joined by nature,

²⁹ All English translations of ancient nonbiblical texts are from LCL, unless otherwise noted.

³⁰ See A. R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968) 39.

³¹ See Isocrates, *Areopagiticus* 35, where, in a description of the old Athenian constitution—not a mythic golden age—people owned property privately, but the enjoyment of it was shared by all. In that same book (83) Isocrates claims “no one had any need.” He calls on his listeners to imitate their ancestors to cure society’s present ills (84).

Cicero addresses a quite practical matter. He states further that having all things in common properly refers to benefiting others freely but in a much less radical way than the maxim *κοινὰ τὰ φίλων* would seem to suggest, as when it is associated with the utopian ideal. The ultimate norm for charitable giving in Cicero is "that we may continue to have the means for being generous to our friends" (*De Off.* 1.51–52).³² For him "having all things in common" does not affect one's private property. Indeed, there is a rationalization for retaining one's wealth in his caution against being overly generous.³³ His use of the friendship maxim, then, supports the status quo of upper-status society.³⁴ According to Cicero, the state exists to secure the right of individuals to accumulate private property, and having all things in common cannot compromise that.³⁵ One finds similar thinking in Seneca and Plutarch.³⁶

³² He cites Ennius, "No less shines his" referring to the person who lights a wayfarer's lamp without diminishing his own.

³³ *De Off.* 2.54: "We must often distribute from our purse to the worthy poor, but we must do so with discretion and moderation. For many have squandered their patrimony by indiscriminate giving. But what is worse folly than to do the thing you like in such a way that you can no longer do it at all? Then, too, lavish giving leads to robbery; for when over-giving men begin to be impoverished, they are constrained to lay their hands on the property of others. And so, when men aim to be kind for the sake of winning good-will, the affection they gain from the objects of their gifts is not so great as the hatred they incur from those whom they despoil." Also, 2.55–56: "There are, in general, two classes of those who give largely: the one class is the lavish, the other the generous. The lavish are those who squander their money on public banquets, doles of meat among the people, gladiatorial shows, magnificent games, and wild-beast fights—vanities of which but a brief recollection will remain, or none at all. The generous on the other hand, are those who employ their own means to ransom captives from brigands, or who assume their friends' debts or help in providing dowries for their daughters, or assist them in acquiring property or increasing what they have."

³⁴ Baldry, *Unity of Mankind*, 199, 201.

³⁵ For a good treatment of Cicero's views on private property and how the right to it upholds the social order, see Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought*, 105–19. W. Den Boer claims: "There is, then, no question of a universal love of all mankind in the writings of Cicero, who, as an ex-consul and senator would not have known what this concept meant" (*Private Morality in Greece and Rome* [Leiden: Brill, 1979] 80).

³⁶ Seneca (*De Ben.* 7.4.2) attributes the right to own everything to the king, who parcels out individual ownership to others. He concludes about the tension between having all things in common and private ownership of property: "It is not necessarily true that what I have is not mine if what is mine is also yours; for it is possible that the same thing may be both mine and yours" (7.4.7). It is clear from his discussion about kings, masters, and slaves that he does not advocate a change in the social order. Further on (7.12.3–5) he says, "there are many ways of owning things in common. . . . Whatever our friend possesses is common to us, but it is the property of the one who holds it; I cannot use things against his will." Here the distinction is between ownership and use. See also *Ep. Mor.* 81. Plutarch criticizes Plato's ideal of common property and claims that the maxim *κοινὰ τὰ φίλων* is not absolute (*Amat.* 767E). In *Quaest. Conv.* 2.10.644C–D, he specifies what the proverb refers to in the context of a banquet: "Private possession in such matters does not disturb the general fellowship (*κοινωνίαν*) and this is due to the fact that the most important characteristics of a gathering and those worth most serious

If anything, texts like these show that there was some discussion about what the maxim κοινὰ τὰ φίλων meant in the practical order. And here is an important clue to Luke's use of that tradition. Authors like Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch used the friendship maxim to uphold the social order of their day.³⁷ They did not use it to advocate reform and social leveling. If anything, their interpretations of the maxim support social distinctions. Luke, however, has contextualized the maxim so to question the social order of his day.

