

NARRATIVE SUMMARIES IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES READING OF THE SECOND SUMMARY ACCOUNT (4:32-35)

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Abstract

The article presents a reading of the second summary narrative account in the Acts of the Apostles by adopting *Point of View Analysis* with *Intertextual Reading* of the Isaianic prophecies. The nascent Christian community is thus presented in sharing its livelihood as a realization of the community's fellowship with God and with one another.

Keywords: point of view analysis, intertextual reading, Isaianic New Exodus, nascent community.

Introduction

This article, combining narrative and intertextual approach, reads the central narrative section, divided into two subunits (3:1-5:11; 5:12-42), that after the event of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), recounts how the community relates to the Jewish public. Two summary portrayals (4:32-35; 5:12-16) and the final summary statement (5:42) encompass and reiterate both the description of the inner life of the community and the growing conflict with the temple authorities (4:1-22; 5:17-41).

1. Prerequisites for interpretation

1.1. Overview of the narrative context

Following the first summary account, the reader observes Peter and John as they both heal a lame man in the temple (3:1-10) and explain the healing by teaching about Jesus Christ (3:11-26). The authorities react with suspicion, as they imprison Peter and John, and forbid them to teach (4:1-22). The community responds with prayer which precedes the empowerment by the Holy Spirit (4:23-31). As a corollary to this event, the second summary account depicts the community in sharing goods (4:32-35). Two illustrative examples at the end continue the theme of sharing goods, highlighting the authority of the apostles (4:36-5:11).

1.2. Delimitation and coherence

Whereas the narrative account is expressed by a *sequence of aorists* which runs until 4:31b, the summary description, smoothly prepared for by a transition in 4:31c,¹ is characterized by the use of the *descriptive imperfect tense* beginning in 4:32. Both the use of the imperfect and the specific narrative of concise *discourse time*² single out the summary from the surrounding context. The shift back to the regular narrative style of recounting actions lies at the heart of the following episode (cf. 4:37: ἤνεγκεν, ἔθηκεν).³

With regard to the *plot or action*, i.e., the focus on the sharing of goods (4:32.34–35) and the testimony (4:33), not only sustains the internal coherence but also links the summary to the surrounding episodes of the trial and to

¹ For Ulrich WENDEL (*Gemeinde in Kraft. Das Gemeindeverständnis in den Summarien der Apostelgeschichte, Neukirchener theologische Dissertationen und Habilitationen* 20; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1998, 51) and Craig KEENER (*Acts. An Exegetical Commentary. 3:1-14:28*, 2, Grand Rapids MI, 2013, 1173) the summary begins in 4:31 as this permits Keener to propose a thematic chiasmic structure. However, verse 4:31 is better understood as a transition, as the shift of both the subject and the verb (καρδία καὶ ψυχή; ἦν) as well as the theme (unity) is marked by a particle of transition in 4:32, as Bernd MÖNNING (*Die Darstellung des urchristlichen Kommunismus nach der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas. Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Theologischen Fakultät, Göttingen* 1978, 58) shows.

² Andy CHAMBERS, *Exemplary Life. A Theology of Church Life in Acts*, Nashville TN, 2012, 44.

³ The episode of Ananias and Sapphira (disregarding the direct speeches) continues the *sequence of aorists*: 5:1: ἐπόλησεν; 5:2: ἐνοσφίσατο, ἔθηκεν; 5:3: εἶπεν; 5:5: ἐξέψυξεν, ἐγένετο; 5:6: συνέστειλαν, ἔθασαν; 5:7: ἐγένετο, εἰσηλθεν; 5:8: ἀπεκρίθη, εἶπεν; 5:10: ἔπεσεν, ἐξέψυξεν, εὔρον, ἔθασαν; 5:11: ἐγένετο.

Barnabas and Ananias–Sapphira. In short, the summary primarily shows a shift of style (verbal tense) and focus (the unity of the community).

2. Close reading: Point of View Analysis

2.1. Perceptual facet

The analysis of this facet in terms of *time and space* remains vague. The general *temporal indication* καθότι ἄν⁴ (4:35), with a nuance of possibility, forms a transition to the concrete case of distribution by Barnabas (4:36). The enduring temporal aspect can be deduced by the *sequence of verbs* in the imperfect tense⁵ and the periphrastic or participle construction.⁶ This indicates an unceasing positive disposition towards unity and openness as a corollary of the gift of the Spirit (4:31). Although the *spatial dimension* remains likewise inexplicit, some indications can be inferred from the close context. Jerusalem remains the general setting (cf. 4:27), reiterating the ideological insistence on the Holy City (cf. Acts 1:8; Isa 52:1-2). Whereas the referral to the temple is withheld,⁷ the reference to the house,⁸ implying movement towards possession (Acts 4:34),⁹ has symbolic proleptic value of the universal mission (4:35).¹⁰ In short, both the loose temporal and spatial dimensions emphasise the enduring unity within the community.