Philip Esler has carefully studied Luke's theology of the poor, and his findings support ours.³⁸ He concludes that Luke challenged prevailing social arrangements, but sought not to overturn them. Rather, he asked the members of his community who came from a higher status to eschew the benefits of those arrangements for themselves. I would add that Luke wanted the status people of his community to transfer some of their benefits to those without status, through the institution of friendship, which normally would have kept the two separate. In other words, Luke used an institution very familiar to people of means, friendship, to get them to share their possessions with the poor of the community. He exhorted them to use their normal "power-brokering" technique to care for poor in their midst. When one realizes the implications of what Luke asks, one quickly sees that he has a specific social objective in mind.

II. Friendship and Reciprocity

Friendship could facilitate generosity toward others, but frequently largess was kept within social boundaries. Horizontal friendship was the norm because the element of likeness dictated that it be kept between social equals. Friendship between nonequals was possible, but then it took on the trappings of patron-client relationship and the expectations changed.³⁹ In both contexts (horizontal and vertical) giving was done with an eye to receiving, whether it be for further material gain, honor, or prestige (cf. Hesiod, *Op.* 354). A. R. Hands has studied the role of gift giving in ancient friendship

attention are in fact common, namely, conversation, toasts, and good fellowship " For the use of the maxim in other contexts, see *Coniug. praec.* 140D, *Quaest. Rom.* 266A, *Quaest. Conv.* 743E, *Non posse suaviter* 1102F

³⁷ See Den Boer, *Private Morality in Greece and Rome*, 62-92

³⁸ Esler mentions these summaries in Acts only briefly and calls attention to Luke's expectation of giving without receiving, but does not discuss them in terms of the friendship ideal used to communicate that (*Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* [SNTSMS 57, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987] 169)

³⁹ The institution of *clientela* brought people of differing statuses into relationships, but this was not considered friendship. Patrons benefited their clients and expected the latter to return loyalty, votes at election time, military support and honor (see J. E. Stambaugh and D. L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* [Library of Early Christianity 2, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986] 63-67)

and has shown how the "giver's action is self-regarding."⁴⁰ In fact, the failure to offer a gift in return for one given is tantamount to declaring enmity.⁴¹ This gives rise to an "agonistic" element in friendship, a competition between giver and receiver. The aim of the contest is always to better one's position and enhance one's status.⁴² Lack of a return would have the opposite effect and could actually cause dependence of the receiver on the donor.⁴³

Despite occasional criticism of this practice through time, Hands concludes, the attitude toward giving for a return remained largely the same. The bottom line is that the disposal of one's property as gifts, benefits, favors, etc. should be made for those capable of making return.⁴⁴

In terms of helping those who could make no material or monetary return, the expectation was that one would receive honor. Cities institutionalized this to reward people who did public works. Despite the ostensible freedom of such giving, according to Paul Veyne, there seems to have been some pressure put upon the wealthy to contribute to the good of the whole. Consequently, the motives for giving were more political than social or charitable. There need not be any real friendship in such euergetism, and if there were it is likely to have been politicized.⁴⁵

Giving across social and ethnic lines was sometimes facilitated by another form of friendship, where alliances or benefactions were made in the context of ritualized or guest friendship. The social bonding was different in this type of relationship, although the mutual benefits may have been externally quite similar to friendship between equals. Gabriel Herman has offered a fascinating study of ritualized friendship, *ξενία*, in classical and Hellenistic Greek cities, where it functioned to divide a small minority of aristocrats at the top of the social pyramid from *οἱ πολλοί*.⁴⁶ Herman defines ritualized friendship simply as "a bond of solidarity manifesting itself in an exchange of goods and services between individuals originating from separate social

⁴⁰ Hands, *Charities and Social Aid*, 26.

⁴¹ Ibid., 26. Hands follows the work of the anthropologist Marcel Mauss (*The Gift* [Glencoe: Free Press, 1954] 3, 51, 118), who describes the "agonistic" attitude found in his study of primitive moneyless societies.

⁴² P. Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions and Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987) 2. P. Veyne confirms this agonistic element in the practice of "euergetism" (*Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism* [London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1990] 78–80).

⁴³ Hands, *Charities and Social Aid*, 27; Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 2–3.

⁴⁴ Hands, *Charities and Social Aid*, 30. Hands cites Democritus, Aristotle, Terence, and Seneca, all of whom believe anonymous giving or giving without expected return to be a higher form of gift, showing that reciprocal giving was the norm among social equals. In order to maintain such relationships one had to be a person of means (ibid., 32). See also Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 8; and Degenhardt, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, 181. Giving was recognized by Aristotle as a way of making friends (*EN* 4.3.24–25 [1124b]).

⁴⁵ Veyne, *Bread and Circuses*, 232–33; cf. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid*, 35–48.

⁴⁶ Gabriel Herman, *Ritualized Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

units.”⁴⁷ Unlike φίλος, ξένος normally crossed social boundaries and was found among people of differing statuses.⁴⁸ It consisted of a ritualizing of the bond through gesture, and an exchange of goods and services. Frequently the gesture was the δέξις, the right hand of fellowship, but it had other forms.⁴⁹

Whatever the case, Luke understood well the practice of friendship and euergetism in his day, but viewed it differently for his community. He knew it as a powerful institution for helping others, but also expected that it would jump social barriers.

III. Friendship in the Lucan Community

Thus far, the discussion has provided important evidence for appreciating Luke’s special interest in reshaping the notion of friendship for his community. It is now time to turn to Luke-Acts for confirmation of the thesis that he has done this with an eye to changing social relations between rich and poor. The following reasons support the view that Luke transformed the notion of friendship to cross social lines in his community and, in turn, challenged the reciprocity ethic, an important part of friendship in his day.

First, Luke’s perspective establishes the expectation that among the early Christians those from higher status will freely and naturally help those of lower status, but without expecting anything in return. The mention of a return to the donor is noticeably absent from the summaries describing the community of goods. That this is consistent with Luke’s overall perspective is confirmed by redacted material in his Gospel:

And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again But love your enemies, and do good, and lend expecting nothing in return
(Luke 6:34–35a RSV)⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., 10

⁴⁸ There are synonyms for ξένος that can refer to people coming from different or the same social units (Herman, *Ritualized Friendship*, 11–12)

⁴⁹ The question is open for me whether Luke had only standard friendship in mind or may have been thinking of ritualized friendship. In Acts 4 the story of Barnabas fits the context of ritualized friendship, because of the ethnic and status differences between the parties and the ritualized gesture involved in the exchange

⁵⁰ The origin of these verses is uncertain. Although much of the material surrounding them derives from Q, they are unparalleled in Matthew. R. A. Edwards notes that “the editorial activity of Matthew and/or Luke is quite extensive in this section,” but he fails to identify the source of Luke 6:34–35a (*A Theology of Q: Eschatology, Prophecy, and Wisdom* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976] 86). In his Q concordance Edwards lists only πλὴν ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθρούς in 6:35a (*A Concordance to Q* [Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975] 100). J. S. Kloppenborg shows no parallel in Matthew 5 and puts Luke 6:34–35a in parentheses, indicating an unclear origin (*Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes and Concordance* [Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988] 28, 31). He cites a saying from *Gos. Thom.* 95: “If you have money, do not lend it at interest. Rather, give

When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. (Luke 14:12-14 RSV)⁵¹

The thought is echoed later in the Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (RSV). These texts show how different are Luke's expectations from those prevailing in the culture of his day.⁵² They establish an important context for appreciating the message of Acts 2 and 4.

Second, the language of the summaries stresses unity and harmony, and selects from the friendship traditions those elements that highlight equality.⁵³ The purpose here is not to reinforce the cultural tradition of friendship within rank only but to challenge that by showing people of different statuses joined together as friends who hold "all things in common." The equality they have is achieved by their willingness to cross social lines.