2.2. Psychological facet

The *psychological facet* ponders the *emotional and phraseological plane* of the text in order to demonstrate the shift from a Hellenistic *topos* of friendship to a biblical understanding of the Covenant. The first verse 4:32 merits special attention as it consists of three complementary segments:

⁴ It may express a possibility. For the iterative construction καθότι ἄν + imperf. ind. cf. BDR § 3673.

⁵ The sequence: 4:32: ἦν, ἔλεγεν, ἦν; 33: ἀπεδίδουν ἦν; 34: ἦν, ἔφερον; 35: ἐτίθουν, διεδίδετο, εἶχεν.

⁶ The sequence: 4:32: πιστευσάντων, ὑπαρχόντων; 34: κτήτορες ὑπῆρχον; πωλοῦντες; πιπρασκομένων.

⁷ The omission of the temple reference prepares the shift from the temple onto the streets (5:12.15–16) and the mission to the Gentile's house (11:14).

⁸ Acts 2:2.46; 4:31; 5:42.

⁹ The reference to fields and houses of the owners prepares for the universal mission (cf. Acts 4:36: Κύριος [2:9-11]) that remains under the guidance of the apostles.

¹⁰ Josep RIUS-CAMPS – Jenny READ-HEIMERDINGER, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae. A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition*. I. Acts 1.1–5.42, Jerusalem, 2004, 311–314.

- 4:32a: entitling segment of unity
- 4:32b: negative formulation concerning private property
- 4:32c: positive formulation concerning common goods

(1) The initial segment 4:32a contains a threefold emphasis on unity with the help of a double genitive, an abstract subject, and a predicate. The *double genitive* (4:32: Τοῦ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων) defines the multitude. The former *genitive of relation*¹¹ links the crowd to the abstract subjects heart and soul, while the *genitive of quality*¹² characterizes the crowd as the believers. Thus, the believers do not represent the subject-focus as in the first summary (2:41.44), but, rather, the focus represents the unity which is qualified by the dimension of faith. This is even more convincing through correlation with Isaiah, where the contrast between the terms »multitude« and »faith« emerges. While the former has negative connotations, i.e., related to war-like conditions of destruction (Isa 21:15) and the numerous chariots of the enemy (37:24), the notion of faith implies positive connotations, i.e., stability (7:9) and acknowledgment of the Lord (43:10). Thus, in Acts the multitude of the believers forms a unity only through faith.

The community is depicted as being of one heart and soul. This characterization in terms of integrity enables the relationship with God¹³ and friends.¹⁴ The cardinal number »one« (Acts 4:32a: μία) functions as a predicate at the end of the phrase and further emphasizes unity. Whereas the first summary portrayed unity by focusing on *table-fellowship* with reference to joy and simplicity of the heart (2:46), here the spiritual unity of the heart and soul entails sharing material goods.¹⁵

(2) The second segment 4:32b, using the conjunction of apposition (καί), displays a negative formulation: »not even one of the owners claimed his belongings as his own.« Here the predicate of the first segment »one« (4:32a: μία) becomes the subject (4:32b: εἷς). Thus, the subject »one,« related to the negation »not even« and the *partitive genitive*¹⁶ »owners,« is further explained by the da-

¹¹ BDR § 162.

¹² BDR § 165. See also: Maximilian ZERWICK – Joseph SMITH (*Biblical Greek*, Roma 2005, § 45).

¹³ Cf. Deut 4:29; 6:5-6; Phil 1:27,2.2.

¹⁴ Douglas HUME, *The Early Christian Community. A Narrative Analysis of Acts 2:41-47 and 4:32-35*, WUNT 2.298, Tübingen, 2011, 122.

¹⁵ Jacques DUPONT, *Studi sugli Atti degli Apostoli*, Roma 1975, 878.

¹⁶ BDR § 164.

tive of possession,¹⁷ and a verb related to the two accusatives which function as a predicate.¹⁸ While the dative places the emphasis on possessions, the accusatives determine the possession, i.e., the first relates to the undefined possession τι, and the second linked to the infinitive re-interprets the possession (ἴδιον εἶναι). Henceforth, owners do not claim things as their own.

(3) The third segment 4:32c, by applying the conjunction of opposition ἀλλά, redefines the possession positively by affirming the use of possession for a common good. The rhetoric of persuasion is formed by means of: (1) conjunctions (4:32b: καί /4:32c: ἀλλά),¹⁹ (2) a subject (4:32b: [οὐδέ] εἷς/ 4:32c: ἅπαντα),²⁰ (3) ownership (4:32b: ἴδιον/4:32c: κοινά).²¹

In brief, unity determines the use of possessions. Thus, owners no longer consider their possessions as their own (4:32b), as everything is held in common (4:32c). The simplest way of understanding would be a correlation between 4:32a: καρδιά καὶ ψυχή μία and 4:32c: ἅπαντα κοινά to form a friendship paradigm. However, the central insertion 4:32b: τι [...] ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι prompts the owners to redefine their possessions. The shift in the mindset of the owners will be examined below in four steps, which redefine the *semantic polysemy* of the heart and the soul: (a) topos of friendship; (b) historical analogies; (c) expression of the covenant (d) friendship as concern for the needy.

(a) Topos of friendship

The reference to the unity of both the soul and common property evokes the Hellenistic idea of friendship, concisely expressed in the proverbial maxim »friends are one soul and have all in common.« The concept is not Lukan as Gerd Theißen (1995, 699–700) points out,²² but a common *topos* in Greek literature, in

¹⁷ BDR § 189.

¹⁸ BDR §§ 157.397. See also: ZERWICK – GROSVENOR, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, Roma⁵1996, 363.

¹⁹ The conjunction καί, καὶ οὐδέ may indicate the explicative continuation of the initial phrase. BDR § 445. On the other hand, the conjunction ἀλλά correlates with the preceding negation. BDR § 448.1.

²⁰ The cardinal number »one« represents a real subject of the phrase.

²¹ BDR § 286.1. The term entails both negative (Judas: 1:18-19.25) and positive (apostles: 4,23) dimensions. Thus, a person's perception regarding his goods is crucial.

²² Gerd THEIßEN, *Urchristlicher Liebeskommunismus: zum »Sitz im Leben« des Topos ἅπαντα κοινά in Apg 2,44 und 4,32*, in: *Text and Contexts. Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts*, Essays in Honor of L. Hartman, T. FORNBERG – D. HELLHOLM (ed.), Oslo, 1995, 699–700.

spite of its variegated interpretations.²³ Thus, Plato in *Republica* §§ 413C–417B applies the notion of friendship to the context of the utopian, golden age of the ideal state.²⁴ Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1159b.1168b.7–12; 1169b.16–21) and *Eudemian Ethics* (1137b.1240b) designates friendship as objective bonds of kinship and alliance, based on virtue and reciprocity.²⁵ Diogenes Laertius, in his *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, is pertinent for our purpose, as he outlines how the interpretation of the friendship maxim with regard to the distribution of property depended on different authors. In general, friendship defines the relationship between political and social equals, or possibly benefactors.²⁶ Therefore, private property was not abolished. In order to preserve the status of the upper classes, Cicero, in *De officiis* (1,51-52), sets a clear distinction between »private property« and »friends share all things in common.« Whereas the state has to secure the right of individuals to private property, the notion of friendship calls for rational generosity among friends.²⁷ In brief, friendship is considered to be

²³ John T. FITZGERALD (ed.), *Friendship in the Greek World Prior to Aristotle*, in: *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, SBLRBS 34, Atlanta GA, 1997, 13–34; Douglas HUME, *The Early Christian Community*, 62–75.

²⁴ See also: Alan C. MITCHELL, *The Social Function of Friendship in Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-37*, in: *JBL* 111, 1992, 261; Alan C. MITCHELL, »Greet the Friends by Name«: New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman Topos on Friendship, in: *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, John T. FITZGERALD (ed.), SBLRBS 34, Atlanta GA, 1997, 241; Martin HENGEL, *Property and Riches in the Early Church. Aspects of a Social History of Early Christianity*, Philadelphia 1974, 8–9; Markus ÖHLER, *Die Jerusalemer Urgemeinde im Spiegel des antiken Vereinswesens*, in: *NTS* 51, 2005, 394–413.

²⁵ See also: Frederick M. SCHROEDER, *Friendship in Aristotle and Some Peripatetic Philosophers*, in: *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, John T. FITZGERALD (ed.), SBLRBS 34, Atlanta GA, 1997, 35–44.

²⁶ While social identity of such a group in the Hellenistic culture points to *philosophic groups* and *voluntary associations* (Steve MASON, *Philosophiai. Graeco-Roman, Judean and Christian*, in: *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, Stephen G. WILSON – John S. KLOPPENBORG (ed.), London 1996, 55; Wayne MCCREADY, *Ekklesia and Voluntary Associations*, in: *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, Stephen G. WILSON – John S. KLOPPENBORG (ed.), London 1996, 69–70), in the Jewish religious-cultural context to *Ebionites* (Hans-Joachim DEGENHARDT, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen. Besitz und Besitzversicht in den lukanischen Schriften. Eine traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Stuttgart 1965, 204; Michael GOULDER, *The Anointed*, in: *The Old Testament in the New Testament*, Essays in Honour of J.L. North, J. L. NORTH – Steve MOYISE (ed.), Sheffield, 2000, 73–74), *Therapeuts* (Alfred WIKENHAUSER, *Atti degli Apostoli*, Brescia 1958, 86–87) and *Qumran* (Taylor 2001, 147–161; Brian J. CAPPER, *The Palestinian Cultural Context of Earliest Christian Community of Goods*, in: *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*, Richard BAUCKHAM (ed.), The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, 4, Grand Rapids MI, 1995, 323–335; Étienne P. TROCMÉ, *The Childhood of Christianity*, London, 1997, 16–19; Steve WALTON, *Primitive Communism in Acts? Does Acts Present the Community of Goods (2:44-45; 4:32-35) as Mistaken?*, in: *EQ* 80, 2008, 102–1089).