The real power of the summaries in Acts lies in how their message reaches into the narratives surrounding them. Several times those stories mention how the community was all together (ὁμοθυμαδόν in 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12 or ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό in 1:15; 2:1, 44, 47).⁵⁴ For Luke, these are synonyms for being of one heart and mind (καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία) and having all things in common (ἅπαντα κοινά).⁵⁵ The contrasts of Judas and Ananias and Sapphira,

[it] to someone from whom you will not get it back," something quite different from Luke (ibid., 29). In another work Kloppenborg expresses doubt over the Q origin of Luke 6:34-35a (*The Formation Q: Trajectories Ancient Wisdom Collections* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987] 175-76). Nor are these verses part of A. Polag's reconstruction of Q (see I. Havener, *Q: The Sayings of Jesus* [Good News Studies 19; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987] 70, 126). It is not unreasonable, then, to consider them Lucan redaction (see J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX* [AB 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985] 627, 640; R. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986] 129; S. Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* [Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972] 130-31; R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* [New York: Harper & Row, 1963] 96).

⁵¹ For the prevailing cultural attitude, see Juvenal, *Satires* 5.12-23, 167-73.

⁵² Cf. Degenhardt, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, 180-81, 221-22; Karris, "Poor and Rich," 115.

⁵³ Seccombe sees the absence of the word ἰσότης in these summaries as proof of Luke's lack of concern for equality or social leveling among his community (*Possessions and the Poor*, 209). But Luke certainly seems to appeal to the ideal of equality in the language of these summaries, much the way he includes friendship maxims without actually using the word φιλία. Seccombe grants the latter (ibid., 203). Cf. Dupont, "La communauté des biens," 516-18.

⁵⁴ On the importance of these words in Luke, see J. Dupont, "Lunion," 305-9; R. Rasco, "Beauté et exigences de la communion ecclésiale (Ac 2; 4; 5)," *Assemblées du Seigneur* (n.s.) 23 (1970) 122.

⁵⁵ Johnson understands the two expressions to mean more than just being together; they imply a deeper unity transforming the notion of "friends" in the Greco-Roman ideal into the idea of "believers" (*Literary Function of Possessions*, 187). See Cerfaux ("La première communauté chrétienne," 27-28) for the parallels to ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό in the Greco-Roman friendship tradition.

who violated the principle of *κοινωνία*, help the reader to appreciate the force of this unity in Luke's scheme. Rather than join together with the others (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό), Judas went to a place of his own τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον (1:25). Whereas the believers say they have nothing that is their own, and some show this by selling fields and homes to benefit others, Judas buys a field of his own (1:18).⁵⁶ It was purchased with a reward, a μισθὸς τῆς ἀδικίας, which contrasts to τὰς τιμὰς πιπρασκομένων of the believers in 4:34. Likewise, rather than contribute wholly and generously to the community of goods, Ananias and Sapphira held back (ἐνοσφίσαστο ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς, 5:2) part of what another would have surrendered. Here the contrast of common and private property is heightened. The stress on "togetherness" and the negative examples showing individuality have the value of suggesting that the distinction "mine" and "yours" should be adjusted.⁵⁷ Since that distinction was a function of status separation, Luke challenges his hearers to relax social boundaries in their community.

Third, joining the Greco-Roman tradition of friendship to LXX traditions helps Luke to distinguish his objective from the cultural expectation for friendship in his day.⁵⁸ The Deuteronomic ideal of eliminating need in Israel (ὅτι οὐκ ἔσται ἐν σοὶ ἐνδεής, Deut 15:4) adds motivation for the rich to cross social lines to benefit the poor, bringing the practice of sharing property closer to the Jewish ideal.⁵⁹ Further religious incentive is drawn from Deut 4:29, where ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου characterizes Israel's seeking for God. This is similar to Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:13, 18; 13:3; 26:16; and 30:2, 6, 10, where the joining of heart and soul typifies Israel's total response to God.⁶⁰ Several times ψυχὴ μία refers simply to a person (Lev 4:27;

⁵⁶ See Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions*, 180–82.