²⁷ For an interpretation of the *topos* in the Hellenistic period, see: David KONSTAN, *Friendship in the Classical World*, Cambridge, 1997, 93–148); Christopher M. HAYS, *Luke's Wealth*

a philosophical virtue enacting a unity and harmony of relationships among individuals within a social sphere. However, the maxim of friendship does not mean merely an abstract philosophical concept, given the fact that some social groups endeavoured to fulfil the ideals of friendship.

(b) *Expression of the Covenant*

The notion »heart and soul« evokes a biblical foundation,²⁸ alluding to the integrity of the person who finds himself or herself in a covenant with the Lord. Luke adopts the terminology of friendship elsewhere;²⁹ however, the parallel »heart and soul« evokes the book of Deuteronomy which describes the covenant with God in these terms. The relationship with God, described as seeking, loving and serving the Lord with all one's heart and soul (cf. Deut 4:29; 6:5), is either a blessing, if people obey God's commandments, or a curse if they disobey (11:13-17). Therefore, people should pay attention to divine words (11:18). However, despite his people's disloyalty, God remains faithful by renewing the covenant and restoring people when they return to the Lord with all their heart and soul (30:1-10). Given that the Lord's word is intrinsic to a person's heart (30:14), the covenant pattern always remains decisive for Israel. Thus, Hays comes to a general conclusion:

»The Shema is such a familiar and foundational text within Judaism that only a slight verbal cue is needed to trigger the full-volume echo.«³⁰

The Deuteronomistic hopes of the covenantal renewal find their place in Isaiah (cf. Isa 51:1-7).³¹ Harkening to God (51:4-5) leads to conversion which means two things:

- (1) an end to social injustice (cf. 44:18-20; 51:13-14; 58:6-7),
- (2) God's abiding presence in the heart (57:15).

Ethics. A Study in Their Coherence and Character, WUNT 2.275, Tübingen, 2010, 201–209.

²⁸ The biblical use of the term »friend« usually defines a human relationship. The occurrence in Deut 13:7 evokes the Hellenistic comprehension of a friend as »one's own soul.« However, in Exod 33:11 the notion describes Moses' relationship with God.

²⁹ Jesus calls his disciples friends (cf. John 15:9-15). Luke uses the term on different occasions: the centurion's messengers (Lk 7:6), Jesus as a friend of publicans and sinners (Lk 7:34). Jesus redefines the notion (Lk 14:10-14; 16:9), indicating a shift in approaching the needy (Lk 6:33-34; Acts 20:35) and persecution (Lk 21:16).

³⁰ Richard B. HAYS, *The Conversion of the Imagination. Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture*, Grand Rapids MI, 2005, 36.

³¹ Gerald J. JANZEN, »An Echo of the Shema in Isaiah 51:1-3«, JSOT 43 (1989) 69–82.

However, the renewal of the covenant is established through Jesus's resurrection (Acts 4:33) as the fulfilment of the Isaianic hopes (Isa 26:12-19). The prophet portrays the restoration of the nation by imagery of three stages of reanimation or transition to life (Isa 26:19; cf. Ezek 37:1-14): the arousal of the dead corpse (Isa 26:19a), the awakening of the lifeless (26:19b), and the shout of joy of the revived (26:19c). In brief, the restoration of the covenantal blessing requires conversion to the Lord, which has threefold consequences: (1) the status of fellowship with the Risen; (2) membership and security in God's family; and (3) a commitment to live worthily and responsibly towards the community's members.³²

(c) *Friendship as care for the needy*

The community members live as friends and provide for the poor (Acts 4:34-35) because of their fellowship with Christ (4:33a).³³ They represent a new creation by the Spirit (4:33b)³⁴ and resemble the child Jesus (Lk 2:40). This *syncretism* evokes Luke's use of the Isaianic Servant, who is anointed by the Spirit and cares for the poor (Lk 4:18-19; Isa 61:1-2; 58:6). The community accepts the mission to bring the offer of divine friendship to the people and all of humanity (cf. Isa 49:8-10; 41:17-20).

The wealthy members are characterized by their:³⁵ (1) deliberate choice to re-evaluate and sell their possessions, and (2) humble disposition towards the apostles. In fact, when we examine the owners, we see there is a change in the perception of their possessions:

³² For an historical development of Israel's social ethos, see: Hans E. WALDOW (Social Responsibility and Social Structure in Early Israel, in: *CBQ* 32, 1970, 182-204).

³³ The combination χάρις ἐπί has the meaning of divine grace (cf. 1Esd 6:5; Lk 2:40; 2Cor 9:14; Eph 2:7), but also human generosity toward another or gratitude for God's gifts (cf. 1Esd 8:4; Sir 26:15; 1Cor 9:15). In Acts there many occurrences: grace and power or wisdom (6:8; 7:10); favour in God's sight (7:46); God's grace (11:23); and salvation through the grace of Jesus Christ (15:11); Gospel or word of God's grace (20:24). On the other hand, there are references to merely human favour (24:27).

³⁴ Due to the new creation by Christ's resurrection, God's grace is upon them. See: Luke T. JOHNSON, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, Missoula MT, 1977, 199-200; David P. SECCOMBE, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts*, SNTSU 6, Linz, 1982, 200-209; B. WITHERINGTON, *The Acts of the Apostles. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, Grand Rapids MI, 1998, 207.

³⁵ There are several verbs characterizing the owners. Their social status is expressed by the imperfect tense (Acts 4:34: ὑπῆρχον) portraying the continuity of this realm within the community. The fact that selling is expressed by the participle construction (34: πωλοῦντες, πιπρασκομένων) gives much more emphasis to their action of bringing and putting proceeds in front of the apostles which is expressed in the aorist tense (34: ἔφερον; 35: ἐτίθουν).

(1) The analysis of the *emotional-phraseological plane* displayed above points out the deliberate decision to reconsider possession and the bond of friendship (Acts 4:32a.b) in the light of the fellowship with Christ as witnessed by the apostles (4:33).³⁶

(2) The change is portrayed by the causal clause explaining the selling (4:34b)³⁷ and their own humble disposition in entrusting their money for the needy of the community (cf. 4:35). By selling their property for the common good of the community the owners invert the negative examples of both Judas (1:18.25) and Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11). Personal possessions are meaningful if they are used for the good of all the community.

The aspirations of friendship ideals (4:32a) are resolved to some extent when assured of the biblical promise of blessing by the NT *hapax legomenon* (4:34a: ἐνδεδίχθη). The assertion evokes verbatim the text of Deut 15:4-5 presenting the legislation for the holy sabbatical year with the remission of debts as a sign of the Lord's release (15:1-2).³⁸ Therefore, the divine blessing, including both abundant prosperity and absence of the poor (15:4.6), requires: (1) observance of the commandments (15:5), and (2) concern for the poor (15:7).³⁹ The insertion of Deut 15:4 in Acts 4:34 represents a *proof-text*, related to the context by two guiding conjunctions (γάρ) which indicate (1) a theological and (2) an anthropological basis for the realisation of the biblical promises and the redefinition of the friendship maxim. In fact, Hans Eberhard von Waldow rightly observes that Israel maintains its »special character as people of God« by cherishing a special attitude toward the destitute.⁴⁰

(1) *Theological basis*: The explanatory conjunction (4:34a: γάρ)⁴¹ reveals the real cause of the covenantal friendship which comes from divine grace (4:33b:

³⁶ The discipleship and acceptance of Jesus' lordship implies the disposition of personal goods (Lk 18:22-25).

³⁷ It has causal, justification value. BDR § 452 n.1.

³⁸ The Jubilee release is echoed in the surrounding narrative (cf. Lk 4:18; Acts 2:24.38; 4:21). For etymological connections (יביל/ורור; ἄφεσις) and Jubilee tradition, see: Sharon H. RINGE, *Jesus, Liberation, and the Biblical Jubilee*. Images for Ethics and Christology, Philadelphia, 1985, 60–85; Robert B. SLOAN, *The Favorable Year of the Lord*. A Study of Jubiliary Theology in the Gospel of Luke, Austin TX, 1977, 32–42; Robert NORTH, North, R., *The Biblical Jubilee...After Fifty Years*, AB 145, Roma, 2000, 9–17.

³⁹ Christopher WRIGHT (*Deuteronomy*, Peabody MA, 1996, 187–192) sees the solution to the tension between »no needy« (Deut 15:4) and »always poor« (15:11) through social concern for the poor.

⁴⁰ Hans E. WALDOW, *Primitive Communism in Acts?*, 202.

⁴¹ Maximilian ZERWICK – Joseph SMITH, *Biblical Greek*, §473.

χάρις). Divine grace is linked to the gift of the Spirit (4:31) and to conversion to Christ (cf. 2:38; 3:19) following the apostles' testimony of Christ's resurrection (4:29-31.33a). Although in Luke's Gospel the term resurrection (ἀνάστασις) remains abstract,⁴² in Acts the resurrection is directly connected with Jesus Christ (cf. 1:22; 2:31; 4:2; 17:18; 26:23).⁴³ In the summary the sequence of genitives (4:33: τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ) reveals a three-fold ambiguity of interpretation of this term as examined below:

- (a) sequence of *objective* and *subjective genitives*;
- (b) sequence of two *objective genitives*;
- (c) sequence of *objective* and *epexegetical genitives*.

(a) With regards to the first, Schneider, in the light of a similar construction in Acts 1:22 interprets the resurrection as an *objective genitive*, upon which a second *subjective genitive* depends: bearing witness to the resurrection of / belonging to Jesus.⁴⁴

(b) As to the second, Fitzmyer believes the apostles do not proclaim an abstract resurrection but rather the Risen One (1:3).⁴⁵ The witness thus refers to Jesus and his resurrection, as in Codex B.