⁵⁷ Seccombe believes that it makes little sense to see the account of Ananias and Sapphira primarily as "a negative aspect of the sharing of goods" (*Possessions and the Poor*, 211). Its chief function is "to give illustration and content to the idea that fear surrounded the primitive community" (ibid., 211) and "to demonstrate the holiness of the primitive community" (ibid., 213). But in the end he concludes that the story must have some relationship to possessions: "It provides another clear example of the destructive power of greed" (ibid., 214). Curiously, he does not discuss the example of Barnabas's generosity as demonstrative of the community's holiness, which one might expect since the story of Ananias and Sapphira provides an example opposite to his. It makes more sense to tie Ananias and Sapphira more closely to possessions than Seccombe will grant. Johnson is correct to see it as "a negative contrast to the picture of community life in 4:32–37" (*Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 205).

⁵⁸ On the LXX background of καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία and οὐδὲ εἰς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι in Acts 4:32 and οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδεής τις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς in 4:33, see Dupont, "La communauté des biens," 509–10, 512–13, idem, "L'union," 303, Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 199, idem, *Sharing Possessions*, 128, Degenhardt, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, 170–72, Del Verme, "La comunione dei beni," 367–68, 381.

⁵⁹ See Degenhardt, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, 177–80, 183–87.

⁶⁰ Dupont rightly notes that the joining of heart and soul is more biblical than Greek, so Luke may have intended to recast the friendship maxim μία ψυχὴ in LXX language ("La communauté des biens," 513).

Num 15:27; 31:28), but in 1 Chr 12:39, where it designates Israel's unanimity in the choice of David as king, it is close to the Greek friendship ideal.⁶¹ These LXX allusions provide a fresh incentive for the non-Jewish members of Luke's community, putting the friendship tradition they knew in a new light. Linking the union of hearts and souls to the alleviation of need in the community reinterprets the meaning of benefiting friends, who, by definition, have all things in common. Thus Luke offers his readers a significant reason to reshape their thinking on the matter.

Fourth, in light of this stress on unity, the image Luke presents us with in chap. 4 should not be overlooked. Barnabas is a landowner, which implies some means and certainly status.⁶² He sells a field and then in a gesture of humility lays the proceeds of it at the apostles' feet.⁶³ We see here a landowner bowed before Galilean fishermen, someone with property before those who, in Luke 18:28, proclaim that they left their possessions (τὰ ἰδια) and, in 5:11, πάντα to follow Jesus.⁶⁴ The reversal is striking, for according to the normal conventions of society Barnabas, as benefactor, should have been the superior in this relationship.⁶⁵ Thus he would hardly have been at the apostles' feet.⁶⁶

Luke Johnson sees in this the submission of Barnabas, an important

⁶¹ Deut 13 7, ἡ ὁ φίλος ὁ ἴσος τῆς ψυχῆς σου, seems to know the tradition of a friend as another self, which is similar to ψυχὴ μία.

⁶² On the meaning of status in the first century CE and how to measure it see G. Alföldy, *The Social History of Rome* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1985) 94–156, B. Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 21–28, R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations 50 BC to AD 284* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 88–120, W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 20–22, 53–55.

⁶³ The gesture actually appears to be one of supplication, an element of the guest-friendship tradition (see J. Goold, "Hiketeia," *JHS* 93 [1973] 74–103, V. Pedrick, "Supplication in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*," *TAPA* 112 [1982] 125–40).

⁶⁴ Luke's redaction is instructive. In 19:28 he substitutes τὰ ἰδια for πάντα in Mark 10:28. In place of τὰ δίκτυα in Mark 1:18 and τὸν πατέρα αὐτῶν in Mark 1:20, the things Simon, Andrew, and Zebedee's sons left behind, he has πάντα. In 5:28 Luke adds that Levi, getting up, καταλιπὼν πάντα to follow Jesus to Mark's simple notice that he got up and followed Jesus (2:14). Esler contests Mealand's reading of τὰ ἰδια as compromising the total renunciation made by the apostles (*Community and Gospel*, 167). I agree it should be interpreted in terms of the earlier reference to "everything" but note that it does specify what were their own possessions according to 18:29. See Karris, "Poor and Rich," 123.

⁶⁵ Cicero helps us to appreciate the status gulf between Barnabas and the apostles when he ranks occupations, placing fishermen at the very bottom and agriculturalists at the top (*De Off* 1:150–51). Surely the latter are not those whose subsistence depends on farming, but are landowners whose property was the basis of their wealth (see M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974] 56–61). Esler estimates that some of Luke's community were possibly from the *ordo decurionum* (*Community and Gospel*, 184).