(c) As to the third, both terms standing in apposition interpret each other. Thus, preserving the word order »bearing witness to the resurrection,« means »bearing witness to Jesus Christ,« which is the real meaning and content of the testimony (cf. 26:23).⁴⁶

Although all three interpretations are possible, the grammar and the context of Peter's Christological speeches require us to choose between the last two renderings. The apostles proclaim that God's plan of salvation culminates in Jesus. In fact, the inchoative hope of resurrection and the end of death foreshadowed in Isaiah (cf. Isa 25:8; 26:19; 53:10-11; 60:19-22)⁴⁷ are fulfilled

⁴² As the temporal dimension, expressed by the dative (Lk 14:14; 20:33), or as an object of the debate in the accusative ([2:34], 20:27), or as the expectation of resurrection expressed in the genitive because of the dependence on the verb (20:35).

⁴³ Paul's speeches also express hope in the resurrection (Acts 17:32; 23:6; 24:15).

⁴⁴ Gerhard J. SCHNEIDER, *Die Apostelgeschichte*. 1. Teil, Freiburg, 1980, 365.

⁴⁵ Joseph A. FITZMYER, *Gli Atti degli Apostoli*. Introduzione e commento, Brescia, 2003, 307.

⁴⁶ Maximilian ZERWICK – Joseph SMITH, *Biblical Greek*, § 45. A sequence of two genitives is more commonly resolved by referring one genitive to another, rather than to one noun (cf. 2Cor 4:4).

⁴⁷ While the Servant shall see offspring (Isa 53:10: ὄψεται σπέρμα), and the Lord shows him light (53:11: δεῖξαι αὐτῷ φῶς), as he himself is the eternal light and the source of the resto-

in Jesus. The apostles, therefore, bear witness to Jesus's sovereignty realised by the resurrection-exaltation. While this enables restoration and salvation (Acts 4:30), it also requires a new social frankness (4:31), that prefers true friendship in contrast to flattery when addressing the authorities. (Hume 2011, 132–134), as God offers his friendship to all humanity (cf. Isa 52:3; 55:1-5).

(2) *Anthropological basis*: Prosperity is God's blessing (Deut 15:4), since the community practises »release« from various kinds of imprisonment;⁴⁸ however, the apostles' testimony, indicating God's sovereignty, demands a shift in social understanding, i.e., conversion according to conventions of benefaction and patronage.⁴⁹ To this end, the causal conjunction (Acts 4:34b: γάρ)⁵⁰ introduces the cause of prosperity, as the rich members enhance their social sensitivity toward the needy by selling and bringing the proceeds for the distribution of goods »according to need« (4:35). This action displays the consequence of fellowship with Christ, i.e., the value of each member and the importance of care for one another (cf. Acts 4:32b.34–35; 2Cor 8:14-15).⁵¹ The shift of emphasis from wealth (cf. Acts 3:6) to Jesus's divine sovereignty (3:16) is perceived by using the specific verb »giving, bearing witness« (4:33a: ἀπεδίδουν) which links the message of Christ with the socio-economic dimension (cf. 5:8).⁵² The pattern of Deuteronomy is evoked in Isaiah, when depicting the Lord's care for the needy and the poor (cf. Isa 41:17). This activity forms the righteous remnant, the restored people who should imitate God's action (58:1-12), as »an ethical re-interpretation of the jubilee,« as Bergsma affirms.⁵³ In brief, the text singles out the bond of unity in terms of prosperity and divine blessing based on the actions of both the apostles as well as wealthy members.

ration (60:20: φῶς αἰώνιον). For this reason, God prevails over death's victory by raising the dead from their graves (25:8; 26:19).

⁴⁸ Douglas HUME, *The Early Christian Community*, 138–139.

⁴⁹ Zeba A. CROOK, *Reconceptualising Conversion. Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, BZNW 130, Berlin, 2004, 254.

⁵⁰ Maximilian ZERWICK – Joseph SMITH, *Biblical Greek*, § 474.

⁵¹ Scott S. BARTCHY, *Community of Goods in Acts. Idealization or Social Reality?*, in: *The Future of Early Christianity, Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, Birger A. PEARSON – Thomas A. KRAABEL – Georg W. E. NICKELSBURG – Norman R. PETERSEN (ed.), Minneapolis MN, 1991, 311; Gert J. STEYN, *Driven by Conviction and Attitude! Ethics in the Acts of the Apostles*, in: *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, Jan G. van der WATT – François S. MALAN (ed.), BZNW 141, Berlin 2006, 160–161.

⁵² Lk 7:42; 12:59; 16:2; 19:8.

⁵³ John S. BERGSMASMA, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran. A History of Interpretation*, VTS 115, Leiden, 2007, 198.

2.3. Ideological facet

The *ideological facet* exhibits a theme of sharing goods.

The purpose of the eclectic combination of the concepts of Hellenistic friendship and the biblical covenant is twofold: (1) rhetorical and (2) apologetic.