⁶⁶ They may have exchanged the δέξις, the right hand of fellowship, or some other gesture that would not have been quite as demeaning.

figure in the Gentile mission, to the authority of the apostles.⁶⁷ He is on firm ground when he cites the LXX evidence where being at the feet of another connotes submission. But is the subordination just one of authority? If it were normal in Luke's day for benefactors to wield social power by accumulating honor and prestige through their donations, wouldn't the gesture also function here to give the opposite impression?⁶⁸ Giving without receiving implies forgoing the social benefit of public honor and sets a quite different example for the well-off in Luke's community.

Fifth, the story of Ananias and Sapphira exemplifies a wrong attitude about the use of possessions. Karris observed, on the basis of Luke 16:14–15, that some in the Lucan community may have believed that Jesus abrogated the Jewish teaching about almsgiving or may have sought theological justification for their cultural bias against it.⁶⁹ But in a note he also claimed that it is not sufficiently clear to him that Luke is attacking this.⁷⁰ There is, however, a link between Luke and Acts on this very point. The Gospel tells us: "The Pharisees, who were lovers of money (φιλάργυροι), heard all this and they scoffed at him. But he said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God'" (Luke 16:14 RSV). They are, of course, scoffing at Jesus' claim that one cannot serve God and mammon. Whether it is a sign of divine favor or not, the Pharisees reject Jesus' claim, implying that they think there is a way of serving God and mammon. The contrast between their justification before humans and what God knows to be true about them indicates they are deceiving others, and maybe even themselves.

Ananias and Sapphira have tried to deceive others, too. The retention of a portion of what they had promised to the community illustrates an attempt to have it both ways, to serve God and mammon.⁷¹ For this reason, Luke uses language reminiscent of the Gospel when Peter confronts them. Acts 5:4 asks τί ὅτι ἔθου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο; and declares οὐκ ἐψεύσω ἀνθρώποις ἀλλὰ τῷ θεῷ. Luke 16:15 provides the context for understanding this language: ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὁ δὲ θεὸς γινώσκει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν· ὅτι τὸ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὑψηλὸν βδέλυγμα ἐνώπιον τοῦ

⁶⁷ Johnson, *Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, 201–4

⁶⁸ R. Tannehill discusses the connection between wealth and prestige in relation to the Pharisees in Luke's Gospel. Both themes come together in 16:14–15, where Jesus criticizes them for their love of money and exaltation (*Narrative Unity*, 181). Whether or not the image of the Pharisees has actual relevance for Luke's community, it is likely that the link between wealth and prestige does (cf. Degenhardt, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, 132; Karris, "Poor and Rich," 122).

⁶⁹ Karris, "Poor and Rich," 122–23. See also E. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT 5, 3d ed., Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1975) 166; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV* (AB 28A, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985) 1112.

⁷⁰ Karris, "Rich and Poor," 123 n. 48.

⁷¹ Tannehill connects making friends, being faithful, and serving God rather than mammon as ways of talking about disposing one's wealth for those in need (*Narrative Unity*, 131). Cf. Secombe, *Possessions and the Poor*, 220.

θεοῦ. Both stories emphasize a contrast between human perception and divine knowledge, and both locate the problem in the hearts of the deceivers. Like the Pharisees, Ananias and Sapphira contrived the deed in their hearts. They tried to hide their deception from humans, the way the Pharisees disguised their self-righteousness. They cannot, however, fool God, who knows their hearts.

Since their story is the opposite of Barnabas's and is connected to the Pharisees' attitude toward money in the Gospel, it is not unreasonable to think that Ananias and Sapphira involved themselves in some kind of rationalization for not handing over all of the proceeds from their property. Karris may be correct that some in Luke's community sought theological legitimation for not giving alms. If so, Ananias and Sapphira could represent them. It is possible, too, that they represent the Greco-Roman cultural attitude we saw in Cicero, where he justifies restricted giving under the guise of being able to benefit his close circle of friends. Both attitudes manifest a rationalization for not being generous with one's possessions across social boundaries, something Luke tries to overcome in his community.

Sixth, the example of Peter's benefaction toward the lame man at the Temple in Acts 3:1–10 points to a different attitude in giving. In 4:9 Peter refers to this act as εὐεργεσία, a technical term for a benefaction. As such acts normally were done to enhance the status of the benefactor, who expected and received a return for the work, Peter's attitude in bestowing the favor is not usual.⁷² He does not give silver or gold, and expects nothing in return. He seems to exemplify the mandate of Luke's Gospel, which distinguishes community members from those outside: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors (εὐεργέται). But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves" (Luke 22:25–26 RSV).⁷³ It should also be noted in relation to this that Bohnenblust, in his study of the friendship *topos*, found that friendship is sometimes portrayed as better than riches.⁷⁴

Seventh, even though, as Johnson has observed, the mention of the community of goods is not found in the subsequent chapters of Acts, the crossing of social boundaries is.⁷⁵ Luke shows people of differing statuses sharing in the community as the book proceeds. Karris points to the stories of Simon Magus, the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, Sergius Paulus.⁷⁶ Other examples may be added. The mention of everyone contributing to the collection at Antioch according to ability to pay implies a variety of status levels (11:29).

⁷² See Veyne, *Bread and Circuses*, 5–69

⁷³ See F W Danker, *Benefactor Epigraphic Study of a Greco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis Clayton Publishing House, 1982) 404, 324

⁷⁴ Bohnenblust, *Beitrag zum Topos ΠΕΡΙ ΦΙΛΙΑΣ*, 15, 29 See DIO Chrysostom, *Or* 44 2

⁷⁵ Johnson, *Sharing Possessions*, 128

⁷⁶ Karris, "Poor and Rich," 125

The mother of John Mark hosts a number of people in her house in 12:12, giving another example of a woman of means (she has a servant girl, Rhoda) supporting the mission.⁷⁷ At 13:1 we are told that Manaen, an intimate friend (σύντροφος) of Herod the Tetrarch is part of the community at Antioch. Lydia invites Paul, Silas, and Timothy to her house to stay in 16:15, and when they get out of prison they return there (16:40). At Beroea many Greek men and women of standing become believers (17:12). Paul seems to exemplify the proper attitude toward property and giving in his speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus in Acts 20:33–35. There we are told that he coveted no one's silver or gold apparel, he provided for his own needs and the needs of his companions by working, and he set the example that giving was indeed better than receiving. We could add the women of means who aided the mission in the Gospel, Mary Magdalene, Johanna, Susanna, as well as many others (8:3). The picture is one of people from differing statuses joining together and often those of a higher status aiding those of a lower one.

This evidence supports the view that Luke had more in mind than alluding to a primitive Christian utopia when he incorporated elements of the Greco-Roman friendship ideal in his summary descriptions of the early Jerusalem community. The context of the maxims, *ἅπαντα κοινά* and *καρδιά καὶ ψυχὴ μία*, directs their function toward the practical problem of how property will be held in his community and how those who have it will benefit those who do not by adopting a new view of friendship.

IV. Conclusion

Friendship was doubtless a vehicle for wealth, status, and power for the ruling elite of Luke's day. Normally, it was formed within social orders, and its benefits were shared by people of the same status. Luke, however, uses friendship to equalize relationships in his own community. He portrays the early Jerusalem community in Acts as a community of friends to show how friendship can continue across status lines and the poor can be benefited by the rich. Redefining friendship this way helps Luke to achieve his social objective: encouraging the rich to provide relief for the poor of his own community. Barnabas exemplifies the correct attitude here. His example challenges the reciprocity ethic that some of Luke's community may have followed: giving for a return. Luke may question, too, a theological justification for not sharing possessions, and the Greco-Roman cultural attitude that rationalizes the retention of wealth under the guise of being able to bestow future benefits, primarily among one's friends. The story of Ananias and Sapphira accomplishes that. Thus Luke appeals to the Greco-Roman friendship tradition to help his constituents reimagine the relationship between rich and poor within their own *κοινωνία*.

⁷⁷ Dupont also considers her house evidence that people still held private property ("L'union," 301).

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