(1) Firstly, Luke reinterprets the concept of friendship through the covenant dimension renewed in Christ in order to challenge the wealthy members to convert and extend their circle of friends to include all believers.⁵⁴ Whereas Kato points to the narrative function of the theme of sharing,⁵⁵ Mitchell refers to the rhetoric of persuasion.⁵⁶ The rhetoric of persuasion prevents a communistic reading in terms of the overturn of a social structure and the end of private possession.⁵⁷ Conversely, the purpose is to unify the community across social boundaries and to encourage voluntary participation in mutual support.⁵⁸ To this end, Luke uses, as Ian Paul observes, »the Old Testament categories to interpret [his] own world,«⁵⁹ borrowing from the Jubilee tradition (Isa 58:6; 61:1-2 in Lk 4) known also to Qumran (cf. 1Q21; 4Q181; 1Q379).⁶⁰ From a literary-rhetorical perspective, the memory of the Jubilee tradition has its own character. While the Jubilee in contrast to selling speaks of a release of the slaves, return of the land-family, and special protection of the Levites, here the community members, even Levites such as Barnabas, sell their land and

⁵⁴ For sociological stratification, see: Kenneth C. HANSON – Douglas E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus. Social Structures and Social Conflicts*, Minneapolis MN, 1998, 67–68.

⁵⁵ Takashi KATO, Le caractère lucanien de l'image de la communauté primitive de Jérusalem en Ac 4,32-35, in: *AJBI* 20, 1994, 89–94.

⁵⁶ Alan C. MITCHELL, The Social Function of Friendship in Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-37, in: *JBL* 111, 1992, 257–267.

⁵⁷ Bernd MÖNNING, *Die Darstellung des urchristlichen Kommunismus nach der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas*. 1978.

⁵⁸ Carsten COLPE, The Oldest Jewish-Christian Community, in: *Christian Beginnings. Word and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times*, Jürgen BECKER (ed.), Louisville KY, 1993, 90–91; Kyoung-Jin KIM, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology*, JSNTSup 155, Sheffield 1998, 223–233; Thomas E. PHILLIPS, *Reading Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts*, Lewiston NY, 2001, 196–208.

⁵⁹ Ian PAUL, The Use of the Old Testament in Revelation 12, in: *The Old Testament in the New Testament, Essays in Honour of J.L. North*, J. L. NORTH – Steve MOYISE (ed.), Sheffield, 2000, 273.

⁶⁰ Daniel GURTNER, Luke's Isaianic Jubilee«, in: *From Creation to New Creation. Biblical Theology and Exegesis, Essays in Honor of G. K. Beale*, Daniel M. GURTNER – Benjamin L. GLADD – Gregory K. BEALE (ed.), Peabody MA 2013, 136; Timo ESKOLA, *A Narrative Theology of the New Testament. Exploring the Metanarrative of Exile and Restoration*, WUNT 350, Tübingen, 2015, 23–20.

property.⁶¹ The initially agrarian and cultic feast receives new ethical nuance, as community members conduct their lives and employ their possessions for the good of that community, which lives a new kinship-like unanimity based on fellowship with Christ (Acts 4:33). With reference to historical indicators, Jesus's disciples represent a »*petit bourgeois*,« being both vulnerable to poverty caused by natural calamities coupled with the practice of sabbatical years⁶² and sustained by the contribution of other churches (cf. Acts 11:28-30).⁶³ Moreover, Kirsopp Lake proposes the a common fund corresponding to the Jewish model of social care, which included a weekly dole (*kuppah*) and a daily tray (*tamhui*).⁶⁴ Alongside the rhetoric of persuasion, the text also has apologetic repercussions.⁶⁵

(2) Concerning the apologetic purpose, while the fulfilment of biblical hopes portrays the community as the restored people of God, the application of the friendship concept enables the crossing of social boundaries and the universal mission.⁶⁶ Although the identity of the liberated people of God in the summary account finds historical plausibility in Qumranic self-understanding,⁶⁷ the context of Pentecost undergirds such understanding (cf. 2:33; 3:20-21), showing, as Thompson observes, that the people of God are now united in submission to Lord Jesus, expressed through meeting each other's needs.⁶⁸ Therefore, the community is not merely a community of friends but rather an enterprise of divine character, since the Holy Spirit (4:31) empowers

⁶¹ Jeffrey A. FAGER, *Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee*. Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the Sociology of Knowledge, JSOTSup 155, Sheffield 1993, 25–27.

⁶² For the historicity of calamities and sabbatical years, see: Joachim JEREMIAS, *Gerusalemme al tempo di Gesù*. Ricerche di storia economica e sociale per il periodo neotestamentario, Bologna, 1989, 228–234.

⁶³ Klaus BERGER, Almosen für Israel. Zum Historischen Kontext der Paulinischen Kollekte, in: *NTS* 23.2, 1977, 180–204.

⁶⁴ Kirsopp LAKE, The Communism of Acts II. and IV.–VI., in: *The Beginnings of Christianity*. 1. The Acts of the Apostles, Frederick J. FOAKES-JACKSON – Kirsopp LAKE (ed.), 5, London, 1933, 140–150.

⁶⁵ Gregory E. STERLING, »Athletes of Virtue«. An Analysis of the Summaries in Acts (2:41-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16), in: *JBL* 113.4, 1994, 692–696.

⁶⁶ Christopher M. HAYS, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 2010, 190–211.

⁶⁷ The comparison is enabled by reference to covenant through the community of goods (1QS 1:11-13), adherence to the teachings of the community (1QS 5:2-12) and a ritual meal (1QS 5:8-12), as well as by adherence to Deuteronomistic theology concerning loyalty to God and sharing possession (Deut 10:12-22; 15:4). Matthias WENK, *Community-Forming Power*. The Socio-Ethical Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts, Sheffield, 2000, 263–271.

⁶⁸ Alan J. THOMPSON, *One Lord, One People*. The Unity of the Church in Acts in its Literary Setting, LNTS 359, London, 2008, 88–90.

the prophetic witness (4:33) and enacts the divine blessing (4:34).⁶⁹ The text evokes the Isaianic consideration of this issue. In fact, God's care for the poor and needy (Isa 41:17) requires a human response (58:6-12). This social sensitivity is emphasised by Tannehill's observation on unity, »in which the hearts of all are directed to the welfare of others.«⁷⁰

In brief, as regards fellowship and the use of possessions, the text suggests three possible interpretations.

(1) Firstly, scholars searching for history behind the text interpret the common goods in the summaries (Acts 2:44-25; 4:32.34-35) as an historical experiment, albeit on a voluntary basis (5:4).⁷¹ Scholars interpret the narrative shift from the common goods to almsgiving (6:1ff.) either as a failure to realise the platonic political ideal,⁷² or as the victory of the Jewish way of resolving the social question.⁷³

(2) For rhetorical analysis, the friendship ideals should convince those Christians coming from a Hellenistic culture to extend the concept of friendship to those in need within the community.⁷⁴

(3) The apologetic reading sees the community as the people of God who experience the eschatological renewal in paradisiacal terms, since the possession stems from the fall from paradise and leads to egocentrism.⁷⁵

Synthesis

Section Acts 3:1-5:11 centres on the new authority of Jesus's name. The apostles bear witness to the name of the Risen Jesus and his transforming power. The community fellowship as the fruit of this witness represents a realization of the ideal of the Hellenistic and biblical worlds. The second summary portrays

⁶⁹ Sijbolt J. NOORDA, Scene and Summary. *A Proposal for Reading Acts 4,32 – 5,16*, in: *Les Actes des Apôtres. Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, Jacob KREMER (ed.), BETL 48, Leuven, 1979, 481–483; Matthias WENK, *Community-Forming Power*, 268–269.

⁷⁰ Robert C. TANNEHILL, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts. A Literary Interpretation*. 2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Philadelphia, 1990, 79.

⁷¹ Pierre BENOIT, Qumrân et le Nouveau Testament, in: *NTS* 7, 1961, 285–286.

⁷² Andy CHAMBERS, *Exemplary Life*, 93.

⁷³ Gerd THEISSEN, *Urchristlicher Liebeskommunismus*, 797–709.

⁷⁴ Hans-Joachim DEGENHARDT, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, 170–206.

⁷⁵ Ernst TROELTSCH, *Gesammelte Schriften*. 1. *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, Tübingen, 1912, 113–117.

the community as the *restored people of God*, as the community recognises divine sovereignty and forms its internal relationships in kinship terms. However, the *topos of friendship* indicates that the community is prepared to bring the message of Jesus's resurrection even to the Gentile culture. The restored people of God are guided by the divine Spirit and the apostles. Therefore, the second summary, crucial both for the community and for the growing conflict, has an important twofold function, as David McCabe points out, to legitimate the sanctity of the messianic community and the authority of the apostolic leadership. It also serves to assess the nature of the opposition to the apostles as diabolic and heightens the suspense with regard to the danger to the Jerusalem Temple leadership of rejecting the Messiah's emissaries.⁷⁶

The divinely guided community is ready to confront both internal and external trials. While the former has been resolved, the latter still await an answer in the following sequence (5:12-42).

Sažetak

NARATIVNI SAŽECI U DJELIMA APOSTOLSKIM.

ČITANJE DRUGOG SAŽETOG ZAPISA (4,32-35)

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Članak prikazuje čitanje drugog sažetog narativnog izvoješća u Djelima apostolskim po usvajanju analize gledišta s intertekstualnim čitanjem izajjskih proročanstava. Kršćanska zajednica u nastajanju tako je predstavljena u dijeljenju svojih sredstava za život kao ostvarenje zajedništva zajednice s Bogom i jednih s drugima.

Ključne riječi: analiza gledišta, intertekstualno čitanje, Izajjski Novi Izlazak, zajednica u nastajanju.

⁷⁶ David R. MCCABE, *How to Kill Things with Words*. Ananias and Sapphira under the Prophetic Speech-Act of Divine Judgement (Acts 4.32–5.11), LNTS 454, London 2011, 20.